PLATO'S CODE

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF KNOWLEDGE IN EDUCATION

by

Twyla Gail Gibson

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Program in Philosophy
Graduate Department of Education
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

PLATO'S CODE:

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Doctor of Philosophy. 2000

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Program in Philosophy

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This thesis examines the philosophy of education presented in Plato's dialogues. It dates the composition of these writings to the time of the transition of Greek culture and education from orality to literacy following the adoption of the phonetic alphabet. It shows that an awareness of this revolution in the technology for storing and retrieving communication has not been incorporated into our paradigm for interpreting Plato's philosophy.

The study takes Homer as an example of a literature with roots in an oral tradition. It explains how poetry functioned as a technology for preserving culture. and how formulas. the sequential ordering of topics. and the geometric ring structure were techniques used by the poets to recite the epics from memory. and by the audience as a guide to reception.

Applying to Plato an understanding of the principles of the oral traditional style used to structure the verse in Homer allows us to see. in the dialogues. certain characteristic mnemonic patterns that have not been noticed until now. Recognizing the oral patterns in these writings opens the door to a comprehension of the "unwritten doctrine" of principles attributed to Plato by Aristotle. which scholars in the modern era have had difficulty finding in the dialogues.

The analysis centers on the instructions in Plato's *Sophist* for drawing the lines that divide the definition of "art" (τέχνη) into a sequence of topics. The study shows that this geometry provides the framework for the mnemonic ring composition. The ideas classed in each topic in this definition make

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up a sequence that recurs in every dialogue. This same series is repeated in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and in Aristotle's *Poetics*. It is also present in the *Chuang Tzu* and in Genesis 1-3 of the Old Testament. The frequency of the occurrence of this multi-part sequence makes it unlikely that it is either random or accidental. That it turns up in four other ancient works that have been dated to the same time period (428-301 B.C.E.) adds even more weight to the conclusion. These different treatises were all shaped by the techniques and conventions of an oral traditional system of philosophy.

For Conrad

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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For the Greek versions of Plato. Aristotle. and Xenophon. I used the Loeb editions. Plato is cited by the standard Stephanus numbering. References to passages in the dialogues rely on the translations in the collection edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Sometimes. I use the Loeb editions and indicate this in a footnote. A substantial amount of this project was completed before a new translation of the complete works edited by John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson was published. I use this edition for the apocryphal works not included in the Huntington and Cairns. I also use Gerald F. Else's translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Quotations from the Old Testament. are from *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. translated by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton. I use Burton Watson's translation of the *Chuang Tzu*.

I have minimized the use of words in the ancient Greek language. I do not believe this presents a serious difficulty in most instances. Unlike the formulas in Homeric verse. which are inextricably linked to the Greek. the forms in Plato rely not on rhythm and music but on ideas. Plato's Socrates and *Chuang Tzu* both say that terms or names are conventions. whereas the ideas behind them are constant. In fact. the ideas transcend the words used to express them. for the *patterns are obvious even in translation.*[1] Since my understanding of ancient Greek is limited and my knowledge of Chinese and Hebrew non-existent. I have. for the most part. left the detailed translations and the philological technicalities to those who are experts in these ancient languages.

Still. a brief note of explanation is necessary concerning some of the Greek terms which I do use. I frequently leave two words untranslated. The first. τέχνη (art. technique. craft. profession or skill) is the Greek word for the major definition in this study. The second word is τόπος (topic. place or space). These two words soon become part of the standard vocabulary in this analysis, so I frequently leave them untranslated.

As is well known. the translation of certain words into English presents a problem. In some cases. we have a number of different English words for one Greek word. so that any one English expression tends to be too specific. In other cases. Greek has many different words for what in English we typically translate with a single word. In still other cases. there is. of course. no match whatsoever. For the most part. I cite the Greek only in those instances where precise distinctions cannot be captured with an English

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[1] In the *Seventh Letter*. Plato observes that there is nothing essential in the name—such as something called a circle and known by that expression—the word is merely conventional: there is nothing to prevent our assigning the name 'straight' to what is called 'round' and vice versa (*Seventh Letter* 342b-c: 343a-b) [see Heath. *History of Greek Mathematics*. p. 289]. In the *Cratylus*. words are. once again. mere conventions and images. Some names may be like the thing they signify. most are just chance signs (*Cra.* 433d-438c).

word or expression. Where different translators have not used the same English term, I make it clear that different expressions refer to the same notion.

The works of Plato and other ancient authors are sometimes cited by abbreviated titles. These follow the standard list in the front of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The exceptions are as follows:

WORKS OF PLATO

Phil.	*Philebus*
Stsmn.	*Statesman (Politicus)*
Gorg.	*Gorgias*
Ltr.	*Letters (Epistles)*
H. Maj.	*Hippias Major*
H. Min.	*Hippias Minor*
Rep.	*Republic*
Theaet.	*Theaetetus*
Tim.	*Timaeus*

WORKS OF ARISTOTLE

Met.	*Metaphysics*
DA	*De Anima*
Ph.	*Physics*

WORKS BY OTHER ANCIENT AUTHORS

Lives	Diogenes Laertius
Mem.	*Memorabilia*, Xenophon

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND THEORY OF COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

We are living at a time of revolutionary change in communications and information technology. The convergence of radio, television, cellular telephone and the computer along with innovations such as the internet, e-mail and fax have made information exchange and retrieval instantaneous. These developments are beginning to alter the forms of organization that both reflect our society and help to shape it. Experts assure us that advances in technology will transform our economy and our society, changing the way we learn, work, play and relate to one another. Educators struggle to keep up with the impact of technology on the classroom. Government leaders shift their educational priorities and directives as they come to see a technologically skilled workforce as the key to a competitive position in the global information economy. Parents want to know how they can best prepare their children for life in the information age. Even though everyone wants to understand the changes that will be wrought by this technology, many believe that the circumstances of this revolution are so unprecedented there is no way of knowing what the repercussions will be. Or is there?

Marshall McLuhan: The Three Fundamental Innovations in Technology

When the ancient Greeks borrowed the alphabet from the Phoenecians and gave it vowels, they achieved a significant advance in the technology for preserving and transmitting the accumulated body of knowledge in their civilization. The late theorist of culture and technology, Marshall McLuhan, argued that there have been three basic technological innovations: (1) the invention of the phonetic alphabet by the ancient Greeks which shifted humans out of oral patterns of speech and thought and made way for the dominance of literate forms of communication and instruction; (2) the introduction of movable type by Gutenberg in the 16th century which accelerated this process; and (3) the invention of electric media, beginning with the telegraph in 1844, and followed in succession by radio, films, telephone, and computer. These, argued McLuhan, will ultimately transform all aspects of our social and psychic existence. In his lectures at the University of Toronto, he told his students that the use of the electronic media "constitutes a break boundary" between the linear thought processes characteristic of Gutenberg man and the simultaneous perception of electronic media man, just as phonetic literacy was a break boundary between oral man and literate man.[1] After the Greeks adopted the technology

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[1] Marshall McLuhan, "Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan—A Candid Conversation with the High Priest of Popcult and Metaphysician of Media," *Playboy* (March 1969) in *Essential McLuhan*, eds., Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone (Basic Books: New York, 1995), p. 245.

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of the alphabet, there was a long period of tension between oral and literate modes of communication. For centuries, the ancient oral tradition persisted alongside the practice of writing. McLuhan pointed out that

> there was a very rich cultural result from the interplay of the oral and written forms. The revival of oral culture in our own electronic age now exists in a similar fecund relation with the still powerful written and visual culture. We are in our century 'winding the tape backwards.' The Greeks went from oral to written even as we are moving from written to oral. They ended in a desert of classified data even as we could 'end' in a new tribal encyclopedia of auditory incantation.[2]

According to McLuhan, the story of the ancient Greeks is our own story, unfolding in reverse. It is a tale with particular relevance for educators at the end of the 20th century, which also happens to be a time of revolutionary innovation in communications technology.

John Eisenberg: Technology and Human Thought

Just as it is not possible to look ahead to the technological changes now taking shape, it is not easy to look back to the ones that have helped form our own culture. As John Eisenberg—who studied with McLuhan in the 1960's—reminds his own students in philosophy of technology, it is difficult to think about communications technology because the medium shapes thinking, and it is not easy to think about thinking. It is, according to Eisenberg, the problem of the Zen koan, "How can the hand grasp itself grasping?" Thought is so intimately associated with the conventions of a technology that it is hard for users to see that different media are independent means for the expression of thought.[3] The challenge is to break out of the confines imposed by immersion in the conventions of our own technologies to understand the thinking of cultures whose conventions for communicating are unfamiliar to us. Alphabet users have a hard time giving up their literate intuitions, for the adoption of writing systems transformed human thought. "Stated more accurately," said Eisenberg, "human consciousness, perceptions, relationships, society, even values were different" from what they were before this innovation. This is why the story of the modulation from an oral to a written technology in ancient Greek civilization might shed light on events now underway in our own.

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[2] Ibid., p. 92.

[3] John Eisenberg, *The Limits of Reason: Indeterminacy in Law, Education and Morality* (Toronto, Ontario: OISE Press, 1992); idem, "In Sheep's Clothing: A Study of Creativity" (Unpublished work in progress, Toronto, Ontario, 1998), p. 2.

Harold Innis: The Bias of Writing

Another University of Toronto scholar. Harold Innis. taught a method of using historical situations as a lab for testing the character of technology in shaping culture. Juxtaposing historical situations. proposed Innis. allows us to discover examples in ancient history that can illuminate contemporary matters. He maintained that the dominant technology of a civilization is its cause and shaping force. Pinpointing the major technological achievements of a culture makes it possible to identify what the physical and social pattern of that culture had to be. He noted that this dominant form and all its causal powers are hidden from the attention of people living in that culture. He warned of a blindness to the bias or distorting power of the prevailing technology of communication and cautioned, "We are perhaps too much a part of the civilization which followed the printing industry to be able to detect its characteristics." Education in our own culture. he said. became the art of teaching people "to be deceived by the printed word." We must be continually alert. he warned. "to the implications of this bias and perhaps hope that consideration of the implications of other media to various civilizations may enable us to see more clearly the bias of our own."[4]

In taking up the Greek story and considering what light the change from orality to writing might shed on the technological transformation in our own culture, we must be aware that we bring to this research a host of prejudices that are the effect of lacunae imposed by our own immersion in the technology of the printed word. That is to say. we view the ancients through a veil imposed by our own prevailing technology. We should anticipate that the dominance of literate modes of communication in our culture will have had a distorting effect on our reconstruction of the ancient world.

Theory and Argument

The theory in this study in philosophy of education is an outgrowth of a tradition known (by others) as the Toronto School of Communications.[5] established by Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis at the University of Toronto beginning in the 1950's. These two scholars explored the way communications technology. particularly the alphabet. has shaped human culture and social institutions. This tradition took as its impetus the work of Rhys Carpenter and Milman Parry. It was influenced by Eric Havelock. who taught at the University of Toronto for a time. He brought Parry's theory to bear on the collection

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[4] Harold Innis. *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), pp. 34-44.

[5] Robert K. Logan. *The Alphabet Effect* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1986), p. 22; David R. Olson. *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994). p. 15.

of ancient Greek writings that have come down to us in Plato's name. McLuhan's student, Walter J. Ong,[6] supplemented Havelock's theories and added into the mix the findings of Francis A. Yates and Cedric M. Whitman. Havelock and Ong in turn impressed Northrop Frye[7]—McLuhan's rival and one of my own teachers—who applied the theories concerning the technology of the alphabet to the field of literary criticism. John Eisenberg drew from McLuhan for his work in philosophy of technology, for his investigation of creativity and the kinds of relationships that foster innovation, as well as for his theory of causal indeterminacy. Deanne Bogdan combined Frye's literary theory with Havelock's findings concerning Plato and brought both to bear on problems in the philosophy of education. Paul W. Gooch, a professor at Toronto's University College, contributed to the theory by explaining how Plato's Socrates uses irony in the dialogues, and how he employs indirection in his philosophical work. This study both continues and challenges this tradition. I bring this body of theory concerning the technology of the alphabet to an analysis of Plato's dialogues. I consider the evidence that has come down to us through history concerning the composition of the texts that make up the Platonic canon. I examine this evidence in light of the findings of John Miles Foley, who has written extensively on oral traditions. He contributed to the communications theory by explaining how the patterns in traditional compositions served as an aid to their reception by an audience. I also investigate the connection between Plato's dialogues and several other works that were set down in writing during the same time span (428-301 B.C.E.).

This chapter presents the background concerning Plato and outlines the aspects of the Toronto theory of communications technology that will be used in this study. This serves as a preliminary to Chapter Two, which outlines the problem known in the history of interpretation as the "Riddle of the Ancient Academy." Chapter Three sets out the parameters of the investigation and presents a capsulization of the argument. Chapters Four and Five pinpoint the issues in Plato interpretation that have been the focus of recent debate. The history of the problem along with the various approaches to its interpretation are presented in Chapter Six. This chapter also revisits the theory of communication developed by scholars associated with the University of Toronto, and amends it in light of new evidence. The theory that will be utilized in this study is a synthesis of the strongest arguments culled from the different approaches to the interpretation of the problem, along with a refined version

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[6] Ong's 1941 master's thesis on Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins was directed by Marshall McLuhan, who taught at St. Louis University from 1937 to 1944 [Randolph F. Lumpp, "Walter Jackson Ong, S.J.: A Biographical Portrait," *Oral Tradition*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1987): 13-18].

[7] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), pp. xix, 8.

of the theory of communication. Chapters Seven through Thirteen present the analysis. Chapter Fourteen reviews the territory covered in the study and comments on these findings. The Fifteenth, and concluding chapter offers suggestions for further research.

Rhys Carpenter: Archeological Evidence for the Late Introduction of the Alphabet into Greece

For many years, scholars believed that the alphabet came to Greece between the eleventh and early ninth centuries B.C.E. However, scholarship in this century has added massively to our understanding of the introduction and spread of letters throughout the ancient world. Remnants of inscriptions preserved on clay and stone have made it possible for archeologists to reconstruct the transmission of letter forms over time and across geographical regions. The earliest inscription of more than a few letters—dated to about 730 B.C.E.—was scratched on the shoulder of an Attic Geometric vase, the Dipylon oinochoe, after it was glazed and fired.[8] Archeologists have not found any older material remains to provide evidence that alphabetic writing existed prior to that. Thus, in 1933 and again in 1938, Rhys Carpenter argued that the alphabet adopted from the Phoenicians was not reshaped into Greek before the last quarter of the eighth century.[9] Initially, his view won little acceptance. However, decades have passed and no further evidence has surfaced to indicate the presence of the phonetic alphabet before that time. Although earlier inscriptions may have been written on a material that has not survived, this possibility cannot explain the total absence of evidence of alphabetic writing from any earlier period. As a result of this negative "evidence from silence," in the mid-1980's, there emerged a general (though not unanimous) agreement on the middle of the eighth century as the date for the arrival of the Phoenician script into Hellas.[10]

Greek Education and the Transition From Oral to Written Culture

The alphabet was introduced into a Greek civilization that was completely oral. Knowledge and traditions in this ancient culture were preserved by memorization and repetition and passed on from one generation to another by word of mouth. Society was largely organized around a tradition of oral

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[8] Barry B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 158.

[9] See Rhys Carpenter, "The Antiquity of the Greek Alphabet," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 37 (1933), pp. 8-29; idem, "The Greek Alphabet Again," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 42 (1938), pp. 58-69.

[10] Rachel Kitzinger, "Alphabets and Writing," *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece and Rome*, Vol. 1, eds., Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), p. 402.

poetry which has come down to us in written form in the works of Homer and Hesiod. Wandering bards. singers (rhapsodes). storytellers. and poets mastered a style that made it possible for them to learn verses by heart and to recreate extemporaneously poems that took hours to recite. These recitations were the focus of a sense of community. Listeners identified with the poet and assimilated information and values through the sound and rhythm of the spoken verse. Poems carried the memory of the past and represented at once history. education. and entertainment for the audience. The need for a powerful memory was a feature of oral society that appeared in contexts other than the performance of epic narrative. In ancient Greek culture. all political and legal processes depended on the oratorical power of those in authority. and on their ability to remember and repeat what had been done in the past as a means of deciding issues in the present. and planning the future.[11]

The arrival of the alphabet in the eighth century marked only the beginning of the transition to the use of letters. Initially. the use of alphabetic writing was confined to a privileged elite. Over time. commemorative inscriptions started to appear. Later. writing began to be used to record commercial transactions. At some point. scribes undertook to commit to letters the oral poems and stories that made up the cultural heritage.

Writing liberated the life of the text from the moment of performance. It allowed the poet to reflect on and manipulate traditional forms and subject matter. Recording the chronicles of oral culture led to the development of prose. a purely written use of language. By the fifth century. the transition of Greek society from oral to scribal habits was well underway. Athens began to provide public gymnasia and palaestras so that teachers could set up their own schools for the sons of wealthy citizens. Short texts were written on scrolls or wax tablets as an aid to memorization and oral recitation. Reading was done out loud, and writing used capital letters with no spaces between words. As literacy became increasingly widespread. and more and more of the cultural heritage was documented in writing. the need to preserve and re-create over and over the traditions and memory of the society became less urgent. In time. dependency on the forms of social organization designed to preserve the culture orally receded.

These cultural changes coincided with a number of other social. political and economic factors. The establishment of democracy in Athens in combination with the wealth and curiosity of an imperial society created a demand for formal. higher education in letters. oratory. rhetoric. science. philosophy and statesmanship. This demand was met by wandering scholars—the sophists. or "teachers of wisdom"—who engaged lecture halls, gave their courses of instruction, and then passed on to other

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[11] Kitzinger. "Alphabets and Writing." pp. 403-410.

cities to repeat them. From the start, the sophists incurred resentment for charging all that their patrons could be persuaded to pay. Their costly instruction made higher education available only to the rich and gave those who could afford it an advantage in politics and in the law courts. For decades and then centuries, the oral traditions persisted alongside of and in tension with new forms of organization that were emerging in response to the changing technology. The poets passed on the tradition through their songs and in tandem with them, the sophists offered their education in letters and oratory. Into this historical and cultural arena came three great teachers.[12]

Plato and the Philosophical Foundations of Education

We take up this story of our Western philosophy of education with Socrates (469 - 399 B.C.E.), Plato (427 - 347 B.C.E.), and Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.). These three generations of teachers are often said to have "invented philosophy as a discipline,"[13] and to have "created knowledge as an object and as the chief purpose and the proper content of all educational systems."[14] Over the span of their lifetimes, the oral tradition gave way to the technology of the alphabet, and Greek culture and education made the transition from oral to literate forms of communication and instruction. Socrates did not write. He was suspicious of the written word and conducted his philosophy in oral conversations.[15] His pupil, Plato, wrote dialogues. While earlier generations set forth their views in the form of brief prose pieces (Parmenides), histories (Herodotus), in collections of aphorisms (Heraclitus), or used the dialogue format as plays for entertainment (Aristophanes, Euripides), Plato was the first *philosopher* to "adapt sustained oral teaching into continuous written discourse."[16] He had a crucial role "as the thinker in whose text the full results of literacy, conceptual and linguistic, were first fully displayed."[17] Plato's student, Aristotle, is credited with lectures and prose treatises in which the author speaks

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[12] Will Durant, *The Life of Greece* (1939; rpt. ed., New York: MJF Books, 1966), pp. 288-291.

[13] Richard Kraut, "Introduction to the Study of Plato," *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1992), p. 2.

[14] Procope S. Costas, "Review of *Preface to Plato*, by Eric A. Havelock," *Classical Journal* 60 (1964), p. 79.

[15] We learn of Socrates' teachings only through references in ancient comedies, and through the writings of his students, Xenophon and Plato.

[16] Eric A. Havelock, *Preface To Plato* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 56; idem, "The Orality of Socrates and the Literacy of Plato," *New Essays on Socrates*, ed., Eugene Kelly (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1984).

[17] Kevin Robb, ed., *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy* (Monist Library of Philosophy: La Salle, Illinois, 1983), p. 3.

directly to the reader.[18] In adopting the treatise form. Aristotle introduced the style characterized by standardized vocabulary and the categories conducive to abstract thought. thereby completing the transition from the oral to the literate modality. As the student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. Plato was the *point of interaction* between two different phases of language. Rachel Kitzinger has noted.

> Plato, by juxtaposing the intimacy of the oral world with the permanence of a philosophical written text. bears witness to the rich interaction that persisted in classical literature and thought between the oral tradition and the relatively young phenomenon of writing.[19]

We must anticipate that the Platonic texts both exhibit and reflect this revolutionary. intermediate phase between orality and literacy. This interface between oral and written modes of thought is considered to be a significant part of the foundation of Western culture itself.[20]

The Theme

This thesis will examine the interaction between oral and written modes of communication and instruction in Plato's dialogues. the collection of writings that constitute the "break boundary" between orality and literacy in ancient Greek culture. and one of the source texts of the Western philosophical tradition. The central theme of this study is that a more detailed understanding of the tension between speech and writing in Plato's dialogues will shed light on the role this philosophy of education played in the foundation of Western culture. and it will also add to our understanding of a parallel shift in technology now in progress in our own time.

Ancient Philosophy: Piecing Together the Puzzle

Before we can consider Plato's philosophy. however. we must pause to acknowledge another serious difficulty. All our knowledge of ancient culture is a reconstruction. Doing ancient history and philosophy is like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle with many of the pieces missing and to which some of the pieces do not really belong. We examine the pieces that we have, discard the ones that do not seem to fit. attempt to determine what the lost pieces might look like. and then try to fit them all

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[18] Although we are told that Aristotle. Plato's student. also wrote dialogues. none have survived. See Cicero. *Letters to Atticus* XIII xix 4. For further discussion. see John M. Cooper's Introduction and Notes in John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson. eds.. *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. Inc.. 1997), p. xviii.

[19] Kitzinger. "Alphabets and Writing." p. 415.

[20] Tony Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press. 1989), p. 178.

together to form a unified construct. In this exercise, the vision of the completed picture is crucial. This is why the jigsaw puzzle always comes with a photo of the fully assembled puzzle on the box. The total picture serves as a paradigm, a context, and a conceptual frame. It guides the sorting and weighing of pieces, determines the ways in which parts of the jigsaw are connected, and provides clues about how whole sections of the puzzle come together. Historians and philosophers attempting to piece together the puzzle of the ancient world do not have the benefit of any depiction of the whole. They rely on theories of the big picture that have been built up over years or even centuries by the accumulation of contributions from many researchers across different scholarly disciplines. Disagreements among scholars often stem from different perspectives on the "big picture." or on entirely different visions of how the ancient world looked. Certain pieces of evidence can be accommodated in all the different pictures we have of the ancient world arising from many different approaches to interpretation. Some pieces of evidence cannot be reconciled within any interpretive framework, despite the repeated efforts of the most accomplished members of the intellectual community. Often, the evidence that will not fit into the current picture is not seen at all, as Thomas S. Kuhn has noted in his study on the role of paradigms in research. Sometimes it is not seen as significant, and sometimes, even facts are rejected if they do not fit into prevailing constructs.[21] Kuhn offered this rule: the more evidence a theory that can account for, the greater its explanatory value relative to alternative interpretations of the evidence proposed by others. The strength of any one theory of interpretation depends on how well its central ideas can be reconciled with *all* the available evidence. This includes first of all the material that others have deemed most significant, second, the evidence that exists but which other interpreters did not highlight as relevant, or did not include in their rendering of the total picture; and third, how well it accounts for inconsistencies and anomalies that cannot be explained by other theories. As Kuhn emphasized, one test of the power of a theory is its ability to expose the inadequacies of other perspectives. A superior theory holds out the potential for extending knowledge of the data that it reveals as significant, for increasing the extent of the match between the data and the theory's predictions, and for the further articulation of the theory itself.

The Thesis

The thesis of this study is that Plato's writings are the specific product of a culture that was in the process of changing from an oral to a written technology. I will show that in spite of an expanding body of evidence dating the composition of these ancient texts to the time period of this historical shift,

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[21] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962; 1970), p. 24.

awareness of this technological transition has not been incorporated into our paradigm for interpreting Plato's philosophy. I will demonstrate that this historical context is crucial for understanding certain puzzles that have proven intractable in the history of interpretation. I will also show that applying to Plato's writings our knowledge of the conventions of the oral traditional style will allow us to see, in these books, certain characteristically oral patterns that scholars have not noticed until now. The identification of these oral structures will make it possible for us to make sense of certain anomalies and inconsistencies that current theories cannot explain. I will argue that the ability to uncover the oral residue that has escaped the observation of commentators, together with the way my view can account for anomalies when compared to the prevailing theoretical approaches to Plato, makes my theory more successful than others in resolving difficulties that interpreters have come to regard as acute. Kuhn emphasized that a new theory "is at the start largely a promise of success discoverable in selected and still incomplete examples."[22] This investigation combines broad sweeps with deep soundings, an overall picture with one key example as demonstration and proof. The focus on one example in this study constitutes both its promise and its limitation.

The Platonic Canon

While scholars seldom agree on much, one of the few things about which there is a consensus concerns the pieces of the puzzle that we do possess. It is widely held that Plato's texts are the earliest body of continuous prose philosophical writing to survive intact. Since none of the ancient authors refers to any Platonic work that has not come down to us, it appears that, as Richard Kraut has put it, "we possess every philosophical work he ever composed."[23] In fact, Plato's writings survived transmission better than the works of nearly all other ancient authors.[24] In this case, then, we are not faced with a

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[22] Ibid., p. 23-24.

[23] Kraut, "Introduction to the Study of Plato," p. 20; also Cooper and Hutchinson, eds., *Plato: Complete Works*, p. x; Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy: II. Plato and Aristotle*, ed. and trans., John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 8; John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, I: *Thales to Plato* (London, 1914), pp. 220-221; A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York, 1927), p. 503; G.C. Field, *Plato and his Contemporaries* (New York, 1930) p. 38; Léon Robin, *Platon* (Paris, 1935), p. 13.

[24] Wincenty Lutoslawski recites the historical factors which he believed led to the accurate preservation of Plato's texts. Plato's Academy continued for nearly a millennium after his death, under the direction of a "golden chain" of scholarchs until the school was closed following an order from the emperor Justinian in 529 C.E. That there was a Platonic school permanently fixed in one place over centuries "explains the preservation of his works in so remarkable a state of correctness and purity." The probability that the school was a kind of religious association gave it a stability greater than if it was simply an educational institution. These associations were respected by the Romans and lasted until Plato's writings were deposited in Christian monasteries. According to Lutoslawski, this continuity of religious protection

situation involving lost works. Instead, we have a circumstance in which a number of texts that could not have been written by Plato were preserved as part of the collection. For the most part, these works lack the artistry and complexity of the dialogues that are considered genuine. We do not know who wrote them or why they were included from so early on with Plato's own writings. For even in antiquity, it was known that certain books were not authentic.[25] In the first century C.E., or about four hundred years after Plato's death, all the writings that make up the canon were published by Thrasyllus, a Platonist and astrologer from Alexandria. Most of the medieval manuscripts derive from his collection, which is the basis for all modern complete editions. Apparently in line with earlier tradition, Thrasyllus organized the works credited to Plato into nine tetraologies—groups of four books—consisting of thirty-five dialogues in which the thirteen *Letters* were counted as one work, thereby making a total of thirty-six. He also included in his edition an appendix containing nine works that were passed down with the collection but which he regarded as spurious. To each dialogue, Thrasyllus affixed a double title. One was frequently taken from the name of the interlocutor, the other

was unusual for authors of the fourth century B.C. Plato's school continued for more than nine hundred years, outliving those of Aristotle and Epicurus. In addition, during the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., there was an improvement of writing materials and the papyrus rolls were copied onto parchment. Whereas the papyri have been preserved only in fragments, the texts copied onto parchment have come down to us intact. Since Plato's works were copied onto parchment while his Academy was still in existence, Lutoslawski reasoned, they are more likely to be accurate than texts of other writers whose works were not continually read. He continued: "We also know that many leaders of Plato's Academy spent their lives writing commentaries on the dialogues. Such commentaries as those of Proclus . . . show great care for the correctness of the text." In contrast with many other Greek works which came through Alexandria and Rome, indications of the copyists show that the oldest of Plato's manuscripts were written in Greece, thereby increasing the probability of their descent from the copies of the Academy. Further, while other ancient writers were despised by the early Christian clergy, Plato was admired by St. Augustine and many others. The monks who copied the works of Plato in the ninth century transcribed with care, knowing that Plato was held in esteem by the greatest authorities of the Church. "These unique circumstances explain the survival of Plato's text in a state more correct and authentic than that of contemporary poets or orators, and they further explain why not one of the works written by Plato has perished. There is no valid testimony as to the existence of a single work by Plato not contained in our collection" [Wincenty Lutoslawski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic* (London, New York and Bombay, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), pp. 4-7]. See also George Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates*. Vol. I. (London: John Murray, 1867), especially Chapter 4, "Platonic Canon, as Recognized by Thrasyllus," and Chapter 5, "Platonic Canon, as Appreciated and Modified by Modern Critics." In a more recent study, D.H. Fowler found the evidence for this view to be "either lacking or distorted," and "the whole line of interpretation unfounded" [*The Mathematics of Plato's Academy: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 197-8].

[25] A list of the dialogues regarded as genuine and dubious by the ancient world is recorded in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Vol. I. trans., R.D. Hicks (1925: rpt. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, LCL 184, 1991), pp. 331-332. For background concerning the authentic and inauthentic works, see J.A. Philip, "The Platonic Corpus." *Phoenix* 24: 296-308, as well as Thomas L. Pangle, ed., *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 1-18.

from the topic (for example, the *Euthyphro* was also entitled, *On Holiness*, the *Statesman* was called *On Monarchy*, and the *Timaeus* was known as *On Nature*). Apparently, these topics were popular with many ancient writers. Lists of books credited to other authors and recorded by Diogenes Laertius or known from other sources indicates that a number of different philosophers all wrote works with these same titles.[26] Since Thrasyllus included all the books considered authentic plus many whose legitimacy was disputed (for a total of forty-five works), and since none of the ancient authors refers to any Platonic work that we do not possess, it appears that everything Plato ever published has survived.[27]

In piecing together the puzzle of this philosophy, then, we are faced with a most unusual situation. Numerous works in the corpus cannot have been Plato's own. Hence, one subject of perennial debate in Platonic scholarship has been the question of drawing the line between spurious works and texts whose authority seems indisputable. Since the spuria frequently contain philosophical notions clearly at odds with the major texts, a solution to inconsistencies in supposedly authentic dialogues has often been to contest their legitimacy. At one point in the mid-nineteenth century, all but nine dialogues were declared apocryphal.[28] Today, the pendulum seems to have swung in the opposite direction. Strong arguments have been advanced for reinstating a great deal of the corpus, including

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[26] To give some selected examples listed by Diogenes, to Heraclitus is attributed a composition, *On Nature*. Dialogues entitled the *Republic* and *Of Law* were written by Zeno. Of *Beauty, On Law, Of Wisdom* and *On Knowing* were written by Crito, a student of Socrates. Demetrius of Phalerum wrote a *Defense of Socrates*. Another friend of Socrates, Simon, wrote *Of the Good, On the Just, Of Virtue, On Law, On Philosophy* and *On Knowledge*. Simmias wrote *On Wisdom, On Philosophy,* and *On the Soul*. Democritus composed *On Nature* and *Of Reason*. Among the works attributed to Protagoras were *Of Virtues* and *Of the State*. Dialogues with the titles, *Of Justice, On Philosophy, Of the Statesman,* the *Sophist, Of the Soul, Of the Good, On Nature,* and the *Laws* were written by Aristotle. Antisthenes, a pupil of the sophist Gorgias is credited with *Of the Good, Of Law, Of Nature,* and *Of Kingship*. Diogenes, Antisthenes friend and a critic of Plato, wrote a *Republic, On Virtue,* and *On Good, Of Laws, Sophisms, On Nature, On the Soul, Of Kingship,* and *Of Piety* were authored by Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus. His successor, Strato, wrote *Of Kingship, Of Justice, Of the Good, On the Philosopher-King,* and *Of the Soul*. Speusippus, Plato's nephew and successor at the Academy wrote *On Justice, On Legislation,* and *On Philosophy*. His student, Xenocrates, is said to have written works with the titles, *On the Soul, On Nature, On Holiness,* and *That Virtue Can Be Taught*. Cleanthes wrote the *Statesman, Of Knowledge,* and *Of Kingship*. His follower is credited with writing a *Republic,* and the works: *On Justice, Of Virtue* and *Of the Good*. To Epicurus is attributed the titles: *Of Piety, Of Justice and the Other Virtues,* and *Of Kingship*. As far as I know, only one commentator has noted that all the ancients gave the same titles to their works. Gilbert Ryle mentioned a comment in Isocrates to the effect that orators chose their themes from an authorized list, and wonders if competitors at festivals chose themes for their dialogues out of such a list as well [*Plato's Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 35].

[27] John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson, eds., *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1997), pp. viii-ix.

[28] Alan C. Bowen, "On Interpreting Plato," *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings,* ed., Charles L. Griswold, Jr. (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1988), p. 52; and Cooper and Hutchinson, *Plato: Complete Works,* pp. x-xi.

works long regarded as having been written by other ancient authors.[29] Thus. not only is Plato

significant as the author of the first comprehensive collection of prose philosophy to be put "on paper."

he is also unique among authors of the classical age in that all of the written works credited to him by

the ancients have been preserved. One of the difficulties in reconstructing Plato's philosophy. then.

is that we are dealing with a puzzle that contains extra pieces.

Plato: His Education, Teaching and Writing

Though it appears we have everything that Plato wrote. there is not much evidence concerning his life.

his education and his teaching in the Academy.[30] The most important record of his activities are the

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[29] Pangle. *Political Philosophy*. pp. 1-21.

[30] Our knowledge of early Greek literature and philosophy is based on two kinds of evidence: (1) fragments. mainly in the form of quotations containing the philosopher's actual words, and (2) testimonia. the descriptions of the philosophers' teaching reported by later writers. The fragments of quotations that have come down to us provide the most valuable source of information. To fill in the gaps around fragments, we must rely on the reports of other authors. Both fragments and testimonia tend to be found in the same sources. The following are the most significant. After Plato. the earliest source is Aristotle. who sometimes initiates his discussion of philosophical problems by surveying the views of his intellectual forebears. He seldom quotes the exact words of his predecessors. The accounts he gives of the tradition—in *Metaphysics* 1 and *Physics* 1—are the earliest we have. Aristobulus (probably the second half of the second century B.C.E.). was the author of a work known to us only through quotations in Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius. Aristoxenus. the theorist to whom we owe almost all our knowledge of the musical theory of Ancient Greece. was Aristotle's pupil. as was Theophrastus. Cicero (mid-first century B.C.E.) was a prolific writer and frequently quoted the early Greek philosophers. This Roman orator and statesman wrote significant accounts of post-Aristotelian Greek philosophy that include historical surveys of the philosophical views of the Presocratics. Quintilian (born 35 C.E.. date of death unknown), was a Roman rhetorician and teacher. His one surviving work. the *Institutio Oratoria*. contains numerous comments and stories of the ancient Greek authors. Clement of Alexandria (150 C.E.), was an Athenian who converted to Christianity. His writings contain numerous quotations from the early Greek literature. Origen (184-255 C.E.). was born in Alexandria of Christian parents. He was a famed teacher. and wrote many works dealing with Greek philosophy. The *Didaskalikos* by Alcinous (second century C.E. and long identified erroneously with the middle Platonist Albinus). is a significant document of one school of second century C.E. Platonism. It served as the standard introduction to Platonism in the Byzantine period and the Renaissance. Numenius of Apamea (second century C.E.). was said by Longinus to be the culmination of a long line of Pythagorean writers (*ap.* Porph. V. *Plot.* 20). We have today only fragments of his works. Sextus Empiricus (late second century C.E.). was a physician of the empirical school and a follower of the skeptic Aenesidemus. He wrote three books. *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. *Against the Dogmatists*, and *Against the Schoolmasters*. The first is a work of skeptical philosophy. The latter two are concerned primarily with cognition and sense perception and contain numerous quotations of earlier philosophers. Diogenes Laertius probably lived in the earlier half of the third century. His book. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. somewhat uncritically compiles material from a number of sources that have not survived. Eusebius (260-339 C.E.). was an early Christian historian who cited many ancient sources in his works. Simplicius lived in the sixth century C.E. He wrote commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*. *De Anima*. *De Caelo* and *Physics*. He explicated Aristotle's critiques of the early Greeks by citing the words of the philosophers themselves. In so doing. he provided extensive extracts. noting that the older writings had become rare [see Richard D. McKirahan. Jr. *Philosophy Before Socrates*:

Letters that have come down through the tradition as part of the canon. Plato's *Letters* are significant—even though their authenticity has always subject to debate—because they are the only place in his writings where we find autobiographical statements. Next in importance are the comments by Aristotle and by other early authors, and, finally, the statements of Diogenes Laertius. Though Diogenes lived in the earlier half of the third century, he had access to the texts of ancient writers that we do not have. Since, as Eduard Zeller once noted, the tradition concerning ancient philosophers "has more and more to tell, the further it lies, chronologically, from the events," let us consider the sources in reverse order, from least to most reliable.[31]

Diogenes Laertius's Account. In his book, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius noted that Plato was born in the 88th Olympiad (about 428 B.C.E.). He was either eighty-one or eighty-four when he died.[32] He was originally named Aristocles, after his grandfather. Both his father and his mother came from noble Athenian families. He had two brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon, as well as a sister, Potone. He was educated in the school of Dionysius and then, later, he studied philosophy with the followers of Heraclitus. He excelled at gymnastics and wrestling. Some say his wrestling teacher, Ariston, renamed him Plato—which means "broad or wide"—on account of his "robust figure." Others say the name Plato came from "the breadth of his style" (III. 4). As Plato grew older, he applied himself to the composition of lyric poems and tragedies. In 408 B.C., when he was twenty, he was about to enter one of his compositions into a competition when he heard Socrates speak in front of the theater of Dionysus. He abandoned poetry and from then onwards, attached himself to Socrates. In 399, Socrates was charged with corrupting the youth with false teachings about the gods, and with introducing new gods into Greece. He was executed by poison. When Socrates was gone, Plato joined the circle of Cratylus the Heraclitean. Then, he studied with Hermogenes who taught the philosophy of Parmenides. When he was twenty-eight, he began traveling. He went to Megara for a time with some of the other disciples of Socrates, and there he studied with Euclides. Later, he spent time in Cyrene with Theodorus the mathematician. After that, he journeyed to Italy to visit with the Pythagoreans, Eurytus and Philolaus. Philolaus (perhaps late fifth century) wrote a book entitled, *On Nature* (VIII. 84-85), making him the first Pythagorean to write and to publish the doctrines which had

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An Introduction with Texts and Commentary (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), pp. 1-6; and J. M. Robinson, *An Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), pp. 309-312].

[31] Eduard Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, ed., Wilhelm Nestle (13th edition, Leipzig, 1928), p. 364.

[32] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. I, trans. R.D. Hicks (1925; rpt. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, LCL 184, 1991), p. 277, 313.

been kept secret until then (VIII. 15). When Plato's studies with the Pythagoreans ended. he traveled to Egypt "to see those who interpreted the will of the gods" (III. 6) Eventually. he accepted an appointment arranged by his friend Dion to act as tutor to the younger Dionysius. son of the tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse. a Greek city in Sicily. Plato returned to Athens when he was about forty and established the Academy in a grove outside the city walls. Later. the seventeen-year-old Aristotle became one of Plato's students and took up residence at the school. Some reports say that he stayed for twenty years. Others say that he remained until Plato's death. About 367. Plato made a second trip to Italy. He tried to convince the younger Dionysius—who had by then inherited the realm—to create a constitution based on his model of the ideal state. The younger Dionysius agreed but then he decided that Plato's republic was too austere and he broke his word. About 387. he dismissed Plato from the court and threw him in prison. His release was secured by the Pythagorean Archytas (fourth century B.C.E.). who wrote to Dionysius. procured a pardon and arranged for Plato's safe return to Athens. In 360. Plato made a third trip to Italy. This trip ended in disaster as well. After that. he stayed out of politics and concentrated on teaching.

Some sources say that Plato wrote to Dion and persuaded him to purchase three Pythagorean treatises from Philolaus for one hundred minae (a fortune at the time). and that it was from these texts that he learned to write the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*. Other authorities say that the book was a gift. given to Plato for securing the release from prison of one of Philolaus' disciples. According to a third source. there was only one book. This. Plato bought himself from the relatives of Philolaus on one of his trips to Sicily and from it he transcribed the *Timaeus* (VIII. 84-85). According to traditional sources. Plato "transcribed a great deal" from other authors and in particular. he "employed the words" of the Pythagorean Epicarmus (550-460 B.C.E.). Plato also drew upon the mimes of Sophron. modeling his characters in this style. He was the first philosopher to refute the speech of Lysias. which he set out word for word in the *Phaedrus*. He was a rival of Xenophon. who had been another pupil of Socrates. They both wrote similar narratives. including a *Defense of Socrates*. a *Symposium*. a *Republic*. and various moral treatises (*Lives* III. 34). In fact. Aristoxenus said that nearly all of Plato's *Republic* was a replication of the *Controversies* of Protagoras (III. 36-39).

To many of his contemporaries. Plato's philosophy was incomprehensible. According to Diogenes. "he employed a number of different terms to make his system less intelligible to the ignorant." He used the same word in contexts where they have a very different meaning. he employed different words to represent the same thing. and he expressed the same thing by way of contrary expressions. When Plato first read the *Phaedo* to an audience. only Aristotle stayed to the end: the rest of the assembly got up and walked away.

Plato died at a wedding feast when he was an old man. His friends discovered a copy of the mimes of Sophron under his pillow; the *Laws* were left on wax tablets, and they found that the early part of the *Republic* had been revised several times. Speusippus, the son of Plato's sister, succeeded him as head of the Academy.

Reports on Plato's Teaching From the Early Commentators. Diogenes' report that Plato's philosophy incorporated many phrases and doctrines from earlier thinkers was based on a number of ancient reports. Aristobulus, (*ap.* Clem. Al. *Strom* I. 22; cf. Eus. *Praep. Ev.* XIII. 12.); Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* I. 22. 131. 2-6); Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* X. II. XI. I), and Origen (*Contra Celsum* IV. 39, VI. 19) all stated that Plato borrowed from the Hebrew philosophers, altered their precepts slightly, and inserted them into his system of doctrines.

Similarly, Diogenes' account of the audience walking out on Plato's reading of the *Phaedo* is just one version of the story concerning this famous incident. There are many references in the Greek commentators on Aristotle to Plato's lecture *On the Good.* Our most reliable source concerning this speech (or series of talks) comes from Aristotle's student, Aristoxenus, who recounts:

> as Aristotle used often to relate . . . most of the audience that attended Plato's lectures
> on the good . . . came . . . in the conviction that they would get from the lectures some
> one or other of the things that the world calls good; riches or health, or strength, in
> fine, some extraordinary gift of fortune. But when they found that Plato's reasonings
> were of sciences and numbers, and geometry, and astronomy, and of good and unity
> as predicates of the finite . . . their disenchantment was complete. The result was that
> some of them sneered at the thing, while others vilified it (*Harmonics* 30.10-31).[33]

Apparently, people did not anticipate that Plato's "good" would involve numbers, geometry, unity, and the notion of limit. Simplicius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (187a12; 151), refers to the lecture *On the Good (Phys.* 545.23), saying that this talk was attended by a number of Plato's students, including Aristotle, who wrote down his "enigmatic utterances."[34] Different versions of the story come to us from Proclus in his commentary on the *Philebus,*[35] and from Themistius.[36] Another piece of

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[33] Henry S. Macran, trans., *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 88-89.

[34] As cited in Konrad Gaiser, "Plato's Enigmatic Lecture 'On The Good,' " *Phronesis,* 25 (1980): 5-37. See also Sir David Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 148; and A.E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Meridian, 1926, 1927, 1956), p. 503.

[35] "[Interpreters] raise the question whether philosophers should read out their writings before an audience, as Zeno did; and they insist, if one does so, only to read material suited to the audience so as not to suffer the same fate as Plato when he announced a lecture on the Good. A great throng of all kinds of people assembled: but when he delivered his lecture, they did not understand his argument, and went away one by one until finally they had almost all gone. But Plato knew that this would happen to him, and had told his followers beforehand not to refuse entry to anyone, since the lecture would still only take place before their group" [Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Philebus,* translated in Victor Cousin (Paris: Budé, 1864),

evidence concerning Plato's teaching indicates that many of his educated contemporaries could not fathom his philosophy. A fragment of a comedy by Epicrates (frag. 11) tells of a physician who passed by the Academy and witnessed Plato teaching a group of his students. All of them were engaged in "distinguishing and defining the kinds of animals and plants." They were huddled together, silently contemplating a gourd. "Suddenly and without straightening up one said: 'It's a round vegetable'; another: 'It's a grass'; a third: 'It's a shrub'." Their procedure was so puzzling to the doctor that he pronounced their activity "nonsense." Apparently, Plato and his students were unperturbed, and "went on drawing their distinctions."[37]

Aristotle's Testimony Concerning Plato's Education. Aristotle is the most important secondary source for the biography of Plato. In the *Metaphysics* (I. IV. 9-v. 1-VI. 10), he describes Plato's education and how his philosophy was influenced by his various teachers. In the *Poetics* (II. 47b8-10), he discusses Plato's writing style.

The passage in the *Metaphysics* is significant because it contains the only comments about Plato as a person in the surviving texts of his most famous student. Though in other treatises, Aristotle mentions Plato by name and discusses his philosophical doctrines, he is silent about the character and personality of his master, about events surrounding his life, and about his relations with other people. Nor do Aristotle's extant writings contain a single account of his experiences at Plato's Academy.[38] Despite its significance, caution must be exercised in accepting as fact the evidence from this testimony, for the *Metaphysics*, as Werner Jaeger demonstrated, is a collection that was assembled after Aristotle's death.[39] Little is known about which of its parts contain Aristotle's own writing, how much of it accommodated earlier works, or what adaptations were made by editors. Even so, it is as close as we come to an eyewitness report.

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p. 688].

[36] Themistius says, "It did not in the least prevent wise old Plato from being wise on the occasion of his lecture in the Piraeus when people came flocking from all around and assembled together—not only the townspeople from above but also workers from the fields and vineyards and from the silver-works—and when he presented his treatise on the Good, the huge crowd became dazed and streamed away from the place until finally the audience was reduced to Plato's trusted followers only" [*Oratio* 21. 245 c-d, as cited in Gaiser, "Plato's Enigmatic Lecture," pp. 9-10.

[37] Epicrates, frag. 11. ed., T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, Vol. II (Leipzig, 1884), p. 287. Also translated and quoted in Harold Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), p. 63.

[38] Further, Ryle provides an outline of numerous features in Plato's writings about which Aristotle seems unaware [*Plato's Progress*, pp. 2-10].

[39] Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, translation with the author's corrections and additions by Richard Robinson, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 168ff.

Aristotle says that Plato followed the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. but he added to it certain peculiar features that made his teaching distinctive. This was because. as a young man. Plato studied the Heraclitean doctrines with Cratylus. He embraced the view that sensibles are a state of flux and so there can be no secure knowledge of them. Plato continued to adhere to these doctrines from then onward. Later. he studied with Socrates. who did not deal with the physical universe but focussed instead on moral questions. seeking the universal definitions. Plato combined the thought of Socrates with the Heraclitean doctrines concerning flux. He came to believe that inquiry was not concerned with sensible things but with "entities of another kind." since there can be no general definition of things that are always changing. He called these other entities "ideas." says Aristotle. and he held that all sensible things which have the same name as the forms exist by participation in them.

In the *Poetics* (II. 47b8-10). Aristotle defines three different kinds of imitation and classifies Plato's writing style as one of them. He mentions that one form of imitation used verses alone, one used prose without rhythm. and a new kind of composition mixed poetry with prose discourse. This third kind of art was so new. says Aristotle. there was as yet no name for it. As examples of this form of imitation. he describes the mimes of Sophron. Xenarchus. and the Socratic discourses. It is assumed that the expression. "Socratic discourses." refers to Plato's writings. and that Aristotle classifies them as a mixture of prose and poetry.[40]

Plato's Letters. The most reliable source for Plato's biography comes from his own *Letters.* which date from the last two decades of his life and relate to his travels to Italy and his activities there. Most refer to his friendship with Dion and his involvement in the politics of Syracuse. Some refer to Plato's association with the Pythagoreans. Letters *Nine* and *Twelve* were addressed to Archytas of Tarentum (the Pythagorean who arranged with Dionysius for Plato's release from prison). This correspondence indicates that Plato and Archytas were engaged in finding, recording and preserving the Pythagorean philosophy. Archytas says in his letter to Plato that he is sending him treatises on *Law. Kingship. Piety.* and the *Origin of the Universe.* He mentions that the rest were nowhere to be found.[41] In reply. Plato says that he had received the writings and was returning some of his own even though they were not yet completed. These treatises, he states. should be kept under guard (*Ltr. XII* 359 d-e).

That Plato was involved with others in a major effort to preserve the Pythagorean philosophy

[40] As Gerald F. Else pointed out. ". . . we think naturally of Plato's. but he did not invent the genre and was far from being the only practitioner of it. Indeed. one theory maintains that Plato took up the writing of Socratic dialogues in order to correct misinterpretations by others" [see his translation of Aristotle's *Poetics* (Ann Arbor. MI: University of Michigan Press. 1970). fn. 7. p. 81.

[41] Diogenes is our only source for Archytas's letter to Plato. Since he documents Plato's *Twelfth Letter* verbatim. it is reasonable to assume that he recorded Archytas's letter accurately as well.

is supported by a passage in the *Thirteenth Letter* (360b). where Plato writes. "Here then is something we must keep alive. . . So I am doing my part now to effect this by sending you herewith some Pythagorean treatises and some classifications." In line with the Pythagorean tradition of silence concerning their doctrines.[42] Plato warns in the *Second Letter* (314-315). "Take precautions. lest this teaching ever be disclosed." He says that he is couching the doctrine concerning the nature of the first principle of this philosophy in riddles. lest his letter fall into the wrong hands (*Ltr. II* 312e). He describes some sort of "incredible doctrine." and how it had been preserved and transmitted.

> For it is through being repeated and listened to frequently for many years that these doctrines are refined at length. like gold. with prolonged labor. But listen to the most remarkable result of all. Quite a number of men there are who have listened to these doctrines—men capable of learning and capable also of holding them in mind and judging them by all sorts of tests—and who have been hearers of mine for no less than thirty years and are now quite old: and these men now declare that the doctrines that they once held to be most incredible appear to them now the most credible. and what they then held most credible now appears the opposite (*Ltr. II* 314a-b).

The emphasis on repeating and listening in this description makes it clear that this was an *oral doctrine* that was passed on by face-to-face communication. With respect to this "doctrine" and "teaching" (*Ltr. II* 313d). Plato's advice was to "avoid writing and learn by heart: for it is not possible that what is written down should not get divulged." He continued. "That is the reason why I have never written anything about these things. and why there is not and will not be any written work of Plato's own. What are now called his are the work of a Socrates embellished and modernized" (*Ltr. II* 314c). or (as it has sometimes been translated). as "a Socrates become fair and young."[43] Plato continued with the following instruction. "Farewell and believe. Read this letter now at once many times and burn it" (*Ltr. II* 314b-c).

Milman Parry: The Oral-Formulaic Style of the Homeric Tradition

We move on now to consider one of the most significant contributions in this century to our understanding of ancient Greek literature. This came from a Homeric scholar. Milman Parry. Before Parry. classical scholarship was preoccupied with what was commonly called the "Homeric Question." That is. with the problem of *who* "Homer" was and *what* exactly his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* represented.

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[42] On the secrecy of the Pythagoreans. Diogenes Laertius (VIII. 15) mentions that for centuries after the death of Pythagoras. "down to the time of Philolaus. it was impossible to obtain any knowledge of any Pythagorean doctrine." From Porphyry. we learn that "What he taught his disciples no one can say for certain. for they maintained a remarkable silence" [*Vita Pythagorae* 19. as cited in Robinson. *Early Greek Philosophy*. p. 57].

[43] "Embellished and modernized" is the translation favored by L.A. Post. while "a Socrates become fair and young." is the one offered by R.G. Bury.

Parry formulated a new answer. His reply was that Homer was "one of a long *tradition* of *oral* poets that . composed wholly without the aid of writing."[44] His answer opened a new field of inquiry which is known (by the oxymoron). "oral literature."[45]

Parry maintained that the compositions of an oral tradition have a very different style and form from written compositions. Through his analysis of Homeric epithets—such as "divine Odysseus," "wine-dark sea," or "gray-eyed Athena"—he demonstrated that Homer's language was a total structure built up from stock phrases he called "*formulas*." He defined the formula as a "group of words regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (Parry 1971 272). He pointed out that many lines and fragments of lines in a given passage of Homer were reproduced word for word in one or more other passages. This repetition of ready-made expressions, he argued, meant that the written versions of the epics must have originated as oral works.

In contrast to the literate poet who writes out lines, Parry reasoned, the oral poet cannot take time during a performance to think of the next word, make changes, or read over what he has just written before going on. The phrase which will fall easily into the verse in the right place is a difficult thing to make up. Since his poem is created impromptu, the oral poet cannot think critically phrase by phrase. To tell his story, he chooses expressions from a vast number of stock word-groups—a poetic diction—which he has heard in the poems of other poets and memorized. Each pre-fabricated phrase expresses a particular idea in words that conform to a given length of verse. It is made up of parts of speech that fit into a section of the hexameter and connect with the formulas that go before and come after it.

> Each formula is made in view of the other formulas with which it is to be joined; and the formulas taken all together make up a diction which is the material for a completely unified technique of verse making (329).

Using this traditional system, the oral poet "sews together" (*rhapsode* means sewer of songs) his composition as he goes along by remembering "these innumerable devices which enabled him to

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[44] M. Parry. *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*. ed. and trans.. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1971). pp. 1-239.

[45] Here. I make use of a distinction established by Berkley Peabody. where the "continuing process of oral composition is called an *oral tradition*. The recorded phenomenon of an oral tradition (which is where writing inevitably enters in) is called *oral literature*. An oral tradition is a highly sophisticated socio-linguistic institution that plays a central role in maintaining the continuities of the culture in which it occurs. This stabilizing function is often taken over by records. when writing becomes established in a society; but the shift in medium from utterance to record affects the way such an institution works . . . [*The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's Works and Days* (Albany: State University of New York Press. 1975). pp. 1-2 and 70]. See also Michael E. Hobart and Zachary S. Schiffman. *Information Ages: Literacy. Numeracy. and the Computer Revolution* (Baltimore. Maryland: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1998). pp. 17-20.

combine words and expressions into complete sentences and lines of six dactylic feet embodying the ideas proper to the narration of the deeds of heroes" (195). The singer's memory functions not by committing the lines of the poem to memory verbatim. Rather, he extemporizes by linking together traditional phrases and expressions "into the mold of his verse after a fixed pattern" which is easy to remember under the pressure of performance (268). The storehouse of expressions and events, together with the principles for combining them in a composition, constitute this unified oral traditional system.

Parry maintained that the poetic diction could only be the cumulative creation of many generations of oral poets over centuries (330). The scope and economy of the diction is so complex, he argued, that it could not have been constructed by a single poet. No one singer could create a system with so many metrical alternatives and so few non-functional variations. The traditional system is so extensive because countless poets helped make it up; it is economical because less useful phrases were eventually eliminated. When one poet came up with a phrase that worked well, others took up its use and passed it on so that, over time, versions that were not as functional or pleasing were forgotten and the new one became the optimal way to express an idea in a particular length of verse. Individual poets learned by hearing and by word of mouth to recite verses by drawing from a traditional diction which "time had proven to be the best" (330). Since it was difficult to top a time-tested formula, individual poets could at most make only slight alterations to the tradition. They could perhaps put formulas together in a different way or they could make a new one on the pattern of the old. To create a formula to express a new idea, the bard chose an existing expression similar to the notion he wished to convey, and then he proceeded to model the new one after the original. It was by *imitation of an original pattern* that the formulary was built up. If the formulas in any one part of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* imitated those of any other part, he argued, this repetition was proof of imitation (8). Indeed, remarks Parry, the role of imitation and resemblance is crucial in the creation, use, and survival of epic formulas. A resemblance between expressions is not the result of mere chance; it is the work of generations of singers elaborating on the traditional system (197).

While the poetic diction is accessible to modern readers only by way of long study, it was familiar in every way to both the bard and his audience. The poet knew this technique "without being aware that he knew it, because it was dependent on his memory of an infinite number of details" (20). The poets used these phrases so often they forgot to think about the meaning in them (391). The audience heard, again and again, the long performances of epic poetry always composed in the same style. After singing and hearing the epic verse countless times, both poet and audience became indifferent to the meaning of repeated expressions that did not carry the story (129-130). In a way that

is difficult for literates to comprehend: what the words and phases lost in meaning they gained in a kind of "charm" that pleased the poet and the spectators. The rhythm in the poetry became a kind of music. conveying a mood rather than a meaning. Parry asserted. and the audience became lost in the incantatory charm of the heroic (375).

Even though the oral diction was the creation of countless poets. each telling of the tale was the "performance" of a single poet. Said differently. while the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are constructed in conformity with the conventions of the oral tradition. within these parameters. they are most probably the monumental compositions of a single hand.[40] Each composition is created through a kind of unity of poet and tradition. as the individual sews a story together from material that has been fashioned collectively. Even though certain metrical irregularities in the elaboration of themes and contradictions of detail in the narrative provide evidence that the Homeric verse belonged to an oral tradition. Parry argued that there was also a unity of style that pointed to the work of a single poet. According to Parry. if an analysis of the narrative structure reveals inconsistencies and illogicalities that cannot reasonably be accepted as the mistakes of a single creator. but which could have come about through the imperfect combination of contributions from more than one source. then it must be accepted that the whole work is not the *creation* of one person. At the same time. the work may well be the *composition* of a single person making use of the traditional system. Thus. argued Parry. the vocabulary and the overall style indicate that

> the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are very exactly. as we have them. each one of them the rounded and finished work of a single singer: though whether they are both the work of *one* singer I do not yet know. I even figure to myself. just now. the moment when the author of the *Odyssey* sat and dictated his song. while another wrote it down verse by verse. (451)

Parry's final contribution was to carry out field expeditions to Yugoslavia. He and his assistant. Albert B. Lord. tested theories developed from the ancient manuscript tradition by comparison with the Serbo-Croatian oral epics of the Yugoslav *guslari*. These studies of a living tradition. completed by Lord following Parry's early death. demonstrated that techniques similar to Homer's—though not

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[40] This observation has been confirmed by subsequent studies that have applied the procedures of narrative theory to the epics in an effort to separate the conventional from the individual and to discriminate the traditional from non-traditional elements. In this search for the individual poet. the "Homer of the Homeric epics." the analysis concentrates on the outlook and organization of the whole construction (by the use of prefabricated structural elements and patterns). rather than on the language and style of the work [see Joachim Latacz. *Homer: His Art and His World.* trans.. James P. Holoka (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1998), p. 11: I.J.F. De Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam: B.R. Gruner. 1987): J. Griffin. *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1980): and Scott Richardson. *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville. TN: Vanderbilt University Press. 1990)].

as elaborate—have been developed in the oral poetry of other societies.

Parry lived long enough to extend his initial definition of the formula to include larger word groupings and phrases. If certain actions with many of the same details and the same words recur again and again. he said. then they may be seen as belonging to a common "type." Types are patterns of formulas that proceed from beginning to end treating each principal stage in a nearly identical order. Particular instances of the type merely tone down or embellish the basic pattern. What is essential to the type is that which remains constant in all repetitions (357). If certain formula types occur regularly under similar circumstances. then. according to Parry. we can assume that these are part of the traditional system (64). The definition was expanded still further by Albert Lord to include a stock element he called the "theme." Themes typically involve actions or events such as journeys or wars. They entail subthemes. for example. getting ready for a voyage or preparation for a battle. Lord defined themes and subthemes as "groups of *ideas* regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style."[47] Even though the words and phrases might vary in different sections of the composition. types. themes. and subthemes involve the repetition of an identical order of events. acts. and objects. Every journey. for instance. repeats a consistent order in the formal and ideational sequence of loading, embarking. disembarking and unloading of ships.

Parry emphasized that the oral style demands an entirely different kind of understanding from the written style. It is not easy to put aside the literary prejudices of our own time in order to conceive that the oral poet "marked his works with genius not because he was able to model the words on his own thoughts. but because he was able to make use of traditional words and expressions" (144). As early as the time of Aristotle. wrote Parry. the age of the old oral poetry was passing and Homer was condemned as a mere "imitator." The failure to see the difference between written and oral verse was. according to Parry. "the greatest single obstacle to our understanding of Homer . . . and above all. we shall find that many. if not most of the questions we were asking. were not the right ones to ask" (269). Parry's answer to the "Homeric Question" was to become one of "the twentieth century's single most important critical perspectives on Homer and a fundamental theoretical fulcrum in the study and comparison of numerous other ancient. medieval. and even contemporary literatures."[48] His answer was also a basis for the theories developed by many of the University of Toronto scholars.

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[47] Albert B. Lord. *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge. Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1964). p. 68.

[48] John Miles Foley. *Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing. 1985). pp. 11-12.

Plato's Banishment of the Poets

Next. we will consider passages in Plato that have weighed heavily in our reconstruction of Greek culture and education during the transition from oral poetry to written philosophy. In the dialogues. Socrates leads a sustained and merciless attack against the poets with Homer and Simonides (*Rep.* 331d-335e: *Prt.* 316d. 339a-347a: *Hppr.* 228c: *Ltr.* II. 311a) the targets most frequently mentioned by name. For instance. in Books II and III of the *Republic*. Socrates considers the subject of diction and points out that Homer and "all the other poets effect their narration through imitation" (*Rep.* 393c). The poets are criticized for producing deceptive images and for not telling their tales in the prescribed patterns (379a: 398b). In the middle of the dialogue. images are relegated to the lowest level of the diagram of the divided line. In Book X. the poets are said to be imitators who produce without knowledge of the truth (598a). Deceived by their own images. they are unable to perceive them as "three removes from reality" (598b). "for it is phantoms. not realities. that they produce" (599a). Their imitations. Socrates says. cast a spell (601b) over the audience that charms and entertains them while offering no educational benefit (608). Near the end of the dialogue. he looks back on the argument and decides to banish the poets from the ideal republic. They will not be allowed to return from exile. he proclaims. until a defense is offered in prose. showing that poetry is not just delightful but beneficial to the order of the state (607d).[49]

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[49] Deanne Bogdan. "Instruction and Delight: Northrop Frye and the Educational Value of Literature" (Ph.D. diss.. University of Toronto. 1980): "Censorship of Literature Texts and Plato's Banishment of the Poets." *Interchange: On Education.* 14. No. 3: 1-16. 1983: *Re-Educating the Imagination: Toward a Poetics, Politics, and Pedagogy of Literary Engagement* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann Inc.. 1992): John Bussanich. "Review of Julias A. Elias's *Plato's Defense of Poetry.*" *Ancient Philosophy.* Vol. 6 (1986): 211-215: Julias Elias. *Plato's Defense of Poetry* (Albany. N.Y.: State University of New York Press. 1984): A.S. Ferguson. "Plato and the Poet's *Eidola.*" *Philosophical Essays Presented to John Watson* (Kingston: Queens University Press. 1922): William Chase Greene. "Plato's View of Poetry," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.* edited by a committee of the classical instructors of Harvard University (London: Cambridge University Press. Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 1918). pp. 1-75: Charles L. Griswold Jr.. "The Ideas and Criticism of Poetry in Plato's *Republic.* Book 10," *Journal of the History of Philosophy.* Vol. 19 (1981): 135-150: J. Hartland-Swann. "Plato as Poet: A Critical Interpretation." *Philosophy.* 26 (1951): 3-18: Philip H. Hwang. "Poetry in Plato's *Republic,*" *Philosophical Quarterly* (1991): 29-37: Christopher Janaway. *Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995): Murray Krieger. *The New Apologists for Poetry* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. 1956): Penelope Murray. "Poetic Inspiration in Early Greece." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies.* Vol. CI (1981): 87-100: A. Nehamas. "Plato on Imitation and Poetry in *Republic* 10." eds.. J. Moravcsik and P. Tempko. *Plato on Beauty. Wisdom. and the Arts* (Totowa. N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield. 1982): Morriss Henry Partee. *Plato's Poetics* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. 1981): Stanley Rosen. *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry: Studies in Ancient Thought* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1988): Hermann Wiegman. trans. by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. "Plato's Critique of the Poets and the Misunderstanding of his Epistemological Argumentation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric.* Vol. 23. No. 2 (1990): 109-124.

Through the occurrences of words we would translate as art (τέχνη). imitation (μίμησις). images (εἴδωλα. εἰκόνες). imagination (εἰκασία). and phantasy (φαντασία). these statements in the *Republic* have been linked in the history of interpretation to passages in other dialogues. particularly the *Sophist* (235e: 265-268d). the *Philebus* (38a-48d). the *Timaeus* (22a-37d) and the *Theaetetus* (152c-160c and 164d-165b)[50].

These terms recur again in the *Laws* (811-818). where the entire preceding discourse is said to be the "kind of poem" that is the most suitable for teaching the young. In fact. in determining what should be taught. the dialogues themselves. we are told. are the standard against which all other compositions—whether poetry. prose or even *unwritten discourses*—are to be measured. This passage emphasizes that the Platonic writings should serve as the model for the kinds of compositions that will be committed to writing (811d). Therefore. when the tragic poets stand before the judge and the Minister of Education and ask if they can be readmitted and their poetry with them (817a-d). they are invited to present their compositions for comparison with the dialogues. and they are told that they will be allowed to return only if their works are the same. or better.[51]

Eric Havelock: Plato and the Transition of Greek Education From Orality to Literacy

Eric Havelock—who was a visiting scholar at University of Toronto—brought together Rhys Carpenter's evidence for the late introduction of the alphabet. Milman Parry's findings on oral-formulaic patterns. and Plato's pronouncements on the nature of epic poetry. to support his theory concerning the impact of the alphabet on Greek culture and education.

Following Carpenter. Havelock pointed out that early Greek culture was "wholly oral" and after the invention of the alphabet. there was "a long period of resistance to the use of letters," so that literacy was not achieved in Athens until nearly three hundred years later.[52] Greek "society became

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[50] See especially Murray W. Bundy. "Plato's View of the Imagination." *Studies in Philology*, 19 (1922): 362-403: idem. "The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Medieval Thought." *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*. 12 (1927):2-3.: also Gerard Watson, *Phantasia in Classical Thought* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988).

[51] For one of the few discussions of this passage in the *Laws*. see Elizabeth Asmis. "Plato On Poetic Creativity." *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*. ed.. Richard Kraut (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. 1992). pp. 338-364.

[52] Eric A. Havelock. *The Muse Learns to Write* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986). p. 90. Havelock elaborates his views in a series of works. See also his *Preface To Plato* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 1963): "Preliteracy and the Presocratics." *Institute of Classical Studies Bulletin*. No. 13 (1966): 44-67: "The Alphabetization of Homer." *Communication Arts in the Ancient World*. eds.. E. Havelock and P. Hershbell (New York: Hastings House, 1978): *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1982): and "The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics." *Language and Thought in Early Greek*

literate only by slow degrees" (1986: 29). Oral habits of communication and instruction "persisted long after the alphabet had theoretically made a reading culture possible" (1963: 45-46). Between Homer and Plato, argued Havelock, the method of preserving the culture began to change as Greek education became alphabetized. Even up to Plato's time, he said, the introduction of the alphabet made "little practical difference to the educational system or to the intellectual life of adults" (1963: 38). Since Plato's writings are prose dialogues and not works of epic poetry, Havelock placed "Plato near the end of the great transition from oral to literate habits of communication" (1963: 97). Plato describes a cultural situation "in which oral communication still dominates all the important relationships and valid transactions of life." He concluded that "it is only too likely that Plato is describing a situation which was on the way to being changed as he wrote" (1963: 41).

Havelock applied Parry's findings concerning the oral verse of Homer to problems in our reconstruction of the history of early Greek education. He sought to demonstrate that the "formulaic technique was employed as the instrument of education" by the pre-literate Greeks (1963: 123). He asked, "How did this civilization preserve its laws, traditions, historical sense and its technical skills?" He pointed out that preservation and transmission of the tradition can never rely completely on the "give and take" between generations. To function, a social group needs some kind of "standardized linguistic statement" that describes and enforces a common consciousness, shared habit patterns and collective values. In an oral society, this statement is preserved in the memories of living people and passed down through the generations. The collective memory provides the content of the "educational apparatus" of the group. To become available for "transmission through the educational apparatus, the tradition has to be verbally preserved in permanent and unaltered form . . ." (1963: 290-91). People had to be "assisted in their memorization of the living word by every possible mnemonic device which could print this word indelibly upon the consciousness." How can memory retain elaborate linguistic statements without changing them in transmission from one person to another and from one generation to the next? According to Havelock, "the only possible verbal technology available . . . was that of the rhythmic word organized in verbal and metrical patterns which were unique enough to retain their shape" (1963: 42-43). Poetry functioned as a technology for preserving cultural identity. It was used by the Greeks as form of education, he asserted, "as a way of preserving and transmitting the accumulated body of knowledge in the absence of writing." Homeric verse was therefore central to Greek education prior to Plato

> not on the grounds that we would offer, namely poetry's inspirational and imaginative
> effects, but on the ground that it provided a massive repository of useful knowledge.

Philosophy, ed., Kevin Robb (La Salle, Illinois: Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983).

a sort of encyclopedia of ethics. politics. history. and technology which the effective citizen was required to learn as the core of his educational equipment (1963. 27).

According to Havelock. poetry did not mean the same thing for the Greeks that it means to us. Greek oral poetry was a kind of "tribal encyclopedia." an "indoctrination which today would be comprised in a shelf of text books and works of reference." Poetry was the "container" for all philosophy. history and science. It was "first and last a didactic instrument for transmitting the tradition" (1963: 43).

Havelock asserted that poetry was the "sole mechanism" for memorization and preservation in the absence of written record. It served this function via three devices: first. the employment of rhythms and formulas to aid in the recall and re-use of the cultural record (1963: 100). second. through the use of what he called "verbal formulas:" and third. through the reduction of all experience to a great story or a connected series of stories. Poetic rhythm involves consistent repetition of patterns of language sounds. Verbal formulas—what Parry and Lord called types and themes—entail the repetition of "an identical order" in different passages (1963: 82-84). The third device. that of the great story. involves gathering together a number of small stories into a coherent series of episodes focussed around "several prominent agents" who "act and speak with some overall consistency" (1963: 175-76). Episodes provide a "frame of reference. the chapter headings. the library catalogue. within which the memory can find markers" by locating a narrative situation in the context of a huge and compendious story. In this way. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are kinds of catalogues of the history and the geography of the Greeks. Hesiod's *Theogony* classifies the gods. their functions and families. while the *Works and Days* is a catalogue of "exhortations. parables. proverbs. aphorisms. sayings. wise saws and instances. interlarded with stories" (1963: 295).

Havelock linked Parry's findings on the imitative nature of the formulaic patterns of Homeric poetry with Plato's criticism of the poets in the *Republic*. and with the negative assessment of art in other dialogues. He pointed out that Plato was claiming for himself the place he was asking the poets to vacate. With the ascendence of literacy. he argued. more and more of the cultural heritage was set down in writing. and the ways of the old tradition were challenged. Plato's attack on the poets was. according to Havelock. a rejection of the oral tradition in which the bards merely imitated and copied words and phrases without any genuine knowledge of what they were doing. Plato's assault. he maintained. was a rejection of the formulaic style produced by the Greek oral mentality. a state of mind that was in tension with new modes of thought made possible by the effects of the alphabet.

According to Havelock. the transition from oral to literate patterns touched off changes in vocabulary. syntax. and in the basic categories of human thought. The terminology used by Plato and Aristotle to define and categorize the operations of consciousness. he argued. had to pass through a

long period of development (1963: xi). He cited the findings of Harold Cherniss to support his theory that "the metaphysical interpretations of pre-Platonic thinkers which are found in Aristotle's own works are in large measure accommodated to the problems and indeed the terminology of his own system."[53] He presented passages in the *Republic* (522a-530b) as evidence that Plato was creating a new frame of discourse and a new kind of vocabulary. Plato, he claimed, was arguing for an approach that focused not on "modeling and reproducing." He was "demanding instead a discourse which shall rearrange phenomena under general headings or categories" (1963: 259-60). The language of categories and universals, claimed Havelock, refers to what would be called "concept" in modern terminology. He said that Plato avoided the notion of concept or mental construction that would make things like justice and goodness "abstract, arbitrary and relative conceptions of the human intellect." Instead, he argued, Plato saw them as "somehow representing the cosmic structure independent of human cognition and so labeled them visual shapes or forms." Thus, in the development of human thought, the theory of forms was a transition between the "image-thinking" of oral poetry and the abstract concepts of philosophy made possible by writing.

As the "first philosopher to adapt sustained oral teaching into written discourse," Plato must have been "writing in the crucial moment of transition," from orality to literacy, said Havelock (1986: 111). He emphasized that when orally shaped communication was first written down, "the device of script was simply placed at the service of preserving visually what had already been shaped for preservation orally" (1963: 136-37). Prose conformed at first to the previous rules for the poetic (1963: 39). Even though the alphabet was destined to replace orality by literacy, "the first historic task assigned to it was to render an account of orality itself before it was replaced. Since the replacement was slow, the invention continued to be used to inscribe an orality which was slowly modifying itself in order to become a language of literacy" (1986: 90). After Plato, Havelock concluded, the balance of the tension between the oral and literate mind-sets swung in favor of writing. The end of the oral civilization marked the beginning of our own. "Plato, living in the midst of this revolution, announced it and became its prophet" (1963: vii).

Plato's Denouncement of the Sophists

The poets were not the only target of Plato's attack. The sophists were criticized mercilessly by Socrates. These wandering teachers were the successors of the rhapsodes. Recently discovered fragments from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. prove that they were also heirs of the tradition

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[53] Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, pp. vii-xii. Here, he refers to Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).

started by the poet Simonides (556 - 468 B.C.E.).[54] These few surviving documents have allowed scholars to trace the line of descent from poet to rhapsode to sophist as part of the transition from oral tradition to written record. When material from more than one source was put together, interpreters were needed to translate anachronistic expressions and foreign words.[55] As the epics came to be preserved in written collections, a group of rhapsodes became interpreters as well as presenters of poetry. Some of the earliest prose consists of their efforts to explain the meaning of traditional names and phrases in the old theogonies. Glosses, along with explanations of Homeric proper names and obscure words by "etymology," were developed, collected and transmitted by the rhapsodes.[56] Over time, they began to offer instruction in the interpretation of poetry, in the use of letters, as well as in the classifications and definitions laid down by their predecessors. They also taught techniques of oral presentation and public speaking in addition to the use of an "art of memory," which was said to have been invented by Simonides.[57] At some point, the most prominent of their number became known as teachers of wisdom. The early sophists wandered all over the Greek-speaking world. Later, they converged on Athens, the leading democratic city-state, where they could establish themselves as professional educators and gather their best students around them. A number of Plato's dialogues bear the names of the major sophists in the tradition—*Gorgias, Protagoras, Critias* and *Hippias*. For instance, at *Protagoras* 339a, there begins an extended passage in which the sophist explains a lyric poem by Simonides so as to rationalize some of its contradictions. The *Sophist* offers a number of different definitions and classifies sophists themselves as "deceptive image makers." The *Gorgias*

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[54] R. Pfeiffer noted that a recently published Simonidean fragment indicates that we must accept Simonides as the "proto-Sophist," and as the forebear of the early sophists [*History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 16 and 55].

[55] Flavius Josephus, in the first century C.E. noted that "Among the Greeks there is to be found no work that is agreed to be earlier than the poetry of Homer . . . and they say that *even he* did not leave his poems in writing, but that they were clearly remembered and put together later from his songs" [Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1. 2. 12].

[56] Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 5-12.

[57] Simonides' invention of mnemonics is documented by an inscription on a marble tablet found at Paros in the seventeenth century. The tablet, known as the *Parian Chronicle*, has been dated to about 264 B.C.E. It records dates for significant discoveries (for example, the publication of the poetry of Orpheus, the invention of the flute, the introduction of corn) with a particular focus on the prizes awarded at festivals. We know from other sources that Simonides was awarded the chorus prize in his old age; at the time the inscription was written on the Parian marble, he was characterized as the creator of a system of memory aids. The inscription reads: "From the time when the Ceian Simonides son of Leoprepes, the inventor of the system of memory-aids, won the chorus prize at Athens, and the statues were set up to Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 213 years" (i.e., 477 B.C.E.) [cited as translated in the collection of references to Simonides in ancient literature gathered together in *Lyra Graeca*, ed. and trans., J.M. Edmonds, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. II (1924), pp. 249].

contains an extended critique of sophistic deceptions. and in the *Greater Hippias* 285b-286a and the *Lesser Hippias* 368c-369a. Socrates takes an ironic tone in praising Hippias's use of the memory "art."

Francis A. Yates: The Memory Art of the Ancient Greek Poets and Sophists

The major contribution to our understanding of the Simonidean tradition came from Francis A. Yates. an historian of the Renaissance. She demonstrated that by about 500 B.C.E., the ancient Greek orators and sophists were making use of a mnemonic technology that grew out of the formulaic system of the poetic tradition. This was the "art of memory" invented by Simonides. It was based on a technique of impressing on the mind a series of "places" and "images" (τόποι and εἰκόνες in Greek, whence our words "topics" and "icons").[58] Knowledge of this system was passed on to the Romans (the method of *loci* and *imagines* in Latin). It came down through the European tradition as a part of rhetoric, and also as a branch of ethics, where it was organized around a scheme of virtues and vices. The technology for remembering involved mentally picturing a spatial structure—such as a theater, a building, a park, or a geometric figure—as the background "places." This scheme was then used as the representational format for encoding information into memory. Items to be remembered were converted into mental images and then set into the "places" in this imagined background. While the ancient orator gave his speech, he walked through the background space in his imagination, visiting each of the places in turn, re-collecting the images he had set in them. By this system, he was able to deliver long speeches from memory with complete accuracy. Since the images were placed in the background in a series, the speaker was able to move in his or her imagination either forward or backward from the place selected as a starting point. Numerical markers were set into the background regions at regular intervals to ensure that the speaker would not lose his place. According to a memory treatise, the art of memory was like inscribing "words in the soul." The backgrounds were compared to wax tablets, the images to letters, the order and arrangement of the images to the writing, and the presentation to the reading (*Ad Herennium* III. XVII. 28-29). The backgrounds, like wax tablets, were lasting but the images, like letters, were effaced when no further use was made of them.

Yates showed that the education provided by the sophists—so harshly criticized by Plato—made extensive use of this mnemonotechnic to memorize names or specific terms. Words were broken down into their etymological roots and each component was matched to an image of something

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[58] Francis A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 11.

that sounded similar.[59] She said that the etymological use of the mnemonic may have been an attempt to adapt an oral technology to writing (230). Evidence from a memory treatise attributed to the sophist Hippias of Elis (who appears as chief interlocutor in Plato's *Lesser Hippias* and *Greater Hippias*). indicates that the education he offered involved committing to memory vast quantities of etymological information. Yates suggested that it was possible that Plato's objection to these highly paid wandering teachers might be explained by this sophist memory treatise with its senseless use of such etymologies. According to Yates. "One would expect a Platonic memory to be organized not in the trivial manner of such mnemonotechnics. but in relation to the realities" (51).

Yates also described a branch of the memory tradition that rejected the use of images and imagination. relying instead on the principles of division and orderly arrangement. This method. later called "dialectic." grew out of the observation that "thoughts" and certain "parts of speech." do not call up images in the same way as material things (Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria* XI. ii. 24-26). The technique involved dividing the material to be remembered into manageable "lengths" which were then organized into a schematic "in which the more general or inclusive aspects of the subject came first, descending thence through a series of dichotomized classifications" to subdivisions containing more specialized. or individual aspects (230). In contrast to the method which impressed material on memory by envisaging vivid and emotionally charged "images." the method of memorizing by "dividing and composing" stressed the use of cool analytic thought processes in the continuous rehearsal and recitation of the abstract order of the "divisions."

Cedric M. Whitman: The Geometric Structure of the Homeric Epics

Homeric scholar. Cedric M. Whitman, contributed to the theory by demonstrating that Homer's poems have a completely unified formal structure. Whereas Parry thought the composition as a whole was created extempore by the poet during a performance by way of interlocking formulas. Whitman proved that there were larger scale mnemonic patterns that Parry had not detected. He showed that the Homeric epics are "spun out" from an initial formula in an organization that forms a geometric design that is "the acoustical analogue of the visual circle." The scenes and episodes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* all have a formal and ideational resemblance through the imitation of a few basic patterns. Variation is achieved through expansion. compression. shading. or modification of the original themes and

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[59] So for example. if I wished to remember the name. "Plato." I would break it down into two etymologically similar words. "plate" and "toe." I would picture an image of a dinner plate and upon it a human toe. Then I would set this image in one of the places. It is not difficult to see how the memory would quickly become cluttered with silly images that bore no relation to the original idea.

motifs. Episodes are organized by topic into a precise series. After the middle of the epic. the composition repeats the previously mentioned topics in a reverse order sequence so that the concluding passage returns to the beginning formula. Whitman described this symmetrical "ring" format in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a "geometric structure of the most amazing virtuosity." It helped the poet remember the order of the episodes in the story because they followed an A-B-C-B'-A' pattern with a symmetry of elements on either side of the center.[60] Each place—A, for example—is subdivided further according to this sequential and symmetrical pattern so that it contains within it additional levels of information."[61] This "nested structure" connects material thematically and spatially. Frames enclose a centerpiece. forming the "frames within frames" typical of Geometric period art. specifically Dipylon vases.[62]

> [T]he secret of Homeric structure, of the *Iliad* at least. lies. as we shall see. in the adjustment of oral technique to the psychology underlying the Geometric symmetry of the late eighth century B.C. Its units are the typological scenes and motifs which are the stock in trade of oral poets, and [of] Homer's finished design . . .[63]

Based on their Geometric typology. Whitman concluded that the Homeric epics could be dated to the Mycenaen Era and that the poetic tradition preserved a kind of "history" of the Heroic age.[64]

Walter J. Ong: Transformation of the Word—Oral Thought Patterns in Written Texts

McLuhan's student and Havelock's colleague, Walter J. Ong, offered his theory of the "transformation of the spoken word." He connected the rhetorical structuring of alphabetic cultures with its origin in the oral mind-set and he developed a theory of how human personality and consciousness were changed by the invention of writing. His work combined the theories of McLuhan, Innis. Parry. and Havelock. To this. he added Yates's findings on the memory systems of classical antiquity. as well as Cedric Whitman's discovery of the geometric patterns governing the overall structure of the Homeric epics.

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[60] If the sequence has no central core (e.g.. A-B-C-C'-B'-A'). it is known as "hysteron-proteon." See Steve Reece. "The Three Circuits of the Suitors: Ring Composition in *Odyssey* 17-22." *Oral Tradition*. 10 (1995): 207-229.

[61] Elizabeth Minchin. "The Performance of Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics." *Voice Into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*. ed.. Ian Worthington (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1996), pp. 11-14.

[62] Cedric M. Whitman. *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge. Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1958). pp. 249-84.

[63] Ibid.. p. 10.

[64] He said. "Where historical controls exist. Homer's picture of the Mycenaen world can be largely verified . . . and therefore the Homeric poems are no doubt . . . the truest history of the Mycenaen Age [Ibid.. p. 45].

Ong identified a number of characteristic features of the traditional style that spilled over into later. alphabetic cultures as an "oral residue."[65] One residue of orality that is perpetuated in written texts is the formula. Another is a narrative that follows a pattern defined by the digressions of the poet's memory. rather than by the linear progression of pages turned. A third remnant of the oral style is the anonymity of the author. In oral compositions. the narrator has no voice in the story. The oral style deals with communal concerns and with the preservation of traditions. There is no room for the feelings and thoughts of the individual and so the composer never presents herself as a subject in the tale. A fourth feature is the mnemonic system of "places" or "topics." Here, Ong amended Havelock's argument that poetry was the only mnemonic device available to the ancient Greeks. He took his cue from Parry and Lord's extension of the formula to include types and themes. by recognizing that the topic mnemonic was used to create larger structural patterns in the composition. Groups of set expressions were linked in a series forming stereotyped scenes and episodes. He said that the "places" were used "in true oral fashion not merely as formulas but as themes which were strung together in traditional. and even highly rationalized patterns to provide the oral equivalent of plot" (1967: 84). The "topic" system developed into the fifth convention. the "ring composition." the architectonic principle consistent with Geometric art. Drawing on the findings of Whitman. Ong pointed out that the geometric structure is the manifestation of the "topics." It is a memory device employed by the public speaker to guide the telling of the story. He said that if we find in written texts the "formulaic tendency to repeat at the end of an episode elements from the episode's beginning," so that the composition is "built like a Chinese puzzle. boxes within boxes" of repeating stringed patterns. then we may be sure that these structures are residues of the oral "place" mnemonic.

Ong also contributed a theory of how human consciousness was altered by the shift from the kind of perception that was dominated by the ear to the kind of perception that is dominated by the eye. He maintained that literacy changes perception from the auditory and temporal to the visual and spatial. It takes speech. an evanescent sound that exists in time and substitutes writing. visual symbols on the page that exist as objects in space. This change "freezes" the verbal utterance perceived by an act of hearing into a permanent record that can be reconstituted by the sight-based act of reading. Literacy changed consciousness. he argued. because shifting from one sense to another altered the organization of the human sensorium. producing patterns of perception and thought which to literates seem "natural" but which are possible only when the mind has devised and internalized the technology of

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[65] Though Ong does not mention his source for the term "residue." Plato at *Gorgias* 502c offers as a definition. "if you should strip from all poetry its music. rhythm and meter. the residue would be nothing else but speech."

writing.

Ong took Havelock's claim that primary oral cultures are not able to manage knowledge "in elaborate. abstract categories,"⁵⁰ along with his view that Plato was helping to invent abstract thought by "rearranging phenomena under general headings or categories." and he linked it with Yates's findings concerning the mnemonic technology of the sophists. Whereas the ancients thought of storing knowledge in their culture in "some kind of place." said Ong. we think of knowledge as being stored under "headings" (1967: 80-81). The ancient "memory systems are intermediate between the oral and the chirographic-typographic."⁵⁷ Ong maintained that the formulary character of oral performance is responsible for the development of the memory systems explicated by Yates. He saw the "topics" as the codification of ways of assuring and managing the stock of oral formulaic expressions so that things that were alike came to be stored in a "commonplace" (τοπικός). giving rise to categories such as causes. effects. contraries. comparable things. related things and so on. This "codification was devised with the aid of writing in cultures which. despite writing. remained largely oral in outlook and performance patterns" (1967: 82-83). In the passage from orality to literacy. he claimed. the movement was from formulas to the "places" which then became the "headings" of our own literate categories (1967: 80-81). The "topics" were "essentially formulaic modes of expression derivative from oral practice and perpetuating oral psychological structures." When Plato "superseded the old oral-aural world." said Ong, he banished the poets because educational needs could no longer be met by memorizing Homer. When he "hit out against the Sophists." it was because they represented the "other great oral-aural speech form. oratory. which was still largely poetic" (1981: 35).

Northrop Frye: The Great Code

Plato's critique of poetry has given rise to a long tradition of poetic apologetics. In a series of talks originally aired on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio and later published as *The Educated Imagination*. Northrop Frye offered his own contribution to this tradition.⁵⁸ He discussed the theories of McLuhan and Yates in other public lectures delivered in the mid-1980's. and he drew from Havelock and Ong in his last two works. *The Great Code* and *Words of Power*. Frye took Ong's notion of writing as "frozen speech." as well as his idea that formulas were "codified" into thematic patterns.

⁵⁶ Walter J. Ong. *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982: reprint ed., London and New York: Routledge. 1991). p. 140.

⁵⁷ Walter J. Ong. *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (1967. New Haven: Yale University Press. rpt.. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1970 and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1981). p. 26.

⁵⁸ Northrop Frye. *The Educated Imagination* (Toronto: CBC Publications. 1963).

and he incorporated them into his method for analyzing myths and literature from different ancient traditions."[69] In so doing. he contested McLuhan's view that writing and reading create a "linear. causality-bound tunnel-vision type of perception." Reading is a two-part operation. said Frye. The sequential reading of the narrative is just the first stage. The second stage comes into play when a text has been read so often that it "freezes" into a unity in the reader's mind. All its parts exist simultaneously. so that its structural form can be analyzed "like a picture." aside from the linear movement of the narrative (1982: 62). The term "structure" (a metaphor of "spatial form" borrowed from architecture). becomes a factor after the reading experience has been completed. said Frye. when details missed in the sequential reading become relevant. At this point. an image can be compared with all the other images. not merely with those that precede or follow it in the narrative. While the first part of the process "is linear." the second part involves a more simultaneous type of perception "capable of taking in many aspects at once."[70]

Frye put Yates's work on memory together with Havelock's notion of the tribal encyclopedia. and Ong's "codification" of formula types in his theory of a "great code" which he used to compare Greek myths and stories in the Bible. He saw the "code" as a "typology." or an archetypal "mode of thought" that provides a framework for the arrangement of words in an oral literature so that "all facts and all ideas are linked together" in repeating sequences (1982: 80). If we mentally "freeze" the narrative of the myth into a simultaneous unit. he emphasized. it becomes "a single. complex structure of repeated images." The shape of story patterns forms a "cultural framework." a "theater shaped encyclopedia" where something can be remembered by "pulling it out of its numbered place in the auditorium."[71] When they are mentally frozen. these patterns of repeating images are easier to compare. one to another. or to images in the mythologies of other traditions.

Whereas Havelock associated Plato with the development of writing. Frye saw the Platonic texts as marking the development of continuous prose. "Plato," proclaimed Frye. created a "revolution in language." Prior to Plato. he said, "the basis of expression is poetic." and "the operations of the human mind are controlled by words of power. formulas that are the focus of mental activity" (1982: 7). At this stage. prose is not continuous; it is merely a series of formulaic epigrams or oracular statements. Philosophers such as Heraclitus and Pythagoras. he noted. appear to have been "oral

[69] Frye. *The Great Code*, p. 63; idem, *Words With Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature* (Markham, Ontario. Canada: Viking. 1990).

[70] Northrop Frye. "The View From Here." *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays. 1974-1988.* ed.. Robert D. Denham (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia. 1990). pp. 74-75; idem, "The Dialectic of Belief and Vision." Ibid.. pp. 94-95.

[71] Northrop Frye. "The Stage is All the World." Ibid.. pp. 204-205.

teachers. and what has survived from them consists mainly of discontinuous aphorisms with a cosmological reference. like the "all things flow" of Heraclitus." With Plato. he said. we enter the second phase of language. His Socrates "orders his conversation in a sequacious argument." Plato's invention of continuous prose made it possible to "smooth out the discrepancies" in a narrative structure where contradictions and disjunctions mark the places where formulaic phrases have been stitched together from traditional elements.

> In continuous prose. if A and B seem to be inconsistent. one can always insert intermediary verbal formulas. or rephrase them in a commentary. in a way that will reconcile them: if only we write enough of such intermediate sentences. any statement whatever can eventually be reconciled with any other statement (1982: 10).

Aristotle. he argued "points straight ahead" to the third. descriptive. phase of language (9). This phase deals with language as though it describes an objective natural order. Words are conceived on the model of "truth by correspondence." A verbal structure is compared to what it describes in the non-verbal world. and is deemed to be "true" if it seems to provide a satisfactory correspondence to it. In this third stage. truth is measured by the extent of the match between the structure of words and the external source of the description. rather than by the consistency of interrelationships among the words themselves."[72] This descriptive phase. he emphasized. is a reaction against the stage inaugurated by Plato. and it will be centuries before it gains full ascendence.

Deanne Bogdan: Beyond Communication

Deanne Bogdan pursued the educational implications of Havelock's arguments concerning Plato's banishment of the poets.[73] She also made Frye's *Educated Imagination* the impetus for her work. *Re-Educating the Imagination* (among others). in which she explored questions surrounding the educational value of literature. Bogdan argued that Plato's rejection of poetry has reverberated down through the centuries and that it continues to inform our views about the role of literature in education. the arguments put forward for the censorship of books. as well as our theories about how written texts educate readers. These issues form the backdrop to her investigation of the dynamic between engagement and detachment. Bogdan pointed out that Plato's complaint against the poets was that they

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[72] Frye. *The Great Code*. p. 13. 57-8.

[73] See the following additional works by Deanne Bogdan. "Virtual and Actual Forms of Literary Response." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*. Vol. 20. No. 2 (1986): 51-57: "Censorship and Selection in Literature Teaching: Personal Reconstruction or Aesthetic Engagement?" *Ethics in Education*, Vol. 8. No. 2 (1988): 7-9: Deanne Bogdan and Stanley B. Straw. eds.. *Beyond Communication: Reading Comprehension and Criticism.* (Portsmouth. NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann Inc.. 1990): "The Re-Educated Imagination and the Power of Literary Engagement." *The Journal of Educational Thought.* Vol. 24. No. 3A (1990): 83-109.

entertained their audience without providing any educational benefit. Listeners were charmed into a hypnotic state by the rhythm and music of the poet's verse. Immersed in the performance (the first stage of Frye's two-part operation), they had no reason to move beyond the pleasures of the recitation to critically assess the work or the effect it was having on them (Frye's second stage). For the audience, poetry provided a pleasurable emotional experience that offered no opportunity for the exercise of rational thought. Since engagement without detached reflection has little educational value, Socrates wanted to send the poets into exile and to remove the Homeric epics from their central place in the curriculum.

Bogdan drew from this argument in pointing to subtleties and nuances concerning poetry and poetic creation that Havelock overlooked. She noted especially a number of positive statements in the dialogues that do not fit into the totally negative picture he portrayed. Havelock argued from what he believed to be Plato's point of view (1980: 32), and so his perspective focussed almost exclusively on the writing side of literacy. He assumed that the transition from oral to literate forms of education involved a shift in the technology for "preserving and transmitting" (Havelock 1963: 123) the "content of the tradition in permanent and unaltered form" (Havelock 1963: 290-91). For Havelock, then, the central purpose of education—and the role of literature within it—was to transfer cultural information or knowledge intact from teacher to learner, or from one generation to another. As Bogdan has pointed out in her lectures at University of Toronto, this view is rejected in the dialogues themselves. Her reading of the text underscores passages that emphasize that teaching and learning in this tradition did not involve a direct transfer of knowledge from someone who has it to someone who does not. Rather, teaching was an art of "shifting" or "turning around" a person's perspective so that they could see and become conscious of knowledge they already possessed "in some way" (*Rep.* 518c-e).

Havelock's view of language and of the function of literature in education was reinforced by his conception of writing as the conduit for a communication between author and reader. In this model, the author transmits a meaning via the content in the text and the learner receives this communication. Bogdan has said that in recent decades, theorists—especially those working on the reading side of the writing/reading equation—have moved beyond the communication model of education that Havelock took for granted. She challenged the idea that either education or a written text can function as a pipeline for moving communication from the author (who has authority over the meaning) to a passive receiver (whose job it is to understand the meaning intended by the author).[74] To "interpret literature as a one-way direct message from text to reader" she asserted, "is to be caught

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[74] See the Introduction to *Beyond Communication: Reading Comprehension and Criticism*, eds., Deanne Bogdan and Stanley B. Straw, (Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook Publishers Heinemann, 1990).

within a narrow truth-of-correspondence."[75] Again. she invoked Frye's two part model of the "spatialization of both literature and the response to literature." where the pattern of interrelationships among words in a verbal structure takes precedence over the relation between the verbal structure and reality. Along with Frye. she shares

> a rejection of the correspondence model of truth and the view of literature as 'direct communication' in favor of language as 'indirect communication,' as a constellation of verbal symbols whose meaning is multiple. indeterminate, and polyvalent. where the text is . . . a structure of myth and metaphor. which both says and does not say.[76]

According to Bogdan. this conception of "indirect communication" is the model we find in Plato's writings.

Paul W. Gooch: Word and Silence—Indirection and Hiddenness in Socrates' Discourse

Toronto professor. Paul W. Gooch. would agree with Bogdan. He emphasized that Plato's Socrates "rejects the content-transfer model of learning."[77] In Plato's theory of education. he said. it is not possible to convey or transmit knowledge to someone else. Hence. Plato's Socrates employs indirection and hiddenness in his discourses.

Gooch defined indirection as the "opposite of directness in speech." where "something that might be stated straight out is instead hinted at or implied" (200). He said that "one of the effects of indirection is that it demands a translation effort on the part of the interpreter." In contrast to Frye. who saw Plato's Socrates using a different kind of language from the discontinuous comments of his predecessors. Gooch pointed to the aphorisms put forward by Socrates as a vehicle of this indirection. These aphorisms—or Socratic paradoxes—are not "fully articulated theories." They are, he emphasized. "puzzles for the mind to turn over." Socratic indirection "invites[s] an interpretive contribution" from the reader. "a contribution that the reader then owns." Words do not "do all the work" needed to disclose their meaning. "Something more" is required. and this "something" must "be contributed by the hearer" (200). What the dialogue is *really* "about" is "unstated within the structure of words." so that listeners and readers must attend carefully to the verbal structure and then turn around and reason out the meaning for themselves (201).

Hiddenness in Socrates' discourse. according to Gooch. has more to do with the hearer or reader than with the speaker or the text. The content-transfer model of education does not take into

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[75] Bogdan. *Re-Educating the Imagination*. p. 87

[76] Ibid.. p. 89.

[77] Paul W. Gooch. *Reflections on Jesus and Socrates: Word and Silence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 1996). p. 206.

account that learners "cannot be made to see what is before their eyes." Plato's Socrates knows that "words do not necessarily deposit with their hearers the meanings assigned them by their speakers" (89). Hiddenness involves a recognition about authority—of the teacher as author of meaning and the author as teacher of meaning—an acknowledgment of a "*powerlessness* to control" what "hearers hear" (202). According to Gooch, "*What it is*" that learners see or hear depends on their own condition. The "teaching may be presented, the works performed, all to no avail" unless listeners pay attention (200-201). Learning depends upon an "unforced contribution on the part of the learner." This is why Socrates hides his pedagogic authority. He recognizes that the meaning he intends cannot prevail over the interpretive decisions of his listeners. Gooch describes—as an example of hiddenness—how "Socrates distinguishes himself from the **sophists** . . ." (emphasis mine). Their name implies that they offer some type of **wisdom** to communicate. "And with **knowledge**, it's assumed, comes pedagogic authority: **those in the know** should speak the content of their minds, and **those who need that content** should listen and accept it." He pointed out that Socrates "prefers to talk in the city's **public** places to anybody willing to take part . . . Although **some assume that he thinks himself expert** . . . Socrates . . . denies such authority. His own **ignorance** won't allow it . . . (204). Gooch said that Plato's readers, like the jury in the *Apology*, sometimes doubt that Socrates can be **serious** . . . (205). Even so, he is convinced that Socrates is "deeply **serious**" in his claim "to have no authority to be hidden." What he does hide, Gooch emphasized, is "his own mind in order to bring to birth knowledge in those whom he questions" (207).

Retrospective

We now have a picture of the historical and cultural context in which the Platonic texts were written, the passages in Plato that figure into our reconstruction of the movement from the oral to the written technology, and the theories of the scholars associated with the University of Toronto School and their colleagues. Once again, we must pause to acknowledge a serious difficulty. There are some problems with this vision of the total picture. Now, Harold Innis warned that the dominance of literate modes of communication in our culture would likely have a distorting effect on the theories that have guided our reconstruction of the ancient world. Eisenberg spoke of the difficulty in moving beyond the confines of our own technology to understand the thinking of cultures with conventions that are not familiar to us. According to Innis and Eisenberg then, we might expect that these scholars have not been aware of the extent to which writing has obscured their vision of the ancient Greeks. Further, Gooch emphasized that there was a hiddenness and indirection in the discourse of Plato's Socrates, an indirection that demands special attention and translation on the part of the reader. Bogdan noted that

there were a number of statements concerning poetry in the dialogues that do not fit in with Havelock's argument. Her theory also makes it clear that Havelock viewed the transition from orality to literacy in terms of a transmission model of communication and instruction and that a major rethinking of this paradigm is now underway. She also described how reading often serves the needs and wants of the learner and the meaning taken is the one hypothesized by the reader and not necessarily the one intended by the author. These points, taken together, help explain how evidence that does not fit into conventional paradigms is not noticed, as Kuhn observed. So we find that the theories of many in the University of Toronto School collide headlong into one of the great puzzles in our reconstruction of Greek philosophy. McLuhan, Havelock, Ong and Frye all positioned Plato on the writing side of the shift in medium from speech to writing. They saw Plato as "the break boundary" between orality and literacy (McLuhan 1995: 245); as an exponent of "the written tradition [that] brought the oral tradition to an end" (Innis 1951: 50); as marking "the end of the great transition from oral to literate habits of communication (Havelock 1963: 97); as "superseding the old oral-aural world." (Ong 1981: 35) and as the "inventor of continuous prose" (Frye 1981: 22). However, Plato's writings openly question the educational value of written discourse and argue for the superiority of oral conversation. According to Havelock and Ong, Plato was denigrating poetry to make way for literacy. Their contributions to the theory lead us to expect that Plato would look favorably on writing. Yet, it turns out that Socrates explicitly condemns writing and argues for the supremacy of the spoken word.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEM: THE RIDDLE OF THE ANCIENT ACADEMY

Statements in the *Phaedrus* (274b-278b), the *Protagoras* (328e-329b), and the *Letters* (*Ltr. II* 312-314c; *Ltr. VII* 341b-e, 344c) which express negative views on writing have been at the forefront of debate since early in the nineteenth century.[1] These passages argue that the most profound philosophical truths—especially concerning "the nature of the first principle" (*Ltr. II* 312d)—cannot be expressed via the written word. Moreover, Plato's writings never really provide an explicit explanation of the philosophic principles that serve as the foundation of this system. In fact, at crucial junctures in the arguments of a number of dialogues, there are warnings that certain information will not be revealed. In addition, Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* (I. IV 985b-VI. 988a) testifies to Platonic theories that seem unlike anything in Plato's writings. In the *Physics* (209a30-210a), he notes a discrepancy between doctrines in Plato's *Timaeus* and in his "so-called unwritten teachings." Aristotle's account is supplemented by reports from other ancient commentators concerning the philosophic principles held by Plato. These are pieces of the puzzle that cannot be made to fit into our current paradigms for interpreting Plato's philosophy.

Plato's Critique of Writing in the *Phaedrus*

In the *Phaedrus* (274b-278b), Socrates states that it is impossible to pursue philosophy in writing.[2] The written word is disparaged because it substitutes reminder (a reliance on external marks) for memory (calling things to remembrance from within). Written compositions are said to be equally accessible to the right people (those who are able to understand), and to the wrong (those who do not have this ability). Socrates emphasizes that there is a more legitimate form of discourse, one that is better suited

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[1] In 1808, A. Boeckh, brought together the evidence that figures prominently in all later discussions of this puzzle concerning the foundations of Plato's philosophy, namely, the passages in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter*, the *Republic* (509c), along with Aristotle's statements concerning the "unwritten doctrines," and the reports of Plato's lecture, "*On the Good*" ["Kritik der uebersetzung des Platon von Schleiermacher," *Heidelbergische Jahrbücher d. Literatur für Philologie* etc., I.1 (1808), now in A. Boeckh's *Gesammelte Kleine Schriften, Siebenter Band: Kritiken* (Leipzig 1872), pp. 1-38, referred to in H.J. Krämer, *Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics: A Work on the Theory of the Principles and Unwritten Doctrines with a Collection of the Fundamental Documents*, edited and translated by John R. Caton (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 29].

[2] As Charles Griswold has pointed out, "With respect to the relationship between speaking and writing, and the different styles of either speaking or writing in philosophy, the *Phaedrus* is the crucial Platonic text" [Charles Griswold, "Style and Philosophy: The Case of Plato's Dialogues," *Monist* 63 (1980), p. 532].

to instruction and which "knows to whom it should speak and before whom to be silent." This, he proclaims, is the *spoken word* of one who knows as opposed to the written word, which is merely *a kind of image*. Thus, the verbal utterance is given clear primacy over writing in this famous passage in the *Phaedrus* (274b-278b). In the paragraphs that follow these statements, there is an extended discussion concerning the educational value of writing. What is presented is an explicit and straightforward argument that the written word cannot convey the most profound philosophical truths. There is, of course, the possibility that Plato's own views differ from those expressed by Socrates in this passage. That is to say, perhaps the *Phaedrus* gives voice to the reasons why Socrates did not write and, at the same time, invites the reader to figure out whether or not Plato's own writings manage to avoid Socrates' criticisms.[3] This view, while plausible, is challenged by the evidence from the *Protagoras* and the *Letters*, which suggest that Plato's own views were not that different from those expressed by Socrates.

The Criticism of Books in the *Protagoras*

Statements in the *Protagoras* (328e-329b) put down written texts by comparing them to "popular orators" or "demagogues" (δημηγόρων). Socrates says that these public speakers are

> like books, they cannot either answer or ask a question on their own account. Ask them the smallest thing supplementary to what they have said, and like a gong which booms out when you strike it and goes on until you lay a hand on it, so our orators at a tiny question spin out a regular Marathon of speech (329a).

This passage raises the question of why Plato would write a book in which the central character disparages books. Even though Socrates in the dialogue offers this critique in the context of a verbal discussion, the problem is that "in actual fact the critique is contained within the pages of a book." We have, paradoxically, a written work that condemns written works.[4]

Plato's *Letters*

Plato expresses a number of reservations about writing in the *Letters*. In addition to the comments in the *Second Letter* which were mentioned earlier, a section of the *Seventh Letter* also states that he did not put his thoughts on certain subjects into writing (*Ltr. VII* 341b-e, 344c). As there are fewer doubts concerning the authenticity of the *Seventh Letter*, Plato's remarks in this autobiographical document have been taken much more seriously than the comments he makes in the *Second Epistle*. In the

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[3] This is the suggestion of Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 126.

[4] Raphael Woolf, "The Written Word in Plato's *Protagoras*," *Ancient Philosophy* 19 (1999): 21-30.

Seventh, Plato insists that. concerning many of his most important doctrines. "there is no writing of mine about these matters. nor will there ever be" (*Ltr. VII* 341b-e). Since the *Phaedrus*. the *Protagoras*. and the *Letters* denounce the written word. classify writing as a kind of image. argue that only oral conversation is adequate for pursuing philosophy. state explicitly that Plato did not put his ultimate principles in writing. wrote in riddles. or that what was written was not his own. it is not immediately apparent how these statements impact our interpretation of the treatises that have come down to us from antiquity in his name.[5]

The Omissions

The possibility that Plato did not put his most important doctrines in writing is amplified by the fact that the text does not appear to include any explicit and comprehensive account of ultimate principles. and also that a number of passages in the dialogues alert the reader that parts of the philosophy have been "passed over" or "omitted" (*Rep.* 509c). Some indicate that only a small part of a much larger topic will be investigated (*Soph.* 254b-d; *Stsmn.* 284d). Others say that important points in the discussion will be considered at another time. only this promise is never fulfilled (*Laches* 201b-c; *Meno* 100b-c; *Prt.* 357c; *Rep.* 506e-507a). Several passages refer to arguments made "on other occasions" (*Phaedo* 78b-80c) to secure assent on a point of discussion. yet it turns out that none of these previous conversations are recorded. Still others indicate that certain crucial matters are too difficult to explain (*Tim.* 48c-e; *Meno* 76e-77a); too hard to follow (*Phd.* 107b; *Rep.* 533a); inappropriate to speak of in front of the present audience (*Prm.* 136d-e); can be known only by God or one who is dear to God (*Tim.* 53c-d); or by those who are initiates (*Meno* 76e-77a). These and many other instances suggest to some scholars that Plato included hints in his writings to warn attentive readers that more was involved than was stated explicitly.

Aristotle's Testimony Concerning Plato's "Unwritten Doctrines"

More puzzling still is the testimony of Aristotle concerning Plato's philosophy. In the passage in the *Metaphysics* where Aristotle mentions Plato's education and influences. he also reviews the history of philosophy up to his own time and comments on the contributions of his intellectual forebears. In this book. he attributes to Plato certain Pythagorean theories that many scholars have had difficulty finding in Plato's writings. In previous centuries. some commentators believed that while "reflections of the doctrines Aristotle described" could be seen in later dialogues such as the *Republic*. *Philebus*. *Timaeus*

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[5] Rosemary Desjardins. "Why Dialogues? Plato's Serious Play." *Platonic Writings. Platonic Readings*. ed.. Charles L. Griswold Jr. (New York: Routledge. 1988), p. 110.

and *Laws*, "they could not be deduced from the dialogues alone." Today, the majority view is that doctrines corresponding to Aristotle's description cannot be located in the Platonic texts. As Luc Brisson recently observed. "It is a fact that, on a number of topics. Aristotle attributes to Plato doctrines of which it is impossible to find any trace in the dialogues."[7] At the very least, as Kenneth Sayre pointed out, "generations of careful scholars . . . have agreed that these doctrines cannot be found in the written dialogues."[8] The teachings Aristotle attributed to Plato, and which scholars view as "missing" from his writings, involve the following: the "idea-numbers" (i.e., a classification system based on the mathematical proportions of the musical scale): an "intermediate class, the objects of mathematics" located between sensible things and forms; and the opposite first principles Plato called the "one" and the "unlimited," where the unlimited consists of the duality of the "great and small" (τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρὸν).[9] "Of all this," stated Harold Cherniss. "there is not a word in the Platonic dialogues, and but for Aristotle and the later commentaries on his works or derivations from them no one would ever have dreamed that such notions as these could have had any place in Plato's theory of Ideas."[10] Cherniss reviewed and analyzed Aristotle's testimony in the *Metaphysics* and in his other books, surveyed the surviving reports of ancient authors, sifted through the opinions since the eighteenth century concerning these missing principles, and then compared them with statements in Plato. In the end, he concluded that all the attempts to find these doctrines in the dialogues "have failed," and "it has been positively proved over and over again" that Plato does not mention them anywhere in his writings (1945: 76). Even if we take into account the fact that Aristotle's survey of his philosophical predecessors was framed in terms of an argument for his own position, it is still puzzling that the doctrines he describes as being the foundational tenets of Plato's philosophy do not seem to correspond to any explicit discussion in the dialogues.

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[6] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. 1977), p. 3.

[7] Luc Brisson. "Premises. Consequences. and Legacy of an Esotericist Interpretation of Plato." *Ancient Philosophy*. Vol. 15 (1995), p. 124.

[8] Kenneth Sayre. *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1983), pp. 78 and 11.

[9] Harold Cherniss. *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. 1935); and his *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), pp. ix-xxii; idem. *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), p. 76. See also J.N. Findlay. *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1974); H.J. Krämer. *Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics*; and Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy: II. Plato and Aristotle*, ed. and trans. from the fifth Italian edition by John R. Catan (New York: State University of New York Press. 1990), p. 10.

[10] Cherniss. *The Riddle of the Ancient Academy*, p. 7.

Matters are complicated further by remarks made by Aristotle at *Physics* 209b14-15, where Aristotle notes a discrepancy between Plato's "*so-called unwritten doctrines* (ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν)" and the teachings that were recorded in the *Timaeus*. Scholars claim there is nothing in Plato's writings that corresponds to Aristotle's description. Some have suggested that Aristotle was referring to remarks Plato made orally in the lecture *On the Good*. The reference to an unwritten doctrine, together with the statements concerning comments made by Plato and heard by Aristotle which do not appear in the dialogues, has led to speculations that Plato had an oral teaching that was different from the teaching he set forth in his writings.[11]

Plato's Lecture *On the Good*

Plato's famous seminar, *On the Good*, is a key piece of evidence in this puzzle. Ancient testimony concerning this speech given by Plato seems to support the possibility that the philosophy he expounded orally contained "something more" than the philosophy that we find in the dialogues. These reports lend further weight to Aristotle's testimony. It is unfortunate that a treatise written by Aristotle entitled. *On the Good*, has perished, for in this book, he apparently discussed at length the doctrines Plato explained in his speech. In his commentary, Aristoxenus (30.10-31; 122.7-14) identifies the doctrines Plato espoused in his lecture *On the Good* with the "unwritten doctrines" which Aristotle refers to at *Physics* 209b 14. Another ancient, Simplicius, in his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (187a12; 151), indicated that he had access to this lost work of Aristotle's. Like Aristoxenus,

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[11] A partial list of scholars who have held this view in the history of interpretation would include A. Boeckh. "Kritik der uebersetzung des Platon von Schleiermacher." *Heidelbergische Jahrbücher d. Literatur für Philologie* etc. I 1 (1808). now in A. Boeckh's *Gesammelte Kleine Schriften. Siebenter Band: Kritiken* (Leipzig 1872). pp. 1-38. referred to in H.J. Krämer. *Foundations of Metaphysics*. p. 29; John Burnett. *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1912), p. 312.; Findlay, *Unwritten Doctrines*; Konrad Gaiser. "Plato's Enigmatic Lecture 'On The Good,' " *Phronesis* 25 (1980): 5-37; George Grote. *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates*. Vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1865), p. 273; Jacob Klein. *Plato's Trilogy: Theaetetus, the Sophist and the Statesman* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1977; Krämer. *Foundations of Metaphysics* (1990); Giovanni Reale, *Ancient Philosophy: II. Plato and Aristotle*; A.E. Taylor. *Plato: The Man and His Work* (New York: Meridian. 1956), p. 503; W.G. Tennemann. *System der Platonischen Philosophie. I* (Leipzig. 1798). pp. 128-41 and *Geschichte der Philosophiei. Vol. II* (Leipzig. 1799). pp. 204ff. 220 as quoted in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and the Platonists*. Vol. 2. trans.. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 1840. 1995). p. 11; Gregory Vlastos. "Review of H.J. Krämer. *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles.*" *Gnomon*. 41 (1963): 641-55 rpt. in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1973). p. 397; Eduard Zeller. *Plato and the Older Academy*. trans.. Sarah Frances Alleyne and Alfred Goodwin (1888; rpt. ed.. New York: Russell & Russell Inc.. 1962). pp. 88-89 and his *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*. trans.. L.R. Palmer. ed.,Wilhelm Nestle. 13th edition (1883; rpt. ed.. New York and London: The Humanities Press Inc. and Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.. 1951). p. 118.

Simplicius also identified the reference to the "unwritten doctrines" at *Physics* 209b 14 with Plato's lecture *On the Good* (*Phys.* 545.23). Simplicius said that Plato spoke about the principles of the one and the indefinite dyad of the great and small, and that this talk was attended by a number of Plato's students, including Aristotle, who wrote down his "enigmatic utterances" (453.25-455.14).[12] Simplicius noted as well that Porphyry (in a work that has not survived), connected the doctrines of Plato's lecture with the mathematical passages in the dialogues. He added that Porphyry (in another lost work), expounded the reports of those who heard Plato's seminar in support of his interpretation of this dialogue (Vol. 9, 453.36). Likewise, Alexander of Aphrodisias, in his treatise on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, said that Plato's teaching about the one and indefinite dyad was recorded in Aristotle's book *On the Good*—which was based on notes of Plato's lectures (56.33-5, 85.17, 250.17-20, 262.18-26).[13] Thus, the evidence from ancient testimony links the doctrines Aristotle attributed to Plato in the *Metaphysics* with the description of the "unwritten doctrines" in the *Physics* and also with the mathematical passages in Plato's writings.

Conflicting reports raise the question of whether Plato made his highest principles public, or whether he reserved these teachings for his students and other members of his inner circle. The versions of the story concerning the public lecture that come to us from Themistius (*Oratio* 21, 245 c-d), Asclepius, and Philoponus add weight to the evidence that on at least one occasion, Plato gave a lecture before a wide audience during which he explained the nature of the "good" by reference to geometry, astronomy and numbers. Other versions of the story suggest that Plato reserved instruction in the foundational principles of his philosophy for members of the Academy. The story in the *Didaskalikos* of Alcinous says that Plato's convictions concerning the "good" were not presented publicly.[14] Galen mentions that Plato gave his *Timaeus* only to a few people with scientific training because the general public would have despised it.[15] In either case, the theories which Aristotle attributed to Plato and which scholars have been unable to locate in the dialogues are key pieces in the

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[12] *Commentaria In Aristotelem Graeca*, Vol. 1, ed., M. Hayduck (Berlin, 1891): 56.35; ibid., Vol. 9, 151.10 and Vol. 17.34 respectively. See also Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, p. 148; and Taylor, *Plato*, p. 503.

[13] Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, p. 148.

[14] The *Didaskalikos* says in chapter 27 entitled "The Highest Good and Happiness," that: "The most valuable and greatest good he [Plato] considered to be neither easy to discover, nor, when discovered, to be such as to be revealed to all. Certainly, he only imparted his views on the good to a very small, select group of his associates (27.1) [Alcinous, *Didaskalikos*, or *Handbook of Platonism*, trans., John Dillon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 167].

[15] Kühn, *Galeni Opera Omnia*, Vol. IV., p. 757 as cited in Gilbert Ryle, *Plato's Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 25.

puzzle of this ancient philosophy. The reason that this problem is so significant is that the entire later tradition was strongly influenced by the doctrine of principles. In fact, as John Dillon pointed out, it is not even possible to understand the directions taken by Plato's immediate followers without some knowledge of the unwritten doctrines, "since it is to those at least as much as to the dialogues that his immediate successors are reacting. It is often the problems left by Plato in his oral teaching that they are trying to solve."[16] The question of whether Plato presented his doctrine publicly or whether he reserved it for private instruction is of some relevance. If he presented this teaching orally to a wide audience, then there is little reason to suspect that he would have excluded from his writings the fundamental aspects of his philosophy. If he kept his theories private, there is some basis for believing that he did not include the doctrine of principles in his writings. The weight of evidence, as we can see, falls on the side of public instruction to a general audience.

The Esoteric Doctrine

Several surviving fragments from ancient comedies provide additional information concerning Plato's philosophy. Konrad Gaiser surveyed sections from comedies attributed to Alexis, Amphis and Philippides (who were contemporaries of Plato), and concluded that the "average theater-goer" in Athens had heard of Plato's philosophy but it was notoriously "difficult to understand."[17] This, together with the evidence mentioned earlier—the fragment of a comedy by Epicrates,[18] the reports of Plato's lecture, and Diogenes' comment that Plato disguised his philosophy through his use of an inconsistent terminology—raise the question of whether the "something more" that appears to be absent from the dialogues is actually "missing," or whether it is in fact contained in the dialogues, but it is merely obscure and difficult for most people to comprehend. While this evidence has created a great deal of confusion among modern commentators, the ancients had no such difficulty. Up until the modern era, there was always assumed to be a Platonic "secret doctrine" that was *contained in the text but which was incomprehensible to non-initiates*. Numenius of Apamaea (second century C.E.) said that Plato "concealed" some of his teachings so that he would not suffer the same fate as Socrates.[19]

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[16] John Dillon. *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. 1977). p. 2.

[17] Konrad Gaiser. "Plato's Enigmatic Lecture 'On The Good.'" *Phronesis* 25 (1980): 5-37; George Grote. *Plato and the Other Companions of Sokrates*. Vol. I (London: John Murray, 1865), p. 12.

[18] Epicrates. frag. 11. *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*. ed., T. Kock. Vol. II (Leipzig, 1884), p. 287.

[19] Numenius. frag. 41. ed., Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, *Numenius of Apamea, the Father of Neo-Platonism: Works. Biography. Message. Sources and Influence* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1917), p. 42.

He said that Plato hid certain parts of his philosophy in ambiguous language—in a style he described as "half way between clearness and unclearness." Plato. he said. was so successful in achieving his security that ever after. there was "discord and difference of opinions about his teaching." The Neoplatonists—Plotinus. Porphyry. Iamblichus. Proclus and their followers—regarded Plato's writings as a kind of mystery religion. They adopted the stance that the doctrines were not missing from Plato's writings but were instead contained in the dialogues in a form that was comprehensible only to insiders. According to Proclus. all the dialogues contain Plato's teaching to a greater or lesser degree. It is only a question of reading them in the right way.[21] Sextus Empiricus mentioned that there were "certain doctrines in these writings about which all the interpreters of Plato keep silence" (*Against the Professors* I. 301). St. Augustine (*Contra Academicos* III. 38) says that certain aspects of Plato's philosophy

> were preserved. as far as possible. by his successors and guarded as 'mysteries.' For neither are such things easily understood save only by those who, purifying themselves from every vice, are living a life higher than is human; nor could he be without grave fault who, knowing them, would wish to teach them to men of any kind whatever.[22]

Plato's critique of writing, his omissions at key junctures in the arguments, and the testimony of Aristotle and the later tradition are all the more puzzling in light of the fact that the principles of this philosophic system are never really spelled out in the dialogues. These difficulties comprise one of the most famous conundrums in Platonic studies.[23] It has been called in the history of interpretation. the "riddle of the Ancient Academy." This—along with the question of whether Plato's writings are a product of the transition from an oral traditional system to a writing system—constitutes the principle focus of the inquiry that follows.

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[20] Numenius, frag. 1. Ibid.. p. 64.

[21] H.D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink. trans. and eds.. *Theologia Platonica* (Paris: Budé. 1968), pp. 30 as quoted in Tigerstedt. *Interpreting Plato.* p. 65.

[22] As quoted in E.N. Tigerstedt's "The Decline and Fall of the Neoplatonic Interpretation of Plato: An Outline and Some Observations." *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum.* Vol. 52 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica. 1974). pp. 8-9.

[23] See especially Harold F. Cherniss. *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1945); and Kenneth M. Sayre. *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1983).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ARGUMENT

Having presented the background and evidence, the theories about the interface between oral and written styles of communication, the perplexities posed by the critique of writing in the dialogues, and the reports of Plato's philosophy, it is now time to explain, by way of anticipation, how the present analysis parts company with the theoretical approach of its predecessors, even as it continues to build on the ground laid by the Toronto scholars and by those commentators who have grappled with the problem of the unwritten doctrines. This chapter sets out the argument of the thesis. I begin by considering the difficulties with the theory that stem from certain assumptions made by Havelock concerning Plato's role in the transition to the alphabet. I concentrate on Havelock because he was the member of the group most responsible for applying the findings of Carpenter and Parry to Plato. Then, I turn to the dilemma of the unwritten doctrines. After that, I go on to outline the questions, rationale, hypotheses, the argument in upcoming chapters, and the limitations of this study.

Critique of the Theory of Communications Technology

Though Havelock's views were extremely bold and controversial when *Preface to Plato* was published in 1963—over thirty-five years ago—many of his arguments are today widely accepted by classical scholars and historians of Greek thought. Two of his theses are no longer in question except in matters of detail. The first is the dating of the alphabet. The second is the slow transition to the use of letters.[1] In terms of these two theories, Havelock may be seen as having defended and extended the work of Carpenter and Parry. His thesis concerning the causal role of the shift in medium from speech to writing in the development of Greek literature and social institutions, and his argument that Plato marks the point at which orality gave way to literacy, are his own contributions. His hypothesis concerning the impact of the alphabet on Greek culture has been heavily criticized.[2] His hypothesis concerning Plato's role in the change has been virtually unchallenged, and it became a cornerstone of the communication theories of the University of Toronto School, as the previous chapter in this study has shown. Still, it is clear that in bringing the theories of Carpenter and Parry to Plato's writings,

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[1] Kevin Robb, ed., *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy* (La Salle, Illinois: Monist Library of Philosophy, 1983), p. 3.

[2] Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992), has argued at length that Havelock and Ong attributed too much to the role of literacy in the development of Western culture. For a comprehensive discussion and review of the literature critiquing the University of Toronto theorists see Olson, *The World on Paper*, pp. 1-45.

Havelock combined several brilliant insights with three mistaken ones. First. Havelock assumed that Plato banished the poets because he was rejecting the oral tradition and the formulaic style: second. he was convinced that (aside from formulas and the great. connected story). poetry was the only technology for memorization and preservation in the oral world; and third. he claimed that the vocabulary and consciousness needed for metaphysics went through a long process of development. and that Plato was in the process of "inventing" new categories in reaction to changes triggered by writing. His view that Plato marked the point at which the tension between orality and literacy was resolved in favor of writing is not supported by the evidence. Nor is his view that verse was the "sole mechanism" for preserving the cultural heritage in living memory, as Yates. Whitman. Ong and to a lesser extent Frye have demonstrated. To make the case that the conceptual apparatus requisite to abstract thought was a consequence of literacy. Havelock had to malign those reports of Aristotle and other commentators that testified to the metaphysical views of earlier Greek thinkers. To discredit the ancient accounts. Havelock relied on the findings of Cherniss. As a number of scholars have pointed out. Cherniss's arguments do not hold up under close scrutiny. Moreover. Havelock's assertion that Plato was creating new literate categories is contravened by an explicit statement in the very passage he cited in support of his view. The language in Homer is certainly quite different from the language in Plato. The movement from oral to literate undoubtedly involved a change in human thought patterns. The first question is whether Homer and Plato represent two different stages of language, or whether they represent two different strands of the Greek oral tradition—the poetic and the philosophical. The second question is whether the change from speech to writing went hand in hand with a transition from concrete to abstract. Evidence indicates that the transition more likely involved a change from oral philosophical classifications that were *both* concrete and abstract to the different kinds of categories for classifying abstract and concrete things that emerged as a consequence of literacy. Let us take a more detailed look at each of these difficulties. In Chapter Six of this study, we will examine these problems in even more detail. At this point. let us simply outline the obstacles that prevent us from accepting the theory as it stands.

(1) Havelock's first error was in taking Plato's testimony condemning the poets as evidence of a rejection of the oral state of mind and as marking the move toward philosophical abstractions. There are a number of reasons why this part of Havelock's theory cannot be correct. To make this claim. he had to deny the evidence that weighed against it. both on the poetry side of the equation; and also on the writing side. He also assumed that Plato's dialogues indicated a sudden shift to literacy. even though his own theory as well as the supplements to it made by Ong emphasized the lengthy and gradual nature of the change of medium. In addition. Havelock took it for granted that the Homeric

epics were the only "storehouse of cultural information" in early Greek education. This is an oversimplification. Evidence from Aristotle and other early sources indicates that there were several different and competing traditions—the Pythagoreans being a case in point. Though it may well be that what he calls the "precise linguistic forms" or "storage language" of the Homeric poems took the form of concrete actions. this does not mean that every school of thought in the ancient Greek world was so limited.

In all of Havelock's books and papers. he accepts Plato's critique of the poets as final. He is not alone.[3] However. as Deanne Bogdan has pointed out. this assessment of the educational value of poetry in Plato's dialogues is by no means conclusive.[4] She cited the work of a number of scholars who have expressed doubt concerning the finality of this negative appraisal. and who have pointed to positive statements concerning poetry and poetic creation that do not fit the negative paradigm.[5] For instance. the *Ion* (536c) praises the poet for being divinely inspired. In the *Republic* at 595-598 and in Book X. the universe is stratified into various grades of reality and the poet is assigned to the class that is "three removes from truth. While this class is the "lowest." it has also been argued that it is the

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[3] The following may be counted in this camp. Paul Friedlander. *Plato: The Dialogues*. 2nd and 3rd Periods (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1969): G.M.A. Grube. "Plato's Theory of Beauty." *The Monist*. Vol. XXOII. No. 2 (April 1927): 269-28: Morriss Henry Partee. *Plato's Poetics* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. 1981): Karl R. Popper. *The Open Society and Its Enemies: the Spell of Plato*. Vol. 1 (1962: reprint ed.. Princeton. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1966): P. Shorey. "Note on Plato's *Republic* 488d." *Classical Review*. Vol. 20 (1906): 247-8: J.G. Warry. *Greek Aesthetic Theory: A Study of Callistic and Aesthetic Concepts in the Works of Plato and Aristotle* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.. 1962).

[4] See D. Bogdan. "Censorship of Literature Texts and Plato's Banishment of the Poets." *Interchange: On Education*. Vol. 14. No. 3 (1983), 1-16: "Censorship and Selection in Literature Teaching: Personal Reconstruction or Aesthetic Engagement?" *Ethics in Education*. Vol. 8. No. 2 (1988), *Re-Educating the Imagination: Toward a Poetics. Politics. and Pedagogy of Literary Engagement* (Portsmouth. NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann Inc.. 1992).

[5] J.W.H. Atkins. *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1934): R.G. Collingwood. "Plato's Philosophy of Art." *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*. Vol. 34. No. 134 (April 1925): 154-172: Julias Elias. *Plato's Defense of Poetry* (Albany. N.Y.: State University of New York Press. 1984): William Chase Greene. "Plato's View of Poetry." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. Edited by a committee of the classical instructors of Harvard University (London: Cambridge University Press. Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press. 1918): 1-75: Robert W. Hall. "Plato's Theory of Art: A Reassessment." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 33. No. 1 (Fall 1974): 75-82: Philip H. Hwang. "Poetry in Plato's *Republic*." *Philosophical Quarterly* (1991): 29-37: Ronald B. Levinson. *In Defense of Plato* (Cambridge. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1953): Rupert C. Lodge. *Plato's Theory of Art* (New York: Russell and Russell. 1953): W.J. Verdenius and J.H. Waszink. eds.. *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and its Meaning to Us*. Vol. III (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1972): Hermann Wiegman. trans.. Henry W. Johnstone. Jr. "Plato's Critique of the Poets and the Misunderstanding of his Epistemological Argumentation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. Vol. 23. No.2 (1990): 109-124.

essential first stage in the psyche's path to full knowledge.⁰ As well. Socrates divides poetry into two kinds. one representative and the other imitative. At the beginning of Book X. he only banishes as much of poetry as is imitative.⁷ We find that Socrates is willing to accept tragedy and comedy into the city if they deal with commendable themes (*Rep.* 395c). and that poetry will be approved by a censor if it conforms to the pattern of the dialogues themselves (*Laws* 817).⁸ Havelock dismissed these examples in a footnote.⁹ However. as Bogdan has emphasized. these passages prevent acceptance of the banishment as final and irrevocable. J.W Atkins argued that close scrutiny of these instances suggests that we must either accuse Plato of inconsistency—which he admitted was a possibility—or refuse to "accept his statement at its face value as final and absolute."¹⁰ Bogdan concluded that the difficulty in accepting the finality of "Plato's banishing the poets is trying to interpret the diverse and often contradictory statements scattered throughout his dialogues on the value of poetry. poetic inspiration. imitation. the metaphysical status of beauty and so on." She wondered if it were even possible to "reconcile" the views in different passages.¹¹ These examples from the subject of poetry are typical of the inconsistencies between statements in different parts of Plato's writings and highlight one of the perennial difficulties in interpreting the dialogues. Havelock. like many commentators, has taken a side in the debate concerning poetry and then he has downplayed or even ignored those passages in the dialogues that express a point of view that does not fit in with his position.

Just as there are difficulties with Havelock's theory from the perspective of poetry. there are also problems with his argument from the perspective of literacy. He assumed that Plato's animosity toward poetry meant that he was an advocate of the written word. This too cannot be correct. for writing is consistently denigrated in the dialogues and in the *Letters*. This rejection of the written word by one of its greatest masters has always astonished commentators. The typical response is either to refuse to take Plato's comments seriously. or to attempt to explain them away.¹² Havelock is no exception. He saw Plato's strictures against the written word as simply a consequence of the fact that

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⁰ Collingwood. "Plato's Philosophy of Art." pp. 155-60

⁷ Ibid.. p. 46.

⁸ J. Tate. "Plato and Allegorical Interpretation." *Classical Quarterly*. Vol. 73. No. 8 (1929): 149-153

⁹ Havelock. *Preface*. p. 33.

¹⁰ Atkins. *Literary Criticism*, pp. 47-49.

¹¹ Bogdan. *Instruction and Delight*. p. 24.

¹² E.N. Tigerstedt noted that few aspects of Plato's philosophy have been more discussed than his treatment of poetry and poets. He pointed out that "since earliest times it has evoked fierce opposition but also inspired stout defense" ["Plato's Idea of Poetical Inspiration." *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum. Societas Scientiarum Fennica*. Vol. 44. No. 2. (1969): 1-78].

he was writing at a time when there was a "continuing partnership between orality and literacy."[13] In what is. as far as I know. the only statement on this issue in all of his writings. he dismissed Plato's suspicion of letters. saying that the "priority of the oral over the written" had an "ambiguous result" because it was only writing that made Plato's profession possible. Ong attempted to help Havelock out in this matter. He acknowledged the passages in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter* that express reservations about writing. but he saw these as evidence that this conflict "wracked Plato's own unconscious." According to him. "the relationship between Homeric Greece and philosophy after Plato was not continuous. but disruptive and antagonistic. often at the unconscious rather than the conscious level."[14] Ong echoed Havelock when he conceded that

> Plato's relationship to orality was thoroughly ambiguous. On the one hand. in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter* he denigrated writing in favor of oral speech. On the other hand. when in his *Republic*. he banished the poets. he did so. as Havelock shows. because they stood for the old oral. mnemonic world. Paradoxically. Plato could clearly and effectively formulate his preference for orality over writing only because he could write.[15]

Havelock and Ong offer as an explanation that Plato felt "ambiguous" and "conflicted" about writing. The question is whether the theory of an "unconscious conflict" is strong enough to hold up against the weight of the counter evidence that makes up the "riddle problem." Havelock and Ong both noted that Plato proposed to supplant the poets himself and they saw Plato's objections to Homer and epic poetry as a rejection of the oral tradition of Greek education. They took the fact that Plato wrote prose rather than poetry and the fact that he produced a substantial body of writing as milestones marking the point when the formulaic thinking of orality gave way to abstract philosophical thought made possible by the technology of the alphabet. They placed Plato on the writing side of the tension between orality and literacy because they assumed that Plato's books themselves were stronger evidence than the statements in the dialogues. In this. Ong downplayed and Havelock ignored passages in Plato's writings that are inconsistent with their position. For example, it is clear that they both associated writing with abstract thought. Yet in the *Phaedrus*. Plato rejects writing as being inimical to the pursuit of philosophical thinking. They also identified memory with the oral tradition that Plato attacks in the *Republic*. However. the fact that writing destroys memory is the basis for the condemnation of the written word in the *Phaedrus*. Further. *while poetry is classed as a mere image. so too is writing*. In contrast. speech and oral conversation are assigned to the higher class of originals (*Phd.* 275a-c). and

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[13] Havelock. *Muse Learns to Write*. p. 111.

[14] Walter J. Ong. *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982; rpt. ed.. London and New York: Routledge. 1991). pp. 167-168.

[15] Ibid.

Socrates emphasizes that the living word is superior to both poetry and writing (*Phd.* 276). So unlike the case of poetry, where we find conflicting appraisals—both negative and positive—in the case of writing, there is no such conflict. While Havelock and Ong have argued that Plato's stance is ambiguous, we are hard pressed to find any statements in the Platonic corpus that extol the virtues of writing.[16] Writing is always secondary to speech. It is used as an aid to memorization and recitation of the spoken word.[17]

Havelock, and in his stead McLuhan, Innis, Ong and Frye, have located Plato on the writing side of the turning point between the oral tradition and a newer literate mentality. Yet, in the years after *Preface*, there has been a continuation of the trend to move up the date at which writing began to supersede the oral tradition. The overall pattern of evidence indicates that the period of tension and interaction between the orality and literacy persisted until long after Plato.[18]

The tendency has been to see Plato's dialogues as a discontinuous leap into literacy. Havelock, Ong and Frye all exemplify this penchant. Havelock's statement that "Plato was writing at the crucial moment of transition from orality to literacy," Ong's contention that the shift from orality to literacy "was not continuous, but disruptive and antagonistic," and Frye's view of Plato's "revolution in

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[16] At *Philebus* 39a-b, where the soul is compared to a book and the conjunction of memory and sensation is said to "write words in our souls," we find that this writing is only the "picture or image" of an "actual speech . . . audibly uttered" (38c). In the *Theaetetus*, Memory is said to be like a wax block and whenever we hear something we want to remember we "hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring" (*Tht.* 191c, 193b-196a). Yet here too, the imprint is said to be an image. There are some other passages where letters are mentioned. In the *Cratylus* (414c-440a), there is an extended discussion of syllables, letters and numbers as kinds of imitations; in the *Philebus* (17b-18b), the letters of the alphabet are used as an example to establish that the sound from the mouth is both one and unlimited and it is knowing the exact numbers and kinds of sounds that makes a person "lettered." A similar passage in the *Sophist* (253a-254b) establishes that dialectic is a combination of the skills involved in grammar and music. In the *Greater Hippias* (285d), there is a brief passage that mentions "the properties of letters and syllables and rhythms and harmonies," and in the *Republic* (368d), large and small letters are used as examples of clarity and obscurity.

[17] There is mention of writing in the *Protagoras* (326a), where "when boys have learned their letters and are ready to understand the written word as formerly the spoken, they set the works of good poets before them on their desks to read and make them learn them by heart . . . so that the child may be inspired to imitate them and long to be like them." In the *Laws* (811a), where it is said of young people that "their reading lessons must give them a wide acquaintance with their works and an extensive scholarship in them; whole poets must be learned by heart. There are others who compile anthologies of the poets and make collections of whole passages, which they say must be committed to memory and learned by heart.

[18] Tony Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 176; Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 103; and Jenny Cook-Gumperz and John Gumperz, "From Oral to Written Culture: The Transition to Literacy," *Writing: the Nature, Development and Teaching of Written Communication*. Vol. 1., ed., Marcia Farr Whiteman (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981).

language" and the "invention of continuous prose" all betray this assumption. However, scholars researching the general features of oral as distinguished from written narrative describe "a complex series of graduations and transitions existing between the two."[19] Studies in oral traditions indicate that the transition is more like a continuum than a sudden, discontinuous change. Evidence proves that transitional texts—those that were set down during a shift in medium from utterance to record—involve an oral stratum that becomes enfolded within later elements. Milman Parry warned that for us, formulaic structures were not immediately obvious and that their identification required long study. It is difficult to recognize the oral traditional diction in the Homeric poems, even though they preserve in written form what might be called a "pure formulaic" style (because it was difficult to alter the linked phrasing of the verse without doing damage to the poetic rhythm). In a transitional text, formulas are even more difficult to identify because oral features tend to be enveloped by "layers" of prose. As Frye described, in "second phase language," continuous prose arises to reconcile the inconsistencies between "A and B" by inserting intermediary statements.[20] When oral compositions are first written down, they preserve intact the formulaic diction, inconsistencies and all. Over time, there is a shift in expression from the strict economy of phrasing necessitated by the improvisational style of oral presentation to the more prepared and deliberate style of written texts. Yet, since writing and oral presentation are altogether different techniques, it is difficult to convert the circular, pieced-together oral poem into a seamless piece of literature. Oral compositions do not "flatten out well on a printed page."[21] They tend to reveal their roots in the places where the work was "stitched together" from traditional elements. When the orally derived composition is edited and revised to smooth over the discrepancies that occur where traditional elements were joined together, there is the tendency to elaborate on the original by adding words to make it more intricate and sophisticated in structure and composition.[22] The poetry gradually begins to lose its music, rhythms and meter. Still, vestiges of the poetry and the formulas remain, interspersed with prose. As Havelock himself has noted, research indicates that in the initial stages of the transition from speech to text, "prose at first conformed to the

[19] John Miles Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. xiii. See also Robert L. Kellog, "Oral Narrative, Written Books," *Genre* 10 (1977): 655-65.

[20] Frye, *Great Code*, p. 10.

[21] Berkley Peabody, *The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's Works and Days* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), pp. 1-2 and 70.

[22] Ian Worthington, "Greek Oratory and the Oral/Literate Division," *Voice Into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, ed., Ian Worthington (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 165.

previous rules for the poetic."[23] In other words. we should expect that the poetic principles of variation by "expansion. compression and modification of motifs" described by Ong and Whitman continued as the precepts governing the elaborations that went into the prose composition. so that. when intermediary statements were inserted. the formulas were "expanded and split by other words."[24] The author of the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, a treatise of the six century Alexandrian school of Proclus. described it as follows:

> The part of Form is filled by the "style." which can be "rich." "lean." or "mixed." and if "mixed." then either by "blending or juxtaposition" (*Commentary on Parmenides* 17.1).[25]

The principle is rather like that of an accordion. where the order and succession of folds remains the same and the variations in the sound are accomplished by expanding. compressing or twisting the instrument. So too with prose writing that is composed in an oral traditional style. The sequential order of the "topics." themes and episodes remains the same. To expand the composition. variations and elaborations are inserted *between* the formulas. To compress it. the excess verbiage is removed so that formulas are pared to the minimum. To vary it. words are mixed in with the pure formulas or juxtaposed with them.[26] The result is a style that is half-way between poetry and prose. a hybrid form that is not quite either. This is the type of style we should expect to find in Plato's writings. At the very least. we should anticipate finding some indicators of a continuity with this style along with a residual conformity to the rules of the traditional system.

Both Havelock and Ong are aware of this transitional style. In fact. their theories emphasize it. Havelock stressed it when he stated that prose initially followed the principles of poetic composition. that the modulation from orality to literacy was "slow and by degrees." when he said that at first. writing was employed as a device for preserving what had "been shaped for preservation orally." and when he concluded that writing was for a long while "used to inscribe an orality which was slowly modifying itself in order to become a language of literacy."[27] Ong. in particular. maintained that initially at least. prose writing contained a "residue" of the set expressions and formulaic organization of orality. Perhaps it was their assumption that Plato rejected the poets because of their oral traditional

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[23] Havelock. *Preface*. p. 39.

[24] Paul Kiparsky. "Oral Poetry: Some Linguistic and Typological Considerations." *Oral Literature and the Formula*. eds.. Benjamin A. Stolz and Richard S. Shannon (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Publications. 1976). p. 82.

[25] Proclus. *Commentary on the Parmenides*. eds. and trans.. Morrow and Dillon. p. 4.

[26] Juxtaposition involves setting words or phrases "side by side" producing unexpected combinations of colors. shapes or ideas.

[27] Havelock. *Preface*. p. 39; and *Muse Learns to Write*. p. 90.

style. Maybe they took it for granted that Plato was an advocate for writing because so many books have come down to us in his name (none of them written in verse). Maybe in looking at literacy almost exclusively from the perspective of writing. they were not aware of how their own purposes in reading guided their selection of the evidence as well as their interpretation of its meaning. Perhaps it was simply because they were not able to recognize any oral features in Plato's style. In any case. neither Havelock nor Ong appear to have seriously investigated the possibility that Plato's writings might contain vestiges of orality.[28] This, in spite the fact that their own theories lead to the expectation that Plato's dialogues would be a product of the merging of oral and textual cultures. and not simply a product of writing.

The critique of writing in the dialogues calls into question the contention that Plato was dismissing the mind-set of the oral culture because he favored the thought processes produced by literacy. The view that oral cultures were not capable of abstract thought must also be questioned. Given Plato's distaste for writing, it is more likely that his treatment of both the poets and the sophists—who offered instruction in letters and in the use of images in the mnemonotechnic associated with Simonides—reflects the advocacy of a competing tradition. Yates described a different version of the memory tradition that rejected the use of vivid and highly charged images and emphasized. instead. emotional detachment in the use of division and artistic composition. We also know that there was more than one school of thought in the oral traditional culture of ancient Greece.[29] Socrates in the dialogues famously says there "was from of old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry" and that there were many expressions of "this ancient enmity" (Rep. 607b). This suggests that there was a philosophical branch of the oral tradition that kept alive the words and ideas of the great thinkers, just as the poetic branch continued to sing about the deeds of the heros of an earlier age. Just as the Iliad and Odyssey provided an encyclopedia of history and geography. the Theogony a record of the gods. and the Works and Days a storehouse of stories. proverbs and aphorisms. so Plato's dialogues might be a kind of encyclopedic catalogue of the various ideas that made up the intellectual heritage of Greek oral culture. Certainly the biographical reports of Plato indicate that he drew upon several distinct traditions—that of Socrates. Heraclitus, Pythagoras—as well as Parmenides' version of sophism. the mathematical school of Theodorus. and the mimes composed by Sophron. The picture that emerges is thus more complex than the one envisioned by Havelock and Ong. Further. while they concluded that the Homeric system lacked abstractions. this may not have been the case with every branch of the

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[28] Even though Havelock said that "Plato was the first to adapt sustained oral teaching into continuous written discourse" (1963: 56).

[29] Thomas. Literacy and Orality. pp. 5-15.

tradition in this culture. Aristotle noted that the philosophy taught by the historical Socrates emphasized "the universal definitions," which clearly implies philosophical abstractions. It may be the case that some traditions were able to manage thought in abstract categories. but these categories were not organized on lines familiar to those immersed in the conventions of script. Instead, they may have been patterned on non-literate classifications that are hard for alphabet users to grasp. In sum, the weight of evidence does not support the theory that Plato's dismissal of poetry was a reflection of his endorsement of writing. The notion that his treatment of the poets and sophists was a consequence of the effect that the technology of the alphabet was having on his thought processes is purely conjecture.

(2) Havelock's second mistake was in claiming that poetry was the only technology for preserving information to be handed down from one generation to another in Greek oral culture. Poetic rhythms were not the only mnemonics available to the ancient Greeks. As Yates found, at least from the late sixth and early fifth centuries. Greek poets and orators utilized at least two different mnemonic techniques, neither of which relied on meter or rhythm. One device associated the material to be remembered with an imagined object which was then "placed" mentally in a three-dimensional space. and the other divided the material to be remembered into lengths and then arranged it in a sequence. Even Homer used more complex mnemonic devices than the rhythms Havelock credited him with. as Whitman demonstrated. Moreover, the discussion in both the *Greater* and the *Lesser Hippias* makes it clear that Plato was familiar with the mnemonic techniques used by the sophists but he did not take them seriously. This evidence indicates that Havelock was mistaken when he claimed that verbal formulas shaped into poetic rhythms were the only memory device used by the ancients.

Ong attempted to supplement and correct Havelock's oversight concerning ancient mnemonics by incorporating the findings of Yates and Whitman into the theory. He insisted that the oral typology and what he termed the "system of commonplaces" were oral psychological structures that were perpetuated in oratory and in written texts for centuries after their invention. At the same time, he concluded that the balanced symmetries of the ring composition and the codifications of memory were "intermediate between the oral and the chirographic-typographic" (1967: 26) and that they were "superseded" by Plato. Again, we find the argument that Plato marked a sharp disruption in the continuity of the tradition. which seems inconsistent with the basic premise of a gradual change. A further inconsistency is that Havelock claimed that in the development of human thought. Plato's theory of forms was a "transition" between the concrete image-thinking of oral poetry. and the arrangement under general headings or categories of the abstract concepts of philosophy (1963: 259-60). Ong added that the developmental succession was from "formulas" to "places" to the "headings of literate categories" (1967: 80-81). He based his argument on Whitman's evidence. Whitman, it will be

recalled. demonstrated that the topic mnemonic was used in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to create "a geometric structure of the most amazing virtuosity." This means that the mnemonic was fully in evidence in Homer: it was not a later development that was touched off by the spreading use of the alphabet. The rhapsodes were using the mnemonic place system before either the sophists or Plato arrived on the scene. Plus. even if the ring structure was a middle stage in the movement from orality to literacy as Ong claimed. if the transition to the use of letters was slow and gradual. if oral psychological structures were sustained for a prolonged period. if Plato was an intermediary between the concrete images of oral poetry and the abstract categories of written philosophy. and if these philosophical categories developed out of the mnemonic place system. then it seems odd that in the dialogues. oral forms of preservation were so completely eclipsed by writing that there is no residue whatsoever of the mnemonic place system.

(3) This is related to the third problem with Havelock's theory. The crux of Havelock's argument is that literacy caused the development of Greek culture and social institutions. He took Homer's style as evidence for the type of concrete thinking he associated with orality. He used Aristotle's style as evidence for dating the time by which the shift to a standardized vocabulary and abstract. literate categories was completed. In between these two he placed Plato. The style of the dialogues suggested to Havelock that Plato belonged on the literate side of the orality to literacy spectrum. So he argued that Plato invented the classifications that served as the transition between the concrete thinking of Homer and the abstract classifications found in the writings of Aristotle. Thus. Plato's style was the middle link in the chain of causality that led Greek culture from orality to literacy. To support his theory. Havelock used a passage in the *Republic* that sets out the classifications of numbers as evidence that Plato was inventing the categories that substituted abstract conceptual discourse for a concrete imagistic one. Since Aristotle testified to the metaphysical positions of his forebears. Havelock enlisted the findings of Cherniss to make the argument that Aristotle's account of his predecessors was in error. However. studies have shown that Cherniss frequently misrepresented Aristotle's statements: inferred an implication from Aristotle's comments and then criticized the inference. or he exaggerated Aristotle's faults. Cherniss frequently neglected to provide reasons for his dismissal of certain positions: and when he did. his discussion was often garbled or incomprehensible (see. for example. Brentlinger 1963: Krämer 1990: or Sayre 1983).

It is important to recognize that the findings of Cherniss play a crucial role in Havelock's version of the Toronto theory of communications technology. It is a curious circumstance that Cherniss apparently worked with Havelock at Harvard University. Together. they supervised J.B. McDiarmid's 1953 paper entitled. "Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes." and his results became a cornerstone

of both their works [30] Both Cherniss and Havelock cited McDiarmid's study in their campaign to discredit the tradition of Platonic interpretation. Since Cherniss was not able to find the doctrines in Plato. it was important to him that the reports of the unwritten doctrines be dismissed because they could all be traced back to one unreliable source. Since Havelock was trying to show that the vocabulary of Greek philosophy had to go through a long process of development. he employed Cherniss and McDiarmid to discredit Aristotle's report that there was a long history of abstract metaphysical thought prior to Plato. Based on the conclusions of Cherniss and McDiarmid. Havelock said. the "elaborate structure ... of ancient philosophy. fell to the ground in pieces." He went on to say that he was offering his *Preface to Plato* as a "corrected account."[31] It seems odd that the two never got together so that it would occur to one or the other of them that the "unwritten doctrines" Cherniss spent his life investigating might not mean just a few lectures of Plato's. but the doctrines of the primary "oral" cultural tradition discussed by Havelock.

The section of the *Republic* (522a-530b) cited by Havelock as evidence that Plato was rejecting the formulas of the Homeric tradition and creating new categories made possible by writing is simply incorrect. as even a cursory reading of this passage makes clear. In these paragraphs. Socrates states explicitly that he is describing the sciences of astronomy and harmony of the *Pythagoreans* (530d).[32] In other words. we have in this passage a direct statement that these are Pythagorean categories—which Socrates affirms and agrees with— not new ones made possible by the alphabet. Coincidentally. it is difficult to ignore the fact that this passage cited by Havelock contains explicit statements concerning the idea-numbers and the great and small.[33] Thus. in the example Havelock offers as evidence that

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[30] In this study. McDiarmid expressed his gratitude to Cherniss and Havelock "who both urged the undertaking of this study and have generously read the manuscript and made many suggestions for its improvement." This article claimed that the tradition of commentary subsequent to Aristotle should be dismissed. In it. McDiarmid developed the findings of Hermann Diels, who had argued that the history of early Greek philosophy written by Aristotle's pupil. Theophrastus. was the sole source for the later tradition. He went on to claim that Theophrastus' books were based only on Aristotle's account. He argued that if Theophrastus was the source for all the later authors. and if Theophrastus' source was Aristotle. and if (following Cherniss). Aristotle's portrayal of his predecessors is unreliable. then the whole tradition of our knowledge of early Greek philosophy that was reconstructed from the later writers was inaccurate [See his "Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 61 (1953) 85-156]

[31] Havelock. *Preface to Plato*, pp. viii-ix.

[32] Moreover. as scholars note. this reference in Plato is significant as one of the few fixed points in the reconstruction of Pythagoreanism. See especially Walter Burkert. *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (trans.. Edwin L. Minar. Jr. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1972), p. 373; and Richard D. McKirahan Jr.. *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. Inc.. 1994). p. 83.

[33] Thus. "anyone acquainted with geometry" may study these categories in "diagrams" designed in accord with the patterns in the heavens and in musical harmonies (529d-530e). "What in the world then is

Plato's mental processes reflected changes brought about by writing, we find the metaphysical tenets of the Pythagorean philosophy which was attributed to Plato by Aristotle and which scholars have been unable to locate. Further, in Book X, there is a lengthy comparison between the tradition associated with Homer and the one associated with Pythagoras. The point of the discussion is to determine which tradition offers the better education. It is established that the tradition and way of life inaugurated by Pythagoras provides the superior training (*Rep.* 600a-e). Thus, when there is a comparison with the "Homeric tribe," we find the competition to be the Pythagorean tradition, not a new tradition based on the technology of the alphabet. On close scrutiny, we find that Havelock has taken the passage in the *Laws* (811-818), where the characters agree that it is the dialogues themselves that should take the place of poetry, and he has conflated it with these paragraphs in the *Republic*, which he saw as establishing new kinds of categories. Yet, according to the *Republic*, the tradition of Homer is not dismissed in order to advocate its replacement by writing. It is rejected and in its stead Plato champions his own philosophy, which is said to be a "successor" to the tradition that was "transmitted to posterity" by the students of Pythagoras.

When we get to the bottom of all these difficulties, we find a tension and inconsistency at the heart of the communication theory. The hypotheses concerning Plato's role in the transition to the use of letters does not square with the evidence or even with other premises of the theory. If the theses concerning the late dating of the alphabet and the gradual transition to the use of writing are correct, and if Plato was in fact the mediator between the oral and literate worlds, then we should expect to find many features of the oral-traditional style in his writings. Yet, the fact is, that neither the University of Toronto scholars—nor those who followed in their stead and developed their theories further—have managed to turn up any evidence of oral traditional patterns of communication and instruction in Plato's dialogues.

Critique of Current Formulations of "The Riddle of the Ancient Academy"

Similarly, the central problem of the cluster of issues that make up the "riddle" of the ancient Academy is that to date, commentators have not found in these writings the principles that ground Plato's philosophic system. Hence, the perplexities surrounding the comments that criticize writing and the notifications concerning omissions in the dialogues, along with the reports by Aristotle and the later

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the great and small?" (523e-524c). It is unity (524d-e) and number, or "the same thing at once as one and as an indefinite plurality" (525a) that is "one and both two" (524b-c). We also have an attempt to classify mathematical entities—"to which class then, do you think number and the one belong ?" (524d)—using the example of fingers, as "intermediate or extreme" (523d), "outside or in the middle" (523e).

commentators.

Yet. we must also question the way this problem has been formulated in the history of interpretation. Though the leading commentators on opposite sides of the debate—Cherniss and Vlastos at one extreme and Krämer and the Tübingen scholars on the other—assume that the Platonic writings do not contain any explicit statements corresponding to Aristotle's description of the foundational principles. we have already found one passage in *Republic* (529-530b) that makes overt reference to the metaphysical tenets thought to be missing from the dialogues. Jacob Klein also noticed that the "great and small" were mentioned in this section of *Republic*.[34] Further. Sayre noted that the "great and small" of Aristotle's testimony appears in the *Philebus* and the *Seventh Letter*.[35] Francis Cornford found the "great and small" in the *Parmenides* (143a-156b).[36] A.E. Taylor found them in a passage in the *Epinomis* (990a-991e) that describes the discovery of a "divine contrivance."[37] Robert S. Brumbaugh found enough material on the "One" as "unity and the unlimited" in the *Parmenides* to write an entire book on the subject.[38] So, there are in fact some "explicit" statements in the text that correspond to the doctrines Aristotle attributed to Plato. In fact (to anticipate a future chapter in this study). a survey of the history of interpretation shows that there have been more than a few dissenting voices on this matter. For instance. in articles published in the *Journal of Philology* between 1882 and 1888. Henry Jackson argued that doctrines that accorded with the Aristotelian evidence could be found throughout the dialogues. particularly in the *Parmenides*. the *Philebus* and the *Timaeus*.[39] John A. Brentlinger said that "Plato *did* hold a theory of intermediates" which he located in the divided line passage at *Republic* 511d. In addition to him. J. Adam. I.M. Crombie. J.C. Davies. John N. Findlay. W.F. Hardie. Jacob Klein. H.J. Krämer. Kenneth Sayre. H. Sidgwick. J. Souilhé. J.L. Stocks and Anders Wedberg all thought that these were intermediate mathematical objects located midway between visible. sensible things and forms.[40] Even Paul Shorey and Harold Cherniss. who argue for

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[34] Klein. *Plato's Meno*. p. 116.

[35] Sayre. *Plato's Late Ontology*. p. 96.

[36] Francis Cornford. *Plato and Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1939), pp. 144-178 and A.E. Taylor. "Forms and Numbers: A Study in Platonic Metaphysics." *Mind*. Vol. 35. No. 140 (1926). pp. 419-440.

[37] Taylor. *Plato: The Man and His Work*. p. 432.

[38] Robert S. Brumbaugh. *Plato on the One: The Hypotheses in the Parmenides* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1961).

[39] H. Jackson, "Plato's Later Theory of Ideas." *Journal of Philology*. I. 10 (1882): 253-98: XI (1882): 287-331: III (1885): 1-40: IV. Ibid., 242-72: V. 14 (1885): 172-230: VI. 15 (1886): 280-305.

[40] John A. Brentlinger. "The Divided Line and Plato's 'Theory of Intermediates.' *Phronesis*, Vol. VIII. No. 2 (1963): 167-172: J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato*, 2 Vols. (1902: rpt. ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1963): I.M. Crombie. *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, 2 Vols. (London:

the opposing view, acknowledge that intermediate mathematical objects are mentioned in this text. They just do not believe that these are the same intermediate mathematical objects that Aristotle was describing.[41] As well, Rosemary Desjardins argued that the doctrine of principles could be found in the *Theaetetus* and also in earlier works.[42] These commentators have all found in the dialogues explicit statements concerning one or more of the doctrines Aristotle attributed to Plato. That so many studies have located aspects of Aristotle's testimony in Plato's writings suggests that there are serious difficulties with the way the problem has been conceived in the history of interpretation, and raises the question of whether there might possibly be additional explicit statements in the dialogues that accord with Aristotle's comments.

Even though there are studies that point to passages in Plato that match Aristotle's description, by and large, this work has been ignored. In the main, scholars working in this area have concentrated on explaining why the doctrines cannot be found in Plato's writings. Suffice it to say that these explanations run the gamut. At one end of the scale, we have the prevailing view, originated by Leibniz and championed in this century by Harold Cherniss and Gregory Vlastos, that Aristotle was mistaken concerning Plato's views and that none of the doctrines he describes can be traced in Plato's writings. By characterizing most of the documents and other materials that have come down to us from antiquity as unreliable, this position has effectively severed Plato from the two-thousand year tradition of Platonic interpretation. As well, it seems hard to accept that one of the greatest thinkers in human history could have been so mistaken about the doctrines of his teacher even though he spent at least twenty years studying with him at the Academy. Still, this view is the one most widely accepted today. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have the position advocated by the Tübingen commentators, headed by H.J. Krämer.[43] This group sees Plato as having an exoteric and an esoteric

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Routledge, 1962-63), pp. 1: 126 and 2: 76; J.C. Davies, "Plato's Dialectic: Some Thoughts on the Line," *Orpheus*, Vol. 14 (1967): 3-11; John N. Findlay, *Written and Unwritten Doctrines*, pp. 182-96; W.F. Hardie, *A Study in Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936); Jacob Klein, *Plato's Meno*, p. 124; H.J. Krämer, *Foundations of Metaphysics*, p. 52; Kenneth Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, pp. 196-97; H. Sidgwick, "On a Passage in Plato," *Journal of Philology*, Vol. 2 (1869): 96-103; J. Souilhé, *La notion platonicienne d'intermédiare dans la philosophie des dialogues* (1919; reprint ed., New York: Garland, 1987), pp. 76-92; J.L. Stocks, "The Divided Line of Plato," *Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 5 (1911): 73-88; and Anders Wedberg, *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1955), pp. 99-111.

[41] Paul Shorey, *The Unity of Plato's Thought* (1903; rpt. ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), pp. 82-83; Cherniss, *Riddle*, p. 78.

[42] Desjardins, *Rational Enterprise*, p. 61, *fn*. 1.

[43] H.J. Krämer, *Foundations of Metaphysics*. Other frequently cited followers of Krämer include Findlay, *Unwritten Doctrines*; Gaiser, "Enigmatic Lecture," pp. 5-37; and Reale, *Ancient Philosophy: II. Plato and Aristotle*; and the main work of Th.A. Szlezák, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie*

teaching. They claim that Plato's writings contain only the exoteric teachings while the esoteric philosophy was "unwritten." Since Plato's doctrine of ultimate principles was presented verbally to members of his inner circle. it can only be recovered from the accounts recorded by his students and contemporaries. Their view has been widely rejected and even ridiculed.[44] The problem with their account is that it has the effect of relegating Plato's own writings to a minor position as sources of his philosophy, while elevating the testimony from the secondary literature to the number one slot. As many of their critics have complained. it is hard to justify giving priority to later reports of Plato's teaching when we have over thirty-five books of his own. Somewhere in the middle would be the view currently advanced by Kenneth Sayre. His theory is that Plato did not teach or record in writing his most significant thoughts because words. either spoken or written. are not adequate to the task of expressing the foundations of philosophy (a position that is supported by comments in the *Second Letter* (312d). According to this theory, while both Plato and Aristotle are reliable guides to the better part of this philosophy, neither are adequate sources of information concerning the ultimate principles. While this explanation is more plausible, it is discouraging to think that Plato bequeathed to posterity so many noble works that provide no clues to the most significant aspects of his philosophy.

The history of interpretation shows that many of the most frequently offered explanations for this famous conundrum invoke the idea that Plato had two versions of his teaching. a public one that was "written" and the other. a private one that was "unwritten." One version of the "two doctrine" interpretation suggests that the theories of the dialogues represent the philosophy of Socrates while Plato's own philosophy was never written down. Another claim is that Aristotle was describing a later development of Plato's doctrines whereas the dialogues only record his early theories. Some have suggested that Plato held some views that he published and other views which he did not; that he had a popular version of his philosophy which he presented in public lectures and in the dialogues. as well as a more comprehensive one reserved for oral instruction at the Academy. The difficulty in accepting these explanations is that it seems odd that even though so many written works have survived in Plato's name. the genuine philosophy perished.

The explanation that was transmitted down through the tradition from antiquity is that the dialogues themselves contain *both* an exoteric and an esoteric teaching. The idea is that there is one

Interpretationen zu den Frühen Dialogen (Berlin/New York: de Gryter. 1985).

[44] Gregory Vlastos. "On Plato's Oral Doctrine: Review of H.J. Krämer." *Arete bei Platon und Aristoteles. Gnomon.* 41 (1963): 641-55 rpt. in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1973). p. 397. See also Luc Brisson. "Premises. Consequences. and Legacy of an Esotericist Interpretation of Plato." *Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 15 (1995). p. 124.

level at which the meaning in the dialogues can be understood by everyone and another level of meaning that can only be grasped by initiates. This explanation would fall in line with Gooch's argument that there is an explicit meaning and also a meaning that is implicit (or at least not obvious) located in the structure and style of the text, and that it is the task of the learner to figure out that message. The reader in this model is a puzzle solver and an interpreter of meaning. This interpretation, which is aligned with the standard ancient reading of the dialogues, is currently out of scholarly favor. Even so, the theory that there is a "hidden truth" contained within Plato's writings has had defenders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Different perspectives on this position have been put forward by F.E.D. Schleiermacher, by Leo Strauss, by Rosemary Desjardins and of course, by Paul W. Gooch of the Toronto School. The version offered by Schleiermacher (the father of the literary reading of the dialogues so popular today), is that Plato's theory of education meant that he did not simply state his most profound teachings outright in a direct and straightforward way but instead, forced readers to search for the answers themselves by following clues he left in the text. This aspect of his interpretation has never really been taken up and examined by his successors.[45] The one suggested by Leo Strauss—that Plato concealed his genuine views through the use of various literary devices so that he could avoid persecution—has met with an even worse fate than the view proposed by the Tübingen scholars.[46] Now, it is true that neither Schleiermacher nor Strauss offered an account of the secret doctrine. They merely claimed there was one. Strauss in fact undermined his own theory by acknowledging that there was no way to establish the correctness of any one interpretation of the "secret doctrine" over any other. The version offered by Rosemary Desjardins—that secrecy in philosophy was part of the long intellectual tradition Plato inherited from his predecessors—has been, for the most part, completely ignored, even though she presented a detailed account of what she called "the refined and subtle teaching" she found cloaked in the ambiguity of the writing style in the *Theaetetus*.[47] The one offered by Gooch—that Socrates uses indirection as the only appropriate form

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[45] F.E.D. Schleiermacher. *Platons Werke*. 1st ed. (Berlin, 1804-10), quoted from the 3rd ed., 1855-61. pp. 15-16, referred to in Jacob Klein. *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1965), p. 6.

[46] Leo Strauss. "Persecution and the Art of Writing," chapter 2 of *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988); "Exoteric Teaching," chapter 4 of *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: Essays and Lectures by Leo Strauss*, ed., Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989); and "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing," chapter 9 of *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959).

[47] Rosemary Desjardins, *The Rational Enterprise: Logos in Plato's Theaetetus* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 61, *fn.* 1; and "Why Dialogues? Plato's Serious Play," in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed., Charles L. Griswold Jr. (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 112-13.

of discourse out of a recognition that the pedagogic authority of the teacher cannot pre-empt the interpretive decisions of listeners. and that learning involves the "unforced contribution" of the student—is aligned with Schleiermacher's position. Gooch did offer examples of hiddenness and indirection in the dialogues through his analysis of the *Apology*. Since his book was published quite recently. only time will tell if it gets more of a response than has Desjardins' work. For all things considered. the notion that there is an esoteric or mystery doctrine in the text is so out of tune with our scientific age that it is seldom even mentioned as a possibility.

While modern scholarship has dismissed the notion of an esoteric doctrine as unworthy of serious consideration. there are powerful reasons. evidential and philosophical, for taking another look at this possibility. i.e.. that the text could have been designed so that when it is looked at one way, there appears the exoteric teaching and in another. the genuine philosophical doctrines that are intelligible only to the specially initiated. The weight of evidence alone is enough to warrant reconsideration of such a notion.[48] The repeated distinction between appearance and reality in Plato's writings also suggests that there may be more going on than appears on the face of it. Yet. the whole concept of a Platonic mysticism is so thoroughly outside the bounds of our current paradigms of interpretation that we do not even find arguments against the notion. If there were such arguments. then presumably they would be somewhat similar to the principal arguments that have been leveled against the testimony of Aristotle and the other ancients concerning the Platonic doctrine of ultimate principles: that the idea is a relic of ancient. Middle Platonic. or Neoplatonic misreadings of Plato: that it depends on an inordinate weighting of a few isolated passages in the dialogues, in Aristotle. and in reports of a tradition that has largely been discredited. Above all. it has simply been assumed that the principles could not possibly be in the text because "generations of careful scholars" have not found them. Could such a doctrine have gone undetected in works that have been examined so carefully by so many?

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[48] Let us recap some of it. The ancient reports of the lecture *On the Good* suggest that while the general public was admitted to Plato's talk. they could not comprehend his "enigmatic utterances." The fragment from Epicrates indicates that Plato's teaching in the Academy left an observer completely perplexed. This. as well as the evidence from ancient comedies suggests that average citizens in Athens knew of Plato's philosophy but they had difficulty understanding it. When the dialogues caution that parts of the philosophy have been passed over. sometimes it is because it is "inappropriate" to speak of crucial matters before the present audience or because they can be known only by initiates (*Parm.* 136d-e; *Meno* 76e-77a). The *Second Letter* (314-315) warns that Plato was writing in riddles so that the doctrine concerning the foundational principles would not be disclosed. In the *Phaedrus* (274b-278b), the legitimate discourse "knows to whom it should speak and before whom to be silent." This, along with the testimony of Aristotle, the explicit reports of Diogenes, Numenius, Proclus, Sextus Empiricus and St. Augustine concerning the Platonic "mysteries" as well the fact that Plato was affiliated with the Pythagoreans—a tradition known for its esotericism—should give us pause before rejecting the possibility of an esoteric teaching.

Bogdan pointed out that the meaning taken away from a written text is often the one hypothesized by the reader and not necessarily the one intended by the author. Her theory would help explain Kuhn's description of how evidence that does not fit into prevailing paradigms often goes unnoticed. Eisenberg warned of the limits of our ability to move beyond the boundaries imposed by our own conventions in order to understand the thinking of cultures whose technologies for communicating are unfamiliar to us. Innis spoke of a lacunae in our perception of modes of communication that are different from our own.

Questions

This brings us to the two central questions in this study. First, are Plato's dialogues strictly an expression of prose writing, or are they an oral literature composed by way of a traditional system?[49] The second question takes its cue from one posed by Eugene Tigerstedt as the central problem of Plato interpretation: Is there a doctrine in the written dialogues that is accessible to every serious and careful reader, or was the genuine philosophy unwritten, an oral teaching that can only be reconstructed from hints in Plato and other authors?[50]

Rationale

The reason for investigating the first question is that while the work of Parry, Havelock and Ong has spawned an entire industry—that of "oral-formulaic studies"—Platonic scholarship has remained virtually untouched by their theories, as recent surveys confirm.[51] Further, a review of the oral-formulaic literature itself reveals a dearth of studies on the application of oral theory to Plato's dialogues. For example, in John Miles Foley's monumental survey of the field, involving over 1800 volumes of oral literature research, many of them devoted to the question of ancient Greek epic, only one work (that of James A. Notopoulos, one of the first articles to recognize and use Parry's theories), called for an awareness of oral style, not only in Homer and Hesiod, but also at the foundation of the

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[49] Again, I use the distinction suggested by Berkley Peabody, where the "continuing process of oral composition is called an *oral tradition* [Peabody, *The Winged Word*, pp. 1-2 and 70].

[50] Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*, p. 13.

[51] Gerald A. Press, "The State of the Question in the Study of Plato," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XXXIV (1996),507-532; and also his "Introduction" in *Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations*, ed., Gerald A. Press (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993); as well, see Kraut's "Introduction to the Study of Plato," in the *Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed., Richard A. Kraut (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 1-51; and also E.N. Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell, 1977).

Platonic works.[52] Given the enormous influence of Havelock and Ong. one might hypothesize that their research would have been applied to an analysis of Plato's style. Such is not the case. With few exceptions. researchers—either from the field of oral theory or from the discipline of philosophy—have not attempted to consider the Platonic texts in light of the oral-formulaic research.[53] Given Plato's supposedly pivotal role in the struggle between oral and literate modalities as well as the problems with the theory with regard to writing, a new effort seems justified.

There are also grounds for an inquiry into the second question. Even though a number of studies have identified in the dialogues some of the metaphysical tenets Aristotle ascribed to Plato, the assumption that there is no trace of these doctrines persists. Since Cherniss published his monumental studies around the middle of this century. efforts to prove otherwise came to a halt as scholars such as Krämer and his colleagues shifted their attention to the secondary literature as sources for the unwritten doctrines. Can anything new be said about a matter so much debated for centuries? The fact that the discussion continues unabated and that there are a number of interpreters who find statements in the dialogues that match Aristotle's report points to the possibility that something significant has been overlooked—so that a new attempt seems warranted here as well.

The "Written" and the "Unwritten"

What does seem to have been overlooked is a possible connection between the transition in Greek culture and education from oral to "written" and Aristotle's comments concerning Plato's "unwritten" teaching. Many of the University of Toronto scholars assumed that Plato represented writing because they did not observe any oral patterns in the dialogues. Leading commentators say the foundations of Plato's doctrine or the principles of it that Aristotle ascribed to him cannot be found in the written dialogues. whereas ancient reports indicate that this teaching was presented orally. While Innis's caution about the "bias of writing" is a cornerstone of the Toronto theory of communication. and much has been made of Kuhn's ideas about how dominant paradigms determine what is considered significant and what is ignored in research. it has not occurred to anyone that for literates, there might be something "esoteric" about the traditional system of an oral culture. While a number of

[52] John Miles Foley. *Oral-formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London. 1985); James Notopoulos. "Mnemosyne in Oral Literature," *Transactions of the American Philological Association.* 69 (1938): 465-93.

[53] An exception would be Harold Tarrant's. "Orality and Plato's Narrative Dialogues." *Word Into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece.* ed.. Ian Worthington (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1996), pp. 129-148. In this study. Tarrant could not find an "obvious debt to oral narrative in Plato's narrative dialogues. Such a search fails . . ."

explanations have been offered for the cluster of issues that make up the riddle problem, no one has taken the expression "unwritten doctrines," or even "Plato's oral doctrines," as referring to the philosophy of a cultural tradition that existed prior to the advent of writing. Even though the issues that make up the riddle of the ancient Academy present a challenge to the theories of the University of Toronto School, the theory may offer a way to work through the puzzle of the unwritten doctrines. Both the connection and the confusion seems to revolve around the notion of the "dialogues" as "written" philosophy and the "unwritten" doctrines as an exclusively "oral" teaching.

Commentators have distinguished different meanings for the terms "written" and "unwritten." They have understood these words first, in the narrow sense, where "written" simply means writing while "unwritten" means "speech," so that we have, for instance, Plato's written dialogues as contrasted with the oral instruction he gave in his lecture *On the Good*. In the sense described by Parry, Havelock, Ong and other oral-formulaic theorists, "written" refers to a technology for preserving communication in a culture whereas "unwritten" would point to oral forms of storage. In this frame of reference, the oral literature is a written record of an oral tradition, so that what was once preserved by way of an oral traditional system is documented in writing. In this sense, the "oral" is "written." Since oral-formulaic theory has not been integrated into our paradigms for interpreting Plato's philosophy, the term "written" has most often been taken in the sense of an exoteric philosophy preserved in Plato's dialogues, while "unwritten" has been understood to mean an esoteric oral teaching that was never put into writing. Now, there are other ways we might understand the terms "written" and "unwritten" that involve more subtle shadings of meaning.

(1) *The "Written" as the Literature of an Oral Tradition*. First, given Plato's supposedly intermediate role in the shift from oral to written culture, it is possible that this doctrine involved an oral traditional system for preserving communication that he chronicled in the "written" dialogues. In other words, it is possible that the dialogues are both "oral" and "written" in the way those terms are understood in oral-formulaic theory.

(2) *The Tradition in Transition From Oral to Written*. Second, we might expect that during the transition to the alphabet, it would take time to record and document the existing body of knowledge. More likely than not, there would be a period of time when some of the tradition was "written" down while some of it remained "unwritten."

(3) *The "Written" as Esoteric*. A third way these words might be understood but which has not been considered—or at least not taken seriously—is that the esoteric doctrines are accessible by way of the "written" dialogues. That the doctrines associated with the esoteric Platonic teaching might have something to do with the oral traditional patterns of thought has also escaped notice. In other

words. it is possible that some knowledge of how the oral traditional system works is needed in order to uncover the esoteric doctrine. This interpretation would see the "written" dialogues as involving both an exoteric and an esoteric Platonic teaching. In this scenario, there is only one Platonic doctrine that is embodied in the "written" dialogues. The exoteric teaching is accessible to all by way of the philosophical content of the "written" dialogues in the sense that all the information that is required in order to find the ultimate principles is contained in the treatises. The esoteric teaching in the "written" dialogues is open only to those who understand the formal structuring principles of the traditional system. In other words, there is the possibility that the esoteric philosophy is both "written" (stated explicitly but in an ambiguous manner where there are so many overtones of meaning that what is said by a character in a dialogue can be interpreted in a number of ways only one of which is correct), and "oral" (in the sense that a knowledge of the principles of the traditional system of the oral culture is required in order to distinguish this pure teaching from the range of possible meanings). While the "written" exoteric philosophy is open to all serious readers, only a few will persist with this kind of study until they learn to grasp the "written" esoteric philosophy. This esoteric written doctrine is a more refined version of the total philosophical "content" that makes up the exoteric teaching. It is said in the dialogues to be the "essence" of the argument that may be purified from the narrative as a whole, "like gold, with prolonged labor" (*Ltr. II* 414a-b) by using the system of rules that govern the order and arrangement of the subject "matter" or "topics" that make up the overall "form" of the work.

(4) *The "Unwritten" as Esoteric* A fourth possible nuance of meaning entails an additional understanding of complexity. Over and above the exoteric teaching embodied in the explicit (albeit ambiguous) statements of the dialogue's "written" content, and the esoteric "written" teaching that is not set forth in express statements but is implicit in the text by way of the structuring principles of the traditional system itself, there is an esoteric "unwritten" teaching that is not stated explicitly, but which may be inferred by reasoning it out according to the principles of the traditional system and based on the evidence that is given—or "written"—in the text. According to this interpretation, the educational purpose of the dialogues would be such that the esoteric doctrine is not "written." Nor is it given to the learner either by way of direct language, or by way of the formal structure. Rather, it is "unwritten"—it must be "produced" by those students (or readers) who are "initiates," i.e., who are cognizant of the way that the oral traditional system operates, who know it so well they are able to ascertain where the lead character in a dialogue is *silent* about certain matters and to thereby identify where the structure is *absent*, and who are able to use their knowledge of the principles that generate the structure to go on and fill in the missing pieces. So while it may be the case that the foundational elements of this philosophy are never stated in a direct and straightforward manner, it may not be the

case that this teaching cannot be recovered based on the information contained in the dialogues alone. The "unwritten" esoteric doctrines are a kind of puzzle or "test" if you will. for those "subtle thinkers." who are able to refine the matter (the definitions or topics) from the total "written" content. to combine this with a knowledge of the forms (the formal structure of the system) and. putting this together with the principles (the mechanics that determine its construction). to go on and reason out the "first principles." So that when Socrates warns in a dialogue that certain crucial matters will be "passed over." or will be comprehensible only to initiates. this does not mean that chunks of material were left behind in ancient Athens never to be incorporated into the text. Instead. it is a sure sign that important matters in upcoming passages will not be expressed via the philosophical content but will instead be "transposed into formal relations." as Schleiermacher once said.[54] In other words. Socrates cautions the reader that the mode of communication is about to shift from explicit statement to implicit ideas. In this way. the esoteric "written" doctrines are still present and accessible in the "written" work in the way that the "subject matter" or "topics" that come up in the course of the dialogue are *connected* to form the shape and structure of the narrative sequence. The "unwritten" is a further nuance in that it requires a knowledge of the formal structure of "topics" (called "definitions" in the dialogues), so that gaps or absences in the sequence may be identified by a knowledge of the system itself. In this way. it would be possible to figure out the "unwritten" section by way of the principles that govern the formation of the system. and based on the material that is overtly expressed in the philosophical content. In other words. the *unwritten doctrine of principles has to do with the oral system itself.* The esoteric teaching is offered in direct "written" statements. The esoteric teaching is impressed on the written dialogue in the way that the content is organized into an overall form. so that the doctrines are not *just* in the content but in the *form of the content.* in the rules that go into the creation of this structure. and in the completion of the it in accordance with the principles of the system.

All four meanings come together in the passage from Book VII of the *Laws* (811a-e) cited in the first chapter. Recall that this section of Book VII states that due to some sort of "divine guidance about the matter." the dialogues themselves have been "framed exactly like a poem" in the way that the "discourses are marshaled. as it were. in close array." and that this "pattern" serves as the "standard" against which all other compositions are to be measured. The law-givers and educators are instructed to engage in a search so that if there should be found "connected and similar matter in the verse of our poets. in our prose literature, or even in the form of simple unwritten discourses of the same type as the present. by no means neglect it but get it put into writing." In this context. the first

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[54] F.E.D. Schleiermacher. *Platons Werke.* 1st ed. (Berlin. 1804-10). quoted from the 3rd ed.. 1855-61. Introduction. p. 6. 17. by Krämer. *Foundations of Metaphysics,* p. 17.

meaning. that of an oral literature. is conveyed by the reference to "written" verse and prose compositions. while "unwritten" denotes compositions passed on by word of mouth. i.e.. an oral tradition. There is also the second meaning. where both "written" and "unwritten" compositions are being sought out for collection and documentation in writing. Thirdly. there is as well specific reference to both "written" and "unwritten" works that conform to a pattern discernible from the way the "matter" is "connected"—i.e.. by way of the "manner" or "form." In terms of the first meaning, we have in this passage support for the possibility that parts of the tradition were documented while others parts were still oral. With regard to the second meaning. we find once again (as in the *Ninth, Twelfth* and *Thirteenth Letters*). instructions that have to do with finding. recording and preserving particular kinds of compositions in order to "keep" them "alive" (*Ltr. XIII* 314-315). With respect to the third meaning. we find support for the interpretation that finds in the written dialogues a certain latent pattern that serves as the exemplar for assessing all other works. and finally. in terms of the fourth meaning. there is the sense that certain "unwritten" discourses embody a pattern. so that. even though the principles that govern the form of the traditional system are not stated explicitly so that they are *visible* in the "content" or "matter," they may be *intelligible* from the way the "matter" is "connected" or "marshaled" in an "array."

Other sections of the dialogues lend weight to this interpretation. For instance. in an earlier passage in this same book. the "unwritten law" is defined as the whole body of regulations. laws and traditions of our forebears. These ancient traditions

> are the mortises of a constitution. the connecting links between all the enactments already reduced to writing. and preserved by it. and those yet to be recorded. a true corpus of ancestral and primitive tradition which. rightly instituted and duly followed in practice. will serve as a sure shield for all the statutes hitherto committed to writing . . . (*Laws* 793b).

This statement indicates that one possible meaning of "written/unwritten" is that. in Plato's time. some parts of the Greek tradition had been documented while others remained oral. i.e.. certain things were written down while others were not yet written. Moreover. we find yet again a reference to the "connecting links" that form the "mortises" of the system of rules and regulations adhered to by certain predecessors. Further. in this particular passage. the reader is given to understand that the "unwritten law" is "all we are now discussing." In other words. it seems that the "unwritten law" is the *Laws.* We can make sense of this comment if we see it as an oral traditional statement that has been preserved in a written text. While it seems puzzling that a written work such as the *Laws* would refer to itself as "the unwritten law." many examples of oral statements such as this one in Plato's writings have been recorded by theorists studying the literature of oral traditions other than the Greek.

Discussions about stories or laws "written or unwritten" can also be found in the *Republic* (563e)." and in the *Statesman* (295a-303a). The latter passage involves an extensive argument comparing legislation by "written code" to "unwritten ancestral customs." Here, Plato criticizes written laws on the same grounds that he attacked poetry and writing itself. Written codes of law are condemned and censored as mere "imitations" and "copies" of the "unwritten ancient custom of our forbears." According to the theory of some members of the University of Toronto School, Plato was averse to both the poets and the sophists because he was rejecting the oral mentality in order to make way for the new kinds of thought made possible by writing. However, it is more likely that Plato objected to the poets and sophists because he was arguing on behalf of a *competing oral tradition* that he was attempting to preserve in the face of technological advance. Whereas Frye saw Plato as "revolutionary," it is just as likely that he was "conservative." Whereas Havelock assumed that the Greek oral tradition was a unified chorus, it is equally probable that the tradition was made up of a number of competing voices.[56]

Still, it does seem odd that major structuring principles such as the ones I am describing have gone unobserved in texts that have been examined by so many scholars over the centuries. Is it possible that the doctrine has been in the text all along? In the first book of his *Platonic Theology*, Proclus says that every dialogue contains the principles of Plato's teaching to a "greater or lesser degree." He assures us that it is only a matter of reading them in the right way. However, with the rise of modern historical and critical techniques of interpretation, the Neoplatonic approach of Proclus—in fact the two-thousand year tradition of Platonism—gradually slid into disrepute. Techniques of textual analysis modeled on the scientific method came to dominate interpretation. When the methods of science were transferred to philosophy, explicit statements in a written work came to serve the same function as empirical evidence in scientific research. The emphasis was on establishing and confirming what the author "said" or "thought" by reference to overt statements as proof of an interpretation. It is this kind of strictly "literal" reading—where support for a critical analysis is narrowly confined to express statements—that has failed to turn up any substantial evidence of the principles that ground Plato's philosophy. Now, there is great value in applying empirical methods to textual analysis; yet,

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[55] In this book, the reference is to "laws written or unwritten" in the "soul." Even in this instance, the word "written" refers to letters inscribed in the human psyche and not to external marks on a page or wax tablet. This account of an "inner writing" parallels the descriptions of the Greek memory art as it came to be recorded in later antiquity (*Ad Herennium*. III. XVI. 28-29. Cicero. *de Oratore* XVII. 30-31; Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria* XI. II. 1-3).

[56] See the recent work of John Miles Foley. *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1999), p. 16.

as Gooch and Bogdan have shown, in the view of education offered in the dialogues, it is not possible to convey or transmit knowledge to someone else. Gooch described this indirectness as the very "opposite of directness in speech." He noticed that the teaching of Plato's Socrates was "about" something that was only "hinted at or implied within the structure of words" (1996: 200). Bogdan argued that the words both "say and do not say" (1992: 89). Eisenberg has pointed out that some aspects of human experience are fundamentally indeterminate. He has advocated a kind of interpretation wherein "the ungraspable, incompletable, inaccessible aspects of our being, the being of others and their interconnections are recognized and juxtaposed alongside the rational."[57] According to Desjardins, the kind of interpretation that counts as valid only explicit statements is not compatible with ancient paradigms of education. For the Greeks, she said, education was a kind of "initiation into hidden truth." She said two things were meant by this, both of which are in line with the discussion of indirection and with the interpretations of "written/unwritten" I have been urging here: first,

> teaching seems not to have been automatically, nor even primarily, via straightforward statements of plain language but frequently through modes of indirect discourse; second (and as corollary of the first), that meaning often proves to be multi-leveled, yielding layers of interpretations normally requiring (as in so many cultures other than Greek) that one be *led* from one level of understanding to another.[58]

She described two senses of "concealment." One sense utilizes "modes of indirect discourse," so that, in the case of the poets and early philosophers, indirection took the form of imagery, metaphor, innuendo and other kinds of oblique allusion (*Rep.* 332b-c; *Theaet.* 180c-d, 152c-155d). The second sense of concealment involves "layers" of meaning that must be untangled from the written discourse, so that ambiguities in the formulation of a philosophical statement make it subject to various interpretations. In both cases, understanding the "true meaning" involves a kind of riddle (αἴνιγμα, *Chrm.* 161c-162b; *Meno* 77b-80b; *Tht.* 152c; *Rep.* 332b; *Soph.* 226d). In the case of indirect discourse, sometimes even the best words are insufficient and unreliable for expressing certain kinds of knowledge. In the case of polysemy, the various errors and false meanings must be stripped away from the enigmatic statement, leaving the correct and genuine interpretation. According to Desjardins, if for Plato, words are not adequate for expressing certain ideas, and statements of doctrine are true or false only under an interpretation, then it would appear that any manifest presentation of basic statements of doctrine would not only be "self-defeating," but would at the same time "reveal the philosophical ignorance" of the presenter or author (1988:114-7).

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[57] Eisenberg. *Limits of Reason*, p. 3.

[58] Rosemary Desjardins. "Why Dialogues? Plato's Serious Play," in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed., Charles L. Griswold Jr. (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 113.

This definition of esotericism in Greek education as involving "modes of indirect discourse." and "layers" of meaning suggests how the theory of communications technology presented by the University of Toronto School might shed light on the unwritten doctrine puzzle and vice versa. Eisenberg's view of indeterminacy. Bogdan's view of the way words say and do not say, and Gooch's account of indirection and hiddenness are all aligned with the two senses of concealment Desjardins describes. Their theories suggest how the dialogues themselves might provide a way to assess the correctness of interpretations, just as it says in the *Laws*. I have proposed the possibility that there is both an exoteric and an esoteric teaching. If "modes of indirect discourse" are involved in the esoteric unwritten doctrines, if what is required to fill in more of the total picture is an understanding of the oral traditional system of composition, then the features of the style identified by Parry and other Toronto authorities may help us uncover the oral characteristics associated with the indirection in the dialogues. The second sense of concealment, involving what Desjardins' called "layers of meaning," and what Gooch terms, "hiddenness." reminds us that in a transitional style (i.e.. a composition that straddles the poetic and prose styles). the traditional diction becomes "buried in layers" of prose as the basic formulas are expanded, separated and covered over by later elaborations. This is where the notion of polysemy, this second sense of "hidden truth" might help to explain how even the "written" statements in the dialogue involve an element of esotericism. If "layers of meaning" are contained in the written works, if what is required to identify the correct interpretation is, once again, a knowledge of the way the traditional system works, then perhaps the findings concerning oral-formulaic modes of communication may be of some assistance in helping us tune into the genuine Platonic doctrine.

What we need is to find what Proclus called the "right way" to read the dialogues so that we may ascertain the principles of the traditional system and uncover the unwritten doctrines. At the same time, this "right way" must involve a theory and method consistent with scientific standards of verification and proof. In other words, we need to find the rules and principles that will allow us to access the indirect discourse and also, a "standard of correctness" for the different layers of interpretation, so that when there are discrepancies between different analyses of the esoteric doctrine, we have some way of separating the studies which are better or more accurate from those which are worse or less accurate. It is not enough to simply announce that there is an esoteric doctrine (as did Schleiermacher and Strauss) and then leave it at that. We must be able to point out where it is, what it is. how it works and what its purpose was. According to Ockham's Razor. this explanation must in some ways be simple and obvious once we clue into it. Even though it is an "esoteric doctrine." it will not be satisfactory if the account of it is so convoluted that only two people in the world can understand it. In this regard. the research must be replicable so that subsequent commentators may confirm or

disconfirm findings with respect to the conventions of the system and by way of comparison with the "correct and genuine interpretation." In addition, Ockham's Razor means that in terms of parsimony, a "one doctrine" Platonic theory is superior to a "two doctrine" theory. According to Kuhn's rule, the more evidence a theory can account for, the greater its explanatory value relative to competing interpretations. This "right way of reading" must consolidate more of the evidence than the prevailing accounts, which offer explanations only by excluding from their analyses major pieces of the puzzle. So for example, no weight is given to the testimony of Aristotle and the later commentators in the views of Cherniss and company, while for Kramer and his Tubingen followers, Aristotle's report bears the full weight of their interpretation while Plato's dialogues are relegated to a secondary position. Havelock's theory downplays the problems created by Plato's critique of writing. He also relied on Cherniss's findings to discredit Aristotle's reports of the metaphysical theories of previous philosophers. As it stands then, his version of the University of Toronto theory excludes significant statements in Plato as well as a major portion of the ancient testimony.

I have already indicated that the theory that will be advanced in this study is an outgrowth of the one developed by the Toronto School. Building on this tradition will involve correcting the theory to bring it into closer alignment with the evidence. This revised oral theory of communication will be combined with the most defensible arguments concerning the riddle that have been offered over the history of interpretation of this problem. The synthesis of the two should provide a theory that will help shed light on a number of perplexities concerning Plato's philosophy. If my theory can account for more of the evidence than other approaches, and if its application to the dialogues also yields findings that can be verified or falsified, then it would have distinct advantages over the competition. Such a theory might offer a way to reconnect the ancient paradigms of education with our own, to reclaim the Platonic tradition, and to reunite the philosophy in Plato's writings with the commentaries about it contained in the many documents and materials that have come down to us from antiquity.

Hypotheses

The two main hypotheses in this study have been formulated to indicate the questions in testable form: the first hypothesis is that Plato's writings are an oral literature composed by way of a traditional system; the second hypothesis is that there is a Platonic doctrine in the written dialogues, that it pertains to the technology of the oral system of composition itself, and that it has features that correspond to Aristotle's description.

The First Hypothesis. Plato's writings have a number of attributes associated with oral traditional systems of composition.

(1) Parry and Lord set forth two characteristic features of literature composed in a traditional style. The first is a mnemonic sequence Parry called the "type," wherein formulas are linked in a series so that repetitions of the pattern have many of the same words and details, and they follow a progression that proceeds from beginning to end treating each stage in the same order (Parry 1971: 357). Parry's definition of the "type" was extended by Lord to include "themes," which he defined as "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style." Though the words and phrases vary in different passages in a composition, types and themes involve the repetition of an identical *sequence of ideas*. It is the formulaic arrangement of *ideas* (not formulaic expressions dictated by poetic rhythms), that we should anticipate finding in the Platonic texts.

(2) The second feature noted by Parry and Lord was that oral compositions display inconsistencies and disruptions that indicate the imperfect amalgamation of contributions from more than one source.

(3) The third feature of oral literature was described by Havelock. He noted that in addition to the sequences discovered by Parry, works composed in a traditional style express all experience in the form of a great compendium of stories, loosely connected by the device of one or two agents that speak and act with some consistency.

(4) The feature noted by Yates was the mnemonic system based on topics, images and numerical place markers. Ong developed her evidence and found that the topic system was a device used to organize groups of formulas into episodes and thematic units. In the topic system, alike things are stored in "commonplaces" so that "causes," "effects" "contraries," "comparable things," and "related things" occupy similar regions. The residue of the topic system may be found in the way that the formal and ideational pattern of themes all conform to a nearly identical shape.

(5) Pattern variation in a traditional composition is accomplished through expansion, compression, enrichment, or simplification of the basic motifs.

(6) A fifth characteristic of the oral traditional style, and one that is the residue of the "topic" mnemonic, is the ring-composition discovered by Whitman. This typology is an even larger scale structuring principle that rules the order of the work as a whole. Themes and episodes are organized into a series of scenes that follow a symmetrical A-B-C-B'-A' pattern where the progression is from the beginning situation to a center after which there is an inversion—called the "responsion"—where the order of scenes is repeated in reverse to return to the starting point. More complex versions of the balanced ring composition form a "geometric pattern," wherein the narrative is structured in a "nested" organization of "squares within squares."

(7) Ong described a narrative pattern defined by frequent digressions as a characteristic of the

traditional style.

(8) Another characteristic is the anonymity of the author. Individuals composing in an oral tradition and those composing written materials by means of the oral traditional style use the collectively authored repository as their instrument. The narrator has no voice within the story; his or her presence is revealed only in the arrangement and juxtaposition of traditional elements.

(9) Parry's major argument was that the scope and economy of the oral diction was too complex to have been constructed by an individual poet. Each epic, he maintained, must be the composition of a single poet working within the conventions of the oral traditional system that was created by generations. We should expect the scope and economy of Plato's style to differ from Homer in important respects (for example, we find types and themes in the dialogues, rather than the formulas of the poetic diction). Still, a similar kind of scope and economy in Plato would indicate that the collected works are the repository of a tradition.

If scholars have not noticed repeating patterns such as these embedded in the text, then it is equally possible that they have not noticed the doctrines.

The Second Hypothesis. There is a doctrine in the Platonic writings and it is open to all learners.

(10) The doctrine has to do with the traditional system of composition itself.

(11) Finally, there are statements in the dialogues that correspond to Aristotle's description of Plato's theory.

Methodology

The passages selected for an in-depth analysis in this study will be chosen for their relevance to the problems of poetry, sophistry, and writing in the history of interpretation. One definition (art, technique or τέχνη) will be selected as an exemplar of a pattern of this traditional technology. We will follow the instructions given in the text concerning the division and orderly arrangement of the different branches of this one definition, concentrating, in particular, on the parts of the series that deal with imitation. We will trace the thread of the argument through the sequence of the narrative, sifting out and making explicit the sequential order of the topics discussed by Plato's literary characters during the course of the discussion. As we go, we will note how this definition is *connected* to other topics in the system. We will also attend to the way that the general aspects of the subjects in this scheme come first, followed by a descent through a series of polar classifications to subdivisions containing more specific aspects. This multi-part sequence will serve as the master template, and the reading of versions of the definition in other works will proceed by way of this model. Frye's method of

"freezing" will be adopted as a way of separating out the thematic structure from the prose in the various examples of the pattern. We will also make use of Frye's theory of "second stage language" as it was developed by Bogdan. In so doing. we will view the "truth" or correctness of the interpretation as being primarily concerned with the accurate specification of the interrelationships among the ideas. rather than with either the relations among words. or the "correspondence" of the words to the physical world. Therefore. as we move from one context to the next. we will look for consistencies not in a word for word reiteration of the master definition. or in the match between the words of the discourse and the natural world. but rather. in the *stability of the bonds* that link the ideas together in the theme.[59]

The objective will be to provide a step-by-step explanation of each decision that goes into the reconstruction so that other researchers can reproduce the investigation and confirm or disconfirm the findings. The challenge will be to follow the line of argument over the course of the discussion. separate out what is essential at each stage so that we can identify and build up the formulaic code that in part constitutes the "indirect" teaching. When the themes can be seen to be not only consistent across different works. but even sustained as mutually complimentary. so that their integration yields a coherent "system" of conventions. then there seems to be some justification for thinking that they do in fact represent a "doctrine."

Capsulization of the Argument

Chapters One through Eight of this study present an overview of the problems and the theory. The burden of marshaling evidence in support of the present conception is distributed among these chapters. The remaining chapters set out selected passages that conform to the pattern of the definition of art. and of imitation within that—and they examine the way the prose discourse conforms to this model. They also explain how modes of argument based on analogy. polarity and symmetry may be used to identify the unwritten portions of Plato's mnemonic. The penultimate chapter reviews the ground covered in the study while at the same time. commenting briefly on the explanatory value of the theory relative to competing interpretations of the evidence. The conclusion offers suggestions for further research.

Let us start at the beginning and recap before going on with the capsulization of upcoming chapters. Chapter One urged a parallel between revolutionary changes in our communications technology and the transition of Greek culture and education from orality to literacy following the

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[59] John Miles Foley. *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 1988). p. 43.

adoption of the technology of the alphabet. This historical context—one in which the technology for preserving communication was transformed—set the stage for this analysis of the dialogues. This chapter considered the findings of Rys Carpenter and Milman Parry and the way their work was developed by a number of University of Toronto scholars—McLuhan. Eisenberg. Innis. Havelock. Frye. Bogdan. Gooch and their associates—Yates. Whitman and Ong. I argued that we should anticipate that Plato's writings reflect the tension and competition between oral and written styles. It is reasonable to assume. I argued, that the composer of the dialogues took earlier material which had its source in an oral tradition and reworked it. writing it down but preserving many oral features.

In the second chapter. I brought together the pieces of evidence that make up the problem known as "The Riddle of the Ancient Academy." namely. Plato's criticism of writing. his omissions at key junctures in a dialogue. as well as the reports of Aristotle and the later commentators.

In this. the third chapter. I presented a preliminary critique of the theory of communication advanced by the Toronto School (especially the versions of it presented by Havelock and Ong). and also of the formulation of the "riddle" problem. After that. I set forth the questions. hypotheses, rationale. objectives and the summary of the interpretive strategy that will be followed in this study. I will show in the next two chapters that the scholarly literature on Plato has paid scant attention to the significance of the historical transition from speech to writing. Nor have the findings of Parry and the University of Toronto School been brought to bear on Plato's philosophy in general or on the "riddle" problem in particular. So in the next two chapters. the issue of the transformation of technology from orality to literacy will move to the background while we turn first to matters that are the focus of current controversy, and then after that. to the history of this debate.

Chapters Four through Six of this investigation deal with what might be called the two part "Plato Question:" Why did Plato write dialogues? and How should they be interpreted? The difficulties that make up the question will be considered in terms of inconsistencies and disjunctions first. between different passages in any one dialogue: second. between different dialogues in the collection. and third. between the philosophy we find in the dialogues and the theories attributed to Plato by Aristotle and the later tradition.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the individual dialogues and on the Platonic canon as a whole. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the anomalies and disjunctions that make it hard to reconstruct a Platonic philosophy that reconciles all the contradictions in different books. These issues have led scholars to view inconsistencies as precluding the possibility that Plato's writings contain a unified systematic underpinning.

Chapter Five deals with discrepancies between the philosophy we read in the dialogues and the

theoretical principles attributed to Plato by Aristotle and the entire tradition that came after him. Here. I concentrate on Aristotle's testimony. and consider the details of his discussion in the *Metaphysics* as well as his comments in the *Physics* concerning the "so-called unwritten doctrines." We look closely at the passages that scholars have deemed central to the "Riddle of the Ancient Academy." The aim of this section of the study is to develop a sketch of the "unwritten doctrine" of ultimate principles. Here. I show that Aristotle utilizes patterns of thinking that we know were fundamental to Greek philosophy prior to the invention of formal logic. These modes of argument and methods of explanation rely on analogy. polarity and symmetry. Analogy is used to account for one thing by comparing it to something else like it. Polarity classifies and explains objects or concepts by relating them to one or the other of a pair of opposites. Symmetry entails unity. balance and harmony based on like proportions. According to Aristotle. "comparative measure" involving a one-to-one correspondence between parts by mirror reflection (for example. the face). rotation (flowers. snowflakes). repetition (nautilus shell). or combinations (geometric shapes). are the principles of the unwritten doctrines. The chapter will present a reformulation of the "Plato Question." It will also argue that in these passages that have generated so much controversy. the "doctrines" Aristotle was describing involved a memory system based on the proportions of the musical intervals which he says was invented by the Pythagoreans and developed further by Plato. This chapter will distinguish four main kinds of anomalies that turn up in the dialogues. I argue that three of these should probably be classed as inadvertent consequences of the processes of composition and transmission. Only one would fall into the category of a deliberate strategy. Knowing how to separate the gaps and inconsistencies that are a consequence of inadvertence. from those that reflect the educational aim of the dialogues. will put us in a position to unravel some of Plato's esoteric teachings.

Chapters Six through Eight continues to develop the critical tools needed to proceed with an examination of the evidence in the texts. Chapter Six of the study is divided into two parts. The first part identifies the major alternative interpretations of the "riddle problem." The purpose of this section will be to sort out the main strategies in play today and to determine the commitments entailed by each approach in terms of the evidence embraced or rejected. This research will show that the approaches to interpretation that have arisen since the advent of modern historical and critical methods of philosophical analysis are all grounded in contemporary concepts of original authorship and textuality. Modern models of authorship assume that a work is written in a fairly short time frame. by a clearly defined author or authors. and that the unacknowledged incorporation of previous material into a composition is dishonest if not illegal. These assumptions about authorship have predisposed commentators to ignore. reject or explain away textual features that are characteristic of a traditional

style. Our understanding of traditional compositions will lead us to reject most of the paradigms of interpretation that dominate current philosophical analyses of Plato. The second part of this chapter revisits the body of theory offered by scholars associated with the Toronto School. We pick up the thread of the argument concerning the oral traditional modes of composition in order to figure out where Havelock and Ong erred when they applied the oral theory to Plato's writings. The two main goals of this chapter, as a whole, are first, to arrive at a theory that provides a more accurate picture of how Plato fits in to the transition from orality to literacy; and second, to explain how an understanding of oral traditions affects our interpretation of Plato's philosophy of education.

The research in Chapter Seven provides the facts to back up my argument that Plato should be placed on the oral side of the transition from speech to writing, and for my contention that the dialogues do not denigrate poetry to advance the technology of writing but instead, reject both poetry and writing and argue for an alternative to both. I begin this chapter by presenting evidence from fourth century texts and from Plato's writings. This material shows that oral recitation and the use of a powerful memory were the dominant contexts in philosophy during the time in which the dialogues were composed. I present in addition the archeological evidence that proves beyond question that memory systems were in existence long before Plato's time. Then, I look at statements in the dialogues themselves that comment on the memory art. This will prove that Plato's Socrates was familiar with the memory systems of Simonides and the sophist Hippias, and he disapproved of them. Socrates contrasts the sophistic mnemonic with a "superior kind of study" that matches Aristotle's description point by point. Next, I show that memory in Plato's writings is described in terms of an "inner writing," and as impressions on a "wax block"—notions that were associated from antiquity with the art of memory. This will support my argument that the dialogues offer instruction in the construction of a mnemonic system and in the techniques and conventions governing its use. Whereas the place system of Simonides was based on visualizing images in an imagined architectural space, Plato's system of dialectic is based on reasoning with ideas placed in an intelligible realm of pure forms.

In Chapter Eight, I introduce the research on traditional styles by John Miles Foley, who has furthered the work of Parry and Lord on Homer and South Slavic poetry. I also take a close look at statements made by Socrates in Plato's Republic and in Xenophon's Memorabilia that suggest how it might be possible that the system and doctrines are "hidden in plain view" in the written dialogues, so that the teaching is accessible and open to all learners, even as the loftiest principles can only be apprehended by initiates. I propose that these paragraphs offer a succinct description of how Socrates uses hiddenness and indirection in the dialogues. I also propose the figure-ground relationship as a model for understanding how it is possible for the system and doctrines to be concealed in the open.

In the chapters that follow, we begin to expose some of the mysteries of the techniques and conventions of the traditional system used by the ancient philosophers to compose these philosophical discourses in the oral style, and by their audiences as a guide to reception.

Chapter Nine outlines in detail the different parts of the definition of art or technique (τέχνη) presented in Plato's *Sophist*, concentrating, in particular, on the parts of this series that are designated to imitation. This sequence will serve as the "master pattern" or "standard of correctness," and all the variations on this pattern in different works will be read in its light. I also look closely at the specification of the lines that divide the topics into the sequence of classes that make up this one definition. I argue that the instruction concerning the lines is the basis for the construction of the geometry that functions as the "background" in Plato's mnemonic system, and that the various items classed in each topic in *this* definition are the "commonplaces." I also point to numerous statements that match Aristotle's explanation of the doctrines held by Plato. The definition serves as one example of how to pinpoint the exact location of the omissions and other intentional irregularities that constitute the "indirect," or "unwritten" portions of the doctrine. The identification of the gaps in the sequence is a pre-requisite to filling in the blanks—of that which is unwritten—by using the material that is written in conjunction with a knowledge of the rules and conventions of the system.

Once the different parts of the definition have been distinguished, I go on, in Chapter Ten, to show how the passages that have figured prominently in the critiques of poetry and writing are structured in a string patterned formulaic sequence that conforms to the order of the divisions or categories of the paragon definition. I consider the critique of writing in the *Phaedrus*, *Protagoras* and in the *Seventh Letter*, the comments concerning poetry in the *Republic*, and the discussion concerning the readmission of the poets in the *Laws*. I show that *all of these passages conform to an identical pattern*. This pattern, I demonstrate, manifests all of the features of a "formula type" or "theme," with the repeating series of topics indicative of the mnemonic place system. Moreover, the variations may be seen to expand, compress, simplify or embellish the basic structural pattern. That is to say, in each of these passages we find embedded in the prose the same multi-part sequence that forms a kind of stratum that is enfolded within the narrative. Having a number of different variations on the same pattern makes it easier to see how the "topics" are consistent and conform to the formal structure of the definition even though the wording and terminology of the content changes from one book to the next.

In Chapter Eleven, I will prove that this one definition—or parts of it—may be found in every dialogue in the canon and in many of those that have been regarded as spurious (the exceptions, as I have pointed out, are the *Definitions* and the *Epigrams*). Some of these chapters provide a brief

commentary on the text. Most of the repetitions of the definition will be presented without commentary. Providing an explanation of every version of the sequence would exceed the size limitations of this dissertation. Yet. I believe it is important to present one in-depth sampling of a definition to demonstrate the comprehensive nature of the structural patterning. That is why I provide one version of the sequence from every dialogue. However. I present only the outline of the theme so that it is clear how the definition serves as the link between the form and the content of these works. At the end of this exercise. we will have a long line-up of different versions of the pattern so they can be compared one to another. Setting passages "side by side." and contemplating how they are alike and unalike. as the dialogues themselves suggest (*Rep* 435a; *Stsmn* 285b-c) makes irregularities in the sequence readily apparent. and it also make it possible to discern more complex regularities.

In Chapter Twelve. I will show that the same sequence is repeated in Xenophon's report of Socrates in the *Memorabilia*. and in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

The identification of all these different reiterations of the pattern will put us in a position to recognize the sequence in the opening chapters of the Chinese classic. the *Chuang Tzu*. and in Genesis 1-3 of the Old Testament. The versions of the pattern that occur in these two ancient texts will be presented in Chapter Thirteen.

Chapter Fourteen. the results section of the study. begins with a brief recapitulation of the main lines of the argument. I point out that an understanding of the traditional style has cleared up a number of discordances between Plato's philosophy and the ancient testimony concerning it. Since the acceptability of the hypotheses can be measured to some extent by comparing their explanatory power against other competing hypotheses. during the course of the review. I highlight some of advantages of my theory in dealing with the problems relative to alternative interpretations of the evidence. Given that the theory has made it possible for us to uncover a consistent and hitherto unidentified pattern in Plato. as well as in several other ancient texts. that it can explain more of the evidence. and that it can deal with inconsistencies and anomalies that cannot be reconciled in other approaches. I argue that it presents a more comprehensive account than competing hypotheses, and that it has more to recommend it than major alternatives.

In the Fifteenth. concluding chapter. I point out that the occurrence of this multi-part sequence in so many ancient books makes it unlikely that the pattern is either random or accidental. As Parry argued. repetition is confirmation of a pattern and it is clear that the passages in all these different works conform to a typology that is familiar to us from the research on oral traditions. The occurrence of the pattern in the texts of two other ancient Greek authors—Xenophon and Aristotle—adds additional weight to the theory that Plato's writings have their source in an oral tradition. That the

pattern turns up in the *Chuang Tzu* and in the book of Genesis tips the balance in favor of the conclusion. These writings are shaped by the conventions of the oral traditional system of philosophy that is set forth in the doctrines in Plato's dialogues. This chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

Objectives

Even though there has been a great deal of work on all aspects of Plato's dialogues in the twentieth century, it has been fragmented, with most studies concentrating on individual dialogues or on several related dialogues in the collection.[60] There have been few studies of Plato as a whole. Though one dialogue—the *Sophist*—is the centerpiece of this analysis, the objective will be to develop a theory that can be applied to all of Plato's dialogues and *Letters*. Another primary objective will be to demonstrate that the findings of this study are firmly seated in the body of existing knowledge and that my argument is contingent on a mere shift of emphasis in the interpretation of previous findings, and on a synthesis of existing research. Where I do depart from previous scholars is in my view that these writings are shaped by the conventions of an oral traditional style of philosophy, and in the strength of my contention that there is a Platonic doctrine in the dialogues, that it explains the theory behind the system of composition itself, and that the doctrine tallies with descriptions of the philosophy attributed to Plato by Aristotle and the later tradition. The objective will be to identify the features characteristic of the traditional system in the text, and then to show how to identify the doctrines that describe how to use the mnemonic technology. A corollary goal will be to set out the results of the investigation in a manner that renders them capable of duplication by subsequent researchers. For my theory to be acceptable, it must be shown to be better than its competitors in solving a group of problems that scholars have come to recognize as critical and to which the philosophical community has previously only drawn attention. Showing that my theory provides a more comprehensive explanation in comparison with alternatives is another major aim of this project.

The complexity and accuracy of Plato's system is such that it opens vast new territory for future research. Most of the system remains to be discovered and articulated. My theory and the ground I have covered in this study is only the genesis of a new approach, one that leaves a number of outstanding problems for continued study and further research.

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[60] For a discussion, see Julia Annas, "Plato," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds., Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 1193.

Limitations

This study aims at a reorientation of the overall vision of Plato's writings. There is no doubt that my focus on the "big picture" has been to the detriment of the details. In a field where many spend their careers specializing in the analysis of one or two dialogues, taking a synoptic approach to the corpus as a whole necessarily involves many compromises. Hence, it will be particularly important to set limits on the parameters of this research.

I want to emphasize that my use of the theories of members of the Toronto School and their colleagues is restricted to the aspects of their writings outlined in the pages of this study. The findings concerning the oral traditional style of Homer are cited as evidence in support of my analysis of the dialogues, and so my use of this material is similarly confined to what I have set forth in the preceding chapters. My goal is to *find* evidence of the oral traditional system and doctrines in Plato's writings, to demonstrate that these formulaic structures are consistent—in both the dialogues, and in four other books that have been dated to the same time frame (428-319 B.C.E.). A secondary goal is to understand how these patterns could have been overlooked by interpreters. I do not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of them, to present a complete reconstruction of Plato's system, or to assess the philosophical merit of the doctrines. Accordingly, I treat numerous matters quite cursorily because they do not directly touch my central concerns. Since my emphasis is on the Platonic system, I simply present the versions of the sequence in other ancient texts; I do not engage in a lengthy commentary on the versions of the pattern identified in these other works. With respect to the issue of "system," my argument is that many of the puzzling inconsistencies in the dialogues become comprehensible once we understand that the text was likely "put together" from traditional material. The limits of this study do not allow for the provision of a detailed account of the system, but only sufficient examples as would show my hypothesis to be *more plausible than other explanations* for anomalies that have been offered in the history of interpretation. Similarly, where education is concerned, the focus on the oral traditional forms of teaching means that I largely ignore a great deal of what counts as Plato's philosophy of education by almost anyone's standard.

I maintain that each of the ancient books that I include in this study (such as the *Memoribilia*, the *Chuang Tzu* and the Old Testament) contributes to the understanding of different aspects of Plato's system. However, my discussion of them is extremely selective, and I do not pretend to be an authority on these texts. Even within Plato's dialogues, limits of space have led me to concentrate on certain works over others. In determining my focus, I have concentrated on passages that have been central to certain narrowly circumscribed debates in the history of interpretation. Therefore, I have not given anything like a complete commentary on any one dialogue (even the *Sophist*); I have instead focused

on those aspects of these writings that seem to matter most to the present inquiry. Of course. a great deal of what I have uncovered sheds new light on the theories concerning politics. morality. ethics. and society in Plato's dialogues. but I have not examined any of these connections. since I maintain that the traditional system and the Platonic doctrines can be understood without them. although there is no doubt that a full account would have to include them.

A number of additional constraints have been considered during the formulation of the study and should be mentioned here. The discussion of Aristotle and the Aristotelian authorities focusses on their testimony concerning Plato philosophy. Since the central concern is to find Plato's doctrine, this study utilizes the testimony as evidence and therefore. it must by-pass the theories presented in these other works—even their more fully developed comments concerning Plato. As a result. many issues that should by rights be entitled to some treatment have not been touched on at all. While there will be some consideration of the criticisms Aristotle leveled against the Platonists. a full investigation of his critique is beyond the scope of this present work. Further. it is important to emphasize that I will not be relying on Aristotle's report in establishing the principles of Plato's philosophy. In other words. I will not be arguing to the conclusion that Plato held particular doctrines from the premise that Aristotle said that he did. My reason for citing Aristotle's testimony is so that we may use his account to guide us in the search for the unwritten doctrines. As to whether the particular doctrines he claimed Plato espoused can be found in his writings. and the details of what they might be. this must be taken from the Platonic writings alone. If these doctrines can be found in the text and can be shown to be major components of the philosophy. then this will allow us to make sense of the otherwise puzzling ancient reports.

Parry pointed out that the Homeric formulas are so complicated that their analysis requires "immense labor." The definitions in Plato are. I believe. much more complex than anything we find in Homer (though perhaps my prejudice is showing here). The classifications of the mnemonic build dimensionally. from simple formulations based on lines. to more abstract conceptions based on planes. and then to solid geometric shapes. with each new level of magnitude incorporating all the subthemes of the previous dimensions and combining them into a more complex unity. A full demonstration of how the sequences come together is beyond the scope of this present study (not to mention the ability of this researcher!). The much more limited objective will be to provide a map of two dimensions of one definition. Even in this. I am certain that I will have made a number of errors in my description of the classifications. Therefore. I have attempted to make explicit my reasons for making each of the divisions so that other researchers may follow the steps of my procedure and check at every stage to see whether or not the structure I have uncovered conforms to the descriptions of it in the text.

Again. let me restate. explain and defend the limits that form the initial and terminal points of the proposed investigation. This study is not about the traditional system as a whole but only about certain parts of it. It is not about the unwritten doctrines. only about how they can be found. This thesis is not about Plato's philosophical system. only about certain restricted manifestations of it. It is not about Xenophon. the *Chuang Tzu.* or the Book of Genesis. only about the features of the Platonic system that may be identified in them. I am well aware that I only address many issues in a partial and preliminary way. The broader issue of the system as a whole—in Plato and in the other texts—is not only beyond the scope of the present study. it is probably too vast a project for any single endeavor.

Let us now turn away from the big picture to focus the lens of our inquiry on the more circumscribed problems of reading and interpretation that stem from Plato's writing style.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PLATO QUESTION

In these next two chapters. we consider the puzzles surrounding the interpretation of Plato's writings. These perplexities occur on three different levels: first. at the level of the individual works: second. at the level of the corpus as a whole: and third, at the level of the testimony of Aristotle and of the entire Platonic tradition up to the time when the Neoplatonic approach to interpretation came to an end. In this chapter, we consider the difficulties at the first two levels. In the next chapter, we deal with Aristotle's report. The purpose of the two, taken together. is to set out the anomalies and violations of expectation that have attracted the increasing attention of the philosophical community, and at the same time. to set forth the cluster of difficulties that the theory of oral traditions helps to explain. A related goal is to show that while Plato's writings display a number of features characteristic of traditional texts. this recognition has not been integrated into our theories for the interpretation of this philosophy. Scholars continue to interpret the dialogues in light of modern models of authorship and textual formation.

Since everything that Plato wrote appears to have survived the centuries, one would expect that there would be little uncertainty about the scope and meaning of his teaching. However, such is not the case. For a number of reasons, the way Plato's dialogues are written makes them difficult to interpret. In fact, a great deal of the most recent scholarship centers on what might be called the two-part "Plato Question." Just as in Parry's time, commentators sought answers to the two part "Homeric Question:" (Who was Homer? and What do his writings represent?), so today, much of the current discussion centers on the two part question: *Why* did Plato write dialogues? and *How* should these writings be read?[1] Thus, the lens of the inquiry in this chapter is focussed on the problems created by

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[1] There are so many studies dealing with these two questions that only the most significant will be noted here. There are three collections of papers on this topic, the most recent edited by Christopher Gill and Mary Margaret McCabe, eds., *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); the second by Gerald A. Press, ed., *Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993); and a third by Charles L. Griswold, ed., *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings* (New York: Routledge, 1988). See also J.M. Anderson, "On the Platonic Dialogue," *Essays in Metaphysics*, ed., C.G. Vaught (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970); Robert S. Brumbaugh, "Doctrine and Dramatic Dates of Plato's Dialogues," *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 2. ed., J.P. Anton and A. Preus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983) and *Platonic Studies of Greek Philosophy: Form, Arts, Gadgets and Hemlock* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 1989); Diskin Clay, "Platonic Studies and the Study of Plato," *Arion*, 2 (1975): 116-132, and "Reading the Republic," in *Platonic Writings. Platonic Readings*, ed., Charles L. Griswold Jr. (New York: Routledge, 1988); J. Fisher, "Plato on Writing and Doing Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27 (1966): 163-172: individual works by Charles L. Griswold, Jr. "Style and Philosophy: the Case of Plato's Dialogues,"

Plato's use of the dialogue form. and on the issues of reading and interpretation that have arisen in response to them. Let us consider the individual writings.

The Individual Works

The texts that have come down to us from antiquity in Plato's name consist of a number of separate books structured into plays or letters. Each of the dialogues presents a conversation between a lead character and several interlocutors. *Letters* too are a form of conversation. albeit one-sided. What is the significance of this dialogic form and how does this style affect our interpretation of Plato's philosophy?

Form and Content. Plato's writings—with the exception of the *Letters.* the *Definitions* and the *Epigrams*—take the "form" of dialogues. That is. their formal structure is shaped into a question-and-answer format that depicts a conversation between two or more characters. The content of this conversation consists of philosophical ideas intermingled with history. myths. images, stories, metaphors and other "literary" features.[2] The current controversy centers on the relation between the dramatic form and the philosophical content—or what the dialogues themselves refer to as the "form"

Monist. 63 (1980): 530-46 and his "Introduction" in *Self-Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986): D. Hyland, "Why Plato Wrote Dialogues," *Philosophy and Rhetoric.* Vol. I (1968): 38-50: C.H. Kahn. "Did Plato Write Socratic Dialogues?" *Classical Quarterly.* 31 (1981): 305-20: A.A. Krentz, "Dramatic Form and Philosophical Content in Plato's Dialogues." *Philosophy and Literature.* Vol.7 (1983): 32-47: H. Lesser. "Style and Pedagogy in Plato and Aristotle." *Philosophy.* 57 (1982): 388-94: A.W. Levi. "Philosophy as Literature: The Dialogue." *Philosophy and Rhetoric,* 9 (1976): 1-20: Philip Merlan. "Form and Content in Plato's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas.* Vol. 8 (1947): 406-30: K.F. Moors. "Plato's Use of Dialogue." *Classical World,* 72 (1978): 77-93: Martha C. Nussbaum. "Fictions of the Soul." *Philosophy and Literature,* Vol.7 (1983) 145-161 and *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): Gerald A. Press, "The State of the Question in the Study of Plato," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. XXXIV (1996): 507-31: D.L. Roochnick, "The Impossibility of Philosophical Dialogue," *Philosophy and Rhetoric,* 19 (1986): 147-65: K. Seeskin, "Socratic Philosophy and the Dialogue Form," *Philosophy and Literature.* 8 (1984): 181-94 and *Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987): Rosamond Kent Sprague, "Logic and Literary Form in Plato," *Personalist.* 48 (1967): 560-72 and "Some Platonic Recollections." in Press (1993): Michael V. Stokes. *Plato's Socratic Conversations: Drama and Dialectic in Three Dialogues* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986): H. Thesleff. *Studies in the Styles of Plato* (Helsinki: Societas Philosophica Fennica, 1982): E.N. Tigerstedt. *The Decline and Fall of the Neoplatonic Interpretation of Plato: An Outline and Some Observations* (Helsinki: Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, 52, 1974): and *Interpreting Plato* (Stockholm. Sweden: Almquist & Wiksell, 1977): H.G. Wolz, "Philosophy as Drama: An Approach to Plato's Dialogues," *International Philosophical Quarterly,* 3 (1963): 236-70: and R. Zaslavsky, *Platonic Myth and Platonic Writing* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981).

[2] Ludwig Edelsten. "The Function of the Myth in Plato's Philosophy." *Journal of the History of Ideas.* 10 (October 1949): 463-81.

and "matter" of speech (*Rep.* 392c-d: *Phd.* 264c)—and on whether or how the philosophy should be distinguished from the literary elements.[3] In the past, many commentators saw the literary aspects of the dialogues as being extraneous to the philosophy.[4] The approach they advocated involved extracting the philosophical matter (the arguments), from the dialogues' conversational form (characters, settings and the like). More recently, a number of voices have been raised in opposition to this practice of ignoring everything except the sections deemed to contain what Rosemary Kent Sprague has called the "philosophical meat of the dialogue."[5] Increasingly, the literary form is seen as essential to the philosophy and the "form" and "content" are thought to be integrated. For those who take the literary elements seriously, the debate centers on *how* this integration is to be accomplished. What is the relationship between Plato's writing style and the theory of forms? Is there some connection between the fact that Plato structured his philosophy in the form of a conversation, and the "metaphysical" structure of "reality" in the dialogues? As Charles L. Griswold has pointed out, "No one has been able to specify in detail just what it is about *this* view of "reality" that supports and is supported by *this* view of philosophy as dialectic and dialogue."[6] From these questions, we can observe that the dialogic question and answer format of these writings has been assumed to be their "form." Even though Plato is known for the "forms," more complex and consistent patterns have not been identified.

Dialogue or Doctrine? The dialogues repeatedly call for "full explanations," complete accounts, and accurate definitions of theories. Yet, while standard textbooks and histories of philosophy describe Plato as having had a "theory" of knowledge and of forms, a view of learning as recollection, a method of dialectic, a doctrine of art as "imitation" as well as conceptions of "the good" and of knowledge, these writings in point of fact cannot be said to contain any explicitly stated theories

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[3] A.A. Krentz, "Dramatic Form and Philosophical Content in Plato's Dialogues." *Philosophy and Literature*, Vol.7 (1983): 32-47.

[4] The view that the literary elements in Plato are "superfluous for Philosophy" was advocated by Hegel, who suggested separating the philosophical content from the literary form of the dialogues. "In order to gather Plato's philosophy from the dialogues" one should distinguish "what belongs to ordinary conception—especially where Plato has recourse to myths for the presentation of a philosophic idea—from the philosophic idea itself: only then do we know that what belongs only to the ordinary conception, as such, does not belong to thought, is not the essential" [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and the Platonists*, Vol. 2, trans., E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1840, 1995), pp. 10: 17 and 20]. Martha Nussbaum, for example, observed that "the *Republic*'s sun, line, and cave . . . are not essential to the philosophical argument: they come after it and reinforce . . . general philosophical truths for which [Plato] has already argued" [Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 131].

[5] Sprague, "Platonic Recollections," p. 251.

[6] Griswold, *Plato's Phaedrus*, pp. ix-x.

of this sort.[7] For example, in spite of the centrality of the forms or of the "good" to Plato's philosophy, relatively little is actually said about them in the dialogues. Granted, there are passages that discuss aspects of these theories. Yet, nowhere do we find set out in a direct and straightforward manner a comprehensive account of the foundational principles of this philosophy.[8] This is one of the perplexities that has given credence to the idea that Plato did not record or make public his most significant teachings but instead, disclosed his doctrines privately in oral lectures to members of his inner circle. As we will see, uncovering the techniques at work behind hiddenness and indirection in the dialogues will pave the way to the discovery of the most profound teachings of this tradition.

Digressions and Irrelevancies. As an argument progresses over the course of a dialogue, the discussion frequently deviates from the subject under consideration, digresses to re-examine ground already covered or rambles on about things that seem extraneous to the ostensible topic.[9] This means that readers must sift out the kernel of Plato's thought on any particular issue from a number of seemingly unrelated matters. However, since positions established early in a dialogue are often reconsidered, called into question, and then revised or sometimes even rejected later in the same work, it is not easy to extract passages from their context or to pin anything down as having been established once and for all.[10] Disruptions and recommencements make it hard to determine the relation between the early and later books of the *Republic*,[11] for example, or how the various sections of the *Philebus* are connected one to another,[12] or whether the *Phaedrus*[13] or the *Parmenides*[14] can be taken as forming

[7]Gooch, *Word and Silence*, pp. 200-205. Another in-depth discussion of this issue may be found in a recent book by Kenneth Sayre, *Plato's Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp. 7-10.

[8]Cynthia Hampton. *Pleasure, Knowledge and Being: An Analysis of Plato's Philebus* (New York: SUNY, 1990).

[9]Dialogues such as the *Republic* and *Laws*, for example, deal with matters promised in their titles but also with much that does not seem to belong to the definition of justice. Even in the *Sophist* (the one dialogue which has as its stated object the search for a definition of the sophist and which appears to arrive at a successful definition), many matters are dealt with which appear to have little or nothing to do with the main topic.

[10] Nussbaum. *Fragility of Goodness*, pp. 123-125.

[11]Diogenes Laertius mentions that "the beginning of the *Republic* was found several times revised and rewritten" [*Lives* III. 37-38]. Deanne Bogdan, pointed out that it was not really possible to reconcile contradictions between early and later books [*Instruction and Delight*, pp. 24-25. See as well Philip H. Hwang's "Poetry in Plato's *Republic*," *Philosophical Quarterly* (1991), p. 37].

[12] J.C.B Gosling, *Plato: Philebus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 228; Cynthia Hampton, *Pleasure, Knowledge, and Being* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 1-2;

[13] Jan Zwicky, "Plato's *Phaedrus*: Philosophy as Dialogue With the Dead," *Apeiron*, Vol. XXX (1997): 19-47.

[14] Kenneth M. Sayre. *Parmenides' Lesson: Translation and Explication of Plato's Parmenides* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996). p. xi-xx.

one organic whole.

Again, an understanding of the oral style sheds light on these difficulties. The rough transitions and disjunctions that appear to disrupt the unity of these dialogues may be instances where traditional material was combined. In addition, a meandering and digressive style is, according to Ong, a characteristic feature of orally derived narrative. Moreover, what appears to be a digression will often turn out to be a "full explanation" of a definition, that is, one that touches on every topic in the sequence from beginning to end without leaving out a single place in the series. We will see as well that digressions are a key aspect of the method of dialectic. Matters that initially seem unrelated to a given conception are later recognized as having a crucial bearing on this topic. Hence, learners are compelled to continually go back over previous material, and to reassess and adjust their understanding as they recover more and more of the subtle teaching. As we begin to identify the topics, themes and other patterns, it will become obvious that it is the underlying order and arrangement of the sequences that ties all the diverse subjects in a dialogue together into an organic unity. However, since current thinking has remained relatively untouched by the theory of oral traditions, readers continue to try and explain how any one dialogue "hangs together" as a self-contained, unified whole.

Dogma or Skepticism? An issue that is related to the question of whether or not there is a doctrine in the dialogues concerns the status of the *aporetic* books, those works which end but do not seem to conclude. The fact that so many dialogues end inconclusively leaves the learner "up in the air," uncertain as to whether or not any one point of view has prevailed.[15] Since antiquity (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, III. 51-53), opinion has been divided between those who see the dialogues as actually putting forward "doctrines," and those who see these works as only offering different points of view on various matters.[16] Those who come down on the dogmatic side of the equation see in the dialogues positive doctrines that point to a universal, enduring, and unchanging standard. They believe that Plato's Socrates defends a number of his own views.[17] However, these commentators are frequently nonplussed to discover how difficult it is to defend a view of Plato as arguing for particular positions, since the author never speaks directly to readers and the reasoning offered for various convictions is frequently flawed.[18] Those who are aligned with the skeptics, on the other hand, see the pursuit of

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[15] For example, the *Theaetetus* ends without having arrived at a satisfactory definition of knowledge; the *Euthyphro* without having attained a conception of piety; the *Charmides* without drawing conclusions about self-control; and the *Laches* does not achieve a definition of courage.

[16] Griswold, *Plato's Phaedrus*, pp. ix-x.

[17] Kraut, *Companion to Plato*, p. 9.

[18] Peter Geach, "Plato's *Euthryphro*: An Analysis and Commentary," *Monist* 50 (1960): 369-82; Richard Robinson, "Plato's Consciousness of Fallacy," *Mind* 51 (1942): 97-114; David Sachs, "A Fallacy

knowledge in these writings as open-ended. They believe Socrates destroys the position of his opponent without ever putting forward positive doctrines of his own.

Here again, knowledge of the formulaic patterns that form the stable ground underlying the philosophical content will help make sense of these sorts of conundrums. With respect to arguments in the dialogues, it is important to know about the methods of explanation that preceded the development of formal logic. Once we know that the dialogues use this kind of reasoning, it becomes clear that judging the arguments by the standards of formal logic involves committing the error of historical anachronism, of misinterpreting the past in terms of the present. With regard to the aporetic dialogues, it is important to understand that the sequences are patterned on the ring composition, moving in circles from beginning to end and then reversing and returning to the starting point.[19] Knowing the underlying order of topics and their arrangement in the geometric ring structure lets us see that the dialogues do not always start at the beginning of a series—A-B-C-D. The discussion may start from a different place in the sequence and then circle back to the beginning, e.g. D-A-B-C. Thus, the correct definition may not be given at the end of the dialogue. It may, however, be presented in the course of the dialogue even though this is not always made explicit.

The Anonymity of the Author. The majority of Plato's writings are dialogues, and dialogues are plays. Their theatrical form is structured into discussions among various characters. Plato is not a member of the cast. Only in the *Letters* do we have anything like a first person account from the author. Authorial anonymity is, of course, a distinguishing feature of works composed in an oral traditional style. However, since the research concerning this style has not filtered through to philosophers, the question of why Plato does not have a speaking part in the dialogues remains a huge topic of debate in contemporary interpretation. Numerous studies continue to grapple with the issue

in Plato's *Republic,*" *Philosophical Review* 72 (1963): 141-58; and Sayre (1995), p. 8.

[19]A well-known example would be the *Theaetetus*. This dialogue appears to close without arriving at a successful definition of knowledge. However, learners tuned into the patterns notice that Socrates divides knowledge into four distinct parts by way of four views of "what knowledge really is": (1) the position that "knowledge and wisdom are the same thing" (*Tht.* 145e); (2) the view that "perception comes to be knowledge" (*Tht.* 151e); (3) the saying that "true judgment is knowledge" (*Tht.* 187b-200e); and (4) the notion that "knowledge is true belief with an account" (*Tht.* 201c-206c). In the end, Socrates announces that "neither perception, nor true belief, nor the addition of an 'account' to true belief can be knowledge" (*Tht.* 210b). At the same time, he warns that they have been moving in "the most vicious of circles," and he tells Theaetetus to go back to the beginning and "try to conceive afresh." When we learn from other dialogues that the four main parts into which knowledge is divided are, from the lowest to the highest rank in the sequence: A) perception; B) true belief or opinion; C) knowledge; and D) wisdom, it becomes obvious that the story pattern of the dialogue follows the sequence, D-A-B-C.

of distinguishing what Plato thought from the views expressed by the actors in his dramas.[20] Commentators frequently suggest that Socrates speaks for Plato.[21] However, the problem with assuming that Socrates is Plato's spokesman is that Socrates is not present in the so-called later dialogues. Some commentators have pointed out that it is not even reasonable to assume that a literary character represents the views of the author. At the very least, they point out that the theatrical form of the dialogues makes it difficult to ascribe a single line of argument to Plato,[22] or even to speak of him as having had certain "views" or "intentions." Even so, many continue to believe that such a view exists.[23] The abiding question is how to arrive at a principle for distinguishing Plato's views from the opinions put forward by the characters.

History or Fiction? Connected to the issue of authorial anonymity is the question of whether we should regard the dialogues as histories or as works of fiction. In the current debate, scholars note that many of the characters in Plato's dialogues bear the names of historical figures. Hence, it has often been assumed that the dialogues are more or less accurate transcripts of real-life oral conversations that took place between Socrates and his contemporaries. However, if these writings are the verbatim documents of the philosophical discussions of Socrates, as many scholars believe, then the question arises as to whether the dialogues can be said to contain Plato's own philosophy. A further complication is that it is difficult to defend a view of the dialogues as solely chronicles of conversations that actually took place, since Plato was not the only author to write about Socrates. Different versions of the old man's character, activities and philosophy have come down to us from Aristophanes, Xenophon, and even Aristotle.[24] These alternative accounts suggest that the dialogues cannot be taken as representing an accurate "historical record"[25] of events that took place in ancient Athens.

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[20] Ludwig Edelstein, "Platonic Anonymity," *American Journal of Philology* 83 (1962): 1-22; L.A. Kosman, "Silence and Imitation in the Platonic Dialogues," in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, eds. James Klagge and Nicholas Smith (*Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* [suppl] 1992): 73-92; Merlan, "Form and Content in Plato," pp. 406-430; Paul Plass, "Philosophic Anonymity and Irony in the Platonic Dialogues," *American Journal of Philology* 85 (1964): 254-78.

[21] See for example Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 9; John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1914; 1950): pp. 178 and 313; Jacob Klein, *Plato's Trilogy* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 1-2; Kraut, *Companion to Plato*, pp. 29 and 49; and A.E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (1926; rpt. ed., New York: Meridian, 1956), p. 504.

[22] Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 87.

[23] Desjardins, *Rational Enterprise*, p. 200; and Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 87.

[24] Gooch, *Word and Silence*, pp. 4-5.

[25] For example, a later report recounts an episode in which Socrates accused Plato of telling lies about him. Plato, he complained, had him say a lot of things in the dialogues that he never ever said [Diogenes *Laertius* III. 35].

Interpreters also run into problems if they assume that the Socrates of the dialogues is a fictional character, separate and distinct from the real person who was sentenced to death in 322 B.C.E. For if we cannot assume that the dialogues are reconstructions of historical events, we cannot take them to be purely fictional works either, for there are certainly a number of points about which all of the portrayals of Socrates agree. Since Plato is our most comprehensive source for information concerning Socrates, it would be discouraging if his literary portrait looked nothing like Socrates the historical figure. Yet, if we try to take a middle path and view the dialogues as a hybrid of historical event and imaginative creation,[26] then the difficult question becomes, "Where do we draw the line?" Once again, we encounter a feature that is characteristic of works with oral roots: for the blurring of the relation between historical fact and fictional account is a recognizable feature of traditional compositions.

Obscurity. The writing style in the dialogues is abstruse and highly perplexing. Ludwig Wittgenstein summed up the view of many when he declared in frustration: "Reading the Socratic dialogues one has the feeling: what a frightful waste of time! What's the point of these arguments that prove nothing and clarify nothing?"[27] Scholars familiar with traditional modes of composition would see his complaint as the expression of a mind inured in the scribal habits of manuscript culture. This is not to suggest that the application of oral-formulaic theory would make the dialogues transparent to interpretation. These writings are often "impenetrable on first reading." Some, particularly the so-called later works, do not give up their meaning easily even after repeated re-reading.[28] Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, editors of the *Collected Dialogues of Plato,* describe many passages in Plato's writings as being difficult to understand because they run "on and on in words that appear to make sense and yet convey nothing to the mind."[29] Even where there is not much of a problem comprehending what is said, it is still difficult to pin down exactly what is meant.[30] What Plato says of Parmenides could well be applied to his own writings, "we may not understand his words, and may

[26] Terence Irwin, for example, argues that the "early" dialogues contain the views of the historical Socrates while the later dialogues represent the views of Plato. See his *Plato's Ethics,* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 13-15. Se also Terry Penner, "Socrates and the Early Dialogues," in Kraut, *Companion to Plato,* p. 121, for a slightly different version of this same theory.

[27] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* ed., P. Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931, 1980), p. 14.

[28] Thomas Cahill, remarks: "No one grasps Plato by reading him through quickly or once" [*How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 55]; see also Stanley Rosen's remarks in his *Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 1 and 2.

[29] Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 920.

[30] Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato,* p. 22.

be still further from understanding what he meant by them" (*Tht.* 184a). Bringing a knowledge of oral traditional systems of composition to bear on our reading of these texts may not eliminate all obscurity or make it any easier to understand their meaning. However, altering the conceptual frame in which these writings are understood may help remove some existing obstacles to their interpretation, thereby opening new avenues for the discovery of meaning.

Ambiguity. Part of the difficulty with these texts lies in the ambiguity of the Platonic writing style.[31] Some see these works as having been intentionally contrived in an nebulous manner so that they are capable of being understood in two or more possible ways and hence, "subject to inadequate or false as well as adequate or true interpretations."[32] Other commentators see no ambiguities or equivocations whatsoever.[33] However, it is hard to find support for this latter view when Plato's dialogues themselves acknowledge this ambiguity inherent in philosophical statements by referring to them as "riddles" (*Ap.* 21b; *Chrm.* 161c, 162a-b; and *Rep.* 332b).

Irony. Tied in with the problem of ambiguity is the issue of irony.[34] Ever since Soren Kierkegaard published *The Concept of Irony With Continual Reference to Socrates,* scholars have been obliged to come to terms with Socrates' irony.[35] The biggest difficulty is in putting one's finger on specific examples of it. Rosemary Desjardins saw "classic" cases of Socratic irony as involving the "tension between what is said and what is actually meant."[36] Charles Griswold agreed. He located the nexus of the tension in the difference between the dialogue that is conducted by the interlocutors and the one that the reader conducts with the text.[37] Gregory Vlastos elaborated a notion of "complex

[31] Desjardins, *Rational Enterprise.* pp. 6-7; Press, "State of the Question," p. 511.

[32] Ibid..

[33] Rosalind Weiss, "HO AGATHOS as HO DUNATOS in the *Hippias Minor.*" *Classical Quarterly* 31 (1981): 187-204; and Jane S. Zembaty, "Socrates' Perplexity in Plato's *Hippias Minor.*" *Essays in Ancient Philosophy III: Plato,* eds., John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

[34] E.L. Burge, "The Irony of Socrates," *Antichthon,* 3 (1969): 5-17; Desjardins, *Rational Enterprise,* p. 251; Paul W. Gooch, "Socrates: Devious or Divine?" *Greece & Rome,* Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (1985), p. 41; and "Irony and Insight in Plato's *Meno,*" *Laval théologique et philosophique* 43 (1987): 189 - 203; Drew A. Hyland, "Taking the Longer Road: The Irony of Plato's *Republic,*" *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale.* Vol. 93 (1991): 317-355; Sayre (1995), pp. 33-65; P. Plass. "Philosophic Anonymity and Irony in the Platonic Dialogues." *American Journal of Philology,* 85 (1964): 254-78; and Tigerstedt. *Interpreting Plato,* p. 95; Gregory Vlastos, "Socratic Irony,"*Classical Quarterly.* 37 (1987): 79-96.

[35] Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony With Continual Reference to Socrates,* eds. and trans., Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[36] Rosemary Desjardins, *The Rational Enterprise: Logos in Plato's Theaetetus* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 251.

[37] Charles Griswold, *Self-Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 12-13.

irony," where "what is said both is and isn't what is meant." He found that the purpose of irony was to propound "a kind of riddle" which is left to be solved by the hearer. Alexander Nehamas maintained that irony in the dialogues expresses an essential uncertainty.[38] Paul Plass saw the term "irony" as covering all "the various facets of concealment, anonymity, unexpected humor and long discussions that have negative results."[39] The analysis of Paul W. Gooch distinguished three kinds of irony in the dialogues: (1) Socrates' irony; (2) Socratic irony; and (3) Platonic irony. Socrates' irony is a type of sarcasm that operates at "the level of the characters within the text."[40] Socratic irony also works at the level of the characters, but it is of a more "specialized or technical sort that has to do with Socrates' profession of ignorance."[41] According to Gooch, instances of this kind of irony involve a suspicion that Socrates is not being sincere when when he claims that he does not know. Platonic irony involves an understanding on the part of the audience or reader that goes unrecognized by the characters in the dialogue.[42] This framework allows Gooch to argue that Socrates expresses his views openly and straightforwardly in the dialogues. Jonathan Lear would agree. He pointed out that Socrates "warns his audience against the temptation of attributing hidden layers of meaning to him." Lear said that "What is almost impossible for us to hold on to is the idea that everything about Socrates is right there on the surface."[43] It is clear that the use of irony in these texts makes it difficult to determine whether Plato means us to take certain statements seriously or whether he is playing a joke. When it comes time to specify precisely how statements are meant to be interpreted, it is hard to prove that any one reading is the "correct" one. As we shall see, recognizing the sequential patterns that form the backdrop to the philosophical content in the dialogues provides the framework for interpretation that makes it possible to cut through the ambiguity and irony. Once we see that Socrates always shapes his discourse along

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[38] Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections From Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[39] Plass, "Anonymity and Irony," p. 276.

[40] So that when, for example, Thrasymachus complains that Socrates is "well known," for his irony and for being a notorious "dissembler" (*Rep.* 337a), he warns the other characters in the dialogue that nothing the old man says can be taken at face value.

[41] The "difficult problem," according to Gooch, is that Socrates "keeps saying that he does not know, but Plato's very writing pushes us to suspect that his Socrates does know whatever it is that Plato is using him to teach us" ["Socrates: Devious or Divine?" *Greece & Rome*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (1985), p. 41].

[42] Gooch offers as an example a passage in the *Meno* (95a-100e), where the reader recognizes that the discussion presages Socrates' trial and condemnation whereas "the *persona* Socrates cannot be in a position to comprehend this within the dialogue itself" [Gooch, "Irony and Insight," p. 194]. A similar case might be found in the introduction of the *Sophist*, where Socrates asks the Stranger if he is one of the gods come to "attend upon the goings of men of mercy and justice" (216b).

[43] Jonathan Lear, "The Examined Life: Review of Alexander Nehamas's *The Art of Living*," *The New York Times Book Review* (October 25, 1998): 26.

the lines of the definitions, we realize that even if there is irony in the content of his statements, structurally, they always follows the form of the definitions. So that embedded in every remark is the pattern that serves as the "key" or "standard of correctness" for its interpretation, making it possible to judge what is meant, even when it is the opposite of what is said.

Inconsistent Terminology. A further complication stems from the lack of a consistent technical vocabulary. Said differently, the dialogues do not utilize a fixed terminology by employing exactly the same words for a particular thing in different contexts. The absence of a consistent vocabulary leads to confusion when the reader attempts to ascertain whether Plato is speaking of the same thing in various passages, even though he uses different words when discussing them, or whether he is speaking of different things altogether. Inconsistent wording is a characteristic feature of works produced in the traditional style. A composition that is centuries in the making, and which preserves and combines material from different sources often contains anachronistic expressions, interpolations, and foreign terms. This was why some rhapsodes began specializing in the interpretation of the Homeric epics. In addition, comparative analysis of traditions has shown that different performances of the same piece (even by the same singer at different times) use alternative ways of saying the same thing, which leads to variant versions of the tradition.[44] Further, while the formulas in Homeric verse rely on rhythm and music, so that the poetry is inextricably linked to the Greek words, we will see that the forms in Plato's prose discourse rely on *ideas*, not words. This makes it possible to express the same concept in different ways. Further, recall from the report of Diogenes that Plato "employed a number of different terms to make his system less intelligible to the ignorant" (*Lives* III. 63-64). He said that Plato used the same words in contexts where they have a very different meaning, he employed different words to represent the same thing, and he expressed the same thing by way of contrary expressions. We should not be surprised if the shifting terminology has something to do with the esoteric doctrines. Further, statements in Plato's dialogues warn learners that words or terms are mere conventions and images, whereas the ideas behind them remain constant (*Ltr.* VII. 342b-c. 343a-b; *Cra.* 433-438c). This means that the concepts are not tied to a particular language, and it make the patterns evident even in translation. However, even though Plato is known for the philosophy of ideas, researchers have tended to ignore the statements in Plato's dialogues that express the view that words and expressions are unstable images that present a deceptive appearance. Since scholars typically assume that a systematic technical vocabulary is a defining feature of philosophical writing, they have not looked below the surface of the text for consistencies at a deeper level.

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[44] Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 48-54.

Method. Another vexed question concerns what may properly be regarded as Plato's educational method. "We've heard of the Socratic method from schoolteachers." remarked Gooch. "who themselves couldn't guide us to a good example of Socrates' use of that method."[45] Nor it seems. can philosophers. By the time of Proclus (412 - 481 C.E.). as Morrow and Dillon have noted. there was considerable "embarrassment among the majority of Platonists who practiced what they regarded as Platonic dialectic (also called diaeresis. definition, demonstration and analysis). but had never found any use for this method . . . so they tried to downgrade it."[46] What is the purpose of the method of dialectic? Is it simply a process of question and answer or is it something more complicated than that? In addition to dialectic. various works describe a method of questioning.[47] of collection and division.[48] of hypothesis.[49] of example.[50] of the gods.[51] the usual procedure.[52] and the refined and subtle

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[45] Gooch. *Word and Silence* (1996). p. 7.

[46] *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides.* trans.. Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1987). p. 9.

[47] In the *Meno* (84a-c). the method of questioning involves interrogating learners until they become so perplexed they recollect true opinions out of themselves without any knowledge or explanation from the teacher.

[48] The *Phaedrus* (266c) offers a discussion of this method. Collection and division is said to be a pair of procedures: collection involves bringing dispersed plurality under a single form in order to define it so that the topic under discussion may be clarified: the second procedure is said to be the reverse of the other. It involves the division into forms. Having isolated a definition. it is then separated into kinds until the limits of division are reached.

[49] Two methods are described in the *Republic* (510b-511d): the method that investigates by using images as assumptions and then proceeds down to a conclusion: and the method of dialectic that uses assumptions as hypotheses. moves up to the principle. and then uses ideas to move downward to a conclusion.

[50] In the *Statesman* (278c. 286a) we find the method of example. The aim of this method is to train learners to grasp the highest class of existents. Since this class has no visible embodiment and can only be apprehended by reason. it is easier to practice on lesser objects than on objects of the highest value. The method of example is an operation that identifies a factor in something that is not well known that is identical with a factor in a something that is well known. This common factor in each is then made the basis of a parallel examination of them both. making it possible to achieve a single true judgment about each of them as forming one of a pair.

[51] The *Philebus* (16c) sets out the method that is "easy to indicate but difficult to employ." and is "the instrument through which every discovery ever made in the sphere of the arts and sciences has been brought to light." It is said to involve two different tactics. The first assumes that the thing investigated is contained in a single form. Having apprehended the single form. the search continues for "the total number of forms the thing in question has intermediate between its one and unlimited number." The second makes a threefold division of the universe to reveal four distinct classes: 1) the unlimited: 2) the limit: 3) the combined: and 4) the cause.

[52] The various stages of a method are set out in *Timaeus* It begins by establishing a starting point and then moves in sequence through the following stages: 1) nature and function: 2) formation and origin: 3) generation and resolution: 4) figure and number: 5) order and arrangement: and 6) reversal and return to the starting point.

method.[53] Are these different methods? or is dialectic a single method made up of many procedures?[54] If there is more that one method, what are the different ones? what is the purpose of each? and what is their relation to one another? Some doubt that we should even take seriously the descriptions of the method.[55] Others have claimed that the dialogues are "self-illustrating" examples of the procedure discussed by Socrates and his companions.[56] That is to say, when a dialogue describes a method, it uses the method described. So that in the *Sophist*, for instance, while the Stranger describes division and collection on the discursive level, Plato has employed this method in shaping the narrative structure of that dialogue. These scholars maintain that the words in Plato's writings should be correlated with the deed presented to us in the text. As Jacob Klein has explained, "What is said in the dialogues is not only *said*, but it is also *done*. Speech and deed remain always tightly tied to each other."[57] Yet, these commentators have not explained in detail exactly how the method of dialectic works to connect the word and deed, nor have they come any further than the Middle Platonists in figuring out what its purpose might be.

Here again, an understanding of traditional compositions goes a long way toward explaining some of the questions surrounding the method. Yates described a branch of the memory tradition that favored the use of division and ordered arrangement over the use of phantastic images. Coincidentally, this type of mnemonic was called "dialectic." It would make sense that in later centuries (say, by the time of Proclus, or about eight-hundred years after the dialogues were written), the ways of the oral tradition were forgotten and writing was so taken for granted that the mnemonic purpose of the method was no longer understood. In addition, Whitman's studies of Homer demonstrated that the oral traditional style combined a number of different techniques into a unified system of verse-making. We should expect to find in Plato a complex method comprising a range of different techniques that together, amount to a unified system of philosophical discourse making in Plato. Again, we know that

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[53] In the *Theaetetus* (152e-153a; 155d-c; 156a) Socrates describes a theory he attributes to the "subtle thinkers." It involves (1) recognition of an indeterminate; (2) the introduction of measure; (3) the generation of new products; and (4) reversal and return to the starting point.

[54] H.J. Krämer for instance, argued for a "Platonic *methodological pluralism*," stating that Plato "tried to grasp the totality of being by means of multiple convergent attempts . . ." [*Plato and the Foundations of Metaphysics: A Work on the Theory of the Principles and Unwritten Doctrines with a Collection of the Fundamental Documents*, edited and translated by John R. Caton (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 81 and 89-90].

[55] Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 2.

[56] Brumbaugh, *Platonic Studies*, p. 199; Desjardins, "Why Dialogues? Plato's Serious Play," pp. 117-122; Klein, *Plato's Trilogy*, p. 6.

[57] Ibid.

when compositions fashioned from traditional material were written down. there were so many unusual expressions. foreign words and phrases that a specialist guild of rhapsodes arose to translate. interpret. and sort through inconsistencies. This would suggest reasons why there were several names for a particular technique in different works in the Platonic collection.

Mathematics. The ancient sources are clear that Plato emphasized the high educational value of training in mathematics.[58] In fact. the tradition holds that there was an inscription over the porch of the Academy:

> Let no one who is not a geometer enter my house. That is, let no one who is unjust come in here, for geometry is equality and justice.[59]

Numerous translators have puzzled over the meaning of the inscription. speculating on the relation of geometry to Plato's philosophical conceptions of equality and justice. Certainly, Plato was part of a long tradition in Greek thought that assimilated mathematics to philosophy. as Martha Nussbaum has observed.[60] However. the way in which the Greeks conceived philosophical ideas as being related to geometry has never been understood. Proclus noted in his history of the succession of geometers from Pythagoras to Plato. that

> Plato . . caused mathematics in general and geometry in particular to make a very great advance. owing to his own zeal for these studies: for every one knows that he even filled his writings with mathematical discourses and strove on every occasion to arouse enthusiasm for mathematics in those who took up philosophy.[61]

Proclus's description of Plato's high regard for geometry is supported by passages in the dialogues (e.g.. *Rep.* 521c-531c). Yet. it is not clear to modern historians and philosophers of mathematics exactly what Plato's contributions to the advancement of the field were.[62] For centuries. certain "mathematical" passages in Plato's writings have puzzled scholars. especially those in which geometry

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[58] Jacob Klein offers a comprehensive review of these sources in *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*. trans. Eva Brann (Cambridge. Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1968), pp. 10-17.

[59] The earliest source for this story is dated to the fourth century C.E. The most commonly cited standard source is the twelfth-century Byzantine. Johannes Tzetzes in his *Book of Histories* (*Chiliades* VIII. 972-7). For a comprehensive review of the archeological evidence and the literary sources for this legend. see D.H. Fowler. *The Mathematics of Plato's Academy: A New Reconstruction* (Clarendon Press: Oxford. 1987). pp. 197-202. For other discussions. see Robert S. Brumbaugh. *Plato's Mathematical Imagination*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1954): and also Sir Thomas Heath. *A History of Greek Mathematics*. Vol. I. *From Thales to Euclid* (1921: reprint ed.. New York: Dover Publications. Inc.. 1981). p. 24.

[60] Martha C. Nussbaum. *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1990). p. 107.

[61] Proclus on Euclid. I. 21-66. 18 as cited in Heath. *Greek Mathematics*. p. 170.

[62] See Heath. *Greek Mathematics*. p. 294: Edward A. Maziarz and Thomas Greenwood, *Greek Mathematical Philosophy* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.. Inc.. 1968). p. viii.

appears not as an illustration of some other concept,[63] but is itself the subject of the discussion. These would include the metaphysical passages in the central books of the *Republic*, often referred to as the trinity of sun, line and cave, which are considered, as Ian Mueller has pointed out, the most significant philosophical sections in the Platonic canon and the most "cited and belabored passages" in all of Plato.[64] Other sections in the dialogues that contain extended discussions of mathematics include the *Philebus* (18a-27d) and the *Timaeus* (49a-58c), with shorter vignettes in the *Sophist* (265e-266b), and the *Statesman* (266a-c). Unfortunately, our surviving manuscripts of Plato's dialogues do not contain any diagrams of these mathematical figures described in the text. Perhaps they never did.[65] In spite of the centrality of geometry to Plato's philosophy, then, there has never been any consensus concerning the philosophical meaning and significance of these mathematical discussions in the dialogues.[66] In the nineteen-fifties, Robert S. Brumbaugh and Scott Buchanan suggested that in these passages, Plato was constructing a diagram of a "matrix grid." This grid, argued Brumbaugh, serves as a "notational device" for defining philosophical terms by locating them in a web of geometric relations to other systematically ordered terms. "The matrix grid presents a graphic and convenient mathematical image for the spatialization of a net of dialectical distinctions."[67] Unfortunately, neither Brumbaugh or Buchanan went on to develop these suggestions in their later works. This graphic grid assimilating philosophical terms to numbers has all the features of the classical mnemonotechnic. The graphic matrix notational device—a geometry that provides for the spatialization of systematically ordered philosophical terms—is a fairly precise description of the background "topics" in the art of memory, where numbers are included at regular intervals in order to keep track of the place in the system. Today, the mathematical passages have been variously considered as nonsense or riddles, as

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[63] The sections of the *Meno* (82b-87b) that describe a geometric construction would be considered in the category of illustrations because the point of the exercise is to demonstrate recollection.

[64] Ian Mueller, "Review of Paul Pritchard's *Plato's Philosophy of Mathematics*," *Ancient Philosophy* Vol. XVII. No. 2 (Fall 1997), 458-461.

[65] Fowler, *Mathematics of Plato's Academy*, p. 67.

[66] For example, in the case of the *Meno* (82b-85b), we find an extended passage wherein Socrates has a boy recollect certain geometric figures and show his answers by way of diagrams. Even though there is relatively little controversy concerning the structure of the geometry, commentators explain this passage as a proof that Socrates can guide an uneducated boy to recollect a correct account of squares and triangles without having ever been exposed to this knowledge in his lifetime. Yet, no one seems to ask why Socrates has the boy generate *these particular geometric figures*. The choice of figures is probably not arbitrary?

[67] Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination*, p. 72. Brumbaugh notes that he based his comments on an observation made by Scott Buchanan in a footnote to his "Symbolic Distance in Relation to Analogy and Fiction." *Psyche Miniatures*, General Series. No. 39 (London, 1932), p. 101 ff.

having no significance.[68] as incomprehensible.[69] as "diagrams" designed by Plato "to accompany and clarify his text,[70] and as providing the "key" to the philosophy as a whole.[71] That opinions differ so widely concerning the significance of the geometry, together with the fact that, in the history of documented commentary, no interpretation of these passages has been offered that a majority of scholars have found convincing, indicates that the Platonic mathematics has not been understood. Identifying the order and arrangement of the theme that serves as the master pattern will shed more light on how the geometry functions as the definitional framework of the classes of the mnemonotechnic in Plato's writings.

Speech or Writing. Not only have the mathematical passages confounded scholars, but the statements in the dialogues and *Letters* that compare writing to speech and proclaim the primacy of oral conversation over the written word have also been a source of great perplexity. These are the passages mentioned previously in connection with the riddle problem. They are, of course, *Phaedrus* (274b-278b) which discusses writing in the context of rhetoric,[72] *Protagoras* (328e-329b) that downgrades books, and the passage in the *Seventh Letter* (531), where Plato denies that writing can convey the most profound philosophical truths. These passages are at the forefront of current debate. For it is not immediately apparent to scholars how this negative conclusion concerning the written word should affect the interpretation of Plato's own writing.[73] Some claim that these passages should not be taken seriously; they object to the notion that Plato's writings do not contain the fullest expression of his philosophy, even though they are hard pressed to reconcile Plato's criticisms of writing with the fact that he bequeathed to posterity what Rosemary Desjardins has called "a voluminous literary legacy." Why, these scholars ask, would Plato have created such a large body of work, only to leave out his most significant teachings? That Plato produced so much writing suggests to these readers that he did not himself subscribe to the criticisms of writing expressed by Socrates. Thus, they maintain, we cannot take Plato at his word but instead we must look to his deeds for evidence of his genuine views.

Further, in this same passage in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates makes a number of explicit statements

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[68] Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 131.

[69] Julia Annas stated that "the insolubility of this problem [of the structure of the line] is a good illustration of the difficulties that Plato runs into by using images to make a philosophical point" [*An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 252.

[70] Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination*, p. 3.

[71] Desjardins, *Rational Enterprise*, p. 59.

[72] As Charles Griswold has pointed out, "With respect to the relationship between speaking and writing, and the different styles of either speaking or writing in philosophy, the *Phaedrus* is the crucial Platonic text" ["Style and Philosophy: The Case of Plato's Dialogues," (*Monist* 63, 1980), p. 532].

[73] Desjardins, "Why Dialogues? Plato's Serious Play," p. 110.

concerning the correct principles of philosophic writing and rhetoric. He criticizes Lysias' speech—the one Diogenes said Plato recorded verbatim—for the haphazard organization of the content. He asks.

> Do you find any cogent reason for his next remark, or indeed any of his remarks, occupying the place it does? . . . Can you find any cogent principle of composition which he observed in setting down his observations in this particular order? . . . any discourse ought to be constructed like a living creature, with its own body, as it were: it must not lack either head or feet; it must have a middle and extremities so composed as to suit each other and the whole work (*Phd.* 264c)

Socrates' criticism along with his dictum concerning the correct principles of writing and rhetoric leads to the expectation that the dialogues themselves will exemplify the kind of the stylistic features that are established as characteristic of philosophical writing. Even more, they seem to directly contravene the criticisms leveled against haphazardly organized compositions, since Plato does not seem to have utilized any cogent principles in setting down his thoughts in the order that he did. Why is it, interpreters ask, that Plato's own writings do not exhibit the stylistic attributes established by his literary characters as the defining features of philosophical writing?

I will argue that immersion in the technology of our own time has obscured our ability to comprehend oral traditional patterns of communication. These writings only appear to be meandering, random, and haphazard when measured against contemporary notions of systematic writing. As we become familiar with the Platonic traditional style, it will become readily apparent that Plato's writings use the definitions consistently and that the discourse follows the traditional forms with unparalleled exactitude. Yet, with few exceptions, researchers—either from the field of oral theory or from the discipline of philosophy—have not attempted to apply an understanding of oral traditions to the Platonic texts.

Omissions and Exclusions. The passages in the dialogues that alert readers that certain aspects of the philosophy have been "omitted" or excluded from the conversation are also the focus of considerable controversy. In this discussion, the statement at *Republic* 509c weighs most heavily, since it occurs in the introduction to the sun, line, and cave. Suffice it to say that these and the other instances mentioned in the previous chapter of this study have suggested to many that Plato may have intentionally left out of his writings a number of crucial aspects of his philosophy. To others, these passages offer hints that the dialogues contain a "secret doctrine," and that Plato included warnings as a signal to careful readers that more was involved than was stated explicitly.

Conclusion of Section I

These, then, are thirteen issues which cannot be resolved under existing theories. Literary and philosophical methods devised for the interpretation and analysis of modern texts are not equipped to

deal with the patterns that characterize works composed in a traditional style. *In contrast. the theory of oral traditions provides an explanation for every point.*

Next, we turn to part two of this chapter and to the issues involving the connections between the different works in the Platonic canon. The difficulties in reconstructing the philosophical theories presented in any individual dialogue are amplified at the level of the dialogues taken together as a whole.

The Platonic Corpus

One of the greatest interpretive challenges is determining how different dialogues are related to one another. for the individual treatises do not seem to be connected to other works in the collection by way of any clear principle of organization.

Literary Sequence. Establishing the order in which Plato's writings should be read is a problem that has occupied scholars since antiquity (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* III. 57-62). Havelock's version of oral theory would make us inclined to see in the dialogues a record of all experience in a great and compendious story loosely put together from a number of smaller episodes "focused around several prominent agents"—either Socrates or one of the Strangers—"who act and speak with some overall consistency."[74] Instead. scholars have been preoccupied by attempts to identify a linear sequence. This. despite the fact that there are almost no internal clues from the dialogues themselves to indicate that books in the canon were intended to be read in any particular order. The most significant piece of evidence is the introduction of the *Theaetetus*. Here, Plato has Euclides state that he has grown weary of the reporting and reply formulas such as "he said" and "he answered," so he will no longer make use of this narrative form.[75] Scholars claim that Plato's rejection of reporting language in this dialogue makes it unlikely that texts written in this style were composed after the *Theaetetus.*[76] Beyond this one clue. only two references in the entire corpus correctly cite statements in other works: the *Statesman* (284b and 286b) makes two accurate references to the discussion in the

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[74] Havelock. *Preface to Plato,* pp. 175-76.

[75] "To quote: "This is the book. Terpsion. You see how I wrote the conversation—not in narrative form. as I heard it from Socrates. but as a dialogue between him and the other persons he told me had taken part. These were Theodorus the geometer and Theaetetus. I wanted to avoid in the written account the tiresome effect of bits of narrative interrupting the dialogue. such as 'and I said' or 'and I remarked' wherever Socrates was speaking of himself, and 'he assented' or 'he did not agree,' where he reported the answer. So I left out everything of that sort. and wrote it as a direct conversation between the actual speakers" (*Tht.* 143b-c).

[76] Leonard Brandwood, *The Chronology of Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 1.

Sophist; and the *Critias* (106a-b) opens with Timaeus handing over the discussion to the dialogue's namesake, "as we agreed I should do" (in the *Timaeus*). Aside from these exceptions, there are no other citations that make a completely correct reference to another book. Hence, readers are often disconcerted to find that passages in one dialogue that *do* point to a different work contain discrepancies that prevent the formation of direct links between the two. For example, the beginning of the *Timaeus* cannot be read as a summary of the *Republic*,[77] and there are difficulties with the *Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman* sequence.[78] Nor does any one work seem to depend on an argument put forward in another. Yet again, we have a format that is consistent with the style of orally derived works, where many traditional stories in circulation for centuries were gathered together at some point and set down in writing.

Gaps and Missing Pieces. In addition, many see major gaps in the Platonic writings, pieces of the puzzle that have gone missing. Perhaps the most glaring example is the *Critias*, which ends abruptly in mid-sentence. As well, it has often been suggested that Plato planned to write two dialogues that were never written. At *Sophist* 216c-217a, for example, Socrates asks the Stranger for definitions of the sophist, statesman and philosopher. Since there exist two dialogues entitled the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* and none called the *Philosopher*, there is speculation that these two works should have been followed by a third. The absence of a dialogue entitled the *Philosopher* appears as a "gap" where the culminating book in the trilogy was not written. Likewise, the *Republic, Timaeus,* and *Critias* seem to be part of a "tetralogy" that should have included the *Hermocrates*. The majority view is that these works belong to Plato's so-called later period and that the author did not live long

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[77] Clay has summarized the obstacles that prevent us from connecting one dialogue to the other: 1) There are five characters in the *Timaeus* and ten in the *Republic*. The only person present in both dialogues is Socrates; 2) "At the banquet held the evening before, Socrates, not Cephalus, was host, and it was Socrates who assigned to each of his four guests his theme for the following day (the day of the *Timaeus*") [Clay, "Reading the *Republic*." p. 144]. In contrast, it is Glaucon and Adeimantus who suggest the theme of the *Republic*; 3) Socrates long and apparently unbroken speech of the evening before was on the best form of society (*Tim.* 17c); the formal topic of the *Republic* is justice and its advantages; 4) the festival that brought the group of five together was the Greater Panathenaea, not the Bendidea (*Tim* 21a and 26e); and missing from Socrates' account in the *Timaeus* is any hint of the philosopher king or the matters of *Republic* Book I, V 473c-VII, VIII-IX and X [Francis MacDonald Cornford made similar comments in his *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato* (London: Kegan Paul, 1937), pp. 1-8].

[78] As Gilbert Ryle noted, "The chronological unity between the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* is now totally dislocated. Dramatically, we, the audience, are on Monday in the company of Eucleides and Terpsion in Megara in 369, while the middle-aged Theaetetus is dying and Socrates has been dead for thirty years. But on Tuesday we are, dramatically, in Athens in 399 in the lively company of Socrates, Theodorus, the Stranger, and the promising lad Theaetetus" [*Plato's Progress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 30].

enough to write them.[79] A minority of scholars dismiss the notion that Plato intended to write a separate dialogue called the *Philosopher*, citing *Sophist* 253b, where the Stranger says that in the search for the sophist, they have stumbled on the philosopher.[80]

Some of the gaps in the collection seem to be purely accidental. The *Critias*, for instance, simply appears to be unfinished; there does not seem to be any reason for Plato to have purposely left the ending open. The same holds for the *Hermocrates*, projected as the successor dialogue to the *Critias*. These examples are contrasted with the missing books that seem intentional. For many scholars view the *Philosopher* as having been projected and then left unwritten as a provocation to the reader.[81] Clay cites David Monro's observation that the *Odyssey* "never repeats nor refers to any incident related in the *Iliad*."[82] According to Munro, this means one of two things: either the poet of the *Odyssey* did not know of the *Iliad*, or he displays an awareness of the *Iliad* by "steering clear of it." Clay suggested that Monro's observation for Homer was valid for Plato's dialogues. Ignoring the former possibility, he argued that the gaps and the lack of connections between texts must have been an intentional part of Plato's strategy. Further, he claimed that there is a "pattern in the gaps," and that Plato "left to his reader to fill, as best he can, the gaps he has created among the dialogues."[83] Unfortunately, Clay did not offer specific examples to support his theory of a pattern. Nor did he describe exactly how the reader should go about filling in these missing links.

These are the sorts of anomalies and disjunctions that oral theory makes it possible to explain. The case of the missing half of the *Critias* and the absence of the *Philosopher* may be understood as

[79] Lutoslawski, quotes Campbell approvingly to argue that "The *Sophist* and *Politicus* are both the middle pair of an unfinished tetralogy, sketched out in the second dialogue of the series; so are the *Timaeus* and *Critias* (Introduction, p. xix). Lewis Campbell, *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867), p. xix, as cited in Wincenty Lutoslawski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic* (London, New York and Bombay, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), p. 85.

[80] Henry Jackson, "Plato's Later Theory of Ideas, VI., The *Politicus*," *Journal of Philology*, Vol. XV (1886), pp. 284-285; as well, Jacob Klein asserted, "In the *Statesman*, Old Socrates says (258a4-6) that he is not acquainted with Young Socrates, that Young Socrates should now answer to the Stranger, and "to me, well, at a later time." Does this mean that Old Socrates envisages a conversation with Young Socrates about the "philosopher," as some scholars have understood this remark? Is it not, rather, a playful removal of this possibility, especially if we consider Socrates' awareness of the impending trial? It may even not be wrong to assert that the trial of Socrates, the Philosopher, replaces the dialogue about the "philosopher"[Klein, *Plato's Trilogy*, p. 5].

[81] Diskin Clay, "Gaps in the 'Universe' of 51the Platonic Dialogues," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. III (1977), p. 151, and "Platonic Studies," p. 151; Mitchell Miller, "Commentary on Clay," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. III (1987), p. 158.

[82] D.B. Monro, *The Odyssey: Books XIII-XXIV* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1901), p. 325.

[83] Clay, "Gaps," p. 156.

a consequence of the transmission of the text down through history. The discontinuity between the *Republic* and the summary of it at the beginning of the *Timaeus* is understandable if the dialogues are an oral literature, where different performances have been gathered together in a collection. Plato's attempt to refine the Pythagorean theories and to combine the teachings of entirely different schools of thought—that of Sophron. Heraclitus. and Socrates for example—likely created a few irregularities. Alternatively, Socrates' warnings of omissions becomes comprehensible if they are understood as signs pointing to modes of indirection. We will be in a position to apprehend the esoteric doctrines when we learn to distinguish the rough transitions and inconsistencies associated with orally derived compositions. from the gaps and omissions that point to the unwritten doctrines that make up the educational strategy in the Platonic texts.

Chronological Development. For nearly a century. scholars have attempted to establish the order in which Plato composed the dialogues. If the sequential order of composition could be pinned down. they reasoned. interpreters could attribute inconsistencies between statements in different dialogues to changes that occurred in Plato's thinking over time. The theory of oral traditions suggests a different perspective concerning inconsistencies and disjunctions. We know that when oral compositions are first written down. they contain contradictions resulting from their having been stitched together from traditional materials. Once they are set down in print. the performance is often edited in order to smooth over these rough patches. Even so. an orally derived work tends to manifest inconsistencies of detail that seem puzzling to those who are not familar with the characteristics of works with roots in an oral tradition. To many interpreters. it seems only common sense that Plato's thinking would have undergone development over the course of his lifetime and that he would have modified his doctrines accordingly. They believe that establishing the chronological order in which the dialogues were written would help readers sort out the way in which different works reflect the evolution of Plato's thought at different stages of his philosophical career.

Three kinds of evidence have been used in support of the development hypothesis: first. external evidence from secondary sources: second. stylistic elements: and third. evidence provided by changes in the philosophical content in Plato's writings. The major external source of evidence comes from two of Aristotle's statements. In the *Metaphysics* (987a-b). he noted that "in his youth." Plato studied with Cratylus who acquainted him with the Heraclitean doctrines "and in after years he still held these opinions." This comment clearly implies some development of Plato's thinking. It suggests that while he held onto the Heraclitean doctrines. he changed his mind about others. The most significant piece of external evidence. also from Aristotle. is a statement from the *Politics* (II 6. 1264b24-7), where he mentions a number of difficulties in "the republic discussed by Socrates . . . And almost the

same holds good of *Laws* also. which was written later." Parts of this story were mentioned by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* III. 37). when he noted that after Plato's death. they found the *Laws* on wax tablets. He added that Plato's student. Phillippus of Opus. copied them out. This is reiterated by Olympiodorus (*Prol.* 6. 24). who said that the *Laws* were found unrevised and in the wax after Plato was gone. Based on the evidence from these tidbits. analyses of Plato's style initiated in the nineteenth century and continuing to the present all begin with the premise that the *Laws* was Plato's last work, and that death prevented him from completing it. In the dating of the dialogues. this is the only point about which. as Richard Kraut asserted. "there is universal consensus."[84]

The second. stylistic approach to the development hypothesis. aims at determining the order of composition of Plato's works by analyzing their style.[85] This approach was initiated in the last century. It assumes that the *Laws* mark the end point of Plato's development. Those adopting this strategy attempt to date the other Platonic writings backward in time by way of their stylistic proximity to the *Laws*. This theory looks at Plato's use of language for evidence of chronology. Studies enumerate occurrences of certain expressions. technical vocabulary. synonyms. reply formulae. the frequency of hiatus or other "late" linguistic features. By the beginning of this century. stylometric research succeeded in grouping Plato's writings into early. middle. and later phases but did not manage to determine the sequential order of works within these different groups. The third kind of analysis proceeds from the evidence provided by changes in the philosophical content in Plato's writings. Many of the difficulties encountered by attempts to pursue this approach were described in the previous section of this chapter. Perhaps the most problematic method of all is the one that attempts to amalgamate the findings of stylistic analyses with those that trace inconsistencies in the philosophical content. These attempts open up a number of further complicating factors that render problematic even the approximate grouping into early. middle. and late periods. The *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus*. for example. are classified as "middle period" on the basis of stylistic criteria. yet

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[84] Kraut. *Companion to Plato*. p. 15.

[85] Lewis Campbell produced the first study of stylometry. *The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato* (Oxford. 1867: 1967). Other influential works include W. Lutoslawski, *The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic. with an Account of Plato's Style and of the Chronology of his Writings* (London: Longmans, Green, 1867): Holger Thesleff. *Studies in Platonic Chronology* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1982) surveys over one hundred and thirty chronologies proposed from 1792 to 1981: see also his *Studies in Platonic Chronology*. and "Platonic Chronology." *Phronesis* 34 (1989): 1-26: D. Wishart and S.V. Leach. "A Multivariate Analysis of Platonic Prose Rhythm." *Computer Studies in the Humanities and Verbal Behaviour* 3 (1970): 90-9. For a comprehensive examination of these studies as well as the nineteenth century investigations by German scholars, see Leonard Brandwood. *The Chronology of Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990): and also his "Stylometry and Chronology." in Kraut, *Companion to Plato*. pp. 90-120.

philosophically, we find these dialogues critical of views of the forms and of knowledge that were deemed acceptable in other middle period writings. The opposition to the forms expressed in the opening pages of the *Parmenides* is a crucial issue in a debate over whether Plato abandoned the theory later on, just modified it, or whether he continued to adhere to it to the end of his days. In the dialogues that have been dated as "late"—the *Timaeus*, *Critias*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Philebus*, and *Laws*—Socrates plays either a minor role or he is absent altogether. The exception is the *Philebus*, classified as Plato's penultimate work. The presence of Socrates in this one late text prevents interpreters from claiming that at some point, Plato began putting forward his own views, rather than those of Socrates. The dating of the *Timaeus* is also controversial. For this work continues to endorse the theory of forms that was criticized in the *Parmenides*. In an influential study, G.E.L. Owens argued that the philosophical content of the *Timaeus* renders problematic the studies that classify it as a later work on the basis of stylometric features. According to Owen, the *Timaeus* must have been written after the *Republic* and before the *Theaetetus*. He found it improbable that Plato would have continued to whole-heartedly subscribe to the theory of forms without in any way acknowledging the critique set forth in an earlier work.[86] Today, there is still enormous dissension concerning the temporal relation among works in the canon. Still, there does seem to be an emerging recognition that attempts to establish the chronological sequence of the dialogues have been largely unsuccessful.[87] Even so, it is safe to say that many more scholars continue to adhere to some version of the development hypothesis than reject it altogether.

It is clear that all these different versions of the development hypothesis assume a modern concept of authorship and literary creation. Unfortunately, the notion of chronological sequence does not apply to works with pre-textual origins. When civilizations moved from orality to literacy, different performances of the tradition were set down in writing, and over time, a definitive version became "authorized." Once more, the theory of oral traditions suggests an answer to a problem that cannot be explained by existing theories of interpretation.

Conclusion of Section II

This section of Chapter Two concentrated on the dialogues as a whole and on the issues that thwart attempts to link various works together. Here again, *oral theory can account for the difficulties that*

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[86] G.E.L. Owen, "The Plato of the *Timaeus* in Plato's Dialogues," *Classical Quarterly* 3 (1953): 79-95. Reprinted in *Logic Science and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*, ed. Martha Nussbaum (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 65-84

[87] Brandwood, *Chronology of Plato's Dialogues*, pp. 114-115.

other theories cannot explain.

The obstacles to interpretation at the level of individual texts and at the level of the dialogues as a whole lead ultimately to the question of whether or not there is a Platonic system. In the next chapter, we will deal with Aristotle's report. The problem with Aristotle's testimony, I maintain, centres on the question of whether or not there is a Platonic doctrine. I will argue that Plato's writings must be seen in the context of the transformation of Greek culture from an oral to a textual modality, and that an understanding of this historical milieu will shed new light on the perplexities that have eluded resolution in the history of interpretation.

Anomalies, Inconsistencies and Disruptions: The Question of a Philosophical System

This section and the previous one considered the features of Plato's style that complicate the interpretation of his writings. These issues confront the reader with a number of anomalies that make it impossible to securely reconstruct a Platonic philosophy that reconciles all the inconsistencies and contradictions in the canon. Nor is it possible to develop a set of rules or interpretive principles that can be applied consistently and systematically to every work.

Many scholars believe that the inconsistencies that become apparent when comparing all the relevant passages on a given topic in the dialogues preclude the possibility that Plato's writings contain a unified systematic underpinning. As readers soon discover, anomalies make it difficult to piece together a theory by gathering together all the statements on a topic from different dialogues. Any such attempt forces the interpreter to confront all the problems that make it difficult to develop a logically coherent, systematic body of doctrine involving a synthesis of many works.[88] The lack of a fixed terminology, along with the other obstacles that prevent the construction of links between statements in different passages in one dialogue (and between different dialogues in the corpus), are so obvious and intractable that it is now widely accepted that Plato's philosophy does not contain a philosophical system.[89] Thus, individual texts in the Platonic corpus cannot be seen as "steps within an overarching deductive system," and there can be no presumption of continuity across the canon. As Diskin Clay has emphasized, "The universe of [Plato's] dialogues is one of apparent and surface discontinuity, not one of a coherent system of philosophy."[90] Alfred North Whitehead once remarked, "Plato failed in

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[88] Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, p. 87-88. See also Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*, p. 15-16.
[89] Bowen, "On Interpreting Plato," p. 50; Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* II, p. 120; Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, p. 9; Kraut, *Companion to Plato*, p. 27; Press, *Plato's Dialogues*, p. 309; Tigerstedt, *Interpreting Plato*, p. 14.
[90] Clay, "Gaps," p. 135.

his attempts at systematization." for it is not possible to "extract a systematic scheme of thought from his writings."[1] Leibniz once proclaimed: "If anyone can reduce Plato to a system. such a one would render a great service to mankind."[2]

Exceptions and anomalies make it difficult to develop a set of interpretive principles that may be applied to every dialogue. So. for example. one cannot employ the principle that a particular character in a dialogue speaks for Plato, since this character is not present in every book. It is not possible to pin down with certainty what Plato means when he says a certain thing because he does not use terms consistently in different contexts. There can be no rule such as "positions from a later dialogue should not be brought to bear on the interpretation of an earlier dialogue" since there is no way to establish a chronological sequence.

Granted. the character Timaeus. in the dialogue bearing his name. fully acknowledges inconsistencies and contradictions:

> If then Socrates, amidst the many opinions about the gods and the generation of the universe, we are not able to give notions which are altogether and in every respect exact and consistent with one another, do not be surprised. Enough if we adduce probabilities as likely as any others, for we must remember that I who am the speaker and you who are the judges are only mortal men, and we ought to accept the tale which is probable and inquire no further (*Tim.* 29c-d)

Timaeus pleads that total consistency is not within the purview of mere mortals. Even so. scholars have been hard pressed to understand how Plato could have allowed so many contradictions into his writings when, as has often been pointed out. he was the first to formulate the Law of Contradiction (*Rep.* 436c-d; *Soph.* 230b-c).[3]

Since philosophy is often assumed to be synonymous with system,[4] the lack of one in Plato's

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[1] A.N. Whitehead. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology.* corrected ed.. Ed. D.R. Griffin and D.W. Sherburne (1929, New York: Free Press, 1978). p. 39.

[2] G.W. Leibniz. *Die philosophischen Schriften.* C.J. Gerhardt edition, Vol. III (Berlin, 1670, 1887; 1978). p. 637. as quoted in Giovanni Reale. *Plato and Aristotle.* trans.. John R. Catan (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 23.

[3] The passage at *Republic* 436c-d contains the first known formulation of the Law of Contradiction. It comes at the beginning of a discussion of the nature of the soul. Socrates says that because we discover by experience that the soul does and suffers 'opposite things'. we can infer that it contains separate 'parts', that is, the rational, spirited and appetitive faculties. This passage goes on to state as a rule that the factors of *time, respect* and *relation* must be taken into account in deciding whether two statements in which opposites are predicated of the same subject are incompatible. It brings to light that predicating opposites of the same subject does not necessarily involve a self-contradiction [for discussion of this passage, see G.E.R. Lloyd. *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1966). p. 140].

[4] Bowen. "On Interpreting Plato." p. 50.

writings is one of the problems that the philosophical community has found most perplexing. Two kinds of explanations have been put forward for this seeming absence of system in Plato. Either the inconsistencies are assumed to be the unintended consequence of a development—either on the part of Plato as an individual, or as a reflection of how civilization itself has developed from primitive to scientific—or they are considered to have been an intentional part of Plato's strategy in casting his philosophy in the form of dialogues.

Those who see contradictions as the unintentional expression of development recognize a process of growth and maturation. The development hypothesis is a version of the individual, *genetic* form of explanation, since inconsistencies are taken to be the unintentional result of an evolution in Plato's thinking, and of how the doctrines that were an expression of this thought developed over time. This view assumes that Plato's thought grew progressively more systematic as he matured. It provides for the option of reconciling doctrines by isolating stages, identifying the ones that preceded others chronologically, and then attributing conflicting statements in different texts to earlier and later phases. Another version of the development hypothesis was first articulated by G.W.F. Hegel. This view sees human thought itself as becoming gradually more systematic as civilization progresses from primitive to more advanced forms. Even though this view does not provide for the possibility of reconciling doctrines, it does offer an explanation for inconsistencies by seeing Plato's writings as belonging to a phase of human thought that was too primitive for systematic work. Only with Aristotle, argued Hegel, do we find "a systematic scientific form of representation."[25]

In recent years, a growing number of studies have questioned the view that difficulties with Plato's writing style are simply a reflection of the philosophical development of the author or a product of a primitive stage of human civilization. Those who advocate literary methods of interpretation in particular see Plato as having had a unified system which he intentionally chose not to incorporate into his writings. These scholars focus on the irregularities and illogicalities that are hard to accept as being the errors of a thinker of Plato's obvious calibre, and they suggest that he was well aware of all the difficulties with these texts, as a sample canvass of various opinions indicates. According to Kenneth Sayre for instance, "the fact remains that there is no explicitly stated 'theory of Forms' defended by Plato within the dialogues; and the reason for this almost certainly is not inadvertence on Plato's part."[26] E.N. Tigerstedt pointed out that "there are obscurities and ambiguities in him which seem quite

[25] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and the Platonists*, Vol. 2, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1840, 1995), p. 17.

[26] Sayre, *Literary Garden*, p. 7.

deliberate. as if Plato had not wanted us to be certain about his real meaning."[97] Charles Griswold argued that "the reader must assume. at least initially. that any gap. inconsistency. fallacy. or contradiction in the text is present for a reason and that the author is fully conscious of it."[98] This view seeks to account for anomalies as well at the apparent absence of a system by offering reasons why Plato chose not to include his system in his writings. More often than not. these contradictory statements are explained by reference to Plato's educational objectives. As Rosemary Desjardins emphasized. when we find ourselves reduced to perplexity. "storm-tossed in the puzzling cross-currents of the discussion" (Phl. 29b), we can be confident that the goal of the dialogues "is not mere perplexity. but the engendering of knowledge and wisdom." She quotes Socrates: "Let us not imagine that the end of our ... discussion is a mere puzzling of us all" (Phl. 20a).[99]

We turn now to Chapter Five in order to look at the discontinuity between the philosophy that we find in the works in the Platonic canon and Aristotle's report of Plato's doctrines. The difficulties in reconstructing the philosophical theories presented in individual dialogues and in different works moves to a whole other level of magnitude with Aristotle's testimony. Even though we possess everything Plato wrote—and more—it seems there are still some pieces missing from the puzzle of the dialogues. We will see that the problem of a philosophical system and the problem of the unwritten doctrines have been linked together in the history of interpretation. When faced with the challenges to interpretation presented by the dialogues. scholars have been intrigued by the evidence that suggests that Plato's philosophy consisted of "something more" than what we have. This evidence comes from Aristotle's testimony. and from the reports in support of his statements from other ancient writers who had access to documents that have not come down to us.

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[97] Tigerstedt, Interpreting Plato, p. 15.
[98] Griswold, Plato's Phaedrus, pp. 14-15.
[99] Desjardins, "Horns of Dilemma," p. 113.

CHAPTER FIVE

ARISTOTLE'S ACCOUNT

We turn our attention now to discrepancies between the philosophy we read in the dialogues and the doctrines attributed to Plato by Aristotle and the ancient commentators. We focus on Aristotle's report and examine his discussion in the *Physics* and in the *Metaphysics* in order to develop an outline of the "unwritten doctrine" of ultimate principles. This will give us some idea of how the missing pieces of the puzzle were supposed to look. Since Aristotle is thought to have been Plato's most eminent student, and since he wrote numerous treatises that comment on his master's doctrines and teaching, it should be possible to clarify some of the anomalies and obscurities in Plato by turning to Aristotle's testimony for guidance. However, it turns out that referring to Aristotle creates more problems than it solves. For he offers a detailed critique of a Platonic system which authorities say cannot be found in the dialogues. Thus, the dissonance between passages in one and the same dialogue, and between different dialogues extends further. There is a huge incongruity between the philosophy in Plato's writings and the system and doctrines ascribed to him by his successors. Since Aristotle's comments are likely to be more accurate than those of commentators in later centuries, and since participants in the debate have focussed on his testimony, we will confine our investigation to his remarks.

In the pages that follow, we will find that the only express statement in all of Aristotle's writings concerning Plato's "unwritten doctrines" takes place in the context of a discussion concerning the basis for assigning an object to a "place" or "topic." We will also see Aristotle utilizing patterns of thinking that we know were fundamental to Greek philosophy before formal logic was invented. These modes of argument and methods of explanation are based on the notions of analogy, polarity, and symmetry. Aristotle says that Plato's intellectual forebears were the Pythagoreans. Plato, he says, altered their system. Into it he incorporated the Heracleitian doctrine of flux and the Socratic definitions. He also introduced the "ideas," and he changed the understanding of numbers to include a separate place for "mathematical objects" in between the forms and the region designated to sensible things. Aristotle mentions a number of points that were "left an open question by Plato and the Pythagoreans." These remarks provide clues concerning the aspects of the doctrines that are "unwritten." More importantly, we will see that the system of "idea-numbers" Aristotle describes (which he says was invented by the Pythagoreans and developed further by Plato), has all the features of a "topic" mnemonic. However, whereas the Simonidean system of backgrounds was based on an architectural model and the material to be remembered was matched with associated images, the

system of backgrounds Aristotle attributes to Plato is based on the ratios of the musical scale. and the material to be recollected is matched with ideas in accordance with the "first principles" of number (1. 2. 3 and. 4) and of the elemental geometric shapes—fire. air. water. and earth. Whereas the sophist practiced an art of memory. walking in his imagination through the hallways and rooms of an architectural space to revisit the images deposited in its various places. the Platonist pursued in addition to this art a science of dialectic, moving intellectually through an intelligible space of pure geometric forms that unfolded like progressions in music. making "no use of the images" but relying instead "on ideas only and progressing systematically through ideas" to "recollect" the knowledge which he "had once before" (Rep. 510b; Phaedo 75e). Finally. I argue for a distinction between four quite different kinds of anomalies. The first kind of irregularity applies primarily to corruptions and omissions that occurred during the transmission of the Platonic texts from the ancient to the modern world. The second kind of anomaly involves the disruptions and inconsistencies that are the hallmark of traditional works. The third kind entails confusions brought on by adjustments Plato made to the Pythagorean tradition. The fourth type of anomaly concerns the gaps and blanks in the doctrine that must be filled in by the learner.

Let us begin with Aristotle's statement concerning the "unwritten doctrines" in the Physics.

The Report of Plato's "Unwritten Doctrines" at *Physics* 209a30-210a

In the passage at *Physics* 209a30-210a. where Aristotle makes his famous statement concerning Plato's "unwritten doctrines." the phrase. ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν, occurs in the context of a discussion concerning "causes and principles." As it happens. we find an explanation of the criteria for assigning various notions to a topic.

Aristotle says in these paragraphs that an object may be assigned to a "place" or "topic" (τόπος) either because it is its "special and exclusive place," because it is its "common place" with other things, or because it is the "universal place that includes the proper places of *all* things." Thus. it turns out that Aristotle's only direct statement concerning Plato's unwritten doctrines comes up in the course of a discussion concerning the "topics." Here, he describes a number of perplexities about the "place" or "topic." Even though many thinkers insist on the "reality" of place. he says, he is completely puzzled about what a "place" is. In fact. he wonders whether "there is such a thing as 'place' at all" (*Phys*. IV. 209a30).

He goes on to explain these difficulties. If what is meant by the "place" is what contains each body—as an "envelope"—then "place" is the limiting determinant. the molding "form" or shape by which the magnitude or the matter of the magnitude is determined. It is the role of the limit to define

or mold something, he adds. "From this point of view, then," says Aristotle. "we should identify 'place' (τόπος) with 'form.' (εἶδός)." However, he continued, if an object's "place" is thought of as the extension of the magnitude, or its "dimensionality," it is "matter" rather than "form," since matter is what is contained by the form, as by a bounding plane. From this viewpoint, then, matter is that which is "bounded and determined by the form, as a surface, or other limit, molds and determines, since it is that which is itself undetermined but which has the capacity for determination that we mean by matter." Thus, looking at "place" from the perspective of a container suggests that it is the form. If place is looked at it from the perspective of bodily extension (or the dimensionality of the continuous magnitude), then this suggests that the place is matter (and we have already established that for these ancient thinkers, the "form" may refer to the style and the "matter" to the philosophical content of a dialogue). Aristotle is uncertain as to whether either of these is correct. That he is himself uncertain when it comes to making these distinctions tells us that the place is difficult to tell apart from the form and the content. He says that if the limit and other determining characteristics are taken away from a concrete sphere, then nothing is left but its matter. In the next sentence, he states

> This is why Plato, in the *Timaeus* says that 'matter' (ὕλην) and 'space' (χώραν) are the same: for the 'participant' (μεταληπτικὸν) is different from what he says in his so-called *unwritten teaching* (ἀγράφοις δόγμασιν). Nevertheless, he did identify 'place' (τόπος) and 'space' (χώραν) [*Phys.* 209b15].

He adds, "I mention Plato because, while all hold place to be something, he alone tried to say *what* it is." So, here is the statement that has been the focus of so much controversy, and which has given rise to so many conflicting explanations of its meaning. What is clear from this passage is that the account of that which "participates," i.e., the "receptive factor," *is not* the same in the *Timaeus* and in the unwritten doctrines. What precisely this difference was we may only speculate. What *is* common to *both* Plato's *Timaeus* and the unwritten doctrines, according to this statement, is the identity of the place or topic (τόπος), and space or position (χώραν). The identity of place and space is thus the fixed point of reference in both the written dialogues and the unwritten doctrines. Therefore, we may be certain that "place" or "topic" in Plato's system was synonymous with "space."

The "place" is difficult to comprehend when looked at from the viewpoint of either matter or form, exclaims Aristotle, because "matter and form themselves stand at the very apex of speculative thought," and neither can be conceived apart from the other. He concludes that the place cannot be either the matter or the form of a thing, since neither can be separated from the object, whereas the place *is* separable.

Aristotle complains again about the difficulty in determining what "place" or "topic" is, and he reiterates that a "topic" is not the form of its content or the matter that makes up the form. By way

of explanation. he says this has something to do with how two of the four elements—air and water—succeed one another. Actually, he concludes, a "place" is like a "vessel." He mentions "parenthetically" at this juncture several other points which Plato did not make clear:

> Plato ought to tell us why the ideas and the numbers have no locality or place, if 'place' is indeed the 'receptive factor'—and this, whether the said receptive factor is 'the great and small' or (as he writes in the *Timaeus*) 'matter' (*Phys.* 209b35-210a).

Apparently, the ideas and the numbers have no "place," and Plato did not say why. Nor did he mention whether or not the place was synonymous with the receptive factor (also called the "participant"). In addition, he did not say whether the receptive was the same as the "great and small." We pause to note once again a passage that exemplifies a curious feature of Aristotle's account of Plato. When Aristotle says that "Plato . . . ought to tell us why. . . " he speaks as though Plato was not available to him to answer his questions or to provide spoken instructions. As Gilbert Ryle has noted. "It is as if Aristotle knew as a reader many, though not all, of Plato's dialogues" but he "did not know Plato the man." Ryle also pointed out that Aristotle seems not to be aware of the content of many of Plato's most significant dialogues. He concluded. "It seems then that many things are wrong with our habitual picture of Aristotle as studying philosophy under Plato's personal tutelage from the age of eighteen. and absorbing from about the same date even the latest of Plato's dialogues."[1]

In sum. the passage in the *Physics* containing Aristotle's famous pronouncement concerning Plato's unwritten doctrines happens to be describing the basis for assigning objects to a place or topic. It is worth noting that one criterion for designating things to a particular region is that it is the "commonplace" shared by the object and other like things. While there were some discrepancies between the unwritten doctrines and the doctrines of the *Timaeus* (with respect to the identity of matter and space). we may be certain that Plato was consistent in identifying place or topic with space. Finally, we should anticipate that Plato's dialogues will not contain any express statements explaining why the ideas and the numbers are not in a place. whether the "receptive factor" and the place are the same. whether the receptive is identical with "the great and small," or whether it is the same as "matter."

Let us move on to another aspect of Aristotle's testimony.

The Report of Plato's System in *Metaphysics A*

The section of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* at I. IV. 985b-VI. 988a is one of the earliest surviving histories

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[1] Ryle provides an outline of these various features in Plato's writings about which Aristotle seems unaware. See his *Plato's Progress*. pp. 2-10.

of philosophy. It is also the key passage outlining Aristotle's "metaphysical interpretation of the pre-Platonic thinkers" that Havelock sought to discredit in order to establish his claim that Plato was creating a new "abstract vocabulary." In this book. Aristotle introduces Plato's contributions to the question of causes and principles by describing how his doctrines were a development of the Pythagorean theories. This is where he makes a number of direct statements concerning the ultimate principles of a "system" based on the ideas as numbers. This system features a pair of opposite foundational principles. the one and the duality or dyad of the great and small. and also a class of mathematical entities located in between sensible objects and forms. Now, this is not the only passage in which Aristotle details these aspects of Plato's theories. There are many statements concerning these doctrines in the *Metaphysics* and in other works in the Aristotelian corpus. However, this section of the treatise has been the focus of debate because it is the most concentrated and extended discussion in which he explicitly attributes these views to Plato by name, whereas in other passages, he tends to refer to the name of the dialogue (e.g.. *Timaeus*) or to the theories espoused by the "Platonists."[2] Remember that we must exercise caution when interpreting this work attributed to Aristotle, since this collection of writings in the *Metaphysics* may itself be the product of a tradition. However, even if we allow for some garbling in transmission. Aristotle does make express mention of Plato, and he explains in detail the changes his predecessor made to the Pythagorean tradition.[3] That he attributes these contributions to Plato by name and that he also offers a critique that is so lengthy and precise makes it hard for scholars to understand how the teachings he mentions could differ so completely in expression and content from the lessons of the dialogues.

The Pythagorean Cosmos. Aristotle begins this chronicle by asserting that "wisdom is knowledge of certain causes and principles" (*Met.* I. 1. 15-16). He then reports on the causes and principles held by Greek philosophers beginning with the ancients and moving in chronological order up to his own time. comparing and contrasting the views of different thinkers along the way. So these remarks are significant not only for Plato. as Walter Burkert has emphasized. but also for the entire history of philosophy. and especially for our understanding of the early mathematics of the

[2]For a list of references see H. Bonitz. *Aristotelis Metaphysica*. Vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Olms. 1960). See also Sir David Ross. *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1953), pp. 143-153.

[3]Further. Aristotle (along with his student Theophrastus) is also the primary ancient source for our information concerning the teachings of Plato's immediate successors. commonly known as the Old Academy: Speusippus. Plato's nephew (head of the school from Plato's death until 339 B.C.E.): Xenocrates (399-314 B.C.E.): and then Polemon (314-267 B.C.E.). Though lists of their books have come down to us, their writings have not. Aristotle's lengthy polemic against both Plato and his successors contains extremely detailed accounts of the changes and amendments they made to Plato's philosophy. a philosophy which concentrates on the doctrines thought to be missing from the dialogues.

Pythagoreans.[4] No written records of Pythagorean thought have come down to us. The tradition relates that they swore an oath of secrecy.[5] Legend has it that their philosophy involved a complete way of life. and that their practice of inquiry (the name Pythagoras gave to geometry) was connected to a theory of the immortality of the soul.[6] Sir Thomas Heath, however, dismissed the notion that their teachings would have been protected by some sort of secrecy pledge. arguing that this story may have "been invented to explain the absence of documents." adding, "the fact appears that oral communication was the tradition of the school." The evidence does indicate that the Pythagoreans continued to preserve their philosophy orally long after the alphabet had made written forms of storage possible. Certainly, our lack of knowledge of their tradition compounds the difficulty in interpreting Aristotle's comments. For Plato's philosophy, he tells us, was the successor of the Pythagorean system.

Aristotle begins his discussion of Plato's contribution to the tradition by stating that his doctrines were for the most part in agreement with the philosophy of the Italians. He notes that the Pythagoreans were the first to develop the science of mathematics. Apparently, they held that the principles of mathematics were the fundamental principles (ἀρχὰς) of everything in the universe and so they grounded their system in the principles of number. Since this passage is so significant, it is worth quoting at length.

> And since *numbers* are by nature first among these principles, and they fancied that they could detect in numbers, to a greater extent than in fire and earth and water, many analogues (ὁμοιώματα) of what is and comes into being—such and such a property of number being *justice* (δικαιοσύνη). and such and such *soul* (ψυχὴ) or *mind*

'Walter Burkert provides a comprehensive review of the history of research concerning Pythagorean philosophy He supported Eduard Zeller's conclusion that the only two reliable sources are the reports in Aristotle's surviving treatises and several fragments attributed to Philolaus. Of the two. Zeller maintained that Aristotle's reports are the most important with the fragments of Philolaus in second place [Eduard Zeller. *Die Philosophie der Griechen in Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, ed., Wilhelm Nestle (13th edition. Leipzig. 1928), p. 365]. Other early sources contradict one another concerning nearly every detail. What has come down to us surrounding Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans is mostly legend. This passage in *Metaphysics* A contains one of Aristotle's most extended reports. At 986a12, he mentions his more detailed and comprehensive treatment of the subject elsewhere (most probably in two lost books. *On the Pythagoreans* and *A Reply to the Pythagoreans*). Reports are also included in the *Physics* (202b3) where he discusses the concept of the unlimited. and *On the Heavens*. which contains an account of Pythagorean astronomy. with its conception of earth as a moving celestial body and the notion of the harmony of the spheres [See his *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*. trans.. Edwin L. Minar. Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1972)].

᠂ See Diogenes Laertius. *Lives* VIII. 15: and Porphyry. *Vita Pythagorae* 19.

᠂᠂᠂Inquiry᠂ was the name which Pythagoras gave to geometry᠂᠂ [Iamblicus, *Vita Pythag*. 18, 89]. Robinson surveyed the evidence and concluded "that Pythagoras taught this doctrine [of transmigration of the soul] is quite certain᠂᠂ [Robinson, *Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 61].

(νοὺς) another *opportunity* (καιρός) and similarly, more or less, with all the rest—and since they saw further that the properties and ratios of the musical scales are based on numbers, and since it seemed clear that all other things have their whole nature modeled upon numbers, and that numbers are the ultimate things in the whole physical universe, they assumed the elements of numbers to be the elements of everything, and the whole universe to be a proportion and number. Whatever analogues to the processes and parts of the heavens and to the whole order of the universe they could exhibit in numbers and proportions, these they collected and correlated . . . to make their system a connected whole . . . (*Met.* I. V. 985b-986a).

According to Aristotle then, the Pythagoreans, took numbers and the four elements of nature—fire, air, water and earth—as their principles. The very first principles were, however, numbers (before even the four primary bodies), because they saw in them many likenesses to reality and the sensible world. They observed the numerical patterns in nature and they saw the properties of numbers in concepts such as justice, soul, mind, and opportunity. They noticed that the characteristic attributes and proportions of the musical scale were derived from numbers. They decided that numbers were a fundamental structuring principle of the cosmos and that nature was a kind of great music that conformed to a mathematical pattern. They concluded that the universe was in consonance with the principles of number, proportion, and harmony. From this observation they created their system of classification, which assimilated all things to numbers and to proportions. They took the measure of everything in the universe, correlated each component with an analogous number, and then "collected" it all together in such a way as to make "one" whole, interconnected "unity" expressed in the decad. Thus, the Pythagorean "system" involved "numbers" as well as "fire, earth, and water"—the elements of nature—in a comprehensive classification scheme that modeled the cosmos on the paradigm of the musical scale.[7]

History has preserved very few accounts of this Pythagorean theory, grounded as it was in the principles of numbers, the elements, and the features of the intervals of musical scales. We are further hampered in our understanding of the system because we have almost no information (with the exception of the tract of Aristoxenus) about ancient Greek music. Richard D. McKirahan explained that in correlating the cosmos with the musical scale and with the notion of harmony, the Pythagoreans amalgamated two central notions. Cosmos (κόσμος), with its attendant meanings of order and *adornment*, brought together notions of regularity and arrangement with the idea of beauty, perfection, and positive moral value. Harmony (άρμονία), as McKirahan emphasized, originally meant a frame,

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⁻ On "harmony," see *De Caelo*, II. ix. In Euclid, *Elements* vii, definition 21, numbers are *proportional* when the first is the same multiple, or the same part, of the second as the third is of the fourth. See *Greek Mathematics: Thales to Euclid*, ed. and trans., Ivor Thomas (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), p. 71.

"a fitting together, connection or joint. Later, it meant the string of a lyre, and then a way of stringing the lyre. i.e., a tuning or scale. The essence of order in the world, the Pythagoreans believed, is located in the connections of its parts."[8]

Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* VIII. 11-12) confirms that the system was based on the "arithmetical" aspects of geometry and on the sounds produced by vibrating strings.

> Pythagoras worked very hard at the arithmetical side of geometry, and discovered the musical intervals on the monochord.

As its name suggests, the monochord is an instrument with one string. Pressing down on the string at one point and plucking and then holding it down at another point and plucking again makes it possible to establish a relation between the sounds "produced" and the length of the vibrating strings.[9] The Pythagoreans found a correspondence between numbers and tone in the measurable and observable correlations between string lengths and the tonal intervals they sound. Apparently, these different ratios were experienced both acoustically and visually. The auditory experience of music appeared "to result from the imposition, by means of number, of order and limit on the unlimited continuum of possible tones."[10] The visual experience was suggested by certain "rising and falling sequences of pitch" creating a "tone circle" where beginning and end coincide in a reference tone that "functions visually as a geometric mean between the symmetrically located arithmetic and harmonic means."[11] The Pythagoreans were impressed by the discovery that these qualities they experienced through music could be expressed quantitatively. They enlarged and extended this idea, applying the mathematical structure to their cosmos to create a complete system that was grounded in the aesthetic principles underlying harmonic progressions. Aristotle adds that the finished whole that made up the essential nature of this system was based on the first four terms in the series of natural numbers (1,2,3, and 4).[12]

We must pause at this juncture to note that this pre-Euclidean "mathematics" that Aristotle describes is not well understood even today. We know that this early Greek mathematics had its roots in the oral tradition and was "carried on without symbolic notation."[13] Thus, we must recognize that

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[8] Richard D. McKirahan, Jr., *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), p. 93.

[9] For an explanation of Pythagorean musical theory, see Ernest G. McClain, *The Pythagorean Plato* (York Beach, Maine: Nicolas-Hays, Inc., 1978), a brief but valuable commentary is contained in John Mansley Robinson, *An Introduction to Early Greek Philosophy* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. Ltd. 1968), p. 68.

[10] McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, p. 92.

[11] McClain, *The Pythagorean Plato*, pp. 9-12.

[12] See John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 1-5 for a more complete explanation.

[13] Fowler, *Mathematics of Plato's Academy*, pp. 24-25.

our own way of dealing with concepts may have stood in the way of our ability to understand this pre-Euclidean. spoken mathematics practiced by the Pythagoreans. Jacob Klein has said that it is imperative that we refrain as much as possible from the use of modern concepts when interpreting the Greek theory of numbers set forth in these ancient texts. To whatever extent it is possible. he instructed. we must try to step outside our present day scientific terminology. and even to by-pass the ordinary intentionality which corresponds to our mode of thinking. While this may be difficult, he said. it cannot be impossible. for this ancient mode of thinking and conceiving is. after all. the foundation of our own tradition and in consequence. it cannot be totally strange or closed to us. Instead, he suggests. the "relation of our concepts to those of the ancients is oddly *ruptured*—our approach to an understanding of the world is rooted in the achievements of Greek science but it has *broken loose* from the presuppositions which determined the Greek development." He advised that if we are to clarify our own conceptual presuppositions we must always keep in mind the difference in the circumstances surrounding our own science and that of the Greeks.[14] One difference in circumstance is, of course. the contrast between the oral and the written modalities. Once we recognize that orality precluded not only alphabetic writing, but mathematical notation. then this helps point us in the direction of an understanding of this ancient Pythagorean system where all the parts of the universe were matched with numbers and with the elements called fire. air. water. and earth and then ordered into a unified scheme.

While scholars have been at a loss to explain the Pythagorean system and few have even ventured a guess as to what purpose it might have served. the taxonomy is more comprehensible when we realize that the Pythagoreans must have been an oral tradition of philosophy.[15] Knowing that this was an oral system provides the missing piece of information needed to understand the purpose of such a scheme. In the absence of writing and notation, it makes sense that early philosophers such as the Pythagoreans would have developed mnemonic techniques that were at least equal to if not better than those of the poets. Whereas the poets used their devices intuitively and by imitation, one would expect that the memory techniques of the scholarly branch of the tradition would be more well thought out. consciously applied. and accurate than the ones utilized by the rhapsodes. Yates described a branch of the memory tradition that emphasized the principles of division and orderly arrangement over the use of images and imagination. This school distinguished itself from the "Homeric tribe" by its

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[14] Klein. *Greek Mathematics*. pp. 118. See also his "Phenomenology and the History of Science." *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (Cambridge. Mass.. 1940). pp. 142-163.

[15] We do not know with certainty when Pythagoras lived. Aristotle speaks of Pythagoras as an ancient. Diogenes says that Pythagoras lived between 582-500 B.C.E.. or about three hundred years after the first arrival of the alphabet and at least one hundred years before Plato composed the dialogues.

technique of dividing the material to be remembered into lengths and then subdividing further in a series of dichotomies that descended from general to specific. Alternatively. the reverse order of this technique proceeded by collecting like things together by way of common features so as to ascend from particular to universal. Division is. of course. a mathematical operation. It is not much of a stretch to see the Pythagoreans as having come up with a mnemonotechnic that was based on a conception of numbers inspired by the mathematical patterns in nature.

In order to get closer to such a conception. we must. as Klein emphasized. jettison nearly all our present day concepts of what is meant by the words "numbers." the "elements (earth. air. fire and water)." "arithmetic." "mathematics." and "geometry." When the Pythagoreans pursued their mathematical studies. not only was there no notation. but the concept of "zero" had not yet been invented and they possessed no algebra. They treated geometry as an application of arithmetic. taking the point as the minimum unit and correlating it with the number "one" so that numbers were seen as being made up of many "ones." They also used geometry to solve algebraic problems in a method Heath has called a "geometrical algebra." They did all this. it seems. "in their head."

Aristotle says that the numbers and the elements (conceived on the paradigm of the proportions of the musical scale) that were the first principles of the Pythagorean system were not abstract units. Apparently. the Pythagoreans thought that units had magnitude. i.e.. spatial extension. According to Aristotle's definition. numbers. as "first principles." are those primary truths whose meaning and existence must be assumed. whereas the existence of everything else that follows from them must be proven. He offers as examples. the "unit." "straight line." "magnitude." and "triangle" (*Post. An.* I. X. 74b5-76a30-35). In this system then. what is assumed as fundamental are numbers and these are conceived as the continuous magnitudes of geometry.[10] The number "one"—as the unit—is basic to all numbers. In this view. numbers have spatial extension. or dimensionality. moving in progression from one (the unit). to two (the line). through to three (the plane). and then to four (the solid). Aristotle says that the Pythagoreans "seem to be unable to say" exactly how the first "one" was constructed so that it had magnitude (*Met.* 1080b 15-20). While it was not made clear how numbers in their system came to have spatial dimensions. it *was* made clear that when notions such as "justice" were matched to a number. they were assigned to a place in a geometric shape. Hence. "justice" was said to be a "square number." and Aristotle adds that

they make out that Opinion and Opportunity are in such and such a region. and a little

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[10] See Tobias Dantzig. *Number: The Language of Science* (1930: rpt. ed.. New York: The Free Press. 1954): idem. *The Bequest of the Greeks* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1955). See also Desjardins's. *Rational Enterprise.* pp. 34-62.

above or below them Injustice and Separation or Mixture. and they state as proof of this that each of these abstractions is a number: and also in this region there is already a plurality of the magnitudes composed of number.[17]

Aristotle wonders whether the numbers that correspond to each of these abstract concepts is the same kind of number that is found in the sensible universe or whether it is another kind of number. Apparently. the Pythagoreans did not make this aspect of their system explicit either.

Analogy. Aristotle says that the Pythagorean theory involved matching all the different parts of the universe with numbers based on a "likeness" of proportion. Analogy was a type of argumentation and mode of explanation found in ancient Greek thought from the earliest times.[18] Analogy was used to explain one thing by comparing it to something else that was like it. Analogy, in the narrow sense. referred to proportional analogy (a:b::c:d). In its broadest sense. it referred to any kind of reasoning in which one object or complex of objects was likened. or assimilated to another, on the basis of some "common features." Frequently. one of the two was unknown or incompletely known. while the other was better known. Moreover. the recognition of a resemblance between two objects served as the basis for a causal explanation of one of them. on the principle that similar effects proceed from similar causes. The relation the Pythagoreans saw between any two things was numerical. Thus. analogy with number provided a rational way to bring a systematic order to their cosmos. because lesser known. obscure. or difficult to understand phenomena could be explained by comparing. or relating it to. mathematical principles that were more well known. Thus. says Aristotle. the Pythagoreans assigned every part of nature along with all the different abstract conceptions to number. and then these numbers were "collected" in such a way as to make an interconnected "whole."[19]

Symmetry. Aristotle. describes how these analogies were made in this system. Where there were two things (first. the well known thing and second. the lesser known). there was a symmetrical relation wherein the measure of one corresponded to the measure of the other. He says that number was regarded as a first principle of material entities and as a measure of their properties and states (affections). The Pythagoreans said that the elements of number were the even and odd. One of these

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[17] Here. the translator has used the word "region" but in fact. no new term has been introduced here (*Met.* I. VIII. 990a23).

[18] G.E.R. Lloyd. *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1966). p. 7.

[19] See the notes and introduction of Hugh Tredennick. who cites Alexander (1. 17) as his source [Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I-IX. trans.. H. Tredennick (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press. 1936. rpt. in the Loeb edition. 1989), p. 32]. See also Jacob Klein. *Greek Mathematical Thought.* p. 65.

was limited. the other unlimited. and unity was both even and odd.[20] From unity came numbers and from numbers. he reiterated. came the whole scheme for the sensible universe. Thus. there was an ordered sequence of generation. How it worked is not clear. What is apparent. as Jacob Klein has stated. is that it exemplifies a prominent feature of early Greek thought. the effort to trace everything back to a small number of foundational principles. Since the sequence of numbers was taken to be the original order of nature, and since the number sequence began from a first or smallest number (or ratio). they made these principles govern their system as well. Just as there was a starting point of the number sequence. so the Pythagoreans made number the starting point of their system. Intelligible and intangible things were matched with a number. Then. sensible and tangible things were matched with intelligibles based on some perceived likeness. and after that. all these were assigned to a place in one of the basic geometric shapes. For the Pythagoreans then. "unity." involved symmetry (σύμμετρος)—balanced proportions—and *their system entailed one-to-one correspondences between sensible and intelligible things based on like proportions.*

The Pythagoreans must have observed that symmetry is a fundamental patterning principle in nature. In geometric symmetry. for example. there is a one-to-one correspondence in size. shape. and relative position of parts on opposite sides of a dividing line or median plane. so that one-half of a whole is the reverse order opposite. or mirror image. of the other half.[21] Symmetry is the structural basis for many dimensional shapes in the natural world. e.g.. the triangle (surface of crystals): circle (ripples in water: the human eye): spiral (vortex: and phyllotaxis. the arrangement of leaves around

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[20] In a passage in the *Physics* (3.4 203a 10-15). Aristotle noted that "They say that the unlimited is the even. For when this is surrounded and limited by the odd it provides things with the quality of unlimitedness." Thus. it seems that one is odd. and the unlimited is a duality. or two. which is comprised of the unequal great and small.

[21] The human face and body participate in this kind of geometric. or bi-lateral symmetry. The unity created by the symmetrical relation between opposites is connected to motion. so that most living creatures have a left and right side as a structuring principle governing the way they move through the environment. where walking. running. flying. swimming or crawling is a consequence of coordinated movement of both sides and perfection of movement approximates geometric symmetry. While the pattern in geometric symmetry is created by reflection. other kinds of symmetry generate structure by extension and repetition of the basic pattern. by rotating it around an axis. or by translation (repeating the same object or motif by shifting it a constant distance). or by a combination of all of the above. Plant life displays a radial symmetry. for example. where the growth patterns reveal a motion that is upward and outward rather than forward. Trees exhibit symmetry in their annual rings. which show that motion is in relation to the central axis [see Bryan Bunck. *Reality's Mirror: Exploring the Mathematics of Symmetry* (New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1989): R. Feynman. *The Character of the Physical Law* (Cambridge: MIT Press. 1962): István Hargittai and Magdolna Hargittai. *Symmetry: A Unifying Concept* (Bolinas. California: Shelter Publications, 1994): H.E. Huntley. *The Divine Proportion: A Study in Mathematical Beauty* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.. 1970): Ian Stewart and Martin Golubitsky. *Fearful Symmetry: Is God a Geometer?* (Oxford. U.K.: Blackwell Publishers. 1992)].

plant stems): hexagons (honeycomb): sphere (moon and planets): cone (volcanoes: stalactites): and helix (nautilus shell). Symmetry, and its opposite. anti-symmetry (e.g.. male/female. black/white). are fundamental principles governing forms and changes of form in the physical universe. It may have been this study of nature that led the Pythagoreans to the theory of proportionals and to the geometry for constructing the "cosmic figures." Proclus (*Euclid I*, 7) writes:

> Pythagoras transformed this study [of geometry] into a form of liberal education, examining its principles from the beginning and tracking down the theorems immaterially and conceptually. It was he who discovered both the theory of proportionals and the construction of the cosmic figures

The theory of proportionals went in tandem with the construction of the elemental geometric shapes—the cosmic figures or primary bodies—which were associated with the four elements. fire (pyramid), air (octahedron), water (icosahedron), and earth (cube). In addition to these four elemental shapes, there was a fifth. which stood for the universe as a whole (dodecahedron). Scholars have been at a loss to explain the meaning and significance of these geometric shapes. Though the four elements have often been conceived by modern commentators as simply heat, wind, liquid. and soil. it is clear from Aristotle's description that they stood for something more complicated than that. The elements were, after numbers, the foundational principles of this philosophy. It is also worth noting that this study involving the "construction" of the cosmic shapes was the basis of the Pythagorean system of education.

Polarity. Aristotle went on to say that the Pythagoreans held that there were ten principles. *which they arranged in columns, opposite to opposite*: (1) limit and unlimited: (2) odd and even: (3) unity and plurality: (4) right and left: (5) male and female: (6) rest and motion: (7) straight and crooked: (8) light and darkness: (9) good and evil: and (10) square and oblong. By way of this "two column" arrangement, the "contraries" were laid-out in a symmetrical scheme whereby the notion in one column was counterbalanced by the opposite notion in the other column.²² We know from other

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²² I use the terms "polarity" and "opposite" to refer to the relationship between any pair of terms which involve a contrast or antithesis. Following the traditional schedule which derives from Aristotle, we may distinguish between contraries. contradictories and contrasts. "All A is B" and "no A is B" are contraries: if one proposition is true, the other is false: but if one proposition is known to be false. it does not follow that the other is true (for is may be that neither is true, that is to say that some, but not all A is B). "All A is B" and "some A is not B" are contradictories (as also are "some a is b" and "no A is B"): one or other proposition must be true, and the one that is not true must be false. In other words. if two propositions are contradictories. then to prove the one it is sufficient to refute the other: but if two propositions are contraries, then it is not enough to refute the one in order to demonstrate the other. Contrasts like sun and moon are not contraries, but they are opposites in the sense that one is the source of light by day and the other the source of light by night. Similarly sky and earth may be considered opposites in that, from the point of view of a person standing on the earth, the sky is up and the earth down. Contraries may not both be truly

sources that (along with analogy and symmetry), polarity was one of the most prevalent principles of explanation in early Greek philosophy.[22] The characteristic of polarity was that objects were classified or explained by being related to one or the other of a pair of opposite principles. In this system, then, opposition provided a comprehensive framework by reference to which things were described or classified.[23] We may observe that at 985b-986a, justice is assigned to a number and at 990a23, injustice is assigned to a part. Aristotle does not say whether these were two more polarities, whether they belonged to the ten he just mentioned, whether the list he provides is set out in any particular order of priority, or how the Pythagoreans related one set of opposites to others above or below them. Nor does he mention whether the "columns" were depicted by way of a diagram, or whether they were purely a mental conception. Certainly, the contraries were—like analogies and symmetries—primary modes of explanation in the Pythagorean theory. Though there are different kinds of opposition, the Pythagorean table was based on contrary notions. Thus "unity" involved a symmetrical relation between two columns organized into opposites involving some sort of likeness. So that "light and darkness," for example, are opposites of one another but they are also analogous, in a way that "light and right," are not. Aristotle went on to say that the earliest philosophers made the first principle material. Some assumed that this first principle was "one," while others said there was more than one corporeal principle. However, he emphases, everyone agreed that the first principles were material. What we may learn from this ranking, he concluded, was that contraries were the principles of physical bodies.[25] According to Aristotle, then, the "first principles" were opposites. Once again, Aristotle

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predicated of the same subject at the same *time*, in the same *respect* and in the same *relation*. While a quality can have only one true contrary, a substance may have more than one opposite, in the sense that it may be contrasted with several other objects in different respects: thus king, for example, is opposed both to queen (as male to female) and to subjects (as ruler to ruled) [Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 87-88].

[23] Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 7. He also offers an extended discussion of Plato's use of opposites in argument, his formulation of the law of contradiction, his distinctions among many different kinds of opposition (such as contraries and contradictions, sameness and difference and also the nature of intermediates between opposites).

[24] Considering the number of theories and explanations based on opposites found in Greek philosophy and medicine, it is surprising how little this recurrent feature has been discussed by scholars and historians of ancient thought [see Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 27. Lloyd himself neglects symmetry, the related principle. See also Richard Robinson, *Plato's Earlier Dialectic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). F. Cornford's early study, *From Religion to Philosophy* (London, 1937), also includes an analysis of classification into opposites in early Greek thought].

[25] Aristotle claimed that all his predecessors adopted opposites as principles. At *Physics* (A 5 188b 27f), for instance, he remarked, "they all identify the elements, and what they call the principles, with the contraries, although they give no reasons for doing so, but are, as it were, compelled by the truth itself" (see also *Ph.* 188 a 19; *Met.* 1004b 29; 1075a 28; 1087a 29). Lloyd pointed out that "there is a large body of evidence in the fragments of the Presocratic philosophers themselves which tends to bear it out, at least as a broad generalization." Opposites form the basis of many of the theories which early Greek philosophers

notes an aspect of the theory about which the Pythagoreans were not forthcoming, for he says they "did not indicate" how these "contraries" could be related to causes. Prior to the Pythagoreans, he said, philosophers were vague concerning cause, except that they employed two, one of which was the source of motion and was considered by some as one and by others as two. The Pythagoreans, he suggests, spoke of two principles and made a further addition, unique to them: they did not regard the limited, the unlimited, and the one as *separate entities*, like fire or water. Instead, they thought of them as essences, and therefore, that number was the essence of all things. As Jacob Klein has remarked, we do not know "whatever special motives may have led to such a conception."[26]

As it turned out, there were limitations to this Pythagorean mathematics. Their treatment of geometry as an application of arithmetic (wherein the point was correlated with the number one, so that numbers were thought of as many ones) did not work with the magnitudes of geometry. Their method of proportions—this "geometrical algebra"—was applicable only to commensurable magnitudes. Heath quotes a scholium to Euclid, Book X:

> the Pythagoreans were the first to address themselves to the investigation of commensurability, having discovered it as a result of the observation of numbers; for, while the unit is a common measure of all numbers, they were unable to find a common measure of all magnitudes . . . because all magnitudes are divisible *ad infinitum* and never leave a magnitude which is too small to admit of further division, but that remainder is equally divisible *ad infinitum*. The first of the Pythagoreans who made public the investigation of these matters perished in a shipwreck.[27]

We hope it was an accident![28] For we know from other sources that the discovery of irrationals precipitated a crisis when these Greek mathematicians found out there was an error at the foundation of their system. Apparently, Theodorus of Cyrene (a student of Protagoras and one of Plato's teachers) proved the irrationality of √3 to √17 (*Tht.* 147d). Later, Euclid would separate arithmetic from

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and medical writers put forward in their attempts to account for natural phenomena. The one surviving fragment of Anaximander refers to the continuous interaction of opposed factors of some kind [Simplicius, *Phys.* 150; Plutarch, *Strom.* 2]. Parmenides' cosmogony in the *Way of Seeming* begins with the two, Light (or fire) and Night, which are equal (fr. 94) and opposite (fr. 8. 55 and 59). In Empedocles, Love and Strife are opposites, bringing about opposite effects (Fr. 26. 5). Anaxagoras describes in Fr. 4 an original mixture of all things which contains pairs of opposites. The Hippocratic treatises of the late fifth or fourth centuries also offer a number of additional examples of medical theories which have a similar general form [Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy*, p. 15-16; 19-20].

26 Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought*, p. 66-68.
27 As cited in Heath, *Greek Mathematics*, Vol. I, p. 154.
28 Iamblicus, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, 88, records the story of Hippasus, "who was a Pythagorean but, owing to his being the first to publish and write down the (construction of the) sphere with the twelve pentagons, perished by shipwreck for his impiety, but received credit for the discovery, whereas it really belonged to HIM, for it is thus that they refer to Pythagoras, and they do not call him by name" [as quoted in Heath, *Greek Mathematics*, p. 160].

mathematics. and much later (between 400 and 1200 C.E.). mathematicians would make the point correspond to zero. and make zero. not one. the first number.[29] However. it would be centuries before these solutions would take hold. At this juncture. Plato apparently stepped onto the scene and attempted to change the system to correct the difficulties with the Pythagorean mathematics.

Plato's Idea-Numbers. Plato. says Aristotle. introduced certain "peculiar features" into the Pythagorean philosophy as a result of his studies with various teachers. First. he denied the existence of points. "Plato steadily rejected this class of objects as a geometrical fiction." thinking instead of the fundamental minimum as the "indivisible line" which he recognized as a beginning or "starting point" of a line. and he "assumed" this class as fundamental (*Met.* I. IX. 992a). So Plato altered the Pythagorean system by moving it closer toward the notion of zero and in the direction of a non-arithmetic conception of geometry. In Plato's system. numbers—as fundamental. "sovereign" principle of origin (ἀρχή). and the "first place" in the universe—are the continuous magnitudes of geometry.[30] The minimum unit is not the point but the "starting point of a line." which Aristotle says was Plato's expression for the magnitude that cannot be divided any further. Aristotle does not specify exactly how Plato's "one" differed from the Pythagorean "one." or how it was related to "unity" or the decad. What he does make clear is that in this geometry. the mode of increase was not by adding units but by "production." where the combination of factors generates. not just a new line segment of greater magnitude. for example. but a radically new product. a dimensional figure. Aristotle notes that

> the truth about numbers must be rather as Plato used to maintain: there must be a first two and first three. and the numbers cannot be addible to each other (*Met.* XII. VIII. 1083a37).

What Aristotle seems to mean is that for Plato. the *first* number two is not made of "one plus one." Instead. two is a concept—or an "idea"—in its own right.

Plato. he says. also added to the Pythagorean system the universal definitions taught by Socrates and also. the Heraclitian doctrines concerning flux. Since he came to believe that "the problem of definition" should not be concerned with sensibles because "there can be no general definition of sensible things which are always changing." he introduced entities he called "ideas"(ἰδέας). and he held that all sensible things were named after them. so that sensibles had the same name as the forms (τοῖς εἴδεσι) because they existed by participation in them. Plato's "first two and first three." then. were the universal ideas of numbers. so that all the sensible objects that may be

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[29] Ian Stewart. *Nature's Numbers: The Unreal Reality of Mathematics* (New York: Basic Books. 1995). p. 33.

[30] Desjardins's. *Rational Enterprise*. pp. 34-62.

counted as twos or threes were named after them. When Aristotle noted that the Pythagoreans assigned Opinion and Opportunity to a place, saying that "each of these abstractions is a number," or more specifically, "a plurality of magnitudes composed of number" (*Met.* I. VIII. 990a23), he was not certain whether these numbers were the sensible kind or another kind, since the Pythagoreans did not express this aspect of their system by way of explicit statement. In contrast to this silence of the Pythagoreans,

> Plato at least says that it is another [kind of number]. It is true that he supposes that numbers are both these magnitudes and their causes; but in his view the causative numbers are intelligible and the other sensible (*Met.* I. VIII. 990a23).

For Plato, then, the numbers assigned to abstract concepts were not the kind of numbers found in the region of the sensible universe, they were instead classified as intelligible. So that Plato's arrangement correlated numbers with causes and these were divided into two orders of magnitude: sensible and intelligible. We take it that the "first two and first three" were classed with the latter. Aristotle mentions at this point that whereas the Pythagoreans said that things exist by "imitation of numbers," Plato said they exist by "participation" in number. Aristotle emphasizes that the only thing Plato changed was the word. He complains that this aspect of the system was never spelled out by way of express statement by either Plato or the Pythagoreans, saying that what this "participation" or "imitation" might be was left an open question.

Aristotle, in a later passage, describes how analogies were made in Plato's version of the Pythagorean system. He said that they were based on the idea of one or of a "unity in measure" which applied to everything in a "collection." Aristotle makes it clear that in Plato's system, the "idea of one" and "unity" are linked. While the idea of one and unity are measures, they are not numbers but starting points. In terms of a correspondence between two things based on a symmetrical relationship, Plato's version is the same as the Pythagorean model.

> That "unity" denotes a measure is obvious. And in every case there is something else which underlies it: e.g., in the scale there is the quarter-tone; in spatial magnitude the inch or foot or some similar thing; and in rhythms the foot or syllable. Similarly in the case of gravity there is some definite weight. Unity is predicated of all things in the same way: of qualities as quality and of quantities as quantity. . . . (Unity is not a number, for the measure is not measures, but the measure and unity are starting-points.) The measure must always be something which applies to all alike: e.g., if the things are horses, the measure is a horse; if they are men, the measure is a man; and if they are man, horse and god, the measure will presumably be an animate being . . . (*Met.* 1088a9-10).

Aristotle pinpoints the common features behind the "unity" that serve in all instances as the criteria for classifying things as "alike" in the pattern. These involve measurements, either of quantity or quality. The examples of quantity offered by Aristotle include tones in the instance of the scale; weight in gravity; the foot or syllable in the rhythms of music or poetry, and any standard unit of measure—such

as our inch and foot—in spatial magnitudes. Examples of qualities include horse as the measure of a horse. and men as the measure of a man. In terms of the "collection." the unity in which man. horse and god all participate is "animate being." For these things. "animate being" is a more general class and so it is prior to horse. which is in turn a more specific instance and so it is posterior in the collection to "animate being." Just as there is a distinction between the idea of a horse in this scheme and any particular horse. so there is a distinction between the idea of one and any one specific thing.

To reiterate. then. we find Aristotle describing Plato's idea-numbers as a modified version of the Pythagorean system. Still. the changes Plato made were substantial enough to make Aristotle describe it as the "successor" to the Pythagorean scheme. because he took their arrangement and altered it to incorporate the Heracleitian doctrines concerning flux. the Socratic definitions and his own contributions. the "starting" point and the ideas. Whereas the Pythagoreans did not say whether abstractions were correlated with sensible numbers or another kind of number. Plato made it clear that they belonged to the other kind. Aristotle does not state precisely how Plato's innovations affected the number sequence postulated by the Italian philosophers (number. even and odd. limited and unlimited). how their scheme changed when the fundamental principle moved from the sensible to the sphere of the ideas. how Plato integrated the Socratic definitions into the system. or how his introduction of the ideas—a kind of entity that was different from the contraries—altered the "two column" arrangement of the Pythagorean table.

The Intermediates. Aristotle does say that along with the notion of the starting point and the ideas. Plato made another substantial contribution of his own. He held in addition to sensible things and the forms the existence of an intermediate class. the objects of mathematics. These. he said. were distinct from sensible things in being eternal and immovable. They were separate in that there were many similar objects of mathematics. whereas each form was unique. Here. then. is Aristotle's statement concerning the "intermediate objects of mathematics." He reports that. whereas the Pythagorean numbers were not separate from sensible things. Plato introduced the abstraction of pure numbers from numbers of sensible objects. So Plato distinguished at least three different kinds of numbers (1) those correlated with sensible objects: (2) those that were assigned to mathematical objects: and (3) those that were matched to the abstractions. The third kind were at once magnitudes and causes and so they were the highest class. The second type were the objects of mathematics. and so these were placed in between the place of the pure numbers and the region where the first sort of numbers—those corresponding to sensible objects—were located. Thus. the continuum of numbers was separated into three different spaces. In Plato's system. there were arithmetical numbers concerned with the objects in the sensible world. the mathematical numbers which were eternal and

without motion but which included many similar numbers (many twos or many threes). and then there were the idea-numbers (the first "two" and the first "three"). which were eternal. immovable and unique (not generated by adding others together). Said differently. there was a place for sensible numbers and a place for intelligible numbers. The sensible region encompassed the numbers of arithmetic that govern sensible objects. such as two apples added to two apples comes to a total of four apples. *The intelligible region was made up of two kinds of numbers. the intermediate numbers and the causal. or idea-numbers.* The distinction between the two kinds of intelligible numbers was that the intermediate numbers. on the one hand. included operations such as two plus two equals four. Thus. the intermediate mathematicals involved those numbers which could be added. subtracted. multiplied. and so on but which were at the same time separate and distinct from a number of sensible things. The causal numbers. on the other hand. each being singular. the "first" numbers. would have been the domain of the "idea" of "two" and of "four." Since "two plus two" involves the addition of two number twos. this kind of operation would have been excluded from the place reserved for each unique number form. Since the mathematical numbers included "many alike." they were located in the intermediate position and only the causal numbers were placed with the forms.

Aristotle's description of the "intermediate" location of this "separate" class suggests as well that Plato changed the Pythagorean "two column" arrangement. Plato seems to have distinguished the "sensible and intelligible" as kinds of opposition that were not in evidence in the Pythagorean scheme. where numbers "were not separate." Moreover. "intermediate" is an expression that only becomes understandable in relation to two other expressions involving opposing extremes. Some pairs of terms allow for an intermediate. while some do not. The pairs black and white. for instance. admit intermediates (grey and other colors). whereas odd and even do not. It is not the case that all colors are either black or white. but every whole number is either odd or even. But odd and even may in turn be distinguished from odd and not-odd. i.e. a pair of predicates related as affirmation and negation or as contradictories. It is true of all members of the class of whole numbers (but not of other things). that they must be even. odd. or not odd. This interpretation of intermediacy is supported by many references in Greek literature to *intermediate terms.*[31] In Plato's theory. sensible and intelligible were

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[31] Three examples should suffice. There is the intermediate term between right and left, so that the battle-field. at *Iliad* 13 308. for example. is divided into a right. a left and a middle. Similarly, at *Iliad* 12 269 there is a reference to those who are neither particularly brave, nor particularly cowardly. but are instead undistinguished in battle. And intermediates between opposite pairs are referred to quite commonly when a course of action is recommended which is a mean between two extremes, as for example, at *Odyssey* 15 70. where Menelaus remarks that both excessive hospitality and excessive inhospitality are unseemly in a host. and what is better and more fitting is the mean. falling somewhere in between them. For additional examples. see Lloyd. *Polarity and Analogy.* p. 92-103.

kinds of contraries that admitted an intermediate term, for Aristotle said that "separation" involved a differentiation wherein "mathematical numbers" were set apart from, and located between "sensible number" (arithmetical) and "ideal" number (*Met.* 1090b11-12). The intermediate mathematical objects, then, may be understood as occupying a space in between two other kinds of numbers which are placed at opposite ends of the scale on a continuum of numbers. It is curious that in Aristotle's description, there are two kinds of numbers in the intelligible place and only one kind in the sensible. For according to the principle of symmetry, the two kinds of objects in the intelligible realm should have been balanced by two corresponding kinds of objects in the sensible. One thing is certain. Plato's alteration of the Pythagorean system to incorporate these "intermediates" created considerable confusion and conflicting opinion even in his own time. In fact, the "intermediates" gave rise to different schools of Platonism in the years following his death, as Aristotle considers at length in the later passages in *Metaphysics*.

The Great and Small. Aristotle goes on to discuss what scholars regard as another missing tenet—the great and small (τὸ μέγα καὶ τὸ μικρόν). These two expressions are, of course, relative oppositions. Aristotle says that in Plato's system, forms (εἴδη) are the causes (αἰτια) of all things, and that Plato considered the elements of the forms to be the elements of everything. As a result, says Aristotle, Plato said the great and small were the material principle, and that the essence, or formal principle was the one, since numbers were derived from the great and small by participation in the one. At this point, Aristotle begins to compare and contrast Plato with the Pythagoreans. He says that Plato's teaching resembled the Pythagoreans in treating the one as a substance instead of as a predicate of some other entity. Also like the Pythagoreans, Plato saw the "numbers as the causes of Being." He differed from the Pythagoreans in positing a duality instead of a single unlimited, and in making the unlimited consist of the great and small. He also differed in regarding the numbers as distinct from sensible things, whereas the Pythagoreans held that things themselves *are* numbers. Nor did the Pythagoreans posit an intermediate class of mathematical objects. Plato's distinction of the one and the numbers from ordinary things—in which he parted company with his Pythagorean predecessors—along with his introduction of the ideas, were innovations that emerged from his study of logic (for the earlier thinkers had no knowledge of dialectic). Plato conceived of the other principle (the great and small) as a duality because the numbers, except those which are first (the idea-numbers), can be generated from it as from a matrix (ἐκμαγεῖον). That certain numbers are generated from duality as from a matrix is similar to the usage of the word ἐκμαγεῖον that may be found at *Timaeus*

(50c).[32] In both Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Plato's *Timaeus*. this term has the meaning of that on which or in which an impression is made. as a mold.[33]

At *Met.* 1091a13. Aristotle explains that "Plato makes spatial magnitudes out of a great and small." Thus. the "great and small" involve a unity of size. extent. quality or caliber of space that is measured in standard units—such as inch or foot—as Aristotle makes clear in numerous passages. Those things that are classed as the "unequal great and small." include

> numbers. which are composed of the Many and Few . . . lines from the Long and
> Short. planes from the Broad and Narrow. and solids from the Deep and Shallow.
> These are species of the Great and Small (*Met.* 1085a10-15)

Thus the expression "great and small" refers to two comparable spatial magnitudes involving (1) numbers: (2) lines: (3) planes: and (4) solids. These different types of great and small all involve geometry. more specifically. certain fundamental figures. Moreover. the great and small represent "unequal" rather then "equal" amounts including unequal numbers. lines. planes. and solid things. We notice as well that this description involves a sequence of generation. There appears to be a geometric progression that moves from numbers to lines to planes to solids. Each member of the species is related to the predecessor by a uniform law. So the solid is posterior to the plane. which forms its basis: the plane is posterior to the line. which is its ground: and the line is posterior to the number. which is prior. We have a continuous and connected series like the movement of musical parts in harmony. So in order of spatial magnitude. the solid is greater and the plane smaller. the plane greater and the line smaller. the line greater and the number smaller. Further. if we link this statement with the comparison between ideas and sensible things. the implication is that the idea is greater and the physical thing smaller.

That the great and small also refer to geometry is a point about which some other authorities have found parallels in Plato's writings.[34] So the great and small. along with the intermediate

[32] Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Vol. 1. trans.. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press. 1933). p. 47.

[33] A.E. Taylor found evidence of this matrix associated with great and small in a passage in the *Epinomis* (990a-991e) that describes the discovery of the "divine contrivance" that molds form and type "about the double in various progressions." These progressions about the double. Taylor declares. are "what was meant by the Great and Small" [Taylor. *Plato: The Man and His Work*, p. 432].

[34] Francis Cornford found evidence of the great and small in the *Parmenides* (143a-156b). Here. he explained. "It always proves to be two and never is one." He added that the dyad in the case of numerical magnitude is the great and small but in the case of sensible qualities manifests as "indefinite continua, like hotter-and-colder. always admitting of the more-and-less." According to Cornford. the great and small is "a continuum of maniness. along which you can mark off any number of units or measures" [Francis Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1939). pp. 144-178. See also A.E. Taylor. "Forms and Numbers: A Study in Platonic Metaphysics." *Mind*. Vol. 35. No. 140 (1926): 419-440].

mathematical objects. are two aspects of Aristotle's report that researchers have found to be corroborated in Plato's dialogues. Further. we note that each pair of terms admits of an intermediate. Between many and few we might have a medium number. Between long and short we might have an average length. between broad and narrow. a medium size. and between deep and shallow an intermediate depth. This, concludes Aristotle. is how Plato viewed the question he was investigating. He ended his "concise and summary account of the duality, the "great and small" by adding one further note. Plato, he said, "assigned to these two elements respectively the causation of good and of evil."

Here we bring to a close this commentary outlining Aristotle's testimony in the *Metaphysics*. These are the main points of the philosophical teaching he attributed to Plato that some readers say does not tally with the views set forth in Plato's writings. However, in the course of this discussion. we have found a few readers who claimed to have located in Plato some aspects of Aristotle's testimony.

This is the principle evidence from Aristotle that suggests to scholars that Plato's oral philosophy was different from his written philosophy. The lack of harmony authorities find between passages in one and the same dialogue. between different dialogues and between Aristotle's testimony and Plato's written philosophy extends further to the reports of other ancient writers. The testimony from these commentators who had access to chronicles that have perished over the centuries adds even more weight to the reports of a Platonic system. These accounts are beyond the scope of this study. It should be noted however, that there is. in fact. considerable secondary evidence regarding the views Plato held on these doctrines preserved in books by Aristotle's commentators. The detailed meaning of these reports is. of course. a matter of considerable dispute. There is. however. general agreement on the passages that are most significant for the issue of the "unwritten doctrines."[35] The documents scholars have cited in support of the theory of an oral teaching are contained in works by Aristoxenus. Theophrastus. Antiochus of Ascalon. Alcinous. Sextus Empiricus. Proclus, and Simplicius.[36] These

Kenneth Sayre agreed and added that "more exactly [the great and small] represents a whole variety of such continua, quantitative for magnitudes, qualitative for sensible properties"(98-99) [Sayre, *Riddle Resolved*, pp. 98-99. For a similar view. see W.D. Ross. *Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Vols. 1 and 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1924). pp. 170-171]. Jacob Klein found the Great and Small of Aristotle's report in the *Republic* [Jacob Klein. *Commentary on Plato's Meno* (1965: Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977). p. 116].

[35] Dillon. *The Middle Platonists*. p. 2.

[36] For Aristoxenus. see Henry S. Macran. ed. and trans.. *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1902), p. 88; for Theophrastus, see Theophrastus' *Metaphysics*, trans.. W.D. Ross and F.H. Forbes (Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim. 1967), pp. 15-39. Antiochus of Ascalon is cited in Cicero, *Academia I and II*. trans.. H. Rackman (Loeb, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press and William Heinemann Ltd., 1954), p. 32. For Alcinous see *Didaskalikos*, or *Handbook*

ancient authors confirm Aristotle's description of the "unwritten doctrines" and they offer extended commentaries on the theories he ascribed to Plato. Scholars believe that while reflections of some of the doctrines described by these other ancient commentators can be seen in later dialogues like the *Republic*, *Philebus*, *Timaeus* and *Laws*, "they could not be deduced from the dialogues alone."[37]

Outline of the Philosophy Aristotle Attributed to Plato

It is now possible to outline the main features of the doctrines Aristotle attributed to Plato and which many in the intellectual community claim they cannot locate in the dialogues. Plato's system combined the Pythagorean philosophy with two other ancient philosophical traditions: the Heracleitian and the Socratic. To this, he added his own innovations, the notion of the "starting point," the ideas, the intermediate mathematical objects, and the method of dialectic (of which earlier authorities had no knowledge).

The principles in Plato's system (as in the Pythagorean scheme that preceded it), were numbers and the elements known as the cosmic figures, namely: fire (tetrahedron), air (octahedron), water (icosahedron), and earth (cube). In this scheme, the numbers were the "ultimate principles," prior even to the elements. Plato took the Pythagorean arrangement that used proportion and harmony in the musical intervals as a pattern for ordering the cosmos and he refined it. Like other early Greek thinkers, Plato used modes of explanation and argument based on analogy, polarity, and symmetry. The overall pattern for his system was based on the mathematical structure of music. It took "one" as the starting point and "unity" as its completion. Analogies between different kinds of objects were made on the principle of a "likeness" to the proportions of the musical intervals. Contraries were based on the principle of polarity. Symmetry was the principle of commensurability. The method of dialectic (a form of logic), involved "collecting" everything in the universe together and matching the various parts with analogous numbers and proportions in such a way as to make "one" whole, interconnected "unity."

of Platonism, trans., John Dillon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 167. The evidence from Sextus Empiricus is contained in several of his works. In *Against the Physicists* II. 306, he cites *Phaedo* 97a; in *Against the Logicians* I. 142 he quotes *Timaeus* 27d; in *Against the Ethicists* (70-71) he offers a reading of the *Republic* 335d and 379a; in *Against the Professors* I. 301, he quotes from *Tim*. 35a; and in *Against the Rhetoricians*, he quotes from *Grg*. 453a. The accuracy of his quotations of these known texts suggests that his reading of other sources that have perished is credible as well. For Proclus, see *Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, trans., Glenn R. Morrow and John M. Dillon (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 3. Simplicius may be found in *Commentaria In Aristotelem Graeca*, Vol.9, ed., H. Diels (Berlin, 1882), pp. 453-55.

[37] Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, p. 3.

Plato's universal "definitions" *were not concerned with material things* but with entities he called "ideas." He named physical things after the ideas, and he held that things exist by participation in them and were due to their relation to them. Whereas the Pythagoreans thought that things existed by "imitation of numbers," Plato said they existed by "participation." The method involved assigning parts of the universe and abstract philosophical notions to numbers as well as to the primary geometric shapes known as the cosmic figures or the elements of nature. However, in Plato's system, the fundamental was not a unit or point but the starting point. Unity was a term for the whole (1, 2, 3, and 4). "Unity in measure" was said to be the common factor in everything gathered together in a "collection," so that the first four numbers were the principles providing the link between the one and the many bodies in the three-dimensional physical world. Finally, Plato grouped numbers into sensible and intelligible. The intelligible numbers were then divided in two main kinds, the mathematical and the idea-numbers.

Plato changed the Pythagorean philosophy to include the existence of a separate class of *intermediate* mathematical objects, which he placed in between sensibles and the highest class.

In Plato's system, the duality or dyad of the great and small constituted the material principle; while the essence and formal principle was the one. Plato made spatial magnitudes out of the opposition of the unlimited great and small and the one, so that numbers were derived from the great and small by participation in the one. In Plato's teaching, numbers were causes. He also posited a dual unlimited made up of the one and the great and small. Plato conceived of the great and small as a duality because the numbers (except the idea-numbers), could be generated from it as from a matrix.

Plato's Unwritten Doctrines

Aristotle notes a number of points that were not made explicit, either by the Pythagoreans or by Plato. For instance, he complains that "Plato ought to tell us why the forms and the numbers are not in place . . ." He says that the Pythagoreans did not say how the first one was constructed so it had magnitude, or whether the numbers correlated with abstractions were those of the sensible world or another kind of number. Both Plato and the Pythagoreans did not explain the nature of imitation or participation. Neither were all that clear about what the place or topic was. They were also circumspect about whether the receptive factor was synonymous with place, and whether what participates is the great and small, or matter. From these comments concerning those issues that were not stated openly, Aristotle directs attention to the points in this philosophy that were "unwritten." Said differently, these statements pinpoint the aspects of the system that were not set forth in words—what I have described as "indirection in discourse"—but were left instead for learners to reason out themselves. Further,

Aristotle in these passages informs his readers about the principles needed to uncover the esoteric teaching. Knowing that one of the ways unwritten doctrines work is on the principle of analogy makes learners aware that they should keep their eyes open while reading Plato to make sure they note the correlations that Socrates or one of the other lead characters makes between different objects. For that which is not written may be reasoned out from that which is written in the text on the basis of a parallel judgment. As an example, when Socrates says in the "Likeness of the Sun" passage in the *Republic* that he will not discuss the good, but he will discuss that which is made in its likeness, the reader should know that what applies to the likeness that he discusses also applies to the thing that is omitted from the discussion on the basis of analogous proportion and symmetry. The thing that is not discussed should be the unwritten counterpart of the thing that is discussed in writing. In addition, when Socrates sets out "columns" of polar expressions and he leaves out certain parts, readers should be able to identify at least some of the missing pieces. They should know that the notion that is given on one side of the opposition should be counter-balanced on the other side by an opposing term on the basis of the principle of symmetry. Therefore, those things which are unexpressed may be identified by using the information that is given and by applying the rules and procedures of the system to figure out the unwritten doctrines.

Plato's System: An Education in the Technology of Memory

These features of Plato's system to which Aristotle testifies have not been understood by authorities. When we look to the experts for an interpretation of this scheme, we find them unable to offer any reason why the Pythagoreans would have bothered inventing a system where all things were matched with numbers and assigned to various places in an order that took its impetus from musical harmonies. If we examine the literature, we see scholars offering interpretations that describe Aristotle's points, providing commentaries that paraphrase his remarks, or giving accounts that relate his words to statements in his other works. We do not find explanations for the system's existence. Commentators refrain from even speculating as to what purpose such a taxonomy might have served. Thus, in the absence of a theory regarding the scheme. I put forward my own as an only contender. I suggest that the Pythagoreans were an oral tradition of philosophy and that their scheme which Plato adapted was a mnemonic system.

Aristotle, in describing the philosophy of the Pythagoreans and of Plato, describes all the features we have learned to identify with ancient mnemonics. His report of a system involving common places or topics to which things were assigned has many of the characteristics of the art of memory invented by Simonides and practiced by the sophists. It has, in addition, attributes that make

it more complex and exacting. We know that the sophistic memory system worked by way of topics and images. The topics were conceived as an architectural space. The material to be remembered was matched to vivid. emotionally charged images in an arbitrary manner according to the associative patterns of the person. In Plato's system, the background space was modeled on the cosmic figures. those geometric shapes that were thought to express certain fundamental mathematical principles governing form and changes of form in the cosmos. The material to be remembered was correlated with a number using cool, analytic thought processes and by way of well reasoned and consistent techniques. Recall that in dialogues named after famous sophists such as the *Gorgias, Protagoras. Critias,* and the *Hippias Major* and *Minor.* these characters are repeatedly criticized for their use of deceptive images. Even so, in the sophistic memory system, the background places were said to be the wax tablets on which impressions were formed. Similarly, in the Platonic system, there was a matrix that molded impressions. In the sophistic system, numerical markers were located at regular intervals to keep track of the different places. In Plato's system, there was a division into four main classifications, each of which bore a numerical marker. Apparently, unity was the expression for the system as a whole. Further, in the mnemonic of the sophists, words were broken down into their etymological roots and linked with something similar; in the Platonic system, some words were measured "in syllables" (Met. 1088a9-10) and correlated with an analogous number. In the sophistic memory, material to be remembered was related to images that individuals created in their imagination. In the Platonic memory, correlations were made intellectually based on relations of proportion. The arrangement of the sophistic system was left to the discretion of the user; the Platonic memory was organized in accordance with the prescribed patterns. Whereas the Simonidean memory was codified into places where alike things were stored so that there were classifications such as causes, effects, comparable or related things, so too in Plato's system, there was a codification into causes, states or affections, analogies or likenesses and the polarities or contraries. Since injustice was designated to a region, and justice was said to be a property of number, and since these are polarities, we may surmise that the contraries fit into the scheme as well. So the intermediates are placed in a separate region, i.e., a topic in between the place of the forms and the place of sensibles. Opinion and reason are in different places; and injustice, separation and mixture are located above them or below them in the mnemonic.

Plato's memory system appears to have been a whole connected scheme for storing and preserving knowledge. The system was "filed" according to causes and by way of principles into two major groupings: sensible and intelligible. In other words, this scheme classified memory contents by dividing them into conceptual and perceptual kinds of knowledge. Some contents had characteristics

which had different values on distinctive dimensions of quantity such as scale, magnitude, length, weight, or in the case of discourse, the syllable. Other contents had features that were measured qualitatively; thus "horse" was the measure of a horse. An object, either conceptual/intelligible or perceptual/sensible was assigned to a place, or "topic"—a dimensional space—in accordance with the properties or relations it held in "common" with other things. It could also have been designated to its own unique place or to a universal place. Thus, in this storage system, the classifications move in a sequence of dichotomies from universal to particular, so for example "animate beings" is the general class to which gods, humans and horses are all assigned. Further, the one and the great and small were spatial magnitudes forming the matrix that generated numbers and the primary figures in progression. Aristotle says that the great was the cause of good in Plato's doctrine, and the small was the cause of evil. Now we can begin to see why Plato stymied the general public with a lecture in which he described the good in terms of magnitudes, sciences, and numbers.

The question arises as to why Aristotle and Plato do not make explicit reference to mnemonics. Of course, they *do* make express mention of memory systems (Plato at *Lesser Hippias* 368c-369a and at *Phaedrus* 274e-277e; and Aristotle at *De Anima* 427b 15-25; *De Insomnis* 458b 20-25, *Topica* 163b 24-30; and *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* 451b 25-452a 16). If they do not mention them as frequently as one might expect, this is probably because the conventions of a technology are taken for granted by users. For example, Yates surveyed early literature on the art of memory and found it puzzling because the ancient authors assumed that their readers understood the conventions of the mnemonotechnic, and so they did not provide detailed explanations of how the conventions worked. Remember as well that Innis described how conventions for communicating seem so self-evident to users that they become almost invisible to them. For instance, elementary text books seldom provide written directions that state explicitly that the convention for reading English is that the lines start on the top left side of the page, move to the right in linear sequence, then break off at the margin and move over to the left side of the page where the new line begins—and so on from the top to the bottom of the page. By the time children have mastered the skill required to read this kind of instruction, they have already incorporated the convention so thoroughly that it is not necessary to spell it out. Yet, such a convention is not as straightforward as it seems. Other kinds of writing, the Chinese or Arabic for example, do not use the left to right and top to bottom convention. Further, we tend to forget that, far from being self-evident, our own conventions took centuries to develop. When the early Greeks first adapted script, they often wrote letters from right to left or they reversed certain letters into a mirror image. The conventions of word spacing, punctuation, and paragraphs, all took centuries to became standardized. So we find Aristotle in the *Topics* writing an extended commentary on what I am arguing

is a mnemonic system and how it works by analogy, contraries, intermediate terms and so forth without ever stating outright that he is speaking of a mental technology for storing information in memory, just as many of our own textbooks on writing never come right out and say that they are dealing with symbolic notation as a technology for storing communication on the printed page.

Four Kinds of Anomalies

In the previous chapter. I described how scholars have understood the problems with the dialogues as a consequence of Plato's own philosophical development, or of his historical location in a culture that was undeveloped from a scientific standpoint. Other commentators have questioned whether some of these inconsistencies and illogicalities could possibly be the unintentional mistakes of a thinker such as Plato. They say that difficulties with the texts were part of a deliberate strategy and that every anomaly is there for a reason of which the author was fully cognizant.

My own proposal is that these two chapters have helped us to identify *four completely different kinds of anomalies*: three of which would be classed as inadvertent and only the fourth one would fall into the category of the deliberate. The first kind of inadvertent anomaly would involve the errors, omissions, corruptions and emendations that would have crept into the canon during the process by which the Greek literature was transmitted from the ancient world to the present day.[18] The missing section of the *Critias* might be an example of this type of disruption. The second, inadvertent kind, would entail the sort of inconsistencies and illogicalities of detail described by Milman Parry. This type of inconsistency is characteristic of works composed by way of an oral traditional system, where the compositions has been fashioned from traditional material. The inconsistent vocabulary or the supposed summary of the *Republic* at the beginning of the *Timaeus* would be instances of this type. The third kind of anomaly would involve problems brought on by changes Plato made to the Pythagorean tradition. Dillon (1977: 3-12) has noted that confusions over whether the theory was tripartite or quadratic, for example, haunted Platonism for centuries. The fourth, deliberate, type of discrepancy would concern the esoteric "unwritten" doctrines, where obscurities and absences must be worked out by the learner on the basis of the material provided in the text. If we can identify the difficulties arising from faulty transmission and from the assimilation of different traditions; if we add to this an understanding of how oral systems of composition work as well as an awareness of the

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[18] See L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1968). For a guide to the way the Platonic texts were handed down to the West, see Sears Jayne, *Plato in Renaissance England* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995).

doctrines we should be looking for based on Aristotle's report, then we will be in a position to sort out the inadvertent kinds of anomalies from the deliberate, so that we can move ahead to unravel some of Plato's esoteric teachings.

Reformulation of the "Plato Question"

I began these two chapters by drawing a parallel. Whereas in Milman Parry's day, studies of Greek epic poetry were concerned with the attempt to deal with the two-part "Homeric Question," I argued that in our own time, the debate focusses on the two-part "Plato Question." In this chapter and the previous one, we considered the puzzling aspects of Plato's writing style and the issues of interpretation at the center of current controversy and debate. This investigation concentrated on the obstacles to interpretation that pertain to Plato's use of the dialogue form. The exegetical difficulties presented by the writing style were dealt with in terms of inconsistencies and disjunctions, first, between different passages in any one dialogue and second, between different dialogues in the collection. I argued that these problems center on the question of a system, both in terms of Plato's writings, and with respect to reading and interpreting them. In this, Chapter Five, we considered the disruption between the philosophy we find in the dialogues and the philosophy attributed to Plato by Aristotle. We looked at the evidence that has suggested to scholars that Plato's philosophy consisted of "something more" than what appears in these writings. We examined the testimony of Plato's successor in which he describes what Giovanni Reale has called "that *plus* that the dialogues lack." I suggested that the focus of the controversy was on the question of a Platonic doctrine.

Parry said that the failure to distinguish between the written and the oral was the single greatest barrier to the comprehension of Homer, and that many of the questions scholars were asking "were not the right ones to ask." Questions carry implicit preconceptions about how certain problems should be approached and solved. The first part of the "Plato Question" seeks to answer Why Plato wrote dialogues? Implicit in this question is the presumption that Plato "wrote," and also that he was the sole author and creator of these works. The second part of the "Question" assumes that the answer to the first part will affect the way we should interpret these writings—as it most certainly does.

Through the analysis in these two chapters, we are now able to reformulate the questions concerning the collected dialogues and their interpretation. The two-part "Plato Question" now becomes, first, Is there a unified systematic underpinning to the collected dialogues? and second, is there a doctrine in these writings? and if so, does it have to do with the rules and conventions governing the system itself? Finally, Does the doctrine correspond to the ancient reports of Plato's philosophy? Note that these reformulated questions are a paraphrase of the questions guiding this study.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERPRETING PLATO

Over the next three chapters, we will develop the critical tools that will enable us to work through the problems with our reconstruction of this ancient philosophy. This chapter presents a critique of the various approaches to interpreting Plato's philosophy and it also amends and refines the theory of communications advanced by the Toronto School (Havelock and Ong in particular). I will show that all these different theoretical approaches interpret the dialogues in light of textual models and by way of a literate mind-set. Chapter Seven will present the facts that support my argument that Plato should be placed on the oral side of the orality to literacy continuum, and for my contention that the dialogues do not dismiss poetry and advocate the technology of writing, but instead, reject both poetry and writing and argue for an alternative to both. This alternative, it turns out, is an "art of memory" which Socrates says is "superior" to the one practiced by either the poets or the sophists. In Chapter Eight, we shift focus from the "oral" side of the Greek "oral tradition" to the side of the equation that deals with the "tradition." I have suggested that the esoteric Platonic teaching has something to do with oral patterns of thought, so that apprehending the unwritten doctrines requires some knowledge about how the traditional system works. The eighth chapter in this study will look at how immersion in a culture with long established traditions and conventions of orality affected the reception of a performance by audiences. The goal of these three chapters, taken together, will be to develop a theory that more accurately reflects Plato's role in the transition from orality to literacy.

The research in this chapter will show that existing paradigms for interpreting the philosophy in Plato's writings all presuppose a modern concept of authorship and textual formation. These models assume that a book is the original creation of a clearly defined author or authors, that it was written in a fairly short time frame, and that the unacknowledged incorporation of pre-existing material is dishonest. I maintain that these notions of originality and authenticity are misleading when applied to the Platonic texts.

We have known since antiquity that only about twenty-four of the forty-three dialogues are the authentic works of Plato. Fifteen to nineteen texts were probably not written by the same person who wrote the books that are considered genuine.[1] We also know that the dialogues set forth the philosophy of Socrates. In fact, the evidence from our earliest and most reliable sources indicates that Plato

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[1] The standard text, Huntington and Cairns, *Plato: Collected Dialogues*, contains about twenty-four books thought to be authentic works of Plato. The remaining nineteen books are considered spurious.

incorporated materials from a number of extant compositions. Even the *Letters* state that Plato and Archytus worked together to find and document the Pythagorean treatises. This evidence suggests that the collected dialogues are transitional texts, and that Plato was as much a composer or redactor—that is, an editor or compiler who brought together earlier material and re-assembled it into a new form—as he was an individual "creator" or "author" in the sense that we regard those terms today. The shift from a view of Plato as sole author to a view of Plato as composer will force us to confront some of our most deeply entrenched assumptions concerning the creation of these philosophical texts. It will also force us to reassess the various strategies for interpreting the dialogues, and to reorient our thinking about this philosophy in light of our understanding of oral traditions.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part identifies the major alternative interpretations of the issues surrounding a Platonic system and doctrine. The purpose of this section will be to sort out the major strategies in play today, and also, to determine the commitments entailed by each approach in terms of the evidence embraced or rejected. This research will show that the questions concerning a Platonic system and doctrine have been connected in the history of interpretation. Even though authorities in the modern era rejected the Platonic tradition of interpretation, scholars continued to look to the tradition for an explanation as to why the dialogues did not seem to manifest a unified systematic structure. Second, I will show that the approaches to interpretation that have arisen since the advent of modern historical and critical methods of analysis all presuppose literate concepts of textual formation. The belief that the material in Plato's dialogues represents the output of one individual creative genius (in the modern sense), and that some works in the collection are authentic while others are not genuine, has governed our interpretation of these texts for centuries. I will show that these textual models of literary production have predisposed commentators to ignore, reject, or explain away textual features that are characteristic of works composed in a traditional style. Understanding that the dialogues came together during a time of tension and interaction between oral modes of communication and new, literate modalities will lead us to reject most of the paradigms of interpretation that dominate current philosophical analyses of Plato. In the second part of this chapter, we turn again to the contributions to the theory of communications technology made by Havelock and Ong. The goal will be to figure out where they went wrong in applying the theory to Plato, and then to amend their findings. To do this, I will offer more detailed evidence in support of the arguments first presented in Chapter Two. In the end, we will find that Havelock and Ong applied an understanding of oral traditions to Hesiod and Homer but they continued to interpret Plato and Aristotle by way of a textual paradigm. I argue that giving up some of our scribal assumptions about Plato will remove a major obstacle that has stood in the way of our

understanding of these writings. When we stop using literary methods developed on modern texts to interpret the dialogues. and we extend the theory of oral traditions to the Platonic works, we will find solutions for difficulties that have resisted resolution in the history of philosophy. When we put the most plausible approaches to interpretation identified in the first section of this chapter together with the corrected findings concerning the oral tradition that will be the outcome of this second section, we will have made some headway toward the development of a critical apparatus that is more closely aligned with the evidence.

System and Doctrine in the History of Interpretation

In previous chapters, we looked at the pieces of the puzzle that members of the intellectual community have not been able to accommodate within existing interpretive frameworks. After considering the cluster of issues that make up the "Plato Question," we reformulated the questions concerning Plato's dialogues and their interpretation. In the pages that follow. I trace the history of the debate surrounding a Platonic system and doctrine over the last few hundred years. We take up the investigation around the dawn of the eighteenth century (when these two questions first came to prominence), and consider the various strategies of interpretation that have been offered in response to them.[2] The purpose is twofold: first. I will show that the two main issues have been linked in the history of interpretation because authorities have looked to the tradition concerning Plato's doctrines for an explanation as to why a Platonic system could not be found in the dialogues: and second. I will show that underlying all these different approaches to interpretation is the assumption that Plato was an author in the modern sense, that some dialogues in the collection are spurious, while others are the authentic and original creations of a single individual who spent his lifetime engaged in literary labor.

Prior to the modern period. the notion that there was a hidden or esoteric Platonic system to

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[2] I have limited the scope of this investigation to the past three centuries. Even so. the magnitude of scholarly literature on Plato makes it questionable whether a truly comprehensive investigation of any particular issue is even possible, as Gerald Press (1993: 507) has pointed out. This research looks at about twenty authorities over the last 200 years. Only those who have dealt explicitly with the two related problems will be discussed. There were and are. of course. many other participants in the debate whom I could have included. If we set aside the problem of philosophical system. there are "many thousands of pages of learned conjecture on the topic of Plato's 'unwritten teachings' alone." as Sayre (1995: 236) has remarked. However. my purpose is not to offer a review of the literature. Instead. my goal is to outline the development of the major strategies of interpretation, to pin-point the evidence that can be accommodated under any one view. and to determine how dependent each position is on textual paradigms. I focus on the contributions of the most influential thinkers. I selected individual commentators as representatives of an approach: either they were the first to articulate a view. the most influential exponent of a position, or their work crystallized a distinctive way of conceiving these problems.

which the ancients had access went unquestioned. With the rise of modern historical and critical techniques of textual analysis at the end of the seventeenth century, scholars turned to the collected dialogues to verify interpretations of Plato's doctrines. However, when readers looked to Plato's writings to try and confirm the traditional interpretations of his philosophy, they could not find in the dialogues the doctrines that corresponded to the ancient testimony. Over time, the ancient accounts of Plato's philosophy and the tradition of interpretation that went with them were discredited and abandoned.[3]

The Undiscovered System. When scholars first set aside the tradition, they took it for granted—since philosophy was assumed to be synonymous with a system—that Plato's writings contained a systematic doctrine that had not yet been specified (Leibniz 1670: 23). After scouring the text for evidence of a unified system, commentators were faced with all the difficulties presented by Plato's writing style. Since anomalies, ambiguities, gaps and inconsistencies in Plato's writings make them resistant to efforts to find in them a logically coherent, systematic body of doctrine, commentators were hard pressed to explain why.

Multiple Systems. Though the tradition was separated from Plato's writings for the purpose of interpretation, it never lost its influence entirely. Even those authorities who were advocates of this separation continued to look to the indirect tradition to understand why there were so many inconsistencies. One view was that contradictions in the dialogues were the result of Plato's attempt to assimilate three irreconcilable systems (Brucker 1742: 53). According to this approach, the dialogues contain not one but three different systems which were imperfectly amalgamated in the text. This view recognized that the dialogues were influenced by earlier material. However, the approach was not taken up by subsequent researchers. Scholars continued to see Plato as a creative writer who modeled his words on his own thoughts, rather than as a composer who patterned his words on the definitions that govern the forms of discourse in the Greek philosophical style. Proponents of this view recommended reconstructing Plato's system from his writings alone. Still, even though this position abandoned the traditional authorities, it continued to rely on those authorities to explain the irregularities in the text.

Different Oral and Written Systems. Another approach also employed evidence from the tradition—Aristotle's statement concerning the "unwritten doctrines," the reports of Aristoxenus and others confirming that Plato described the foundational elements of his philosophy in his lecture *On*

[3] E.N. Tigerstedt, "The Decline and Fall of the Neoplatonic Interpretation of Plato: An Outline and Some Observations," *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, Vol. 52 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1974), pp. 66; Bowen, "On Interpreting Plato," p. 50.

the Good. and the testimony that Aristotle's lost book with the same title set forth the contents of the famous lecture—to suggest that Plato had two versions of his system. a public one that he presented in the dialogues. and a more comprehensive version that he reserved for those students he instructed privately at the Academy. While some maintained that a few fragments of the oral system were present in the dialogues and that these could be gathered and pieced together (Tennemann 1798: 128-41), others said that Plato did not include the foundations of his philosophy in the dialogues at all (Boeckh 1808: 1-38: Grote 1867: 273: Hermann 1839: 88-89: Krämer 1990: 65-169). Some thought that the dialogues record the philosophy of Socrates. and that Plato did not set forth his own system in his writings (Burnet 1914: 178. 224: Taylor 1926: 504). Another suggestion was that Plato had theories that he had worked out fully and published. and other views which he discussed orally with his students but which he did not think worthy of publication (Vlastos 1973: 399). According to this theory, the unwritten doctrines were radically different from those which appear in the Platonic dialogues. All these different versions of the "two system" approach carry the same underlying presuppositions about the authorship and textual formation of the dialogues.

Still. this explanation did offer an advantage in that it was able to account for the seeming lack of system in Plato's writings while at the same time. preserving Plato's reputation as a "philosopher" (since he did have a philosophical system. which he chose not to document). Under this approach. it was possible to accept the testimony of Aristotle and the tradition even though it did not seem to tally with the dialogues. However. this advantage came at a significant cost: all the variations on this approach entail that the genuine Platonic doctrines are not contained in Plato's writings. Thus, many adherents of this strategy gave priority to Aristotle and his early commentators as the main source for Plato's "oral teaching." They saw the interpreter's task as reconstructing the doctrine from the writings of the ancients. This approach has encountered considerable resistance from scholars who reject the notion that Plato's philosophy should be re-assembled from secondary reports. when so many of his own writings have survived. Further. as might be anticipated. the reconstructions of Platonic doctrine produced by way of this approach differ markedly from one another. One proposal was that the dialogues included the *application* of Plato's system to phenomena of the sensible world while the *principles* were reserved for oral discussion with his students (Hermann 1830: 88). This view was successful in accounting for the problem while leaving open the possibility that the system could be recovered from the dialogues. While this theory was headed in the right direction. it was eclipsed by the notion that the dialogues did not contain a systematic exposition of philosophy because Plato—as the sole author of the text—lived in a culture that had not yet developed to the point where thinkers could produce a "systematic scientific form of representation" (Hegel 1840: 11).

A Developing System and Doctrine. The suggestion that Plato's writings reflect the author's historic location in a civilization that was not advanced enough for systematic thought was a version of the development hypothesis. Developmentalists saw inconsistences as indicators of how human culture evolved progressively from primitive to more complex. or of how Plato developed as an individual writer and philosopher, changing his doctrines as his thinking grew and matured over time. According to the former view, there was no system in the dialogues. This position was dominated by the paradigm of progress. It used as evidence the difference between the writing styles of Plato and Aristotle, noting that the philosophical content of the dialogues seemed to be "all mixed up in a loose popular way . . . intermingled with the literary elements." whereas Aristotle's exposition was "more systematic" (Hegel 1840: 11-20). This approach accounted for the lack of system in Plato by arguing that there was no system in the first place. It explained what we find in both Plato and in the tradition but it granted a higher philosophical status to Aristotle. Those authorities who saw the development as being not so much cultural. but individual, claimed there was a system but it was in process, making for different versions of Plato's doctrines at different periods of his career. Thus. the trouble with this approach is that it relies on the modern day concept of textual formation to explain the very inconsistencies that are the hardest to understand as being the errors of a single author.

The development hypothesis was largely based on "common sense." but it could also be supported by Aristotle's statement in the *Metaphysics* (I. V. 987a31). where he noted that Plato learned the Heracleitian doctrines from Cratylus, "and in after years he still held these opinions." Some commentators who thought they saw in the late dialogues traces of the doctrines described in the Aristotelian sources proposed that Plato radically changed his system toward the end of his lifetime (Jackson 1885: 39; Zellar 1888: 517). According to many who espoused this view, most of the dialogues record the early or middle stages in Plato's thinking, whereas Aristotle was describing this later development in Plato's thought. Some asserted that this development came to Plato when he was too old to publish his final views (Zellar 1888: 517-519). Others said that it could be found in the *Philebus* and the *Seventh Letter,* "with terminological changes illuminated by the later Greek commentators" (Sayre 1983: 13). However. this proposal was not accompanied by an explanation for these "terminological changes." Nor did it offer any reason why the theory was not in evidence in the *Laws,* said to be Plato's final work. Developmentalists all recognize a form of genetic explanation for inconsistencies and anomalies and they attempt to identify one dialogue as the precursor of another. These studies typically seek to isolate a concept or theory that seems to involve an inconsistency, to establish a sequence of works in which versions of the theory appeared, to identify some version as early and another as late. and then to exhibit the versions as a sequence of theories which show a

progression through time. However. attempts to establish the order in which the dialogues were composed have been inconclusive. As we have seen. studies which have sought to provide a philosophical account of change—that is. the philosophical reasons why Plato would have altered his doctrines over time—have been the most unsuccessful of all. Further. there is a tendency among development theorists to turn any inconsistency into evidence for temporal sequence. In fact. we find once again that the only point in development theory about which there is a consensus—that the *Laws* is a late work—comes from the tradition. specifically. from Aristotle's testimony that this work was later than the *Republic* (*Pol.* II. VI. 1264b24-7). or from the reports in Diogenes (*Lives* III. 37) and Olympiodorus (*Prol.* 6. 24). that it was found on wax tablets after Plato's death.

A Fragmented System. Another proposal was that the dialogues are works of fiction. According to this approach. Plato's writings do not contribute to any single doctrinal system. involve neither the gradual unfolding of a preconceived scheme. nor different phases in the changing views of the author. The dialogues are disconnected compositions whose only relation one to another is that they were created by the same person (Grote 1867: 273: Klein 1965: 49). This view does. however. accept as correct Aristotle's report concerning Plato's philosophy.

The Absence of a System. While all these explanations have been offered in the history of interpretation to account for the missing system. the view that prevails today is that Plato did not have a coherent system and that whatever it was that he did have is expressed openly in the dialogues. The problems and inconsistencies are supposed to reflect the fact that Plato's philosophy is seriously flawed. Those adopting this approach deny the validity of Aristotle's comments indicating that Plato did have a system. Plato's student. they argue. was profoundly mistaken concerning his teacher's views and he framed his testimony in terms of his own position (Shorey 1903: 82-83: Cherniss 1945: 10). This approach takes as evidence the fact that Aristotle does not refer to any conversations or lectures of Plato's beyond the written works. It warns against using Aristotle's testimony to elucidate passages in Plato's dialogues. In addition. this view excludes a number of works in the collection. such as the *Letters*. In short. the strategy adopted by this approach is to resolve the difficulties by denying the evidence.

Some scholars *have* located in the dialogues the doctrines attributed to Plato by the tradition. thereby opening the possibility that the system is embodied in the text. For instance. doctrines that accord with the Aristotelian evidence have been found throughout the dialogues. particularly in the *Parmenides.* the *Philebus.* the *Timaeus* (Jackson 1886: 300). and in the *Theaetetus* as well as other earlier works (Desjardins 1990: 61. *fn.* 1). Readers have identified the intermediate mathematical objects in the *Republic*'s divided line (Klein 1965: 116: Sayre 1983: 13). The "Great and Small" from

Aristotle's testimony was also identified in the *Republic* (Klein 1965: 116; Sayre 1983: 93-109), as well as in the *Philebus* and in the *Seventh Letter*.

The Hidden System. The only approach that can accommodate both the tradition and the view that there is just one version of Plato's theory is the hidden system theory. This approach resembles the view that sees different oral and written versions of Plato's philosophy. However, in contrast to those who have maintained that the oral system and doctrines were not captured in the dialogues, those who claimed that there is a system argued that Plato *did* include the oral teaching in his texts, but he shrouded his genuine views in some mysterious way, either out of fear of persecution (Strauss 1952: 36), because secrecy in philosophy was a common practice in the ancient world (Rosen 1987: xiv), for pedagogical reasons (Schleiermacher 1804: 15-16) or a combination of these (Desjardins 1981: 109-123). Under this approach, the interpreter may consult the external sources. However it is not acceptable to give greater emphasis to the traditional reports than to the dialogues themselves. This theory sees Plato as having disguised his true philosophic system through various devices that can only be detected by initiates. Each dialogue is said to contain within itself all the materials needed for its understanding, but these materials must be deciphered before the meaning can be revealed. One version of this view suggested that Plato kept the foundations of his system a mystery because the dialogues were intended as educational books; readers were expected to sort out the system themselves based on certain formal relations established in the text (Schleiermacher 1804: 10). This approach was consistent with the view of teaching in the dialogues, where the role of Socrates (as teacher) is modeled on the midwife, and where knowledge is not communicated directly to the learner (because students must formulate their own answers so as to actualize this knowledge within themselves). It offered an explanation for why there was no explicitly stated philosophical system and at the same time, accounted for gaps, fractures and inconsistencies by seeing them as hints, clues or puzzles that the author created intentionally to attract the attention of careful scholars and to guide them toward the correct answers. While this theory held out the possibility that the system could be reconstructed on the basis of the dialogues alone, no such description was offered by the scholars who advanced this approach—with one notable exception. One theorist found correspondences between Aristotle's account and statements in Plato's dialogues, and offered evidence for a "hidden truth" which is "embedded in the ambiguities of the language" (Desjardins 1990: 100). However, in contrast with other versions of this approach, this theory does not see the secret doctrine as having been disguised. It sees it as being "declared openly." This strategy is the one that is most in consonance with the approach taken in this study. However, whereas my theory makes it possible to distinguish among different kinds of anomalies and it provides a standard for verifying or falsifying different interpretations, the problem

with this approach is that it still assumes a contemporary concept of literary production. Moreover, there is no standard for sorting through different reconstructions of the doctrine, or for determining which one is more correct and accurate. Nor does it provide a way to identify precisely what the errors are in an interpretation. Simply comparing two different reconstructions with the evidence from the dialogues so as to make a straightforward decision between them is more difficult than it sounds, for the many ambiguities and obscurities make it possible for both to be consistent with the evidence. Alternatively, each view might construe the evidence so differently that there is no one set of evidence by which to decide between them. Yet the situation demands a resolution as a precondition to further interpretation. Avoiding the problem of choosing between views by saying the differences do not matter is not acceptable, as the history of interpretation has shown. Once again, the difficulty is that it is not possible to determine which interpretation is more accurate.

Approach to Interpretation: The Undiscovered and Hidden System

This section of the chapter has demonstrated that the issue of a philosophical system and the question of a Platonic doctrine have been connected in the history of interpretation. Scholars have turned to the ancient descriptions of Plato's teaching in an effort to understand why they could not locate the Platonic system in the dialogues. This inquiry has also shown that all the different approaches to interpretation that arose with the commencement of modern historical and literary methods of philosophical analysis presuppose contemporary paradigms of authorship. This assumption has led scholars to either let certain anomalies that characterize oral compositions pass without comment, to reject the evidence that does not fit in to a textual paradigm, or to offer philosophical arguments in order to explain textual features that are much more easily understood as a consequence of a traditional style. Our understanding of traditional compositions and their process of formation allows us to see that most of the paradigms of interpretation that dominate current philosophical analyses of Plato proceed from mistaken assumptions.

The exceptions are the "undiscovered" and "hidden system" approaches. Though the "undiscovered system" strategy assumed that there was a system which had yet to be identified, and a few studies continued to advance versions of the "hidden system theory"—views which are, as I have explained, the ones that come closest to the approach I take in this investigation—most have assumed that Plato's dialogues were the work of one author who was the original creator of all the different dialogues.

Of course, neither the biographical evidence, the ancient testimony, nor the material in the dialogues themselves fits in with our present day picture of Plato as an individual literary artist and the

inventor of a philosophy. Today, the unacknowledged incorporation of time-tested material into an author's book constitutes plagiarism. Scholars operating under modern assumptions ignored the evidence from our most reliable sources that described Plato as having used earlier material. Even those who adhered to the Burnet-Taylor hypothesis saw no contradiction in the notion that while Plato wrote the dialogues, he put nothing of himself into his writings because he was only recording the statements of Socrates. Of course, many allowed that Plato drew upon and was influenced by earlier sources. A number of commentators cited reports that Plato was influenced by Dionysus, by the Heracleitian philosophy, by Socrates and Parmenides, as well as by his training in mathematics and Pythagorean philosophy. Certainly, most accepted that Plato documented the defense Socrates offered at his trial, and that the collected works include a number of books that could not have been written by a single person. No one seemed to dispute this much. Yet the tradition went much further than this, and it was this evidence that commentators either downplayed or ignored. The tradition relates that a substantial number of earlier materials were assimilated into the collection. Plato was said to have "transcribed" the *Timaeus* and parts of the *Republic* from Pythagorean texts; he "employed the words" of Epicarmus; "modeled" his characters after those in Sophron's mimes; recorded verbatim the speech of Lysis; copied a significant portion of the *Republic* from a work by Protagoras; and he borrowed from the Hebrew philosophers. Nor does Aristotle's description contribute to the view of Plato as an innovator or "creator." Aristotle said that Plato adhered "in most respects" to the philosophy of the Italians and that he assimilated into the Pythagorean system certain Heracleitian and Socratic elements. Even the *Letters* indicate that Plato and Archytus were collaborating on a project that involved "keeping alive" the Pythagorean philosophy which at least in part involved documenting in writing their "classifications." It is hard not to notice that the titles of the treatises they exchanged match some of the double titles of Plato's dialogues.[4] Over the last century, many ancient books from other traditions that were once thought to have been written by an individual author are now recognized as products of a process to which generations have contributed.[5] This same insight must be extended to the

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[4] *On Law* seems close to the *Laws*, for instance; *On Kingship* might be either the *Statesman* or quite possibly the *Republic*; *On Piety* could be the *Euthryphro*, and of course, the *Origin of the Universe* could well be the *Timaeus*.

[5] In this century, ancient texts from other traditions that were once thought to have been the product of a single author are now recognized as being the sum of the many individuals involved in composition over the decades and centuries before the texts that survive to us were written down. For example, the Buddhists recited the *sūtras* for hundreds of years before they were documented, the Zoroastrian *Book of Law* (dated to about the sixth century B.C.E.) was not collected into the *Avesta* until the time of the Sassanids (226-637 C.E.). The Pentateuch, said to have been written by Moses, is now acknowledged to be a blend of several different sources. In the case of the more recent *Koran*, many of Muhammad's later speeches were recorded at or immediately after they were uttered, but the earliest were preserved only in the memories of his

Platonic texts.

A comprehensive approach to the interpretation of Plato's dialogues must take into account an understanding of traditional styles of communication. It is obvious from this investigation that none of these studies considered the issues of a philosophical system and of the unwritten doctrines in the context of the historic transition of Greek culture and education from orality to literacy. Though there is widespread consensus that the change from an oral to a written technology provides the crucial historical and social context for understanding of the Homeric epics, is now safe to say that this context has not been taken into account in dealing with puzzles that have resisted resolution in the history of the interpretation of the Platonic texts. In fact, Havelock's contribution to the theory of communication rests on the "no system" explanation advanced by Cherniss. Shaky ground indeed! We can now see that Havelock and Ong applied an understanding of the oral tradition to Homer and Hesiod and then they shifted to contemporary notions of authorship and to a textual mind-set when dealing with Plato and Aristotle. The theory of communications technology must be amended to bring it more in line with all the evidence we possess about Plato's writings. This refined version of the theory will be the one I will apply to an analysis of the dialogues.

Refining the Theory of Communications Technology

We begin the second part of this chapter with an observation. In Plato's dialogues, Socrates—or one of the other lead characters—considers an issue from different perspectives, questions each position, separates out the errors and then preserves and refines the better argument. According to this approach, it is unlikely that any one point of view is either totally wrong or completely right. Even a position that is correct overall likely contains inaccuracies and distortions in the details. To remove these inconsistencies, the view must be purified by a method of cross-examination so that errors may be winnowed out and the more accurate conception retained.

The method Socrates uses in the dialogues, then, suggests a way we might work through some

followers, and many were not gathered and written down until long after the prophet's death. Consider, the case of the Hindu Vedas. These works were compilations of centuries long traditions of oral poetry. First mentioned in Mesopotamian records of the period 1800 to 1400 B.C.E., they were probably composed by Aryans who settled in Iran and northwestern India. Though the Aryans had no system of writing, by about 1200 B.C.E., priests had devised methods of memorization that enabled them to preserve the poetry then in liturgical use. By about 800 B.C.E., their poetry had been gathered into the four collections we know as the Vedas. A standard textbook on the history of religion notes that, "because the texts were as settled at about this time as if they had been published by a press, we may speak of the Vedas as "books," even though they were imprinted only on human memories and to this day, are usually recited from memory rather than read" [*Religions of the World*, eds., Niels C. Nielsen, Jr., Norvin Hein, Frank E. Reynolds *et al* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1983), pp. 101-2; 404; 600-610].

of the problems with our reconstruction of the puzzle of this ancient philosophy. In the last section of this chapter. we sorted through different approaches to the questions in the history of interpretation and demonstrated that only the undiscovered and hidden systems strategies offer defensible positions. In the next section of this chapter. we take up again the theory of communication presented by the Toronto School. Havelock and Ong in particular. The goal will be to cross-examine their version of the theory. to determine where they erred. and then to separate out the mistakes so that we can arrive at a more accurate conception of Plato's role in the transition from orality to literacy. When we put the only two viable approaches to interpretation identified in the previous section of this chapter together with the corrected findings concerning the oral tradition that will be the outcome of this next phase of the study. we should end up with a theory that presents a more accurate picture of how Plato fits into the transition. In the end. we will find that (with some amendments). many of the oral patterns Parry and Whitman found in Homer are in evidence in Plato's dialogues as well. These patterns, it will turn out. hold the key to the puzzle of the unwritten doctrines.

Sorting Through the Hypotheses. To set the theory on firmer ground. we will have to go through its hypotheses and (1) identify those which appear to be accurate: (2) note where other members of the Toronto School have corrected and refined earlier formulations: (3) isolate those remaining hypotheses that are not consistent with the evidence or with other premises of the theory: and then (4) amend them.

(1) *Accurate Hypotheses.* It appears that McLuhan was correct when he stressed the profound effect of the shift in technology from orality to literacy. We will see that Eisenberg's explanation of indeterminacy has special relevance to Plato. His view about the limits of our ability to understand the thinking of cultures whose technologies for communicating are different from ours was probably an understatement. as was Innis's warning of the bias of communication. Subsequent research has upheld Carpenter's findings concerning the late date for the introduction of the alphabet into Greece. Parry and Lord's identification of the techniques and conventions associated with oral composition have also proven correct over time. Research has added weight to Havelock's argument that the transition to the use of the alphabet was gradual: that writing was initially used as a device for storing material that was designed for oral preservation: that the dialogues describe a cultural situation in which "oral communication still dominates all the important relationships and valid transactions of life:" and that Plato was recommending that his own philosophy replace what was offered by the poets in the education system. Yates's work is accurate as it stands. Subsequent studies have reinforced Ong's recognition that at first. prose writing contained a "residue" of the organizational patterns that characterize pre-literate forms of composition. Frye's description of how continuous prose "smoothed

out" the inconsistencies in the narrative structure where formulaic phrases were put together from traditional expressions was probably right. As we will see in the upcoming chapters. the textual evidence will support Bogdan's position concerning the role of the listener or reader in the reception of meaning. We will also find that Gooch's explanation of hiddenness and indirection is supported by passages in Plato's dialogues, and also by Xenophon's account, the only other surviving eyewitness report of Socrates.

(2) *Corrections and Refinements.* Parry saw the Homeric epics as improvised by the poet during a performance using the linked formulaic phrasing. He based his theory on patterns he discovered in the epics themselves. Whitman amended his theory by showing that Parry had not noticed that there were larger structural patterns—namely the geometric ring composition—governing the architectonic of the work as a whole.

Havelock built on Parry's findings. He emphasized that the Homeric poems were exemplars of a type of language characteristic of oral cultures.[6] To preserve for transmission from "generation to generation" the oral society's "storehouse of cultural information," he claimed, the "precise linguistic forms," of what he called "storage language" had four requirements, all of which were mnemonic. First, storage language expresses experience in the form of a great collection of stories. loosely linked in a series by the device of one or two agents; second, it uses formulas that involve a consistent order and sequence of events, acts and objects; third, it must tell stories rather than relate facts because the oral memory "is unfriendly to abstracted and conceptual speech;" and fourth, it must be rhythmic or metrical, because the "cadence of the words facilitated memorization"[7] Plato's dialogues clearly satisfy the first mnemonic requirement. For we have in the dialogues a great compendium of stories connected to one another by the character of Socrates or one of the Strangers. In an upcoming chapter, I will show that they satisfy the second criterion as well. Havelock's thesis concerning the third and fourth requirements rested on two main sources of evidence. First, he contrasted the language of concrete actions he found in Homer with Plato's use of philosophical abstractions. He considered Plato's banishment of the poets together with the passage in Book VI of the *Republic*. He saw Plato as marking the end of Greek oral culture and the transition to the categories conducive to abstract philosophical thought. Second, he cited Cherniss' findings as having established that "the metaphysical interpretations of pre-Platonic thinkers which are found in Aristotle's own works are in large measure

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[6] Eric A. Havelock, "The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics," *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*, ed., Kevin Robb (LaSalle. Illinois: The Hegeler Institute, 1983), p. 13.

[7] Ibid.

accommodated to the problems of his own system."⁸ He put Cherniss' theory together with McDiarmid's paper and he concluded

> that in light of these findings I have felt it possible to take a more radical step, and to call in question the whole assumption that early Greek thought was occupied with metaphysics at all, or was capable of using a vocabulary suitable for such a purpose.

Havelock rejected Aristotle's testimony as well as the tradition. He then put forward his own theory as a "corrected account of the metaphysical positions of the early Greek thinkers."⁹

Ong in turn offered a partially revised rendering of Havelock's version of the theory. Where Havelock saw poetic rhythms and stories as the only mnemonic devices for storing the tradition, Ong drew upon Yates's findings to show that the sophists utilized a method of remembering which relied not on rhythm or stories, but on associating items to be remembered with images and then locating them in an imagined three-dimensional space. This he combined with Whitman's discovery of the typology of the ring composition and he argued that the topic mnemonic was "intermediate between the oral and the chirographic-typographic." That is, he saw the formulas as characteristic of Homer and the topic mnemonic as epitomizing the sophistic tradition and each as representing stages in the transition from orality to literacy. Both the Homeric and the sophistic stages, he claimed, were "superseded" by the phase inaugurated by Plato.

Bogdan pointed to inconsistencies in Havelock's treatment of poetry that rendered problematic his claim that Plato's view of the poets was wholly negative. She argued as well that the content-transfer model was not the only way of looking at reading and education. Gooch reiterated that this model was rejected in the dialogues. His position also served as a corrective to Frye's contention that what Plato's Socrates offered was essentially different from the aphorisms put forward by earlier philosophers.

(3) *Inconsistencies.* Let us try to separate out those remaining hypotheses that are not consistent with the evidence or with other tenets of the theory. Since Havelock and Ong were most responsible for relating the findings of Parry, Whitman and Yates to Plato, the problems seem to be concentrated in their contributions. There appear to be five main difficulties.

First, many of the University of Toronto theorists accepted Havelock's view that Homer was at the beginning and Plato at the end of the transition from speech to writing, as well as his claim that the early philosophers were not capable of abstract thought. Yet, evidence indicates that the shift to the use of letters and to the mentality characteristic of literacy was only just getting underway when

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⁸ Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, p. viii.

⁹ Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, pp. vii-xii.

Plato's dialogues were written. The oral tradition continued to co-exist alongside the practice of writing for centuries after Plato. Even other premises of the theory suggest that the change from orality to literacy was not complete at the time the dialogues were put in writing. Havelock also argued that early Greek thought was concrete and expressed in stories because oral thinkers could not deal with abstract concepts. The view that oral thought is restricted to the concrete runs counter to the evidence provided by both Plato and Aristotle. Thus, correcting the argument will involve altering the time line for the transition from oral to literate forms of communication and instruction. It will also require reconsideration of the view that the early thinkers in this oral culture were not capable of abstract, metaphysical thought. The evidence we uncover will lead us to challenge the assumption that the "oral" should be identified with "concrete" thinking while only the "literate" should be associated with "abstract" thought.

Second, Havelock argued that prior to the introduction of writing, the educational needs of Greek culture were met by memorizing Homer and Hesiod, and that Plato banished the poets because the formulaic style was in tension with new thought modes made possible by writing. Both McLuhan and Ong argued that these new modes were triggered by changes in perception from the auditory and temporal to the visual and spatial. In terms of "storage," Havelock maintained that (beside the compendium of stories and the presentation of concrete actions), poetic rhythms were the "sole mechanism" of preservation in the absence of the written word. This view cannot be correct. A wholly oral culture needs not only a way of handing down the cultural heritage from one generation to another. Such a society also needs ways to remember accurately the information of everyday life. People need to store and retrieve data that, in a literate culture, would be documented by written notes, scripts, or lists. For instance, the actor in the play must be able to remember his speaking part, the statesman needs to remember his speech, the lawyer his argument for the case before the law court, the merchant his order and agreements. Yates, Whitman and Ong all demonstrated that the early Greeks made use of a number of different mnemonic techniques—the system of backgrounds and images, the principles of division and orderly arrangement, and the ring composition being cases in point. Metrical poetry facilitated the preservation of culture but it was not the only mnemonic device that this civilization utilized. As well, the Toronto theorists assumed that the reason for Plato's attack on the poets and sophists was because their approach to education was no longer adequate in the face of the a more advanced technology. Yet, as we have seen, Plato downgrades writing too. Both poetry and writing are classed as images. We need to look more closely at the kind of study that Plato's Socrates was actually advocating. Finally, a vast body of evidence calls into question Ong's view (shared by McLuhan) that the oral is mostly auditory and the literate is predominantly visual. Their theory of the

shift in the human sensorium seems doubtful if not wrong.

To these two, we must add a third inconsistency, stemming from another aspect of Havelock's contribution to the theory. The theory that oral cultures cannot manage knowledge in "elaborate abstract categories" relies on Chemiss' conclusion that Aristotle's history of the metaphysical theories of the early Greek philosophers is unreliable. Going along with this argument involves rejecting not only the evidence from Aristotle but also from the later tradition. It runs counter to evidence in the dialogues that indicates that the oral philosophers recited from memory lengthy and complex abstract discourses. Since this position does not stand up to the weight of evidence, Havelock's argument that Plato was inventing abstract "headings" in works such as the *Republic* must be re-examined.

Fourth, if Plato's dialogues are the product of a tradition, then applying the theory of oral composition to Homer while holding Plato's dialogues up to contemporary standards of literary production, as Havelock and Ong do, must have led to distortions and inaccuracies. These too must be corrected.

Reassembling the Puzzle

The parts of the theory dealing with Plato do not fit together with the other aspects of the theory concerning the transition from speech to the use of letters. As it stands, Havelock and Ong's reconstruction only works if major pieces of evidence are excluded, if we force-fit the pieces that we do have, or if we assume that the sections of the theory dealing with Plato and Aristotle are governed by quite different rules from those that apply to other Greek works that were set down in writing during the transition from orality to literacy. All in all, the theory of communications technology offered by Havelock and Ong fits in with the evidence about Homer but it cannot be squared with the evidence concerning Plato. The hypotheses concerning Plato's role in the transition to the use of letters is not in accord with the evidence, or even with the other premises of their contributions to the theory of oral traditions. We must take apart their reconstruction of the ancient Greek world and reassemble this section of the puzzle piece by piece so that the parts concerned with Plato fit together with the rest of the picture.

The next two chapters will present the evidence that backs up these proposed amendments to the theory. In the upcoming pages, we will look at statements in Plato's dialogues and in the work of his contemporaries concerning memory and writing. We will also look at the evidence for more information concerning the history of ancient mnemonics. After that, we will consider statements in Plato's dialogues and in Xenophon's *Memoribilia* that deal directly with the question of secrecy and esotericism in philosophy. Since esotericism refers not to the understanding of the composer, but to

the comprehension of the recipient. we will look at the traditional system from the perspective of the audience. We will consider how a long-term institutionalized tradition of usage impacts the listener's reception of the work and what this means for our understanding of an esoteric doctrine. This evidence will provide the information we require in order to re-orient the theory of the Toronto School (concentrating especially on the versions offered by Havelock and Ong). so that all the pieces of the puzzle can be incorporated into the total picture of Plato's philosophy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ORAL TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF COMPOSITION

In this chapter, we continue building the theoretical apparatus that will enable us to offer solutions to some long standing perplexities concerning this ancient philosophy. The material offered in this part of the study will back up arguments first presented in Chapter Two. It will also provide more evidence in support of the argument that the dialogues are a traditional literature with roots in orality, that there were different branches of the Greek oral tradition, and that the ancient philosophers had developed a mnemonic system that allowed them to remember and recite lengthy abstract discourses. It will also show that the memory art used by Plato's lead characters emphasizes the order and arrangement of ideas and rejects the use of images that bear no relation to the original idea. Finally, this section of the study will argue that there is a doctrine in the dialogues, and that Aristotle's account of the metaphysical views of his intellectual forebears—including Plato—was much more accurate than Cherniss and Havelock would have us believe.

The investigation in this chapter is divided into sections that parallel the main problems with the theory of communication that we identified in the previous chapter. The first section of this chapter considers the role of memory in fourth century Greek culture along with the model of memory and recitation in Plato's dialogues. This investigation will support my argument that Plato must be repositioned on the oral side of the orality to literacy spectrum.

The second section will look closely at the kind of study that Plato's Socrates was actually advocating. We also look at the documents that show that there were two different schools of Greek mnemonics. From Cicero we learn that the tradition associated Simonides with the principle of the images. A different branch of the memory tradition described by Quintilian rejected the use of images—especially for memorizing prose—and advanced instead the principles of "correct division" and "artistic structure." This, I will argue, is precisely what Plato's Socrates recommends. I will show, in addition, that the tradition relates that the mnemonic originated in Egypt, was brought to Greece by Pythagoras, and was then credited to Simonides sometime later. Passages from the dialogues will be presented to show that Plato was familiar with the mnemonic techniques of Simonides and the sophist Hippias and that he disapproved of them. Socrates contrasts the sophistic mnemonic with a "superior kind of study." I will show that the study he outlines corresponds point by point to Aristotle's description of the Pythagorean system adapted by Plato.

The third part of this chapter will present the statements in Havelock that show that he recognized that the entire weight of his theory rested on the passage in Book VI of the *Republic*, where

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he saw Plato creating the abstract categories that would make philosophical thought possible. He also relied on Cherniss' argument that Aristotle was mistaken concerning the metaphysical interpretations of the Presocratic thinkers. I show that the passages in the *Republic* cited by Havelock do not support his argument that Plato was inventing new abstract categories. They show, in fact, directly the opposite. These abstract classifications are attributed to the Pythagorean tradition which was, at the time the dialogues were written, hundreds of years old. Moreover, locating statements in Plato's writings that match the accounts handed down from Aristotle and the tradition will undermine the position that there is "no trace" of these views in Plato. The discussion concerning the validity of the ancient reports must be reopened.

Fourth, and finally, the evidence presented in this chapter adds more weight to the argument that the dialogues are the product of a tradition. If oral theory applies not only to Homer and Hesiod, but to Plato's dialogues as well, then this would mean that we cannot apply an understanding of oral theory to Homer while at the same time continuing to view Plato in light of a contemporary model of authorship and textual formation.

I. Repositioning Plato on the Oral Side of the Orality to Literacy Spectrum

Havelock argued that writing was the source of Plato's understanding of abstractions and that it was a direct influence on the origin of Western philosophy. He noted that the oral tradition remained a powerful force up to the time of Plato. In later works, he argued that there was a "dynamic tension" between the world view of orality and the abstract thought of literacy, with the balance swinging in favor of writing with Plato.[1] However, subsequent research by Tony Lentz and Rosalind Thomas indicates that Plato must be repositioned on the oral side of this "balance point."[2] In separate studies, they examined a number of ancient authors for their descriptions of the place of writing, reading and recitation in various contexts in ancient culture. This evidence shows that during the time when Plato's dialogues were composed, Greek society was still predominantly oral and memory remained dominant in all aspects of the culture. The age of literacy was only beginning. Writing remained secondary to the memory and performance skills of the oral tradition. Instruction in the schools remained largely oral, with students learning great works by heart. Thus, even as literacy spread, the Greeks continued to carry their cultural identity complete within their memory, so that educated individuals could recite

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[1] Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece*, pp. 9-10.

[2] Tony Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989); Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the shared literature with ease.

Recitation From Memory in Fourth Century Greek Philosophy. A trained memory continued to be the dominant mode in philosophical deliberations. Greek philosophical literature offers many examples of memory and oral performance in use as a support for serious discussions. These texts illustrate the use of memory and recitation in philosophical discourse, with a body of material that the ancients compose orally, learn by heart, and then recite without relying on written notes. Philosophical literature of the period illustrates that recitation was a frequent part of the intellectual life of Athens. The discussions recorded in writing show a reliance upon memory that is surprising for a period that we see as the beginning of literacy in the Western world. For example, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.1.21-34) records a story of Socrates reciting from memory a long and complex composition entitled "Heracles and Virtue," which he attributed to Prodicus. Apparently the lecture was the one that Philostratus claimed Prodicus recited for money in cities throughout the Greek world—the famous "fifty-drachma lecture" mentioned by Aristotle and others (*Rhetoric* 1415b; Plutarch, *Lives of the Sophists* 482-83, and *Moralia* 836f). This is only one of many references in fourth century texts to the practice of repeating certain renowned philosophical discourses from memory. Where writing is mentioned, it is clear that the alphabet only caught on and became influential "due to its power as a support for, or alternative to, memory."[3] Writing's emergence around 450 B.C.E. marked only the beginning of its interaction with oral culture. The use of letters became gradually evident over time, appearing more frequently in all areas of society from the law courts to the schools. This pattern supports a conception of incremental increase in the influence of writing throughout the Hellenic period, not an immediate, or even an eventual, triumph over the older oral culture. Lentz concluded that the "dynamic tension between orality and literacy described by Havelock continued on well past Plato."[4]

The fact that so many fourth century works refer to the practice of *reciting famous philosophical discussions from memory* suggests that there was an *oral tradition of philosophy.* It also implies that these early philosophers stored and preserved in their memories aspects of the intellectual heritage of Greek oral culture that were *different* from the parts of the tradition preserved by the poets. Havelock argued that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* used the device of an extended story to create the tribal encyclopedia of Greek history and geography. He maintained that the *Theogony* was a catalogue of the gods and heros, while the *Works and Days* was a compendium of stories and sayings. I maintain

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[3] Lentz, *Orality and Literacy*, Ibid., p. 3.
[4] Ibid., p. 176.

that Plato's dialogues are a collection of acclaimed philosophical discourses tied together by the story device of Socrates teaching his companions in Athens.

Recitation From Memory in Plato's Dialogues. The descriptions of recitation from memory in other ancient authors are not isolated exceptions. They are consistent with incidents in Plato's own writings.[5] The dialogues themselves provide evidence for the premise that they are in fact a written record of an oral tradition of philosophy. The dramatic elements of the dialogues attest to the overwhelming dominance of memory and recitation in Greek philosophy at the time these writings were composed. A number of dialogues involve lengthy recitation from memory as the context for the entire composition. While there may be different ways of interpreting the content of Plato's writings, there is no ambiguity concerning the dramatic form. The orations that provide the dramatic frame of so many Platonic dialogues indicate that orality and along with it, a powerful memory, rather than literacy, and the use of written notes, was the dominate context in philosophy during this time frame. Further, Plato's dialogues portray recitations as involving extended abstract conversations. There is, in addition, a major concern on the part of the characters in a dialogue to establish the correct order and arrangement of the themes and topics they discuss. In many instances, famous discourses are learned by heart and then taught to others. That these abstract discourses were *shared* adds further weight to the argument that they represent an oral tradition of philosophy. Moreover, these examples span the so-called early, middle and late periods into which Plato's writings are categorized and include as well the spurious works. Let us consider a few of these examples.

The *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus* epitomize the pattern of a repetition from memory as the dramatic context for the whole dialogue. The *Protagoras* begins with Socrates meeting a friend who asks him where he has been (310a). Socrates then recounts the entire dialogue from memory (310a-362a). The oration is not confined to the concrete. It includes a precise delineation of the order and distribution of the parts of virtue (wisdom, temperance, courage, justice, and holiness). Further, at 339b, Protagoras asks Socrates if he knows an ode of Simonides; if not, he says, he will recite the work. This statement indicates that the Greeks continued to recite both poetic works and philosophical debates from memory during the period in which the dialogues came together. We find in the *Euthydemus* the same introductory formula noted in the *Protagoras*. Socrates relates a discussion of the previous day in the Lyceum (271a, 272d-e). He then recounts the entire dialogue without reference to writing as an aid to the presentation (272d-290d). This book also contains a lengthy abstract discussion concerning the distinction between "knowing and not knowing."

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[5] Ibid., p. 98.

The *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* employ a similar dramatic framework and setting. Echecrates recounts to Phaedo the story of the last dialogue between Socrates and his friends. Here again, the recitation is not restricted to concrete actions. It includes a discussion of learning as recollection (72b-75b), a review of the principles of opposites (101e-106a), and a comparison of different theories of causation (97a-101c). The *Symposium* begins with Appollodorus agreeing to relate the symposium story to his friend in order to "refresh [his] memory" (172a). In this work, those who were not present at the event received an account of it from eyewitnesses, and then they went on to teach the dialogue to others. The conversation in this text includes a number of "lofty thoughts" (210d) on the nature of love and beauty. Once again, we find an emphasis on a precise delineation of a hierarchical order, with a discussion of an ascent up the "heavenly ladder" to beauty itself.

Another example of a dialogue where recitation provides the dramatic context is the *Parmenides* (97). In this work, Cephalus has come to Athens to meet Antiphon, who learned from Pythodorus, who was taught by Zeno to recite a conversation he once had with Socrates and Parmenides. Antiphon was said to have heard it so often that he could "repeat it from memory." Cephalus was told that while he was still young, "Antiphon worked hard at getting that conversation by heart" (126c). That this kind of training and practice was taken for granted in the dialogues attests to the continuing dominance of speech over writing and adds weight to the hypothesis that Plato's writings are an oral literature. Further, the *Parmenides* is the dialogue singled out by Hamilton and Cairns as being one of the most difficult to grasp because the argument is so abstract.[6] That so many thinkers worked hard to memorize and pass on to others a particular dialogue points to a shared tradition of philosophy organized around certain famous debates.

We find another example of a reliance upon memory in the *Timaeus*. The dialogue begins with Timaeus asking Socrates to "recapitulate the whole" conversation of yesterday, so that the details might be "more firmly fixed in our memories" (17b). Critias goes on to relate the story of Atlantis, which was attested to by the Athenian lawgiver Solon (630-560 B.C.E.), a relative of his great-grandfather, who told the story to his grandfather, "who remembered and repeated it to us" (20d-21a). After his tale, Critias turns the conversation back to Timaeus, who is to recite the discourse from the origin of the universe down to the creation of human beings. Critias is supposed to take over at this stage, and in accordance with the tale of Solon, take the story through to its conclusion in the law. In the *Timaeus*, then, the orators follow a precise order and sequence such as would be possible through the use of a mnemonic topic system. (It is also worth noting that Plato's dialogues taken as a whole culminate with

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[6] Hamilton and Cairns, *Plato's Dialogues*, p. 920.

the *Laws*, just as the sequential order of the universe described by Critias and Timaeus ends with the law). This arrangement appears to be well known to the participants in the discussion. For Timaeus and Critias to agree in advance that each will recite a certain length of discourse implies a prior knowledge of an order and arrangement that was shared by both, where the full course is divided up and the two function as a relay team, with Critias relieving Timaeus at a specific juncture. So Timaeus says he will commandeer the abstract, divine and "intelligible" part while Critias will take over the more concrete section of the human, visible and "sensible." This arrangement into intelligible and sensible mirrors a major structuring pattern in the dialogues themselves and matches Aristotle's description of the division of causal numbers in Plato's system.

Another example is when Cleitophon, in the work bearing his name, recites an earlier attack upon Socrates' instruction. His recitation constitutes the entire work and involves, among other topics, a critique of Socrates' understanding of justice. In the *Menexenus*, Socrates recites a speech that Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles, allegedly composed (236a-249c). The composition, which continues for almost the whole length of the dialogue, displays Socrates' ability for memorization (95). Thus, Plato's dialogues employ recitation from memory as an accepted introduction and conclusion. This is the case in dialogues that have definitely been attributed to Plato (*Republic*, *Protagoras*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Timaeus*), as well as in those works which have been regarded as spurious (such as the *Euthydemus*, *Cleitophon*, or the *Menexenus*).

Exceptions would be the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedrus*. In the former dialogue, Eucleides reports a conversation between Socrates and Theaetetus that he had not actually heard, but which Socrates later repeated to him (142d). Eucleides told his companion, Terpsion, that he did not have the discourse memorized (142d), so after hearing it from Socrates, he went home and wrote it down (143a). On later visits to Athens, he questioned Socrates about the various points of the discourse which he could not remember and corrected the notes when he got home (143a). In this dialogue, we have an example of writing primarily as an aid to memory and oral presentation and not as a form of preservation in its own right. Similarly, when Phaedrus (in that dialogue), is asked by Socrates to recite the speech of Lysias, he says that he is not certain he will be able to "repeat by heart, without disgracing its author, the work of the ablest writer of our day" (228a). Socrates scoffs, saying that he "is certain" that Phaedrus asked Lysias to repeat his speech over and over again until he had most of it by heart and then finally, he "secured the script," and went over the difficult parts until he had the entire speech memorized. Phaedrus reiterates that he does not have it all down by heart. He pulls the "script" out from under his cloak and agrees to *read out loud* the points of the discourse concerning the lover and non-lover, "taking them in order one by one" (228d). Once again, we find an emphasis on order and

arrangement. As well, it is clear in this instance that writing serves mainly as an adjunct to memory. Using his notes. Phaedrus then goes on to recite a lengthy section of the famous oration. Recall that Diogenes says that Plato was the first to refute the speech of Lysias which he copied "word for word" in the *Phaedrus* (*Lives* III. 36-39). Here, we realize that the *Phaedrus* itself takes the form of a "script" of a philosophical drama. Could the script of Lysias's speech that Plato's Phaedrus holds in his pocket and the script that has come down to us as the speech of Lysias in the *Phaedrus* be one and the same? Recall also that Socrates criticized this speech for its haphazard organization. saying that Lysias observed no principle of composition in setting these points down in the order that he did (*Phaed.* 264c). In this dialogue then. we have one of the rare references in Plato to the reading of a written document. This piece of writing is disparaged. Moreover. the reason given for this criticism is that there is no systematic artistic structure involved in the way Lysias laid out his observations. We are therefore given to understand that Socrates' complaint against this written speech is that it does not follow any "cogent principle of composition." In other words. just as the poets in the *Republic* were dismissed because they did not tell their tales in the prescribed patterns. so this speech of Lysias is denigrated because the author did not set his points down in the correct order. We know that sequential order is a principle governing the patterns of formula types and themes. and more specifically. of the mnemonic that worked by division and composition. It is quite possible that Socrates is arguing for the kind of composition Yates associated with the branch of the oral tradition that emphasized detached recitation and rehearsal of an abstract. sequential order.

These passages in Plato provide powerful evidence in support of the hypothesis that the dialogues are transitional texts: they are an oral literature composed by way of a traditional system. as much as they are an expression of prose writing. They also offer a glimpse into the way the oral tradition of philosophy interacted with the new technology of writing during this period. The use of the recitation model throughout the Platonic canon—both in works considered authentic as well as in those thought to have been written by other authors—indicates that oral recitation and a trained memory continued to dominate philosophical inquiry throughout this time span.[7] These works portray recitations as the occasions for the repetition of certain famous abstract discourses that were lengthy and complex. Socrates suggests in the *Lysis* that attending to a discourse or an intellectual dialogue customarily involves attempting to memorize as much of the discussion as possible (*Lys.* 211a-b). Even the *Republic* is consistent with this recitation by memory scenario. for while Socrates established no specific dramatic context. he related the entire work to an unidentified listener. In this dialogue. the

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[7] Ibid.. p. 96.

characters engage in a protracted and complicated conversation, yet their memories allow them to go through a series of elaborate digressions and reassessments of the previous arguments and to keep coming back to the main topic of the investigation. Above all, references in Plato's texts to recitation as practice to "refresh memory," to a conversation that was reiterated so often that others could "repeat it from memory," to students working "hard at getting that conversation by heart," and to types of compositions that follow a prescribed order, is in line with what we should expect to find in an oral tradition of philosophy.

That Plato employed a recitation tableau so often, that the literary characters display astounding feats of memory over prolonged abstract discussions, that there appears to be a precise order in the topics of discussion—as exemplified in the *Timaeus* which begins with the "divine and intelligible," moves through the "human and visible," and then culminates in the "law"— is more evidence in support of the hypothesis that the dialogues are an oral literature composed along the lines of a mnemonic place system. Moreover, as Lentz has pointed out, the "dialogues" preserve knowledge in the only format consistent with the views on writing put forward in the *Phaedrus*—possibly in the only form that is valid given the attack on writing—as written reminders of the spoken word.

If Plato's dialogues are an oral literature, then this indicates that the pre-literate thinkers in this tradition were not restricted to concrete actions as Havelock and Ong would have us believe. In fact, they show precisely the opposite. We see that speakers and listeners are able to attend and keep track of abstract ideas over the course of an extended recitation. Formulas and mnemonics allowed the poets to sing the traditional tales from memory. Such devices would have made it possible for the intellectuals in Greek oral culture to remember and keep track of the structure of relationships between abstract ideas so they could learn and recite philosophical discussions without writing. It does not seem likely that the poets and sophists had a monopoly on the most highly developed systems for preserving knowledge in this civilization.[8] Surely the early philosophers, as the thinkers in this society, would have used systems for remembering that were equal to if not more precise than the ones used by the oral poets and popular orators.

At the same time, Havelock and Ong were not completely mistaken. Aristotle's account in the *Metaphysics* does lend some credence to Havelock's argument and also suggests where he may have gone wrong. Even though Havelock rejected the ancient reports concerning Plato's doctrines, Aristotle

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[8] This is especially so, since scientific studies have shown that human beings devise mnemonic strategies naturally and spontaneously, without any formal training or instruction [F.S. Bellezza, *Improve Your Memory Skills* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982); and Alan Searleman and Douglas Herrmann, *Memory from a Broader Perspective* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994), pp. 352-54].

does note that the abstract metaphysical notions described by the Pythagoreans—including such concepts as justice. soul. mind. opportunity. being. becoming. and so on—were correlated with numbers which were not "separate" from things. Aristotle says the Pythagoreans did not say whether the numbers correlated to abstractions were sensible and that only Plato clarified that they involved a different kind of (intelligible. and hence purely abstract) number. Havelock's argument therefore appears to have some basis. That the Pythagoreans correlated their abstract notions with numbers that were not distinguished from sensible things. and that Plato altered the system so that numbers became pure. conceptual entities does suggest a transition. The question is whether this movement was caused by the change from orality to literacy. It is just as likely that Plato changed the earlier philosophies in the direction of abstractions in response to discoveries in mathematics.

II. Socrates' Rejection of the Memory Art and his Advocacy of a Superior Kind of Study

In this section. we will look more closely at the evidence that indicates that the topic mnemonic was used to organize the episodes of the Homeric epics in the sequential order in which they have come down to us. that these techniques were in circulation long before Plato. and that they continued to be used as an aid to oral recitation during the time in which the dialogues were written. In fact. we will find that these techniques endured for centuries as a part of rhetoric.

We begin with Cicero's account crediting Simonides with the discovery of the principles of backgrounds and images as an aid to memory. Then. we turn to Quintilian's report in the *Institutio Oratoria*. In this work. Quintilian discusses the limitations of the images (especially when attempting to commit prose to memory). and he describes an alternative method that utilizes instead the principles of division and arrangement in a series.[9] After that. we look at Plato's comments concerning Simonides in the *Second Letter*. the *Republic*. the *Protagoras*. and the *Hipparchus*. From Plato we learn of the pre-Simonidean origins of division and ordered arrangement for the recitation of Homer. Next. we consider the discussion of mnemonics in the anonymous *Ad C. Herennium libri IV*. In this text. the mnemonotechnic is compared to an "inner writing" and to an "impression of a seal on wax." We find the "inner writing" description of memory in Plato's *Republic* (563e). The wax block model of memory turns up in the *Theaetetus* (191e). Finally. we turn to one of the earliest surviving accounts of mnemonics in the *Dialexeis*. a fragment credited to the sophist Hippias of Elis. after whom Plato named his *Greater Hippias* and *Lesser Hippias*. The instruction concerning the memory art that we find in the fragment is consistent with the mnemonic as it is practiced by the character Hippias in

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[9]While both Cicero and Quintilian were substantially later than Plato. both authors had access to ancient works that have not survived the centuries.

Plato's dialogues. Socrates contrasts the mnemonic of Hippias with a superior kind of study. The features of the superior study conform exactly to Aristotle's description of the system Plato inherited from the Pythagoreans and modified. Let us begin with Simonides.

Simonides' Discovery of Places and Images as an Aid to Memory. The poet Simonides (circa 556 to 468 B.C.E.)—father of the sophistic tradition—is credited with the invention of a memory system that made use of backgrounds and images. All the Hellenic world knew of this man by the time he was thirty and when he died (a half a century before Plato was born), he was by common consent the most brilliant lyric poet of the day. Beside the introduction of the mnemonic system, he is recognized for two other innovations: he was the first to demand and receive payment for poetry.[10] and he was the first to draw a parallel between the methods of poetry and painting.[11] The first two of Simonides' achievements are the subject of extensive ridicule in Plato's dialogues. The third—the identification of poetry and painting—is used by Socrates himself in Book X of the *Republic*.

Simonides' association with mnemonics is attested by, among others, Pliny, Aelian, Ammianus Marcellinus, Suidas, Quintilian and Cicero. There is a famous story of how he discovered the use of mental images as a memory technology. Quintilian mentioned that there were a number of versions of this story extant in Greek sources.[12] The following is the one recorded by Cicero in the section of his *Di oratore* devoted to the *memoria technica*. According to Cicero, Simonides discovered the general principles of his memory art while at a banquet at the home of a nobleman in Thessaly. When Simonides sang a lyric poem in honor of his host but also included, as was the custom of poets, a passage praising Castor and Pollux, his host told him he would pay only half his fee and suggested he obtain the rest from the twin gods to whom he had devoted the other half of the panegyric. According to the story, the gods paid their debt. For a message was brought to Simonides that two young men were waiting outside for him. When he went out, he looked around but could see no one. However, what followed proved to Simonides that the gods had shown their gratitude. While he was gone, the roof of the nobleman's house fell in, killing everyone. The guests were so badly crushed that friends and family could not identify the bodies for burial.

> Simonides was enabled by his recollection of the place in which each of them had been
> reclining at table to identify them for separate interment; and that this circumstance

[10] A practice which was new to Greece and which caused a great public scandal (Aristophanes, *Peace*, 695).

[11] Plutarch, *Glory of Athens*, 3.

[12] Quintilian noted (*Institutio oratoria*, XI. ii. 14-16) that Apollodorus, Eratosthenes, Euphorion and Eurypylus of Larissa reported that the banquet took place at Pharsalus, whereas Apollas Callimachus (from whom Cicero took his account) stated that the banquet was held at Crannon.

suggested to him the discovery of the truth that the best aid to clearness of memory consists in orderly arrangement. He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty must select localities and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities. with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts. and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves. and we shall employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it (De Oratore II. lxxxvi. 352-355).

The banquet story tells us that Simonides: (1) discovered the truth that an orderly arrangement of localities was the "best aid to clearness of memory." and (2) that he "inferred" that forming mental images of the things one needed to remember would preserve the memory of those facts. Thus, the art of memory employed two devices. the localities and the images respectively.

Quintilian and the Principles of Division and Orderly Arrangement. Quintilian, a teacher of oratory, reiterates the story of Simonides. He adds that the "art of memory" is to the extempore speech giver the "treasure-house of eloquence" (Institutio Oratoria XI. ii. 1-3). According to Quintilian, visiting the topics in memory and "seeing" in the mind's eye the deposits in each place allows one to recall all the details of the material one needs to remember. This use of visualization as an aid to memory calls into question Ong's assertion that the introduction of the alphabet altered human consciousness by shifting perception from the auditory and temporal to the visual and spatial. The ancient Greek poets and orators made full use of visual and spatial imagery long before the alphabet came into common usage. While the move from oral to written definitely brought about changes in human thought structures. the transformation was probably not simply because "man was given an eye for an ear." as McLuhan once quipped.[13]

Returning to Quintilian. we find him pointing out that "pleaders" in the law courts needed to be able to retain numerous facts in their minds. to absorb information quickly. to follow the order of the words and the content once they decided what they wanted to say. to remember what their opponents said. and also to refute arguments in the order in which the different points were advanced. In instances such as these. Quintilian observes. there are problems with the use of images, and so he rejects them. He says that concepts—certain thoughts and parts of speech—do not lend themselves to images in the same way as sensible things.

> For thoughts do not call up the same images as material things. and a symbol requires to be specially invented for them . . . But how can such a method grasp a whole series of connected words? I pass by the fact that there are certain things which it is impossible to represent by symbols. as. for example. conjunctions. We may. it is true, like shorthand writers, have definite symbols for everything. and may select an infinite

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[13] Marshall McLuhan. *The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects.* ed., Quentin Fiore (San Francisco: HardWired. 1967). p. 44.

number of places to recall all the words . . and we may even remember them all as if they were deposits placed in safe-keeping. But will not the flow of our speech inevitably be impeded by the double task imposed upon our memory. Therefore, the experts mentioned by Cicero as having trained their memory by methods of this kind . . May keep their systems for their own use (*Institutio Oratoria* XI. ii. 24-26)

He says that the orderly arrangement of the topics—rather than the images—is the key to the mnemonic system and to the training of the memory.

however large the number of these [details] which it is required to remember, all are linked one to the other like dancers hand in hand, and there can be no mistake since they join what precedes to what follows, no trouble required except the preliminary labor of committing the various points to memory (*Institutio Oratoria* XI. ii. 20-21).

In subsequent paragraphs. Quintilian goes on to describe an alternative to the use of images. The technique he recommends involves concentrating on the *links between the places*. It entails "dividing" the material to be remembered into "definite lengths" according to "natural limits," frequently and continually practicing the subdivisions, connecting the words together in their proper order, and then finally, uniting the various sections into a whole. He adds that the parts that prove difficult to remember should be indicated by "certain marks, the remembrance of which will refresh and stimulate the memory" (XI. ii. 24-26). He concludes that "correct division" and "artistic structure," along with practice, are the most powerful memory aids of all.

For correct division will be an absolute safeguard against error in the order of speech, since there are certain points . . . which naturally come first, second, and third, and so on, while the connection will be so perfect that nothing can be omitted or inserted without the fact of the omission or insertion being obvious . . . the artistic sequence will serve to guide memory . . . For just as it is easier to learn verse than prose, so it is easier to learn prose when it is artistically constructed than when it has no such organization (XI. ii. 38-39)

Thus, Quintilian makes it clear that the technique of division and sequencing is the preferred method for memorizing *prose*, which is more difficult to remember than verse. Further, he emphasizes that once one has come to know the connected sequence by heart, it is easy to notice when one part has been added or omitted. This suggests that gaps and missing pieces in the series are obvious to those who know and understand the mnemonic system.

These Roman authors are some of our earliest *surviving* sources from the manuscript tradition. In addition, there is, it will be recalled, archeological evidence crediting Simonides with the discovery of the mnemonic. An inscription on a marble tablet known as the *Parian Chronicle* indicates that by about 477 B.C.E. Simonides was known for inventing mnemonics.[14] As Frances Yates pointed out:

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[14] From the collection of references to Simonides in ancient literature gathered together in *Lyra Graeca*, ed. and trans., J.M. Edmonds, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. II (1924), pp. 249].

One must believe. I think. that Simonides really did take some notable step about mnemonics. teaching or publishing rules which. though they probably derived from an earlier oral tradition. had the appearance of a new presentation of the subject.

She said that some form of memory art must have been a very ancient technique. She wondered whether

the invention said to have been introduced by Simonides may have been symptomatic of a cultural transition whereby a mnemonic practiced in the ages of oral memory. before writing. becomes codified into rules. In an age of transition to new forms of culture it is normal for some outstanding individual to become labeled as an inventor.

She added that the "pre-Simonidean origins of the art of memory were attributed to Pythagoras who was said to have learned it from the Egyptians."[15] Thus. according to the tradition. the line of descent for the mnemonic is traced from the Egyptians to Pythagoras and then finally to Simonides. There is. then. evidence of a direct link between the Pythagoreans and the mnemonic.

Socrates' Criticism of the Memory Art of Simonides and the Poets. Plato certainly knew of Simonides. In fact. the dialogues contain what is perhaps the earliest manuscript evidence of the poet. He is mentioned by name in the *Second Letter* (311a). In two other dialogues. he is the target of a sustained attack. The *Republic* begins with a critique of his "riddling definition of justice" which he "gave after the manner of the poets" (331d-335e). If Simonides' definition took the "form" or "style" of the poets. then it most likely made use of the formulaic modes of composition. In the *Protagoras*. the "Sophist's art" is said to be "an ancient one" which Homer. Hesiod and Simonides all practiced. Fearing discovery and reprisal. they adopted "poetry as a screen" and as a disguise "to escape malice" (316d). At *Protagoras* 339a-347a. Plato quotes from Simonides and provides an analysis of his poetry in order to poke fun at his contradictory statements. In all these instances. Simonides is associated with inconsistency and with deception.

In Plato's *Hipparchus* (228b-c). Simonides of Ceos was said to be a student of Hipparchus of Philaidae. the oldest and brightest son of Pisistratus. ruler of Athens in the sixth century B.C.E. The tradition has it that Hipparchus introduced the poems of Homer into Greece.[16] It relates that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* existed in a scattered. confused state for several centuries until they were "put in order" by him. Plato says that Hipparchus always had Simonides with him. Simonides. it seems. endeared himself to his master by showering him with "plenteous fees and gifts." To preserve the Homeric epics according to the arrangement he had devised. Hipparchus "compelled the rhapsodes

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[15] Yates. *Art of Memory*. p. 44.

[16]Cicero. *de Oratore* III. xxxiv. 137. Recall as well the passage from Flavius Josephus (probably first century C.E.). that Homer did not leave his epics in writing; they were "remembered and put together later from his songs" [*Against Apion*. 1. 2. 12].

at the Panathenaea to recite them in relay, one man following on another, as they still do now." When we put this evidence together with the fact that the overall story patterns of the Homeric epics are organized along the lines of the ring composition—the A-B-C-B'-A' symmetrical pattern of topics and themes—we may infer that the topic mnemonic was used to preserve the Homeric poems in the order in which Hipparchus "put them together." To recite the epics in relay, the composition must have been divided into sections and each rhapsode assigned a "length" of verse. This order and arrangement must have been both fixed and publicly known. Otherwise, how would each rhapsode have known what part he was supposed to recite? Plato says that the sophist's "art" is an ancient one. In addition, Plato's dialogues credit Hipparchus with the orderly arrangement of the epics and with organizing their recitation in relay. Though Simonides is mentioned in this passage, he is said to be Hipparchus' student. According to the account in Plato then, Simonides learned the technique of division and composition from his teacher. This means that Simonides did not invent the memory art. Recitation in relay involves sequential order but there is no mention of the use of images. The use of images could have been a later development. Perhaps the introduction of mental images to the "ancient art" represents the contribution of Simonides. In any case, the evidence from Plato indicates that the principle of division and composition was used to rehearse and preserve the epics orally at the same time as, or perhaps prior to, the time when they were set down in writing.

According to the dialogues themselves, then, the rhapsodes were using the mnemonic place system to preserve the epics long before Plato's time. The topic mnemonic representing geometric psychological structures must be moved back at least to the time that the Homeric epics came together, and perhaps even before they were written down. Plato mentions recitation in connection with Hipparchus but he does not say that Pisistratus' son was in any way connected with preserving Homer in written form. In fact, Plato states that recitation by relay remained the standard practice even in his own day.

When Socrates banished the poets for not telling their tales in the prescribed patterns (Rep. 379a, 398b; Laws 811-818), he was probably not rejecting the oral mind-set so much as he was criticizing the poets for their haphazard use of the mnemonic. He condemned them for imitating and regurgitating formulas and patterns of composition without any genuine knowledge of what they were doing. When he denounced the sophist's use of images, he was probably objecting to the way these ostensible teachers of wisdom used trivial mental pictures as memory aids. There can be no doubt that what he regarded as most reprehensible was the way they deceived themselves into thinking they knew or even worse, knew they did not know and still persisted in deceiving others with their pretense of a knowledge of philosophy.

In contrast to the poets and the sophists. Plato's Socrates is the genuine philosopher. He knows that human wisdom is not very valuable in comparison to the divine kind. Since, he knows he does not know, he is without pretense. He makes no claim to wisdom and he does not attempt to offer himself for hire. The dialectic of Socrates involves the use of "cogent principles of composition in setting down observations in a particular order." Socrates says that it does indeed "make a difference what order the lines come in" (*Phaedo* 264c-e). In fact, he advocates and offers extensive instruction in the practice of a method which entails "correct division" of "whatever may be chosen as the topic for exposition."

Evidence From the Ad C. Herennium libri IV. After Plato, the section on Memory in the *Ad C. Herennium libri IV* is our oldest surviving treatment of mnemonics.[17] The mnemotechnical system which it presents exerted an influence traceable to modern times. Though the work was attributed to Cicero for nearly a thousand years, we know now that it was written in Rome about 86-82 B.C.E. by a teacher of rhetoric who compiled this textbook for his students. We do not know the name of the author or the original title. The work has come down to us in the name of the person to whom it was dedicated. Gaius Herennius. The author referred to previous writers on the subject of mnemonics in order to combat their theory. Though he stated that these were Greek, he did not mention any of them by name.

Having set forth the five parts of rhetoric (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio*). he embarks on a detailed description of the art of memory as an "inner writing."

> XVII. Those who know the letters of the alphabet can thereby write out what is dictated to them and read aloud what they have written. Likewise, those who have learned mnemonics can set in backgrounds what they have heard, and from these backgrounds deliver it by memory. For the backgrounds are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading. . . I likewise think it obligatory to have these backgrounds in a series, so that we may never by confusion in their order be prevented from following the images . . . So with respect to the backgrounds. If these have been arranged in order, the result will be that, reminded by the images, we can repeat orally what we have committed to the backgrounds, proceeding in either direction from any background we please.

Here we have a description of the mnemonic backgrounds as wax blocks with the places arranged in a sequence, so that the delivery moves either forward (e.g., A-B-C) or backward (C-B-A) from the starting point. The *Ad Herennium* instructs

We shall need to study with special care the backgrounds we have adopted so that they

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[17] For a discussion and notes on the authorship of the *Ad Herennium*, see the introduction to the Loeb edition by H. Caplan (1954). As well, see Yates's. *Art of Memory*, pp. 20-21.

> may cling lastingly in our memory. for the images. like letters. are effaced when we make no use of them. but the backgrounds. like wax tablets. should abide. And that we may by no chance err in the number of backgrounds. each fifth background should be marked. For example. if in the fifth we should set a golden hand. and in the tenth some acquaintance whose first name is Decimus. it will then be easy to station like marks in each successive fifth background. ... (XVII. 30-31).

The ancients compared the topics to the wax tablets which remain when what is written on them is erased so they are ready to be written on again. There are passages in Plato that describe memory in terms of the "inner writing" and wax block models. At *Philebus* 39a-b. the soul is compared to a book and the conjunction of memory and sensation is said to "write words in our soul." words that are only a picture or image of actual speech. In the *Republic* (563e). there is a reference to that which is "written or unwritten" in the "soul." In the *Theaetetus*. Plato offered different models of mind. one of which compares memory to the impression of a seal on wax. This model is introduced in order to explain deception as the "contradiction" of "both knowing and not knowing what we know" (*Tht.* 191e). Socrates describes the wax tablet model:

> Imagine. then. for the sake of argument. that our minds contain a block of wax, which in this or that individual may be larger or smaller. and composed of wax that is comparatively pure or muddy. and harder in some. softer in others, and sometimes of just the right consistency ... Let us call it the gift of the Muses' mother, Memory, and say that whenever we wish to remember something we see or hear or conceive in our own minds. we hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring. Whatever is so imprinted we remember and know so long as the image remains; whatever is rubbed out or has not succeeded in leaving an impression we have forgotten and do not know (*Tht.* 191d-e).

This is a fairly accurate description of the mnemonic. Notice that "memory is synonymous with knowing." while forgetting is the parallel for "not knowing." Notice as well that there are two kinds of memories. One kind is for sensibles—those things "we see or hear"—which entails holding the wax block under the perceptions. The other kind is for intelligibles—the things we "conceive in our own minds"—which involves holding the wax under the ideas. Note further that there is no reference to actual letters of the alphabet in this model. This makes sense if the model of memory as a mold for holding impressions pre-dated writing. Socrates goes on to outline many different kinds of mistakes or false judgements framed as "knowing and not knowing." He explains to Theaetetus and Theodorus that errors in judgement occur ...

> when I. who know you and Theodorus and possess imprints of you both like seal impressions in the waxen block, see you both at a distance indistinctly and am in a hurry to assign the proper imprint of each to the proper visual perception, like fitting a foot into its own footmark to effect a recognition. and then make the mistake of interchanging them. like a man who thrusts his feet into the wrong shoes, and apply the perception of each to the imprint of the other. Or my mistake might be illustrated by

the sort of thing that happens in a mirror when the visual current transposes right to left (*Tht.* 193c-d).

Thus, in the case of vision, mistaken judgment involves either an incorrect match between the imprint and the perception, or a transposition, whereby what in fact belongs to one side of the mirror image symmetry is mistakenly judged as belonging to the opposite side. *Since there are two kinds of memories—one for sensible things and the other for intelligible things—the implication is that sensible things are erroneously taken to be intelligible things or vice versa.* This kind of mistaken impression, Socrates emphasizes, may happen in the perception of distance. While there is certainly much that is puzzling in this description, it seems certain that this type of miscalculation takes place in a situation involving some sort of symmetrical relation.

The Memory Art of the Sophist. Hippias of Elis, Contrasted With Socrates' "Superior Method." A fragment written about 400 B.C.E., known as the *Dialexeis*, contains advice on the use of a mnemonic technique. The fragment is attributed to Hippias of Elis, the sophist of Plato's *Lesser Hippias* and *Greater Hippias.*[18] The *Dialexeis* recommends a strategy of relating the words or items one needs to remember to things one already knows. In terms of words or names, those which need to be memorized are broken down into their etymological components and mentally "placed on" or matched with a mental image of well known items that are etymologically similar.

A great and beautiful invention is memory, always useful both for learning and for life. This is the first thing: if you pay attention (direct your mind), the judgment will better perceive the things going through it (the mind).

Secondly, repeat again what you hear: for by often hearing and saying the same things, what you have learned comes complete into your memory.

Thirdly, what you hear, place on what you know. For example, Χρύσιππος [Chrysippus] is to be remembered: we place it on χρυσός [gold] and ἵππος [horse]. Another example: we place πυριλάμπης [glow-worm] on πῦρ [fire] and λάμπειν [shine].

So much for names.

For things [do] thus: for courage [place it] on Mars and Achilles; for metal-working, on Vulcan; for cowardice, on Epeus.[19]

In the *Lesser Hippias* (368c-d and 369a), Socrates mentions that he "keeps forgetting" that Hippias regarded his skill in the "art of memory" as his "special glory." In the *Greater Hippias* (285b-286a) Socrates describes an education that includes the study of "the stars and celestial phenomena," "geometry . . arithmetic," and the analysis of "the properties of letters and syllables and rhythms and

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[18] Yates, *Art of Memory*, p. 45.

[19] H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1922), II, p. 345; for a German translation see H. Gomperz, *Sophistik und Rhetorik* (Berlin, 1912), p. 149; here quoted as translated in Yates, *The Art of Memory*, p. 44.

harmonies." This. he contrasts with the sophistic education offered by Hippias. which focuses on "genealogies of heroes and of men and in stories of the foundations of cities in olden times. and . . all forms of antiquarian lore." The sophist Hippias appears to belong to what Whitman called the "Heroic Tradition." In fact. announces Hippias proudly. "I can repeat fifty names after hearing them once." "I am sorry," replies Socrates. "I quite forgot about your mnemonic art."

These passages in the Platonic writings state explicitly that Hippias made use of a mnemonic technique. Further. the memory art practiced by Hippias is contrasted with a kind of study that involves. (1) arithmetic. (2) geometry. (3) an analysis of the properties of letters and syllables: (4) the rhythmic processes of change in nature: (5) stars and celestial phenomena: and (6) harmonies. That mention is made of letters and syllables tells us more about how the oral tradition and the technology of writing interacted. Moreover. if we look closely at this description. we will find that the components of the study advocated in this dialogue are the same as the elements of the Pythagorean system that Aristotle described. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle said that the Pythagorean classification system that modeled the cosmic order on the musical scale included the principles of arithmetic and geometry. The arithmetic and geometry in the Pythagorean system matches (1) arithmetic and (2) geometry in the superior kind of study. The basis for correlating things with numbers in the Pythagorean system was described as being a "unity in measure" which "in rhythms [is the] foot or syllable" (*Met*. 1088a9-10). This corresponds to (3) the analysis of the properties of letters and syllables and perhaps (4) rhythms in the superior study. The heavens and the universe in the Pythagorean system has a parallel in (5) the stars and celestial phenomena described as a component of the superior kind of study in the *Greater Hippias*. The (4) rhythms of nature could also fit in here as an alternative expression for the regularities of "celestial phenomena." Finally. the Pythagorean harmonies stemming from the proportions of the musical intervals are obviously (6) harmonies.

So these passages in the Platonic canon recognize that Hippias employed a mnemonic technique. The mnemonics practiced by Hippias is criticized and contrasted with a superior kind of study. This study that is mentioned in this dialogues involves six components. All six of the components match the features of the Pythagorean system as it was described by Aristotle. That the features of the study that is "superior" to the sophistic mnemonic correspond point by point to the Pythagorean system suggests that this study was *a superior mnemonic*.

Yates. it will be recalled, noted that the education offered by the sophists to which Plato was so opposed used the etymological technique to memorize huge amounts of trivial information. From Plato's point of view. she argued. the mnemonics used by the sophists would have been anathema. a desecration of memory. In a moment of prescience. she stated, "One would expect a Platonic memory

to be organized not in the trivial manner of such mnemotechnics. but in relation to the realities (Yates 1966: 51). As we will see in upcoming chapters. it turns out she was right.

III. The Abstract Categories: Preamble and Prelude

Havelock drew attention to the curriculum of the sciences offered in Book VII of the *Republic*. Resting on this one passage is the whole weight of his thesis that Plato rejected orality and that he was in the process of devising a vocabulary. syntax. and categories that would make possible abstract metaphysical thought. as he himself recognized in the foreword to *Preface to Plato* and in its penultimate chapter.[20] The purpose of this section of the *Republic*'s Book VII. he said. "if our thesis is correct. is equivalent to a conversion from the image-world of the epic to the abstract world of scientific description."[21] He found Plato rejecting the formulaic mind-set in favor of abstractions in the description of the way the sciences. "from arithmetic to harmonics. are arranged in ascending series according to the abstract definition of their fields of operation." Each one. he recognized. is a "thought-world" which is "disposed within a set of co-ordinates; these co-ordinates form an ascending series which increases in complication." Havelock also acknowledged that within these thought-world classifications. geometry is coordinated with the plane and with the field of two dimensions. Astronomy is coordinated with the solid and with the field of three dimensions. He then stated that Plato moves on in the series to the "three dimensional in motion or motion applied to volume" and finally to "motion in sound; for motion has several forms." He concluded that

> in this whole passage of the *Republic*. Plato is appealing to the Greek mind to think
> about body and space. motion and velocity, or as we might say, to think about physical
> experience in these terms and using this kind of vocabulary.

Plato. according to Havelock. has "discovered and defined" a "new frame of discourse" and a new vocabulary. "This is." he proclaims. "surely the clue to that passage."[22]

Or perhaps the clue has been misinterpreted. The objective in this section of the chapter will be to highlight the explicit remarks in this passage in the *Republic* that prove beyond question that Socrates makes express statements about the main tenets of the unwritten doctrines including: the one and indefinite duality of the great and small. the idea-numbers. and the intermediates. I also intend to show that he attributes the categories in this study to the Pythagoreans; that *he describes two different branches of the tradition and he rejects one of them*; that aside from one notable exception. Socrates'

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[20] Havelock. *Preface to Plato*. pp. vii-xii; and 254-275.

[21] Ibid.. pp. 258-271.

[22] Ibid.. pp. 259-260.

classification of numbers in this passage has all of the components of both the "superior study" in the *Greater Hippias* and the Pythagorean system that Aristotle described in the *Metaphysics*; and that this passage explains in a clear, direct and straightforward manner how the intelligible numbers are separate from the numbers associated with sensible bodies.

If we find overt statements concerning all these notions in this one passage, it stands to reason that there are more explicit comments about them in other sections of the dialogues as well. I will show that Socrates traces the origin of these classifications to an earlier tradition, that he attributes the classifications to the Pythagoreans, and that he says outright that he is changing the name of the "great and small" to the "intelligible and visible." This makes it clear that Plato was *altering* the classifications he inherited from the Italian philosophers. He was not *inventing* new categories that did not exist previously. Moreover, Socrates is very precise in his rejection of the study pursued by the branch of the tradition that works with numbers attached to sensible things. He contrasts the kind of studies pursued by the people in this sensible branch with a group that focusses on the study of the intelligible topics. He states specifically that this latter group includes "reasoners, dialecticians" and the "Pythagoreans." He declares the kind of study that concentrates on intelligibles to be *superior* to the study that focusses on sensibles. That he argues for the superiority of one sort of study over the other, and that the classifications of the study he recommends match the components of the study he says is superior to the memory art practiced by the sophist Hippias, suggests that the study he is advocating is a memory system.

Now, this passage that Havelock cites comes immediately after the cave. It is, in fact, one of the more complex and condensed sections of prose in Plato's collection. We must be aware that these statements have been wrested from their context in the dialogue as a whole, and trust that while some of Socrates' statements will seem oblique, at least some of his remarks will gain clarity as we proceed with our exploration of other parts of the dialogues.

The Foundation of the Arts and Sciences. At *Republic* 52b, Socrates asks his listeners to see if they can discover if there is a common thing that "all arts and forms of thought and sciences must employ." This common factor involves "distinguishing one and two and three," namely "number and calculation." Socrates asks, "Is it not true of them that every art and science must necessarily partake of them?" He says that all forms of study are grounded in and "participate" in numbers. He then states that the study of numbers will awaken thought and lead the learner to essence and reality. He notes that it is too bad that hardly anyone makes the right use of this study. He warns his listeners to keep a close "watch" and "observe" carefully the things he distinguishes as being conducive to their purpose (*Rep.* 523a).

The Origin of the Intelligible and the Visible in the Indefinite Dyad of the Great and Small.

In the paragraphs starting at 523d, he asks his companions to consider the case of three fingers. Thus, he offers an example of something sensible that can be distinguished into the numbers "one and two and three." Klein (1965: 116) traced the great and small in Plato's dialogues to this example whereas Havelock took it as evidence that Plato was moving from the "image-world of the epic" to the "abstract world" and vocabulary of "equations and laws and formulas and topics." Let us examine this passage carefully to determine which view is more accurate.

Socrates describes three fingers, little, second, and middle. Now, fingers are often used for counting numbers. They are also different sizes. Moreover, any finger on one hand has, as its symmetrical counterpart, a finger on the opposite hand that is its equal. Thus, any one of the three fingers is "one and both two." Socrates says that "when perception no more manifests one thing than its contrary," each one seems to be "equally a finger." Without a contradictory perception, he adds that it

> makes no difference whether it is observed as intermediate or at either extreme,
> whether it is white or black, thick or thin, or of any other quality of this kind. For in
> none of these cases is the soul of most men compelled to question the reason and to
> ask what in the world is a finger? (523d)

If sight does not signal that "at the same time, the finger is the opposite of a finger," then perception will not awaken reflection and thought. Sometimes, touch presents to the soul contradictory perceptions. Curious concerning the significance of this strange sensation, "calculating reason" is called upon to "consider whether each of the things reported to it is one or two," or how it can be "one and both two" (524b-c). Socrates says this example holds as well for the sense of sight, which sees "the great and small, we say, not separated but confounded" (524c). In the case of touch, perception calls on reflection and thought to determine whether the sensation is one or two. In the case of sight, the soul calls intelligence to its aid, "to contemplate the great and small, not thus confounded but as distinct entities, in the opposite way from sensation." Socrates then announces

> And is it not in some such experience as this that the question first occurs to us, What
> in the world, then is the great and small?
> By all means
> And this is the origin of the designation *intelligible* for the one, and *visible* for the
> other (524c).

Thus we find a clear and unmistakable reference to the great and small. It looks like Klein was correct and that Havelock was mistaken. Moreover, by the phrasing of the question, What in the world is the great and small? Socrates has set up a parallel with a previous question, What in the world is a finger? We may infer that the great and small involves three things, a little one, a second one, and an

intermediate one. The great and small, like fingers, are often used to describe numbers, since great and small are expressions for the idea of relative differences in size. Just as the fingers on one hand have, as their symmetrical counterpart, the fingers on the opposite hand, the great and small may well have a symmetrical counterpart as well.

Most important, Socrates traces the intelligible and the sensible to their origins in the great and small, and he makes it clear that intelligible and visible are changes of designation. Thus, it may have appeared to Havelock that Plato was in this instance *inventing* new categories named the intelligible and sensible due to the effects literacy on his thinking. However, since Socrates specifically identifies these classifications as having their source in the great and small, it would be more accurate to say that he was modifying or changing certain classes previously known as the great and small. What he is doing is more reminiscent of Aristotle's description of how Plato changed the name of imitation to participation. Thus, it is more probable that the new categories involve refinements Plato made to the Pythagorean system, just as Aristotle described. From now on, we may be certain that *when the dialogues discuss the intelligible and the visible, the concern is with classifications descended from the great and small.*

The Classification of Number. Socrates proclaims that they have just discerned two classes of things: intelligible and visible; great and small; things that "provoke thought," and those that "do not tend to awaken reflection." Socrates then asks Glaucon, "To which class, then, do you think number and the one belong?" (524d) Glaucon isn't sure. "Well," snaps Socrates, "reason it out from what has already been said." He offers some help. Just as in the instance of the finger, "if unity is adequately seen by itself or apprehended by some other sensation, mind is not drawn to the apprehension of essence." However, if a contradiction is seen simultaneously with unity, so that it no more appears to be one than the opposite, there would be need to judge between them. It forces the psyche to inquire, by arousing thought to attend and to make a judgement. Socrates emphasizes that the study of unity—and the opposite—converts the soul to true being, and that the visual perception of unity is a lesser example of what he is trying to explain. In terms of true being, he says that "we see the same thing at once as one and as an indefinite plurality," and if this holds for "the one . . . the same holds of all numbers" (525a). Thus Socrates has just told his listeners something about the indefinite dyad of the one and the great and small! Though much more should probably be said about the great and small, one thing, in particular, seems plain from Socrates's explanation. Understanding this philosophy (i.e., uncovering the unwritten teaching), entails both analytic and synthetic reasoning. Learners must develop an ability to make more and more refined distinctions—for, as Socrates assures everyone, *what appears at first to be one thing will often turn out to be two things.* Similarly, we must

also cultivate the capacity to discern complex relationships—so that *conceptions that seemed in the beginning to be two different things will, in the end, be one and the same.* This teaching involves distinguishing and discerning *both* the unity and its parts, the indefinite duality that is one and both two.

Socrates goes on to establish that there are two main classifications of numbers: first, a true and authentic one dealing with "pure numbers" that can only be grasped by reason and thought; and second, a lesser class that focuses on "numbers attached to visible and tangible bodies" (*Rep.* 526d-e). He then divides numbers into different parts: first reckoning and arithmetic (525a); second, geometry that investigates plane surfaces (526c, 528d); a third, not given a unique name, that involves cubes and other solids with depth (528d); and fourth, astronomy, concerned with celestial bodies, or solids in motion (528e). He correlates musical harmony to astronomy, saying that harmony is to hearing what astronomy is to seeing. He then says that each of these four classes is divided into two parts. One part is concerned with things that can be apprehended by sight, while the other part is concerned with true numbers, true figures and true motions. These, he says can be "apprehended by reason and thought but not by sight" (529d). Let us look closely at what he says and observe how he does it.

First Dimension: Reckoning and Arithmetic as One and Both Two. Socrates asserts that only the sort of "reckoning and the science of arithmetic" that is "wholly concerned with number," leads to the apprehension of truth. Unless philosophers can rise above the study of the sort of numbers associated with generation and grasp the essence, they will never become "true reckoners" (525b). He reiterates that there are two sorts of "reckoning and arithmetic." There is a "lesser" one that is ranked "below" the other one because it remains focussed on the "generation" of sensible bodies. The other, "true" kind, is assigned to the "greater" area located "above" the sort of reckoning and arithmetic attached to the mundane. This true kind of reckoning and arithmetic is correlated with the sciences and with numbers in the intelligible realm of "pure essences." To become a philosopher, Socrates emphasizes, learners must follow the study of calculation "up until they attain to the contemplation of the nature of number, by pure thought" (525c). He describes this process as a complete "conversion of the soul" from the "world of generation to essence and truth."

Second Dimension: Calculation and Geometry as One and Both Two. Just as reckoning and arithmetic are one thing and both two (one associated with generation and the sensible world while the other, "true," kind, is associated with science, pure numbers, essences, and the intelligible domain), so there is a similar arrangement in calculation and geometry, which is one thing divided into two. The first sort, in a military example, is concerned with the "places and the formation of troops into column and line and all the other formations" that represent "only a slight modicum of geometry" (526d). The second sort is the "greater and more advanced part of geometry. This greater part is the one that

facilitates the "apprehension of the idea of the good" by forcing the "soul to turn its vision round to the region (τόπον) concerned with the "most blessed part of reality." Thus. geometry itself is a unity that may be distinguished into two parts. the first concerned with columns. lines and other formations of visible things in the sensible topics; while the second is devoted to the study of columns and lines and other formations of intelligible things in the places devoted to the greater part of reality. Of these two. if the study "compels the soul to contemplate essence. it suitable." if it involves the contemplation of genesis. it is not suitable. for the "real object" of the pursuit is "pure knowledge" of "that which always is" and not of something that is generated and then passes away. Observe that Socrates has just told us something about the objects of the calculator and geometer. The object of the lesser kind of calculation and geometry is "genesis." which concerns "things that are generated and then pass away." whereas the object of the greater kind is "essence". the "pure knowledge of that which always is." So much for this second branch of study. (By way of foreshadowing. this distinction will prove crucial to the Old Testament which begins. of course. with Genesis).

Third Dimension: Solids and Cubes and Everything With Depth. Astronomy. also. is one thing and yet it is divided into two. The first kind of astronomy is concerned with sense "perception about the seasons and the courses of the months and the years"—that is. a sense of the rhythms of nature. The second kind is not concerned with these "ordinary pursuits." Wait! Socrates claims he has just made a mistake. He says that "we just now did not rightly select the study that comes next after geometry" (528a). After plane surfaces (geometry). he recalls. we jumped ahead to solids in revolution (astronomy). whereas we should have taken up the "third dimension" of "solids" and "cubes and everything that has depth." after the second dimension. and before we "went on to solids in revolution." That Socrates has made an error here signals to the listener that this classification is not as straightforward as the other ones and that learners are apt to be confused about what is classified in this place. Notice that geometry is associated with plane surfaces and that Socrates does not provide a name for the study dealing with solids. cubes. and figures with depth. Yet. clearly geometry deals with three-dimensional objects and not just two-dimensional ones. Here then. we find another one of the techniques used by the dialogues to call attention to the unwritten doctrines.

Fourth Dimension: Astronomy as One and Both Two. Socrates confirms and sets down that the fourth study is astronomy. a "science" that it is concerned with the "movement of solids" (528d). He does not say anything further about the third kind of study that deals with solids "in themselves." Instead. he goes on to divide astronomy into two. He establishes that the first sort of study involves "staring at decorations on a ceiling" with "back-thrown head." People who engage in this sort of activity are not dealing with the part of astronomy that is concerned with the "study of higher things."

The second sort of study involves the soul "gazing upward" at "being and the invisible," and "contemplating them with the higher reason and not with the eyes" (529b-c). This, second kind of study, he adds, is the one that is conducive to his purpose. He says that the "sparks that paint the sky" are the "fairest and most exact of material things." Yet, they are still "*decorations* on a visible surface," [emphasis mine]. They "possess bodies and are visible objects, and as such, they "fall far short of the truth." The genuine study of astronomy is focussed on

> the movements of real speed and real slowness in true number and all true figures both
> in relation to one another and as vehicles of the things they carry and contain. These
> can only be apprehended by reason and thought but not by sight (529d).

Thus, Socrates has established two parts of astronomy, one dealing with the rhythms and movements of the sensible stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies which he compares to "*decorations* on a ceiling;" while the other is concerned with "true numbers and figures" and the "real motion" of "being and the invisible" that can only be grasped by "reason and thought." Notice that Socrates mentions that numbers and figures are "vehicles" that "contain" and "carry" things. Recall that Aristotle at *Physics* 209a30-210a describes the "topics" as "envelopes" that "contain bodies."

Harmony as the Counterpart of Astronomy. Socrates goes on to say that among the classes that can be apprehended only by reason and thought, and not by sight, there is a "counterpart" to astronomy (530d). He states, "as the eyes are framed for astronomy, so the ears are framed for the movements of harmony." These categories, Socrates proclaims, "are in some sort kindred sciences, as the Pythagoreans affirm and we admit, do we not?" Glaucon then confirms Socrates' statement. "We do," he said (530d). Thus, Socrates makes it clear that the classifications explained in the central parts of this dialogue in general and in particular, the divisions of numbers designated to astronomy and its counterpart, musical harmony, belong to the Pythagorean tradition. That Socrates attributes these classes to the Pythagoreans by express statement means that Plato was not inventing new categories. He was using classifications that he inherited from the Italian philosophers.

Two Different Branches of the Tradition. Having established the analogy between astronomy and harmony, Socrates goes on to ask the Pythagoreans "what their opinion is and whether they have anything to add" (*Soph.* 230c). He mentions two sorts of "people." One sort is able to make the transfer from astronomy to harmony, but they simply shift from sight to hearing and go on to measure "audible sounds and heard concords," rather than "ascending" to more "generalized problems and the consideration of which numbers are inherently concordant and which not and why in each case" (*Rep.* 531c). Only reasoners and dialecticians are able to ascend to pure numbers and through this study, to investigate the beautiful and the good. The "other people" are never able to move beyond the "perceptions of sense" and the limits of the sensible to find their way to the "apprehension by thought

itself of the nature of the good in itself [and to] arrive at the limit of the intelligible" (*Rep.* 532a-b). Thus. we have two different types of people whose studies focus on two different aspects of number. the "worthies who vex and torture the strings." and "those others whom we just now said we would interrogate about harmony. i.e.. the Pythagoreans (*Rep* 531b-c). Both are on the right track but only the Pythagoreans progress from the study of numbers attached to audible harmonies to the true numbers that belong to the intelligible harmonies that lead ultimately to the beautiful and good. Thus, Socrates has described two sorts of people and two kinds of study that followed from Pythagoras, and he has determined that one of them is "superior" to the other.

Socrates sums up by stating that "all this"—meaning. presumably. everything discussed in the dialogue thus far—is "but the preamble of the law itself. the prelude of the strain that we have to apprehend?" (531e). The dialogue itself is compared to a musical composition. We are given to understand that the material presented in the text is the "smaller" portion of the "true" philosophy. which is much greater than this amount of information. and which can only be figured out by reasoners and dialecticians. Glaucon asks Socrates to proceed with the "melody itself and go through it as we have gone through the prelude" (532d). Socrates declines. He says "You will not be able. dear Glaucon. to follow me further." Thus. he lets his listeners know that as the unwritten philosophy builds up. there is a point beyond which it ceases to have a visible embodiment in the words recorded in the text. It can only be grasped by reason. that is. by "reasoning it out from what has already been said." Socrates then clearly states one of the "principles." This passage is so crucial it is worth quoting at length.

> "This. then. at last Glaucon." I said. "is the very law which dialectics recites. the strain which it executes. of which. though it belongs to the intelligible. we. we may see an imitation in the progress of the faculty of vision. as we described its endeavor to look at living things themselves and the stars themselves and finally at the very sun. In like manner. when anyone by dialectics attempts through discourse of reason and apart from all perceptions of sense to find his way to the very essence of each thing and does not desist till he apprehends by thought itself the nature of the good in itself, he arrives at the limit of the intelligible. as the other in our parable came to the goal of the visible" (*Rep.* 532b).

This means that vision is an imitation of reason. The classes of sensible numbers have intelligible counterparts. Genesis is a reflection of essence. The rule of method is that we can find our way to the apex of the intelligible if we use the visible as our guide.

Summary of the Prelude and Preamble. Notice that this discussion of the Pythagoreans involves numbers related to musical harmonies. Heavenly bodies and other parts of the universe are arranged in a certain order in a study based on the mathematical structure of music. There is a division of numbers into sensible and intelligible kinds. Sensible numbers are ranked in an ascending order into

a series of four. beginning with arithmetic and moving on through geometry. to a third kind that is related to solid geometric shapes. and then finally to rhythms of nature and astronomy at the apex of the sensible. After that. an analogy is established between astronomy and musical harmony. Each of the sensible classes has a counterpart in the intelligible region. Just as astronomy and harmony were positioned in the upper echelons of the visible and audible categories. so pure numbers and harmonies are positioned at the loftiest extremes of the intelligible order. Moreover. the study of numbers described by Socrates has—with one exception—all the components of the superior study he mentioned in the *Greater Hippias*. What component of the superior study discussed in the *Greater Hippias* is missing from this account in the *Republic*? We see there is no mention in the *Republic* of the class described in the *Greater Hippias* as dealing with the "analysis of the syllables and properties of letters." The addition of syllables and letters would be the sort of insertion into the earlier tradition that we should expect to find in transitional text. where a composition with pre-textual roots is changed to incorporate symbolic notation. Furthermore, the study Socrates advocates in the *Greater Hippias* is declared superior in comparison to the memory art practiced by the sophist. Hippias. The study Socrates recommends in the *Republic* has all but one of the features of the superior study described in the *Greater Hippias* and in Aristotle's account of the Pythagorean doctrines. Therefore. it stands to reason that the technique Socrates champions in the *Republic* is not the sophisticated memory art practiced by some people such as Hippias but rather. a better memory technique wherein all the arts, sciences and forms of thought are grounded in numbers which are divided and ordered in a sequence.

IV. Rejection of Literate and Text-Based Paradigms of Interpretation

Finally. the evidence presented so far in this study adds additional weight to my argument that Plato was more likely a redactor than an author in the modern sense. What I propose is that Plato's dialogues are a group of different philosophical discourses composed in the traditional style that were gathered together and set down in writing during the time when Greek culture and education made the shift from speech to record. Just as the Homeric epics are thought to be the monumental compositions of one or two individuals. it is possible that the historical person who later came to be known as Plato played a leading role in the production of this collection—not as "author." but as "composer" and "redactor." This means that the material in the dialogues represents the cumulative contributions of many individuals and sources. and that we must extend our understanding of oral tradition beyond Homer and Hesiod to include Plato's dialogues as well. At the same time. we need to recognize that in taking the traditional material and turning it into written form. Plato would have fundamentally altered the tradition he inherited. This would have been his accomplishment.

Refinements to the Theory of Communication

The first section of this chapter looked at the role of memory in fourth century Greek culture and considered the model of memory and recitation in Plato's dialogues. This investigation supported my argument that Plato must be repositioned on the oral side of the orality to literacy spectrum. During the time when the dialogues were written, Greek culture was still predominantly oral. The orations forming the dramatic context of works in the Platonic canon show that the abstract philosophical discussions of the day relied on feats of memory that surpass anything we are familiar with in our literate civilization.[23]

The second section cited documents that showed that Greek mnemonics involved two principles: the order of the background places and the creation of mental images. Simonides was associated with the kind of mnemonics that emphasized images. A different branch of the memory tradition described by Quintilian de-emphasized the use of images and advanced instead the principles of "correct division" and "artistic structure." Passages from the dialogues themselves show that the technique of recitation in sequence was known before Plato and that it was used to maintain the Homeric epics in the arrangement of Hipparchus, Simonides' teacher. After that, sections of Plato's dialogues were presented to demonstrate that their composer was familiar with the mnemonic techniques of Simonides and Hippias and that he was sharply critical of them. Socrates contrasts the sophisticated mnemonic with a "superior kind of study." As it turns out, the study he outlines matches Aristotle's description of the Pythagorean system that he says Plato inherited and modified. In addition, passages from Plato's writings show that the models that associate memory with an inner writing and wax tables can both be found in the dialogues. The dominating concern in the Platonic texts is with the order and arrangement of the subject matter of a conversation. This adds weight to my hypothesis that the "doctrines" in the dialogues are concerned with the construction and use of a mnemonic system that emphasized abstract division and composition in a sequence of topics.

The third section considered the evidence Havelock offered to support his thesis, namely, that Plato in Book VI of the *Republic* was inventing the abstract categories that would make philosophical

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[23] Scientific studies indicate that the capacity of human memory has no known limits [A.R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist* (New York: Basic Books, 1968)]. Studies also indicate that exceptional memory performance is not due to a high IQ or to other innate, possibly neurological, differences between people. Evidence suggests that the acquisition of exceptional memory skill is well within the capability of the average person. It appears that with practice, almost anyone can develop seemingly astounding memory capabilities [Searleman and Herrmann, *Memory from a Broader Perspective*, p. 308; K.A. Ericsson, "Memory Skill," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 39 (1985), 188-231; K.A. Ericsson and J. Smith, "Prospects and Limits of the Empirical Study of Expertise: An Introduction," *Toward a General Theory of* Expertise, eds., K.A. Ericsson and J. Smith (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1-58].

thought possible. The analysis disclosed that Cherniss and Havelock were more mistaken than Aristotle.

The fourth, and final section argued that being true to the evidence means that we must do away with our preconceptions about Plato's original creation of the dialogues and look at the philosophy in these writings in light of our understanding of the Greek oral tradition.

Altogether, this evidence strengthened my argument that the dialogues are an oral literature: that apart from the poets who preserved the Homeric epics, and the sophists who practiced the memory art, there was a different branch of the oral tradition that kept alive certain famous abstract philosophical discourses. According to the evidence, the history of the topic mnemonic can be traced from its origins in Egypt through Pythagoras. Plato traces the Simonidean tradition to Hipparchus. The topics in the dialogues are said to have their source in the Pythagorean tradition. According to Plato, by the time the dialogues were written, there were different versions of the mnemonotechnic. One version was practiced by the rhapsodes (the "simple-minded" Homeric "tribe" who did not really know what they were doing). On account of their not knowing, their compositions did not conform to the prescribed patterns, and so they charmed and entertained the audience without providing any serious educational benefit. Another version of the system of memory appears to have passed from Hipparchus to Simonides. It likely evolved into the method of backgrounds and images offered by the sophists (those descendants of the poets who offered their wisdom for sale even though they knew they did not know the rules and techniques of the system they purported to know). The third was dialectic, the mnemonic preserved by the Pythagorean tradition and into which Plato incorporated the "universal definitions," taught by Socrates. Socrates' method of dialectic was concerned with the "correct division" of "whatever may be chosen as the topic for exposition." It utilized certain "principles of composition" that prescribed a "particular order" for "setting down observations," so that it made "a difference what order the lines come in." Dialectic, in sum, has many of the features we know were synonymous with the mnemonic techniques of oral-formulaic thought.

That so many dialogues refer to the practice of reciting famous philosophical discourses from memory adds support to the hypothesis that Plato's writings are the literature of an oral tradition of philosophy. I have suggested that the philosophers stored and preserved in their memories aspects of the intellectual heritage of Greek culture that were different from the parts of the tradition preserved by the poets. The written text of the Iliad and Odyssey is the literature that documents the oral encyclopedia of Greek history and geography. The Theogony is the literature that stores the oral catalogue of the gods and heros. The Works and Days preserves a compendium of oral stories, parables and sayings. Plato's dialogues, I maintain, store, preserve, and document a collection of

acclaimed philosophical discourses that were composed and circulated prior to and during the commencement of alphabetic writing. More than this, they provide a system of education in abstract thinking. The learner is supposed to memorize the discourses, hold this material in mind and then use this information as the basis for figuring out the unwritten doctrines.

Response to the Two-Part "Plato Question"

We now have a reply to the initial, two-part "Plato Question." To the question, Why did Plato write dialogues? My answer is that Plato was not an "author" in the modern sense of that word, and in "writing" the dialogues, he was not the "creator" of these books in the way that we understand those notions today. What does this have to do with how we ought we to interpret a dialogue? It means that we no longer have to search for complex philosophical explanations for features of these compositions that may be understood as the result of multiple contributions to a medium that had a long history of formation. Why dialogues? My response to this query is that dialogue—both the inward conversation "that the mind carries on with itself in silence" and the "outward flow of the mind through the lips with sound" (*Soph.* 263d-e)—is the art (τέχνη) of education. How does this understanding of dialogue as an educational technique affect our interpretation of the Platonic writings? Finding the answer to this question will occupy us for the rest of this investigation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ESOTERIC DOCTRINES: DECIPHERING A CULTURAL CODE

When we embarked upon this research, we recognized that it would not be easy to break out of the thought barriers imposed by our immersion in a culture based on writing to glimpse into the thinking of a civilization whose conventions for communicating were quite different from our own. We also noted that passages in Plato's dialogues and *Letters* state that the most profound philosophical principles cannot be expressed via the written word. In this chapter, we complete our construction of the theoretical tools that will allow us to begin to break through this cultural barrier so that we can put together a major section of the puzzle of this ancient philosophy.

One of the two main hypotheses in this thesis is that there *is* a Platonic doctrine in the written dialogues, that this teaching is open to all learners, and that it explains the techniques and conventions of the traditional system itself. Up to this point, the focus has been on the "oral" side of the Greek "oral tradition." We have concentrated on the way that formulas, sequences, and the ring structure aided composition and performance. Since esotericism entails modes of communication that are intelligible only to an inner circle of advanced or initiated disciples, we will now shift the lens of the inquiry to the "tradition" in "oral tradition," and to the way that formulaic structures facilitated the reception of a work by the audience.

In this chapter, we pick up another thread of the argument first presented in Chapter Two, where I distinguished different senses of "written" and "unwritten" that relied on different levels of audience comprehension, so that what is "exoteric" for some listeners is "esoteric" for others. I suggested that for a literate audience, or even for ancient people who were not familiar with the Greek philosophical tradition, there is and was something "esoteric" about oral traditional modes of communication. In this sense, what is exoteric for those reared in this cultural milieu is esoteric for those without any background in the tradition. Second, I proposed that the Platonic doctrines are concerned with oral traditional patterns of thought, so that some knowledge of how the system works is needed in order to apprehend this teaching. The exoteric Platonic teaching can be grasped by everyone who can read the words that are "written" in the dialogues, in the sense that all the information needed to find the ultimate principles is expressed by way of direct statements in the literature. However, even though this philosophy is stated explicitly, it is formulated in an ambiguous manner, so that statements can be interpreted in a number of different ways, only one of which is correct. In this second sense, the esoteric teaching is *hidden* in the exoteric teaching in the "written" dialogues, so that the doctrines are a more refined version of the total philosophical "content" that

"forms" the exoteric teaching. To recognize the doctrines. learners need to know the rules the composer used to create the work in order to distinguish this pure teaching from the range of possible meanings. Third. I maintained that the educational purpose of the dialogues meant that there is an esoteric doctrine that is "unwritten." It is not given to learners by way of direct language or even by way of the formal structure of the system that governs the order and arrangement of topics in the discourse. It is given by way of *absences* in this framework. In this third sense of esoteric. the highest truths must be produced by those who know the system well enough to identify the *silences amongst the words* in the written dialogues. Having pinpointed the holes in the framework. they are able to go on and use the rules of the system itself to reason out the missing pieces of the puzzle.

To aid our understanding of the first kind of esotericism. I shall introduce the findings of John Miles Foley on the interaction of composition and reception in texts patterned on the traditional style. Foley furthered the work of Parry and Lord by comparing Homer's art with that of the living South Slavic oral tradition. He contributed to the theory of communications technology by explaining how repeating patterns in traditional systems were "ancient technologies of representation" that bore "secret meanings" beyond their literal sense.[1] These meanings were grounded in the context of a long-term history of institutionalized usages. practices. and conventions that pointed to a range of meanings that were understood by ancient audiences. but which gradually. over twenty-five centuries. became closed to learners as the traditional art was eclipsed by the technology of writing. After that. we will consider the second and third types of esotericism by turning to passages in Plato that comment explicitly on secrecy and deception in philosophy. We also look at the report on Socrates from Xenophon. The aim of this section of the chapter is to compare the writings that have come down to us from these two students of Socrates to see if there is anything consistent in their representations of the way that hiddenness and indirection worked in the discourse of their teacher. In the end. I will propose that these paragraphs offer a condensed description of how the doctrines are "hidden in plain view" in the written dialogues. so that the teaching is accessible and open to all learners. while at the same time. the principles can only be apprehended by initiates. I go on to propose the figure-ground relationship as a model for understanding how the system and doctrines can be concealed in the open. After that. I bring all the findings in this chapter together with theoretical points anticipated by Toronto theorists McLuhan. Bogdan. Gooch. and especially Eisenberg. Their contributions focussed on how certain aspects of reality cannot be put into words and on how the medium not only shapes the message but *is* a message. I will go on to argue that even though we can never grasp the messages encoded in this

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[1] John Miles Foley. *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press. 1999), p. 3.

medium in the same way that the original audience understood and appreciated them, we might be able to devise a critical apparatus that will enable us, as modern readers, to decipher the cultural code that would have been apprehended by informed members of Plato's ancient audience.

John Miles Foley: Ancient Technologies of Representation

Foley's research concentrated on the Homeric and South Slavic traditions. I will be extending his findings, with some modifications, to Plato as well. His research will allow me to explain how Socrates can be stating the doctrines outright, but in a way that renders them comprehensible only to those with a background in the tradition.

Foley pointed out that the recurrent formulaic patterns that characterize the oral style in Homer and in the South Slavic tradition—and I would add, the forms in Plato—were "a variety of language" that had "rules for both composition and reception" (88). When the poet sang a prelude or began speaking in the stock expressions and repeating patterns associated with the traditional style (i.e., formulaic words or phrases; types and themes; or the story patterns that shape the composition as a whole), it "cued the audience" that they were about to receive a communication "via a designated channel and according to specific assumptions and rules." Foley referred to the styles associated with these repeating patterns as *registers* (a term he borrowed from anthropological linguistics) and which he defined as "recurrent types of situations" (22-23). He explained how the organized patterns of the register were an "economical" way of communicating traditional meanings to audiences and readers who were "fluent in that specialized tongue." In fact, argued Foley, the patterns "deliver their secrets" only to the "audience that knows the code."

Foley called the formulaic patterns *sêma* (signs), a notion which took its impetus from an episode in Book 6 of the *Iliad* (6.166080). He said that *sêmata* operate as "concrete signals" that refer "institutionally toward a traditional network of associations" that people steeped in a tradition are tuned into but which go unrecognized by those who do not possess this cultural knowledge (31). Behind the sign stands a greater "implication, a hidden association for which the pattern stands, as part to whole." Signs serve as "markers to index 'secret' meanings that bear implications beyond their literal sense." They "act as touchstones, providing ready access to implied cultural or mythic knowledge," and they serve as guidelines "through a thicket of individual instances" by providing the framework that those instances share (5).

Foley elaborated. Oral traditions (and texts that originate in orality but come down to us as written records) are more than just the techniques and conventions that aid composition. These patterns figure just as prominently "in the decoding process of *reception*" (22). The audience or reader

has a role or responsibility for figuring out what the work means. If listeners or readers do not have the background, training, or experience, then the communication is not received (90). The intelligibility of *sēmata* depends on a shared knowledge of the "rules and referent." Traditional referentiality allows for an efficient transaction of meaning because the formulas, types, and themes point toward a whole context of ideas that remain "hidden" in the background. Any singular performance of a recurrent structure is the tip of the iceberg, so to speak; it is a kind of "shorthand" that is implicitly informed by the entire tradition. Said differently, the *tradition* itself is the field of reference to which every instance of a pattern points. The Homeric art is, according to Foley, a two-sided process (7). Individual details work in tandem with traditional patterns so as to "slot" or "index" the instances in any one composition against a much larger backdrop that serves as a familiar, identifiable context to audience members in the know. Events change with the particular situation but the overall outline of the ideational content remains constant from one rendition to the next. Singular instances of the type "engage plural contexts, with their implied wholes brought into play under the agreed upon code and dynamics of Heroic idiom." Thus, an "extra layer of meaning" is created by the whole tradition of usages that adds to each of its occurrences, so that the "referent for the concrete signs in the performance or text lies outside the immediate performance or text" (20). The art "stems neither solely from the uniqueness of the instance nor solely from its traditional meaning, but rather from their interaction" (7).

In line with my argument that Plato's dialogues are an oral literature, Foley confirmed that firsthand observation and report proves that when writing first appears on the scene, traditional language and poetics persist alongside of and in interaction with the new modes of expression made possible by the alphabet. Or as Havelock proposed, prose at first conformed to the previous rules for the poetic (Havelock 1963: 136-137). In a written text, the register is keyed using some of the same signals that guided listeners in the oral culture to the correct channel, even though the performance is no longer live. Foley emphasized that the poet and audience do not simply drop the traditional signs and take up a literate modality when writing first appears. This "would involve introducing an unintelligible language into the performance arena when all parties involved are already fluent in a language so well suited to the purpose." He asserted that a "highly developed mutually intelligible language is far preferable to the alternative, especially in the early stages of the new medium" (17-18; 45).

Transferring Foley's findings concerning the Homeric and South Slavic traditions to Plato helps shed light on the first kind of esotericism. His research explains why the "signals" that refer to the traditional web of associations that would have been understood by ancient audiences were not recognized by readers in the modern era who did not possess this cultural background. His research

also suggests how we might create an intellectual device that will allow us to tune into some of the meanings encoded by the traditional patterns in Platonic works. If we find in Plato (or in other discourses that have been dated to the same time period) the recurrent organizational forms that typify the oral style. then we may be fairly certain that we are dealing with "a kind of language" that has rules for both composition and reception. A dialogue is a kind of theater: a written record of a "performance." If each work is constrained by special rules that apply to philosophical discourse, then different performances composed in the same style can be compared to assess the variability of their structure. Comparison of performances would make it possible to reconstruct parts of the "ideal form" of a pattern. By that I mean that noting the elements classified under each topic in the sequence in every one of the examined performances (which are only a percentage of the actual performances of the tradition), and then combining them together. should give us an indication of the range elements stored in each "commonplace" in the classification system. Establishing the collection of items in each topic will help us to identify the field of possible ideas from which the single performance has selected. Comparisons would make it possible for us to build a composite picture of what the total "field of discourse" might have been for a given type.[2] It would also allow us to develop an understanding of what the choices were for a speaker who wanted to express a particular idea by way of this style, and to begin to see how the composer picked one notion over other possibilities that were available.

When applied to Plato, Foley's research suggests that when Socrates in the *Republic* recited the "preamble and prelude" and formulated his statements in the expressions and patterns associated with the traditional medium, he would have "cued" his listeners that they were about to receive a communication that was shaped by specific techniques and conventions (22-23). The repeating patterns that Foley called the "signs" that make up the traditional "register" and which served as "markers" to "index" or "slot" the secret meanings would have offered a familiar. identifiable context to knowledgeable audience members (i.e.. those who had the right background). By acting as cues to implied cultural knowledge. the patterns functioned as maps. They helped members of the audience follow along with the speaker so they could attend to the way he was moving through the different places in the system during the course of a recitation. Havelock said that in Homer, the "repetition of an identical order in different passages." created the episodes that provided "a frame of reference. the chapter headings. the library catalogue. within which the memory can find markers" (Havelock 1963: 295). I will be transferring this idea to works composed on the lines of Plato's forms. I will argue that the geometry explained in the mathematical passages in Plato's dialogues (together with the

[2]Here. I have appropriated an expression from Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). pp. 48-57.

arrangement of formulaic patterns linked to these structures) served as guidelines—Foley's slots and indexes or Havelock's frames of reference—that helped the audience keep track of individual performances by providing the background framework in which those instances "participated."

Foley emphasized that the communicative value of this style stemmed not from its "originality" but from the way it served as a framework for a variety of songs, poems, and performances. In extending his findings to works composed by means of this technique, I will be attempting to show that the forms are a communicative medium that provides a vehicle for a number of different compositions in the Platonic style.

So much for the first sense of esotericism. To understand the second and third types, let us turn now to the accounts of Socrates in Plato and Xenophon.

Plato's Socrates on Secrecy and Deception in Philosophy

Three different passages in Plato comment explicitly on secrecy, concealment and deception in philosophy.

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates assures his listeners that he speaks plainly and honestly and that the genuine teaching is accessible by way of his discourse. He says

> there was a tradition from the ancients, who hid their meaning from the common herd
> in poetical figures . . . the moderns, in their superior wisdom, declare the same quite
> openly so that the very cobblers may hear and understand their wisdom" (*Tht.* 180d).

This statement supports the position that Socrates expresses his meaning outright in his discourse.

A similar remark is made in the *Protagoras* (316d), this time by the great sophist after whom the dialogue is named. This is the passage in which Protagoras asserts that his ancient predecessors "adopted a disguise and worked under cover" to "escape malice." He says that "some used poetry as a screen, for instance Homer, Hesiod and Simonides; others used religious rites and prophesy, like Orpheus . . . " while others still used "physical training" and "music." In the end, he concluded, their efforts failed and they were discovered, arousing even more hostility than they otherwise might have when everyone found out that the deceivers were "unprincipled rogues" in addition to their other faults. Protagoras declares that admission and confession is a better precaution than the denial and deception. He adds as an aside, "I have devised other precautions as well, so that, if heaven will forgive the boast, I come to no harm through being a confessed Sophist." The statements in this passage make us wonder if it wasn't the mnemonic techniques themselves that the ancients were hiding. As to what the "other precautions" were, it seems clear from Protagoras' comments that the true meaning was concealed even as it was presented plainly and in a forthright way. How did these "other precautions" work so that even when the meaning was stated, most did not *attend* to it, *hear* it, *understand* or *notice* it?

A passage in the *Republic* may prove helpful in this regard. It deals with the hidden nature of the genuine object of investigation. The inquiry is concerned with hunting that which is "covert." Socrates states that what we seek is contained in the text, that it is right before our eyes, that it has been there all along, and that we simply have not been able to see it!

> Now then, Glaucon, is the time for us like huntsmen to surround the covert and keep close watch . . . It plainly must be somewhere hereabout. Keep your eyes open . . . Truly, said I, we were slackers indeed. . all the time, bless your heart, the thing apparently was tumbling about our feet from the start and yet we couldn't see it. but were most ludicrous, like people who sometimes hunt for what they hold in their hands. So we did not turn our eyes upon it, but looked off into the distance which was perhaps the reason it escaped us.
> What do you mean? He said.
> This, I replied, that it seems to me that though we were speaking of it and hearing about it all the time we did not understand ourselves or realize that we were speaking of it in a sense . . . Listen then, said I, and learn if there is anything in what I say (*Rep.* 432b-e).

Apparently, "from the start" and "all the time," the characters in the dialogues have in some "sense" been "speaking of it." So by extension, as readers, we too have been hearing about it, even though, like Socrates' companions, we may not have "understand" or "realized" it. Socrates suggests that we can "learn" about it by "listening" to see if there is anything "*in*" what he says.

What Socrates seems to be proposing in this passage from the *Republic* is that there are two different organizations of meaning in the dialogues. He describes them by using the analogy of sense perception, more specifically, of vision. There is one meaning resulting from "looking off into the distance," and another meaning that involves "turning our eyes upon it" and "seeing it."

The Figure-Ground Relationship

To help us understand what Socrates is suggesting, I propose another example from visual perception: the images of figure and ground. In the figure-ground relationship, the visual field is perceived in terms of figures, which stand out as positive in relation to a background, which is perceived as negative space. The figure-ground image shows how ambiguity creates a kind of optical illusion. Since the image is reversible, perception shifts from seeing a goblet to seeing two human faces in profile and back again. The observer can see either a goblet or two human profiles—but not both at once (fig. 8.1). At one moment, it is the goblet shape that appears as the figure—solid, substantial, and in front of the ground. The next moment, there is a shift in perception, and the two faces appear as the figures while the goblet turns into the background. The figure-ground relation creates a positive-negative sequence *without the possibility of simultaneity*.

fig. 8.1

As Jean-Paul Sartre once explained, "in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground." No one object, or group of objects is organized as either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of attention.[3] The focus of attention involves a perception of discontinuity between that which we notice and that which we ignore. Without this capacity to distinguish, it would not be possible to differentiate any figure from its surrounding ground. Making distinctions involves drawing boundaries, which appear to belong to the figure, while the background seems to be a formless, undifferentiated totality that recedes into the distance. Boundaries are dividing lines that limit attention by separating the relevant and positive (figure) from the unlimited, irrelevant, and negative (ground). The positive-negative sequence in the reversible figure-ground image demonstrates how the perceiver groups items that seem relevant into bounded figures which lift themselves off in isolation from the totality which, seeming irrelevant, does not claim attention and recedes back into the visual field.

Socrates seems to be suggesting that what it takes to see the covert is a sudden shift of focus that realigns perception so that the organization that was at first perceived as positive becomes the negative ground and what was once the negative background—and in a sense hidden—moves to the forefront. What is involved is a kind of "initiation," a perceptual readjustment, or a different take, so that what was there from the first and all along as the backdrop moves center stage. In fact, what Socrates advises is a bit different from what Desjardins (1981: 122) advocates for interpreting what Socrates calls in the *Theaetetus*, the "secret doctrine." Her contrast is between two "levels" of meaning: the *apparent* meaning that results from a surface level reading that takes the words in a dialogue at face value; and the *real* one that results from a deeper level reading that unfolds "successive layers of meaning" to reveal "a carefully calculated structure" (1990: 83). This

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[3] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans., Hazel E. Barnes, (New York: Washington Square Books), pp. 40-44.

interpretation implies a higher and a lower. However, if the figure-ground relation serves as an analogy, what we would be talking about is something simultaneous, an apparent meaning that results when one organization seems positive and the genuine meaning that results when the alternative organization shifts from background to foreground. Now, if there are these different ways we might interpret meaning in Plato's discourse so that the exoteric doctrines are stated outright but in an ambiguous manner, so that they may be taken in more that one way, how then do we shift to the genuine meaning that grounds all these different apparent meanings?

Xenophon on Socrates' Deception

A hint comes to us from Xenophon (c. 430 to c. 354 B.C.E.), author of the *Memorabilia*, the major alternative to Plato's account of Socrates' life and trial. In one section of this work, Xenophon presents Socrates' comments on deception. When Hippias, Socrates' interlocutor, chides him for examining others and poking fun at them while at the same time, refusing to state his own opinions or to give an account of the doctrines he holds, Socrates denies that this is the case.

> "Haven't you noticed that I never cease to declare my notions of what is just?" (10)
> "And how can you call that an account?"
> "I declare them by my deeds, anyhow, if not by my words. Don't you think that deeds
> are better evidence than words?" (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV. IV. 11)

Socrates states that he always presents his own views. He says that Hippias *has not noticed* that he has been declaring his notions of the just *all along*. When Hippias demands to know how Socrates can even suggest that he has been expressing his own opinions, Socrates tells him that if his account is not his words then it can be found in his deeds. Deeds, he emphasizes, are better evidence than words. Hippias balks. He points out that Socrates does not say what justice is. He speaks only of what justice "is not."

> you are clearly endeavoring to avoid stating what you think justice to be. You are
> saying not what the just do, but what they don't do (Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV. IV.
> 11)

Thus, we learn that we need to look closely at what Socrates *does* as well as what he *says*. We also need to pay attention to what is implied indirectly about a conception by way of what it "is not." Now, this explanation falls in line with the idea of hiddenness and indirection as well as with the view of the text offered by Brumbaugh, Klein and others. It also fits in with Aristotle's explanation of the two column arrangement of contraries, where one side sets forth is "what is" while the other outlines "what is not." To take the argument a step forward, we need to understand exactly how what Socrates says connects with what he does and does not do. Said differently, we need to know the systematic rules and procedures that govern the formal structure of the composition so that we may go on to figure out

an account of the doctrine in the dialogues.

So much for the second type of esotericism.

Indeterminacy and the Unwritten Doctrines

McLuhan's famous dictum. "the medium is the message." described how the oral traditional medium of communication is the "hidden ground" that "structures and configures" the message content that in turn shapes response (McLuhan 1964: 1995: 155). To explain the third type of esotericism. we delve into issues first anticipated by Toronto theorists. McLuhan. Eisenberg. Bogdan, and Gooch. Their views fit in with both Foley's theory and my own arguments concerning the esoteric teaching. Bogdan rejected the view that cultural knowledge was preserved and transmitted via the "content of the tradition" (Bogdan 1992: 74). Gooch's idea that the genuine meaning is often "unstated within the structure of words" fits in with Foley's argument concerning the part to whole relation of the traditional style. Gooch's view that "words do not do all the work" necessary to disclose their meaning, and that "something more" must be contributed by the hearer also meshes with Foley's findings concerning the interaction of composer and audience in performances in the oral traditional style (Gooch 1996: 200-201). Eisenberg's theory of indeterminacy seems to come closest to Plato's assertion in the *Second Letter* (312a-314c) that the most profound philosophical truths cannot be put into words. which was why. Plato said. "I have never written anything about these things." Eisenberg recognized that certain aspects of reality are "ungraspable. incompleteable and inaccessible" and therefore. they cannot be contained by human words. printed or spoken. His theory implies that a part of any system is "indeterminate." so that the learners. must participate in its construction. In the case of Plato's dialogues. the ultimate principles in the highest reaches of the system are not stated outright. The course of education offered by the dialogues teaches the learner how to recreate these mental classifications and how to organize them so that the parts that are not framed in words can be generated by means of a knowledge of the system itself. In addition. Eisenberg has advocated a kind of interpretation wherein the indeterminate. "inaccessible aspects of our being are recognized and juxtaposed alongside the rational" (1992: 3). Placement of the contraries in juxtaposition (that is. in the two-column arrangement described by Aristotle). will make it easier to identify the counterbalancing topics as well as the absences in the structure.

My own view combines these observations with the added insights from Foley's extension of Parry and Lord's research.

Plato's Code: The Traditional Frames of Reference

I will bring to the study of the Platonic texts Foley's notion of oral traditions as technologies of representation. I put his findings together with Whitman's discovery that the mnemonic patterns in Homer formed the "frames within frames" characteristic of Geometric Art. Following Havelock, I refer to the formal structures that shape the discourse along geometric lines as "traditional frames of reference." My position is that the Platonic dialogues were written to preserve the educational apparatus of the philosophical branch of the ancient Greek oral tradition. I maintain that a proper reading of these texts continually shifts focus back and forth between the philosophical content of the argument that figures forth in the narrative and the repeating structures that form its stable ground. The doctrine in these writings is presented not only through what is said—the content—but through what is done in conjunction with what is said—the form—and also through what is not said explicitly, but which is implied by way of the contrary of a conception. Thus, the *exoteric* doctrine in the dialogues is expressed through *what is said and what is done*. The *esoteric* (and "unwritten"), teaching is impressed on the dialogues through *what is not said or done*. The order of the transition from one topic to another forms the contours of the geometric forms and indicates the movement through the "register" of the mnemonic. The placement of the contraries in columns makes it easier to identify the counterbalancing topics as well as the absences in the structure.

The research presented in this chapter suggests how we might devise a critical device that will make it possible for us to tap into the meanings encoded in the formulaic structures, meanings that would have been obvious to members of the cultural community that produced the tradition, but which are not so evident to outsiders. What created an insider was, of course, repeated exposure to the tradition. Immersion in the culture brought with it numerous opportunities to mentally compare different compositions organized on the lines of the same stylistic patterns. Perhaps we can simulate the exposure to repeated usages that created an initiated public by selecting one key example of a pattern, carefully following the description of it in the text, laying bare the outline of the sequence, and then going through a number of different books, looking for passages that follow the "language rules" of this one convention. The question is, what pattern should we use?

According to Aristotle's testimony in the *Metaphysics*, Socrates concentrated on the "universal definitions." Many dialogues have as a main objective the definition of a particular philosophical conception—"justice" in the *Republic*; knowledge in the *Theaetetus*; "courage" in the *Laches*; "piety" in the *Euthyphro*, and so on. Most of these attempts appear unsuccessful, for the dialogue ends without arriving at a correct definition. The exception would be the *Sophist*. In that work, Socrates turns the conversation over to the Stranger, who takes the literary characters through a number of

sequences that make up the different branches of the definition of art (τέχνη). The Stranger proclaims that this definition is complete in all its details. In the end. they all agree that they arrive at a successful definition of the sophist as classified under the imitative branch of art. Furthermore, over the course of the discussion. the main topic of conversation concerns the issue of deception in philosophy.

I propose that if we work with this one (ostensibly) successful definition, isolate and set forth a number of different examples of it, see what happens when it is repeated in different settings, look for what remains constant and what is variable in each instance, then we might begin to recognize the system and doctrines. As we come to recognize the regularities that accompany this particular definition and the "field of discourse" associated with it. perhaps we will begin to pick up on some of the background meaning encoded by the traditional frames of reference.

Our purpose in laying out numerous instances of the same sequence is twofold. On the one hand. we will be seeking to prove that there is an identical pattern that recurs in every dialogue in Plato's collection as well as in other ancients texts that have been dated to the same time span. This will show that every work participates in the same oral traditional philosophical system. On the other hand. we will be attempting, through repeated presentations of the same structure. to tune into the cultural meanings that would have been apprehended by an initiated audience. In trying to recreate the experience that came with repeated exposure to the techniques and conventions of this medium. we will be interested not only in each particular realization of the pattern. but in the traditional context to which any single version institutionally refers. Learning to be receptive to this medium will involve "decoding the signals that the poet [or in the case of Plato, the philosopher] and audience used to negotiate meaning" (Foley 1999: 92). As we begin to shift focus to the stable ground that forms the traditional frames of reference. we should start to be able to recognize where parts of the structure are missing. I intend to show that this understanding leads. indirectly. to the "unwritten doctrines" of the traditional system.

The primary purpose of the upcoming chapters will be to spell out this conception of the esoteric doctrines in detail and to articulate and make explicit this one key example of a definition that is consistent across the Platonic canon and in several other ancient texts. It must be understood that this recurring structure represents only one portion of the total system. In the course of unfolding the variations on the theme of art. we will be able to catch a glimpse of other parts of the pattern in all their complexity and exactitude. As we proceed. I shall point out numerous statements concerning the "unwritten doctrines" (the principles of the idea-numbers: of fire. air. water. and earth; the great and small: and the intermediates) and by way of this example. offer an explanation of how the "unwritten" teaching may be "figured out" of the text.

To say it again briefly, the conception underlying the present study is that the dialogues are the written record of a course of education *in the philosophy* of a non-literate culture that had devised a complex system for storing in living memory the great discourses that functioned as the system of education in the tradition. It was a course of education in philosophy because the dialogues were composed in a way that required learners to develop abstract thinking skills. To ascend to the loftiest reaches of the system, learners had to reflect on the material presented in the discourses from a rational and critical perspective, and then reorganize it in a new way to gasp in their own minds the ultimate principles which can never be captured in plain language.

We move on with the investigation. In upcoming chapters, we will attend to the mysteries of Socrates' art as we go about unraveling the esoteric system and doctrines. In the chapters that follow, we will begin to expose some of the rules of the traditional system that gives shape to these philosophical discourses in the oral style, rules that would have been used by both a wider public, and by more select, private audiences, to decode the meaning embedded in these compositions.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DEFINITION

The passages that have been central to the debate concerning Plato's views of poetry, sophistry, writing, and deception in philosophy will be the focus of the next three chapters. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the *Sophist*, concentrating especially on the statements in the dialogue that offer instruction concerning the divisions of imitation (μίμησις) in relation to the other classes in the definition of "art" or "technique" (τέχνη). In the next chapter, I consider the critiques of writing in the *Phaedrus*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Seventh Letter*, the comments concerning poetry in the *Republic*, and the discussion concerning the readmission of the poets in the *Laws*. I will show that all *these passages conform to an identical pattern*. Then, I will demonstrate that different versions of this same sequence turn up in all of Plato's dialogues, in works credited to two other ancient Greek writers, and then finally, in the primary texts of two other philosophical and religious traditions.

In this, ninth chapter, we identify the key topics in the definition of τέχνη in the *Sophist*, highlighting the connections between the different sequences that make up in this "many-sided" definition. There are six main reasons why we take the definition in this book as the centerpiece of our reconstruction. First, the *Sophist* is one of the only dialogues in which the literary characters agree that they have arrived at a successful definition (*Soph.* 268c-d), one that is "comprehensive" in all its details (*Soph.* 235c). Second, the Stranger from Elea lays out the branch of the definition concerned with imitation in a clear, explicit and straightforward manner, and by way of direct statements. Therefore, when we find passages in this and other works where the topics of this same sequence are present in the discourse as a latent, underlying structure, we may be certain that this pattern is not accidental. Third, the parts of the definition are set forth in what the author of the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* referred to as the "lean" style—where there has been relatively little elaboration on the basic type. This compressed presentation makes it easier to identify the formulaic patterns of organization. Fourth, these passages in the *Sophist* have been linked in the history of interpretation to the banishment of the poets. They contain an extended critique of the sophists, and they have also been connected to the denouncement of writing through the occurrences of the terms art (τέχνη), imitation (μίμησις), images (εἰκόνες), imagination (εἰκασία), and phantasy (φαντασία). Fifth, this dialogue provides explicit directions for positioning the lines that divide the definition into an ordered sequence of spaces, making it one of the few passages in the collection to provide this instruction. I will argue that these divisions serve as the frames of reference (which separate the topics into different places, creating what Foley called the "slots" or "indexes") in this portion of Plato's mnemonic system. Sixth,

and finally, this dialogue also contains a number of comments that tally with Aristotle's description of Plato's doctrines. For all these reasons, we focus on the *Sophist*. We will use the structure and sequence we uncover in this book as the "master pattern," "template," or "guide to reception" in our search for the doctrines and oral traditional patterns in other books. In other words, the definition in this dialogue will provide the benchmark, or "standard of correctness" (*Laws* 811a-e) that will allow us to identify and measure the accuracy of all the different variations on this theme in other works.

Once the parts of the definition have been distinguished, I will consider, in Chapter Eleven, the *Phaedrus*, the *Protagoras*, the *Seventh Letter*, the *Republic*, and then the *Laws*. This section of the analysis will show that these passages are all structured in a formulaic sequence—or code—that conforms to the order of the divisions or categories of the definition in the *Sophist* when the topic under discussion concerns either poetry, sophistry, writing, or deception. In Chapter Twelve, I will demonstrate that this formula type—or sections of it—may be found in every dialogue in the Platonic canon. Chapter Thirteen will confirm the presence of this pattern in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Chapter Fourteen will identify the sequence in the *Chuang Tzu*, and in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament.

Conventions

Before proceeding, a few words of reminder are in order concerning the conventions I use to highlight different aspects of this technology. I have suggested that the discourse uses hiddenness and indirection which I see as working along the lines of a figure-ground relationship. This means that the patterns can be difficult to pick out, especially when they are intermingled with lengthy sections of prose. To foreground the structures, I have used bold-faced capital letters as the device for distinguishing the different strands of the definition. I use upper and lower case bold-faced letters to set off key words and phrases that hold a place in the imitative branch of the theme. Where other strands of the definition of art are combined with the paragon sequence, I designate these phrases by using regular italics. I also use italics to emphasize statements that are crucial to the hypotheses in this study. Gaps in the pattern are designated by a square bracket [ ]. Where I fill in a blank with an expression that is not established by express statement in the text, but is given indirectly, I enclose it within the square bracket as well. As we begin to build up the unwritten doctrines by putting together two parts [ ] that are not given by express statement in the discourse, I indicate this with parentheses { }.

In the *Second Letter*, Plato states that the process of learning this philosophy involved committing the dialogues to memory, "holding" them "in mind," and subjecting them to all sorts of "tests" to reason out the unwritten teaching. These compositions were meant to be "recited repeatedly"

and "listened to frequently for many years" until the "doctrines were refined at length, like gold, with prolonged labor" *(Ltr. II* 314a-b). A process meant to be carried out in one's head is hard to put down on paper. I am especially aware that recording my own thinking requires many pages of text to explain the condensed statements in Plato's writings. At each stage, the method of collection and division involves reiterating material presented previously and then adding, as they come up, new ideas to the list in the correct order. To the literate mind, the repetitions needed to learn and keep track of the relationships among ideas may seem digressive, convoluted—sometimes tiresome. In addition, generating the unwritten doctrines often involves reasoning out the intelligible portions of the system by extrapolating from their analogous visible counterparts. Doing this entails projecting the less known material from the more well known by molding the unwritten portions of this teaching after the pattern of that which is written. Said differently, expanding or extending ones's knowledge into the intelligible regions involves assuming that the unwritten is the original pattern and that the written is an "imitation" of it; or more accurately, that the written doctrines "participate" in the original pattern which is unwritten. It is by modeling the one upon the other that the doctrines of the "refined and subtle" teaching are built up. Just as the role of imitation is key to the creation, use and survival of formulas in the poetic diction, so too participation, analogy, polarity, and symmetry are crucial to the generation of the philosophical doctrines. Further, the "ideal" form of each definition is in some sense a compilation of all the ideas that appear in all the different versions of it; or conversely, just as every speech act selects and actualizes a small portion of the total language, so each dialogue is a philosophical "performance" that draws from and realizes aspects of the total field of discourse. With that caveat, let us now turn to the *Sophist.*

Interpreting the *Sophist*

The *Sophist* is widely held to be a late work. We expect therefore, that a number of studies would have looked to this dialogue for insights into the changes Plato made to his doctrine toward the end of his life. Yet, we find that the *Sophist* has not received the same kind of attention as other works in the collection.[1] Even those studies that have dealt with this book have tended to pass quickly over the

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[1] Seth Benardete, *The Being of the Beautiful: Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist and Statesman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Richard Bluck, *Plato's Sophist: A Commentary*, ed., Gordon C. Neal (Manchester: University Press, 1975); Frances M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1935); William De Vries, "On Sophist 255b-c," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 5 (1988): 385-94; James Duerlinger, "The Ontology of Plato's *Sophist*: The Problems of Falsehood, Non-Being, and Being," *The Modern Schoolman* 65 (1988): 151-84; A. Gomez-Lobo, "Plato's Description of Dialectic in the *Sophist* 253d1-c2," *Phronesis* 22 (1977): 29-47; Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, trans., Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (1924-25; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,

definitions in order to concentrate on the section of the dialogue that explains the nature of "not-being." This is surprising for a number of reasons. First. the dialogue consists almost wholly of a geometric procedure that involves drawing lines that separate abstract conceptions into different classifications. Further. this technique has all the features of the system that Aristotle attributed to the Pythagoreans but which scholars such as Burnet (1912: 291-2) have found totally perplexing.[?] Since there is. in addition. an extensive discussion of deception in philosophy (through the example of the sophist). as well as falsity in discourse. it might be a good place to look for clues concerning the secret doctrine.

On second thought. perhaps it is not so surprising that this dialogue has not received the kind of consideration it seems to warrant. For the entire book consists of instruction in the method of dialectic (or alternatively. definition). This teaching entails numerous divisions involving seemingly insignificant or obscure topics. As far as I know. no convincing explanation of the *purpose of this method* has been offered by interpreters. Remember that for centuries. major Platonists in the tradition were stymied because they could not see any use for dialectic (Morrow and Dillon 1987: 9). Even in our own time. scholars tend to sympathize with the view expressed by Stanley Rosen who

> doubt[s] the adequacy of those interpretations that see the dialogue as a technical exercise in definition. It would be more accurate to take the dialogue as a demonstration of the inappropriateness of diaeresis to the study of human affairs (1995: 2).

The position taken here is. of course. diametrically opposed to Rosen's perspective. I view the demonstration of the method as a straightforward instruction in the technique of definition. and I see the purpose of this exercise as offering an education in the classifications that make up the most basic level of the mnemonic. More specifically. my argument will be that the teaching in this dialogue both advocates and demonstrates the use of the kind of memory system described by Yates (after Quintilian). that emphasized division and orderly arrangement of topics over the use of phantastic

1997): Jacob Klein. *Plato's Trilogy: Theaetetus. the Sophist and the Statesman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1977): E.N. Lee. "Plato on Negation and Not-Being in the *Sophist. Philosophical Review* 81 (1972): 267-304: Beryl Logan. "Philosophy and Sophistry: Plato's *Sophist." Eidos* 6 (1987): 7-19: G.E.L. Owen. "Plato on Not-Being." *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Vol. 1. edited by Gregory Vlastos (Garden City: Doubleday and Co.. 1971). pp. 223-67: W.J. Prior. "Plato's Analysis of Being and Not-Being in the *Sophist (The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 18 (1980): 199-211: Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1983): John Sallis, *Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue* (Atlantic Highlands. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1986): A.E. Taylor. *Plato: The Sophist and the Statesman* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons. 1961): Gregory Vlastos. "An Ambiguity in the *Sophist." Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1981): 270-332.

[?] For example. notions such as "opinion" and "knowledge" are "separated" from other philosophical conceptions and designated to particular "regions." some of which are "above" and some "below." some to the "right" or "left" of others.

images. In fact. I see the *Sophist* as offering instruction in dialectic and as presenting, at the same time, an extended polemic against the branch of the tradition that used deceptive images.

More likely than not, the mnemonic purpose of the method was not understood once the oral tradition was forgotten. It is possible that our lack of awareness of the historical context in which these books came together has clouded our own understanding of the dialogues. Now that we have dated the composition of these texts and we have amended the theory, we should be able to understand the mnemonic purpose of dialectic, making it possible for us to render comprehensible much that has remained obscure about the method and the descriptions of it that have come down to us through history.

The Opening Sequence

The *Sophist* opens with the mathematician, Theodorus, extending a greeting to Socrates. Theodorus' student, Theaetetus, is present, as is Young Socrates, the namesake of the dialogues' tragic hero. Theodorus mentions that they have all kept the appointment made on the previous day and further, they have brought a guest, a native of Elea, a follower of Parmenides and Zeno, and a devotee of philosophy. After some discussion, Theaetetus agrees to be questioned by the Stranger, adding that if the going gets too heavy, he will call on Young Socrates, who is of an age with him, and with whom he works out the answers to most questions.

In this opening sequence, the dialogue appears to explicitly situate itself between the *Theaetetus* and the *Statesman*, for at the closing of the *Theaetetus*, Socrates suggests, "But tomorrow morning, Theodorus, let us meet here again" (*Tht.* 210d). He then took leave of his companions to be officially informed of the charges that will lead to his execution. After the *Sophist*, the conversation appears to continue uninterrupted in the *Statesman*. Thus, it would make sense that the dramatic date of the *Apology* (in which Socrates responds to the charges), would come after these three works. In fact, these introductory statements suggest that the dialogues were supposed to be read in the following order: the *Theaetetus*, followed immediately by the *Sophist*, and then the *Statesman*, after which came the *Apology*. There are, however, problems with this sequence. First, the comments concerning Zeno and Parmenides in the opening passages of the *Sophist* as well as a reference at 217c which discusses the nature of "existence" and "that which is not existence," suggest that the *Parmenides* figures into this picture as well but the question is where. Second, even though the introduction in the *Sophist*

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³ The latter dialogue does in fact involve a conversation between Socrates, Zeno and Parmenides. Recall from Chapter Seven that this is the book that begins with Cephalus coming to Athens to hear Antiphon recite the conversation Zeno once had with Socrates and Parmenides (126c). Despite these links,

appears to refer back to the *Theaetetus*, it does not contain any other references to this supposedly earlier work. More puzzling still are the discrepancies that prevent the formation of direct connections between the two.[4] Third, in the *Statesman*, which does have definite and accurate links with the *Sophist*, Socrates begins by thanking Theodorus for his "introduction to Theaetetus and our guest from Elea" (257a). If Plato wrote the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* as a trilogy, it seems strange that the third dialogue in the sequence has Socrates express gratitude for this introduction, as though he had only just met the Stranger and the young mathematician, even though he was introduced to Theaetetus previously, and they carried on the entire dialogue in the *Theaetetus*. Here then, we have examples of the kinds of discrepancies that make it difficult to establish either a literary or a chronological sequence based on the information given in the text.

Trying to make sense of these anomalies and inconsistencies by way of the explanations typically offered for these kinds of problems over the history of interpretation is difficult.[5] However,

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however, the dramatic date of its narration is long after the date the conversation took place, creating a literary distance that makes it difficult to place the *Parmenides* relative to these other dialogues.

[4] The *Theaetetus* opens in Megara with a conversation between Euclides and Terpsion. Theaetetus is dying from wounds he received in battle and from a sickness that broke out among the army. Socrates has been dead for years. Euclides reads the conversation from notes he made from Socrates' description of his discussion with Theodorus and the young Theaetetus. Thus, the opening sequence dates the conversational setting of the supposedly earlier *Theaetetus* to a later time period than that of the *Sophist*. As well, in the *Theaetetus*, there is no sign of Young Socrates who is present as a silent listener throughout the *Sophist*. This presence would not be a difficulty, if Theodorus did not make so much of introducing the Stranger as the *only new guest* in the *Sophist*.

[5] Seeing them as a consequence of development sheds no further light on them. They do not appear to be attributable to the evolution of the author's thought, because they do not involve philosophical doctrines that would have been changed or refined as Plato grew older. Even if Plato composed these three works out of dramatic sequence at different stages of his life, surely he would have been able to smooth over imperfections such as these by referring to one work when writing the other. Nor is it reasonable to see these anomalies as the result of a more primitive stage of human development. These are simple discrepancies of detail. They are not the sort of errors that become understandable when viewed as unintentional reflections of the author's immersion in a primitive culture that was not mature enough for scientific thought. It seems implausible that an author of the caliber of Plato would have failed to notice these small difficulties even as he composed the *Sophist*, with its extended discussion on the nature of inconsistency which includes the first definition of it in the history of philosophy (230b-c). Nor do the mistakes become understandable as a reflection of an intentional strategy on Plato's part, for they are not the kind of difficulties that become comprehensible when seen as being present for a reason of which the author was fully conscious. These are not the kind of errors that would serve a pedagogical purpose, hint of a secret doctrine, or offer clues to some other hidden meaning. Nor are they explainable as a consequence of the fact that the foundational tenets of the philosophy did not make it into these writings, and may only have been revealed to members of Plato's Academy. These inconsistencies *would* be explainable if one or more of these dialogues were not the legitimate works of Plato but were written instead by an anonymous author without access to the authentic works. Now, this explanation has some plausibility given that we know that a number of works that have come down from antiquity with the corpus were not written by Plato. Yet, these dialogues are among those

it is easy to understand them as a consequence of the traditional style of composition. According to the theory of oral traditions, errors and irregularities in detail that are hard to accept as having been made by a single author are precisely the sort of anomalies that can be explained as having come about when the composer fashioned his composition from traditional material. Also. unlike books created by an individual author. works from the collected literature of a tradition do not fall into a chronological sequence.[6] Finally. as I will suggest. we should not be surprised to find that the traditional system itself is the underlying factor that governs the relation of one dialogue to another.

The Topics of Discussion

After Theodorus introduces the Stranger. Socrates asks him whether the guest is an ordinary one or whether he is some "god." Is he **what he appears to be** or is he **not what he appears to be**? Is he such as Homer records (*Odyssey*. XVII. 485-487). the **god** that attends the departure of "**men of mercy and justice**. and not least among them the **god of strangers** who comes to signal the **orderly** or **lawless** doings of mankind?" With this question. Socrates invites us to think about whether there is any connection between the Stranger. his god. and his teachings. and the fact that Socrates is about to be charged with "criminal meddling" (*Ap.* 19b) and sentenced to death for corrupting the youth with false teachings about the gods and for introducing new gods into Greece. Here then. we may have an instance of Platonic irony. where readers recognize that the discussion presages Socrates' condemnation and "departure." whereas "the *persona* Socrates cannot be in a position to comprehend this within the dialogue itself" (Gooch 1987: 194).

Socrates continues. Has the Stranger from Elea come. he asks. with the intention of exposing their inadequacies in "**philosophical discourse**. like a very spirit of *refutation*?" Theodorus assures Socrates that the Stranger is not one of those individuals who devote themselves to mere "*verbal dispute*." Nor is he a **god**—although there is something of the **divine** about him. He adds that he would refer to any "**philosopher** as **divine**." In reply. Socrates remarks that it is difficult to distinguish "**philosophers** from **gods**." Apparently. he does not agree with Theodorus that **philosophers are divine**. Such "**humans**." he says as are "**genuine** not **sham philosophers**." as they *move from one city to the next*. surveying "*from a height*. the life *beneath* them." **appear** to "**wear all sorts of shapes**." but this is only due to the world's "*blindness*" or "**ignorance**." Sometimes *philosophers* may give people the impression that they are "*simply mad*." To some they seem to be of "*no worth*." to others.

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that have always been regarded as the authentic works of Plato.

[6] This is like asking. for example. for the order in which children's nursery rhymes were written, or for the chronology of the fairy tales.

to be "*worth everything.*" Sometimes they "**appear disguised**" as "**statesmen.**" and sometimes as "**sophists**" (216c-d). Once we recognize the sequences. we will see that Socrates has just identified the Stranger as a "**genuine** not a **sham philosopher.**" Further. in these opening remarks, he has named a sequence of notions (highlighted in bold-face and italic lettering). in terms of various polarities. The nature of these topics suggests that the main focus of concern will involve the differences that separate what is **real** from those things that have a lesser degree of **reality**. There is also the question of the correct point of view for seeing beyond deceptive impressions. There is the related issue of discerning what is **constant** behind many **shapes** and **guises**. In addition. there is the implication that the **real philosopher** will seem (to those who have the wrong impression, who are **ignorant**, or who are **blind** to the **true reality** behind the **false appearance**), to be either the **sophist** or the **statesman**.

Socrates asks the Stranger how they use the "names" **sophist, statesman,** and **philosopher** in his country. Do the people in his native land think of them as belonging: to one single type: to two types: or to three different types with one of the corresponding names attached to each one? Even though Socrates has mentioned that it is difficult to distinguish **gods** from **philosophers, divine** beings are not included in his list. The Stranger replies that the **philosopher, statesman,** and **sophist** are **three** distinct types. After a further brief exchange. Socrates withdraws and remains silent for the duration of the dialogue. In turning over the role of chief interlocutor to the Stranger from Elea, Plato's Socrates signals by his absence that the philosophy described in this dialogue is not his own teaching but rather. the teaching of the Stranger.

Starting Point

The Stranger and Theaetetus embark on their "joint inquiry." The man from Elea selects a starting point:

> We had better. I think. begin by studying the **Sophist** and try to bring his nature to light
> in a clear *formula* (218b-c).

The point of departure and the ultimate goal of the exercise will be to discover the definition for the **sophist**. Shedding light on the **sophist,** he warns will be an arduous undertaking.

The Ancient Rule of Method

Let us begin. suggests the Stranger. with a practice "round" on something **small** and easy in preparation for the **great** thing itself. He says they should follow a long established "rule" of method. He explains that the procedure they will use is an ancient one to which "everyone has agreed long ago." Theaetetus goes along with the Stranger when he proposes that they "work out some **lesser** example,

which will be a pattern of the **greater**" (218d). Wait! We have just found one explicit remark concerning the **great** and **small**. Indeed, this comment is more than just a casual hint. It is a statement explaining that the **great** and **small** have to do with a "rule" of method whereby a study is made of something that is not very significant as a form of preparation for an inquiry into those matters that are much more important. Further, the "ancient rule" involves the use of analogical argument.

A passage in the *Statesman* (278c. 286a) provides a more comprehensive description of this technique. In that work, the aim is to train learners to grasp the highest class of existents. We are told straight out that this lofty class "has no *visible* embodiment." It can only be apprehended by reason. This description fits in with the explanation of the two types of classes—the *visible* and *intelligible* as descendants of the **great** and **small**—that Socrates described in the central sections of the *Republic.* In the *Statesman,* the Stranger adds that it is easier to practice on **lesser** objects that are *visible* and have a *body* than on objects of the highest value. Thus. the case of the thing that is *visible* will serve as the pattern for that which is only *reasonable.* This method involves identifying a factor in a little known object (i.e., that which *is not visible* and *is not embodied*), that is identical with a factor in a well known object (which is *visible* and does have a *body*), and which comes from a completely different sphere of life. This common factor in each object will serve as the basis of a parallel examination of them both, making it possible to achieve a single true judgment about each of them as forming one of a pair (*Stsmn.* 278c). This is exactly the procedure used in all versions of the place mnemonic. Thus, the technique assumes that there is a *symmetrical relation* between **lesser** and **greater**, a one-to-one correspondence with respect to some common feature such as size. shape. or relative position. Since, we know that "analogy" (ἀνάλογος) refers to a line of reasoning that makes an inference according to a proportionate calculation (a:b::c:d), the task ahead will involve getting hold of a true judgment about the **lesser** thing that is a particular instance of something more general (*Stsmn.* 278c). Then, it will be possible to pass from this **smaller** example to the comprehension of something **greater**, the truth of which is believed to follow from it based on a quantifiable proportional relation. The Stranger proposes the example of the *angler* as preparation for the **sophist**. He assures his companions that the example of this *pair* will move them toward the "definition and line of inquiry which we want" (219a). Theaetetus agrees.

Question

The Stranger asks a question concerning the *angler*.

> Let us begin by asking whether he is a man having **art** (τεχνίτην) or not having **art** (ἄτεχνον). but some other *power* (219a).

His query involves a dichotomy. Does the *fisherman* have an **art** (τέχνη), or does he not have an **art** (ἄτεχνον)? Does the type known as the *angler* possess a craft, technique, skill or some other method that involves systematic rules? Or does *angling* involve some *power* (δύναμιν) other than **art**? Since the *angler* is the **smaller** instance of something [   ] which is **greater**, this will serve as preparation for the question of whether or not the **sophist** has an **art**. Notice what the Stranger is doing. He takes **art** as the "common factor" in this investigation involving the **great and small**. Then he starts dividing

Division

He says that **art** may be separated into two kinds (219b). However, he goes on to distinguish a succession of three topics and not just two: first, *agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures*; second, the *molding of vessels and the use of tools*; and third, the **art of imitation**. He adds that the thing that is brought into existence is "*produced.*" The person who brings into existence something that did not exist before is called a "*producer.*" These things are said to be characterized by the "*power of producing.*" He has therefore distinguished three types that are gathered together under the rubric, **productive art**. First, there is the *product* or object that is *produced*; second, there is the *producer* who does the creating; and then third, there is the **art** or *power* of *producing* itself. This third thing involves the capacity or ability to act so as to create an effect. While the Stranger gives us the three topics and three aspects of **production**, he does not say whether he has listed them in any particular order.[7]

He says that **productive art** is followed in a series by the entire topic of *learning* and *acquiring knowledge*, then by *money making*, and after that, *fighting* and *hunting*. The *learning, money making*, and *hunting* classes are not creative, he explains, for they have to do with either conquering (by **words** or by **actions**), things that exist because they have already been **produced**, or with preventing others from conquering them. The Stranger goes on to say that all these non-productive kinds are collected together under the *acquisitive* topic. Thus, the first division creates two branches of **art**. One is named the **productive**, and the other is called *acquisitive* (which "is not" **productive**). The latter branch contains further subdivisions within it, namely: *learning* and *acquiring knowledge, money making, fighting*, and *hunting*.

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[7] For further elaboration, see also *Rep.* 477c-d, where four factors are identified: the object, the state (or affection); the power; and the cause.

The Branches of Art (Τέχνη)

In making a number of successive attempts to find the best formula for **sophist**, the Stranger will delineate different strands of the definition of **art** (τέχνη). Initially, he seeks to identify the **sophist** by way of *acquisition* (first, through the example of the *angler*, 216a-220e; second, by the definition of the *hunter*, 219b-223a; third, in terms of the pattern for the *merchant of learning*, 223c-224c; fourth, through the *retail dealer of the same wares*, 224d-e; and fifth, by way of the *athlete in debate*, 225a-225e. The sixth sequence is concerned with [a kind that is open to doubt] involving *medicine* and *purification*, 226b-231c. Following that, there is a reckoning. This summation lists a sequence that was not mentioned explicitly but which can be worked out by the learner, 231c-232a. Then the Stranger appears to backtrack to the topic of *controversy* from the *athlete in debate* sequence, 232b-234c. However, since new information is added, this may be a separate definition. The next series of divisions concerns the **art** of **image making**, which moves through an extended passage on the nature of that which "is not" and culminates in the discovery of the **philosopher**. The Stranger then backtracks once again to **production** and carefully delineates the lines that distinguish the topics in the definition of **imitation**. This final, seventh series incorporates the divisions of **images** from the previous sequence. *An outline of all these different definitions may be found at the end of this chapter.* Though scholars have often dismissed these lists of divisions as nonsense, we will not be so easily deterred. That the branches that make up the definition of art (τέχνη) reflect a tradition of philosophy may be confirmed by comparison with an extent fragment credited to Solon which has been dated to 600 B.C.E. (nearly two centuries before the *Sophist* is believed to have been written down). The arts mentioned by Solon include *angling*; *agriculture*; smithing (i.e., *molding vessels and the use of tools*); forcible constraint (*conquest*); the *acquisition* of wealth (*exchange*); *learning* involving those who are *gifted*; poetry, *medicine* (which entails [health], *disease*, and various *remedies*); and prophesy.[8] A "prolonged acquaintance" with the order and arrangement of these sequences will, it turns out, pave the way into the interconnected system of definitions that make up this mnemonic technology, and to an understanding of the doctrines about them. Even so, an in-depth commentary on all these divisions would make for a very lengthy study indeed! Still, we cannot proceed to the paragon strand of the definition set forth at the end of this dialogue without first drawing attention to certain key distinctions associated with *acquisition*. When we come to the last definition and move on to the versions of it in

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[8] See the translation and commentary in David Roochnik, *Of Art and Wisdom: Plato's Understanding of Techne* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996), pp. 27-33. Roochnik also notes the division into "**production** and *acquisition*" and points out that the latter three—**poetry**, *medicine*, and prophecy—are described by Homer as "*gifts* of the **gods**."

other works. we will find that there are a number of links between the classes designated to *acquisition* and those that are classified under **production**. Moreover. a main hypothesis of this study is that the dialogues are all written by way of a traditional *system*. For there to be a system, each topic in a dialogue must be connected to other places specified in the same work. and to divisions in other books, through a regular set of relations (in this case, by an **art**. method, or technique that involves consistent rules). We need to specify the divisions of *acquisition*. Then, we can show how the *acquisitive* sequences are woven together with the classifications of **production** at the end of the *Sophist* so as to create the philosophical discourse in this dialogue, in other dialogues, and in other ancient texts.

A.   THE ANGLER

The First Sequence. The definition of the *angler* (*Soph.* 216a-220e) establishes that *acquisition* is cut into *exchange* and *conquest* (219b-c). *Conquest* is separated into *fighting* and *hunting* (219d). The latter is divided into two: one sort that *hunts* for *lifeless* things, and the other that seeks *living animals* (219e). After that. *living animal hunting* is distinguished into *land* and *water*. *Water animals*, or those that *swim*, are separated into *winged* (*fowling*), and *water* (*fishing*) [220a]. *Fishing* is partitioned further into a kind that captures the quarry with *nets*, and another that takes them by a *blow*. *Netting* involves surrounding the prey by an *enclosure* (220c). Taking them by *blow*, also called *striking*, is divided into *firing* (by night), and *barbing* (which takes place in the daytime). *Barbing* entails the use of *hooks* or *prongs* that concentrate on the head and mouth, with the goal of *drawing the captive upward from below*. At the end of this sequence, the Stranger retraces the series in the same order in which he made the divisions, mentioning at each stage only the second half of each dyad—the part that was subdivided further—while neglecting to mention the first part of each pair that he set aside. He says:

> One half of all art was *acquisitive*—half of the *acquisitive* art was *conquest* or taking by *force*, half of this was *hunting*, and half of *hunting* was *hunting animals*; half of this was *hunting water animals*; of this again the under half was *fishing*; half of *fishing* was *striking*; a part of *striking* was *fishing* with a *barb*, and one half of this again, being the kind which *strikes with a hook* and draws *the fish from below upward*, is the **art** which we have been seeking, and which from the nature of the operation is denoted *angling* or drawing up (221b-c).

Notice that the Stranger repeatedly states that he is dividing by halves at each phase. Furthermore, he says that *fishing* is the "under half" of *hunting water animals*. These statements let us know that the place concerned with *hunting swimming animals* is divided horizontally into two equal parts, *winged* and *water*. It is also worth noting that this sequence recurs in greater deal in the early passages of the *Statesman* (264b-266a), thereby establishing a direct link between the *Sophist* and this other book.

Next, the Stranger announces that they will "follow this pattern" in their "endeavor to find out what a sophist is."

Question: Does the Sophist Have an Art (Τέχνη)?

He asks, "Does the sophist have an art? He adds that the relation between the *angler* and *sophist* is that "both appear to be **hunters**" (221d).

I.   THE HUNTER

The Second Sequence. This second series (which he says marks the first direct attempt to find the **sophist**), at first follows the same sequential order as the model for the *angler*. However, when the Stranger gets to the place concerned with *hunting for animals*, he says that the *fisherman* and the **sophist** part company. Whereas the angler goes to *water*, the **sophist** goes to "*land* and *water of another sort*—*rivers of wealth and broad meadowlands of generous youth, and he is also intending to take the animals which are in them*" (222a). Thus, in the **lesser** example of the *angler*, *land* and *water* are *visible* and tangible. This *visible pair* have as their **greater** counterparts "*land* and *water of another sort*" in the example of the *hunter*. Though we cannot be certain at this stage, this other kind of "*land* and *water*" is probably located in the *intelligible* realm. If so, it may refer to two of the four elements of nature (i.e., *earth, water,* [fire], and [air]) that Aristotle described.

The Stranger continues with the next step. *Land animals* are separated into *tame* (which includes *humans*), and *wild* (222b). After that, *tame animal hunting* (the part of the pair that he mentioned first) is divided into capture by *force* (which includes in its inventory *piracy, manstealing, tyranny,* the *military art* and other forms of *violence*), and *persuasion*—involving *popular orators, lawyers,* and *conversation*. At this point, the Stranger changes his usual course. Instead of continuing to subdivide the second part of the pair (*wild*), he switches to the part he mentioned first (*tame*). He divides this *tame (human)* class further instead of setting it aside. After that, *persuasion* is divided into **private** and **public**. Again, we find that this sequence is spelled out in greater detail and complexity in the *Statesman* (261b-266a). However, if we confine ourselves to the material given here in the *Sophist,* and if we put the *angler* and *hunter* sequences together, it looks like the order and arrangement of the series is that *living* (as opposed to *lifeless*) things are divided into *plants* and *animals* (which would appear to have something to do with *agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures*). *Animals* are distinguished into *water* and *land*. *Water* includes *fish* and *fowl*, whereas *land* entails *wild* and *tame* (including *humans*). *Tame* is then divided into *violence* and *persuasion*. *Persuasion* is cut into **private** and **public** (222d). He says that **private** *hunting* may be partitioned into

a kind that *receives hire* and another that *gives gifts* The Stranger also says that a part of the *gift*

giving **private** sort has to do with the way that *lovers hunt* their intended by offering *gifts* as

inducements. In contrast, two sorts are identified with the *hireling*. One baits his *hook* only with

pleasure: he possesses an **art** of *flattery*, which involves "making things pleasant." The second kind

of *hireling* includes those who "profess" to form relationships with others for the sake of *virtue*, even

though they demand at the same time a *monetary reward*. **Sophists** are categorized with this latter

group, for they have only a **semblance** of *education*. When retracing the route of this sequence, the

Stranger reviews the divisions in the order in which they were identified. The series is as follows:

acquisitive, hunts animals, living, land, tame, hunts humans, in *private,* for *hire,* a **semblance** of

education, reaching, in the end, **sophistry,** described as "a *hunt* after young men of wealth and rank"

(223b). Next, the Eleatic man moves on to "another branch" of the "great and many-sided **art**" (223c).

II.   THE MERCHANT OF LEARNING

The Third Sequence. Having outlined the pattern for the *angler* and the *hunter,* the Stranger

moves on to the third definition, which he refers to as the second example of the **sophist**. This series

begins, as did the other two, with the division of *acquisition* into *exchange* and *hunting.* Then, the

Stranger changes course again. Whereas he previously partitioned off sections of *hunting,* in this case,

he shifts over to *exchange.* This move is significant. It informs us that the portions that were

subtracted in the two previous sequences contain further subdivisions within them. Whereas *conquest*

was cut into *fighting* and *hunting, exchange* is now separated into *giving* and *selling* (obviously related

in some way to the *giving* and *receiving* of **private** inducements described at 222e). After he divides

exchange (instead of *hunting*), he shifts attention back to the second part of the pair, *giving* and *selling.*

Instead of dividing *giving,* he proceeds to slice *selling* into the sort that *markets their own productions*

and the kind that hawks *the productions of others* (223d). The Eleatic man does not say which of these

two he divides next. Moreover, it is difficult to guess which path he takes since he has just shifted back

and forth from one side of the pair to the other. Here we have a puzzle. Since the Stranger does not

identify by express statement whether he has chosen to subdivide further *selling ones own productions*

or *selling the productions of others,* we will indicate this missing information with a square bracket

[   ]. He goes on to ask

> And is not that part of *exchange* which *takes place in the city,* being about half of the
> whole, termed *retailing*? (224d)

This is getting complicated! It is hard to know whether *retailing* is half of either *exchange of one's*

own productions or the *productions of others,* or whether it is half of all *exchange.* The Stranger then

proceeds to establish that *exchanging goods of one city for those of another* by *selling* and *buying* is called the *exchange of the merchant*. He also establishes that there are two kinds of *merchandise*: *food for the body*, and *food for the soul* (223d). The *merchant* who deals in *food for the soul* purchases *knowledge* and *travels between cities exchanging his merchandise for cash*. *Food for the soul* (which includes *music, painting* and *marionette playing)*. is separated into a **playful** kind that is strictly for **amusement** or **display**. and another. more **serious** kind [   ], which is "not less ridiculous," but involves a *trade in learning* that deals with *instruction* and *knowledge* (224a-c). There are two names for this latter kind (i.e., *trade in learning)*: first, *the sale of the knowledge of virtue*; and second, *the sale of other types of knowledge* (224c). The person who *sells a knowledge of other types of art* should be called an *art merchant*, whereas the person who *sells a knowledge of virtue* is the **sophist**.

Again. the Stranger reviews the steps of the definition. Unfortunately, he skips over the parts that we found most confusing, leaving us to figure out these missing pieces ourselves. He does add that the *knowledge of virtue* involves **speech**. Thus, he restates the divisions in the following order: *acquisition, exchange, trade, merchandise, merchandise of the soul* concerned with **speech** and the *knowledge of virtue*. Fortunately, we can see these gaps in the series and we can attempt to fill in some of them based on the order in which the Stranger marked off the divisions. Hence, the reiteration would begin with *acquisition*, and move through *exchange, [selling]*, then, either to [*selling ones own wares* or to *selling the works of others*], we cannot be sure which. After that, though, the sequence would progress on through *trade*, next to *merchandise*, then after that to *merchandise of the soul* concerned with **speech** and the *knowledge of virtue*, at which point we come to the **sophist**.

III.   RETAIL DEALER, SAME WARES

The Fourth Sequence. The Stranger points out that there may be a "third reappearance" of the **sophist** (224d), and he asks the following question. If the person who peddles a *knowledge of virtue stays in one city*, makes his *own productions* in addition to buying *those that others have made*, and if he earns his living by selling these **productions**, is he still a **sophist**? Theaetetus response is "certainly." In this instance, the Stranger then proceeds directly to the recapitulation without marking off any divisions. He recites the lineage of the **sophist**, once again equivocating on the matter of *selling self-made wares* or *selling the products made by others*. Hence, **art**, *acquisitive, exchange*, "which either *sells* a man's own **productions** or *retails* those of others, as the case may be, and in either way *sells the knowledge of virtue*, you would again term **Sophistry**?"

IV.   ATHLETE IN DEBATE, [GYMNASTICS]

The Fifth Sequence. The fourth appearance of the **sophist** starts off in an unspecified "subdivision of the *combative* or *fighting* art" (225a). Thus, we find ourselves somewhere [   ] within the *hunting* sequence (219b-d). The Stranger asserts that one division of this part of *fighting* is the *competitive* while the other is *pugnacious*. One part of *pugnacious* is not identified [   ]. He says that the other part concerns a *contest of bodily strength* involving *violence*. Mention of *violence* allows us to link this topic with the division of the *hunter* that dealt with *tame animals* by *violence* (which included the *military art*), rather than by *persuasion* (222c). The Stranger makes it clear that when the "war is one of **words**," we are concerned with *controversy*. *Controversy* may be halved into two sorts of **speeches**: one **public** and the other **private** (225b-c). In making this distinction, the Stranger connects this division to the two parts of *persuasion* in the *hunter* sequence (222d). In that previous series, we were only given information about the **private** class which was separated into *gifts* (*love*) or *hire* (*money*). Here, the Stranger defines **public** as long **speeches** on questions about *justice* and *injustice*. **Private** disputation—the kind that is "cut up" into questions and answers—is also bisected into twin parts. First, a *random* sort of **private** dispute (of the species that may be found in *contract negotiations*). This kind *involves no systematic rules of art or technique*. The second kind of **private** dispute, called *argumentation* or *eristic*, is concerned with (1) *justice* in its own nature, as well as with (2) *things in general*. This kind *proceeds by systematic rules and by way of a definite technique*. Mention of this distinction brings to our attention the fact that this dialogue is itself cut up into a question and answer format, and that the Stranger is offering instruction on a method or technique that involves some very definite—and perplexing—rules of procedure! Remember that the **private** divisions in the *hunter* sequence involved *hire, money, gifts* or *love*. Here, we are not dealing with *love* but with *war*. Accordingly, this topic in the *athlete in debate* sequence partitions *argument* into two different kinds. One *squanders money* while the other kind of *argumentation accumulates it*. The type that *fritters away cash for the pleasure of conversation* that is *unpleasant to listeners* is called *loquacity*. This kind that is *unpleasant* to the listener seems directly opposed to *flattery* in the *hunter* sequence (223a), which captivates by bringing *pleasure* to the listener. The Eleatic Visitor goes on to say that the sort of person that *makes money out of private disputation* is the **sophist**, "who reappears again for the fourth time" (225e-226a). Notice that there must be some connection between this division and "**speech** concerned with the *knowledge of virtue*" in the *merchant of learning* definition (224d). Here, **speeches** are said to deal with the *character of justice*; and *justice* is, most probably, a *virtue*. Finally, the Stranger recites the order of this sequence in reverse, from end to beginning, so that the last topic in the sequential order of the divisions forms the first element in the reiteration,

creating an a-b-c-c'-b'-a' structure. Since there is no center point (e.g.. a-b-c-d-c'-b'-a'), we have the pattern variant on the ring composition which is known to Homeric scholars as hysteron-proteon.[9]

V.   [OPEN TO DOUBT], PURIFICATION [MEDICINE]

The Sixth Sequence. This sequence represents the fifth appearance of the sophist. It soon becomes apparent that this branch of the definition is longer and more complicated than the others. It contains a number of omissions and the division into dyads appears to fall apart at several points. This definition also turns up in the *Statesman* (279b-283c), so we can now confirm that there are many direct relationships between that dialogue and this one. Here in the present work, the Stranger embarks on the divisions of this sequence by commenting that the **sophist** is a "many-sided *animal*." He assures everyone that this series involves occupations that center on *sifting, straining, spinning, weaving*, and the *adjusting of warp and woof* (226a). These **lesser** sorts of **arts**. he explains, will serve as the model for the **greater** kind. The factor that is common to the **greater** and **smaller** (i.e.. the *intelligible* and *visible*) types of *weaving* is that they entail "the notion of *division*." The **art** that encompasses all of them is called *discriminating and discerning* (226c). Later on, we will find that this fifth attempt at definition involves many topics that overlap with the divisions of **imitation** at the end of the dialogue, and with other books in the collection. For now though, we see that *discriminating and discerning* is sectioned into two parts. One separates **like** from **like**. It has no proper name [   ]. The one on the other side of the partition is called *purification*. This latter kind seeks to separate the *better* from the *worse*.

The Stranger goes on to divide *purification* into *body* and *soul*. He deals with the *bodily* kind of *purification* first, saying that there are many different varieties in this class and that all of them go by a single name. He does not, however, give the name [   ]. He does say that under the *living* kind of *body*, (as opposed to the *inanimate* kind), there is a division into *inward* and *outward* parts. The *bathman* is the occupation that deals with the *outward* condition of the *living body*, whereas the *fuller* and *decorator* are concerned with the *external* condition of *inanimate bodies*.

After that, the *inward, living, body* is cordoned off further into an **art** of *medicine* that rids the *body* of *physical disease*, and an **art** of *gymnastics* that deals with *physical deformity*. Thus, *medicine* and *gymnastics* are to the *inward, living body*. what the *bathman* is to the *outward, living, body*.

Then, the Stranger announces that *the divisions of the soul have a parallel structure with the*

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[9] Steve Reece, "The Three Circuits of the Suitors: Ring Composition in *Odyssey* 17-22," *Oral Tradition*, 10 (1995): 207-229.

divisions of the body. Here then, we have another one of the rules governing the unwritten doctrines. There is a symmetry between the divisions of the *body* (which is *visible*) and the divisions of the *soul* (which is *not visible*). Thus, the *physical body* is an analogue for the *human psyche* that has *no visible embodiment*. The Stranger begins speaking about **dialectic**. The goal of **dialectic** is "to know what is and is not kindred in all **arts**, with a view to the *acquisition* of intelligence, and having this in view, she honors them all **alike**" (227b). With this statement, the Stranger seems to be suggesting that **dialectic** is the name for *purifications* of the *soul* (as distinct from all other *purifications*, i.e., of the *body*). Moreover, it is an **art** that is concerned with the aspects of collection and division that are concerned with the separation of **like** from **like**.

The Eleatic man warns everyone that we should listen carefully to what he is about to say. It is at this point that we notice that he does not mention the divisions of the *soul* that correspond to the *bodily* divisions of *living* and *lifeless*, *inward* and *outward*. He *does* remark that *virtue* and *vice* are separate in the *soul*. When *virtue* comes up in this sequence, it reminds us that this notion appeared in the *hunter* definition (223a); in the *merchant of learning* series (224c); at the end of the *retail dealer* divisions, and in the *athlete in debate* pattern by way of *justice*. It also appears to tie in with the *angler*, since *virtue* was used by the **sophist** in the *hunter* series to "bait the hook" (223a). Thus *virtue*, and more specifically, *justice*, appears to be connected to all the different strands of the definition that he has explained so far.

Next, he associates the *better* with the *good* and the *worse* with *bad* and *evil*. After that, he establishes that *purification* gets rid of the *bad* and *evil*. There are, he adds, two kinds of *evil* in the *soul*. One is likened to *disease* while the other is an analogue to *deformity*. Discord (which is, of course a lack of harmony, an analogy with *music*)—called *vice*—is the *disease* of the *soul* that corresponds to *physical disease* of the *body*. It involves a *dissolution of kindred elements* in the *soul* stemming from some sort of *disagreement* and *contradiction* (228b). *Cowardice, insolence, intemperance*, and *injustice* are included among its many forms. The other *kind of evil* that is comparable to *physical deformity* is the *psychic deformity* called **ignorance**. All the varieties of **ignorance** are classed as a *deformities* because they involve an "unsightly want of measure" (228a). The Eleatic man lists some examples: in the *psyche* of *bad* people: *opinion* is set against *desire*; *pleasure* against *anger*; *reason* against *pain*. Notice that in these instances, the polarities are not analogous or symmetrical. For example, we should expect to find *pleasure* (as in *flattery*), to be offset by that which *unpleasant* (the experience shared by those who must listen to the *loquacious* person). This suspicion seems to be confirmed when the Stranger emphasizes that *vice* is a *psychic deformity* involving a lack of "symmetry" (228c-e). He then proceeds to subdivide the *deformity* of **ignorance**

into *two halves*. To one or the other of these two (he does not say which), he classifies all the other *errors* of the *intellect*. The other one of these halves—the part that is a particularly *large* and *bad* sort of *deformity* involving **stupidity**—occurs when "a person supposes that he knows and yet he does not know." This second kind of **ignorance** is not given a name [ ]. *Distinguishing* among these different kinds of errors seems to have something to do with the *voluntary* or *involuntary* nature of the condition (228c).

The Eleatic continues. Just as *gymnastics* is the **art** that has to do with the *bodily state* of *deformity*, and *medicine* with the *bodily state* of *disease*, there are two **arts** associated with the *states* of the *soul*. Thus, *chastisement* (also called *admonition*) is prescribed as the *remedy* for the *state* of *psychic discord* and *disease*. *Instruction* and other forms of *education* are the *antidotes* for states of *psychic deformity*. Just as the *physician* knows that the *body* cannot benefit from *food* until *internal obstacles* have been removed, so the *purifier* of the *soul* knows that the patient will derive no *benefit* from the application of *knowledge* until his false *opinions* have been purged by *refutation*, so that he "is made to **think that he knows only what he knows and no more**" (230c-d). The Visitor proclaims that the "**greatest** and chiefest *purification* is *refutation* (or cross-examination)." At the end of this series of divisions, he adds that there are two sorts of *instruction* for the elimination of the two sorts of **ignorance**. He says we will find them most easily

> *If we can discover a line which divides* **ignorance** *into two halves*. For a division of **ignorance** into two parts will certainly imply that the **art** of *instruction* is also twofold, answering to the two divisions of **ignorance**" (229b)

He hastens to add that *education* is one of the kinds that falls under *instruction*, and he divides it into *rougher* and *smoother* *Chastisement* and *admonition* are classed as *rough* forms of reproof. The other kind of *education* is the "examination which confutes the **vain conceit of wisdom**." This latter kind goes by the name of "**sophistry** of a noble lineage." Thus, our teacher makes it clear that two kinds of people can go by the name, "**sophist**." One is of noble descent, while the other possesses only a **vain conceit of wisdom** (230e-231). By the time he finishes this sequence, we have a whole series of proportions wherein the *visible human body* is made the basis of a parallel examination of that which has *no visible embodiment*, namely, the *human soul*. Let us set them in juxtaposition, in a two column, diagrammatic form.

purification, separates good from evil	*purification, separates better from worse*
purification of the soul. [**dialectic**]	*purification of body*
[ ]	*inanimate bodies, fulling and furbishing*
[ ]	*purification of living bodies*
[ ]	*outward body parts, bathman*
inward soul, instruction and education	*inward body parts, medicine and gymnastics*

To these polarities. we must also add the following:

food for the soul. **knowledge**	*food for the body.* [ ]
instruction and education	*medicine and gymnastics*
vice	*internal obstacles*
discord. **thinks he knows but does not**	*disease in the body*
(chastisement is a remedy for discord)	*(medicine is a remedy for disease)*
psychic deformity. **stupidity** and **ignorance**	*physical deformity*
(education is the antidote to **ignorance***)*	*(gymnastics is the remedy for deformity)*

Though **knowledge** is classed as a *food for the soul.* no specific items are listed under *food for the body.* Still. this class brings to mind one of the stories concerning Plato's instruction. Recall the Epicrates fragment that records the observations of a physician who passed by the Academy. When the doctor saw Plato and his students gathered around a gourd. discussing whether it should be classed with "round vegetables." or in some other category. he thought the distinctions they were drawing were "nonsense" (Epicrates. frag. 11). Perhaps they were working on the divisions for the class of *foods for the body.* which must certainly include "round vegetables."

Remember as well that Diskin Clay argued that there was a "pattern to the gaps" in the dialogues that Plato intentionally "left to his reader to fill" (1977: 151). He did not provide specific examples to illustrate the patterns or suggest how the omissions might be identified. As we carefully attend to these divisions. we can start to locate these absences. Setting the juxtapositions "side by side" (230b). so that parallel notions are ordered in columns. like Aristotle described. makes it easier to see where the symmetry is out of balance. When an idea that is assigned to one side of the pair has no obvious counterpart on the other side. then we may be sure that we have identified a missing piece of the puzzle. As we continue with the reading. we will be on the lookout for notions that seem to match the "omitted" or "unwritten" polarities. Since we will find that different components of the topic will be listed in different passages. we will start to be able to put together sections of the jigsaw. At least some of the parts that are missing from the preceding passage will probably be made explicit in other sections of this dialogue. or in other dialogues altogether.

The Stranger brings this sequence to a close by retracing his steps. this time listing the divisions in the order in which he made them: **art.** *separation. purification. soul.* and under that, *instruction.* and under that again. *education.* the **art** of *education* that gets rid of the **vain conceit of wisdom.** "in the *argument* which has now come in by a side wind." is "**sophistry** that is of a noble lineage" (231b).

The Reckoning: Shapes of the Many-Sided Animal

At this juncture. the Stranger and his companions pause to "reckon up between ourselves in how many guises the **sophist** has appeared" (232d). He lists them in order.

I.   Hired *hunter* of rich young men;

II.   *Merchant of learning* as nourishment for the soul;

III.   *Retail Dealer* in the same wares;

IV.   *Selling products of his own manufacture;*

V.   *Athlete in debate.* appropriating the division of contention which consists in the art of eristic;

VI.   [Open to doubt]. claims to be a *purifier* of the soul from **conceits**.

Notice that the fourth item on the list is *selling products of his own manufacture*. However. the Stranger did not provide this definition in between the *retail dealer* and the *athlete in debate* sequences. In fact. this is precisely the part of the definition that he did not specify by express statement when he was marking off the divisions. When he retraced his steps in the collection, he skipped over this part of the sequence. Then in the review of what he called the "third reappearance of the **sophist**" at 224d. he mentioned the kind which either *sells a man's own productions* or *retails those of others*. as the case may be. and in either way *sells the knowledge of virtue*. you would again term **sophistry**?" Here. as the Stranger takes stock of the different branches of **art**. he states that *selling products of ones own manufacture* is the fourth sequence in the *hunt* for the **sophist**. He has let his listeners know on four occasions that something is amiss. either by passing over these distinctions or by highlighting the fact that he does not specify which of the two routes he has chosen. Every time he moved through this part of the series he has signaled to his companions that he has not done the work for them. and that there is something they must decide for themselves. That he listed *selling products of one's own manufacture* at 224d cannot be an inadvertent error. It is not the type of irregularity that is characteristic of traditional compositions. It is not the kind of omission that would have resulted from faulty transmission of the text. Nor is it the sort of inconsistency that would be a consequence of changes Plato made to the Pythagorean system. Since this type of anomaly does not have any of the characteristic attributes associated with inadvertent types of errors and disjunctions, and since the Stranger emphasizes by direct remark that his listeners need to choose "either way," we may be certain that we are dealing with an aspect of the teaching that is not given in the written statements in the dialogue. Rather. it is "unwritten." The solution to this perplexity is left up to learners to reason out for themselves.

If we take a stab at putting the two sequences together in accordance with the Stranger's methodical pattern of matching parallel pairs. we find that the series opens up in startling complexity! (Again. see the outline of the sequences at the end of this chapter).

Collection and Division

Since the Stranger has paused to review the progress of the divisions so far. let us take this opportunity to make a few observations. Notice first of all that the Eleatic Stranger is showing his listeners how to approach the task of definition from different *angles*. He is teaching his listeners how to *hunt* for the **sophist**. He has taken *no fee* for this demonstration. Rather he *gives* this *learning* without charge. Further. since he is not from Athens. he is involved in a kind of *exchange of goods between cities*. Since he carries on a dialogue with his companions. he is leading the type of **private** debate that is *cut up into questions and answers*. Moreover. he is explaining to everyone the *systematic rules of this argumentation*. Since Socrates asked him how they define the **sophist, statesman**, and **philosopher** in his country. we are given to understand that the Stranger is not sharing *wares of his own manufacture*. but *goods produced by others* (i.e.. his countrymen: a tradition). Furthermore. we can see that he is offering *instruction* about *discriminating. discerning*, and *dividing*. Finally, he appears to be separating both **like** from **like** and *better from worse*.

Backtracking. Notice as well that we must continually turn back to previous statements and bring what was said earlier to bear on present matters. In a passage dealing with **likenesses** in the *Republic*. Socrates suggests. "This **image** then. dear Glaucon. we must apply as a whole to all that has been said" (517b). This instruction applies here as well. It seems that no one statement in any context is definitive. Rather. we come by our knowledge of a particular conception through a cumulative process whereby meaning is built up gradually and in stages over a number of passages. We must keep going back over what was established in prior sections of the dialogue (and even to what is said in other works). matching items by using the methods of analogy. polarity. and symmetry. and then *collecting* all this information together in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning. It is left us to us. as learners. to make these connections. The process seems to involve holding everything we have been told in our minds at once. recognizing links between previously established data and new material. judging the correctness of the hypothesized connection by looking at the new information from many different angles to see how it fits in with the body of accumulated facts. If the combination of all the material fits together. then the new evidence can be added into the pool of knowledge. If there is some sort of contradiction. then sometimes the previous understanding has to be revised in light of the evidence. In other cases. a decision must be held in abeyance until further information is given. Here. then. we have come across another rule of procedure for uncovering the esoteric doctrines. As we become more adept at this method of division. collection, and combination of forms. we begin to see how the dialogues *do* provide an explicit account in writing, even though theories are not set out in a comprehensive manner in any one passage. Let us continue.

[THE CONTROVERSIALIST]

Having found that the **sophist** comes in so many different shapes, the Stranger points out that this charlatan has one particularly telling characteristic. He is an *instructor in controversey*, a distinction that was identified at 225b. He suggests to Theatetus that they will get to the source of the matter if they can identify the field in which the **sophist** professes to have his or her competence. He asks if the expertise of the *controversialist*'s students includes "**divine** things that are hidden from common **eyes**" as well as "all that is *visible* in sky and earth and everything of that sort" (232b-c). After that the Eleatic man proceeds to make a number of comments concerning the **art** of *controversey* (232b-235a). We cannot help noticing that the course of this conversation takes up matters that appear at the end of the sequence of the definition of the *athlete in debate*, so that the Stranger begins his remarks concerning *controversey* by describing what happens in "**private** circles" (233c) and in the **public** domain, i.e., "political matters" involving "debates" about "laws" (233c). He makes it clear that while the **sophist** appears to others to possess "**real wisdom**," he in fact possesses only a "sort of **reputed and apparent knowledge**" (233c). At the end of this discussion, he establishes that what the **sophist** does is classified as a kind of **play**, "and of all forms of **play**, could you think of any more skillful and amusing that **imitation**?" (234b). When he mentions **imitation**, we know for certain that he has turned his attention from the *acquisitive* branch of **art** to **production** (219a-b).

He goes on to draw a parallel. The **artist** sketches with his **pencil** *visible* representations that have the same name as **genuine** items. These **renderings** can **deceive naive** children, who see the drawings "from a distance." They are fooled into believing that the artist is capable of producing, "in full reality, anything he chooses to make." So the **sophist** creates with "**words that cheat the ear** . . . images of all things in a **shadow play of discourse**," so that listeners believe they are hearing the truth and that the speaker is a **wise** person (234c). Thus, what the artist does to **deceive the eye** by drawing *visible* representations of the **original reality**, the **sophist** does to **deceive** the **ear** with **speech** that is only a **shadow** of the **genuine discourse**. Having begun with the division into **divine** and *visible*, and then having led an extended discussion about the **original** and the **image**, the Stranger makes his next move.

[THE ILLUSIONIST]

Quartering the Ground of the Art of Producing Images

At 235a, the Eleatic declares that the **sophist** is "a *wizard* and an **imitator** of some sort . . . somewhere within the class of *illusionists*" (though he does not say exactly where).

Agreed then that we should at once quarter the ground by dividing the **art of image**

making. and if. as soon as we descend into that enclosure. we meet with the **sophist** at bay. we should arrest him on the royal warrant of **reason**. report the capture. and hand him over to the **sovereign**. But if he should find some lurking place among the subdivisions of this **art of imitation**. we must follow hard upon him. constantly dividing off the part that gives him shelter until he is caught. In any event there is no fear that he or any other kind shall ever boast of having eluded a process of investigation so minute and so comprehensive.

He proceeds with the *hunt* by "quartering the ground." that is. by drawing lines that divide **imitation** into *four separate and distinct enclosures*. If we think in terms of the **eye**. we may see the Stranger as producing a pencil drawn representation of things that have the same names as the **reality**. The reference to the *visible* alerts us that he is working with classifications descended from the **great** and **small**. Since he is explaining **imitation**. we need to remember "the law which dialectics recites. . . which though it belongs to the *intelligible*. we may see an **imitation** in the process of the faculty of *vision*" (*Rep.* 530b). Moreover. if we make the transfer from the **eye** to the **ear** (recall the passages from the "prelude and preamble" at 530d of the *Republic*). then we may understand that the Stranger is also measuring "audible sounds and heard concords" (in the **discourse**). a signal that while he is "descending" in his search for the **sophist**. we should be mentally "ascending" to "more generalized problems and the consideration of which numbers are inherently concordant and which not and why in each case" (*Rep.* 531c). Since we are dealing with the various classes in the definition of **art**. we may see the search for the **sophist** as an attempt to discover the common thing that "all **arts** and forms of thought and sciences must employ" (*Rep.* 522c). If we think in terms of Aristotle's testimony, we may see the Stranger as showing how to generate the idea-numbers. If we picture this drawing in terms of the figure-ground relationship. we may see him as marking off the background to the topics and as drawing the lines that create the traditional frames of reference in Plato's mnemonic system.

After the Eleatic has *separated. discriminated. and discerned* these four. he then focusses his attention downward into an "enclosure" as he "descends" into the "subdivisions of this **art of imitation**." Further. as he pursues the **sophist**. he will be *dividing only those parts that give him shelter*. He will subtract the rest. His companions agree that this is the correct method. Thus. the procedure involves subtraction and division—both mathematical operations. Each part is one of the four quarters—tandem pairs—into which the whole is divisible. As we continually exclude the portions where we do not find the **sophist**. we should stay alert for signs indicating that the parts that are taken away contain within them subdivisions similar to those we will find in the portions that *do* shelter the **sophist**. Recognize as well that this method yields *enclosures* within *enclosures*. that is, subdivisions at increasingly smaller orders of magnitude. His use of the idea of *enclosures* in our *hunt* for the **sophist** indicates that the Stranger is *fishing* (220b) in *water of another sort*, where the "*angler*

and **sophist** diverged" (222a). Again. notice that following the Stranger's instructions for marking off these *enclosures* generates frames within frames. the nested structure of squares that characterizes the geometry of the ring composition. Further. we cannot help observing that reason in this passage is associated with "royalty" and the "sovereign." Aristotle's expression for the cause that is assigned to the "first place" in Plato's system.

The Stranger carries on with the technique. He lets everyone know that the investigation will be inclusive in all its details (235c).

> Following then. the same method of division as before. I seem once more to make out two forms of **imitation** . . One **art** that I see contained in it is the **making of likenesses** (εἰκαστικὴ). The perfect example of this consists in creating a **copy** that conforms to the **proportions** of the **original** in **all three dimensions** and giving moreover the proper **color** to every part.
> Why. is not that what all **imitators** try to do?
> Not those **sculptors** or **painters** whose works are of colossal **size**. If they were to reproduce the **true proportions** of a well-made **figure**. as you know, the upper parts would look **small**, and the lower too **large**. because we see one at a distance and the other close at hand . . so artists. leaving the truth to take care of itself. do in fact put into the **images** they make. **not the real proportions**. but those that will **appear** beautiful (235c-236a).

He goes back to the technique of dividing by twos. Using the preceding sequences as our pattern. we find "contained" within the four "enclosures" created by this (quadratic) division. two forms of **image production**. Though the Eleatic man associates certain abstract ideas (e.g.. **real proportions; the making of images**) with these places. he does not specify exactly where these distinctions should be located in this ground. He does make it clear that one form of **imitation** involves the creation of **likenesses**. He says that this **eikastic** kind of **artistry** makes a facsimile that faithfully duplicates the **proportions** of the **original**, three-dimensional **shape**, with the correct application of **colors**. Thus, the feature that is the basis for the analogy between the **art** of producing **originals** and the creation of **likenesses** is the accuracy of the **proportions** of the *product* and the rightness of the **coloration**. The second kind of **image making** does not generate a **genuine** reproduction of the **original proportions**. Instead. the *product* is proportioned so that it **appears** beautiful from the vantage point of an observer looking at it from a distance.

> The first kind of **image**. then. being **like** the **original**, may fairly be called a **likeness** (εἰκόν). . . . And the corresponding subdivision of the **art of imitation** may be called by the name we used just now—**likeness making** (εἰκαστικὴν) [236a-b].

Thus. the Stranger states that the **art** of **imitation** is divided into a total of four *enclosures*. Somewhere within these four he locates the type of **image** that is **like** the **original**. This sort of **production** creates an **image** that accurately and correctly duplicates all the attributes of the **original**.

Now. what are we to call the kind which not only **appears** to be a **likeness** of a well-made figure because it is not seen from a satisfactory point of view. but to a spectator with **eyes** that could fully take in so large an object would not be even like the **original** it professes to resemble. Since it seems to be a **likeness**. but is not really so. may we not call it a **semblance** (φάντασμα).

And this is a very extensive class. in **painting** and in **imitation** of all sorts. . . So the best name for the **art** which creates not a **likeness**. but a **semblance** will be semblance making (φανταστική). . . . These then. are the two forms of **image making** I meant—the **making of likenesses** and the **making of semblances** (236c)

After describing **likeness making**, he says that there is a second kind which makes the **phantastic image**. The *product* of this sort of **production** appears to be **likenesses** but it is in fact only a **semblance** (φάντασμα) of the **original**. At the mention of the **semblance**. we are reminded of an earlier division at 221d-223b. where certain **sophists** were said to have only a **semblance** of *education*. Thus. we may surmise that the **phantasy image** identified here is tethered to this other. previous division involving a **semblance**. The Stranger assures his companions that it is hard to distinguish the **likeness** from the **semblance**. In the different efforts to define *acquisition*. we noted that the second attempt named *painting* (along with *music*. and *marionette playing*). as a *food for the soul* (224a-c). Since we find that **painting** turns up here. there must be a connection with *painting* as *nourishment* and **painting** as a **semblance**. though it is not entirely clear what that connection is. Still, it does seem apparent that **painting** entails the type of **imitation** that creates a **playful** sort of *food* (234b). rather than the more **serious** kind that is directed toward *teaching* (224b). Thus. we are given the following kinds of productive artists: those who produce **original** *products*. and those who create **images**. **Image making** is divided into the kind that generates **likenesses** and the kind that produces **semblances**. **Originals** are divided into **shapes** (i.e.. **proportions**; **forms**) and **colors**. Even though the Stranger has divided **images** into four parts. he has identified only two kinds: **likenesses** and **semblances**. Since the **image** is a **copy** of the **original**. this means that **originals** too must be divided into quarters. However. the Stranger has named only two kinds of **originals**: **forms** and **colors**.

Repetition and Correlation

The Stranger goes on to reiterate notions he described previously. As we listen to his explanation. we begin to *discern* certain distinctive features that all **arts** seem to have in common. There is the *product* generated by the artist. that is. the object that is the *painting* itself. Corresponding to the *product* is the *state of mind* or affect produced by the *painting*. For example. believing that the **pencil** representation is the **real** thing would be a *state* of **deception**. Just as there were *bodily states* of *disease* and *deformity*. so there appear to be different *states* in the *soul*). To both of these we must match the **art**

or *power* of making **paintings**. Finally. there is the *producer* or **painter**. the occupation of the person who creates the **art work**. Notice that the different sequences of *acquisition* were described mainly in terms of the *producer*. e.g.. *angler. hunter*. and *athlete*. Only *purification* (and possibly *controversy*) seem to refer to the **art** or *power*. Whereas the Stranger previously distinguished three separate aspects of **production** (*product. power*. and *producer*). we are now able to discern four—*product. state. power*. and *producer*—all of which are correlated. one to the other. From now onward. we know that when any one of these four are mentioned. the other three are implied even though the Stranger might not offer any overt remarks about them.

Locating the Sophist in an Impenetrable Topic

We pass over a discussion on the nature of **appearing** and **seeming. truth** and **falsehood**. and of **being** and **non-being** in relation to **unity** and **plurality** (237a-239c). noting only that all of these topics are specified as some sort of polarity. We stop at 239d. at the passage where the Stranger has found the **sophist** "hidden" in a "a place" (τόπον) we "cannot explore." By Heaven. we have found the **sophist**! Yet. it seems that no further account of this place will be given. In fact. the Stranger says it will be left up to someone else to "perform this feat." Hence. the onus is on us. We. as learners. are left to track down this information ourselves. Further. the Stranger states once again that the *enclosures* or places we are producing in our search for the **sophist** are in fact "topics." He tells everyone that if he says that the **sophist** practices the **art** of creating **semblances**. then he will be forced to define what is meant by **semblances** and by **images**. Theaetetus suggests how this question might be answered.

> Clearly we shall say we mean **images** in **water** or in **mirrors**. and again **images** made by the **draftsman** or the **sculptor**. and any other things of that sort.
> It is plain. Theaetetus. that you have never seen a **Sophist**.
> Why?
> He will make as though his **eyes** were shut or he had **no eyes** at all.
> How so?
> When you offer him your answer in such terms. if you speak of something to be found in **mirrors** or in **sculpture**. he will laugh at your **words**. as implying that he can **see**. He will profess to know nothing about **mirrors** or **water** or even **eyesight**. and will confine his question to what can be gathered from **discourse** . . . The common character in all these things you mentioned and thought fit to call by a single name when you used the expression 'image' as one term covering them all. State it. then. and hold your ground against the man without yielding an inch. Well, sir. what could we say an **image** was. if not another thing of the same sort. copied from the **real thing**? (240a)

Having set out several different kinds—**original** (i.e.. the "**real thing**"), the **image**. the **likeness**, and

the **semblance**—the Stranger goes on to describe in more detail the contents of **images**.

The nefarious **sophist**. he tells us. acts as if his **eyes were shut** or as if he were **without eyes** altogether. By analogy. we know we should be mentally transferring this information to the **ear** and to **discourse**. What is involved. the Stranger emphasizes. is some sort of pretense. This dishonest **sophist** feigns **blindness** (a *psychic deformity?*) about first. **mirrors**. second. **water**, or third. **eyesight**. We are given to understand that there is a common character in all these things called by the term "**image**." What they have in common is "**reality**." Though an **image** is copied from the **real** thing (the **original**). it does not have the same measure of **reality** as the **original**: hence. even though it is **like** the **original**. it is not as legitimate. Thus. having broken **images** down into **likenesses**, and then **semblances** (in that order). the Visitor goes on to identify even more items contained within the overall topic of **images**: (1) **reflections** such as those found in **water**. or **mirrors**: (2) those produced by the **draftsman** or **sculptor**: and (3) **visual images seen by the eye**.

The **draftsman** and the **sculptor** are classified as **semblance** *producers*. Previously. it was established that the **semblance** making class included **sculptors** and **painters**. Since the **sculptor** is common to both groups. it looks like the **draftsman** belongs to this same class of **image makers**. Thus. through the connection of the **sculptor** and **painter**. we are able to ascertain that the *products* category of this class of **semblances** includes **paintings**. **music** (heard by the **ear**), **sculptures**, **puppets**. and **drawings**. or **drafted designs** and **plans**. Moreover. the **draftsman** is probably the name of the *producer* who uses a pencil to draw *faux visible* representations (**semblances**) that **deceive** the **eyes** of **naive** people who end up thinking that they are seeing the **genuine** article. By extension. we may understand the **sophist** as the *producer* who uses false **images**. rather than the **forms**. so that his **words cheat the ear** of **naive** listeners. **deceiving** them into believing that they are hearing a **speech** shaped by **dialectic**. whereas they are in **reality** only hearing "a **shadow play of discourse**."

Now. we will look more closely at the explanation for why the **image** of the **discourse** is the same sort of thing as the **original**. only less **real**.

Polarity

"Of the same sort"? Do you mean another **real** thing. or what does "of the same sort" signify?
Certainly **not real**. but **like** it.
Meaning by "**real**" a thing that really **exists**. . . . And by "**not real**" the opposite of **real**? . . . then by what is "**like**" you mean what **has not real existence**. if you are going to call it "**not real**."
But it has some sort of **existence**.
Only **not real existence**. according to you.

> No. except that it is really a **likeness**. . . . **Real** and **unreal** do seem to be combined in that perplexing way. and very queer it is (240c)

The term **real** means that something **exists**. By **not real** is meant the opposite of **real**. The **image** is like **real existence**. yet it "is not" **real existence**. Still. it does have some sort of **existence**: for even though it is not **real existence**, it is not totally non-existent. The **image** is a curious mixture of the **real** and that which **is not real**. We may surmise that the **image** is a *product* that results from the combination of **real existence** and that which **is not real existence**.

The One and Many as a Unity

Over the next several pages. the Stranger and Theaetetus discuss the **original** kind. This conversation establishes that the term **real**. covers the "**one as unity**;" the "aggregate" that is divided into parts as a "sum or whole" (244a-249d). The Eleatic Visitor remarks that since **reality** and that which **is not reality** are equally puzzling, we can only hope that the "**light**, whether **dim** or **bright**, thrown upon the **one** will illuminate the other to an equal degree." This implies that, in terms of **light**—involving perception of *visible* things with the **eye**—**reality** is correlated with **bright** while that which **is not reality** is matched with **dim**. This means that **bright light** is the analogue to **reality** and **dim light** is the analogue for that which **is not reality**. but is only **like** it. This gives us a way of "measuring" decreasing degrees of **reality** by seeing **existence** in terms of a spectrum moving from **light** to **dark** (**light** and **darkness** being two of the opposites Aristotle attributed to the Pythagoreans). We can then take the relation of **eyes** to **light** and **darkness** and transfer these correlations to the **ear**. We might think of **music** as a scale that moves from high to low pitched sounds. The Stranger tells everyone that if the **light** of one does not shed **light** on the other. then we should "force a passage through the *argument* with both elbows at once" (251a) Elbows in position. we will continue the search

Uncovering the Philosopher by Hunting for the Sophist

At this point. the Stranger assures us, we have come across the **philosopher** while looking for the **sophist!**

> Good gracious. Theaetetus. have we stumbled unawares upon the free man's knowledge and. in seeking for the **Sophist**. chanced to find the **philosopher** first?
> How do you mean?
> **Dividing according to kinds**, not taking the **same form** for a **different** one or a **different** one for the **same**—is not that the business of the science of **dialectic**? (253b-254c)

In the introductory sequence of this dialogue. Socrates asked whether the **sophist, statesman**, and **philosopher** belonged to the same type, or whether they were in fact two, or even three different **kinds**

of human beings. We should combine the data we have accumulated so far with this new information at 253b-254c. In his opening statements. Socrates asserted that there were **genuine** and **sham philosophers**. noting that the former but not the latter. "**appear** to wear all sorts of **shapes** " He said that this **appearance** was **false**, a consequence of the **blindness** or **ignorance** of others. We know that **appearances** are deceptive. especially if the spectator does not have a satisfactory point of view. Socrates added that some people have the erroneous impression that certain **authentic philosophers** are **simply mad**. Sometimes, he said, the **genuine philosopher** appears disguised as the **sophist** and sometimes as the **statesman**. Thus, the **real philosopher** might seem to be a **madman**, a **statesman**, or a **sophist**. Could it be that the apparent search for the **sophist** in this dialogue is, in reality, an attempt to uncover the **philosopher**, who appears (due to our own **blindness** and **ignorance**), to be disguised as a **sophist**? Said differently, it looks like the **sophist** might be the **lesser** example of something **greater**. making the **philosopher** one of the **real** *objects* of this investigation. Since the Stranger seems quite certain that we have located the **sophist** "lurking in an impenetrable place," and in so doing, that we have come upon the **philosopher**, we must consider the possibility that the **philosopher** and **sophist** are two sides of the same coin. It is quite possible that Plato never intended to write a dialogue entitled the *Philosopher* after all.

Question: Does the Philosopher Have an Art?

The Stranger goes on to state that the **philosopher** is a master of **dialectic**—the form of logic Aristotle says was not known before Plato, and also the name for the type of mnemonic that emphasized division and orderly arrangement over the use of deceptive **images**. The Stranger also makes it clear that the "**kinds**" are **kinds of forms**. Further, he claims that the **philosopher** is able to *distinguish* **forms** on the basis of **sameness** and **difference**. Remember that **forms** (or **shapes**) seemed to be (along with **colors**), one of the **kinds of originals**. Now it looks as though the **forms** have to do with **dialectic**. Let us look closely at the way this *power* is described here.

> And the man who can do that *discerns* clearly **one form** everywhere extended throughout **many**. where each **one** lies apart, and **many forms**, **different** from one another. embraced from without by **one form**, and again **one form** connected in a **unity** through many **wholes**. and **many forms**, entirely marked off apart. That means knowing how to *distinguish*. **kind** by **kind**, in what ways the several **kinds** can or cannot combine (253e).

The **philosopher** is said to possesses a type of insight that allows him or her to *distinguish* the **different kinds of forms** and to see how they can or cannot be "put together." **Dialectic** involves the ability to observe a common thread of **unity** that runs through a number of **different kinds of forms**,

connecting them together to make a whole. **Dialectic** also entails a capacity to *differentiate* **one**, whole, **unity** apart from the **many different forms** of it. **One** and **many** are therefore a dyad or duality. Further, **one** is set in opposition to an **indefinite plurality**, designated simply as **many**—just as Aristotle reported. In addition, **many** implies indeterminate quantity, where any **one** of the parts is, relative to the whole, **smaller**. **Unity** is, relative to the many manifestations of it, **greater**. The reference to *discerning* and "marking off" lets us know that the Stranger is in the process of delineating the **forms**. Thus, in pursuing the **sophist** through all these different sequences of definitions, the Stranger has been demonstrating the method of **dialectic**, which is the technique of *distinguishing* many **kinds of forms** and "combining" them into a **unity**.

The Superior Kind of Study

The Visitor from Elea emphasizes that it is not all that easy to *distinguish* among the **different kinds of forms**. He says that knowing how to *separate* **forms** that cannot be "combined" from those that can be "mixed" together is especially difficult. Theaetetus says he is not sure he understands what the Stranger means when he speaks of "combining." By way of explanation, the Stranger offers the examples of **grammar** and **music** and relates them to **dialectic**. The Stranger intimates that mixing **different kinds of forms** is a "combination" of the skills involved in **grammar** and **music**. In fact, he hints to his companions that **dialectic** involves *dividing* and combining **different kinds of forms** according to the model of **sounds** in **language** or in the **musical scale**.

With the example of **grammar**, the Stranger compares combining **forms** to combining the letters of the alphabet (some are said to fit together with other letters through "a sort of bond pervading them all," whereas some do not go together). It is not entirely clear what that bond is. More likely than not, this bond is the "common thread of **unity**"—something in which all the parts *participate*—which the Stranger mentioned earlier (at 253e) as involving the **one** and **many**. We should pay attention here. Remember that an analysis of the properties of letters and syllables was an aspect of the kind of study that Socrates held up as being superior to the mnemonic of Hippias. The properties of letters and syllables was also a feature of Aristotle's description. This suggests that in drawing lines, we are doing geometry, a second feature of the superior study. The **one** and **many** involves *discerning* and marking off numbers, a kind of arithmetic. This gives us a third feature that is in line with both the superior technique and with Aristotle's account. The other example the Stranger gives in the present context is that of the **musical scale**. The **musical scale** correlates with **music** in the superior study. Good Heavens! Here we have all the features that appeared in Socrates description of the superior study in the *Republic* as well as in Aristotle's testimony about Plato's philosophy in the *Metaphysics*. The

Stranger states:

> Again, is it not the same with **sounds of high** or **low** pitch? To possess the **art** of recognizing what can or cannot be blended is to be a **musician**; if one doesn't understand that, one is unmusical (253b).

Let us take these analogies and apply them to what we have been given so far. (1) The *product* or object is, in the first example, **grammar**; in the second, it is **music**. (2) No *state* of mind is mentioned in the case of **grammar**. However, in the case of **music**, the mental state involves "recognizing" which sounds go together and which ones do not. (3) The **art** or *power* to produce **grammar** involves blending letters of the alphabet to create **speech**. This *power* to combine letters to create an effect entails a knowledge of the system of rules that defines the grammatical structure of a language. Similarly, the ability to put notes together in harmonious combinations entails **musical skill**. Like **grammar**, **music** entails a knowledge of the *systematic art or technique* of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having **unity** and continuity. (4) The *producer* who creates letter combinations is called a **grammarian**. The music making kind of **semblance** *producer*, we are told, blends **high** and **low pitched sounds**. The Stranger establishes that the only person to have mastered the knowledge of how to combine **forms** in the **art** of **dialectic** is "the pure and rightful **lover of wisdom**" (253e). Thus, in this repeating pattern of argument, we find that just as **grammar** is the *product* created by the grammarian, who, as the *producer*, possesses a *state of mind* capable of recognizing which letters blend, and who also has the **art** or *power* to put them together in combinations; so **music** is the *product* generated by the **musician**, as the *producer* who has both the mental *state* conducive to this **art** as well as the skill needed to blend **sounds**; so too, [**true discourse**] is the *product* made by the **lover of wisdom** (i.e., the **philosopher**), as a *producer* who can *distinguish* among **forms** and **combine** them to produce **discourse**. The **art** of the **lover of wisdom**, then, is some sort of *combination* of **grammar** and **music** (253e). We are now able to *discern* that the *producer* who creates philosophical **discourse** by blending **forms** is the **philosopher**. Moreover, **dialectic** is a **combination** of the *systematic skills and techniques* that define both **grammar** and **music**. In other words, **dialectic** requires a knowledge of the principles governing the structure of the **forms** and also, of the techniques of ordering the **kinds of forms** in sequence, in combination, and in patterns like those found in **grammar** and **music**, so as to produce a harmonious, **unified** and continuous composition.

The Philosopher and the Sophist

The Stranger goes on to assign the **philosopher** and the **sophist** to different topics.

> It is then. in some such region (τόπῳ) as this that we shall find the **philosopher** now or later. if we should look for him. He may be difficult to see clearly. but the difficulty in his case is not the same as the **sophist's**. The **sophist** takes refuge in the **darkness** of **not-being** . . . Whereas the **philosopher**. whose thoughts constantly dwell upon the nature of reality. is difficult to see because his region is so **bright**. for the **eye of the soul** cannot endure to keep its gaze fixed on the **divine** (254b).

He tells everyone that the **philosopher** will be difficult to see. It will be left up to us to "look for him." We will not. however. locate him in the same space as the **sophist**. We will come across him in a place **like** the one given over to **wisdom**. Thus. the challenge will be twofold. First. we must find the correct place for the **philosopher** as distinct from the region designated to the **sophist**. Second. we must be on the lockout for the place where **wisdom** is located. Through the occurrence of the notions of **reality** and **bright light** in association with the **philosopher**. we are given to understand that this **wise** person is grouped with things that have **real being**. In contrast. the **sophist** is affiliated with that which **is not being** and with **darkness**. The implication is that the **forms** of **discourse** used by the **philosopher** are the **real** thing and the **originals**. whereas the **images** used by the **sophist** are merely a **semblance** of the **forms**. It is not the case that the **sophist** is not **real**. for this sort of person obviously has some kind of **existence**. He is a **real** person but the **images** he uses to create the impression that he has **real wisdom** are without substance. Notice as well that the description of these two types—**philosopher** and **sophist**— as being allocated to separate "regions." is not unlike Aristotle's account of the Pythagorean system (in that an abstract conception such as **wisdom** is assigned to a region). Nor is it unlike our understanding of the mnemonic (as a formulaic sequence that follows a precise order and arrangement in the placement of topics). As for the **lover of wisdom** himself. he keeps the **eyes in his soul** (in contrast to the **eyes of the body**) fixed upon the nature of **reality**. He must keep his **ears** tuned in as well. The Stranger explains that there is so much **light** in this "divine" space that "vulgar souls" cannot bear to look at it for long. By extension. the **sounds** must be so **high** pitched that vulgar souls cannot stand to listen for long either. **Light** is the source of **color** in the *visible* spectrum. which is a kind of scale analogous to the *audible* one found in **music**. This establishes that **bright light** and the **eyes of the soul** are associated with the **divine** region. and that **darkness** is correlated with another place altogether. Translating this to the sense of hearing implies that **high pitched sounds** are associated with the **divine** while **low pitched sounds** are connected to vulgarity. Hence. the **sophist** fixes his **eyes** (and **ears**) on that which **is not being** or **existence**. Whereas the **philosopher** is difficult to **see** and **hear** (with the **eyes** and **ears of the soul**) because his space is filled with **bright light** and **high pitched sound**. the **sophist** is hard to make out because he "takes refuge" in **darkness** and with **low pitched sounds**. Thus. the "pure and rightful" **philosopher**

is correlated with the science of dialectic. with true being. with wisdom. reality. a brightly lit region. with the eyes and ears of the soul. and with high pitch. The sophist. on the other hand. is matched with an art of imitation. with not-being. a place filled with darkness. with blindness. and with low pitch. Let us set forth these comparisons.

philosopher	sophist
science of dialectic	art of image making
true being	not being
wisdom	[ ]
reality	[ ]
eyes of the soul	blind (a psychic deformity. ignorance)
a brightly lit region	place filled with darkness

Having placed the two "side by side" in columns. we notice that there are a couple of gaps in the correlations that fall under the sophist. We have not been given the polar expressions for wisdom or for reality. Still. we should be able to figure them out from the material we have been given so far. At 230e-231a, the Stranger stated that there were two kinds of sophists. one of which possessed only a vain conceit of wisdom. Moreover. at 240c. he instructed that the "opposite of real" was "not real." Therefore. let us tentatively fill in the missing piece opposite to wisdom with the vain conceit of wisdom. Opposite to reality. we could insert the notion. is not reality. However. we are able to be more specific than this. Through the simultaneous occurrence of the polarities real/not real. and bright/dark. we are able to connect this passage to the earlier discussion at (240c). Therefore. we will set down the image as the polarity of reality. We will also transfer these notions to the ear.

philosopher	sophist
science of dialectic	art of image making
true being	not being
wisdom	[vain conceit of wisdom]
eyes	blind (a psychic deformity. ignorance)
reality	[image]
a brightly lit region	place filled with darkness
[ears of the soul]	[deaf]
[high pitched sound]	[low pitched sound]

Notice that the basis of the comparison between the philosopher and sophist is their very different methods. This contrast between imitation and dialectic offers a fair summarization of the two different approaches to the mnemonic—one using images that have little resemblance to the real thing and the other employing the systematic art or technique of ordering topics in succession, in combination. and in relationship to one another to produce a continuous and unified composition. It is because the images used by the sophist have only a small proportion of reality that this character is said to possess only a vain conceit of wisdom. He uses these images so that his speech resembles

the forms of discourse composed by way of the **dialectical** technique. but it is in fact only an **imitation** of the **real thing**. To those who do not know any better. the **sophist** seems to possess **wisdom**. This **appearance is not real**. In contrast. the **dialectic** of the **philosopher** involves dividing **reality** according to **kinds of forms** that have **true being** (253b-254c). The **philosopher** possesses **wisdom** because he or she is able to distinguish among the **different kinds of forms**: knows how they can or cannot combine. is able to observe the **unity** that runs through all the **different kinds of forms**, and can put them together to compose a whole **discourse**. The **philosopher's wisdom** involves the ability to "mark off" the *enclosures* that delineate one topic from another. a difficult procedure. Knowing how to separate **forms** that cannot be combined from those that can be mixed together is especially difficult. Since the **sophist** does not know the **forms**. he tries to fake it by using phantastic **images** as a memory tool. This smoke and mirrors act **deceives naive** members of the audience who cannot tell the **difference** between the **illusion of wisdom** and **genuine wisdom**.

The Kinds of Forms

Between 254b and 255e. different **kinds of forms** are identified. We are told that some do not combine with other **forms**, while some of them do mix. Of those that do, some blend with a large number of **forms** while others combine with only a small number. Still others "pervade" all the **different forms** and blend with everything. The Stranger warns that he will not list every one of them. but only those that are considered to be the most significant. or at least. he says parenthetically. the ones that are "very important" (254c-d). Here. then. we have another explicit acknowledgment that parts of this philosophy will be omitted. Our teacher says that among the *kinds* "that we are discussing" we will find (1) **existence (being)**: (2) **motion**: and (3) **rest**. These. he emphasizes. are very important, and further. two of the three will *not* blend. We must be careful. since we have reason to suspect, from what the Stranger has been doing, that he may be indirectly using some of the other **kinds of forms**, even though he does not come out and say so. He does say that **existence** will blend with two [**motion** and **rest**]. since both **motion** and **rest exist**. He says that these make three in all and that **existence** combines with both [**motion** and **rest**]. Each one of them is (4) **the same** as itself (making **sameness** a fourth **form**), and (5) **different** (or **other**) from the other two (making **difference** the fifth **form**). He proclaims that **difference** pervades all the **forms**. for each one "partakes" of **difference** (255d). **Motion** "participates" in **sameness** and in **difference**, but not in **rest** (256c). Yet, **motion is not existence**. since it *partakes* of **existence** (256d). The Stranger announces that what he calls that which "**is not**." exists in the case of **motion**. as well as in the case of all the other **kinds**. He says that this involves a "principle." which he says means that **difference** makes all the other **forms** something other

than **existence**, which is the sense in which they **are not being**. Here then, we have come across another explicitly stated principle. All the other **forms** partake of **existence** and to this extent they **are**. At 256e, the Stranger says that "in the case of every one of the **forms** there is much that **it is** and an **indefinite** number of things that it **is not**." According to the Visitor then, this list includes the "most important" of Plato's **forms**. When he speaks of that which **is not**, he explains, he does not mean something contrary to **existence** (or alternatively, **being**), but only something that is **different** from it (257b). In consequence, the polarities, **rest** and **motion**, as well as **sameness** and **difference**, appear to be contraries. **Existence** and that which **is not existence** cannot be contraries.

Contraries and Intermediates

After that, there follows an extended discussion on the nature of the "contrary" using the example of that which **is not**. As the Stranger explains why the **is not** cannot be a "contrary," he tells us something about **knowledge** in the process. The statement, "**is not tall**" may refer to something that is "equal," as well as something that "is shorter" (257b). In this instance, equal is the "intermediate" term between the **greater** and the **smaller** quantity of height. He says it is the nature of the **different** to be "parceled out, in the same way as **knowledge**." *Just as knowledge is one, it also has different parts.* Thus, **knowledge** is both **one** and **many**. Each part of **knowledge** in this cosmos occupies a different field and for this reason, it is "marked off and given a special name proper to itself" (257c-d). That which is true of the single nature, he adds, is also true for the parts. We take it then, that **knowledge** is a **unity** that is cordoned off into different *enclosures* in the mnemonic. Each part is a distinctive space and is designated by a unique name. At the same time, the "commonplace" in which all the regions participate is **knowledge**. What holds **true** for **knowledge** applies to the **different** as well. Notice the number of times the Stranger has brought up the notion of "participation" in the context of this discussion of **imitation**. Here we have yet another confirmation of Aristotle's description of Plato's contributions to philosophy. We also have further support for the hypothesis that the doctrine of principles has to do with the system itself. It also seems safe to say that the Stranger *indirectly* identifies a number of other **forms** during the course of his discussion by way of the ones he identifies directly. For example, he mentions the [absolute and relative, 255c-d]; [beautiful and is not beautiful, 257d-e]; [*justice* and the *not-just* 258a]; [**great** and **small**, 257b-c]; and [**true** and **false**, 258b].

Discourse and Flux

The Stranger also establishes by direct statement that (7) **discourse** is one of the **kinds** that **exist**, making it a seventh **form** (260a). Here we have a most significant point!

He adds that **thinking** and **discourse** are the same and **different**. They are said to be the same, in that both "flow in streams." They are **different** in that **thinking** is "an *inward* dialogue that the mind carries on with itself in *silence* . . . whereas the stream which flows from the mind through the lips with **sound** is called **discourse**" (263d-e). The statement that **thinking** and **discourse** "flow in streams" contains a notion that we associate with Heraclitus and the doctrine of flux. When he mentions that **thinking** is an *inward* dialogue, the implication is that **discourse** is an *outward* one that flows through the lips. Based on this comment, we suspect that *inward* and *outward* dialogue are connected to the divisions that were [open to doubt] and [*medicine*] (231c-232a). This was the series that included occupations such as *weaving* that involved the notion of *division, separation, discrimination and discernment* (226c). To reiterate: one of these **kinds** was called *purification*, because it divided off the *better* from the *worse*, the *good* from the *bad*. Remember that the name for all **forms** of *purification* was **dialectic**. *Purification* was, in turn, divided into *body* and *soul*, which had an analogous and symmetrical structure. The *living* kind of *body* was partitioned into *inward* parts and *outward* parts. The *bathman* was concerned with the *outward* condition of the *living body* and the *fuller* and *decorator* were occupations dealing with *external inanimate bodies*. The *inward, living, body* was cordoned off further into an **art** of *medicine*, associated with physical *disease*, and an **art** of *gymnastics*, which was related to *physical deformity*. *Medicine* and *gymnastics* were assigned to the *inward, living, physical body*. We were not given the names of the parts of the *soul* that correspond to the *bodily* divisions of *living* and *lifeless*, and *inward* and *outward*. We notice now that no parallel in the *soul* was given for *inward, lifeless, physical bodies* either. When we collect this information together and build up the symmetrical relation of analogies between the polarities, *body* and *soul*, we can add to the material we were given previously this new piece of information: the *soul* is divided into *inward* and *outward* parts just like the *body*. So **discourse** or **speech** is an *outward* flow from the *soul* and **thinking** is an *inward* dialogue of the *soul*. The Stranger assures Theaetetus that without **discourse**, "we should be deprived of **philosophy**," which suggests that we were correct in making **discourse** the *product* created by the **philosopher** (that **wise** person), as *producer*. This passage verifies that **philosophy** has to do with an **art** *of discriminating and discerning*, in **thought** and in **speech**, the **different kinds of forms**. The Stranger also says that **discourse** "owes its existence to the *weaving* together of **forms**." Thus, **discourse** is designated to the place of **existents**. Theaetetus wonders why the Stranger has brought up **discourse** at this point. The Visitor explains that they have established that the **is not**, exists, and that it is one **kind of form** that pervades all the others; mixing in with **thinking** and **discourse**. If that which **is not existence** did not **exist**, he states, then everything that is thought or said would have to be **true**. At 260c-d, he declares:

And if **falsity exists. deception** is possible . And once **deception exists. images** and **likenesses** and **appearance** will be everywhere rampant . And the **sophist. we** said. had taken refuge somewhere in that region (τόπῳ)

The **is not** is related to **falsity**. As to Theaetetus' question about why the Stranger has mentioned **discourse** at this point. he says in reply that the **existence** of **false thinking** and **false discourse** allows him to account for the **being** of **deception. images. likenesses** and **appearances**—the regions or topics where the **sophist** is hiding! (260d) Though he does not come right out and say so. it may be that **true** and **false** are **kinds of forms** as well. A further implication is that the **philosopher** is a physician of the *soul* just as the doctor is a physician of the *body*. Again. we will lay down these parallels. We are now able to gather this information together with previous formulations of **dialectic.** and to fill in some of the gaps.

purification of the soul	*purification of body*
virtue (good) and vice (bad)	*living (animate) and lifeless (inanimate)*
[ ]	*inanimate bodies*
[ ]	*inward inanimate*
[ ]	*outward inanimate. fulling and furbishing*
[ ]	*purification of living bodies*
outward soul. [**discourse** or **speech**]	*outward body parts. bathman*
false statements	[outward obstacles]
inward soul [**thinking**]	*inward body parts*
food for the soul (knowledge)	*food for the body*
instruction and education	*medicine and gymnastics*
vice. errors of the intellect. **false thinking**	*internal obstacles*
psychic discord. does not know but thinks he does	*disease in the body*
(treated by instruction)	*(treated by medicine)*
psychic deformity. ignorance	*physical deformity*
(treated by education)	*(treated by gymnastics)*

The *Sophist* in Relation to Aristotle's Testimony

We pause to note a few key points. First. it looks like Proclus was on to something when he said that all the dialogues contain Plato's teaching. For in the passages we have considered so far. we have turned up a number of the features of the doctrines that Aristotle ascribed to Plato. The investigation began by selecting "a starting point." We have found in these passages statements expounding the notion of "participation." We also notice that some of the most important **forms** are contraries. In addition. the "principles" of *fire. air. water. earth*—the "primary shapes"—are mentioned here in the *Sophist*. The Stranger is demonstrating how to tell different **forms** apart and how to determine which ones blend together to create **discourse.** which is one of the most important **kinds of forms** because it combines with all the others. We also find the Eleatic man expounding a mathematical

procedure—division—whereby quantities are measured out from a totality. There are a number of statements dealing with the **great** and **small**. and ones that make use of analogy. polarity. and symmetry. There is also a reference to intermediates. We began to notice where terms should be juxtaposed in columns. making it easier to identify and work out the parts of the doctrine that are ˙˙unwritten.˙˙ When the Stranger mentioned. in addition. the expression ˙˙flows in streams.˙˙ we recognized a phrase that has been taken as synonymous with Heracleitian thought in the history of philosophy.[10] Remember that Plato was an adherent of this school. We are also given a list of the ˙˙most important˙˙ of Plato's **forms**. There is reference to **unity** and to the opposition of **one** and an **indefinite many**. In fact. at 256e. the **one** and the **indefinite number** were mentioned together in the same sentence. The opposition of the **one** and **indefinite duality** is yet another tenet of the ˙˙unwritten doctrines.˙˙

VII IMITATION

Seventh Sequence. This final sequence marks the sixth reappearance of the **sophist**. Having identified and dealt with earlier passages in the *Sophist* that prove crucial to an understanding of the divisions in this imitative branch of the definition. we are now in a position to move on to this culminating series.

At 264c. the Stranger asks Theaetetus to recall their earlier divisions by **forms**. He repeats that previously. two **forms** of **image making** were distinguished. ˙˙the making of **likenesses** and the making of **semblances**.˙˙ He reminds everyone that these divisions were confusing. He says that now that they have uncovered the **existence** of **false statements** and **false judgements**, they know that there can be **imitations of real things**, and that the recognition of the corresponding *state of mind* should make it possible for him to account for an **art of deception**. The **sophist**. he declares. will be placed under one of the two kinds. We are not exactly certain which kind he means. Does he refer to **false statements**. to **false judgements**. to the **likeness**. or to the **semblance**?

A Division of Art into Acquisition and Production (265a-b)

The Stranger reiterates once again that **art** is divided into *acquisition* and **production**. He then utilizes the procedure (i.e.. **dialectic**). to determine the **nature** and **function** of this practitioner of the **art of imitation**. The Visitor instructs:

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[10] ˙˙Heraclitus is supposed to say that all things are in motion and nothing at rest: he compares them to the stream of a river. and says that you cannot go into the same river twice˙˙ (Plato's *Cratylus* 402a): ˙˙All things come into being through opposition. and all are in flux like a river˙˙ (*Lives* IX. 8).

> divide the kind proposed in two, keep to the right-hand section at each stage. Holding fast to the characters of which the **sophist** *partakes* until we have stripped off all that he has in common with others and left only the **nature** that is peculiar to him, let us so make that **nature** plain, in the first place to ourselves, and secondly to others whose temperament finds a procedure of this sort congenial (264d-265a).

The method will involve dividing each and every kind in two. In this sequence, the movement at each stage will follow the section on the "right side" as they "descend." The Stranger says that keeping to the right entails hanging onto the features in which the **sophist** *participates*, while stripping away all those characteristics he has in common with others. He says that by the end of this exercise, they should find the **nature** that is unique to their quarry. The purpose, he emphasizes, is to make that **nature** clear and explicit to everyone who understands the significance of this method (again, the implication is that not everyone will understand). The enclosure on the right will be subdivided further according to the sequential and symmetrical quadratic pattern established previously. With every subsequent cleavage, an enclosure on the right will be seen to contain within it further levels of information, producing a nested structure of squares within squares that is characteristic of the ring composition. Thus, we are given to understand that this procedure of *division* will separate a totality into quantities. Abstract notions will then be correlated with the resulting ratios—a method that corresponds to Aristotle's description of the Pythagorean system. At the mention of the word, "right," we are reminded as well that "left and right" were the fourth pair in the series of *opposites* in the two-column arrangement described in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. The clear implication is that this procedure will involve *discerning* and *distinguishing*, by way of analogy and polarity, **likeness** from **likeness**; **true** from **false**; *better* from *worse*; that which **is**, from that which **is not**; and **real** from **unreal**—all by way of a number of symmetrical relationships among the **kinds of forms** that the Stranger will identify. At each stage, it seems he will be taking away the positive attributes while dividing further the negative features.

B   Division of Acquisition into Exchange and Conquest (265a)

He reminds everyone that they previously attempted to track down the **sophist** under "the **arts** of *hunting, contention, trafficking* and other kinds of that sort" that fall under the heading of *acquisition* (265a).

C   Production Divided into Divine and Human (265b)

However, he emphasizes, now that the **sophist** has been cornered in the **art** of **imitation**, they have to start off by dividing into two "the **productive branch of art**." He goes on to remind everyone that

they began by dividing **art** into two kinds, **productive** and *acquisitive*. The Stranger declares that **imitation** is a kind of **production**, albeit a **lesser**—rather than a **greater**—kind. He delineates two kinds of **production**, "the one **divine**, the other **human**" (265b). This distinction seems to be parallel with *purification*, which was divided into *bodies* and *souls* (227c). Thus, we would see the **divine** as being correlated with the *soul* that has *no visible embodiment*, and the **human** as corresponding to *visible bodies*.

D   Division of Divine into Originals and Images

Production, he reiterates, is defined as a "*power* that can bring into **existence** what **did not exist** before" (265b). It is therefore a creative activity involving some sort of **genesis**. It entails a change from one **kind of form**—**not being**, or that which **is not existence**—into a kind of **form** that has **being**. The factor underlying the division at this stage of the inquiry has to do with **generation** (from nothing to something), and **transformation** ("out of **not being**" into **being**).

One of the two kinds into which **production** is separated—either **divine** or **human**—is further divided into three things: first all **mortal animals**; second, **things that grow** including **plants, seeds**, and **roots**; and third, **lifeless bodies compacted beneath the earth**. This third kind—i.e., **inanimate bodies** found underground—is in turn divided into first **fusible**, and then second, **is not fusible**.

Some of these distinctions match up with those established previously. *Agriculture* involves **things that grow** including **plants, seeds**, and **roots**. The *tendence of mortal creatures* seems the same as all **mortal animals**. Mention of **lifeless bodies compacted beneath the earth** reminds us of an idea that might help fill in a "gap" that we noted previously, namely, *inward, lifeless, bodies*. Since *outward, lifeless bodies* included *fullers* and *furbishers*, we anticipate that *inward, lifeless bodies* might include occupations such as [miners, gemologists, fossil hunters, or excavators]. This group of ideas is related to *purification* of *bodies*, which was divided into *outward* and *inward* (227a-b). To continue, the principle behind the division into **divine** or **human** appears to be related to the **formation** and **origin** of the items distinguished. This division concerns the kind of *cause* that generates a thing, the **origin** or source that brings about a **genesis** from that which **is not existence** into **existence**.

F   Division of Divine Originals into Craftsmanship and [   ]

The Stranger asks, "Must we not attribute the **coming-into-being** of these things out of **that which is not existence** to **divine craftsmanship** and nothing else?" (265c). Now, even though he does not say so at this precise moment, by analogy with the distinctions made previously, and in accordance with the specification of the *causal* class just made, we can see that **divine products** and **divine**

craftsmanship must involve the following **divine** *objects,* as that which is *produced* by the **divine craftsman**: first, **mortal animals**; second, **things that grow** including **plants, seeds,** and **roots**; and third, **lifeless bodies compacted beneath the earth**, both **fusible** or **not fusible**. Along with the *product* comes the *state of mind* of both the *producer* and the observer of the *product,* the perspective or the point of view of the creator generating it and the beholder looking at it. Then, there is the **craftsmanship** itself as the *"power* that can bring into **existence** what **did not exist** before" (265b). The **divine craftsman** is the *producer* who carries out the **production.** (At the beginning of the dialogue, mention was made of the **god** and then he dropped out of sight. Maybe this reference to a **divine** *producer* signals the subtle presence of the **god** here in a latent, indirect way). Now, we are instructed that we must recognize the **divine** *cause* of that **existence and coming into being.** According to Aristotle, *causes* were numbers, or first principles in Plato's system. The **divine craftsman** appears to be such a *cause.* From now on, we will keep our eyes open for further evidence that the *producer* and the *cause* are the **same,** and that they are both correlated with number.

The Eleatic Visitor asks if we should merely go along with the most frequently expressed belief? Theaetetus is not sure he knows the belief to which the Stranger refers. The Visitor prompts, "Do these things come to be from **nature** as a *product* of some spontaneous *cause* that generates without **intelligence?** Or alternatively, do they come from a *cause* that **operates with reason and art,** is **divine,** and comes from **divinity?**" Thus, the Stranger hints that the **divine** is separated into two kinds of *causes.* [One kind of **divine** *cause*] (he does not give it a unique name, so we indicate this with a bracket) produces *products* through the sort of **craftsmanship** that works in an **orderly** fashion with **reason** and **art.** The other, **necessary** *cause,* has its **origin** in **nature** and it generates *products* **automatically and involuntarily** from **not being,** in a **lawless** manner, and **without the aid of intelligence.** Remember that **orderly** and **lawless** were two of the polarities mentioned by Socrates at this dialogues' introduction. Here, we find them recurring again in the context of this discussion of *causation.* Theaetetus is not exactly certain as to whether the correct answer is **divine** or **necessary,** but he hazards a guess. He decides that these things are of **divine origin.** If he is correct, then *causes* classed in the **divine** category are of two **kinds**: first, a kind that involves **reason** and **art,** and second, a kind that works by **necessity** and **nature.** The **human** branch of **image production** is said to be the kind that makes things out of that which has been produced by **divine art.** No further details are given concerning the **divine** kind of **craftsmanship.** Nor is there any mention of the *cause* that governs **human image production.** To be clear, let us juxtapose these distinctions.

divine original	divine image
that produces	that generates products

through craftsmanship	automatically
[voluntarily]	involuntarily
in orderly way	in a lawless manner
[ ]	works without intelligence
works with	works by
reason	necessity
and art	comes from nature

Setting the classes in juxtaposition, we notice there is a kind of symmetry between the two sides of these divisions of the **divine**. This mirroring creates parallel structures, some of which are the **same** in both cases while others are **different**. The parts of the pattern that are the **same** on both sides follow the sequence: . . . *cause* . . . produces . . . in a way or manner . . . that works with or by . . . The parts that are **different** appear in some instances to be in opposition, and in others to be merely contrary. Thus, **orderly** and **lawless** seem to be opposites, whereas **works with** is a contrary notion to **works without**. **Automatically** and **involuntarily** that fall on the side of **necessity** appear to counterbalance **craftsmanship** on the side of **reason**. Observe further that most expressions that pertain to one kind of *cause* have a parallel in the other kind of *cause*. The exceptions are the name, so that **necessity** is established as the title given to one kind; the expression for the other is not spelled out but is mentioned only in terms of the **craftsman**. Nor is there any mention of what the kind of *cause* that is correlated with **reason** and **art** "works without." Here, we can see that there are "empty places" in the pattern. Since the symmetrical structure operates by polarities, we suspect that the unique name of the *cause* that works in an **orderly** fashion might be [**reason**], as opposed to **necessity**, and that **art** may be juxtaposed with **nature**. Whereas the *cause* on the right produces **automatically**, the one on the left is **different**. **Craftsmanship** is not something that works spontaneously. It **works with art**, and as such, it [*proceeds by systematic rules and by way of a definite technique* (225b-c)]. Similarly, the contrary to **involuntarily** must be [voluntarily]. In fact, we know this to be the case from the divisions of *purification*, where the Stranger stated that "no soul is [voluntarily] **ignorant** . . . we are to regard an **unintelligent** *soul* as *deformed* and *devoid* of symmetry" (228c-d). In both passages, **unintelligence** is associated with the **involuntary**. We are therefore able to fill in another missing piece in our puzzle.

E   Division of Human into Originals and Images (266a)

Having "laid down" that the *products* of **nature** belong to the **divine**, while all those things that are made out of **nature** are works of **human art**, and that there are two kinds of **production**, one **human** and the other **divine**, the Stranger moves ahead with a description of the next phase. He takes the two kinds of **production**, one **human**, the other **divine**, and partitions each one into two parts. At 266a,

he says

> Once more then, divide each of these into two parts . . . as you have just divided the whole extent of **production** horizontally, now divide it vertically. The result is four parts in all—two on our side, **human**, two on the side of the **gods**, **divine** (266a).

Let us set out in a diagram the Stranger's instructions for the creation of this **figure** and see if we can identify the **number** of parts it embodies. *Again, the diagrams are at the end of this chapter, laid out in sequence as indicated.* Acknowledging that this construction is supposed to be carried out "in our heads," and not on paper, and that inevitably, there will be some features of this geometry that will not flatten out well on the page, we will attempt, as best we can, to produce a structure that matches the description of it presented in the text. Even if some parts of our drawing are difficult to render, constructing the figure should help to clarify the procedure. It should also make it possible for others to come after and confirm or correct the representation. To that end, we will begin by thinking of **production** as one, a **unity**. Then, we divide it into two enclosures—one designated to **divine** *causes* and the other to **human** ones. After that, we will cut the **divine** portion into two parts and the **human** area into two different parts as well, thereby generating parts three and four. Could these be the first four numbers in the Pythagorean decad?

The Stranger explains how this separation should be accomplished. He says that the full extent of **production** is divided width-wise. We will begin with a space designated to **production**. Since nothing has been said about its boundaries, we will leave the region open-ended in our diagram (fig. 9.1). The empty page will represent the "entirety of **production**." Then, we need to draw a horizontal line that bisects all of this entirety, creating two different places. Since the first division is "horizontal," one part of **production** must be "above" and the other "below." However, since the Stranger provides no definite instruction about how big we should make the area that is on top of the horizontal line relative to the space that is underneath it, or about how large to make the field that is situated to the left of the vertical line relative to the place that is to the right of it, we cannot be certain whether these two lines should separate **production** into equal or unequal parts.

There are precedents in other dialogues for both kinds of proportions.[11] In the *Republic* (509e), a line is divided into unequal sections. Since we have encountered a number of references to the **great**

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[11] Admittedly, it is dangerous to attempt to develop an interpretation of a particular issue by amalgamating statements from different books. This is because discussions in different works do not all begin from the same starting point in a sequence, and they also view the topic from different angles. Without an understanding of the order and arrangement of the topics in the definition, it is not really possible to develop a consistent interpretation by piecing together points established in different contexts. However, since we seek only guidelines and we are not looking to incorporate this material into the commentary here, we can make an exception.

and **small**, and since it has already been established that the **divine** is more important than the **human**, we would have good reasons for making the spaces unequal. so that the area above the line is bigger than the one below it. We would then assign the **divine** to the region on the top part of the page, and the **human** to the field at the bottom. However, in the *Statesman* (262b). it is made clear that the line may sometimes be cordoned off into equal parts. We are told in this latter dialogue that

> it is always safer to go down the middle to make our cuts. The real cleavages among the **forms** are more likely to be found thus, and the whole art of these definitions consists in finding these cleavages (*Stsmn*. 262b); and later

> We see two paths lying before us inviting us to our goal. One path reaches the goal more quickly but divides off a **small** class from a **larger** one. The other is a longer way round but it observes the principle we enunciated before. that we should always divide down the middle where possible. We can go by whichever of these paths we prefer . . .To take both at once is impossible (*Stsmn*. 265a).

We must make a choice. The directions concerning the division of the line in the *Republic*, on the one hand, involve a partitioning into **images, likenesses, reflections**, and **shadows**. Since this passage in the *Sophist* deals with these very notions, we would be justified in following the path taken in the *Republic*. If we took this route, we would render the two parts that result from the division into **divine** and **human** on our diagram as unequal. In the *Statesman*, on the other hand. the Eleatic Stranger says that it is possible to make the cuts either way—to proceed by dividing into equal parts or into unequal portions. In fact, he demonstrates the two ways of dividing through the example of the *tendence of mortal creatures*. He shows how to "divide off a **small** class from a **larger** one." and then he provides instruction on how to partition the *care of living beings* down the middle. Now, it was established at the beginning of the *Sophist* that *the tendence of mortal creatures* is, like **imitation**, one part of **production**. Moreover, we did in fact choose this particular passage in the *Sophist* because it is thought to be an instance of a successful definition. We also had the Stranger's assurance that this particular definition would be thorough and complete. Since we are told that it is "safer" to make the cuts in the middle, we have good reasons for taking the second path and cleaving all of **production** into two equal halves. Further—and most importantly—at *Soph*. 221b, we were told that "half of all art was *acquisitive*." This piece of evidence tells us that **art**. as a whole, is divided in two halves, one of which is *acquisition*. The Stranger also established that **art** is divided into **production** and *acquisition*. Therefore, **production** is half of the whole of **art**. Now that **production** is, in turn, subdivided, it makes sense that he is continuing to make the divisions by cutting down the middle of each unity to produce two halves. Moreover, we know that the Stranger has also been dividing other definitions in half, for example. he said, "And is not that part of *exchange* which *takes place in the city*, being about

half of the whole, termed *retailing?*" (224d). He also said that we should be trying to see "if we can discover a line which divides **ignorance** into *two halves* (229b). For these reasons, and also to be on the safe side, let us go by the second path, and draw a horizontal line across the middle of our page, slicing all of **production** in **half**, creating two equal areas. Both spaces represent kinds of **production** (fig. 9.2). If this cleavage should prove incorrect, we will make an adjustment later.

The next step is to determine where we should place the **divine** and the **human**. We will have to be cautious, since the Stranger neglects to specify exactly where these notions should be located. At 265e, he laid it down that the **products** of **nature** were ultimately a kind of **divine art**. He said as well that **human art** makes things out of those things that are **divinely produced**. This implies that the **divine** is more significant than the **human**. Another factor we must take into account when determining the placement of these two is that we are "descending." When we look ahead, we will find ourselves constantly dividing off parts from the **human** sections. For these reasons, let us assume that the **divine** should occupy the higher part, and locate it above the line. We will then take the **human** as being lower than the **divine**, and assign it to the region beneath it (fig. 9.3). In making this assumption, we will take heed of the advice Socrates offers in the *Republic* (511b). We will treat this assumption concerning the placement of the **divine** and **human** parts not as an absolute beginning, but as an "hypothesis," an "underpinning," a "footing," and a "springboard." If we should discover later that we have made a mistake, we can amend the construction then.

Notice that the one line creates two parts. The movement is from the idea of one (**production as a unity**), to two (the straight line, or length that generates a dyad). Having located these two kinds of **production** (**divine** and **human**) on opposite sides of the line—in a sort of symmetrical relation—the Eleatic man proceeds to carry out the partitioning of each of the two parts. He directs his companions to "Once more, then, divide each of these two into two parts" (266e). When Theaetetus asks for further clarification, he says they should draw a vertical line through the horizontal one. Having made the cleavage along the width, the next cut is made *in the opposite way*, that is, along the length. Again, the exact place where the lines cross is not made explicit. Still, he does say to make this length-wise division *just like* the entire unity of **production** was divided width-wise. Therefore, in a manner *analogous* to the way we drew the line all along the full width of **production**, separating it into equal areas, we will now, in turn, cut down the middle of the horizontal line we have just made (fig. 9.4). The parts of **production** become four in all. The two parts situated on the upper "side" we will assign to the **gods** and the **divine** and the two on the lower "side" of the line we will assign to the **human** (fig. 9.5).

To reiterate: we take **production**—considered as one indefinite space—and then we draw a

horizontal line across all of it. This action creates two spaces. one above the other. separated by a dividing line. After that. we cross the horizontal line with a vertical one. Dividing the horizontal line with a vertical one yields four parts in all. The Stranger has. once again. "quartered the ground." These four quarters all belong to **production**. They are *caused* by the combination of the **two** lines without anything further being added. The intersection of the two lines creates *four angles*. These partition the **unity** into four separate and distinct areas. Thus, the **one** and **indefinite dyad** generates **many**.

Observe that we are parceling out **production** in the same way that **knowledge** was distinguished into **different** parts. Remember that **knowledge** was a **unity**, or **one** thing, made up of **many**. Though all the separate parts were the **same** as **knowledge**, each one was said to occupy a **different** place and so it was marked off from the others and given a unique name (257c-d). Just as **knowledge** was said to be both **one** and **many**, **production** is taken to be a **unity** that is partitioned into **many**. Drawing the lines divides all of it into separate spaces, each of which occupies a **different** region of the **same** whole. As we mark off a portion, we are instructed to put a name to it. We were told that what is true of **knowledge** as a single **nature** is also **true** for all of its parts. Likewise, we may infer that what holds for **production**, holds also for the parts.

Let us continue with this procedure by assigning topics to this emerging shape. Having created by the first method of bisection two spaces for the **divine** and two for the **human** kinds of **production**, we will now forge ahead with the definition of the remaining two quadrants. The Stranger explains

> And taking the divisions made in the first way, one section of each part will be the **production of originals**, and the remaining two sections will be the **production** of **images**: so we have a second division of **production** on that principle (266a).

He takes the divisions "made in the first way." For now, we will take this statement as a reference to the horizontal line that separates the totality of **production** into **divine** and **human**, though we must recognize the ambiguity in this instruction and be prepared to revise our diagram should this assumption prove incorrect. The horizontal line is divided by the vertical line into two sections. It separates the total area into two parts on the **divine** side and two parts on the **human** side of the line. One section of the **divine** part will be designated to the **production of originals**. and one section of the **human** part will also be assigned to **originals**. Of the remaining two parts, the other half of the **divine** section will be given over to **divine images**. Likewise, the other section of **human** region will be allocated to the production of **human images**. Since we are moving to the right. and since **images** are derived from, or are dependant on the **original**, we will place the making of **originals**, both **divine** and **human**, to the left of the vertical line (fig. 9.6), and the **production** of **images** to the right (fig.

9.7). With the assignment of these abstract ideas. we can see that the unity of the two opposite lines has created a *symmetrical relation* among the four parts. where the **human** mirrors the **divine** and the **image** mirrors the **original**.

G   Division of Divine Images into Likenesses and Semblances

Theaetetus asks the Stranger to explain again how the **two** parts should be sectioned. We will listen attentively while the Stranger provides Theaetetus with more details about how **divine originals** and **images** should be sectioned. Our teacher instructs.

> **Ourselves.** I take it. and all other **living creatures** and **the elements** of **natural things**—**fire. water** and their kindred—are all **originals.** the offspring, as we are well assured, of **divine workmanship** . . . and every one of these *products* is attended by **images** which are not the **actual thing**, and which owe their **existence** to **divine contrivance** . . . **dream images**, and in **daylight** all those naturally produced **semblances** which we call 'shadow' when **dark** patches interrupt the **light**, or a 'reflection' when **the light belonging to the eye meets and coalesces with light belonging to something else on a bright and smooth surface and produces a form yielding a perception that is the reverse of the ordinary direct view.**
> There are indeed. these two products of **divine** workmanship—the **original** and the **image** that in every case accompanies it.

Thus. we are taught that three things fall under the class of **divine originals**. Mirroring this structure, **divine images**, too, are separated into three. Contained within the region of the **divine original** are the progeny (i.e.. the *products*) of **divine craftsmanship** including: **human beings**; other **living creatures**; and *all* the **elements of nature**, including **fire, water** and their kind. **Fire and water** are, of course, two of the basic geometric **shapes** or **forms** (**fire** being synonymous with the pyramid and **water** with the icosahedron), those cosmic figures that played such a major role in both the Pythagorean theory of proportionals and in Plato's theory. Aristotle said that these were the elements out of which the universe was composed. Further, according to the tradition, the primary bodies were, along with numbers, among the first principles in the Pythagorean system. The Stranger makes it clear that these elements are classed as **divine** *causes*. However, since they are said to be the elements of **nature**, we must understand that they cannot be placed with the highest, or **greater** kind of *cause*, but with the **necessary** sort of *cause* that generates **products automatically** and **involuntarily** and in a **lawless** manner **without the aid of intelligence.** This too tallies with Aristotle's account of the *causes* in the Pythagorean system. where the primary bodies (while being first principles), were not the "very first principles," a place that was reserved for numbers (*Met.* I. V. 985b-986a).

The Stranger asserts that **real** things are accompanied by **images** which are not the *products* of **divine craftsmanship**, but which are instead the *products* of **divine contrivance.** Thus, the

opposing term to **craftsmanship** in **originals** is the [**contrivance**] of **images**. These **contrived images** are, in turn, divided into **eyes**, and **dream images**. The other two *products* produced by **divine contrivance** are **naturally produced semblances** including **reflections**, and **shadows**. We find the Stranger offering a precise description of the **order** and **arrangement** of the subsequent items. Corresponding to every single **divine original** is a **divine image**. **Divine images** are not the things themselves. Even so, they do owe their being to a **contrivance** that is **divine**. So much for **divine originals** and **images**.

F   **Division of Human Originals into Building an Actual House and [   ]**

> And what of our **human art**? Must we not say that **in building it produces an actual house** and in **painting a house of a different sort, as it were a man-made dream for waking eyes**? (267b-d).

For the **human art** that produces **originals**, the Stranger gives the example of **building an actual house** (i.e., architecture, which entails **human craftsmanship** involving **form, shape, proportion, light**, and space) . . .

G   **Division of Human Images into Likenesses and Semblances (266d)**

. . . and as an example of the other kind, the **human image**, he mentions the **painting** of the house which produces a **dream for eyes that are awake**. The **painting of a house** is not an actual building but merely a **contrivance** of a house. The word **painting** also brings to mind earlier divisions of *acquisition* that must be linked to this class. Let us be reminded of the statements at 223d-224a, where **painting** was listed, along with **music** and **marionette playing**, as a *food for the soul*. Then, at 236c, the *products* created by the **sculptor** were added, and then at 239d, the **drawings** of the **draftsman**.

The Stranger establishes that in each and every case, **human production** is twofold and comes in *pairs*. Here is a major clue concerning the pattern that will make it possible to identify the unwritten portions of the structure!

> And so in all cases, we find once more *twin products* of our own **productive** activity in *pairs*—one an **actual thing**, the other an **image**.
> I understand better now, and I recognize two **forms** of **production**, each of them twofold—**divine** and **human** according to one division, and according to the other a **production** of **actual things** and of some sort of **likeness** (266d)

Production, he says emphatically, involves "*pairs of twins*" (in other words, two . . . each of which is further subdivided into two, producing four enclosures in every single instance). Of these four, two are **original**, and are produced by the **art** that creates **genuine things**, and the other two are **images**, more specifically, kinds of **likenesses**. Notice as well that the other division produces **actual things**

(originals) and some sort of likeness. This indicates that likenesses are more significant than semblances. Let us set out in the two column arrangement (since we do not have room on our diagram) the contents of each of the classes. divine and human originals and divine and human images.

divine originals	divine images	human originals	human images
humans	[ ]	building produces	
all living beings	eyes	the actual house	
	dream images		waking dream
the elements of nature	naturally produced		man-made
fire	semblances—shadows		the painting
	(dark interrupts light) or		
	likenesses—reflections		
	(light of the eye meets		
	light of something else on		
water	on a bright, smooth surface		
	forming a reverse		
	perception)		
[kindred elements]			

Looking carefully, we can see that there is a connection between fire and divine images by way of the common factor of light. Similarly water seems to be related to reflections. We should stay alert, for it may be that when the text discusses light and reflections on water or smooth bright surfaces, we are indirectly being given explanations about the primary bodies.

Let us carefully consider this new information in light of our diagram. We currently have four enclosures, moving from left to right above the horizontal line (1) is a divine original; and (2) is a divine image. Moving below the line and from left to right (3) is a human original; and (4) is a human image. Plainly, there are four quadrants in all. Wait! When the Stranger mentions that there is a division into actual things (originals) and into likenesses (which we know to be a subdivision of images), he tells us that he has already cracked apart the image making area.

> Let us remind ourselves, then, that of this production of images there were to be two kinds, one producing likenesses, the other semblances, provided that falsity should be shown to be a thing that really is false and of such a nature as to have a place among existing things (267d-e).

This description of the division of images corresponds precisely to the divisions he explained earlier at 235b-d when he "quartered the ground of image making." Now that it is time to render this division of images on our diagram, we can see that we must be careful, for the Stranger offers no further explicit instructions concerning the placement of the lines, and the description he does provide is fairly cryptic. Fortunately, the directions given for the division of imitation into four parts in the earlier passage at 235b-d will prove helpful. Here, and in this previous passage, image production

is divided into two kinds—**likenesses** and **semblances**. From 235e, we learned that the **likeness** is a **copy that conforms to the proportions of the original in all dimensions and colors**, while the **semblance is only the appearance of a likeness** because it is seen from a restricted viewpoint. Previously, we were told that this limited vantage point was the **human** perspective. In this earlier discussion, we were instructed to "at once quarter the ground by dividing the **art of image making** and . . . descend into that enclosure." We will apply this earlier instruction to the divisions we must make here at 235b-c. In order to do that, we must work out the answers to two questions: first, where exactly should make our divisions? and second, to which part should we assign **likenesses** and to which space **semblances**? Do we take it that "quartering the ground" means that we should separate all of **images** into **four** parts? In other words, do we assume that **divine images** are divided into **four** and likewise, that **human images** are divided into **four** (i.e., into pairs of twins)? As well, should we follow the initial sequence—horizontal line first and vertical line second—when it comes to drawing the lines? Said differently, do we construct one horizontal line through **divine images** and another one through **human images**? Then after that, should we draw a vertical line through **divine images**, and another one through **human images**, thereby separating each kind of **image making** into **four**? Or should we assume that all the subsequent lines are horizontal? Another decision we have to make is whether we should regard the **divine** kind of **image** as a **likeness** and the **human** kind as a **semblance**, or whether **divine images** have both **likenesses** and **semblances**. Similarly, we must decide whether **human images**, too, have **likenesses** and **semblances**. Let us see if we can reason out an answer based on the information that we have been given.

Consider the lines. It has been established that the ground of **image making** should be divided into four (235a). We know from the division of **production** that the sequence for the lines was horizontal followed by vertical. By analogy, it makes sense that *this* division of **images** into four would proceed by way of a *like order and arrangement*. The example of **production** established the following sequence: a horizontal division of all of **production** yielding two parts, one over the line and another under it. One of the two parts of **production** is correlated with the **divine** and the other part is designated to the **human**. After that, there was a vertical division of all of **production** into **originals** and **images** which creates four parts: two for the **divine** (one which is designated to the **original** and the other one to the **image**); and two for the **human** (again, one to **originals** and the other to **images**). Now, we know from the previous instructions concerning the *illusionist*, that it is "agreed then that we should at once quarter the ground by dividing the **art of image making**" and "descend into that enclosure (235a). Further, the Stranger has already declared that "in all cases" we will find "*twin products* of our own **productive** activity in *pairs*" (266d). This indicates that each unity (every case)

is divided into two. and then each of these two is divided in two again to produce four quarters. **Human** productive activity (our own) is separated into twins and then each twin is cut into a pair. If **human image making** is divided into twin pairs, then this must be a reflection of the **divine** divisions. If we collect all this evidence together, it stands to reason that this whole sequential procedure (horizontal line followed by a vertical line) is repeated in the case of both kinds of **image making—divine image making** and **human image making**. Just as we drew a horizontal line separating all of **production** into **divine** and **human**, we will inscribe a line width-wise across the ground of our own **human image productive** activity and likewise, a horizontal line across **human images**. We know that **images** are divided into two, one being **likenesses** and the other being **semblances**. Further, **likenesses** depict with a **greater** degree of **truth** and accuracy the **proportions** and **colors** of the **original**, whereas the **semblance** has a **lesser** degree of **truth**. In other words, **likenesses** are more **like** the **divine** than **semblances**. Moreover, the Stranger said at 266d that the "other" division produced "actual things and some sort of likeness." This means that semblances must be a particular kind of **likeness**. Therefore, let us correlate **divine likenesses** with the regions above the horizontal line in **divine images**, and **divine semblances** with the area below the horizontal line in **divine images**. Likewise, let us locate **human likenesses** above the line in **human images**, and **human semblances** underneath **human semblances** (fig. 9.8). In this way, we have quartered the ground of **images** into **likenesses** and **semblances**. Once again. taking the initial divisions of production as our master pattern. where the vertical division separated the **divine** and **human** into **originals** (on the left) and **images** (on the right). so too we will make a vertical cut down the center of **divine images** (fig. 9.9). Even though we are setting aside **originals** to focus on **images**. we know that the regions of **divine** and **human originals** are sectioned off in a way that mirrors the divisions of **divine** and **human images**.

Let us see if we can confirm our width-wise and length-wise cleavages of **divine** and **human images** by seeing if the Stranger assigns the correct **number** of ideas to each main part. Recall that he divided **image production** into the kind that makes **likenesses** and the kind that **produces semblances**. Let us see if we can **figure** out how these fit in with the spaces created by the divisions on our diagram.

H Division of Divine Likenesses into Eyes and Dreams

The Stranger established that the making of **divine originals** involves a **divine craftsman** as the *cause* that produces in an **orderly** way by working with **reason** and **art**. **Divine images**, on the other hand,

are not the *products* of divine craftsmanship but of divine contrivance. and therefore. they are produced by the lesser kind of divine *cause*. This lesser type operates according to **necessity**. and without the **rules, order**, and **intelligence** that is a characteristic feature of an **art**. With a little thought, we can see that **divine images** are related to **natural** *causes* rather than to the *cause* that uses **reason** and **art**. Let us look carefully at the examples of **divine images** that we have been given, namely: (1) **eyes**, which probably refers to the **eyes of the soul** mentioned at 254b; (2) **dream images**; (3) **reflections** on **water** and on smooth and **bright** surfaces; and (4) **shadows**. Remember that the Stranger always refers to **falsity** in this context as well.

I   Division of Divine Semblances into Reflections and Shadows

The two kinds of **divine images** called **reflections** and **shadows**—where **dark** interrupts the **light**—are said to be "**naturally** produced **semblances**." In other words, **reflections** and **shadows** are *products* that are generated **automatically** and *involuntarily* in **nature** without any *systematic* design or **craftsmanship**. The difference between a **semblance** and a **likeness** is that the **likeness** is the same **shape** as the **original** in all **dimensions** and it also has the right **colors**. **Shadows** and **reflections** have only two **dimensions**—not three. **Reflections** may reproduce the correct **colors**, but **shadows** do not. Further, we can discern that **dream images** (and **eyesight**) have a greater proportion of **reality** and **truth** relative to the **original** than what we find in **reflections** and **shadows**. When compared with **likenesses. semblances** involve a **smaller** proportion of **reality** and **truth**. At the same time, while both **eyesight** and **dream images** reproduce the **colors** accurately in all **dimensions**, **dream images** have about them a **smaller** quantity of **reality, truth**, and **existence** in comparison to **eyesight**. Since we know that **images** are divided into two, one being **likenesses** and the other being **semblances**, we will take a further step and classify as **divine likenesses** both the divine type of **eyes of the soul** and **dream images**. **Naturally produced reflections**, and **shadows**, on the other hand, we will classify as **divine semblances**. Therefore, we will draw a vertical line through **divine images** creating two kinds of **divine likenesses** and two kinds of **divine semblances** (fig. 9.10).

Since the **likeness** reproduces more accurately the **greater** *cause* and the **original**, we will locate the **visual perceptions** seen by the **divine eyes** (of the **soul**) in the area to the left of the vertical line that marks the separation of the **production** of **divine likenesses** into two. For the opposite reason (and because it seems more like the **lesser, necessary** *cause* and the **image**), we will place the **production** of **divine dream images** to the right of the vertical line. This means we have designations for the two regions of **divine likenesses** (fig. 9.11). We now turn to the regions below that are given

to **divine semblances**. In exactly the same way, we will position **naturally produced reflections** (where the **light** of the **eye** meets the **light** of something else on a **bright smooth surface**, forming a **reverse perception**) in the area of **divine semblances** directly below **eyes**, and to the left of the vertical line. We will position **shadows**, where **dark** interrupts the **light**, to the right of the vertical line, and below the **production** of **divine dream images** (fig. 9.12).

Notice that after this point, the Stranger sets aside the **divine** regions and moves on to the **human** topics. We take it that none of these **divine** fields gives refuge to the **sophist**. As we continue our descent into the **smaller** and **darker** areas of the mnemonic in our efforts to *hunt* down the **nature** that is peculiar to the charlatan we seek, it becomes more difficult to make out the divisions. As we descend, we are moving from general to particular. We are also generating an arrangement into columns. Further, these classes are all **one** (they are all portions of **production** and so they are the **same**), yet there are **many** diverse parts (so they are **different**).

H   Division of Human Likenesses into Waking Eyes and Man-Made Dreams

We must now go on to assign topics to the parts of **human image making** that we have separated into four fields. We have designated **likenesses** and **semblances** to **human images** in a way that corresponded to the position of **likenesses** and **semblances** in the sections of our diagram that we assigned to **divine images**. Just as there were two *products* of **divine production** (the **original** and the **image** that "accompanies it in every case"), we have been given, as examples of **human originals**, the **building that produces the actual house**, and as examples of **human images**, first, **painting** (along with **music, marionette playing, sculpting, and drafting**); and second, the kind of **art** that produces the **man-made dream for waking eyes**. It is clear that **man-made dream images** bear a resemblance to the kind of **divine likenesses** in which we placed **divinely made dream images**. There also seems to be a parallel between **divine eyes of the soul** and **human waking eyes of the body**. However, it is not entirely clear where we should situate **painting**. Fortunately, the Stranger has already established (at 236c) that **painting** is classed with **semblances**. It looks like he is continuing to edge his way down into the regions where the **sophist** skulks. Let us wait to see how the Eleatic man makes the next divisions before we determine how we should separate **human semblances**.

I   Division of Human Semblances into Tools and Mimicry

Once more, then let us divide in two the kind that produces **semblances** . . . there is the semblance produced by means of **tools**, and another sort where **the producer of the semblance takes his own person as an instrument.**
How do you mean?

When someone uses his own person or voice to counterfeit your traits or speech. the proper name for creating such a semblance is. I take it mimicry . . . let us reserve that section. then. under the name of mimicry. and indulge ourselves so far as to leave all the rest for someone else to *collect into a unity* and give it an appropriate name (267a-b).

So the Visitor now divides semblances of the human kind into two, just like he partitioned the divine kind. He tells his friends that first kind of human semblance is produced by means of tools or instruments. He adds that the second kind of human semblance is called mimicry. The Stranger says that mimicry entails a *producer* who uses his or her own person as an instrument for imitating characters (as an actor plays a role on stage). or takes his own voice as a tool (for imitating speech).

When the Stranger mentions that the sophist uses his voice as a tool, it reminds us of two of the classes of productive art that he distinguished at the beginning of the dialogue: *the molding of vessels and the use of tools*; and imitation (219b). *Molding of vessels* and the employment of *instruments* reminds us that Aristotle referred to the topics as a "vessel," or container, and that the form (as the style) was the mold or shape that defined the matter (the content). Thus, we may see the mnemonic as a memory *tool*—an intellectual *instrument*—with the forms as the *vessel* that gives shape to this philosophical discourse. According to this understanding, *division*, or dialectic. is the *science of discriminating and discerning*, in thought and speech, the different kinds of forms, knowing which ones can and cannot be combined and then *weaving* those that do blend together to bring into existence philosophical discourse. Similarly, whereas the rhapsodes in this oral civilization used their voice to sew songs. the philosophers used theirs to *weave* discourse, the sophists used their voices to fabricate a shadow play of words.

We need to backtrack again! Consider divine images. We noted that the divine likeness included (1) eyes: and (2) dream images. Divine semblances entailed (1) reflections: and (2) shadows. We can now see that there is a mirroring wherein human images parallel divine images. Hence, (1) human likenesses entail (1) waking eyes: and (2) man-made dreams. Human semblances include (1) productions by tools such as a painting of a house which is a reflection of the original house: and (2) mimicry, which is a sort of shadow of the original words (that cheat the ear. 254c) and actions. Thus. (1) divine eyes (of the *soul*) go in tandem with (1) human waking eyes (of the *body*). Likewise (2) divine dream images seem to correspond to (2) man-made dreams. By the same token (1) divine reflections of divine originals are paired with (1) human paintings (as reflections produced by tools. specifically. pencils or brushes). In the same way (1) the divine shadows are similar to (2) mimicry. Thus, divine images may distinguished into divine likenesses and divine semblances (naturally produced). Human images are divided into human likenesses

and human semblances. Divine likenesses are divided into eyes and dream images. Human likenesses are partitioned into waking eyes and man-made dreams. Divine semblances are halved into reflections and shadows. Here we have the pattern that governs the divisions in this sequence. From now on, he will only make explicit reference to the parts he subdivides further. Even so, we are now in possession of the pattern that will allow us to work out the parts of the structure that he passes over (again, see the summary at the end of the chapter).

J   Division of Human Tools into Painting and [   ]

Human semblances are marked off into tools (such as painting. which uses a brush as the instrument for producing the image) and mimicry. The types of relationships we find in these correspondences provide a basis for working out the "unwritten" portions of the pattern in other parts of the mnemonic. We will now inscribe a vertical line through human images. Then, let us put waking eyes under human likenesses on the left side of the vertical line. Having done that, we should now designate man-made dreams as human likenesses. Why not locate them on the right side of the vertical line in the position in the human regions that corresponds to the place occupied by dream images in the divine sectors? After than, we can position semblances that use tools on the left side of the vertical line in the human field in an analogous position to reflections in divine semblances. Then after that, we can set mimicry to the right of the vertical line that divides human semblances into two (fig. 9.13).

Next, the Stranger says that they will sharpen the lens of the investigation on mimicry. He acknowledges that they will be passing over a number of parts and leaving them for someone else to collect together (267b). That someone is us! Fortunately, by combining the instructions he gave for positioning the lines that divide production with the directions for quartering the ground of images, we have been able to tentatively establish the pattern for working out the unwritten portions of this sequence. Unfortunately, as the Stranger continues to move lower down into the smaller and darker topics of the mnemonic, it becomes harder to make out the divisions. Let us separate off the parts on the right that concern human mimicry, focus the lens of our inquiry on this portion of the structure, and see if we can make out the remainder of this series. Even though we know that the divine kinds must contain further subdivisions as well, the Stranger is silent about these distinctions.

K   Division of Human Mimicry into Those Who Know and Those Who Do Not Know

But there is still ground for thinking that mimicry is of two sorts . . . Some mimics know the thing they are impersonating; others do not. And could we find a more

important distinction than that of **knowing** from **not knowing**?

No

And the **mimicry** we have just mentioned **goes with knowledge**, for to impersonate you, one must be acquainted with you and your traits.

· Of course.

And what of the traits of **justice** and of **virtue** generally? Are there not many who, having **no knowledge** of virtue but only some sort of opinion about it, zealously set about **making it appear that they embody virtue** as they conceive it, mimicking it as effectively as they can in their **words** and **actions** . . . And are they always unsuccessful in **appearing to be virtuous** when they are not really virtuous at all? Do they not rather succeed perfectly?'. . . Where then, must we look for a suitable name for each? No doubt it is hard to find one, because the ancients, it would seem, suffered from a certain laziness and lack of discrimination with regard to the *division* of **kinds by forms**, and not one of them even tried to make such divisions, with the result that there is a **serious** shortage of names. However, though the expression may seem daring, for the purposes of distinction, let us call **mimicry guided by opinion** 'conceit mimicry,' and the sort that is **guided by knowledge** 'mimicry by acquaintance.'

There are still more divisions of the branch of **art** that produces the **kind** of **human images** called **semblances** by **mimicry**, for this type of copier comes in two kinds. Once again, we need to draw lines. We will, of course, maintain the order, arrangement, and sequence that was established previously. Therefore, we repeat the pattern by splitting **mimicry** in half. Since the last line we drew was vertical, let us now make a horizontal division separating all of **mimicry** into two enclosures (fig. 9.14). One kind of **mimicry** is **knowledgeable** and the other involves **mere show**. Once more, we find that these distinctions have already been identified at 224a-225c in the *merchant of learning* sequence. where *nourishment for the soul* (including *music, painting*, and *marionette playing*), was divided into a kind that was purely for *amusement* or *display*—in other words, **mere show**—and another kind that was more *serious*, because it was directed toward *instruction*. This first, "just for show" kind of **mimicry**, involves those who have **no knowledge** of the things they use their own person to **imitate**. Thus, the division imposed by the horizontal line allows us to *discern* a kind of **mimic** that **knows** the things they impersonate, and another kind that **does not know**. Let us put the **knowledgeable** type above the horizontal line and the one that **is not knowledgeable** below (fig. 9.15). The difference between **knowing** and **not knowing**, the Stranger emphasizes, *is one of the most important distinctions of all*.

[L   Human Knowledge Divided into {Justice} and {Other Virtues}]

It is no surprise then, that these classifications also link up with the ones he distinguished between 228b and 232a. Not only does **knowing** and **not knowing** have ties with the *merchant of learning* branch

of the definition, it is also connected to *purification* and *medicine* through the distinction between *virtue* and *vice*. This latter was classed as a *discord* and *disease* wherein *opinion* is opposed to desire. Here in **imitation**, the **mimic** that **knows** goes with **knowledge**, for to impersonate a person, the **mimic** has to be familiar with that individual and his or her character traits. Now, the Stranger says that in terms of the character of *justice* and of *virtue* generally, some **mimics** who have **no knowledge** of *virtue* (but merely an **opinion** about it), try to **make it appear** to others that they possess *virtue* as they conceive it, **imitating** it in their *words*—an impressionist—or in their *gestures*, *deeds* and *actions*—a mime. Thus, we can make out two divisions under **knowledge**. Both seem to relate to character. One involves **knowledge** of the character of *justice* and the other entails knowing the character of *other virtues*.

In this present passage, the Visitor goes on to ask Theaetetus to make up names to distinguish the kind of **impersonators that know** from those **who do not**. He says that this will be a challenge because they will have to invent names for this method of "*division* of **kinds** *by* **forms**." The ancients, he declares, did not even attempt to make these divisions and in consequence, there is a **serious** scarcity of names. This statement concerning the ancients is in line with Aristotle's comment that the "ancients had no knowledge of dialectic," and that this form of logic was Plato's own contribution to the system he took over from the Pythagoreans. The Stranger goes on to suggest that they call **mimicry** guided by opinion, **conceit mimicry**, and they name the kind that is guided by **knowledge**, **mimicry by acquaintance**. Again, we discover that these divisions tie in with the earlier ones made between 230e and 231a, where it was established that there were two kinds of **sophists**: the first kind was descended from a *noble* line (the **knowledgeable** mimic); and the other was described as being the sort who possesses only a *vain conceit of wisdom* (**conceit mimicry**). The Stranger says that it is in the class of the **conceit mimic**—the one that is guided by **opinion** rather than by **knowledge**—that we will find the **sophist**. The **knowledgeable mimic** is set aside, and the one that is full of himself is divided further.

M   Division of Humans Who Do Not Know Into Simple and Ignorant (268a-b)

The **conceited mimic that does not know** is cracked in two: We will now inscribe a vertical line down through the center of **mimicry**.

> Well, there is a gaping crack. There is the **simple**-minded type who imagines that what he believes is **knowledge**, and an opposite type who is versed in discussion, so that his attitude betrays no little misgiving and suspicion that **the knowledge he has the air of possessing in the eyes of the world** is really **ignorance**
> Certainly, both the types you describe **exist**.

We may then, set down one of these mimics as **sincere**, the other as **insincere** (268a).

This division produces two types of **mimics that know** and two kinds that **do not know** (fig. 9.16). The Stranger does not say anything more about the kinds that **know**. However, he does discern two kinds that **do not know** the things they **imitate**: first, a **simple** sort that assumes that his beliefs are **knowledge**, and so he may be sincere because he is in fact **deceived about himself**. The second kind is **ignorant**, a type that is **versed in discussion**. Since the attitude of the **ignorant** one betrays no misgiving or suspicion that he does not possess the **knowledge he appears to possess in the eyes of the world**, this kind of **mimic** is the worst sort of imposter. His *error of the intellect* is more **serious** than the kind committed by the **simple-minded** person. Even though he is well aware that **he does not know**, he is not honest about his lack of **knowledge**. He is insincere in that he **knowingly deceives others** by his pretense. By contrast, the **simple** kind of **mimic** is sincere. He is not the way he his *voluntarily*. His problem is that he is **simply too naive to know** that he does **not know**. In contrast, the **ignorant** kind **knows that he does not know**, and still he persists in taking others in. He is *voluntarily* **ignorant**. Since **ignorance** is a more **serious** obstacle to *purification* than mere **simple-mindedness**, let us position the latter, sincere but **involuntarily stupid kind of mimic** to the left, and the former, insincere, *voluntarily* **ignorant** type to the right of the **simple** person and the vertical line on our diagram (fig. 9.17).

[N   Simple Humans Divided into {Sincere} and {   }]

Notice that we have discovered yet another match with the divisions made between 229c and 230d. In this previous section of the dialogue, thinking one **knows** when one **does not know** was identified as the type of *discord* in the *soul* that is analogous to *disease* in the *body*. **Ignorance** was an *evil* in the *soul* and it was designated as the counterpart of *physical deformity*. The various **forms** of **ignorance**, remember, all had to do with a lack of symmetry between *inward* and *outward* parts. At 231c-232a, the *inward* part was correlated with **thinking**, with the inner dialogue of the *soul*, with *psychic discord* involving *contradiction*, and with **false judgments**. The *outward* was matched with **speech** or **discourse**, with the *psychic deformity* of **ignorance**, and with **false statements**. One of these involved people who "suppose they **know** even though they **do not know**," and was dealt with by *instruction*, so that these **ignorant** types—the kind we know now to be merely **simple-minded**—are made to think that they "**know only what they know** and nothing else" besides this (230c-d). The elimination of other kinds of **ignorance** was said to entail a more lengthy process, where the goal was to "confute the **vain conceit of wisdom**." The Stranger instructs that the **sophist** is not merely **simple**

but **ignorant**, and so he is classed as insincere. When we collect all this information together and combine it, we can understand that the **simple** person is just plain confused, whereas the **ignorant** person is a hypocrite. Those who are **ignorant** are different on the *inside* from the *outward* **appearance** they present to others. The *words* that come out of their mouths are not the same as what they hold in themselves to be true. The way they *act* is aimed at presenting an **appearance** that is **different** from the way they really are inside. This **image** is false, a kind of **lie** that **mimics** the **reality** but is not the **same** as the **reality**. Just to assure us that we are engaged in a discerning quantities by way of a mathematical procedure, we are reminded that this kind of **falsity** entails an "unsightly want of measure." Observe once again that as we go, every subsequent division *participates* in the features "above" it.

O   Human Ignorance Divided Into Private and Public (268b)

> And the insincere—is he of two kinds or only one?
> That is for you to consider.
> I will, and I can clearly make out a pair of them. I see one who can keep us his dissimulation **publicly** in **long speeches** to a **large assembly**. The other uses **short arguments** in **private** and forces others to **contradict themselves** in conversation (268b).

Human ignorance is divided into **private** and **public** (268a). Again, we need to make another set of divisions. Notice first of all that we have discovered more connections with previous divisions. The **public/private** distinction turned up in the *hunter* sequence as the two parts of *persuasion* (222d). It also showed up in the *athlete in debate* series under an **art** of *controversy* (225b-c).

[P   Human Private Divided into {Random} and {Systematic}]

Recall that **private speech** was divided into *random disputes and negotiations* that involve no **art** or technique, and a *systematic kind of argument that proceeds by way of a definite technique*. The other, **public** kind, was defined as "*long* **speeches** on questions about *justice* and *injustice*." There is yet another match with the divisions made between 229c and 230d in the context of *purification*. We are now able to confirm the correctness of the initial decision to make our cleavages into two equal parts. For when **ignorance** was mentioned in the *purification* sequence, the Stranger stated that the challenge would be to discover the "line which divides **ignorance** into two halves" (229b). We have found this line! The Stranger said that this division had to do with two kinds of *instruction*, one for the *stupid* person who **simply does not know** and the other for the more complicated kind of **ignorance** in which the **person knows they do not know**. Now, when the idea of **ignorance** was separated into two

earlier in this dialogue, the Stranger related the two kinds of *intellectual errors* to two kinds of *preventatives* which was the basis for separating both the two types of **ignorance** and the two types of *instruction*. The Stranger said that one type of teaching involves taking the **simple**-minded person aside and correcting him or her **privately** (230d). However, this *smoother* sort of *admonition* is ineffective with the willfully **ignorant** person. This sort of person does not respond to "gentle advisement" in **private**. "Eradicating the spirit of **conceit**" must proceed in "another way" (230b). Since this sort of person is *voluntarily* **ignorant**, they can only be made to change their behavior if they are *chastised roughly* in **public** before a large audience. This entails "*long speeches* on questions about *justice* and *injustice*" wherein they are "*refuted*, and from *refutation*" they learn [modesty] (230). *Refutation* was, of course, the "greatest and chiefest *purification*." On this basis then, let us position the **private** kind above the line and the **public** kind below it (fig. 9. 18).

Q Human Public Divided into Statesman and Demagogue

The Stranger asks Theaetetus whether the "long-winded" sort (i.e., the type that "can keep up his dissimulation **publicly** in *long* **speeches** before a large assembly") should be identified with the **statesman** or with the **demagogue**. Theaetetus decides to correlate this kind with the **demagogue** rather than with the **statesman**.

> And what shall we call the other—**wise** man or **Sophist**?
> We cannot surely call him **wise**, because we set him down as **ignorant**, but as a **mimic** of the wise man he will clearly assume a title derived from his, and I now see that here at last is the man who must be truly described as the **real** and genuine **Sophist**.
> Shall we, then, as before collect all the elements of his description, from the end to the beginning, and draw our threads together in a knot? (268c)

Since **public** is subdivided further, we know that all of **ignorance** should now be cut vertically (fig. 9. 19). This produces two kinds of **private** and two kinds of **public**. The Stranger asks whether the other, **private** one should be called a **wise** man or a **sophist**. Theaetetus says that the **private** kind cannot be truly **wise**, since they already assigned him to the class of the **ignorant**. However, he adds, since he **imitates** the **wise** man he will assume a title that is derived from the **wise** person. Theaetetus announces that he can at last, in truth, see the **real sophist** (268b-c). We therefore situate the **statesman** to the left of the vertical line and the **demagogue** to the right (fig 9.20).

REVERSAL AND RETURN TO THE STARTING POINT

The Collection

The divisions are then collected together from *end to beginning*, so that all the various "threads" out of which the **discourse** has been woven are drawn "together in a knot." The topics in the collection are listed in reverse order sequence, returning full-circle to the starting point. Therefore, the

> art of **contradiction making**; descended from insincere; **conceited**; **mimicry**; of the
> **semblance-making** breed; derived from **image making**, distinguished as a portion,
> not **divine** but **human**, of **production** that presents a **shadow-play of words** (268c-d)

We can observe that the **art of contradiction-making** refers to the **private speech** making kind of **mimic** that forces others to **contradict** themselves. The **shadow play of words** is a new designation, although we notice that the contrary to **play**—**serious**—was mentioned in the third sequence under *acquisition* (223c-224e) and again in the context of those ancients who did not provide enough names for the divisions. Wait a minute! When we consider the order of this collection and how it moves from end to beginning—in the opposite direction from the way we came—we can clearly see that a number of parts have been omitted from this reverse order series. At the same time, we can also recognize the geometric structure of the ring composition (see next page). Fortunately, then, we can fill in some of these blanks in the ascending sequence with material given in the descent. However, when we put all the information together, we are still left with empty places. These blanks indicate just some of the pieces that are missing from this section of the puzzle, the "unwritten" teaching that is not laid out in express statements but is implicit in the dialogue by way of the structure of the system itself. We have identified the precise location of some of these "gaps," their place in the sequence, the topics that are prior and posterior to them as well as the polarity on the descending side of the series. Having located the portions of the structure that are "absent," we have made a significant step toward uncovering the esoteric teaching. We have started to develop the sort of "subtle thinking" that will allow us to understand more of this puzzle or "test." Through a gradually increasing knowledge of the **forms** we will become more familiar with the *systematic rules* and procedures of the oral traditional system that was used to structure the discourse. This, combined with the evidence we have "collected" from the material that is given or "written" in the text, puts us in a position to go on to identify some of the missing sections. At last, we are beginning to see the connection between the oral patterns and the unwritten doctrines.

The Geometric Ring Structure

[ ] [ ]

A Art (265b)

B Acquisition

C Production (235e)

D Divine

E Human

F Production of originals

G Production of images

H Likenesses making

I Semblance making (appears to be a likeness but is not)

J Produces by means of tools

K Mimicry (producer takes his own person as instrument)

L Knowledgeable mimic (Goes with knowledge)

M Do not know things they are mimicking (opinion)

N Simple (deceived about the self)

O Ignorant (deceives others)

P Private (short arguments in private)

Q Public (long speeches to crowds)

R Statesman (the genuine Sophist)

S Demagogue

[ ] [ ]

Reversal and return to the starting point

[ ]' Contradiction making

S' [ ]

R' [ ]

Q' [ ]

P' [ ]

O' Insincere [deceives others], conceited

N' [ ]

M' [ ]

L' [ ]

K' Mimicry

J' [ ]

I' Semblance-making breed

H' [ ]

G' Derived from image making, distinguished as a portion

F' [ ]

E' Of Human

D' Not Divine

C' Production

B' [ ]

A' [ ]

[ ]' That presents a shadow-play of words

GEOMETRIC STRUCTURE OF THE TOPICS IN PLATO'S *SOPHIST*

DOES THE SOPHIST HAVE AN ART (TEXNH)?

Art is divided into production and acquisition
Production is ÷ into agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures; molding vessels and use of tools; and imitation
Acquisition is ÷ into learning and acquiring knowledge; money making; fighting and hunting (219b)

THE ANGLER: FIRST SEQUENCE

A   Division of art into productive and acquisitive (219b-c)
B   Division of acquisitive art into exchange and conquest (219b-c)
C   Conquest divided into fighting and hunting (219d)
D   Hunting divided into lifeless and living. animal hunting (219e)
E   Animal Hunting divided into land and water, animals that swim (220a)
F   Swimming animals divided into wing (fowling) and water (fishing) (220a)
G   Fishing divided into enclosures and striking (220b)
H   Striking divided into firing and barbing (220c)
I   Barb fishing divided into spearing and angling (220e)
A'   Acquisitive
B'   Conquest or taking by force
C'   Hunting
D'   Hunting animals
E'   Hunting water animals
F'   Fishing
G'   Striking
H'   Fishing with a barb
I'   Strikes with a hook drawing from below upward

THE HUNTER: SECOND SEQUENCE, FIRST EXAMPLE OF THE SOPHIST

A   Power and art
B   Division of art into productive and acquisitive (219b-c)
C   Division of acquisitive art into exchange and conquest (219b-c)
D   Conquest divided into fighting and hunting (219d)
E   Hunting divided into lifeless and living, animal hunting (219e)
F   Animal hunting divided into land and water of another sort, angler and sophist diverge(222a)
G   Land animals divided into tame (human) and wild (222b)
H   Tame ÷ violence (tyranny, military, piracy, manstealing) and persuasion (orator, lawyer, conversation)
I   Persuasion divided into public and private (222d)
J   Private inducements divided into hire (money) and gifts (love) (222e)
K   Hire divided into baiting hook with pleasure (flattery) and virtue (sophistry) (223a)
A'   [Art]
B'   Appropriative, acquisitive family
C'   [Conquest]
D'   [Hunting]
E'   Hunts animals
F'   Land
G'   Tame, Hunts man
H'   [Persuasion]
I'   Privately
J'   For hire, taking money in exchange
K'   Exchange, having a semblance of education, sophistry (223b)

THE MERCHANT OF LEARNING: THIRD SEQUENCE. SECOND EXAMPLE OF THE SOPHIST

A	Art divided into productive and acquisitive
B	Acquisitive divided into exchange and hunting (223c)
C	Exchange divided into giving and selling (223c)
D	Selling divided into one's own productions or selling the work of others (223d)
E	[ ] divided into divided into retailing (takes place in city) and merchant (between cities)
F	Merchant exchange divided into food for the body and food for the soul (223e)
G	Food for the soul – amusement (display) and serious (instruction, knowledge of virtue, learning)
H	Trade in learning: (1) describes the sale of knowledge of virtue; and
	(2) sale of other knowledge (art dealer)
I	Trader in virtue is the sophist (224c)
A'	traced from the art of acquisition
B'	through exchange
C'	[selling]
D'	[selling either one's own productions or selling the productions of others]
E'	trade merchandise
F'	merchandise of the soul
G'	[serious, trade in learning]
H'	The kind that deals with speech and sells a knowledge of virtue
I'	is the sophist

RETAIL DEALER, SAME WARES: FOURTH SEQUENCE,
THIRD REAPPEARANCE OF THE SOPHIST

A	[Art]
B	Art divided into productive and acquisitive
C	[Acquisitive divided into exchange and conquest] (224d-e)
D	Exchange divided into giving and selling
E	[Selling – one's own productions or selling the productions of others]
F	Selling – fabricating a knowledge of virtue that takes place in the city (retailing) and
	exchanging the goods of one city for another (merchant)
G	Selling another's knowledge of virtue that takes place in the city (retailing) or
	exchanges the goods of one city for another (merchant)
A'	[Art]
B'	that part of the acquisitive art
C'	which exchanges
D'	and of exchange which either sells
E'	a man's own productions or retails those of others, as the case may be
F'	in either way sells the knowledge of virtue is sophistry
G'	[Selling another's knowledge of virtue that takes place in the city or exchanges goods between cities]

SELLING PRODUCTS OF ONE'S OWN MANUFACTURE THIS SEQUENCE IS LISTED FOURTH IN THE RECKONING (231e). IT MUST BE REASONED OUT BY COMBINING THE MERCHANT OF LEARNING AND THE RETAIL DEALER

A   Art divided into productive and acquisitive

B   Acquisitive divided into exchange and hunting

C   Exchange divided into giving and selling

D   Selling divided into one's own productions or selling the work of others

E   Selling one's own productions divided into retailing
       (fabricating a knowledge of virtue that takes place in city) and merchant (between cities)

E   Selling the productions of others takes place in the city (retailing) or between cities (merchant)

F   Selling one's own productions in the city (retailing) divided into [ ] and [ ]

F   Selling another's knowledge of virtue that takes place in the city is divided into [ ] and [ ]

G   Merchandising own productions in other cities – [food for body] and [food for soul]

G   Selling another's knowledge of virtue by merchant exchange – food for the body & for soul (223e)

H   Food for the body – into [meats] and [drinks] 224a

H   Food for the soul – amusement , display (includes music, painting and marionette playing) and serious (instruction, knowledge of virtue, trade in learning,)]

I   [Meat] divided into [ ] and [ ]

I   Play divided into [ ] and [ ]

J   [Drinks] divided into [ ] and [ ]

J   Serious (kind aimed at instruction) divided into trade in learning and knowledge of virtue

K   [first division of play] divided into [ ] and [ ]

K   Trade in learning – into the sale of knowledge of virtue and the sale of other knowledge

L   Trader in knowledge of virtue (concerned with speech) is the sophist (224c)

L   Trader in other types of knowledge is the art dealer (224c)

A'   traced from the art of acquisition

B'   through exchange

C'   selling

D'   selling either one's own productions or selling the productions of others

E'   fabricating knowledge of virtue in the city (retailing) or between cities (merchant)

E'   selling another's knowledge of virtue by merchant exchange divided into merchandise for the body and merchandise for the soul

F'   Selling one's own productions in the city (retailing) divided into [ ] and [ ]

F'   Selling another's knowledge of virtue that takes place in the city is divided into [ ] and [ ]

G'   Merchandising one's own productions in other cities – into [food for body] and [food for soul]

G'   Selling another's knowledge of virtue by merchant exchange divided into food for the body and food for the soul (223e)

H'   Food for the body – into [meats] and [drinks] 224a

H'   Food for the soul – amusement , display (includes music, painting and marionette playing) and serious (instruction, knowledge of virtue, trade in learning,)]

I'   [Meat] divided into [ ] and [ ]

I'   Play divided into [ ] and [ ]

J'   [Drinks] divided into [ ] and [ ]

J'   Serious (kind aimed at instruction) divided into trade in learning and knowledge of virtue

K'   [first division of play] divided into [ ] and [ ]

K'   Trade in learning – into sale of knowledge of virtue and sale of other types of knowledge

L'   Trader in knowledge of virtue (concerned with speech) is the sophist (224c)

L'   Trader in other types of knowledge is the art dealer (224c)

ATHLETE IN DEBATE. [GYMNASTICS]: FIFTH SEQUENCE
THE FOURTH REAPPEARANCE OF THE SOPHIST

A	[Art]
B	Art divided into productive and acquisitive
C	[Acquisitive divided into exchange and conquest] (225a)
D	[Conquest divided into fighting and hunting]
E	Fighting divided into competitive and pugnacious
F	One part of pugnacious divided into [ ] and contest of bodily strength (violent) (225a)
G	When the war is one of words it may be termed controversy (225b)
H	Controversy divided into public (long speeches, just and unjust, forensic) and private (cut up into questions and answers, disputation)
I	Private disputation – into random ([ ], contracts, without rules of art) and argumentation (eristic, systematic, proceeds by rules, deals with justice & injustice & things in general)
J	Argumentation divided into a kind that wastes money and a kind that makes money
K	Argumentation (Eristic) is ÷ into loquacity (conversation disagreeable to hearers) and sophistry (225d)
J'	the sophist is a money-making species
I'	of eristic
H'	disputatious
G'	controversial
F'	[ ]
E'	pugnacious
D'	combative
C'	[ ]
B'	Acquisitive
A'	Art

[OPEN TO DOUBT] & [MEDICINE] SIXTH SEQUENCE. FIFTH APPEARANCE OF THE SOPHIST

A   Sifting, straining, winnowing, threshing, carding, spinning, warp & woof (menial occupations)
A   menial is pattern for division, discriminating and discerning
B   Art of discrimination, discernment and separation (226c)
B   Discrimination [dialectic] − separation of like from like (227b-c) or purification (better from worse)
C   Purification divided into souls and bodies (227c)
D   Purification of bodies divided into living/animate (227a) and lifeless/inanimate (227b)
D   Purification of souls divided into virtue (good) and vice (bad, evil) (227d)
E   Purification of living bodies divided into outward and inward (227a)
E   [Purification of goods of the soul divided into {outward} and {inward}]
F   Purification of outward lifeless bodies includes fulling and furbishing, & other ridiculous names
F   Purification of outward [   ] souls (takes away evil, 227c) − into {   } and {   }(260d-e)
G   Purification of outward living bodies is the art of the bathmen
G   [Purification of outward {   } soul involves {discourse and speeches} (260c-d)]
H   Purification of inward, living bodies divided into medicine and gymnastics
H   Purification of inward, {   } soul entails {   }.
I   Obstacles to [health] in the inward, living body are divided into disease and deformity
I   Obstacles to virtue (evil, vice) in the inward soul − into discord/disease
            (cowardice, intemperance, injustice, insolence) and ignorance/deformity (devoid of symmetry)
J   Purification of inward living bodies by medicine (for disease) and gymnastics (for deformity) (227a)
J   [Remedies for soul effected by chastisement (for discord) and instruction for (ignorance)]
K   [Deformity (and also gymnastics) both divided into {   }]
K   Ignorance (and also instruction) both − into [errors of intellect] thinks knows but does not and
            stupidity (education)
L   [{   } (remedy for body obstacle of {   } divided into {   } and {   } remedies]
L   Education (remedy for soul for obstacle of stupidity) − into rougher and smoother admonitions
M   As physician removes obstacles so body benefits from food,
M   so purifier of soul refutes prejudices [vain conceit of wisdom"] so soul may learn modesty,
            so the [stupid person] thinks he knows only what he knows and no more and derives
            benefit from application of knowledge (food for the soul)
N   [{   } greatest and chiefest of medical obstacles]
O   refutation is greatest and chiefest of purifications, sophistry ascribes to them too high a
            function, yet has some resemblance to them, as the dog to the wolf, the fiercest of animals to the
            tamest. Resemblances are slippery. Let them pass as sophists, for should they ever set up an
            adequate defense of their confines, the boundary in dispute will be of no small importance
A'   under the art of separation
B'   method of purification
C'   a kind of purification concerned with the soul
K'   under that, instruction
L'   under that again, education
O'   Within the art of education, examination confutes vain conceit of wisdom,
[ ]   sophistry of noble lineage

THE RECKONING (231D-E)

A.   ANGLER
I.   HUNTER: HIRED HUNTER OF RICH YOUNG MEN
II.   MERCHANT: OF LEARNING AS NOURISHMENT FOR THE SOUL
III.   RETAIL DEALER: OF THE SAME WARES
IV.   SELLING PRODUCTS OF HIS OWN MANUFACTURE
V.   ATHLETE IN DEBATE, APPROPRIATING THAT SUBDIVISION OF CONTENTION WHICH
            CONSISTS IN AN ART OF ERISTIC
VI.   [OPEN TO DOUBT], PURIFIER OF SOUL FROM CONCEITS THAT BLOCK WAY TO
            UNDERSTANDING

.

IMITATION: SEVENTH SEQUENCE

A	Art (power) is divided into acquisition and production (brings into existence out of not-being)
B	Acquisition divided into exchange and conquest
C	Production is divided into divine (gods) and human (265b-e)
D	Divine production is divided into originals and images
E	Human production is divided into originals (actual thing) and images
F	Divine originals ~ into (1) offspring of divine craftmanship, living (mortal animals, things that grow including plants, seeds and roots) and lifeless (fusible and not fusible bodies compacted beneath the earth); (2) offspring of contrivance, elements of nature, fire water and kindred)
F	Human originals divided into building an actual house (architecture, craftmanship) and [ ]
G	Divine images are divided into likenesses (copy recreates proportions and colors; eyes, dreams) and naturally produced semblances (reflections in water or smooth bright surfaces and shadows)
G	Human images are divided into likenesses and semblances ((reflections in mirrors) and shadows
H	Divine likenesses are divided into eyes of soul and dream images
H	Human likenesses are divided into eyes of body and the man-made dream for waking eyes
I	Divine semblances ~ into reflections in water or smooth surfaces and shadows (dark interrupts light)
I	Human semblances are divided into tools (uses an instrument to produce semblance) and mimicry (person uses own body as an instrument, counterfeits speech, play acting) (267b)
J	[Divine reflections are divided into { } and { }]
J	Human tools include paintings, music, marionette playing, sculptures, drawings
K	[Divine shadows divided into { } and { }]
K	Human mimicry divided into those who know the thing they impersonate (by acquaintance) and those who do not know (guided by opinion, vain conceit of wisdom)
L	[Divine [wisdom] divided into { } and { }]
L	Human knowledge divided into [justice] and [other virtues]
M	[Divine {does not know} divided into {simple} and {pure}]
M	Human that does not know divided into simple-minded (sincere) and ignorant (insincere) (268a
N	[Divine simple divided into { } and { }]
N	Human simple divided into { } and { }]
O	[Divine { } divided into { } and { }]
O	Human ignorance divided into public (dissimulates in long speeches to a large assembly) and private (short arguments, forces others to contradict themselves in conversation) (268b)
P	[Divine private divided into { } and { }]
P	Human private divided into statesman (the real and genuine sophist) and demagogue (268b-c)
Q	[Divine { } divided into { } and { }
Q	Human public divided into statesman and demagogue
R	[Divine { } divided into { }]
R	Human { } divided into { } and contradiction making
R'	art of contradiction making
O'	descended from insincere, conceited
K'	mimicry
I'	semblance-making breed
G'	derived from image making, distinguished as a portion
D'	not divine
E'	but human
C'	of production
[ ]	that presents a shadow-play of words

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.1)

Production

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.2)

Production

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.3)

Production
Divine

.

Human

.

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.4)

Production
Divine

Human

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.5)
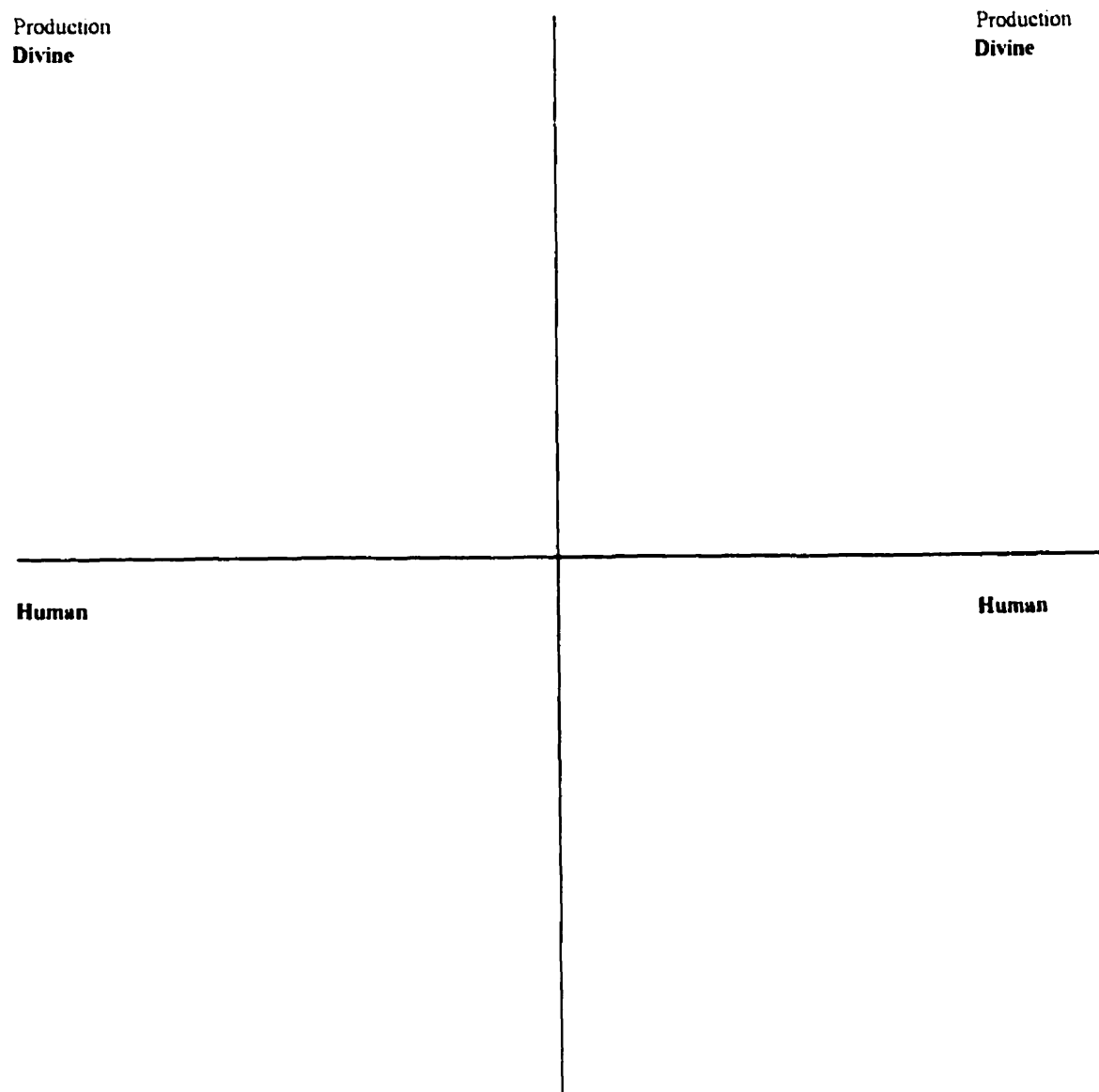
Production
Divine

Production
Divine

Human

Human

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Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.6)

Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine

Human
Originals
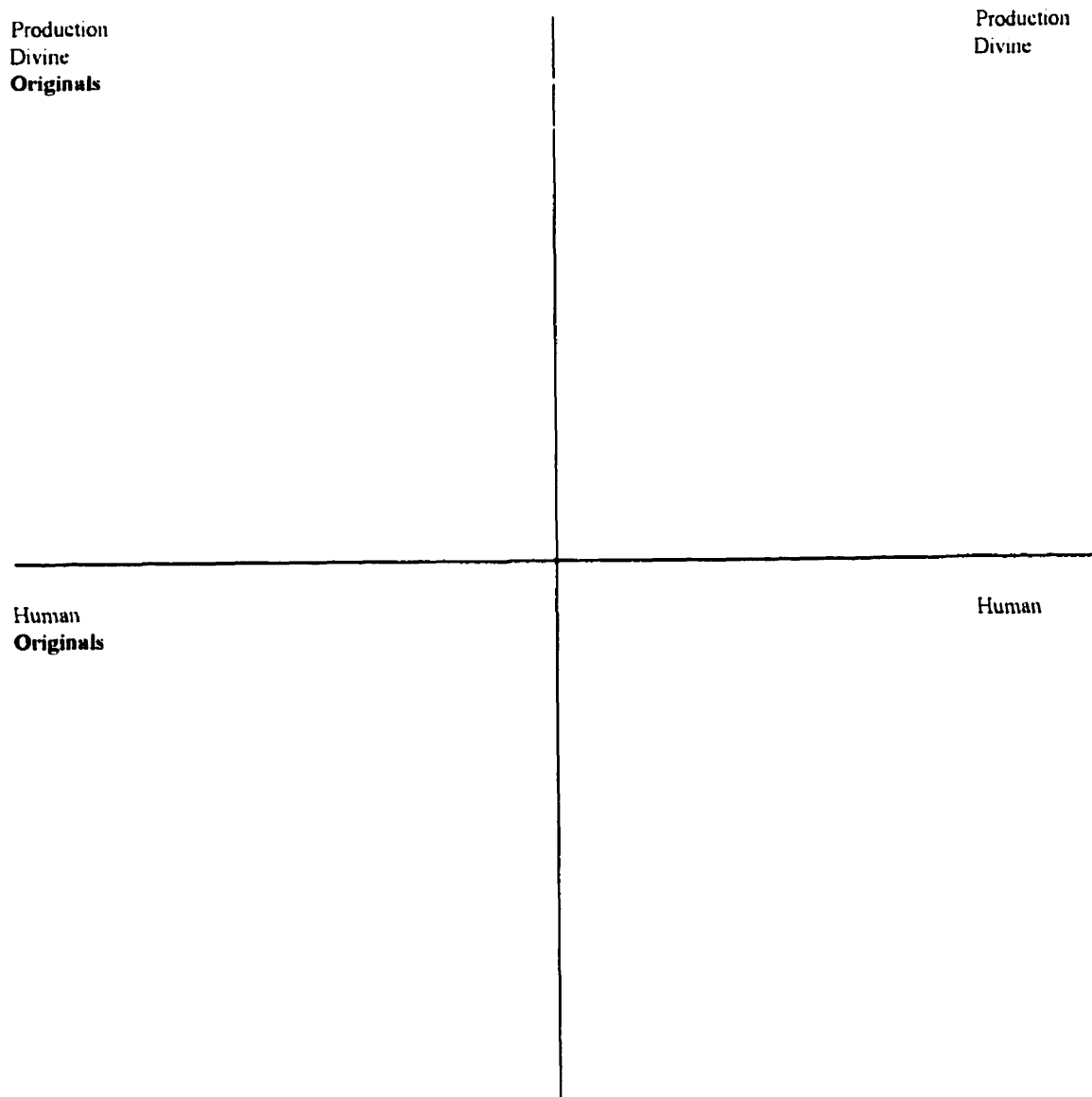
Human

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.7)

Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine
Images

Human
Originals
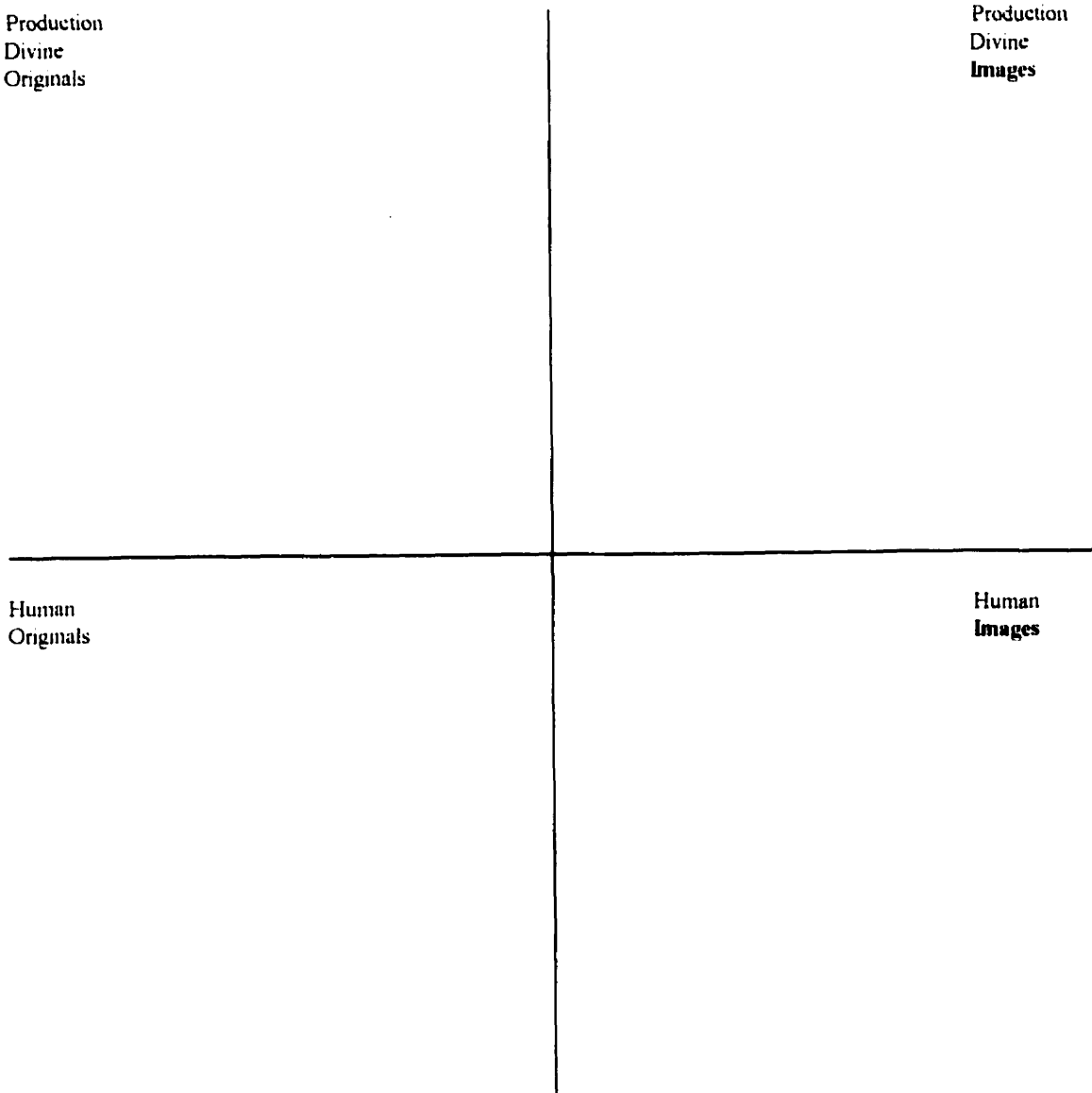
Human
Images

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.8)
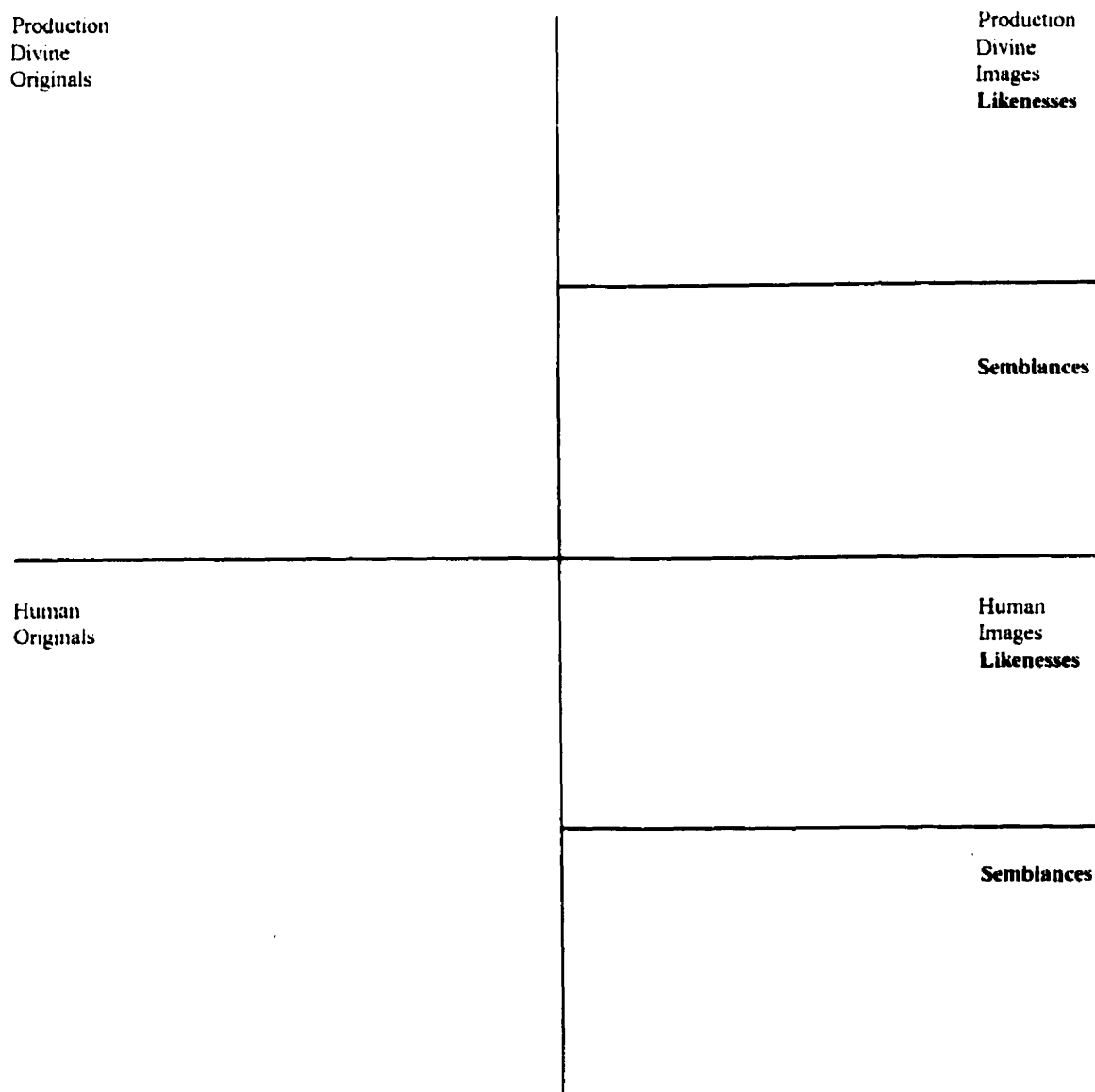
Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Human
Originals

Human
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.9)

Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Human
Originals

Human
Images
Likenesses
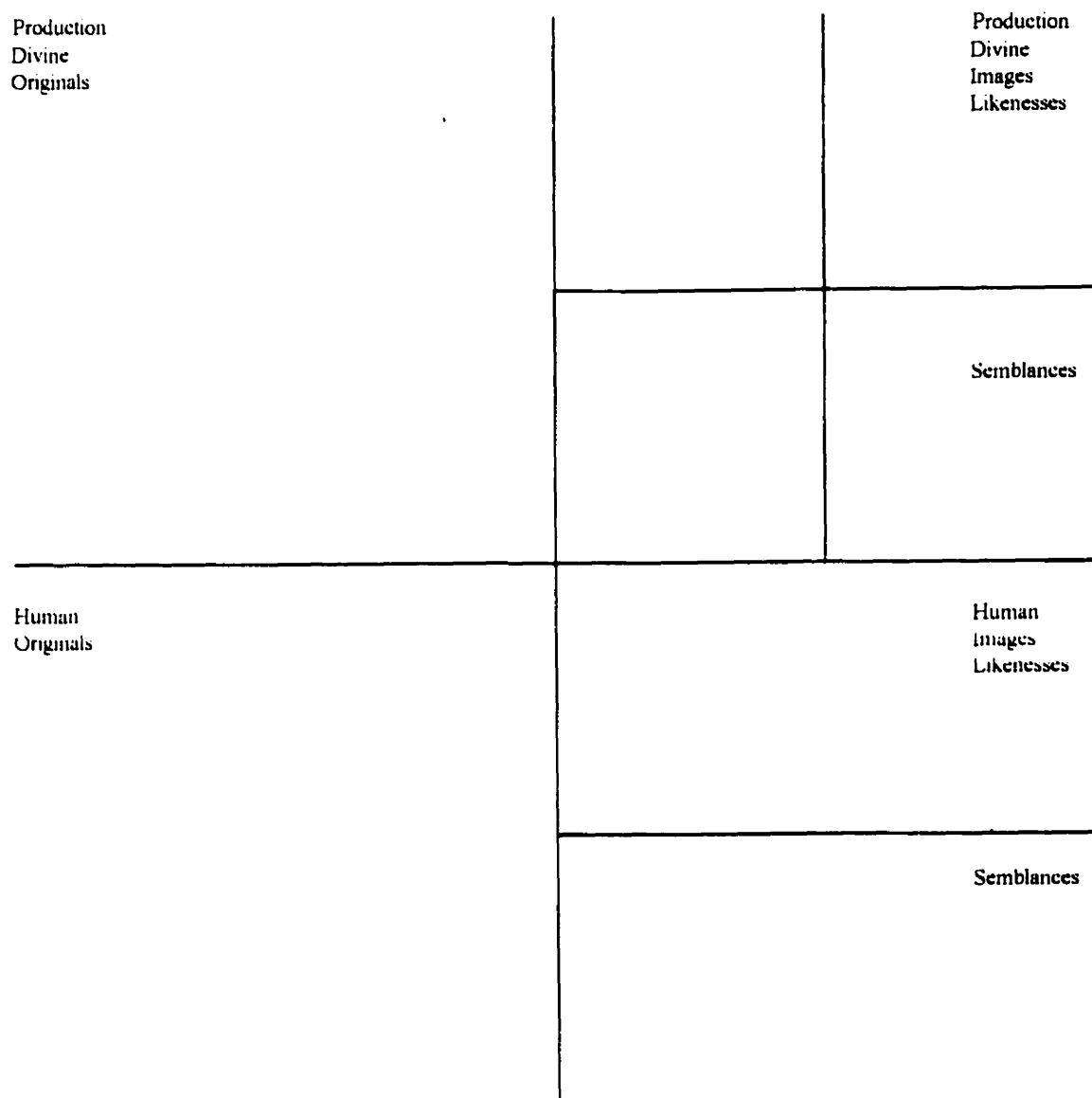
Semblances

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.10)

Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Semblances

Human
Originals

Human
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.11)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses **Eyes**	Production Divine Images Likenesses **Dreams**
	Semblances	Semblances
Human Originals		Human Images Likenesses
		Semblances

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.12)

Production
Divine
Originals

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses
Eyes

Production
Divine
Images
Likenesses
Dreams

Semblances
Reflections

Semblances
Shadows

Human
Originals

Human
Images
Likenesses

Semblances

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.13)

	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes	Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
Production Divine Originals		
	Semblances Reflections	Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses **Waking Eyes**	Human Images Likenesses **Man-made Dreams**
	Semblances **Tools (Painting)**	Semblances **Mimicry**

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.14)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes	Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections	Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes	Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.15)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes	Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections	Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes	Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry **Knows** **Knows Not**

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.16)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes		Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections		Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes		Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry **Knows**	Semblances Mimicry **Knows**
		Knows Not	**Knows Not**

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.17)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes		Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections		Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes		Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry Knows	Semblances Mimicry Knows
		Knows Not **Simple**	Knows Not **Ignorant**

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.18)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes		Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections		Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes		Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry Knows	Semblances Mimicry Knows
		Knows Not Simple	Knows Not Ignorant **Private**
			Public

Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9.19)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes	Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections	Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes	Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry Knows
		Knows Not Simple

Semblances Mimicry Knows	
Knows Ignrt. Private	Not Ignrt. Private
Public	Public

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Divisions of Imitation in Plato's *Sophist*   (fig. 9 20)

Production Divine Originals	Production Divine Images Likenesses Eyes	Production Divine Images Likenesses Dreams
	Semblances Reflections	Semblances Shadows
Human Originals	Human Images Likenesses Waking Eyes	Human Images Likenesses Man-made Dreams
	Semblances Tools (Painting)	Semblances Mimicry Knows
		Semblances Mimicry Knows

Knows Not Simple	Knows Ignrt. Private
	Not Ignrt. Private
	Public Stsmn.
	Public Dem.

CHAPTER TEN

VARIATIONS I

The pieces of the puzzle we identified in the *Sophist* will now be put together with those having a similar pattern in other dialogues. The pages that follow will show that the topics that make up the definition uncovered in the previous chapter may be found, in whole or in part, in every passage that has figured prominently in the debate concerning Plato's views of writing, poetry, and sophistry. These include the critique of writing in the *Phaedrus, Protagoras*, and *Seventh Letter*, the comments concerning poetry in the *Republic*, as well as the discussion concerning poetry and the unwritten teachings in the *Laws*.

In assembling the passages that have been central to the "riddle problem," the primary objective will be to show that portions of this multi-part sequence turn up every time the conversation in a dialogue deals with these matters, and further, *that there are no instances involving a discussion of these topics where parts of the series do not occur*. Since the pattern crops up every time the characters in a dialogue go over these issues, it is unlikely that the sequence is either random or accidental. These passages are all variations on a pattern that we recognize from our studies of the oral traditional style. Moreover, the fact that every passage dealing with poetry, sophistry, writing, and deception is composed by way of the definitions means that the system itself is the unifying feature underlying all these diverse works in the collected dialogues.

A second objective will be to extend our understanding of how the traditional frames of reference served as a communicative medium that aided not just the composition but also the reception of these works. The upcoming pages are arranged in two columns. The outline of the ordered succession of topics in the imitative branch of the definition from the *Sophist* will be set forth in bold-faced lettering on the left side of the page. The selected passages from the dialogue under consideration will be laid out on the right side. The ideas associated with the topics in the branch of the paragon definition that appear in this excerpt will be outlined in bold-face to make it clear how the sequential pattern provides the link between the form and the content of the discourse. When the sequence for imitation is combined with other branches of the definition, these secondary patterns have been indicated in both columns by means of *italics*. At times, two strands of the same sequence are woven together. When this happens, I use bold-face lettering to highlight the primary series and I use *italics* to indicate the alternative string. Once again, square brackets [   ] indicate ideas that are not given explicitly in the text but which may be tentatively filled in based on the material that is given.

At this point, readers may want to flip through the pages in the next four chapters and skim

through all the different variations on the definition. Before attempting to carefully read each excerpt, it is helpful to have an overall sense of how the mnemonic serves as the backdrop against which all the different versions of the series figure forth. It is helpful to read these passages in tandem with the Outline of the Geometric Structure of Topics in the Sophist provided at the end of the previous chapter. This will clarify how certain key ideas in the definition serve as clues or points of reference, guiding our reception of the material by helping us keep track of the way the composition moves through the places of the mnemonic.

The parameters of this project make it impossible to provide an in-depth analysis of all the passages included in this chapter. The selections from the *Laws* and the *Seventh Letter*, for example, merely set out the excerpts and highlight the sequences from the different strands of the definition. At certain points, I will pause to offer a commentary on statements that are crucial to the overall aim of this project. Here, as in upcoming chapters, I will not cite every occurrence of the definition in a particular dialogue, or even lay out in their entirety passages in which it does appear. For the sake of brevity, some parts of this exposition provide a capsulization of sections of the dialogues by setting out only those sentences in which key ideas occur (documented by the Stephanus numbers). Readers are invited to set the excerpts alongside the original text. Comparison with the original will clarify how the episodes are organized by topic into a series, and how different notions are expressed by compressing, expanding, simplifying, or by embellishing the basic type.

As modern readers, we can never grasp the full range of connotations this traditional technology held for Plato and his audience of initiates. These compositions will not mean to us what they meant to those ancient spectators. Even so, going through many different instances of the same pattern will make it possible for us to tune into some of the allusions encoded by the traditional frames of reference. As we follow the sequence through many different contexts, it will become more obvious how the ideas in the topics remain consistent and conform to the traditional form of the definition even though the wording and terminology of the content changes in each particular instance. We will also see how the composition operates within the limits of the forms even as it expresses a range of ideas unique to the situation at hand. Looking at different versions of the definition will add to our knowledge of the order and arrangement of the divisions, our understanding of how the lines provide the frames of reference for organizing all the different ideas in a collection, and how the "superior" memory art serves as a key to rich dimensions of meaning that are never made explicit, but which are implied through the structure of the system itself.

I should also like to restate and emphasize that the goal of this exercise is not to provide a

comprehensive account of the unwritten doctrines. or even of how the definition fits into the whole geometric structure. Piecing together this one pattern will provide only a small portion of the total picture of this philosophy. The main goal will be to identify some of the points that connect this definition to other parts of the structure by showing one or two examples of how the different sequences are combined. A related aim is to show how to locate and fill in some of the unwritten pieces, and to recover enough of the system to move us from the uninitiated class of "those who do not know" the forms to the class of insiders "who know." Let us start off with the *Phaedrus*.

PHAEDRUS

We begin our catalogue of occurrences with the passage that has been the focus of the debate surrounding both the interpretation of the dialogues and the riddle of the ancient academy. This is the book that is frequently offered as evidence that Plato explicitly denied that writing can convey the most profound philosophical truths. It will turn out that the combination of topics we find in *Phaedrus* 274b-278b has many parallels with the final excerpt in our catalogue: the book of Genesis in the Old Testament.

Merchant of Learning
Exchange, Giving
Products of One's Own
Manufacture
Exchanges Goods
Between Cities
Merchandise of the Soul
Amusement (Display)
Serious (Instruction. Deals
with Other Knowledges
Trade in Learning
Art *Dealer*
Division. Discernment
Purification (Separates
Better (from Worse)
Separated into Souls
(**Art of Memory.** *Wisdom*)
Bodies (**Art of Writing**
Forgetfulness), **Production**
Divine
Inward. Soul. **Memory**
Human Original Image
Likeness Semblance Tools
Outward. Body. **Writing**
Purification Inward Body
Gymnastics for Deformity
Mimicry *Lifeless Outward*
Bodies (Other
Ridiculous Names)
Outward Soul (Discourse
and Speech
Does Not Know *(Evil)*
Ignorant *Purification*
Inward Soul Deformity

The story is that *in the region of Naucratis in Egypt* there dwelt one of the old gods of the country, the god to whom the bird called Ibis is sacred, his own name being Theuth. *He it was that invented number and calculation, geometry and astronomy, not to speak of draughts and dice,* and above all **writing.** Now the king of the whole country at that time was Thamus, who dwelt *in the great city of Upper Egypt* which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes, while Thamus they call Ammon. *To him came Theuth, and revealed his arts, saying that they ought to be passed on to the Egyptians in general.* Thamus asked what was the use of them all, and when Theuth explained, he condemned what he thought the *bad* points and praised what he thought *good.* On each **art,** we are told, Thamus had plenty of views both *for* and *against;* it would take too long to give them in detail (274c-e).

But when it came to **writing,** Theuth said, 'Here. O king, is *a branch of learning* that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their **memories:** my discovery provides a recipe for **memory** and wisdom. But the king answered and said, 'O man full of **arts,** to one it is given to **create** the things of **art,** and to another to judge what measure of *harm* and of *profit* they have for those that shall employ them. And so it is that you, by **reason** of your tender regard for the **writing** that is your **offspring,** have declared the very opposite of its true effect. If **men** *learn* this, it will [implant] *forgetfulness* in their *souls;* they will cease to *exercise* **memory** because they rely on that which is **written,** calling things to **remembrance** no longer from *within* themselves, but by means of *external* marks. What you have discovered is a **recipe not for memory, but for reminder.** And it is no true **wisdom** that *you offer your disciples,* but only its **semblance.** for by *telling them of many things without teaching them* you will make them seem to **know** much, while for the most part they **know nothing,** and as men filled, not with **wisdom,** but with the **conceit of wisdom,** they will be a burden to their fellows . . . anyone who leaves behind him a **written manual,** and likewise

Antidote is Instruction Refutes Vain Conceit. Soul Learns Modesty **Simple** *Discord is Remedied by Education. Purifier Refutes Prejudices so Person Thinks He* **Knows** *Only What He Knows and No More Chastisement is a Smoother Remedy Instruction (Gently Advises Person in* **Private**) *Eradicating Spirit of Conceit Proceeds in Another Way (Person is Cross-Examined in* **Public**) **Demagogue** *Convicted of Inconsistent Opinions by* **Statesman** *(Sophist of Noble Lineage)*

Art
Production
Divine
Original

Living **Memory Speech**
Human

Lifeless **Writing Discourse**
Image Likeness
Semblance

Blend of Hunter. Angler. and Merchant Own Productions. Giving Agriculture and Tendence Living. Bodies. Land Tame. Plants. Sows Seeds Persuasion or Force Enclosures (Garden of Adonis). Maturity Food for Body Divided into **Play and Serious**

anyone who takes it over from him. on the supposition that such **writing** will provide something reliable and permanent. must be exceedingly **simple**-minded: he must really be **ignorant** of Ammon's utterance. if he imagines that **written words** can do anything more than remind one who **knows** that which the *writing* is concerned with . . . You know Phaedrus. that's the strange thing about **writing, which makes it truly analogous to painting**. The *painter's products* stand before us as though they were *alive*. but if you question them, they maintain a most majestic *silence*. It is the same with **written words**: they **seem to talk to you as** though they were *intelligible*. but **if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you just the same thing forever**. And once a thing is put in **writing. the composition**, whatever it may be. **drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with** it: it **doesn't know** how to **address the right people**, and not address the wrong. And when it is ill-treated and unfairly abused it always needs its parent to come to its help. *being unable to defend or help itself* . . (274d-275b).

. . . but now tell me. is there another sort of **discourse**, that is brother to the **written speech. but of unquestioned legitimacy**? Can we see how it **originates. and how** much better and more effective it is than the other?

Phaedrus: What sort of **discourse** have you now in mind, and what is its **origin**?

Socrates: **The sort that goes together with knowledge. and is written in the soul** of the learner. that can defend itself, and **knows** to whom it should speak and to whom it should say nothing.

Phaedrus: You mean no *dead* **discourse**. but the *living* **speech**. the **original** of which the *written discourse* may fairly be called a kind of **image** (274d-275b).

Socrates: If a *sensible farmer* had some *seeds* to look after and wanted them to bear *fruit*, would he with **serious** intent *plant* them during the summer in a *garden of Adonis*, and enjoy watching it **producing** fine *fruit* within eight days? If he did so at all. wouldn't it be **in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime**? For **serious** purposes wouldn't he behave like a scientific *farmer. sow his seeds* in suitable *soil*. and be well content if they *came to maturity* within eight months?

Phaedrus: I think we may distinguish as you say. Socrates, between **what the farmer would do seriously** and **what he would do in a different spirit**.

*Blend of Hunter, Angler
and Merchant
Own Productions
Giving,* **Tools Mimicry
Knows, Does Not Know**
*Agriculture and Tending
Mortal Creatures
Land of Another Sort
Tame (Human),* [Implants]
*Sows Words. Persuasion or
Force. Enclosures (Literary
Gardens), Maturity
Food for Soul Divided into*
Play

Serious. *Blend of Merchant
and Division. Dialectic
Own Productions, Giving
Agriculture and Tending
Mortal Creatures. Land
Tame (Human),* [Implants]
*Sows Words. Persuasion or
Force. Enclosures
Immortality*

*Blend of Merchant
Learning and the Kind
that is* [Open to Doubt]
Art

*Productive. Division.
Discernment, Dialectic
Giving. Purification of
Soul, Own Productions
Food for Soul (Music)
Food for Body (Gym)
Goods of Soul
Outward Motion of Soul
(Speech and Discourse)*

Socrates: And are we to maintain that he who **has knowledge** of what is just. honorable. and good has less sense than the *farmer* in dealing with his *seeds'?* . . .Then **it won't be with serious intent** that he **writes them in water** or that **black fluid we call ink,** **using his pen** to *sow words* **that can't either speak in their own** *defense or present the truth adequately'?* (276c). . . No it is not. He will *sow his seed in literary gardens,* I take it. and **write** when he does **write** by way of **pastime,** collecting a store of **refreshment** both for his own **memory,** against the day *when age oblivious comes.'* and for all such as tread in his footsteps. and he will take **pleasure** in watching the *tender plants grow up.* And when other men resort to other **pastimes,** regaling themselves with drinking parties and suchlike. he will doubtless prefer to indulge in the **recreation** I refer to.

Phaedrus: What an excellent one it is, Socrates! How far superior to the other sort is the **recreation** that a man finds in **words.** when he **discourses** about *justice* and the other topics you speak of.

Socrates: Yes indeed, dear Phaedrus. But far more excellent. I think, is the **serious** treatment of them. which employs the **art of dialectic.** The **dialectician selects a soul** of the right type. and in it he *plants and sows his words* founded on **knowledge. words** which can **defend both themselves** and **him who planted them,** *words* which *instead of remaining barren contain a seed whence new* **words** *grow up in new characters. whereby the seed is vouch safed immortality.* and its possessor the fullest measure of blessedness that man can attain unto. . . (276a-277a).

Phaedrus: Yes. that is a far more excellent way.

Socrates: Then now that has been settled. Phaedrus. we can proceed to the other point.

Phaedrus: What is that'?

Socrates: The point that we wanted to look into before we arrived at our present conclusion. Our intention was to examine the reproach leveled against Lysias on the score of **speech writing,** and therewith the general question of **speech writing** and what does and does not make it an **art.** Now I think we have pretty well cleared up the question of **art.**

Phaedrus: Yes, we did think so, but please remind me how we did it.

Socrates: The conditions to be fulfilled are these. First, you must **know** the truth about the subject that you speak or *write* about: that is to say, you must be able to isolate it in *definition.* and having so *defined* it you must next understand how to **divide it into kinds.** until you reach the limit of division: secondly, you must have **a corresponding discernment of the nature of the** *soul* . . .

discover the type of **speech** appropriate to each nature. and **order and arrange your discourse** accordingly,

*Inward Soul
Purification (Thinking and
Inner Dialogue). Outward
Obstacles (False
Judgements and False
Speech): Inward Obstacles
(Discord and Deformity)
Purification Entails Taking
Away Evil: Serious Food.*
Knowledge *of Virtue
(Instruction and Learning).
Education is Divided into
Gymnastics (Body)
and Music (Soul), as well
as Rougher and Smoother
Remedy for Inward Body
Deformity is Gymnastics
(Food for Body)
Antidote for Inner Psychic
Discord is Music (Food for
the Soul). Remedies for
Soul Divided into
Chastisement (Discord)
and Instruction
(Ignorance) Ignorance
and Instruction both
Divided into the type that
Thinks He Knows But He
Does Not Know* (**Simple**)
and Stupidity

Simple is **Reproached** *by
gentle* **Private** *advising
but Ignorant Requires
Cross-Examination in*
Public

**Statesman
Demagogue
Waking Vision
Dream Image**

**Shadow Play
of Words**

addressing a variegated *soul* in a variegated style that ranges over the **whole gamut of tones**, and a **simple** soul in a **simple** style. .

(277c) And now to revert to our other question. whether the delivery and composition of **speeches** is honorable or base, and in what circumstances they may properly become a matter of **reproach**, our earlier conclusions have. I think, shown . .

Phaedrus: Which conclusions?

Socrates: They have shown that any work, in the past or in the future, whether by Lysias or anyone else, whether composed in a **private** capacity or in the role of **a public man who by proposing a law becomes the author of a political composition**, is a matter of **reproach** to its author—whether or not the **reproach** is actually **voiced**—if he regards it as containing important truth of permanent validity. For **ignorance** of what is a **waking vision** and what is a mere **dream image** of **justice** and **injustice**, good and evil. cannot truly be acquitted of involving reproach. even if the mass of men extol it. . .

Socrates: On the other hand, if a man believes that a **written discourse on any subject is bound to contain much that is fanciful**, that nothing that has ever been written whether in verse or prose merits much **serious** attention . . . (277e).

At the beginning of the *Sophist*, Socrates established that **art** was cut into two kinds: **production** and *acquisition*. The first of these two was partitioned into three: first, *agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures*; second the *molding of vessels and the use of tools*; and third, **imitation**. We can now see that this passage in the *Phaedrus* "combines" the strands of *acquisition* with the branches of the definition of production that deal with *agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures* as well as the one for **imitation**. Through this passage in the *Phaedrus*, we have been able to identify some of the **forms** that blend. The point of the argument in this passages is that the **art of memory** is superior to *writing*. The **art of memory** is classed as a **human original** whereas **written words** are mere **images**. Since **writing** is analogous to **painting**, this means that it must be a **semblance**. The factor common to **written words** and **paintings** is that they are produced by **tools**. On this basis, **writing** is classed (along with **painting, sculpture**, and **marionette playing**), as an **image** that is a **semblance** produced by means of some **instrument**. In contrast, the **art of memory** and **spoken words** are **human originals** classed under mimicry, for the *producer* uses her own **voice** as an **instrument** to *produce* the **forms** that correspond to the patterns of the **divine originals**.

Socrates explains the key thing that makes **writing** "truly analogous to **painting**." **Writing** substitutes *reminder*—a reliance on *outward, external* marks—for the **art of memory**—calling things to mind *inwardly*. Remember from the *Sophist* 231c-232a and 260a-263e, that **spoken** "**discourse** is an *outward* flow from the *soul* whereas *thinking* is an *inward dialogue* that the *soul* carries on with itself in *silence*." Recall as well that *bodies* were divided into *living* and *lifeless* (*Soph*. 226c-231c). These statements in the *Phaedrus* let us know that the polarities, *inward* and *outward, animate* and *inanimate*, can be combined with **productive art** as well. **Memory** and **discourse** are the kinds of **art** that involve the *inward* and *outward motions* of the *soul*. They produce the sorts of *products* that are classed as **originals**. As for **paintings**, which we know to be classed as **images**, specifically, **semblances**, we can now see that they are not placed with *inward* things but with *outward* ones, not with *living* things but with *lifeless*, or *inanimate* objects. Just as the **painter's** *products* seem *animated* (*living*), but if you question them, they are *dead silent* (*lifeless*), so the **writer's** *products* seem *intelligible*, but if you ask them anything, "they go on telling you just the same thing forever." If we use **painting** as the model for the pattern and extend it to **written words**, then it appears that **writing** is classed as an **image** and **semblance** that is *lifeless* and [unintelligible]. By extension, and on the basis of polarity, the products of the **memory art** and of **speech** are both *animated* and *intelligible*. This is crucial information, for it establishes a number of important parallels. The *products* of the **painter** and **writer**—the **painting** and the **written text** as physical objects or artifacts—are assigned

to the same class under *bodies*, whereas both **memory** and **spoken words**—which have *no visible embodiment*—are assigned to the *soul*.

Notice in addition that there is a reference to an *inner* **writing**. This was the notion that was associated from early on with the mnemonic. It is worth pointing out that the remark about ordering the conversation across the **gamut of tones** is a statement that links **human speech** to the **musical scale**. We also find more information about **division into kinds** and to the order and arrangement of **discourse**. This reminds us of the superior study discussed earlier. Again, we see the **forms** referring to the *style* of the discourse. Above all, it is made clear that the authentic type of **discourse** does not "speak to everyone." It can be heard and understood by some while others hear only *silence*. Perhaps this is a comment about the esoteric nature of this "ancient technology of representation." The discourse speaks to those who **know** the tradition, while at the same time, frustrating outsiders who **do not know**.

This much of the passage in the *Phaedrus* is cited frequently. But what of the section immediately following it, the one that begins at 274d? As Sayre has pointed out, scholars who quote these portions of the *Phaedrus* have "overlooked" the paragraphs that come right after the reference to **writing** as a kind of **image**. Here, Socrates establishes the primacy of the oral over the written and he goes on to explain the role of **dialectic**. Now, Sayre sees Socrates in these passages as "acknowledging a legitimate role for written language in the activity of dialectic" (1995: 20, 93). Certainly Socrates establishes the authenticity of **dialectic**. Can we go along with Sayre's conviction that **dialectic** involves "written language"? The answer is no! It is clear that **dialectic** *excludes* **writing**. Inscribing **words with pen and ink** is—like the **pencil** representations in the *Sophist*—a form of **play** or **recreation** (*Soph.* 234b). Socrates goes on to say that those with **serious** intentions "do not **write**." He explains that those with **knowledge write** only as a "pastime," a form of **play**, a **refreshment** for their own **memory**, and for the **memories** of those who follow. So much for Sayre's attempt to rescue writing.

Socrates contrasts the **production of art** that is made "**in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime**" with the **serious** intent, which involves **memory**. Those who have **knowledge** of the [just, honorable, and good] can be compared to the *farmer*, that is, to the *producer* from the class of *agriculture and tending of mortal creatures*, who deals with *seeds*. *Seeds*, as well as *plants* and *fruits*, were, of course, *products* of **nature**. Socrates in this passage establishes three parallels: first, there is the *sensible farmer* who *plants seeds* in the *garden of Adonis*; second: there is a **playful** sort of *farmer* who **uses his pen and ink** *to sow words in literary gardens*; finally, there is the **serious** type of *farmer*

who **uses his pen and ink** *to sow words in literary gardens*. finally. there is the **serious** type of *farmer* known as the **dialectician** *who plants and sows words in the soul so that the seed is guaranteed immortality*.

In these paragraphs. Socrates tells us about the role of **writing** during the time period in which this dialogue was written. The **written word** serves only as an aid to recall and as a kind of **recreation** or **amusement**. **Writing** is considered to be a superior form of **entertainment** when compared to drinking parties and other activities of this sort. However. **writing** is inferior when compared to the **recreation** that people find in **spoken words**. and also to the **serious** use of the **art** involving both **memory** and **spoken words**. such as when people **discourse** about *justice* and other similar topics. Thus. Socrates has made it quite clear that *only* the **art of memory** and the type of **spoken discourse** which employs **dialectic** involves the **serious** treatment of **words**. We have a contrast. The **written word** is only a kind of **play**. whereas **memory** and **spoken words** can be either **playful** or **serious**. **Dialectic**. in contrast. is strictly a **serious** use of **memory** and **speech**.

In Chapter Four. we noted that there were scholars who maintained that the dialogues were self-illustrating examples of the method described by Socrates. We observed that these commentators claimed that the word was linked to the deed in Plato's writings. Yet. no one could explain how the method of **dialectic** operated to connect them. Xenophon's Socrates stated that his account is to be found in his actions if it is not in his words. Here. we are starting to see how word and deed, content and form. matter and manner work together to produce an effect in the dialogues. When the discourse deals with **imitation**. the formal structure of the narrative in the passage exemplifies the divisions of **imitation**. *It is now clear that there is a doctrine in the dialogues, and that this teaching deals with the traditional system itself.*

As we begin to unravel the patterns of the mnemonic. we can start to see why. as members of the audience for these dramatic dialogues. we need some knowledge of the traditional frames of reference to understand how what is said abides by *the systematic rules of this art*. As we compare passages from different works and we start to see how the definitions are used in different conversational settings. our knowledge grows concerning the way that the system of rules (what is done), governs the order and arrangement of the composition (what is said), so that changes in the topic provide the contours of the forms. We go on with our analysis. This time. we take up the *Protagoras*.

Tools

Mimicry
Knows
Does Not Know
Simple

Original
Image

Likeness
Semblance, Tools
Mimicry, Knows
The Hunter
Persuasion (Orator,
Lawyer, Conversation)
Private Inducements
Money (Hire)

Baits Hook With Virtue
Sophistry
Does Not Know

Merchant of Learning
Exchange, Selling

Sells Own Wares, Simple
Retailing (In Same City)
Food for the Body

Merchant
(Between Cities)

What particular name do we hear attached to Protagoras in the sort of way that Phidias is called a **sculptor** and Homer a **poet**? (311e) Well, **Sophist**, I suppose, Socrates, is the name generally given to him.

I mean that you are going to entrust the care of your soul to a man who is, in your own *words*, a **Sophist**, though I should be surprised if **you know** just what a **Sophist** is. And yet if **you don't know** that, **you don't know** to whom you are entrusting your soul, nor whether he **represents** something *good* or *bad* (321c)

I think **I know** said he.

Tell me then, what do you think a **Sophist** is?

I suppose, as the name implies, on **who has knowledge** of [wise] things.

One could say the **same**, said I, of **painters** and **builders**, that they are those who have knowledge of wise things. But if we were asked what *sort* of [wisdom] **painters** understand, we should reply, [wisdom] concerned with the making of **likenesses**, and so on with the others. If then we were asked what sort of [wise] things the **Sophist has knowledge** of, what should we answer? *Of what is he the master?*

The only answer we could give is that *he is master of the* **art** *of making clever speakers* (312d) . . .

. . . this question of whether or not to entrust yourself to Protagoras, but ready to spend both your own *money* and that of your **friends** as if you had already made up your mind that you must *at all costs* associate with this man—whom you say you **do not know** and have never spoken to, but call a **Sophist**, and then turn out **not to know** what a **Sophist** is though you intend to put yourself into his hands.

When he heard this he said, It **looks like it**, Socrates, from what you say.

Can we say then, Hippocrates, that a **Sophist** is really a *merchant or peddler of the goods by which a soul is nourished?* To me he **appears** to be something **like** that (313c)

But what is it that *nourishes a soul?*

What it learns, presumably, I said. And we must see that the whole **Sophist** in *commending his wares* **does not deceive** us, like the *wholesaler and the retailer* who deal in *food for the body.* These people **do not know** themselves which of *the wares they offer* is *good* or *bad* for the *body*, but in *selling* them praise all alike, and *those who buy from them* **don't know** either, unless one of them happens to be a trainer or a doctor. So too *those who take the various subjects of* **knowledge** *from city to city, and offer*

Food for the Soul

Trade in Learning

Ignorant

*Concerned With Speech
and Knowledge of Virtue
Medicine. Discrimination
and Discernment
Purification
Better From Worse
Good From Bad
Lacks Symmetry
Remedies
As Physician Removes
Obstacles So
Body Benefits from Food*

*So Purifier
Refutes Prejudices
So Soul
Benefits from Food*

Private

Gymnastics Food for Body

Music Food for the Soul

Public

Statesman

**Demagogue
Mimicry**

them for sale retail to whoever wants them. commend everything that they have for sale. but it may be. my dear Hippocrates. that some of these men also are **ignorant** of the [beneficial] or [harmful] *effects on the soul of what they have for sale. and so too are those who buy from them.* unless one of them happens to be a *physician of the soul* (313d). If then you chance to be an expert in *discerning* which of them is *good* and *bad.* it is safe for you to buy **knowledge** from Protagoras or anyone else. but if not. take care you don't find yourself *gambling dangerously with all of you that is dearest to you.* Indeed *the risk you run in purchasing knowledge is much greater than that in buying provisions.* When you buy *food and drink.* you can carry it away from the shop or warehouse in a receptacle. and before you receive it into your *body* by *eating or drinking* you can store it away at home and take the advice of an expert as to what you should *eat and drink* and what not. and how much you should *consume* and when. so there is not much risk in the actual purchase. But **knowledge** cannot be taken away in a parcel. When you have paid for it you must receive it straight into the *soul.* You go away having *learned* it and are *benefited* or *harmed* accordingly. So I suggest we give this matter some thought, not only by ourselves, but also with those who are older than we, for we are still rather young to examine such a large problem. However, now let us carry out our plan to go and hear the man. and when we have heard him we can bring others into our consultations also. for Protagoras is not here by himself. There is Hippias of Elis. and I think Prodicus of Ceos too. and many other wise men (314b-c)

Personally I hold that the Sophists art is an ancient one. but that those who put their hand to it in former times. fearing the odium which it brings. adopted a **disguise and worked under cover** some use **poetry** as a **screen**, for instance Homer and Hesiod and Simonides; others religious rites and prophecy. like Orpheus and Musaeus and their school; some even—so I have noticed—*physical training*. like Iccus of Tarentum and in our own day Herodicus of Selymbria. the former Megarian, as great a Sophist as any. *Music* was used as a cover by your own Agathocles. a great Sophist. and Pythoclides of Ceos and many others. All of them. as I say. used these **arts** as a **screen** to escape malice. I myself. however. am not of their mind in this. I don't believe they accomplished their purpose. for they did not pass unobserved by **men who held the reins of power in their cities.** though it is on their account that these **disguises** are adopted: the mass of people **notice nothing.** but simply echo what the **leaders** tell them (316d-317a). . . .

The most ancient and fertile homes of **philosophy** among the Greeks are Crete and Sparta. where are to be found more **sophists** than anywhere on earth. But they **conceal their wisdom** like the **Sophists** Protagoras spoke of. and **pretend to be fools,** so that

Knows, Does Not Know

Simple
Ignorant

Private

Public

Statesman

Demagogue

their superiority over the rest of Greece may not be **known** to lie in wisdom. but seem to consist in fighting and courage. Their idea is that if their real excellence became **known**. everyone would set to work to become wise. By this **disguise they have taken in the pro-Spartans** in other cities. who to **emulate** them go about with bruised ears, bind their hands with thongs. take to physical training, and wear short cloaks . . . (342c). . . . All these were **emulators**, admirers, and **disciples** of Spartan culture, and their wisdom may be recognized as belonging to the same category, consisting of pithy and memorable dicta uttered by each. Moreover **they met together** and dedicated the first fruits of their wisdom to Apollo in his temple at Delphi. inscribing **those words which are on everyone's lips.** 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing too much' (343b). . . . In particular this saying of Pittacus. 'Hard is it to be [noble].' got into circulation **privately** and earned the approval of the wise (343). . . .

'Again, what if **our welfare** lay in the choice of [odd] and [even] numbers, in **knowing** when the greater number might rightly be chosen and when the less, whether each sort in relation to itself or one in relation to the other, and whether they were near or distant? What would assure us the good life then? Surely **knowledge**, and specifically a science of measurement, since the required skill lies in the estimation of [excess] and [defect]—or more precise. arithmetic. since it deals with [odd] and [even] numbers.'

Would people agree with us?

Protagoras thought they would.

'Well then,' I shall say. 'since our salvation in life has turned out to lie in the correct choice of pleasure and pain— **more** or **less**. **greater** or **smaller**, [nearer] or [more distant]—is it not in the first place a question of measurement. consisting as it does in a consideration of relative [excess], [defect], or [equality]? (357a).

It must be (358b). 'What skill. or what branch of **knowledge** it is, we shall leave till later: the fact itself is enough for the purposes of the explanation which you have asked for from Protagoras and me (358c). We can go further, and call it, as you have already agreed. a science of measurement, and **you know** yourselves that a [wrong] action which is done **without knowledge** is done in **ignorance**. So that is what being mastered by pleasure really is—**ignorance**, and most **serious ignorance**. the fault which Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias profess to cure (357e).

SEVENTH LETTER

Merchant of Learning
Exchange. Giving
Own Productions. **Mimicry**

The Productions of Others
Merchandise of the Soul
Instruction
(Trade in Learning)
Amusement (Play. Display)
Knows, Does Not Know
Trade in Learning
Simple
Ignorant

Acquisition
Purification
Separates Like from Like
Better from Worse
Souls and Bodies

Living **Words**
Lifeless **Writing**

Instruction
Education

Public

Private

The *instruction* that I **gave** to Dionysius was accordingly *given* with this object in view. I certainly did not set forth to *him all my doctrines*, nor did Dionysius ask me to, for **he pretended to know** many of the most important points already and to be adequately grounded in them *by means of the secondhand interpretations he had got from the others*. I hear too that he has since written on the subjects in which I *instructed* him at that time, as if he were composing a handbook of his own which differed entirely from the *instruction* he received.

Of this **I know nothing. I do know**, however, that some others have *written* on these same subjects, but who they are **they know not themselves**. One statement at any rate I can make in regard to all who have **written** or who may **write** with a claim to **knowledge** of the subjects to which I devote myself—no matter how they **pretend** to have *acquired* it, whether from my *instruction* or from others or by their own discovery. Such writers can in my **opinion** have **no real acquaintance** with the subject.

I certainly have composed no work in regard to it, nor shall I ever do so in future, for there is no way of putting it in **words** *like other studies.*

Acquaintance with it must come rather after a long period of attendance on *instruction* in the subject itself and of close companionship. when suddenly, like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the *soul* and at once becomes self-sustaining. Besides, this at any rate I **know**, that if there were to be a treatise or a lecture on this subject, I could do it best. I am also sure for that matter that I should be very sorry to see such a treatise poorly **written**. If I thought it possible to deal adequately with the subject in a treatise or a lecture for the general **public**, what finer achievement would there have been in my life than to write a work of great *benefit* to mankind and to bring the nature of things to light for all men? I do not, however, think the attempt to tell mankind of these matters a good thing, **except in the case of some few who are capable of discovering the truth for themselves with a little guidance** (341a-344d).

REPUBLIC

The *Republic* is relevant to this present study for the critique and banishment of the poets, for the comparison between the painter and the poet, and for the discussion concerning the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy. It is in this context in Book X that Homer and his "tribe" are compared to Pythagoras and his successors. The result of this comparison is that the poets are dismissed from the state.

The *Republic*'s Book X reproduces the entire sequential pattern with a high degree of accuracy. We will deal with it first before moving on, in a reverse order sequence, to consider the other sections of this dialogue that have held center stage in the history of the debate concerning the problem, namely, Book VII, VI, III and II.

It is important to know that it has been a matter of record for the last ten years that the overall structure of the *Republic* (among other dialogues), manifests the pattern we know to be the defining feature of the ring composition. The late Yale scholar, Robert S. Brumbaugh, described the intricate patterns he found in this text. He noticed that the *Republic* as a whole conforms to a sequence wherein "the A-B thematic pattern in the opening of the dialogue is balanced by the B-A pattern of its close."[1] He pointed out that the theme of the soul in Book IV of the *Republic* returns a second time in the second half of Book IX. The theme of the rise of the state in Book V is balanced by the theme of the decline of the state in Book VIII. Brumbaugh described the list of balanced themes as manifesting the pattern: A-B-C-D . . . D'-C'-B'-A'. At the vertex, he said, "stands the form of the good by way of the symbol of the sun." He noted that this sort of repetition of topics occurs in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedo* as well. Having made this observation, Brumbaugh wondered, Could this "elaborate latent structural order" have been "deliberate" on Plato's part? Did the author expect his readers to recognize this structural pattern? Why, he asks, is there a duplicated treatment of topics? Based on "internal indications," he concluded that "the thematic symmetry is deliberate," and that the ancients must have had "a greater sensitivity to such pattern than a modern reader has."[2] While Brumbaugh had, of course, identified the ring composition, and he also recognized the importance of an audience educated in the tradition, he was clearly in error. For the vertex of the *Republic* is not the "symbol of the sun." The center of the dialogue is the diagram of the divided line.[1] The sun precedes the line and is

[1] The most recent and comprehensive bibliography of research on the divided line may be found in Nicholas D. Smith, "Plato's Divided Line," *Ancient Philosophy* 16 (1996): 25-46. I recommend the following studies: Julia Annas, "On the Intermediates," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 57 (1975): 146-66; Kenneth Benne, "Plato's Divided Line: A Dramatistic Interpretation," *Philosophy of Education:*

counterbalanced by the cave on the responsion side of this fulcrum. Still, it is obvious that he recognized a major structural feature of traditional compositions. As far as I know, only one other researcher appears to have made a similar observation.

Holger Thesleff identified in the *Republic* the pattern we know to be the distinguishing characteristic of the ring structure. He also found this typology in the *Phaedo*, the *Symposium*, the *Theaetetus*, *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, and *Meno*, with corrupted versions of it in the *Charmides* and *Lysis*. He argued that every major dialogue conforms to what he saw as this "pedimental architectonics." In conjunction with this observation, he discerned throughout the dialogues a "two level model" of "sets of pairs of unequal opposites."[2] Thesleff argued that the pedimental structure and the pairs of opposites, taken together, were powerful evidence for the unity of each dialogue. Aside from the findings of these two scholars, it is clear, once again, that an understanding of the oral traditional style has not penetrated into our conceptual framework for interpreting this philosophy. That said, let us now turn to Book X of the *Republic*.

In the opening statements of the tenth book, Socrates asks for a definition of **imitation** (595c). No definition is presented. The request for a definition that is not supplied signals a missing piece of information—a gap or omission—that alerts listeners and readers that this material will not be stated explicitly, but will instead be "transposed into formal relations" (as Schleiermacher once described).

Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Illinois: Illinois State University, 1989); Robert S. Brumbaugh, *Plato's Mathematical Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954); Murray W. Bundy, "Plato's View of the Imagination," *Studies in Philology*, 19 (1922), 362-403; J.A. Brentlinger, "The Divided Line and Plato's 'Theory of Intermediates'," *Phronesis* 8 (1963): 146-66; Rosemary Desjardins, *The Rational Enterprise: Logos in Plato's Theaetetus* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990); John Paul Dreher, "The Driving Ratio in Plato's Divided Line," *Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. 10. No. 2 (1990), 159-172; A.S. Ferguson, "Plato and the Poet's **Eidola**," *Philosophical Essays Presented to John Watson* (Kingston: Queens University Press, 1922); D.W. Hamlyn, "**Eikasia** in Plato's *Republic*," *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.8 (1958), 14-23; Vassilis Karasmanis, "Plato's Republic: The Line and The Cave," *Apeiron* 21 (Fall 1988), 147-171; Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1966); H.J. Paton, "Plato's Theory of **Eikasia**," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol.XXII (1922), 69-104; Nicholas D. Smith, "The Objects of **Dianoia** in Plato's Divided Line," *Apeiron* 15 (1981), 129-137; Gerard Watson, *Phantasia in Classical Thought* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988); Robert E. Wood, "Plato's Line Revisited: The Pedagogy of Complete Reflection," *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 44 (March 1991), 525-547.

[2]Holger Thesleff, "Looking For Clues: An Interpretation of Some Literary Aspects of Plato's 'Two-Level Model,'" *Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations*, ed., Gerald A. Press (Boston: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993): 107-128.

Art
Production
Divine, Original, Image
Human

Original

Image

Likeness

Eyes

Semblance
Tools

Divine Tools

Divine Originals

Divine Images
Divine Likeness
Human Tools. Originals
Human Images

Book X

And truly. I said. many other considerations assure me that we were entirely right in our organization of the state. and especially. I think. in the matter of **poetry** (595a) . . . In refusing to admit at all so much of it as is **imitative** . . . for you will not betray me to the tragic **poets** and all other **imitators**—that kind of **art** seems to be a corruption of the mind of all listeners who do not possess as an antidote a **knowledge** of its real **nature** . . . though a certain love and reverence for **Homer** that has possessed me from a **boy** would stay me from speaking. For he appears to have been the first teacher and beginner of all these **beauties** of tragedy. Yet all the same we must not honor a **man** above **truth**. but, as I say, speak our minds (595c) . . . Could you tell me what **imitation** is? For neither do I myself quite apprehend what it would be at.

It is **likely**. then. he said. that *I* should apprehend!

It would be nothing strange. said I, since it often happens that the **dimmer vision sees** things in advance of the **keener**. . . . Shall we, then, start the inquiry at this point by our customary procedure? We are in the habit. I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name (596b). . . In the present case, then let us take any multiplicity you please: for example. there are many **couches** and **tables**. Of course. But these **utensils** imply. I suppose, only **two** ideas or **forms**. one of a **couch** and one of a **table**.

Yes.

And are we not also in the habit of saying that the **craftsman who produces** either of them fixes his eyes on the idea or form, and so makes in the one case the **couches** and in the other the **tables** that we use, and similarly of other things? For surely no **craftsman** makes **the idea itself**. How could he?

By no means.

But now consider what name you would give to this **craftsman**? Him who makes all the things that all **handicraftsmen** severally **produce** (596c).

A truly clever and wondrous man you tell of.

Ah. but wait, and you will say so indeed, for this same **handicraftsman** is not only able to make all **implements**, but he *produces* all *plants* and *animals. including himself,* and thereto *earth* and *heaven* and the *gods* and all things in *heaven* and in *Hades* under the earth.

A most marvelous Sophist, he said (596d).

Are you incredulous? Said I. Tell me, do you deny altogether the possibility of such a **craftsman**, or do you admit that in a sense there could be such a creator of all these things, and in another sense not? Or do you not *perceive* that *you yourself would be able to make all these things in a way?* . . . You could do it most quickly if you should choose to take a *mirror* and carry it about

Human Likenesses
Human Semblances
Human Reflections

everywhere. You will speedily produce the *sun and all the things in the sky*, and speedily the *earth* and *yourself* and the other *animals* and **implements** and *plants* and *all the objects* of which we just now spoke

Yes. he said. the *appearance* of them. but not the *reality* and the *truth*.

Excellent, said I, and you come to the aid of the argument opportunely.. For I take it that the *painter* too belongs to this class of *producers*, does he not? (596e)

Of course.

But, you will say, I suppose, that his creations are not *real* and *true*. And yet. after a fashion. the *painter* too makes a *couch*. does he not?

Yes. he said . the *appearance* of one. he too.

What of the **cabinetmaker**? Were you not just now saying that he does not make the *idea* or *form* which we say is the *real couch*, the *couch* in itself. but only some *particula. couch*? . . . Then if he does not make that which really is. he could not be said to make *real being* but *something that resembles real being but is not that*.

But if anyone should say that being in the complete sense belongs to the work of the **cabinetmaker** or to that of any other **handicraftsman**, it seems that he would say what is not *true*.

That would be the view, he said, of those who are versed in this kind of reasoning.

We must not be surprised, then, if this too is only a **dim** adumbration in comparison with *reality* (597b).

Divine Production
Divine Original
Divine Semblance (Nature)

Shall we. then. use these very examples in our quest for the *true nature* of this **imitator**? . . . We get, then, these three **couches**, one, that in *nature*, which, I take it, we would say that *God produces*, or who else?

No one. I think.

Human Production
Human Original
Human Semblance
Human Tools

And then there was *one* which the *carpenter* made.

Yes. he said.

And *one* which the *painter* made. Is not that so? . . . (597B)

The *painter*. then, the *cabinetmaker*, and *God*, there are these three presiding over *three* kinds of couches . . . *God* then, I take it, knowing this and wishing to be *the real author of the couch that has real being* and not of some particular couch. nor yet a particular *cabinetmaker*. produced it in *nature* unique . . . call him its *true and natural begetter*, or something of the *kind* . . . since it is by and in *nature* that he has made this and all other things (597d)

Divine Production
Divine Original
Divine Nature

And what of the *carpenter*? Shall we not call him the *creator* of a *couch*? . . .

Human Production
Human Original
Human Tools

Shall we also say that the *painter* is the *creator* and *maker* of that sort of thing?

By no means.

What will you say he is in relation to the *couch*.

Human Mimicry

Original
Image
Likeness
Semblance

Mimicry

Knows
Does Not Know

Simple

Ignorant

This. said he. seems to me the most reasonable designation for him. that he is the **imitator** of the thing which those others *produce*.

Very good. said I. The *producer* of the *product* **three** removes from *nature* you call the **imitator**'' This then. will apply to *the maker of tragedies* also. if he is an **imitator** and is in his *nature three* removes from the *king* and the truth, as are all other **imitators**. . . about the *painter*. Do you think that what he tries to **imitate** is in each case that thing itself in *nature* or the works of the **craftsmen**?

The works of the **craftsmen**, he said (598a-b).

Is it the *reality* of them or the *appearance* . . . Does a couch *differ from itself according as you view it* from the side or the front or in any other way? Or does *it differ not at all in fact though it appears different*. as so of other things?

That is the way of it, he said. It *appears other but differs not at all* (598b)

Consider then, this very point. To which is *painting* directed in every case, to the **imitation** *of reality as it is* or of the *appearance as it appears*? Is it an **imitation** of a *phantasm* or of the *truth*? Of a *phantasm*, he said.

Then the **mimetic art** is far removed from **truth**. and this, it seems, is the reason why it can *produce* everything, because it touches or lays hold of only a *small* part of the object and that of a *phantom*. as for example. a **painter**. we say. will **paint** us a **cobbler**. a **carpenter**. and other **craftsmen**, though he himself *has no expertness* in any of these **arts**, but nevertheless if he were a good **painter**. by exhibiting at a distance his **picture** of a **carpenter** he would **deceive children and foolish men**, and make them believe it to be a **real carpenter** (598c)

. . . When anyone reports to us of someone, that he has met a man who **knows** all the crafts and **everything else that men severally know**, and that there is nothing that he **does not know** more exactly than anybody else, our tacit rejoinder must be that he is a **simple** fellow. who apparently has met some **magician or sleight-of-hand man and imitator and has been deceived by him into the belief that he is all-wise**. because of his own inability to put to the proof and distinguish **knowledge, ignorance, and imitation** (598d)

. . . have we not next to scrutinize tragedy and its leader, **Homer**, since some people tell us that these **poets** know all the **arts** and all things **human** pertaining to **virtue** and **vice**, and all things **divine**. For the good **poet**, if he is to poetize things rightly, must, they argue, create **with knowledge** or else be unable to create. So we must consider whether these critics have not fallen in with such **imitators** and been **deceived by them**, so that looking upon their works they cannot **perceive** that these are three removes from

Public

**Private
Statesman**

Demagogue

reality. and easy to **produce without knowledge of the truth**. For it is **phantoms**, not realities. that they produce. Or is there something in their claim. and do good poets really **know** the things about which the **multitude** fancy they **speak** well? Do you suppose then. that if a man were able to produce both the **exemplar** and the **semblance**, would he be eager to abandon himself to the fashioning of **phantoms** and set this in the forefront of his life as the best thing he had? If he had **genuine knowledge** of the things he **imitates** he would far rather devote himself to **real** things rather than to the **imitation** of them and he would endeavor to leave after him many [noble] **deeds** and **works** as memorials of himself and would be more eager to be the theme of praise than the praiser (599b).

. . . 'Friend **Homer**, if you are not at the **third** remove from **truth** and **reality** in human excellence. being **merely that creator of phantoms** whom we defined as the **imitator**, but if you are even in the second place and **were capable of knowing** what pursuits make men better or worse in **public** or **private** life, then tell us what city was better **governed** owing to you, even as Lacedaemon was because of Lycurgus. and many other cities great and small because of other **legislators**? But what city credits you with having been a good **legislator** and having benefited him? Italy and Sicily say this of Charondas and we of Solon. But who says it of you?' Will he be able to name any?

I think not, said Glaucon. At any rate none is mentioned even by the **homeridae** themselves. . . . Well then, if no **public** service is credited to him, is **Homer** reported while he lived to have been a guide in education to men who took pleasure in associating with him and transmitted to posterity a certain **Homeric** way of life just as **Pythagoras** was himself especially honored for this. and his successors. even to this day. denominating a certain way of life the **Pythagorean**, are distinguished among their contemporaries?

No, nothing of this sort . . . (600b)

Shall we. then, lay it down that **all the poetic tribe, beginning with Homer, are imitators of images of excellence** and of the other things that they 'create.' and do not lay hold on truth, but. as we were just now saying, the painter will fashion, **himself knowing nothing** of the cobbler's are, **what appears to be a cobbler to him and likewise to those who know nothing** but judge only by **forms** and **colors**? (601a).

Certainly

And similarly. I suppose. we shall say that the **poet** himself. **knowing nothing** but how to **imitate**, lays on with **words** and **phrases** the **colors** of the several **arts** in such a fashion that others equally **ignorant**, who see things only through **words**, will deem his **words** most excellent (601a) . . .the thing he will **imitate** will be the thing that appears beautiful to the **ignorant** multitude

Shadow Play of Words

Contradiction-Making

Statesman
Production
Human Original
Images of Excellence
Likeness
Pythagoras
Pythagorean Tradition

Human Image
Imitators of Images
of Excellence
Semblance
Homer, Poetic Tribe
Tools, Painter
Does Not Know
Forms and Colors
Mimicry, Poet
Does Not Know
Words and Phrases
Simple, Ignorant
Public

Demagogue

(602b) . . . we are fairly agreed, that the **imitator knows nothing** worth mentioning of the things he **imitates**, but that **imitation** is a form of **play**, not to be taken **seriously** . . . And did we not say that it is impossible for the same thing at one time to hold **contradictory** opinions about the same thing?
And we were right in affirming that.
The part of the soul then, that opines in **contradiction** of measurement could not be the same with that which conforms to it (603).
He can not be credited with **public** service. Is he reported to have been a **guide in education to men who took pleasure in associating with him**? Did he transmit to posterity a certain Homeric way of life as did **Pythagoras**? Even now, are his successors who carry on the **tradition** distinguished among their contemporaries like those who follow the **Pythagorean tradition**? The answer is no.
All the **poetic tribe**, beginning with **Homer**, are **imitators of images** of **excellence** and of other things that they 'create,' and do not lay hold on truth. . . . **the painter will fashion**, himself **knowing nothing** of the cobbler's art . . . **what appears to be a cobbler to him** . . . and likewise to **those who know nothing but judge only by forms and colors?** (599e-601a) . . . similarly, we shall say that the poet himself, **knowing nothing** but how to **imitate**, lays on with **words** and **phrases** the colors of several arts . . . in such a fashion that **others equally ignorant, who see things only through words, will deem his words most excellent,** whether he **speaks in rhythm, meter, and harmony** about **cobbling** or **generalship** or anything whatever. So mighty is the **spell** that these **adornments** naturally exercise, though when they are stripped bare of their musical **coloring** and taken by themselves, I think **you know** what sort of a showing these sayings of the poets make. . . . The creator of the **phantom**, the imitator, we say, **knows nothing** of the **reality** but only the **appearance** (602a).

Republic 595a-596b. Instead of providing the definition of **imitation**, the inquiry makes use of the usual procedure. Various multiplicities are considered by the name of a single **idea** or **form**. **Couches** and **tables**—kinds of **utensils** or **tools**—have been selected as examples. Up to this juncture, the divisions have followed the same route as the definition in the *Sophist*. However, at the point where the *Sophist* left off **production** by **tools** and focused on **mimicry**, this passage in the *Republic* diverges. Instead of **mimicry**, the conversation follows the thread of **semblances** created by **tools**. This move is significant. Since the topic of **tools** was "taken away" from the definition in the *Sophist*, and since it is made the focus of division in this work, this gives us the subdivisions of one of the parts

that was subtracted in the previous dialogue (i.e.. **tools**).

Socrates states that they will employ the usual procedure. as is their "habit." He says that *in this particular instance*, the **craftsman** who **produces a couch** or a **table** fixes his **eyes** on the **idea** or **form** in order to make the **couches** and **tables** that we use. Then, he announces that "*this extends to other examples as well*," thereby inviting us to work out these examples for ourselves. With the introduction of the **craftsman** analogy, the parallels with the divisions of the *Sophist* become even more apparent.

Republic 596c-597b. A **mirror reflection** is not a **divine image**, since it is not "**naturally produced**." Unlike **reflections in water** or on other **smooth bright surfaces** that occur in **nature**, the **mirror** is a **human artifact**. It captures a reflected **image** of the physical **bodies** in the **visible world**. This **image** corresponds to the **form** of the **original** and gives the proper **color** to each part. However, it does not occupy **three dimensions** so it must be classed as a **human semblance**, rather than as a **likeness**. This classification is corroborated when Socrates explains that some **painters** belong to this group of *producers*.

Since we do not have the pattern of the *Sophist* to guide us in sorting out the contents of **tools**, we can only note certain prominent features in this section of the dialogue and wait to see if the presence of these patterns can be verified by comparison with subsequent repetitions of the definition in other books. It is worth noting that this portion of the discourse mentions the "**real, the true, that which really is** or **real being**," something that "**resembles real being but is not that**," as well as "**that which is not true**." Further, there is a reference to different degrees of clarity with the mention of "a **dim** adumbration in comparison with **reality**." Perhaps the **divine** productions made by **tools** are divided on the basis of **reality** or **is not reality, truth** or **is not truth, being** and **is not being, clarity** and **is not clear**.

We are told that the **productions** of the **painter** are **not true** and **real**. Still, artists do make a **painting** of a **couch** that has the **appearance** of **truth** and **reality**. The example of the **cabinet maker** is slightly different from that of the **painter**. The **cabinetmaker** does not make the **idea** or **form** of the **couch** but rather, a particular **couch**, or an actual **table**, so this sort of *producer* should be assigned to the class of **human production** that makes **originals**. This class resembles **real being** but **is not real being**, for **being** in its fullest sense does not belong to the work of the **cabinetmaker** or any other **handicraftsman** (597a). Notice how that which **is not** is distributed among the **many**. We can also make out that there are *products* on **four** different orders of magnitude, depending on the scale of the *producer*. who, in a pattern that is consistent with what we found in the *Sophist*, acts as the

causal agent. The different scales are: (1) the kind made by the **god**: (2) the sort that is produced by **nature**: (3) the one the **carpenter** makes: and then (4) the one which the **painter** makes. Two are **divine**, while the other two are **human**. The *productions* of the **god** and of **nature** are more significant than the *products* of the **human carpenter** and **painter**. The implication is that there are three sets of parallels. The **small** is like the **great**. The **human** is like the **divine**. The **one** the **carpenter** makes is **like** the **one** that **God** makes. The **one** the **painter** makes is analogous to the sort that occurs in **nature**. Said differently, there is a proportion:

great		divine		god		that which occurs in nature
——	~	——	~	——	~	——
small		human		carpenter		painting

In this pattern, that which **occurs in nature** is to the **divine** and to the **god**, what the **painting** is to the **human** and to the **cabinet maker** or **carpenter**. Remember that the **carpenter** *produces* **human originals**. The **god**, or **divine craftsman**, *produces* **divine originals**. The **painting** is classed as a **human semblance**. Since **paintings** are located with **semblances** on the **human** side of the mnemonic, the **kinds that occur in nature** must be placed with **semblances** on the **divine** side. These examples will now be used in the search for the **true nature** of the **imitator**. In the next section of this passage, notice how the **one** produced in **nature** has an indirect presence in the conversation even though it is never included directly.

Republic 597b-597d. If we take the *Sophist* divisions hand in hand with the examples set out in this passage, we can assign the **painter** in the *Republic* to the **art of semblance making** that produces by **tools**, a kind that is classified as **human image making**. The example of the **human carpenter** or **cabinetmaker** should probably be assigned to the class of **human art** that produces **originals**, since what is *produced* is an **actual couch** or **table**. The example of the **couch** made by **God** would fall under the class of **divine originals**, since it is caused by the **handicraftsman** who *produces* in an **orderly** way by working with **art** and **reason**. In contrast, the *products* of **nature**, while **divine** (since the **great craftsman** is ultimately credited with creating, along with all **implements**, all **gods**, including **himself**, the **plants** and **animals**, as well as every other thing on **earth** and **heaven**), are in fact *produced* out of **necessity**, the **lesser divine** *cause* that generates *products* **automatically**, **involuntarily**, and in a **chaotic manner** that is without **intelligence** or **art**. Mention of *causes* confirms yet again that the **divine craftsman** is a **kind** of *cause*, just as **human craftsman** is a **kind** of *cause*.

Republic 597d-602a. Here is a comparison and contrast of Homer and the "poetic tribe" with

Pythagoras and his "successors." All of the **poets**. beginning with Homer. are said to be only **imitators of images**. Just as the **painter** is assigned to the class that uses **tools**. so the **poet**, who uses his own person as his **instrument**, is classed under **mimicry**. **Without knowing** the **cobblers art**, the **painter** paints what appears to be a **cobbler** to both him, and to those who **know nothing** but judge only by **shapes** and **colors**. Just as the **painter** is **deceived in himself and he deceives others** with a **mere show of knowledge**, so the **poet**, "**knowing nothing** but how to **imitate**, uses **words** and **phrases** to imitate the **colors** of a number of **arts**. Just as the **painter** uses **shapes** and **colors** as **tools** for producing an **image** that is not a genuine **likeness** of the **original**, so the **poet**, through **mimicry**, uses **words** and **phrases** to produce **poetry**, an **image** that is not a **true likeness** of the **forms**. Those who are **ignorant** and who see things only through **words** will believe these **words** to be excellent, "so great is poetry's **spell**." It is therefore confirmed that the poet takes **words** and **phrases** made by his or her own person as **tools** for making his **images**, in a way that is analogous to the manner in which the **painter** uses shapes and **colors** as **tools** for creating **images**. However, whereas the **painter** is classed as **simpleminded**, the **poet**—like the **sophist**—is assigned to the place of the **ignorant** because he "**deceives others** who are **ignorant**."

The **poet**, as creator of the **phantom**, **knows not** the **reality** but only the **appearance**. His **imitations** will **appear** correct to an **unknowing public**. Since the **imitator knows nothing** about the thing he imitates, the **imitation** is at best a form of **play**: it is not to be taken **seriously**. Socrates concludes that those who write tragic **poetry** are **imitators** who charm the **public**. The **crowd** is enthralled by the **spell** of the **rhythm, meter and harmony**—the **musical coloring**—that **adorns** the poet's **words**. Spectators are so caught up in the **entertainment** that they are not able to detach themselves from the experience to assess the value of the work or the effects it is having upon them. If they could disengage from the poetic experience, the audience would no longer be **deceived** by the **poet's speech**. They would recognize that without the **adornments**, the **poet's words** and **phrases** are without substance. For this reason, **poetry** provides only **recreation** that has no **serious educational** benefit. Since **simple-mindedness** and **ignorance** can only be removed by **instruction** and **education**, and since **poetry** provides no opportunity to exercise **reason** and rational **thought**, the **public** remains uneducated. Since **poetry** provides *delight* but not *instruction*, it offers no advantage to either **human** life or orderly government.

Having established the analogy between the **poet** and the **painter**, the discussion goes on to compare and contrast the **poets** and the father of their tradition, **Homer**, with the **Pythagoreans** and the **founder** of their school, **Pythagoras**. In this conversation, **Pythagoras** and his tradition are

indirectly positioned as the polar opposite of the master of tragedy and the **homeridae**. Whereas **Homer** and the **Homeric tribe do not know** the truth. **Pythagoras** and the **Pythagoreans know** all the arts as well as things pertaining to **virtue, vice**, and the **divine**. Whereas **Homer** and the **poets** offered only a form of **play**. **Pythagoras** was a guide in **education**, i.e., he provided something serious. Whereas those who follow the **poetic tradition** have at their disposal only **words** and **phrases** as their **tools** to **mimic** the **forms**, the **Pythagoreans** work directly with **forms** and **colors**. Let us set up the columns.

Pythagoras	Homer
Pythagoreans	**homeridae, the Homeric tribe**
knows all arts, virtue and vice, and divine things	**does not know the truth**
works with reality	**works with phantoms**
[ ]	**three removes from reality**
produces the exemplar	**produces the semblance**
devotes himself to real things	**imitates real things**
leader among men	**leader of tragedy**
can see forms and colors	**sees only through words and phrases**
leaves noble deeds and works	**leaves works**
is the theme of praise	**is the praiser**
transmitted to posterity a Pythagorean way of life	**did not transmit a way of life**
a good legislator	**is not a legislator**
credited with public service	**no public service is credited to him**
a guide in education, i.e. serious	**a form of play**
men took pleasure in associating with him	**no associates**
successors carry on the tradition	**poets carry on the tradition**
and are distinguished among contemporaries	**poets are not distinguished**

Thus, **Homer** and **Pythagoras** are assessed by way of the definitions. It is significant that **Homer** and the **poets** see only through **words** and **phrases**, while **Pythagoras** and **his tradition** see the **forms** and **colors**. In the end, and by all measures, **Homer** and **his tradition** are assigned to the class of the **demagogue**. By the same measuring stick, **Pythagoras** and his **successors** are assigned to the class of the true **statesman** and **sophist**. For all these reasons, **poetry** is banished.

We move now to the earlier books of the *Republic*. In the next two sections of this chapter, we continue with the reverse order reading of significant passages, and with our attempt to unravel the threads of the discourse concerning **poetry, sophistry**, and **writing**. Let us now turn to Book VII and the story of the cave.

This parable is, of course, one of the most well-known passages in all of Plato. It involves a compact and dense description of the "ascent" and "descent" through the topics.

Human

Athlete in Debate
Conquest
Violent (Involuntary)

Mimicry
Marionette Playing
Tools

Shadows
Semblance

Likeness

Ears

Eyes

Book VII

Next. said I. compare our nature in respect of **education** and its lack to such an experience as this. Picture **men** dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern with a long entrance open to the light on its entire width. Conceive them as *having their legs and necks fettered from childhood. so that they remain in the same spot. able to look forward only. and prevented by the fetters from turning their heads*. Picture further the light from a *fire* burning higher up and at a distance behind them. and between the *fire* and the *prisoner* and above them a road along which a low wall has been build. as the exhibitors of **puppet** shows have partitions before the **men** themselves. above which they show the **puppets** (514a-b).

. . See also. then men carrying past the wall **implements** of all kinds that rise above the wall. and human images and **shapes** of animals as well. **wrought in stone and wood and every material.** some of these bearers presumably speaking and others silent (515a)

A strange image you speak of. he said. and strange prisoners.

Like to us. I said. For to begin with. tell me do you think that these men would have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the **shadows** cast from the fire on the wall of the cave that fronted them?

How could they. he said. if they were compelled to hold their heads unmoved through life? (515b).

And again. would not the same be true of the **objects** carried past them?

Surely.

If then they were able to talk to one another. do you not think that they would suppose that in naming the things that they saw they were naming the passing **objects**?

Necessarily.

And if their *prison* had an **echo** from the wall opposite them. when one of the passers-by uttered a **sound**. do you thing that they would suppose anything else than the passing **shadow** to be the **speaker**?

By Zeus, I do not. said he.

Then in every way such *prisoners* would deem reality to be nothing else than the **shadows** of the **artificial objects**.

Quite inevitably. he said.

Consider. then. what would be the manner of the release and healing from these bonds and this folly if in the course of nature something of this sort should happen to them. When one was freed from his fetters and compelled to stand up suddenly and turn his head around and walk and to lift up his **eyes** to the light and in doing all this felt pain and. because of the dazzle and glitter of the light. was unable to discern the **objects**. whose **shadows** he formerly saw. what do you suppose would be his answer if

*Angler. Acquisitive
Conquest (Force)
Hunting. Living. Land
Tame. Human
Fishing. Blow. Striking
With a Barb (Takes Place
in the Daytime). Hooks or
Prongs. Concentrates
on Head and Mouth.
Draws Captive Upward
from Below*

Divine Originals

Divine Images

**Divine Likeness
Semblances, Reflections
Shadows**

Mimicry

Knows

someone told him that what he had seen before was all a cheat and an **illusion**, but that now, being nearer to reality and turned toward more real things, he saw more truly? And if also one should point out to him each of the passing **objects** and constrain him by questions to say what it is, do you not think that he would be at a loss and that he would regard what he formerly saw as more real than the things now pointed out to him?

Far more real, he said (515e).

And if he were compelled to look at the light itself, would not that pain his **eyes**, and would he not turn away and flee to **those things which he is able to discern and regard them as in very deed more clear and exact than the objects pointed out?**

It is so, he said.

And if, said I, someone should *drag him thence by force up the ascent* which is rough and steep, and *not let him go before he had drawn him out* into the **light of the sun**, do you not think that he would find it *painful* to be so haled along, and *would chafe at it*, and when he came out into the **light**, that his **eyes** would be **filled with its beams so that he would not be able to see** even one of **the things that we call real?** (516a)

Why, no, not immediately, he said.

Then there would be need of habituation, I take it, to enable him to see the **things higher up**. And at first he would most easily discern **men and other things**, and later, **the things themselves**, and from these he would go on to contemplate the **appearances in the heavens** and heaven itself, more easily by night, looking at the light of the **stars** and the **moon**, than by day the **sun** and the sun's light.

Of course.

And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true **nature**, not by **reflections in water** or **phantasms** of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place . . . and conclude that this it is that provides the seasons and the courses of the year and presides over all things in the visible region (τόπῳ), and is in some sort the cause of all these things that they had seen.

Obviously, he said, that would be the next step.

Well then, if he **recalled to mind** his first habitation, and **what passed for wisdom there**, and his fellow bondsmen, do you not thing that he would count himself happy in the change and pity them? (516c) . . . This **image** then, dear Glaucon, we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, likening the region revealed through the sight ot the habituation of the *prison*, and the light of the *fire* in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region (τόπον), you will not miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear. But god **knows**

whether it is true. But at any rate, my **dream** as it appears to me is that in the region of the **known**, the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and that when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in **private** or **public** must have caught sight of this . . . (517c)

And again, do you think it at all strange, said I, if a man returning from divine contemplations to the petty miseries of men cuts a sorry figure and appears most ridiculous, if, while still blinking through the gloom, and before he has become sufficiently accustomed to the environing darkness, *he is compelled in courtrooms of elsewhere to contend about the shadows of justice or the images that cast the shadows and to wrangle in debate about the notions of these things* in **the minds of those who have never seen justice itself** (517e) . . . But a sensible man, I said, would remember that there are two distinct disturbances of the **eyes** arising from two causes, according as the shift is from light to darkness or from darkness to light, and believing that the same thing happens to the soul too, whenever he **saw a soul perturbed and unable to discern** something, he would not laugh **unthinkingly**, but would observe whether coming from a brighter life its vision was obscured by the unfamiliar darkness, or whether the passage from **the deeper dark of ignorance** into a more luminous world and the greater brightness had dazzled its vision (518a) . . . Then if this is true, our view of these matters must be this, that education is not in reality what some people proclaim it to be in their professions. What they aver is that they can put true knowledge into a soul that does not possess it, as if they were inserting vision into blind eyes . . . But our present argument indicates, said I, that the true analogy for this indwelling power in the soul and the instrument whereby each of us apprehends is that of an eye . . . (518c)

Well, then, said I, is not this also likely and a necessary consequence of what has been said, that neither could men who are **uneducated** and **inexperienced** in truth ever adequately preside over a **state**, nor could those who had been permitted to linger on to the end in the pursuit of culture—the one because they have no single aim and purpose in life to which all their actions, **public** and **private**, must be directed . . . (519c) . . . It is the duty of us, the **founders**, then, said I, to compel the best natures to attain the **knowledge** which we pronounced the **greatest** . . . You have again forgotten, my friend, said I, that the **law** is not concerned with the special happiness of any class in **the state**, but is trying to produce this condition in **the city as a whole**, harmonizing and **adapting the citizens to one another by**

Acquisitive. Conquest
Fighting. Hunting
Pugnacious. Violent
War of Words
Controversey. Public
(Speeches about Justice
and Injustice. Random)

Does Not Know
Simple. *Loquacity*

Ignorant. *Sophistry*

Public, Private
Statesman

Hunter. Conquest
Living. Tame. Humans
Force. Persuasion. Public

persuasion and compulsion. and requiring them to impart to one another any benefit which they are severally able to bestow upon the **community.** and that it itself creates such men in the state . . .(520a)

Down you must go then. each in his turn. to the habitation of the others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there. For once habituated you will discern them infinitely better than the dwellers there. and you will know what each of the 'idols' is and whereof it is a **semblance.** because you have seen the reality of the beautiful. the just and the good. So **our city will be governed** by us and you with **waking minds,** and not, as most cities now which are inhabited and **ruled** darkly as in a **dream** by **men who fight one another for shadows and wrangle for office** as if that were a great good, when the truth is that the city in which those who are to rule are least eager to hold office must needs be best administered and most free from dissention. and **the state that gets the contrary type of ruler** will be **the opposite of this** (520d).

Baits Hook with Virtue
(Sophistry). Exchange
Having a Semblance of
Education

Demagogue
Shadow-Play of Words

Contradiction-Making

Book VI

Conceive then, said I. as we were saying, that there are these two entities. and that one of them is sovereign over the *intelligible* order and region (τόπου)and the other over the world of the **eyeball,** not to say the **sky-ball,** but let that pass. You surely apprehend the two types. the **visible** and the *intelligible.*
I do.

Divine. *Intelligible*

Human. *Visible*
Eyes

Represent them then. as it were. by a line divided into two unequal sections and cut each section again in the same ratio—the section. that is. of the *visible* and that of the *intelligible* order—and then as an expression of the ratio of their comparative clearness and obscurity, you will have. as one of the sections of the **visible** world, **images.**

Shadows
Reflections
Semblances
Images
Divine, Likenesses
Images
Originals

By **images** I mean, first, **shadows,** and then **reflections in water and on surfaces of dense, smooth, and bright texture.** and everything of that kind, if you apprehend (510a)
I do.

As the second section assume that of which this is a **likeness** or an **image,** that is. the **animals** about us and all **plants** and the whole class of **objects made by man.**
I so assume it. he said.

Would you be willing to say, said I, that the division in respect of **reality** and **truth** or the opposite is expressed by the **proportion**—as is the **opinable** to the **knowable** so is the **likeness** to **that of which it is a likeness?**

Likenesses

I certainly would.

Consider then again the way in which we are to make the division of the **intelligible** section.
In what way?

Images
Originals

By the distinction that there is one section of it which the soul is compelled to investigate by treating as **images** the things **imitated** in the former division. and by means of assumptions from which it proceeds not up to a first principle but down to a conclusion. while there is another section in which it advances from its assumption to a beginning or principle that transcends assumption. and in which it makes no use of the **images** employed by the other section. relying on **ideas** only and progressing systematically through **ideas**.

In spite of the high degree of ambiguity in these instructions. we are able to note number of similarities between this passage in the *Republic* and the Stranger's procedure in the *Sophist*. We can also see that there are some major differences. most notably the separation into *unequal parts*. Let us move on to parts of Book III and then finally, to Book II.

Divine

Human
Original

Image, Likeness
Semblance, Mimicry
Knows

Simple

Book III

. . . the **fire divine** (391e)

What type of **discourse** remains for our definition of our prescriptions and proscriptions? We have declared the right way of speaking about [**gods**] and **daemons** and **heroes** and that other world? (392a)

. . . Speech. then, about **men** would be the remainder . . . (392a) Is not everything that is said by fabulists or **poets** a narration of past, present. or future things? . . . (392d)

. . . Do they proceed either by pure narration or by a narrative that is effected through **imitation**, or by both. . . . (392d)

Tell me. do **you know** the first lines of the *Iliad* . . . (392e)

. . . the **poet** himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking. But what follows **he delivers as if he were himself Chryses** . . . (393b)

And is not **likening oneself to another in speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens oneself?** . . . In such case then, it appears. he and the other **poets** effect their narration through **imitation** . . . But if the poet should **conceal** himself nowhere. then his entire poetizing and narration would have been accomplished without **imitation** . . . (393c)

. . . it would not be **imitation** but narration, pure and **simple** (393d). . . . without **imitation simple** narration results (394b)

. . . there is one kind of **poetry** and tale telling which works wholly through **imitation**, as you remarked. tragedy and comedy, and another which employs the recital of the **poet** himself. best exemplified. I presume. in the dithyramb, and there is again that which employs both. in epic **poetry** and in many other places . . . (394c)

. . . we must reach a decision whether we are to suffer our **poets**

to narrate as **imitators** or in part as **imitators** and in part not, and what sort of things in each case, or not allow them to **imitate** at all. I **divine**, he said, that you are considering whether we shall admit **tragedy** and **comedy** into our city or not. (394d).

Perhaps, said I, and perhaps even more than that. For I certainly **do not yet know myself**, but whithersoever the wind, as it were of the argument blows, there lies our course (394d).

Does Not Know

Do we wish our guardians to be **good mimics** or not? . . .

And does not the same rule hold for **imitation**, that the same man is not able to **imitate** many things well as he can one?(394e).

Still less, then, will he be able to combine the practice of any worthy pursuit with the **imitation** of many things and the quality of a **mimic**, since, unless I mistake, the same men cannot practice well at once even the **two forms of imitation that appear most nearly akin, as the writing of tragedy and comedy**. Did you not just now call these two **imitations**? I did, and you are right in saying that the same men are not able to succeed in both. Nor yet to be at once good **rhapsodists and actors**? True. But neither can the same men be actors for **tragedies** and **comedies**—and all these are **imitations**, are they not? (395b)

Play

Yes, **imitations**. And to a still smaller coinage than this, in my opinion, Adimantus, proceeds the fractioning of human faculty, so as to **be incapable of imitating many things or of doing the things themselves of which the imitations are likenesses** (395b) For while **knowledge** they must have both of mad and bad men and women, they must do and **imitate** nothing of this kind (396a)

. . . If, then I understand your meaning, said I, there is a for of diction and narrative in which the really good and true man would narrate . . . and **another form unlike this** to which the man of the **opposite** birth and breeding would cleave . . . (396c)

What are these for? He said. A man of the right sort, I think, when he comes in the course of his narrative to some word or act of a good man will be willing to **impersonate** the other in reporting it, and will feel no shame at that kind of **mimicry**, by preference **imitating** the good man. . . . But when he comes to someone **unworthy** of himself, he will not wish **to liken himself** in earnest to one who is inferior . . . because he is unpracticed in the **mimicry** of such characters, and also because he shrinks in distaste from **molding and fitting himself to the types of baser things** (396e) . . . Then the narrative that he will employ will be of the kind that we just now illustrated by the verses of Homer, and his diction will be one that *partakes* both of **imitation** and **simple narration**, but there will be a small portion of **imitation** in a **long discourse**—or is there nothing in what I say? (396e)

Molding Vessels and the Use of Tools

Yes, indeed, he said, that *is* the type and patterns of such a speaker (397a). Then, said I, the other kind of speaker, the more **debased** he is the less will he shrink from **imitating** anything and

Serious

Merchant of Learning
Exchange. Selling
Own Productions
Retailing (Takes Place in
City). Merchant (Between
Cities). Food for the Soul
Serious. Instruction, Trade
in Learning

Image, Likeness
Semblance
Forms and Colors
Tools

Acquisition
Hunter. Tame. Violence
Military Art
Athlete. Fighting
Pugnacious

Contest of Bodily Strength
War (Violent)

everything. He will think nothing **unworthy** of himself. so that he will attempt **seriously** and in the presence of many. to **imitate** all things . . . (397a)

If a man. then. it seems. who was **capable by his cunning of assuming every kind of shape and imitating** all things should *arrive in our city. bringing with himself the poems which he wished to exhibit. we should . . . send him away to another city. . . but we ourselves. for our soul's good.* should continue to employ the more austere and less delightful **poet** and tale teller. who would **imitate** the diction of the good man and would *tell his tale in the patterns which we prescribed* in the beginning, when we set out to educate our soldiers (398b) . . . And now, my friend, said I. we may say that we have completely finished the part of *music* that concerns speeches and tales. For we have set forth what is to be said and how it is to be said . . . in the requirement of *conformity to the patterns and manner that we have prescribed* (398d).

Book II

For that healthy state is no longer sufficient. but we must proceed to swell out its bulk and fill it up with a multitude of things that exceed the requirements of necessity in states, as, for example the entire class of **huntsmen**, and the **imitators**, many of them occupied with **figures** and **colors** and many with **music**—the **poets** and their assistants. **rhapsodists. actors. chorus dancers. contractors**—and the **manufacturers of all kinds of articles.** especially those that have to do with women's **adornment**. . . . (373b-c)

And shall we also require other cattle in **great** numbers if they are to be eaten. shall we not? (373c)

And the territory. I presume, that was then sufficient to feed the then population. from being adequate will become too **small** (373d)

We shall go to war as the next step, Glaucon (373e) . . . don't you think that the business of *fighting* is an **art** and a *profession*? (374b) . . . And are we to believe that a man who takes in hand a *shield* or any other **instrument** of *war* springs up on that very day a competent *combatant in heavy armor or in any other form of warfare*—though no other **tool** will make a man be an artist or an *athlete* by taking it in hand. nor will it be of any service to those who have neither *acquired* the science of it nor sufficiently practiced themselves in its use? (373d)

Great indeed, he said. would be the value of **tools** in that case!

Then. said I. in the same degree that the task of our guardians is the [greatest] of all. it would require more leisure than any other business and the [greatest] science and training (374e) . . . Does it not also require a **nature** adapted to that very pursuit? . . . It

Image
Likeness

Acquisition
Merchant of Learning
Work of Others. Retailing
Food for the Body
Food for the Soul
Serious (Instruction
Knowledge of Virtue
Learning)

Molding Vessels and
Use of Tools

Image
Likeness, Semblance
Tools, Mimicry

becomes our task. then. it seems. if we are able. to select which and what kind of **natures** are suited for the guardianship of a state. Do you think. said I. that there is any difference between the **nature** of a well-bred hound for this watchdog's work and that of a wellborn lad? . . . I mean that each of them must be keen of **perception**. quick in pursuit of what it has apprehended. and strong too if it has to **fight** it out with its captive (375a). The [physical qualities] of the guardian, then, are obvious. And also those of his **soul** (375b) . . . The [love of **wisdom**], then, and [high spirit] and [quickness] and [strength] will be combined for us in the **nature** of him who is to be a [good] and **true** guardian of the state (376c). Such. then. I said. would be the basis of his character. But that rearing of these men and their [education], how shall we manage that? (376d) Come then. just as if we were telling stories or fables and had ample leisure. let us [educate] these men in our **discourse**. What. then. is our **education**? Or is it hard to find better than that which long time has discovered—which is. I suppose. *gymnastics* for the *body*, and for the *soul. music*? (376e) And under music you include tales, do you not? . . . And tales are of two species. the one **true** and the other **false**? . . . And **education** must make use of both, but . . . we begin by telling children fables. and the fable is. taken as a whole, **false**. but there is **truth** in it also? And we make use of fable with children before *gymnastics* (377a) Do you know then, that the beginning in every task is the chief thing. especially for any creature that is young and tender? For it is then that it is best *molded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it*. Shall we. then. thus lightly suffer our children to listen to any chance stories fashioned by any chance teachers and so to take into their minds opinions for the most part contrary to those that we shall think desirable for them to hold when they are grown up?
We must begin, then. it seems. by a censorship over our **story makers**, and what they do well we must pass and what not, reject. . . . (377c) And the stories on the accepted list we will induce nurses and mothers to tell to the children and so **shape** their **soul** by these stories far rather than their **bodies** by their hands. The example of the **greater** stories. I said. will show us the **lesser** also. For surely the pattern must be the same. and the **greater** and the less have a **like** tendency (377c)
I do. he said. but I don't apprehend which you mean by the **greater** either (377d)
Those. I said. that Hesiod and Homer and the other **poets** related to us. These. methinks. composed **false** stories which they told and still tell to mankind. . . . with that. I said. which one ought first and chiefly to blame. especially if the **lie** is not a pretty one . . . When anyone **images badly in his speech** the **true** nature of **gods** and **heroes** like a **painter** whose **portraits bear no resemblance**

to his models. (377e)

There is. first of all. I said. the **greatest lie** about things of **greatest** concernment ...

But the best way would be to bury them in silence. and if there were some necessity for relating them. only a very **small audience** should be admitted ... (378a)

No. by **heaven**. said he. I do not myself think that they are fit to be told. Neither must we admit at all. said I. that **gods** war with **gods** and plot against one another and contend—for it is not **true** either—if we wish our future guardians to deem nothing more shameful that lightly to fall out with one another (378b)

Does Not Know

For the young **are not able to distinguish** what is and what is not allegory. but whatever **opinions** are taken into the mind at that age are wont to prove indelible and unalterable. (378d)

Yes. that is reasonable. he said. but if again someone should ask us to be specific and say what these compositions may be and what are the tales. what could we name?

Knows

And I replied. Adimantus. we are not **poets**. you and I at present. but founders of a state. And to founders it pertains **to know** the patterns on which **poets** must compose their fables and from which their **poems** must not be allowed to deviate. but the founders are not required themselves to compose fables (379a)

Right. he said. but this very thing—the patterns or norms of right speech about the **gods**—what would they be? ... (379a)

This then. said I. will be one of the laws and patterns concerning the gods to which speakers and poets will be required to conform. that God is not the cause of all things. but only of the good ...

(380c) Do you think that God is a **wizard** and capable of **manifesting himself by design, now in one aspect, now in another, at one time changing and altering his shape in many transformations** and at another **deceiving us and causing us to**

Simple

believe such things about him. or that he is **simple** and less likely than anything else to depart from his own **form** ... (380d)

And again. it is surely true of all composite **implements**. edifices. and habiliments. by parity of reasoning. that those which are well made and in good condition are least liable to be changed by time and other influences. ... It is universally **true**. then that which is in the best state by **nature** or **art** or both admits least alteration by something else. ... But **God** surely. and everything that belongs to **God**. is in every way in the best possible state. ... From this point of view. then, it would be least of all likely that there would be many **forms** in **God**. ... But would he **transform and alter himself?** ((381a-b). It is impossible then. said I. even for a **god** to wish to alter himself. but. as it appears. each of them. being the fairest and best possible. abides forever **simply** in his own **form** ... ... (381c)

Nor must anyone tell **falsehoods** about Proteus and Thetis. nor in

any tragedy or in other poems bring in Hera **disguised** . . .(381d).
Nor again must mothers under the influence of such **poets** terrify
their children with harmful tales, how there are certain **gods** whose
apparitions haunt the night in the **likeness** of many strangers from
all manner of lands (381e)

But, said I, may we suppose that while the **gods** themselves are
incapable of change they **cause us to fancy that they appear in**
many shapes deceiving and practicing magic upon us? . . .
consider, said I. Would a god wish to **deceive, or lie,** by
presenting in either **word** or action what is only **appearance?**
(381e)

Ignorant

I don't know, said he.

Don't you know, said I, that the veritable **lie,** if the expression is
permissible, is a thing that all gods and men abhor? . . .

. . . what I mean is, that **deception in the soul** about realities, to
have been **deceived** and to be **blindly ignorant** and to have and
hold the falsehood there, is what all men would least of all accept
(382b)

. . . to describe this as in very truth falsehood—**ignorance** namely
in the *soul* of the man deceived. For the **falsehood in** *words* **is a**
copy of the affection in the soul, an afterrising **image** of it and not
an altogether unmixed falsehood (382c)

And also in the fables of which we were just now speaking, owing
to our **ignorance** of the **truth** about antiquity, we liken the **false**
to the **true** as far as we may and so make it edifying (382d)

Does Not Deceive
Simple

Tell me, then, on which of these grounds falsehood would be
serviceable to God. Would he because of his **ignorance** of
antiquity make **false likenesses** of it? . . . Then there is no lying
poet in God. . . Then there is no motive for God to **deceive.** . . So
from every point of view the **divine** and the **divinity** are free
from falsehood. . . . Then God is altogether **simple** and **true** in
[deed] and **word,** and neither changes himself nor deceives others
by **visions** or **words** or the **sending of signs** in **waking** or in
dreams. (381e)

You concur then, I said, in this as our second norm or canon for
speech and poetry about the gods—that neither are they **wizards**
in **shape shifting** nor do they mislead us by **falsehood in words**
or [deed]?(382a)

At *Republic* 375d. the term, **philosopher,** is introduced in the context of a discussion concerning the
education (i.e., learning and acquiring knowledge, which was, along with *exchange* and *conquest,*
identified in the *Sophist* as belonging to *acquisition*). There is a discourse about disposition of
[character]. The guardians of the *state* must be disposed in their **nature** to be [temperate] with what
they know while being ruthless with their enemies and with what they **don't know.** Thus, we are
probably safe in assuming that there is a connection between **divine nature** and **human nature**; both

have a common [character]. Further. **nature** is once again associated with *tools and molding vessels*. We learn that opposing dispositions of [character] can be reconciled through the **philosophic nature** that mediates between the two. The **philosophic nature** is therefore a kind of *intermediate*. It is said to enable one to distinguish between **knowledge** and **ignorance** on the basis of *learning*. We are given a list of the dispositions of [character] of those who have this ability. It combines four things: first, the [love of wisdom]; second, a [high spirit]; third. [quickness]; and fourth. [strength]. This concludes the discussion concerning the basis of [character].

The conversation then shifts to the *education* and rearing of guardians. We are told that a consideration of this topic will be a significant move forward toward the objective of the entire inquiry. "the origin of *justice* and *injustice* in a state." Notice the consistency between the sequential order of the topics that arise in the course of this discussion and the divisions in the *Sophist*. Recall that in the latter dialogue, **art** was subdivided into three: first *agriculture and the tending of mortal creatures*; second, the *molding of vessels and the use of tools*; and third, the art of **imitation**. Here, we can see that *education* is. from the perspective of the learner. a kind of *acquisition of knowledge*, and from the point of view of the teacher, an **art** that entails a kind of *tendence*. Thus, *rearing and training* children may be thought of *tending mortal creatures* and also as *molding vessels* (taken as referring to both *body* and *soul*) with **human nature** as a **tool**. Notice that we are beginning to be able to identify and confirm the divisions that serve as areas of contact between this. *acquisitive*. branch and other parts of the mnemonic.

The *Republic* moves on with a proposal to educate through this discourse "just as if we were telling stories or fables." *Education* is divided into two parts, *gymnastics* for the *body* and *music* for the *soul* (*Rep*. 376e). A significant point is made here. Recall from the series of divisions of *acquisition*. that certain **sophists** were said to have only a *semblance of education* (*Soph*. 222d). As well. two kinds of *nourishments* were identified: first. *food for the body*; and second. *food for the soul* (*Soph*. 223d). The latter was said to include **music**, **painting** and **marionette playing** and it was further divided into a kind that was strictly for **amusement** and another. **serious** sort that was aimed at *instruction*. When we collect these divisions from the *Sophist* together with these distinctions in the *Republic*. we find that it is *education* that is divided into *nourishment for the body* and *nourishment for the soul*. *Food for the body* includes *gymnastics*. *Food for the soul* includes other **arts** such as *music. painting. marionette playing. sculpture* and *poetry*. Bear in mind that this *musical* class is associated (according to the statement at 373b-c). with professions such as *rhapsodist. actor. chorus dancer. contractor*. and the *manufacturers of all kinds of articles*, with priority given to those that

pertain to women's *adornments*. These must all be affiliated with *food for the soul*. Here in the *Republic*. we are told that of the two sorts of *food—body* and *soul*—children are exposed to *music* before they receive training in *gymnastics*.

Gymnastics is set aside and *music* is considered. [Tales] are classified "under *music*" (thereby proving once again that *poetry* is a form of *education* that takes its place as a *food for the soul*. specifically, a kind of *music*). Socrates then goes on to divide *tales* into **true** and **false**. Although he does not say so here. we must assume that one of these kinds is for **play** while the other type is more **serious**. Why is it that the *education* of the young begins with the [fable], he asks. for these **forms** are. as a whole, **false**. even though there is some **truth** in them? Early childhood is a critical time because the young *soul* is malleable and liable to be permanently shaped by the influences of early impressions. Children should not be exposed to **false** [fables] lest their minds be *molded* in a way that is contrary to what is desirable for them as a grown up. Here we have more statements that suggest that *educating* children is like *molding vessels*. Needless to say. we can detect that Socrates is once again carrying out the method of division.

The passage continues with a discussion of a censorship that must be imposed on the storymakers. What the storymaker does well must be accepted. but what is not well done will be rejected. Here. we understand that well-made stories follow the patterns of the **forms** precisely and accurately. Those that will be rejected do not conform to the prescribed patterns of the **forms**. Only the stories that pass will be given to mothers to pass on to their children to ensure a positive formative effect. Most of the stories that mothers now tell will be prohibited (377b-c). Which ones will be banned? The "example of the **greater** stories will show us the **lesser** . . . " For the pattern or model "must be the same and the **greater** and the **less** must have a **like** tendency" (377d). The question of what is meant by **greater** is ignored. Instead, the compositions of Homer and Hesiod are said to be examples of **false stories**. making them, presumably, specific instances of the **lesser** sort. What is wrong with them? They **image** badly in speech the **true nature** of gods and heros, like a **painter** whose **portraits** bear no resemblance to his models (397e). We are therefore given to understand that **lies**. i.e.. **false statements** in speech. **mimic** the truth. The **lie**—which is **false**—**pretends** to be the **truth**. People who utter **false statements** use their own person as the **instrument** of deception. Moreover. **liars** must be classed as **ignorant mimics**, since the *outward* motions from their *soul* (namely the **spoken words** that declare what is **false** to be **true**), are different from the motions that are *inward* (the **thoughts** that **know** that the **spoken words** run counter to the **truth**). For these reasons. the best way to deal with [stories] that **lie** about those things of "**greatest** concernment" is to

"bury them in *silence*." These [stories] must not be told before the **public**, nor **privately**. No specific examples of admissible [tales] are named, and the reason given is that the current perspective is not that of the **poets**, but of "founders of a state," (i.e., **statesmen**). While knowledge of the patterns to which the **poet's** compositions must conform and from which they will not be permitted to diverge belongs to **founders**, the **founders** themselves are not required to compose [fables]. What then, would a model for [stories] about the **gods** be? Even though examples of the pattern are not given directly, we can see that this passage itself manifests the correct order and arrangement of the topics in the definition. Thus the ordered pattern is *hidden* in the discourse. It is given *indirectly* though Socrates' **deeds** rather than through his **words**.

Having looked at all these passages in the *Republic*, let us turn our attention now to the parallel patterns in the *Laws*.

LAWS

Book I

Divine	What, I take it, is **true** and ought to be said in an inquiry into the **truth**. Their **legislation** was framed in the interest of **virtue** as a
Original	whole, not of one fragment of it, and that the least considerable. They aimed at devising a *classified code*, though not on the lines of our present day codes (630e) ... But we contend that the right procedure for the framer of a **legislation** is that with which we have just made a beginning ... It was quite right to begin with
Image, Nature	**virtue** ... May I explain its **nature**? (631b) ...
	... it is not without [good] **cause** ... there are two different kinds
Human	of **good** things. the merely **human** and the **divine**; [the former
Original	consequential on the latter]. Hence a city which accepts the
Image, Likeness	**greater goods** acquires the **lesser** along with them, but one which refuses them misses both. The **lesser** are those among which [health] holds the first place, [comeliness] the second, [strength for the race and all other bodily exercises] the third, while the fourth
Eyes	place belongs to a [wealth which is not 'blind,' but clear-sighted, because attendant on wisdom]. Of [divine goods], the first and chiefest is this same **wisdom**, and next after it [sobriety of spirit]; a third, resultant from the blending of both these with [valor], is [righteousness], and [valor] itself is fourth. All of these **naturally** rank before the former class, and of course, a **lawgiver** must observe that **order**. Next, he should impress it on his citizens that all his other injunctions have a view to these ends, and that among the ends, the **human** look to the **divine**, and all the **divine** to their leader, **wisdom** (631c-d).

Art
Production, Human
Image
Likeness

[Quality, Magnitude]

Tools, Mimicry

Play
Serious

[Proportion. Equality
Symmetry]

Art, Production
Human, Image, Likeness
Semblance, Tools. Play

Serious

Original
Forms and Colors
[Proportion. Equality
Symmetry]
Production,
Human

Image, Likeness
Semblance, Tools

Knows

Book II

And what of the various **arts of imitation** which work by producing likenesses? If they are so far successful. I mean if they give rise to an attendant pleasure. [charm]. I suppose, would be just the right name for it? Yes. Whereas the [rightness] of such *products*. speaking generally. depends not on their pleasantness. but on accurate correspondence in [quality] and [magnitude]? True. Thus the only case in which it will be right to make pleasure our standard of judgment is that of a performance which provides us with neither **utility**, nor **truth**, nor **resemblance**. though. of course. it must do us no harm either. an activity practiced solely with a view to this concomitant [charm]. which is very properly called *pleasure*. unattended by any of the results just specified (667d)

Yes. and I also use the name *play* for it in cases where it does neither **harm** no **good** worth taking into **serious** account. Very true. Then surely it follows from the argument that a man's feeling of pleasure. or his erroneous belief. is never a proper standard by which to judge of any representation. and I will add. any [proportionality]. [Equal] is never [equal]. nor [symmetrical]. because someone believes it to be so. or because someone feels no pleasure: no. we should judge by the standard of truth, never. on any account by any other (668a). Assuredly. Now we may say that all **music** is an **art of producing likenessess** (εἰκαστικήν) or **representations** (μιμήματι). Of course. Consequently. when a man tells us that in **music**. pleasure is the standard of judgment, we must refuse to accept his statement. It is not this type of **music**, if indeed there could be such a type. which we should make our **serious** object. but that other which retains its **likeness** to the model of the [noble] (668b). . . . As they aim at the [noblest] kind of song. they will also have to aim not at a **music** which is pleasing. but at one which is *right*. In fact. we explained the [rightness] of a representation to lie in reproduction of the [proportions] and [quality] of the **original**. To be sure. Again. it would be universally allowed of **music** that its **productions** are all of the **nature of representation** and **portraiture** (668c). . . . a **man** who is to make no mistake of judgment about a particular **production** must, in every case. **understand** what that **production** is. If he **does not understand** what it is, that is. what it is meant for. or of what it is in fact an **image**. it will be a long time before he will discern the [rightness] or [wrongness] in the **artist's** purpose . . . And if a man **does not understand** this **rightness** can he possibly be in a position to discuss the [goodness] or [badness] of the work . . . there are. as **you know**, numerous **likenesses** which are apprehended by the **eye** . . . in

Does Not Know

their case too. a man **did not know** what the various bodies represented were. Could he possibly judge of the **rightness** of the artist's work? For example. could he tell whether it shows the *members of the body in their true and natural [numbers] and real [situations].* so *disposed relatively to one another as to reproduce the natural grouping*—to say nothing of [color] or [shape]—or whether all this is confused in the **representation**? Could a man. think you. possibly decide the question. if he **simply did not know** what the creature depicted was? (668e) . . .

Simple

Now suppose we are aware that the [figure] the artist has drawn or modeled is that of a **human being.** and that he has reproduced all its members. with their [colors] and [outlines]. Does it follow that one who is alive to this need be competent to judge on the further point whether the work is beautiful. or falls short of beauty in some way? (669)

Then must not one who is to be an **intelligent** judge of any representation. whether in **drawing.** in **music.** or in any **other branch of art.** have three qualifications? He must **understand.** first. what the object reproduced *is.* next. how [correctly]. third and last. how well a given representation has been effected. in point of language. melody. or rhythm (669b). The Muses. we may be assured. would never commit the grave mistake (669c).

Ignorant

. . . because our poets are not on the level of the **Muses** themselves. Not to say they would never make a **pretended presentation** of a single theme out of a medley of **human** voices . . . (669d) Whereas our mere **human poets** tend to be only too fond of provoking the contempt of those of use . . . the **reproduction of the cries of animals.** is in the worst of [bad] taste: the use of either as an independent **instrument** is no better than unmusical **legerdemain** (670b). . . .

How. indeed. is a man with little or no familiarity with the Dorian scale to judge the [rightness] of the airs. or the rightness or [wrongness] of the rhythm to which the poet has set his air? (670b)

Public

. . .

In fact. the general **public** are **simply** ridiculous in their belief . . .

But what now about a man who **does not even know** what constituents a piece has? (670c)

Since melody suggests and awakens consciousness of rhythm. the two in conjunction have given rise to the **play** of the choric dance (873d)

But if the practice is treated as mere **play** and free license is to be given to any man (673e)

Laws III

Then I take it we may say that the many generations of men who led such a life were bound. by comparison with the age before the deluge or with our own. to be rude and **ignorant** in the various

arts (679d).

By compositions of such a kind and discourse to the same effect. they naturally inspired the multitude with contempt of musical law. and a **conceit of their own competence** as judges. Thus our once silent **audiences** have found a voice (701a)

But as things are with us. **music** has given occasion to a general **conceit** of universal **knowledge** and contempt for law, and liberty has followed in their train. Fear was cast out by confidence in supposed **knowledge and the loss of it** gave birth to impudence (701b)

Statesman

Why. I said a **legislator** should have three aims in his enactments—the **society** for which he makes them must have freedom. must have amity with itself, must have understanding (701d)

Contradiction-Making

He is like a fountain which gives free course to the rush of its waters, and since **representation** is of the essence of his **art**, must often **contradict** his own utterances in his presentations of contrasted characters. **without knowing** whether the truth is on the side of this speaker or of that. Now it is not the **legislator's** business in his law to make two such statements about one and the same topic: he has regularly to deliver himself of one pronouncement on one matter. Take as an example, one of the very topics on which you have just delivered yourself. A funeral may be extravagant, it may be mean, it may be decently modest. You select **one and only one of those types, the intermediate type, for universal imposition and unrestricted commendation** (719d-e)

The **eye** of love is **blind** where the beloved is concerned. and so a man proves a bad judge of right. good. honor. in the **conceit** that more regard is due to his personality than to the real fact . . . (732a)

Private

Book VII

The **privacy** of home life screens from the general observation many little incidents, too readily occasioned by a child's pains pleasures. and passions. which are not in keeping with a **legislator's** recommendations, and tend to bring a **medley of incongruities** into the [characters] of our citizens. Now this is an evil for the **public** as a whole . . . (788a-b). Hence. though we are at a loss to **legislate** on such points. silence about them is also impossible. But I must try to illuminate my meaning by the production of what I may call samples: at present my remarks must seem something of a riddle (788c).

**Public
Statesman**

Simple

And perfection of the children's bodies, I conceive means—to put it at the **simplest**—that they must grow straight from their earliest days (788d).

My own contention is that the right road in life is neither pursuit of pleasure nor yet unqualified avoidance of pain. but that contentment with **the intermediate condition to which I have just given the name of [graciousness]**—a state which we all. on the strength of an oracular saying. plausibly assign to **God** himself (792d).

Why. as to this matter of children's **games** I maintain that our communities are sunk in a universal **ignorance**: it is not seen that they have a decisive influence on the permanence or impermanence of a **legislation** once enacted. Where there is prescription on this point. where it is ensured that the same children shall always **play** the same **games** in one and the same way. and get their pleasure from the same **playthings**. the regulations in more **serious** matters too are free to remain undisturbed . . Pray let me explain how **serious** this evil is (797b-c).

You mean the evil of **public** dissatisfaction with the ancient fashions (797d)

A **lawgiver**. then. must contrive one device or another to secure this advantage for his community. and here is my own suggestion toward the discovery. They all suppose. as we were saying. that innovation in children's **play** is itself a piece of **play** and nothing more. not. as it is in fact. a source of most **serious** and grievous harm (798b).

When this has been determined. the whole citizen body must do **public** sacrifice to the Destinies and the entire pantheon at large . . . (799b).

No man shall contravene the **public** standards of song, ritual. or choric performance of the young at large. whether by vocal utterance or by movement in the dance. any more than he would any other of our canons (800a).

No **poet** shall compose anything in contravention of the **public** standards of **law** and right. honor and [good], nor shall he be at liberty to display any composition to any **private** citizen whatsoever until he has first submitted it to the appointed censors of such matters and the curators of law. and obtained their approval. These censors we have to all intents appointed by our election of **legislators** for music and a superintendent of education (801d).

Why. I mean we should keep our **seriousness** for **serious** things. and not waste it on trifles. and that. while **God** is the real goal of all beneficent **serious** endeavor. man, as we said before, has been constructed as a **toy for God**. and this is. in fact. the finest thing about him. All of us. then. men and women alike. must fall in with our role and spend life in making our *play* as perfect as possible—to the complete inversion of current theory . . .(803c). It is the current fancy that our **serious** work should be done for the

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Ignorant

Play

Serious

Public

Private

Statesman

Serious

Play

sake of our **play**. thus it is held that war is **serious** work which ought to be well discharged for the sake of peace. But the truth is that in war we do not find. and we never shall find. either any real **play** or any real education worth the name, and *these* are the things I count supremely **serious** for such creatures as ourselves. Hence it is peace in which each of us should spend most of his life and spend it best. What then. is our right course? We should pass our lives in the **playing of games**—*certain* **games** that is. sacrifice. song, and dance—with the result of ability to gain heaven's grace. and to repel and vanquish an enemy when we have to fight him (803d).

They must believe that what we have said has been sufficient for its purpose, and that. for the rest. they will be visited by promptings. **superhuman** and **divine**, as to their sacrifices and dances. suggestions as to the several **gods** in whose honor, and the several times at which. they are to **play** their **play**, win heaven's favor for it. and so live out their lives as what they really are—**puppets** in the main. though with some touch of reality about them. too (804b). . . . bear with me. I had **God** before my mind's **eye** and felt myself to be what I have just said. However, if you will have it so, man shall be something not so insignificant but more **serious** (804c).

Tools

Simple

Book VIII

As to the study of **written compositions without musical accompaniment**. whether written in meter or without rhythmical subdivisions—in fact, compositions in **simple** prose with no **embellishment** of rhythm or melody—difficult problems are raised by some of the works bequeathed to us by our numerous authors in this kind (810c)

. . . So I really think I could not direct our curator of **law** and minister of **education** to a better standard. or bid him do better than instruct his schoolmasters to teach it to their pupils. and also if in his researches he should light upon connected and similar matter in the verse of our poets. in our prose literature, or even in the form of **simple unwritten discourse** of the same type as the present. by no means to neglect it. but get it put into **writing**. 812d-e)

. . . For our tragic **poets** and their so-called **serious** compositions. we may conceive some of them to approach us with a question couched in these words or the like (817a)

. . . Respected visitors, we are ourselves authors of a tragedy, and that the finest and best we **know** how to make. In fact, our whole polity has been constructed as a dramatization of a [noble] and [perfect] life: that is what we hold to be in truth the most real of

tragedies. Thus you are poets. and we also are poets in the same style. rival artists and rival **actors**. and that in the finest of all dramas. one which indeed can be *produced* only by a **code of true law**—or at least that is our faith. So you must not expect that we shall lightheartedly permit you to pitch your booths in our market square with a troupe of **actors** whole melodious voices will drown our own and let you deliver your **public** tirades before our **bodies** and women and the populace at large—let you address them on the same issues as ourselves. not to the same effect. but commonly and for the most part to the very contrary. Why. we should be stark **mad** to do so. and so would the whole community. if you could find one which would let you do as you are now proposing. until its magistrates had decided whether your compositions are fit to be uttered and edifying to be heard by the **public** or not.

Ignorance

Why. I presume they are those in neglect or sheer **ignorance** of which no being could possibly **play the part of a god or superior spirit** toward us. nor yet of a hero capable of **serious** supervision of humanity

So the mere thought that all this information is not indispensable to anyone who means to **know** anything whatsoever of the [noblest] of all sciences is the idlest folly (818d)

Demagogue
Statesman

Should we lay the blame on the **ignorance** of the generality of mankind and their **legislators**? (831b)

Here then. we may say. is one reason in particular why society declines to take this or any other wholly admirable pursuit **seriously** though everyone in it is ready enough . . . (831d)

Book IX

Well. I must do what I can to give the explanation you require of me. I am sure that when you talk together about the soul there is one point assumed by speaker and listener alike. the presence in it of a native character—or. if you like. part—of *passion*. a **contentious** and combative element which frequently causes shipwreck by its headstrong violence (863b)

Deceives

The empire of pleasure. we say. is based on an opposite foundation: it regularly gets its will by a combination of seduction with cunning **deception** (863b)

Ignorant, Simple

And we should not be wrong if we spoke of *ignorance* as a third source of misconduct. Though you should note that the **legislator** will do well to make two kinds of it. **ignorance** pure and simple, which he will regard as a cause of venial offenses, and the more complicated condition. in which a man's [folly] means that he is suffering not from **ignorance** alone. but also from a **conceit of his**

Deceived in the Self
Ignorant

own wisdom. and supposes himself to know all about matters of which he knows nothing whatsoever When such **ignorance** is accompanied by exceptional capacity or power the lawgiver will regard the combination as a source of grave and monstrous crime

Private

Public

Statesman

. . . (863c)

But where there is the conviction that a course is *best*—wherever a society or private individuals may take that best to lie . . .(864a) Our business at present is not to **contend about words**, but in the first place, to get a still surer mental grasp on the **three classes or error** which have already been indicated (864b)

If I am not mistaken, we had already **legislated** against robbery of heaven and treasonable traffic with the **public** enemy, and also against subversion of the established constitution by tempering with the laws (864d).

Book I of the *Laws* advances another series of polarities.

Divine Goods	Human Goods
Greater	**Lesser (a consequence of the Greater)**
1 **Wisdom**	[Health]
2 **Sobriety of Spirit**	**Comeliness, that is a lesser kind of** [beauty]
3 [Righteousness, blends wisdom & valor]	**Strength and all Bodily Exercises**
4 [Valor]	[Wealth, Clear-sighted, Wisdom]

One on the **divine** level is identified as **wisdom**. On the **human** level, number **one** is [health]. The placement of [health] in the human classes gives us the correlate to *disease*, namely, that which is **not** [health]. Since **ignorance** is a *disease* of the *soul* that stems from a lack of **knowledge** and education, it stands to reason that **wisdom** is a form of mental [health] produced by education and **knowledge**. To continue, we find that **two** is defined as [sobriety of spirit] in the **divine** regions, while **two** in the **human** topics is said to be **comeliness**, that is, a lesser kind of [beauty]. **Three**, on the **divine** level includes [righteousness, said to be a blend of wisdom and valor], while the number **three** of the lesser class entails *strength and all bodily exercises*. Finally, **four**, [valor], located in the **divine** has a relation to **four** on the **human** level, which is concerned with [wealth that is clear-sighted because it is guided by **wisdom**]. In addition, **law** and **order** figure into this ranking of **divine goods**, though it is not entirely clear where they should be placed. These passages also establish that [quality], [magnitude], [proportions], [equality], [symmetry], [numbers], and [situations] are all ideas that are analogous to **form** and **color**. Plus, it is emphasized that **play** and **pleasure** are the same and that [graciousness] is an *intermediate* state (792d).

Having looked at these passages, let us now proceed directly to the next chapter, where we will confirm the pattern in all the other dialogues.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

VARIATIONS II

We continue assembling pieces in this puzzle that stretches across all of the dialogues, encompasses works created by Plato's contemporaries, and extends to two other traditions, one Western, the other from the East. This section of the study will show that the sequence of topics in the *Sophist*—or parts of it—may be found in every dialogue in the Platonic canon.[1]

There are a number of objectives in presenting this portion of the argument. The first is to provide—through the example of the *Gorgias*—a sense of how the unwritten doctrines may be built up. The second is to highlight the various repetitions of the definition in order to show how the sequence functions in different contexts. The third is to identify some of the links between this one definition and other parts of the mnemonic. Since I am arguing that the system itself is the unifying factor underlying all the different works in the collected dialogues, it will be important to demonstrate *how* the philosophical conceptions explained in one work can be put together with notions in other books. The fourth is to show how all the various strands of the definition of art ($\tau \acute{\epsilon} \chi \nu \eta$), are woven together in combination to create the philosophical discourse. The *Apology* will serve as the example of this complexity. The fifth is to demonstrate that parts of the series recur in all of the dialogues. Again, the argument that Plato's writings are the literature of an ancient oral tradition of philosophy is strengthened by the fact that variations on this multi-part sequence turn up every time the topic of discussion in the dialogues deals with subjects classified under art. The sixth, and final objective is to collect together a number of different examples of this definition so that we can begin to recognize the signs that cue the traditional frames of reference.

We will be attempt, by means of multiple instances of the same pattern, to partially recover a sense of the esoteric teaching. At the end of this chapter, we will have a long line-up of variations on the theme of art or technique. These can then be compared one to another. Setting passages "side by side" and contemplating how they are alike and unalike, as the dialogues themselves suggest (*Rep.* 435a; *Stsmn.* 285b-c), highlights irregularities in the sequential order, and it also makes some of the complex regularities more obvious. As we gradually learn how to tap into the networks of meaning encoded by the traditional frames of reference, the "unwritten doctrines" begin to take shape.

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[1] Again, the exceptions are two spurious works, the *Definitions* and the *Epigrams*. Neither are dialogues.

Identifying the Definition

Before proceeding, a few words are in order about how the passages included in this analysis were identified. Taking the definitions in the *Sophist*—especially the final sequence—as paragons of the pattern, as well as different versions of the series distinguished in the previous chapter, we carry on with a catalogue of recurrences by mentally freezing the narrative sequence of each dialogue into a simultaneous unity—the method described by Frye—so that all the parts of the structural form exist at once and can be analyzed like a painting or the architectural plan of a building. This makes it easier to identify the contours of the spatial form of each text, so that the disposition of topics can be compared with the division and orderly arrangement of the parts of the definition in the master pattern. Alternatively, it is possible to discern the pattern by scanning the text and attending to the changes in the topics of conversation while staying alert for key terms, concepts, or oppositions that match the sequence of ideas in the master template. It will turn out that Socrates' emphasis on the "knows/does not know" dichotomy was justified. For it seems that this division is a junction or nexus for all the kinds of forms in Plato's system. When we come across these notions (or others, such as "imitation," "tools/mimicry," "simple/ignorant"), we search backwards and forwards from this fulcrum to determine whether either the previous or the subsequent topics conform to the sequential pattern of the theme. When they do, one main sequence from each dialogue has been singled out for inclusion in this chapter. Again, notions identified with *acquisition* in the *Sophist* are highlighted in italics. The **imitative** branch of the definition is singled out by way of bold-faced lettering. New ideas that fill in gaps identified in previous dialogues are noted by way of a square bracket [ ].

Let us begin.

GORGIAS

The *Gorgias*, we will soon see, is a key dialogue in our search for the **sophist**. This reading shows how Plato's Socrates sets up a series of proportional relationships involving some of the divisions of τέχνη. It will also demonstrate how one might go about figuring out the unwritten doctrines by recollecting all the evidence we have uncovered since we embarked on the analysis.

|Rhetoric|
Persuasion

|Arithmetic|

Now at last. Gorgias. you have revealed most precisely what **art** you consider [rhetoric] to be. and if I understand you aright. you assert that [rhetoric] is a **creator** of *persuasion* . . (453a)

Let us take once more the same **arts** as we discussed just now. [Arithmetic] and the [arithmetician] teach us. do they not. the properties of [number]? . . . (453e) And consequently *persuade* us? . . . Then [arithmetic] is also a creator of *persuasion*? . . . Now if anyone should ask us what kind of *persuasion* and in what field, we shall answer him. I suppose. that which teaches about the [odd and the even] in all their quantities. and we shall be able to prove that all the other arts just mentioned are creators of *persuasion* and name the type and the field . . (454a)

Knows

Socrates: And before a **crowd** means among the **ignorant.** for surely. among **those who know.** he will not be more convincing than the *doctor* (459a)

Gorgias: That is quite true.

Does Not Know

Socrates: Then if he is more *persuasive* than the *doctor*. he is more *persuasive* than **the man who knows**? . . . Though not himself a *doctor*. . . . And he who is not a *doctor* is surely **ignorant** of what a doctor **knows**. . . . Therefore when the [rhetorician] is more convincing than the *doctor*. the **ignorant** is more convincing among the **ignorant** than the expert. Is that our conclusion. or is something else.

Gorgias: That is the conclusion. in this instance.

Simple
Ignorant

Socrates: Is not the position of the [rhetorician] and of [rhetoric] the same with respect to other **arts** also? It has no need **to know** the truth about things but merely to discover a technique of *persuasion* so **as to appear among the ignorant to have more knowledge** than the expert?

Gorgias: But is not this a great comfort, Socrates, to be able without learning any other **arts** but this one to prove in no way inferior to the specialists?

Socrates: Whether or not the [rhetorician] is inferior to other **craftsmen** for this reason. we will consider later. if the question should prove relevant. But now let us first investigate whether the relation of the rhetorician to [right and wrong]. the [noble and the base]. the **just** and the [unjust] is the same as it is to **health** and the objects of the other **arts**—whether he **does not know** what is

Private
Public
Demagogue

Contradiction-Making

Art

Production

Semblance

[right or wrong]. [noble or base]. **just** or [unjust]. but has contrived a technique of *persuasion* in these matters. so that. **though ignorant, he appears among the ignorant to know better than the expert.** Or must your prospective pupil in [rhetoric] **have such knowledge** and bring it with him when he comes to you? And if he is **ignorant.** will you. his teacher of [rhetoric] **teach your pupil** none of these things—for that is not your concern—but **make him appear before the crowd to have such knowledge, when he has it not and appear to be a good man, when he is not** (559e). Or will you be utterly unable to teach him [rhetoric] if he does not beforehand **know the truth** about these matters? How do we stand here. Gorgias? In **heaven's** name reveal. as you promised just now. the **true** *power* of [rhetoric].

Gorgias: Well. Socrates. I suppose that **if he does not possess this knowledge.** he can learn these things also from me.

Socrates: Stop one moment! What you say is right. If you make a [rhetorician] of any man. he must already **have knowledge of right and wrong either by previous acquaintance** (460a). . . .

And in our earlier discussion. Gorgias. it was stated that [rhetoric] is concerned with **words** that deal. not with the [odd and even]. but with [right and wrong] . . . (460e).

Polus: I suppose. of this admission a **contradiction** arose in the argument . . .(461b)

Socrates: Are you asking what **art** I hold it to be? . . . (462b)

Polus: But what do you think [rhetoric] is? (462b)

Socrates: I call it a kind of [routine] . . . One that **produces** [gratification] and *pleasure* (462c) Then ask me what kind of **art** I consider [cookery] . . . In my opinion. a kind of [routine] . . . One that **produces** [gratification] and *pleasure.* I claim. Polus (462e)

Polus: Then [cookery] and [rhetoric] are identical?

Socrates: By no means, but each is a part of the same activity . . . that is not very reputable (463)

Gorgias: What is it. Socrates? Tell us and feel no scruples about me.

Socrates: Well then. Gorgias. the activity as a whole, it seems to me is not an **art** . . . I call it *'flattery.'* Now it seems to me that there are many other parts of this activity. one of which is [cookery]. This is considered an **art** but in my judgment is no **art.** only a [routine] and a [knack]. And [rhetoric] I call another part of this general activity. and [beautification]. and **sophistic**—*four parts with four distinct objects.* Now if Polus wishes to question me. let him do so. for he has not yet ascertained what part of *flattery* I call [rhetoric] . . . (463a-b) . . . [Rhetoric] in my opinion is the **semblance** of a part of [politics].

Polus: Well then. do you call it *good* or *bad?*

Socrates: *Bad*—for *evil* things I call *bad* (463d)

Gorgias: . . . tell me what you mean by saying that [rhetoric] is the **semblance** of a part of [politics] . . .

343

Original
Image
Likeness
Semblance

Mimicry
Does Not Know
Simple
Ignorant

Private

Demagogue. [Geometry]
Statesman

Does Not Know

Socrates: I will try to explain to my conception of [rhetoric], and if it is wrong. Polus will refute me. You admit the existence of *bodies* and *souls*? . . . And do you not consider that there is a healthycondition for each? . . . And a **condition of apparent, but not real health** . . . There exists, I maintain, both in *body* and in **soul a condition which creates an impression of good health in each case, although it is false** (464a). Let me see now if I can explain more clearly what I mean. To the pair, *body* and *soul*, there correspond two **arts**—that concerned with the *soul* I call the [political art]; to the single **art** that relates to the *body* I cannot give a name offhand. But this single **art** that cares for the *body* comprises two parts, *gymnastics* and *medicine*, and in the [political art] what corresponds to *gymnastics* is [legislation], while the counterpart of *medicine* is *justice*. Now in each case the two **arts** encroach upon each other, since their fields are the **same**, *medicine* upon *gymnastics*, and *justice* upon [*legislation*]; nevertheless there is a **difference** between them. There are then these four **arts** which always minister to what is **best**, one pair for the *body*, the other for the *soul*. But *flattery* perceiving this—I do not say by **knowledge** but by [conjecture]—has divided herself also into four branches and **insinuating herself into the guise** of each of these parts **pretends to be that which she impersonates**. And **having no thought** for what is **best**, she regularly uses *pleasure* as a bait to catch [folly] and **deceives** it into believing that she is of supreme worth. Thus it is that [cookery] has **impersonated** *medicine* and **pretends to know** the *best foods for the body* . . . (464d) This then I call a form of *flattery*, and I claim that this thing is *bad*—**I am now addressing you Polus—because** it aims at what is [pleasant], ignoring the *good*, and I insist that it is **not an art** but a [routine], because it can *produce* no principle in virtue of which it offers what it does, nor explain the **nature** thereof, and consequently is unable to point to the *cause* of each thing it offers. And I refuse the name of **art** to anything irrational (465a). . . . [Cookery] then, as I say, is a form of *flattery* that corresponds to *medicine*, and in the same way *gymnastics* is personated by [beautification], a mischievous, **deceitful**, mean and [ignoble] activity, which cheats us by **shapes and colors**, by [smoothing] and [draping], thereby causing people to take on an alien [charm], to the neglect of the [natural beauty] produced by *exercise* (465b).

To be brief then, I will express myself in the language of [geometricians]—for by now perhaps you may follow me. ***Sophistic is to [legislation] what [beautification] is to gymnastics and rhetoric is to justice what [cookery] is to medicine.*** But as I say, while there is this natural distinction between them, yet because they are closely related, **Sophist** and [rhetorician], working in the same sphere and upon the same subject matter, tend to be confused with each other, and they **know not** what to make of each other, nor **do others know what to make of them.** For if the *body* was under the control, not of the *soul*, but of itself,

Knows
Mimicry

Simple
Ignorant
Private

Statesman

Semblance

Tools

Does Not Know
Knows

Simple, Play

Serious

Public

and if [cookery] and *medicine* were not investigated and distinguished by the *soul*, but the *body* instead gave the verdict, weighing them by the *bodily pleasures* they offered then the principle of Anaxagoras would everywhere hold *good*—that is something you **know** . . . Well, now, you have heard my conception of [*rhetoric*]. *It is the counterpart in the soul of what [cookery] is to the body* (465e)

Polus: What is it you say then? Do you hold that [rhetoric] is *flattery*?

Socrates: No, I said 'a part of *flattery*' (466a) . . .

"Now is there anything in the world that is not either *good* or *bad* or *intermediate* between the two, neither *good* nor *bad*? (467e)

Socrates: What a rascal you are, treating me **like a child** and **deceiving** me by saying the **same** things are now thus, now **different** (499c) . . . "The good man who speaks for the best surely will not say what he says at *random* but with some purpose in view . . . see how each one **disposes each element he contributes in a fixed order and compels one to fit and harmonize with the other until he has combined the whole into something well ordered and regulated"** (503d-e).

For I do not speak with any **pretense to knowledge**, but am searching along with you, and so if there **appears** to be anything in what my opponent says, I shall be the first to yield to him (506a). . . . But surely the *goodness* of anything, whether **implement** or *body* or *soul* or any *living* thing does not best come to it merely by haphazard, but through a certain [rightness] and [order] and through the **art** that is assigned to each of them. Is this so? I should agree. It is then the presence in each thing of the [order] appropriate to it that makes everything *good*? So it **appears** to me. The *soul* then that has its own appropriate [order] is **better** than that which has none. Necessarily. But further, the *soul* possessed of [order] is orderly? Of course. And the [order] is the [temperate]? Most necessarily. The [temperate] *soul* is the *good*. I myself can offer no objection to this, my dear Callicles (506d-507a). . . . I assert then that, if the [temperate] *soul* is *good*, then the *soul* in the opposite condition to the [temperate] is *evil*. . . (507a)

Socrates: Callicles, if I was speaking **seriously** . . . (508b) . . . For what I say is always the same—that I **know not** the truth in these affairs, but I **do know** that of all whom I have ever met either before or now no one who put forward another view has failed to **appear ridiculous** (509a-b)

Socrates: . . . **knowing** as he does that those he has landed are in no way **better** than when they embarked, either in *body* or in *soul*. **He knows** that if anyone afflicted in the *body* with **serious** and incurable **diseases** (511e-512a). . . . If then when we contemplated some **public undertaking for the state**, we were to enlist each other's aid in a task of building (514a). . . . we might, as sensible men, aspire to **public** works, but if we had no master

to point to. and either no buildings whatever or many worthless ones. then it would surely be [folly] to undertake **public** works . . . (514c) . . . So too in every other case. If. for example. we had aspired to **public** practice (514d). . . . Callicles. it would be ridiculous for anyone. before practicing in **private** often with indifferent results. and often with success and achieving sufficient experience in the profession. to begin. as the saying goes. his apprenticeship in pottery upon a large vessel to aspire himself to **public** practice. and encourage others to do the same (514e). . .

. And now. my best of friends. since you are just beginning to enter **public** life (515a). . . . Do not hesitate. before you aspire to a **public** career. to answer if you can point to any such achievement of yours as a **private** citizen

Callicles: You are **contentious**. Socrates.

Socrates: It is not **contentiousness** that makes me ask. but a true desire **to know** what you consider the right standard of **public** life in our city. Or when you embark upon a **public** career. pray will you concern yourself with anything else than how we citizens can be made as *good* as possible. Have we not many times already agreed that this should be the task of a **statesman** (515c). . . . Then Pericles was no *good* **statesman** by this account (516d). . .

. Then. after all. it seems. our previous statement was true. that we **do not know** of any man who has proved a *good* **statesman** in this city . . . and so. if they were *orators*. they did not employ the true [rhetoric]—else they would not have been driven out—nor the [rhetoric] of *flattery* either (517a). . . . Now you and I are behaving absurdly in this discussion. *for throughout the time of our argument we have never ceased returning in circles to the same point* in a constant failure to understand each other's meaning. I at least consider you have admitted time and again and realize that we are concerned with a twofold activity related to both *body* and *soul*. and that one of these is menial and by it can be provided *food*. if our *bodies* are hungry; *drink*. if they are thirsty; and if they are cold. clothing, bedding, shoes, or anything else that our *bodies* come to desire—I purposely use the same **images**. that you may the more quickly understand. For it is no wonder that a purveyor of these things, whether **huckster**. *merchant*. or *manufacturer* of any of them—*baker* or *cook* or *weaver* or *cobbler* or *tanner*—should because of his character appear both to himself and to others. a true minister to the *body*—to everyone. that is. **who does not know**, that there is above and beyond all these an **art** of *gymnastics* and of *medicine*. which is the genuine ministry to the *body* and should properly control all these crafts and employ their **products**. because it alone **knows**. while all the others **know not**. what *food* or *drink* is *good* or *bad* for the [health] of the *body*. And for this reason, while these other crafts are servile and menial and illiberal in their concern with the *body*, *gymnastics* and *medicine* are by rights their masters. Now when I tell you that the same holds good of the

Private

Statesman

Demagogue

Serious

soul. at one time you appear to understand. and you agree as thought you grasped my meaning (517d-518a) . . . you should answer with the utmost seriousness (518b). . . And their victims in turn. in their ignorance . . . (518c-d).

. . . And yet there is a ridiculous thing that I see taking place today and hear took place with regard to their statesmen of old (519b).

. . . Conditions. it seems. are much the same for those who pretend to be statesmen and for Sophists. Your Sophists, [wise] as they are in other matters. are in one point guilty of absurd behavior. for they claim to be teachers of goodness, yet they often accuse their pupils of wronging them by withholding their fees and showing no gratitude either for benefits received from

Play

them. (519c). . . You have compelled me to play the orator (519d). . . Apparently I can: at least I am making quite lengthy speeches (519e). . . But what would you say about those who pretend to govern the city and see to it that she be as good as possible. and then. when occasion serves. accuse her of being most evil? Do you think they are in any way different from those others? Sophist and orator, my good sir, are the same thing, or pretty nearly so. as I said to Polus. But you through ignorance consider the one thing, [rhetoric] to be something very fine, and despise the other. In actual fact sophistic is better than [rhetoric] to the extent that [legislation] is finer than the administration of justice or gymnastics than medicine. But I always thought myself that [political] orators and Sophists alone were not entitled to find fault (520a-b). . . Then you invite me, my [noble] friend, to play the flatterer (521b). . . I think that I am one of very few Athenians. no to say the only one. engaged in the true [political art], and that of the men of today I alone practice statesmanship. Since therefore when I speak on any occasion it is not with a view to winning favor. but I aim at what is best, not what is most pleasant. and since I am unwilling to engage in those dainty devices' that you recommend. I shall have nothing to say in court (521e).

The Proportions

Looking at the proportions established by Socrates. we can see that he has given us the location in the soul of the statesman and the sophist by way of the parallel location in the body of [beautification] and gymnastics! Thus. we find in this dialogue a classification system based on the mathematical proportions of the musical scale. The Pythagorean system divided the universe into either sensibles or intelligibles. These were then correlated. one with the other (making things in the intelligible the counterparts of things in the sensible). by relating each of them to a number (conceived as a place), based on a likeness of proportion. The properties of numbers were associated with concepts such as "soul" and "justice" which the Italian thinkers allocated to different "regions" of their system. They

assimilated patterns found in nature and the physical universe to the mathematical proportions in music. Here, in this dialogue, we begin to see how these notions were played out in Plato's version of the mnemonic.

The ratios are as follows: **sophistic** is to [legislation] what [beautification] is to *gymnastics*, and [rhetoric] is to *justice* what [cookery] is to *medicine*. Most of the items in this set of proportions would have to be classified as an **art** or **technique**. Sophistic, [legislation], [beautification], *gymnastic*, [rhetoric,] [cookery] and *medicine* are all ideas that refer to the **skill** or **craft**, rather than to the *producer*, the *state*, or the *product*. For instance, if these notions were given in terms of the *producer*, we would anticipate that the list would be something like: **sophist**, **legislator**, [beautifier], *gymnast*, [chef], or *physician*. On this basis, we can see that *justice* is a notion that refers to a *product*. Let us set up the analogies.

sophistic	[beautification]		[rhetoric]	[cookery]
[legislation]	*gymnastics*		*justice*	*medicine*

From now on, we know that when the conversation in a dialogue turns to [beautification], *gymnastics*, [cookery], and *medicine*, what is said about them applies, in a like manner, to **sophistic**, [legislation], [rhetoric], and *justice* respectively. This is one of the techniques used in the dialogues to convey information about the **greater** thing by way of the **lesser**. The **greater**, "unwritten" portion of the philosophy is classified as a **form** of **knowledge**. The **smaller**, written portion that is embodied in the text can be memorized and reproduced by the learner through recitation and **imitation**. This "material" is classified with perceptions or opinions. It seems that memorization of these compositions that embody the culture and traditions of previous generations is only the first step in the path to full **knowledge**. Genuine **knowledge** involves something more than rote learning, or the "transfer of contents" from one generation to another. This "something more" must be contributed by learners through the *exercise* of abstract thought. This kind of "mental exercise" involves taking the communication presented in the discourse, reflecting on it, abstracting the contents from their context in the dialogue, and then reorganizing this material in a new manner to achieve the highest insights. The road to this **knowledge** will be different for every learner, depending on the particular place selected as the *starting point*. Even so, the end of the journey is the same. For the example of the discourse in the collected dialogues themselves serves as the paragon of correctness against which all other constructions of the philosophy may be measured.

Comparison and Contrast with the Divisions in the *Sophist*

One of the main purposes of this commentary on the *Gorgias* is to provide a sample demonstration of how the doctrines may be reasoned out by comparing versions of the pattern in different contexts. We recognize in the formulation of the proportions a number of topics established in the *Sophist* and in the *Republic, Phaedrus*, and the *Laws*. Let us now collect everything we have learned in the first five sequences of the *Sophist* together with the points made in connection with these topics here in the *Gorgias*.

At this initial stage, our efforts can only be classified as *conjectures* and *hypotheses*. Yet, we may be assured that if we persist with this "superior kind of study," our understanding of the system will grow. As we gradually put together more and more pieces of the puzzle, we will move upward (to anticipate distinctions uncovered in upcoming sections of this chapter) through the hierarchy of **knowledge** from *conjecture* (a *state* of mind that is a subdivision of perception), through to *opinion*, then to genuine **knowledge**, and finally to *intelligence* and **wisdom**.

We shall begin our comparison by setting the topics discerned here in the *Gorgias* alongside those divisions in the *Sophist* that began at 219b. Thinking back, we remember that this was the first set of **divisions** that concentrated directly on the illusionist and wizard himself.

THE HUNTER: *Collection with the Definition in the Sophist*. The second sequence under *acquisition* in the *Sophist* established that there was an **art** of *persuasion*. Amongst its subdivisions, was a **private** kind of *persuasion* and a more **public** kind. One of these two included an art of *flattery*, which involved "making things *pleasant*," so that certain **sophists** were said to have only a **semblance** of *education* (*Soph*. 222c). This passage in the *Gorgias* adds more parts to the **art** of *persuasion*. When *persuasion* was mentioned previously, the Stranger said that "the **art** of the *lawyer*, the *popular orator*, and the **art** of *conversation* may be called in one word the **art** of *persuasion*" (*Soph*. 222d). Thus, *persuasion* is the overall class that includes *legal arguments, oratory*, and *conversation*, all of which likely involve [rhetoric]. With this passage in the *Gorgias* then, we can see that we were earlier given only partial information. Now we know that *persuasion* is divided into [rhetoric] and [arithmetic]. In terms of [arithmetic], we are told that it is concerned with the [odd], [even], and all quantity, whereas [rhetoric] is linked with [right] and [wrong], (though we cannot be entirely certain that this latter analogy is correct, since Socrates mentions that this formulation gives rise to some sort of **contradiction**).

What is most significant about these proportions is that these **arts**—and pseudo **arts**—are correlated with numbers in a manner that is consistent with the discussion of numbers in the central works of the *Republic*. Here in the *Gorgias*, as in that other work, we find that the **arts** and sciences

all participate in number. Thus [rhetoric] and *persuasion* are associated with [arithmetic] (*Grg.* 453e). The specification of the proportions themselves seems to be related to [geometry] (*Grg.* 465e). In the *Republic.* numbers were classed as either *sensible* or *pure.* Socrates set forth the sequence (1) [arithmetic]; (2) [geometry]; (3) [a kind that deals with figures with depth]; and (4) [astronomy]. The name for the whole was harmony. Here in the *Gorgias.* Socrates seems to be working with the kinds of things that are classified under the first two sorts of numbers, namely [arithmetic] and [geometry].

As we continue, notice that while [arithmetic] is mentioned at the beginning of this excerpted passage, it does not appear to be a factor in the proportions. We should stay alert. When a conception is set forth as a division and then it is not referred to again, we may be certain that it figures into the equation somewhere. We must therefore keep [arithmetic] in mind as we start to put the puzzle together. Before we move on, it is also worth mentioning that [arithmetic] (whose objects are the [even] and [odd], i.e., mathematical entities) is mentioned in the context of a discussion of "intermediates." Once again, we find that an intermediate is something that occupies the middle ground between two extremes. In this case, there is a neutral intermediate in between both [right] and [wrong], and *good* and *bad.* If we extend this pattern to [arithmetic], we may speculate that the intermediate between [even] and [odd] would be a mathematical notion that is equivalent to [neutral], say, the concept of [equality].

In terms of [rhetoric], we find here in the *Gorgias* that a **technique** of *persuasion* is attributed to the [rhetorician], whereas this **art** was associated in the *Sophist* with the **sophist**. Though this seems inconsistent at first, we are assured here in the *Gorgias* that the [rhetorician] and the **sophist** are easily mistaken for one another, because they "work in the same sphere and on the same subject matter." In spite of their apparent likeness, we are told, there is a "natural distinction" between them (465e). Moreover, the [rhetorician] and [rhetoric] (i.e., the *producer* and the *product*), are said, in the *Gorgias,* to be in the same location relative to other **arts**. In addition, we are given that [rhetoric] is a creator of *persuasion* (453a). Finally, *persuasion* is associated with those who **do not know** what is [right or wrong], [noble or base], *just* or *unjust.* Apparently, even though the person who creates this sort of thing **does not know**, they have nevertheless contrived a **technique** that makes them appear to **know** more about *justice* **than** those who *really are* authorities in these matters.

To make matters more complicated, we are told that [cookery] and [rhetoric] are all parts of *flattery!* [Rhetoric] is also said to be a **semblance** of a part of [politics]. Thus, it seems that [rhetoric] is a **semblance** of [legislation] just as **sophistry** is a **semblance** of *education.*

This passage in the *Gorgias* also informs us that the **art** that is concerned with the *soul* is called the [political **art**]. Socrates says that the corresponding **art** that deals with the *body* (which is not

named). is divided into *gymnastics* and *medicine*. Analogously. the [political **art**]. or *power* of the *soul* is further cordoned off into [legislation] and *justice*. To reiterate: we may confirm the parallel structuring by way of the proportions: what the [un-named art] is to the *body*. so the [political **art**] is to the *soul*. What *gymnastics* is to the *body*. [legislation] is to the *soul*. Similarly. what *medicine* is to the *body*. *justice* is to the *soul*. Further. just as [rhetoric] and **sophistic** were said to overlap even though there was a natural *division* between them. so both *medicine* and *gymnastics* and *justice* and [legislation] occupy the *same* region. even though there is a *difference* between *them*. Thus. there are two main **arts** that care for what is *best*. the [un-named art] which cares for the *body* and the [political **art**] that cares for the *soul*. These. *better* **arts** are in turn cut up further into one pair for the *body*—*medicine* and *gymnastics* —and two for the *soul*—*justice* and [legislation].

This brings us to the kinds that cater to the *worst* parts. Socrates assures his listeners that each of the four parts of *flattery* (that which **is not art** or *power*) has its own distinct *objects*. Now. the **art** that **is not art** practiced by the **sophist**. as we know. is **imitation** or **image making** (*Soph*. 230a-231e). Just as in the *Sophist*. where *flattery* involved making things *pleasant* (*Soph*. 222d). here in the *Gorgias*. it is said to produce a measure of gratification and *pleasure* (*Grg*. 462c). In the *Gorgias*. though. we have added to the equation the fact that *flattery* is clearly designated as something *bad*. Also. the polar expression to the **production** of *pleasure* entails producing something *good* (*Grg*. 465b). If you recall. the division of the second sequence in the *Sophist* ended when "for *hire*" was cut into two kinds. One kind of "*hireling*" baits the hook with *pleasure* and this was the sort that was described as *flattery*. or making things *pleasant*. The second kind "professes to form *acquaintances* only for the sake of *virtue*." and this type was identified as the class of the **sophist** (222e-223a). Notice that here in the *Gorgias*. there is no statement explicitly classifying **sophistry** as a form of *flattery*. Add to this that *justice* is most certainly a *virtue*. The only activities that are clearly classified as parts of *flattery* are [cooking] and [rhetoric] (*Grg*. 466a). Since there is a natural distinction between **sophistic** and [rhetoric]. it seems clear that the class to which **sophistic** is assigned is **different** from the one designated for [rhetoric]. even though the two probably operate on the **same** field. We are. in addition. given a chain of analogies: that [cookery] is a form of *flattery* that corresponds to *medicine*. and in the same way. *gymnastics* is impersonated by [beautification] (said to be a mischievous. **deceitful**. mean and [ignoble] activity. which cheats us by **shapes** and **colors**, by *smoothing* and *draping*. thereby causing people to take on an alien **charm**. to the neglect of the [natural beauty] produced by *exercise*." This suggests. by way of polarity. that *gymnastics* is probably an [obedient. **simple**. superior. and noble activity]. More likely than not. [natural beauty] is one of the *better* parts and it is impersonated by [beautification]. Now. we can see that since these *worse* parts all **mimic** the

better ones. there should be an overall name for the *bad* parts that are proportionate to the *better* ones. Thus. there should be a name for the part that **imitates** the [un-named art] associated with the *body*. There should also be a name for the part that is parallel to the [political **art**] that is related to the *soul*. Yet. it seems that no name has been supplied for the part that is the counterpart of the [un-named art] that ministers to the *body*. though it may be that the part that pretends to be the [political **art**] has something to do with *virtue*. Just as the *better* **arts** were severed further into one pair for the *body*—*medicine* and *gymnastics*—and another pair for the *soul*—*justice* and [legislation]. so the implication is that [cookery] and [beautification] are the *bad* pair of **pseudo arts** associated with the *body*. while [rhetoric] and **sophistic** are the *bad* pair associated with the **soul**

MERCHANT OF LEARNING: *Collection With the Sophist*. Mention of [cookery] reminds us of the third series of divisions of *acquisition* (223c-224c). Recall that *nourishments* were divided into *food for the body* and *food for the soul*. Now. *food for the body* obviously involves some [cookery]. It is possible that the difference between *food* and [cookery] is that *food* is classified under *acquisition* because it is something that "exists already because it has been **produced**" (*Soph.* 219b). [Cookery]. on the other hand. would have to be assigned to the **productive** class. Be reminded that *food for the soul* (including **music. painting** and **marionette playing**). was divided into **play** and **serious**. The new information that is presented in this passage in the *Gorgias* is that [rhetoric] is the counterpart in the *soul* of what [cookery] is to the *body* (465e).

ATHLETE IN DEBATE: Collection with the fourth reappearance of the **sophist** in the *Sophist*. This series of divisions was concerned. in particular. with two kinds of **speeches** about the *character* of *justice*: one was *random* while the other involved *systematic rules*. This is consistent with what we find here in the *Gorgias*. where we are dealing with the topics of **art.** *justice*. and the kinds of **speeches** that go by the name of **sophistic** and [rhetoric]. However, in the *Gorgias*, we are given a lot more new information besides this. Socrates says that there is a single **art** related to the *body* and another one that is matched with the *soul*. thereby confirming what we noticed in the previous paragraphs. The single **art** having to do with *visible. sensible bodies* is matched with one, as is the **art** that is concerned with *intelligible entities* that have *no visible embodiment*. By the rule of symmetry, this means that both have a parallel position in their respective regions, so that the one single **art** dealing with the *soul* occupies the *same* place in the *intelligible* region as the one inhabited in the *sensible* region by the **art** concerned with the *body*. Thus. the **art** concerned with *sensible bodies* is made the basis of a parallel investigation of them both. under the premise that an understanding about the *sensible* provides information about the *intelligible* because they form a pair. In this way. we (as learners) must begin to generate knowledge about the *intelligible* region by understanding exactly how

it is the counterpart of the *sensible*. In a like manner. the single **arts** in each space. *body* and *soul*. are divided into two. We know then that the two **arts** in the *soul* probably have a parallel position with the two **arts** in the *body*. so that [legislation] is the counterpart in the *soul* to the place occupied in the *body* by *gymnastics*. Similarly, *justice* in the *soul* is the counterpart of *medicine* in the *body*. Socrates says that. in the case of the *soul*. the two branches of the [political **art**] overlap each other because they are placed in the same field. and for this reason. *justice* has some things in common with [legislation]. Likewise. in the case of the *body*. the two branches of the [un-named **art**] must be located in the same region and overlap each other . so that *medicine* likely encroaches on *gymnastics*. There is a *difference* between them however. though Socrates does not spell out in detail exactly what this *difference* entails.

Apparently. *flattery* gets wind of the *better* **arts** that care for *body* and *soul* and. working through a form of perception that is not **knowledge**. but merely *conjecture*. divides into **four** parts and **mimics** each of the **arts** concerned with what is *good*. Each one of these **four** parts of *flattery* pretends to be one of the *better* parts. and through this **impersonation—imitation**—it gives the **deceptive appearance** of *high value*. Thus. [cookery] **impersonates** *medicine*. and **pretends to know** the *best foods for the body*. By extension. [rhetoric] acts like *justice*. We also know for certain that [beautification] pretends to be *gymnastics*. that **sophistic mimics** [legislation], and that [rhetoric] and [arithmetic] are a pair (one the **image**. the other the **original**). Surely [arithmetic] is not a form of *flattery*. It seems more likely that it is a form of *virtue*. Now. since we have been told that in each case. the **two** *better* **arts** impinge upon each other because they belong to the same topic—*medicine* upon *gymnastics*—and *justice* upon [legislation]: so we may infer that the *worse* sort too, overlap because they are located in the same place. Thus [cookery] has some overlap with [beautification], and [rhetoric] with **sophistic**. As is the case with the *better* sorts. the *worst* kinds are closely related and tend to be confused with one another. This too, is consistent with the *Sophist*, where **mimicry** was a kind of **imitation** that *produced* a **deceptive image** that **is not the real** thing, but only a **semblance** of it (*Soph*. 267a-b). Certainly in both dialogues. the sort of **mimicry** that aims to **deceive** is not a *good* thing. This is why *flattery* is designated as *bad*. Thus. the various parts of *flattery* only seem to belong to the **art** or *power*. This appearance is **deceptive. false**. and phoney. *Flattery* is merely a [knack] and a [routine]. (a sort of habit). that is just a **semblance** of **art**. We are still left up in the air about the status of the kind of *persuasion* wherein the "*hireling*" offers inducements **privately**. "baiting the hook" not with *pleasure*—which is *flattery*—but with *virtue*—which is **sophistry** (*Soph*. 223a)—though we have every reason to suspect that it. too is more of a [knack] than a genuine **technique**.

[OPEN TO DOUBT] AND [MEDICINE]: *Collection With the Definition in the Sophist.*

To continue amalgamating the information given in the *Sophist* with this new material in the *Gorgias*. we recall that the **art** in the fifth sequence was concerned with forms of *weaving*. Here in the *Gorgias*. we find many complex connections with the *Sophist*'s fifth sequence. Now, we are told here that there are four **arts** that care for what is *"best*. **one** pair for the *body*. the other **two** for the *soul"* (i.e., pairs of twins). At the mention of the word *"best."* we are reminded that in the *Sophist*. the Stranger identified an **art** of *discerning and discriminating* that was cut up into a kind that was engaged in separating *like* from *like*. and another that discriminated the *better* from the *worse*. We can see that here in the *Gorgias*. we are presently engaged in separating the *better* from the *worse*. Since these divisions were complicated. it is worth going over them here to make sure that we get them straight. Remember that *purification* was divided into *body* and *soul*. *Body* was cut into *living* and *lifeless*. *Living* was partitioned into *outward* and *inward* parts. *Outward* parts were correlated with *gymnastics*, which was said to deal with *physical deformity*. while *inward* parts were matched with *medicine*, which was concerned with *physical disease*. The divisions of the *soul* were said to mirror this structure, so that we assumed there must be analogues to *animate* and *inanimate*. *outward* and *inward*—even though these were not given by overt statement. The *Sophist* went on to divide the *soul* into one part that was associated with *psychic discord* which was comparable to *physical deformity*. *Psychic discord*. we were told. entails an *"unsightly* want of measure." and it is divided into different *errors of the intellect*. one of which was **ignorance**. We were also told that *psychic disease*. a parallel with *disease* of the *body*. entailed a sort of *disagreement* and **contradiction** in the *soul* (*Soph*. 229b-d).

Here too in the *Gorgias*. the **art** that cares for the *body* is separated into two topics: *gymnastics* and *medicine*. The **art** that cares for the *soul*. that is. the [political **art**], is bisected into [legislation] that corresponds to *gymnastics*. while *justice* is the counterpart of *medicine*. We may infer that **sophistic** is a kind of *psychic discord* where the *"want of measure"* has to do with the difference—or asymmetry—between the **images** the **sophist** produces in **speech** and the **original, true forms**.

IMITATION: *Collection with the Final Sequence in the Sophist*. Remember that the **sophist** was a maker of **images**. more specifically. of **semblances**. He practices a kind of **deception** that *"makes* our mind think what is **false***" (Soph*. 240d) . All this seems consistent with what we are given here in the *Gorgias*. Once again. there appears to be many features in this passage in the *Gorgias* that are aligned with the culminating definition of the *Sophist*. Since we seem to have covered many of these links already. let us add only that all these pseudo **arts** in the *Gorgias* that cater to what is *worst* entail **producing** not **divine**. but **human images** that are not **true likenesses**. but only **semblances** of what is *best*.

Collection with the Republic. The contrast between **original** and **imitation** was a major

subject in the *Republic*. In Book X. we were given at 599a-b. the juxtaposition between **exemplar** and **semblance**. We can see clearly that [legislation], *gymnastics, justice* and *medicine* are **originals** and **exemplars**, in contrast with **sophistic**, [beautification], [rhetoric] and [cookery], which are **semblances**. Whereas the **painter** uses **shapes** and **colors**, the **sophist**, like the **poet** uses *words* and *phrases* to *produce* **images** that are not a **true likeness** of the **original forms**.

Here in the *Gorgias*, the **sophists** and [rhetoricians] make use of *words* and *phrases* to present **images** that are not **true likeness** of the *forms* of [legislation] and *justice*. We also know from Book X that *Pythagoras* was a *good legislator*, produced **exemplars**, could see **forms** and **colors**, and **knew** all things pertaining to *virtue* and *vice*. In contrast. *Homer* was not a [legislator], he produced **semblances**, saw only through *words* and *phrases*, and he **did not know the truth** In the end. *Homer* and his tribe were assigned to the class of the **demagogue**, whereas *Pythagoras* and his successors were **true statesmen**. Through this comparison in the *Republic*, we know that *Pythagoras* and his followers are **exemplars** of *good legislators* and **true statesmen**, while *Homer* and the **poets** are examples of the sort of people who are **not** [legislators] and **statesmen**. Thus, even though *we did not notice* at the time. Book X was giving us a lot of information concerning [legislation] through the description of one exemplary *causal* agent. Moreover, we can see now that the **poet** and the **sophist** are cut from the same cloth.

From Book II of the *Republic*, we learned that *education* is divided into *food for body* and for *soul*. Under *education*, *gymnastics* was assigned to the *body* while **music** was allocated to the *soul* (*Rep*. 377a). **Poetry** was set "under **music**" along with **painting**, **marionette playing**, **sculpture**, **rhapsody**, **acting**, **chorus dancing**, **contracting** and **manufacturing all kinds of articles**, especially those that involve **women's adornments** (*Rep*. 373b-c). The common factor in all these was that they were **imitations** involving **figures** and **colors**. Later. we were informed that

> the poet. **knowing nothing** but how to **imitate**, lays on with *words* and *phrases* the **colors** of several **arts** . . . in such a fashion that others equally **ignorant**. who see things only through *words*. will deem his *words* most excellent. whether he speaks in rhythm. meter. and harmony . . . so mighty is the [spell] that these **adornments** naturally *exercise*, though when they are stripped bare of their **musical coloring** and taken by themselves. I think **you know** what sort of a showing these sayings of the **poets** make (*Rep*. 602a).

Thus, when the "**adornments**" and "**musical coloring**" are "stripped away" from the **poet's** *words*, nothing of substance is left. This implies that **poetry** involves a kind of un-natural [beautification]. This in turn brings to mind the fifth sequence of the *Sophist*, where the **bathman** was named as an example of an occupation concerned with the *purification* of the *outward, living body*, while the *fuller*, *furbisher* or *decorator* and those who in "general attend to a number of minute particulars, having a

variety of names which are thought ridiculous" were said to deal with *outward. inanimate bodies* (*Soph.* 227a). Surely *fulling, furbishing,* and *decorating* all entail the notion of [beautification], and these arts (or pseudo arts) involve the application of **adornments** to *outward. inanimate bodies* such as would be encountered in constructing *draperies* and *furnishing* rooms in **buildings**. Though we only have the occupation of *bathman* (i.e.. the *cause*) as an example of *outward. living bodies*. it seems likely that the other trades in this class would include those that involve the [beautification] of women through **adornments** such as clothing and jewelry.

In Book VI. the physical objects of astronomy were said to be "[decorations] on a *visible* surface. and people who study these "sparks that **paint** the sky" are just "staring at [decorations] on a ceiling" with "back-thrown head" (*Rep.* 529b-c). Now [decorations], are kinds of **adornments**. Both involve [beautification]. and [beautification] is quite likely a **semblance** of [**true** beauty]. Further. while astronomy is the **fourth** class that deals with the "fairest and most exact of material things." it was still concerned with *bodies.* whereas the "higher class" involves the *soul. Words*. as we know. are motions of the *soul.* This suggests that we are now dealing with the class in the *soul* that is the counterpart of [astronomy] in the region of *physical bodies* This means that the whole time this conversation has been underway in the *Gorgias.* Socrates has been subtly matching the things he discusses with numbers. Thus. we ascended from [arithmetic] to [geometry]. Again. we find that we have skipped over the **third** class and now. we are dealing with the **fourth,** which is the parallel in the *soul* of [astronomy].

The sense that there is a connection between [beautification] and these previously established classes is intensified when we recognize that *inward* and *animate bodies* were *purified* by *medicine* and *gymnastics* (*Soph.* 227a). Do not forget that in the commentary on *Sophist* 260c-d. we identified the counterparts in the *soul* of *outward* and *inward* in the *body.* **Discourse** or **speech** was an *outward* flow from the *soul* whereas **thinking** was an *inward* motion. When we consider these distinctions now. we can see that we were not given the names for [healthy *states*]. Instead. we were presented with just the opposites sorts of conditions (i.e.. **false judgements** and **false speech**). The *states* we were given could all be placed under the rubric. "that which [**is not** health]." namely. *physical disease* and *deformity*. and *psychic disease* and *deformity* We also received the information that *internal obstacles* such as **false judgements** are symptomatic of a *disease* of the *inner soul* that is characterized by **contradiction (thinking one knows when one does not)**. *Instruction* was its *remedy* and *preventative*. **Ignorance** is an *outward psychic deformity* and **false statements** are [symptoms] of this disorder. *Education* was its *remedy*. Remember that these *inward* and *outward obstacles* of the *soul* were classed as *vices*. Since we were told in the *Sophist* that *justice* is a *virtue*. we may infer that *vices*

include **simple-mindedness** (as the **contradiction** involved in **thinking one knows when one does not**). and **ignorance** (when people tell others that **they know** when deep down inside. **they know that they do not know**). The parallel notions in the *body* for **contradiction** and **ignorance** in the *soul* were not given. However. it now appears that *medicine* and *gymnastics* —as *foods for the body*—are at the same time *remedies* for *physical maladies*. just as *instruction* and *education*—*foods for the soul* or **knowledge**—must be remedies for *vice*. Since the preparation of *food* involves "[cookery]." the implication is that *medicine* and *gymnastics* and *instruction* and *education* are *better* kinds of [cookery] that promote [*psychic* health].

Now we can see why it is not possible to piece together "Plato's theory" on any one subject by gathering together all the statements about it from different dialogues. Perhaps one of the "precautions" described by Parmenides in that dialogue is that learners cannot merely isolate the thread of one topic from all the other elements to reconstruct "Plato's theories." The dialogues are constructed in a way that makes it hard to understand Plato's views on poetry. writing, sophistry or deception without an in-depth knowledge of *food. medicine. physical exercise. bathing. clothes. jewelery.* and *decorating!*

Collection with the Laws. The *Laws* set forth the order and arrangement of **divine** and **human** goods in accordance with the idea-numbers. The succession of **divine**. or **greater** *goods* was listed as (1) **wisdom**: (2) **sobriety of spirit**: (3) [right]eousness (a combination of **wisdom** and valor) and (4) [valor]. The sequence of **human**. or **lesser** *goods* was (1) [health]: (2) **comeliness**: (3) strength and all *bodily exercises*: and (4) [wealth that is clear-sighted because it is attended by **wisdom**]. Now. when we collect these kinds together with some of the notions explained in the *Gorgias*. we find two matches under the category of **human** *goods*. *Gymnastics* in the *Gorgias* clearly involves *strength* and *bodily exercises*. [Beautification] must also be related to *comeliness* in the *Laws*. Notice in addition that [health] is the number one **human** *good* in this four part sequence in the *Laws*. This gives us more information concerning the relative positions of these topics in Plato's memory system.

We collect all this information from different passages together to develop a detailed picture of the geometric structure in various dimensions of the mnemonic. It now seems clear that in this excerpt from the *Gorgias*. we are dealing with the parts of the geometric structure that were assigned to the **statesmen** and the **demagogue** respectively.

The Doctrines: A Course of Education in Plato's Traditional Art

The passage beginning at 499c mentions how the **same** things can be **different**. This means that we must be classifying by two of the "very important" kinds of **forms** designated in the *Sophist* as

sameness and **difference**. Socrates says that whatever is *good* in anything, be it **tool**, *body*, *soul*, or *living* thing, does not come to it in a **lawless** manner, but by way of a specific type of [rightness] and *order*, and through the **art** to which each of them is designated. When we come to the idea of **lawlessness**, we recognize a notion that has to do with a lack of [legislation], for we are told by Socrates that what makes anything *good* is the presence in it of the kind of *order* that is appropriate to it. The *soul* that is ordered appropriately is *better* than a *soul* that has *no order*. He establishes that the *good* person does not say what he says in a *random* manner but rather, with some [definite purpose in mind]. In fact, he says that "speaking for the *best*" involves disposing of each element that he contributes *in a fixed order* so that all the parts fit together and harmonize with each other making the combined whole "well ordered and regulated" (503d-e). This **order** is classified as the [temperate] and the [temperate] *soul* is said to be the *good* (506d-507a). The implication here is that the *soul* in the opposite condition to the [temperate] is *evil* and that this whole section of the mnemonic is classified under [temperance]. This would make sense in terms of Yates's research that the art of memory was passed down through the centuries as a part of [rhetoric], and that it was organized around a scheme of *virtues* and *vices*.

Thus, there is a doctrine in Plato's writings. Moreover, this teaching has to do with the *systematic rules* governing the order and arrangement of the discourse in the dialogues themselves.

So ends this analysis of the *Gorgias*. We turn now to the *Apololgy*, the other major section of analysis in this chapter. After that, the versions of the theme that follow are presented in the order in which the dialogue appears in the standard, Huntington and Cairns edition of the collected dialogues, and then in the Cooper and Hutchinson

The Hunter
Does Not Know. *Conquest*
Hunting. Tame (Human)
Persuasion. Public

Simple
Ignorant
Is not an Athlete in Debate
Conquest
Fighting. Pugnacious
Violence (War of Words.
Controversy) **Private**
Public
Persuasion (Orator)
Public (Long Speeches)
Argumentation (Loquacity.
Conversation Disagreeable
To Hearers). **Demagogue**
Systematic
(Deals With Justice)
Statesman
Is Not a
Merchant of Learning
Acquisitive. Exchange
Giving. Own Productions
Takes Place in the City
Between Cities
Is Not a
Retail Dealer. Same Wares
Knowledge of Virtue
Exchanged Between Cities

Purification
Discrimination. Separates
Better from Worse

Of the Soul
Outward (Speech)

False Statements
Evil and Vice
Discord (Injustice)
Refutes Prejudices

Athlete in Debate
Pugnacious

I do not know what effect my *accusers* have had upon you. *gentlemen.* but for my own part I was almost carried away by them—their *arguments were so convincing.* On the other hand, scarcely a word of what they said was true (17a). I was especially astonished at one of their many **misrepresentations**; I mean when they told you that you must be careful not to let me **deceive** you—the implication being that I am a skillful **speaker**. I thought that it was peculiarly brazen of them to tell you this without a blush, since **they must know** that *they will soon be effectively confuted.* when it becomes obvious that I have not the slightest skill as a **speaker**—unless, of course, by a skillful **speaker** they mean one who **speaks truth.** If that is what they mean, I would agree that I am an *orator.* but not after their pattern (17b)

My *accusers*, then, as I maintain, have said little or nothing that is *true*. but from me you shall hear the whole *truth*—not, I can assure you, gentlemen, *in flowery language like theirs, decked out with fine words and phrases.* No, *what you will hear will be a straightforward speech in the first words that occur to me,* confident as I am in the *justice* of my cause, and I do not want any of you to expect anything different. It would hardly be suitable, gentlemen, for a man of my age to address you in *the artificial language of a schoolboy orator* One thing, however, I do most earnestly beg and entreat of you. If you hear me *defending myself* in the same language, which it has been my habit to use, *both in the open spaces of this city*—where many of you have heard me—*and elsewhere,* do not be surprised, and do not interrupt. Let me remind you of my position. This is my first appearance in a **court of law,** at the age of seventy, and so I am a *complete stranger to the language of this place.* Now *if I were really from another country. you would naturally excuse me if I spoke in the manner and dialect in which I had been brought up,* and so in the present case I make this request of you, which I think is only reasonable, to disregard *the manner of my speech*—it may be *better* or it may be *worse*—and to consider and concentrate your attention on this one question, whether my claims are fair or not. That is the first duty of the juryman, just as it is the pleader's duty *to speak the truth* (18a)

The proper course for me, gentlemen of the jury, is to deal first with the earliest *charges that have been falsely brought against me.* and with my earliest *accusers.* and then with the later ones. I make this *distinction* because *I have already been accused in your hearing by a great many people for a great many years. though without a word of truth,* and *I am more afraid of those people* than I am of Anytus and his colleagues, although *they are formidable* enough. But the others are more *formidable.* I mean

Contest of Strength
(Violent)
War of Words
Long Speeches about
Justice and Injustice
Random (Contracts.
without rules of art)
Systematic (Eristic.
Argument, with rules of art)

Is Not a Merchant of
Learning. Acquisitive
Exchange. Giving.
Is Not Selling in the City or
Between Cities
Merchandise of the Soul
Is not a Trader in Learning
or a Hired Hunter of Rich
Young Men. Persuasion.
Private. Hire (money)
Baits Hook with Virtue
Retail Dealer. Same Wares

Agriculture and Tendence
of Mortal Creatures
Land. Taming
Wild Animals
Land of Another Sort
Taming (Human Animals)

Merchant of Learning
Exchange. Hunting
Selling
Takes Place Between Cities
Instruction (Serious)

Play

the people who took hold of so many of you when you were children and tried to fill your minds with untrue accusations against me, saying. There is a wise man called Socrates who has theories about the *heaven* and has investigated *everything below the earth* and can make the *weaker argument defeat the stronger* (18b). . .

Let us go back to the beginning and consider what the charge is that has made me so *unpopular*, and has encouraged Meletus to draw up this *indictment*. Very well, what did my critics say in *attacking* my character? I must read out their *affidavit*, so to speak, as though they were my *legal accusers*: Socrates is guilty of criminal meddling, in that he inquires into things below the earth and in the sky, and makes the *weaker argument* defeat the *stronger*(19b). . . I mean no disrespect for such **knowledge**, if anyone really is **versed** in it—I do not want any more *lawsuits* brought against me (19c). . . .

The fact is that there is nothing in any of these charges, and if you have heard anyone say that I try to *educate* people and *charge a fee*, there is no truth in that either. I wish that there were, because I think that it is a fine thing if a man is qualified to *teach*, as in the case of Gorgias of Leontini and Prodicus of Ceos and Hippias of Elis. Each one of these is perfectly capable of going into *any city* and actually *persuading the young men to leave the company of their fellow citizens, with any of whom they can associate for nothing, and attach themselves to him, and pay money for the privilege, and be grateful into the bargain* (19d-20a)

There is *another expert too from Paros who I discovered was here on a visit*; I happened to meet a man who *has paid more in Sophists' fees* than all the rest put together—I mean Callias, the son of Hipponicus. So I asked him—he has two sons, you see—Callias, I said if your sons had been *colts* or *calves*, we should have had no difficulty in finding and engaging a *trainer* to perfect their natural qualities, and this *trainer* would have been some sort of *horse dealer* or *agriculturalist*. But seeing that they are **human beings**, whom do you intend to get as their *instructor*? Who is the *expert* in *perfecting the* **human** *and social qualities*? I assume from the fact of your having sons that you must have considered the question. Is there such a person or not?

Certainly, said he.

Who is he, and *where does he come from*? Said I. And *what does he charge*?

Evenus of Paros, Socrates, said his fee is five minas (20b) I felt that Evenus was to be congratulated if he really was a *master of this* **art** and *taught it at such a moderate fee*. I should certainly plume *myself* and give myself *airs* if I understood these things, but in fact, gentlemen, I do not (20c0

Perhaps some of you will think that I am **not being serious** . . . What kind of **wisdom** do I mean? **Human wisdom**, I suppose.

Divine, Human

**Original
Image**

Likeness

Semblance

Reflection

**Knows
Does Not Know
Simple, Ignorant**

Tools, Mimicry

Knows

Does Not Know

Simple

**Ignorant
Public, Statesman
Divine**

Presumably the geniuses whom I mention just now are **wise** in a **wisdom** that is **more than human**. I do not know how else to account for it. I certainly have no knowledge of such **wisdom**. and anyone who says that I have is a liar and willful slanderer (20d-e).
. . . I shall call as witness to my **wisdom**, such as it is, the **god at Delphi** (20e). I am certainly only too conscious that I have no claim to wisdom, **great** or **small** (21b). . . . I should succeed in disproving the **oracle** and pointing out to my **divine** authority (21c). I went to interview a **man** with a high reputation for wisdom, because I felt that here if anywhere I should succeed in disproving the **oracle** and pointing to my **divine authority**, You said that I was the **wisest of men, but here is a man who is wiser than I am**. . . Well, I gave a thorough examination of this person—I need not mention his name but it was one of our politicians that I was studying when I had this experience—and in *conversation* with him I **formed the impression that although in many people's opinion, and especially in his own, he appeared to be wise, in fact he was not**. Then when I began to try to show him that **he only thought he was wise and was not really so**, my efforts were resented both by him and by many of the other people present. However, I **reflected** as I walked away, Well, I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that **neither of us has any knowledge** to boast of, but **he thinks that he knows something which he does not know**, whereas **I am quite conscious of my ignorance**. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, **that I do not think that I know what I do not know** (21d).
. . . After I had finished with the **politicians, I** turned to the **poets, dramatic, lyric**, and all the rest, in the belief that here I should expose myself as a comparative **ignoramus**. I used to pick up what I thought were some of their most perfect works and question them closely about the meaning of what they had written , in the hope of incidentally enlarging my own **knowledge** . . . (22b). Well gentlemen. I hesitate to tell you the truth. but it must be told. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that **any of the bystanders could have explained those poems better than their actual authors**. So I soon made up my mind about the **poets** too. I decided that it was **not wisdom** that enable them to write their **poetry**, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers and prophets who deliver all their sublime messages **without knowing** in the least what they mean. It seemed clear to me that the poets were in much the same case. and I also observed that the very fact they were poets **made them think that they had a perfect understanding of all other subjects**, of which they were totally **ignorant**. So I left that line of inquiry too with the same sense of advantage that I had felt in the case of the **politicians** (22a-c). . .
. So I made myself spokesman for the **oracle**, and asked myself whether I would rather be as I was—neither wise with their [wisdom] nor **stupid** with their **stupidity** (22e). . . . real **wisdom**

Human

Original
Image, Likeness
Semblance

Mimicry, Knows
Does Not Know, Ignorant

Serious
Play

Private

Contradiction-Making

Play, Serious

Knows He
Does Not Know

is the property of God. and this **oracle** is his way of telling us that **human wisdom** has little or no value (23b) . . . . That is why I still go about seeking and searching in obedience to the **divine commend.** if I think that anyone is wise. whether citizen or stranger. and when I think that any person is **not wise. I try to help the cause of God by proving that he is not** (23b). . . . Whereupon. I suppose. they find an unlimited number of **people who think that they know** something. **but really know little or nothing** (23d). . . . they have no answer, **not knowing** what to say (23d-e). . . . They are being convicted of **pretending to knowledge** when they are entirely **ignorant** (23e). . . . There you have the **causes** . . (23e) . . . which I present to you **without any concealment** or suppression. **great or small** (24a). . . . Meletus is guilty of treating a **serious** matter with **levity.** since he summons people to stand their trial on **frivolous** grounds (24c). . . . Am I so hopelessly **ignorant** as not even to realize that by spoiling the character of one of my companions (25e). . . . but to take him aside **privately** for instruction and reproof (26a). Do you suggest that I do not believe that **the sun and moon are gods.** as is the general belief of all **mankind**? (26d). He certainly does not. gentlemen of the jury. since he says that the sun is a stone and the moon a mass of earth.

Do you imagine that you are prosecuting Anaxagoras. my dear Meletus? Have you so poor an opinion of these gentlemen. and do you assume them to be so illiterate as **not to know** that the writings of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of theories like these? And do you **seriously** suggest that it is from me that the young get these ideas. when they can buy them on occasion in the market place for a drachma at most. and so have the laugh on Socrates if he claims them for his own. to say nothing of their being so **silly**? Tell me honestly. Meletus, is that your **opinion** of me? Do I believe in no **god**? (26d-e)

No. none at all. not in the slightest degree.

You are not at all convincing, Meletus—not even to yourself. I suspect. In my opinion. gentlemen. this man is a thoroughly selfish bully. and has brought this action against me out of sheer wanton aggressiveness and self-assertion. He seems to be devising a sort of intelligence test for me, saying to himself. Will the infallible Socrates realize that I am **contradicting myself** for my own **amusement.** or shall I succeed in **deceiving him and the rest of my audience**? . . . It certainly seems to me that he is **contradicting** himself in this indictment. which might just as well run: Socrates is guilty of not believing in the **gods.** but believing in the **gods.** And this is pure **flippancy** (27a). . . . who believes in **human** activities and not in **human** beings (27b) . . . **supernatural** activities and not in **supernatural beings** (27c). . . . testing my intelligence for your own **amusement** (27d). . . . and **thinking that I am wise when I am not.** For let me tell you gentlemen. that to be afraid of death is only another form of

Simple	thinking that one is wise when one is not: it is to think that one knows what one does not know. No one knows with regard to death whether it is not really the greatest blessing that can happen to a man. but people dread it as thought they were certain that it is
Ignorant	the greatest evil. and this **ignorance. which thinks that it knows what it does not.** must surely be **ignorance** most culpable (29a-b). . . . while I busied myself all the time on your behalf. going
Private	like a father or an elder brother to see each one of you **privately.** and urging you to set your thoughts on goodness (31b). It may seem curious that I should go round giving advice like this and busying myself in people's **private** affairs. and yet never venture
Public **Statesman**	**publicly to address you as a whole** and advise on matters of **state** (31c). . . . It is this that debars me from entering public life (31d). The true champion of [justice]. if he intends to survive even for a short time. must necessarily confine himself to **private** life and leave **politics** alone (32a). . . . Do you suppose that I should have lived as long as I have if I had moved in the sphere of **public** life . . . (32e). You will find that throughout my life I have been consistent in any **public** duties that I have performed. and the same also in my **personal** dealings (32e-33a). . . . but if anyone, young or old. is eager to hear me conversing and carrying out my **private** mission (33a). . . . I cannot fairly be held responsible. since I have never promised or imparted any teaching to any *body*, and if anyone asserts that he has ever learned or heard from me **privately anything which was not open to everyone else.** you may be quite sure that he is not telling the truth (33b). . . . It is because they enjoy hearing me examine **those who think that they are wise when they are not**—an experience which has its **amusing** side. This duty I have accepted. as I said. in obedience to God's commands given in **oracles** and **dreams** and in every other way that any other **divine** dispensation (33c).

The reader is invited at this point to compare the speech of Plato's Socrates with the defense offered by Xenophon's Socrates.

CRITO

Serious	
Play	
Public	
Private	
Statesman	
Demagogue	

Was it always right to argue that some **opinions** should be taken **seriously** but not others? (46d) . . . **Serious** thinkers. I believe. have always held some such view as the one which I mentioned just now, that some of the opinions which people **entertain** should be respected (46d). . . . When a man is in training, and taking it **seriously**, does he pay attention to all praise and criticism and opinion indiscriminately, or only when it comes from the one qualified person, the actual *doctor* or [trainer]? (47b) . . . Then he should be afraid of the criticism and welcome the praise of the one qualified person, but not those of the general **public** (47b). . . . So he ought to regulate his *actions* and *exercises* and *eating* and *drinking* by the judgment of his instructor, who **has expert knowledge**, rather than by the **opinions** of the rest of the **public** (47b). . . . I am afraid, Crito, that they represent the reflections of the ordinary **public** . . . (48c). . . . Can you and I at our age, Crito, have spent all these years in **serious** discussions without realizing that we were no better than a pair of children? (49a) . . . Do you imagine that a city can continue to exist and not be turned upside down, if the legal judgments which are pronounced in it have no force but are nullified and destroyed by **private** persons? (50b) . . . On the other hand, if any one of you stands his ground when he can see how **we administer justice and the rest of our public organization**, we hold that by so doing he has in fact undertaken to do anything that we tell him (51e). . . . Do you not think that Socrates and everything about him will **appear** in a disreputable light? (53d) . . . no doubt they would enjoy hearing the amusing story of how you managed to run away from prison by **arraying your self in some costume** or putting on a shepherd's smock or some other conventional runaway's **disguise**, and altering your **personal appearance** (53d).

Original	Where did we get our **knowledge**? (74b) This thing which I can see has a tendency to be **like** something else. but it falls short and cannot be really like it. only a poor **imitation**. Don't you agree
Image **Likeness** **Semblance**	with me that anyone who receives that impression must in fact **have previous knowledge of that thing which he says that the other resembles, but inadequately**? (74d-e) . . . So before we began to see and hear and use our other senses we must somewhere have acquired the **knowledge** that there is such a thing as absolute equality. Otherwise we could never have realized **by**
Mimicry	**using it as a standard for comparison, that all equal objects of sense are desirous of being like it, but are only imperfect copies** (75b). . . . And unless we invariably forget it after
Knows	obtaining it we must always be born **knowing** and continue **to know** all through our lives. because 'to know' means **simply** to retain the **knowledge** which one has *acquired*. and not to lose it.
Simple	Is not what we call 'forgetting' simply the **loss of knowledge**. Simmias? (75d) . . . When *soul* and *body* are both in the same
Divine	place, **nature** teaches the one to serve and be subject. the other to rule and govern. In this relation which do you think **resembles** the
Human	**divine** and which the **mortal** part? Don't you think that it is the nature of the **divine** to rule and direct. and that of the **mortal** to be subject and serve? I do.
Image **Likeness**	Then which does the soul **resemble**? Obviously. Socrates. **soul** resembles the **divine** and *body* the **mortal**.
	Now. Cebes. he said, see whether this is our conclusion from all that we have said. The **soul** is most like that which is **divine**, [immortal], *intelligible*, [uniform], [indissoluble] and ever [self-consistent] and [invariable], whereas *body* is most like that which
Semblance **Shadow**	is **human**. [mortal], [multiform], unintelligible. [dissoluble] and [never self-consistent] (80a-b). . . . The **shadowy** apparitions which have actually been seen there are the ghosts of those **souls** which have not got clear away, but still retain some portion of the **visible**. which is why they can be seen (81d). . . . I must guard against the same sort of risk which people run when they watch and study an eclipse of the sun; they really do sometimes injure
Eyes, Reflection	their **eyes**. unless they study its **reflection in water or some other medium** (99d). . . . Perhaps my illustration is not quite apt. because I do not at all admit that an inquiry by means of theory employs 'images' any more than one which confines itself to facts (100a)

CHARMIDES

Does Not Know
Knows

Divine

But that. Socrates. he said. is impossible. and therefore if this is. as you imply. the necessary consequence of any of my previous admissions. I will withdraw them and will not be ashamed to acknowledge that I made a mistake, rather than admit that a man can be [temperate] or wise who **does not know himself**. For I would almost say that **self-knowledge** is the very essence of [temperance]. and in this I agree with him who dedicated the inscription 'Know thyself' at Delphi. That inscription, if I am not mistaken. is put there as a sort of salutation which the **god** addresses to those who enter the temple—as much as to say that the ordinary salutation of 'Hail!' is not right. and that the exhortation 'Be [temperate]!' is far better. If I rightly understand the meaning of the inscription. the god speaks to those who enter

Human
Original

his temple. not as **men** speak . . . (164d-e)

And succeeding sages who added 'Never too much, ' or 'Give a pledge. and evil is nigh at hand.' would **appear** to have so distinguished them. for they **imagined** that 'Know thyself' was a piece of advice which the god gave (164e-165a). . . . I will attempt to prove. if you deny it, that temperance is **self-knowledge** (165b). . . . just because I do not know. and when I have inquired. I will say whether I agree with you or not. Please then to allow me time to **reflect**.

Image

Likeness

Semblance
Reflection

Reflect. he said.

I am **reflecting**. I replied. and discover that [temperance] or wisdom. if it is a species of **knowledge**. must be a science 165b-c). And if you were to ask me what is the result or effect of architecture. which is the science of **building, I should say houses**, and so of other arts, which all have their different results (165d). . . . this motive would be just a fear of my unconsciously fancying that I **knew something of which I was ignorant** (166d). Then the wise or temperate man, and he only. **will know himself** and be able to examine what **he knows** or **does not know** and to see **what others know and think that they know and do really know. and what they do not know and fancy that they know when they do not**. No other person will be able to do this. And this is wisdom and [temperance] and **self-knowledge**—for a man **to know what he knows and what he does not know**. That is your meaning? . . . Now then, I said, since the third time brings luck. let us begin again. and ask, in the first place. whether it is or is not possible for a **person to know that he knows what he knows and that he does not know what he does not know**. and in the second place. whether. if perfectly possible, such **knowledge** is of any use (167a-b).

Tools

Knows, Does Not Know
Ignorant

Simple

LACHES

Semblance	And such a one I deem to be the true **musician**, attuned to a fairer
Tools	harmony that of the lyre, or any pleasant **instrument** of music, for
	he truly has in his own life a harmony of words and deeds
Mimicry	arranged—**not in the Ionian, or in the Phyrgian mode, nor yet**
	in the Lydian, but in the true Hellenic mode, which is the
	Dorian and no other (188d).
Knows	Then must we not first **know** the nature of virtue? For how can
Does Not Know	we advise anyone about the best mode of attaining something of
Simple, Ignorant	whose nature we are wholly **ignorant**? (190c)
	Let us first consider whether we have a sufficient **knowledge** of a
	part: the inquiry will thus probably be made easier to us (190d).
	But the spirit of **controversy** has been aroused in me by what has
	been said, and I am really grieved at being thus unable to express
	my meaning (194a)

LYSIS

Divine

Human

Original

Image

Likeness

Semblance

Tools

Mimicry

Well the poets. if I mistake not. put forward no slight claims for those who happen to be friends. but tell us that it is **God** himself who makes them one to another. They express. if I remember right. their opinion thus: 'Like **men.** I know. to **like. God** ever leads.' and makes them known. You have met with the verse. have you not?

Oh. yes.

And also with the writings of those learned sages which tell the same story—namely. that **like must of necessity be ever friendly with like**. And these are they, if I mistake not. who talk and write on nature and the universe.

True. they are.

Well. do you think they are right in what they say? I asked

Perhaps. said he.

Perhaps. I answered. in half—perhaps. too. even in all—only we don't understand. For as it **appears** to us. the nearer wicked men come to each other. and the more they see of each other. the greater enemies they become (214c)

But they mean to say. I imagine. that the good are **like** and friendly with the good. but that the bad. as is remarked of them in another place. **are not ever even like themselves.** but are **variable** and not to be reckoned upon. And if a thing be **unlike** and **at variance with itself.** it will be long, I take it. before it becomes **like** to or friendly with anything else. Don't you think so too? (214d)

When. therefore. my friend. our authors assert that **like** is friendly with **like.** they mean. I imagine. to intimate. through obscurely enough. the good man is a friend to the good man only, but that the bad man never engages in a true friendship either with a good or a bad man. Do you agree? . . . Still there is a something in the way that troubles me: so let us, with the help of **heaven.** see what it is that I suspect. **Like** men are friendly with **like** men. in so far as they are **like.** and such a man is useful to such a man. Or rather. let us put it in this way. Is there any good or [harm] that a **like** thing can do to a **like** thing (215a)

But you will say. the **like** man is not a friend to the **like** man. but the good will be a friend to the good. in so far as he is **like**.

Look and see then. Lysis. how we have been led into **error.** If I [mistake] not. we are **deceived** in the whole. and not only in the half (215c). . . . Once upon a time. I replied. I heard a statement made which has just this moment flashed across my mind. It was that nothing is so hostile to **like** as **like.** none so hostile to good as the good. . . . And so. he added. by a universal and infallible law the nearer any two things resemble one another. the fuller do they become of envy. strife. and hatred—and the greater the dissimilarity. the greater the friendship. For the poor are obliged to make themselves friends of the rich, and the weak of the strong,

Does Not Know

for the sake of their assistance: the sick man also must be friendly with the physician. and. in short. everyone who is **without knowledge** must feel regard and affection for those who possess it. Nay. he proceeded with increased magnificence of position to assert that the **like** was so far from being friendly with the **like**. that the exact opposite was the case: the more any two things were contrary. the more were they friendly to each other. For everything, he says craves for its contrary. and not for its **like**—the dry craves for moisture. the cold for heat. the bitter for sweetness. the sharp for bluntness. the empty to be filled. the full to be emptied. And everything else follows the same rule. For the contrary. he added. is **food** to the contrary: the **like** can derive no advantage from the **like**. And I can assure you I thought him extremely clever as he said all this. He stated his case so well. But you. my friends. what do you think of it? (216a) . . . It follows then, I think. that neither **like** is friendly with **like**. nor contrary with contrary (216c). . . . Why. to tell you the truth. said I. I **don't know** myself. being quite dizzied by the entanglement of the subject. I am inclined though to think that. in the words of the old proverb. the beautiful is friendly. Certainly the friendly has the **appearance** of being something soft and smooth and slippery. and probably it is from being of this character that it slides and slips through our fingers so easily . . . I conceive I recognize three distinct classes. good. evil. and thirdly. [that which is neither good nor evil]. Do you allow this distinction? (216d)

Simple
Ignorant

On the same ground then we may further assert that those who are already wise are no longer friends to wisdom. be they **gods**, or be they **men**. nor again. are those friends to wisdom who are so possessed of **foolishness** as to be evil. for no evil and **ignorant** man is a friend to wisdom. There remain then those who possess indeed this evil. the evil of **foolishness**. but who are not. as yet. in consequence of it. **foolish** or **ignorant**. but still understand that **they do not know the things they do not know**. And thus. you see. it is those who are [neither good nor evil]. as yet. that are friends to wisdom. but those who are evil are not friends. nor again are the good. For that contrary is not friendly with contrary. nor **like** with **like** (218a-b).

Private

I am afraid. I answered. that. just as if with **lying** men. we have fallen in with some such false reasonings in our search after **friendship** (218d).

That **friend is become friend** to friend—that is to say. that **like** is become friend to **like**. which we declared to be impossible—is a matter I will allow to pass. but there is another point which we must attentively consider. in order that we may not be **deceived** by our present position (219c)

EUTHYPHRO

Divine	But you. by **heaven!** Euthyphro. you think that you have an accurate knowledge of things **divine**. and what is holy and unholy, that, in circumstances such as you describe. you can accuse your father? (4e). Why Socrates. if I **did not have an accurate knowledge** of all that. I should be good for nothing. and
Human	Euthyphro would be no different from the general run of **men** (5a). Let me tell him that in the past I have considered it of great
Original	importance **to know** about things **divine**. and that now. when he asserts that I **erroneously** put forward my own notions and inventions on this head. I have become your pupil (5a).
	Yes. my dear friend. that **I know**. and so I wish to be your pupil.
Image, Likeness	This Meletus. I **perceive**. along presumably with everybody else.
Eyes, Semblance	**appears to overlook** you. but **sees** into me so easily and keenly
Tools, Mimicry	that he has attacked me for impiety. So. in the name of heaven.
Knows	tell me now about the matter you just felt sure **you knew** quite thoroughly (5c). . . . Is not the holy always one and the same thing in every action. and again. is not the unholy always opposite to the holy. and **like** itself? And as unholiness does it not always have its one essential form. which will be found in everything that is unholy? (5d)
Does Not Know	But now they are enraged at me when I proceed against my father for wrongdoing. and so the **contradict** themselves in what they say about the gods and what they say of me (6a)
	There. Euthyphro. you have the reason why the charge is brought against me. It is because. whenever people tell such stories about
Simple	the gods. **I am prone to take it ill, and so it seems, that is why they will maintain that I am sinful**. Well. now. if you who are so **well-versed** in matters of the sort **entertain** the same beliefs. then necessarily. it would seem. I must give in. for what could we
Ignorant	urge who admit that. for our own part. we are quite **ignorant**
Private	about these matters? But. in the name of **friendship**, tell me! Do you actually believe that these things happened so?
Public	Yes. Socrates, and things even more amazing, of which the **multitude does not know** (6b).

Knows

And all **knowledge**, when separated from justice and virtue, is seen to be [cunning] and [not wisdom]: wherefore make this your first and last and constant and all-absorbing aim—to exceed, if possible, not only us but all your ancestors in virtue, and **know** that to excel you in virtue only brings us shame, but that to be excelled by you is a source of happiness to us. And we shall most likely be defeated, and you will most likely be **victors** in the contest, if you learn so to order your lives as not to abuse or waste the reputation of your **ancestors, knowing** that to a man who has any self-respect, nothing is more [dishonorable] than to be [honored], not for his own sake, but on account of the reputation of his ancestors. The [honor] of parents is a [fair] and [noble] treasure to their posterity, but to have the use of a treasure of wealth and honor, and to leave none to you successors, because you have neither money nor reputation of you own, is **alike** [base and dishonorable] (247b-c)

While we gently heal their wounds, let us remind them that the **gods** have heard the chief part of their prayers, for they prayed, not that their children might live forever, but that they might be brave and renowned. And this, which is the greatest good, they have attained. A **mortal man** cannot expect to have everything in his own life turning out according to his will, and they, if they bear their misfortunes bravely, will be truly deemed brave father s of the brave (247c).

But if the dead have any **knowledge** of the living, they will displease us most by making themselves miserable and by taking their misfortunes too much to heart, and they will please us best if they bear their loss lightly and [temperately]. For our life will have the [noblest] end which is vouchsafed to man, and should be glorified rather than lamented. And if they will direct their minds

Does Not Know

to the care and nurture of our wives and children, **they will soon forget** their misfortunes, and live in a **better** and [nobler] way . . . (248c) This, O ye children and parents of the dead, is the message which they bid us deliver to you, and which I do deliver

Seriousness

with the utmost **seriousness**. And in their name I beseech you, the children, to **imitate** your fathers, and you, parents, to be of good cheer about yourselves, for we will nourish your age, and take care

Public, Private

of you both **publicly** and **privately** in any place in which one of us may meet one of you who are the parents of the dead (248e).

LESSER HIPPIAS

Knows
Does Not Know
Private

Why are you silent. Socrates. after the magnificent **display** which Hippias has been making? Why do you not either **refute** his words, if **he seems to you to have been wrong in any point, or join with us in commending him**? There is the more reason why you should **speak, because we are now alone, and the audience is confined to those who may fairly claim to take part in philosophical discussion** (363a)

Now. I should like to **know**. if Hippias has no objection to tell me. what he thinks about these two heroes. and which of them he maintains to be the **better** (363c)

Public

I shall have much pleasure. Socrates. in explaining to you more closely than I could in **public** my views about these and also about other heroes (364c).

Simple

Now. in these verses he clearly indicates the character of the two men. He shows Achilles to be **true** and **simple** and Odysseus to be [wily] and **false** (365c).

Do you say that the **false**. **like** the **sick**. have no power to do many things. and in particular to **deceive** mankind (365d).

Then. according to you. they are both powerful and [wily]. are they not? . . . And are they [wily]. and do they **deceive** by reason of their **simplicity** and [folly]. or by reason of their [cunning]. and a certain sort of [prudence]?

By reason of the [cunning] and [prudence]. most certainly.

Then they are [prudent]. I suppose? . . . And if they are [prudent]. do they **know** or do they **not know** what they do?

Of. course. **they know** very well. and that is why they do mischief to others. And having this knowledge. are they **ignorant** or are they **wise**?

Ignorant

Wise certainly. at least in so far as they can **deceive** (366a)

Would the **ignorant** man be **better** able to tell a falsehood in matters of calculation than you would be. if you chose? Might he not sometimes stumble upon the truth. when he wanted to tell a **lie**. because he **did not know**. whereas you who are the wise man. if you wanted to tell a **lie** would always and consistently **lie**? (367a)

ION

On what point in Homer do you speak well? Not on all points, I take it.

I assure you, Socrates, I do it on every point, without exception (536e).

Yet not, I fancy, **on those matters of which you happen to be ignorant, but Homer tells of?**

And the matters Homer tells of, and I **do not know** what are they? (536e) . . .

Knows

Each separate art, then has had assigned to it by the **deity** the **power of knowing** a particular occupation? I take it that what **we know** by the pilot's **art** we **do not know** by the **art** of medicine as well (537c) . And what **we know** by medical **art** we **do not know** by the builder's **art** as well (537d) . Well, and so it is with all the arts? What **we know** by one of the **we do not know** by another? But before you answer that, just tell me this. Do you allow a distinction between **arts**? One differs from another? . . .

Does Not Know

Now with me the mark of differentiation is that one **art** means the **knowledge** of one kind of thing, another art the **knowledge** of another, and so I give them their respective names. Do you do that? . . . If they meant **simply** knowledge of the same things, why should we distinguish one art from another? Why call them **different**, when both would give us the same knowledge? For example, take these fingers. I know there are five of them, and you **know** that **same** as I about them (537e) . . .

Simple

You assure me that you have much fine **knowledge** about Homer, and you keep offering to **display** it, but you are **deceiving** me (541e). Far from giving the **display, you will not even tell me what subject it is on which you are so able, though all this while I have been entreating you to tell.** No you are just like Proteus: you twist and turn, this way and that **assuming every shape,** until finally you elude my grasp and reveal yourself as a general (542a). And all in order not to show how skilled you are in the lore concerning Homer! So if you are an **artist,** and, as I said just now, if you only promised me a **display** on Homer in order to deceive me, then you are at fault. But if you are not an **artist,** if by lot divine you are possessed by Homer, and so, **knowing nothing,** speak many things and fine about the poet, just as I said you did, then you do no wrong. Choose, therefore, how you will be called by us, whether we shall take you for a **man** unjust, or for a **man divine.**

Ignorant

Private
Public
Demagogue

The difference, Socrates, is **great.** It is far lovelier to be deemed **divine.**

Statesman

This lovelier title, Ion, shall be yours, to be in our minds **divine,** and not an **artist,** in praising Homer (542b)

Divine
Original
Forms and Colors

I think we should, for **justice** is **virtue** (73d). **Virtue**, do you say, or *a* **virtue**? What do you mean?

Take **roundness**, for instance. I should say that it is a **shape**, not simply that it is **shape**, my reason being that there are other **shapes** as well (73e)

I see your point, and I agree that there are other virtues besides justice.

Tell me what they are. Just as I could name other **shapes** if you told me to, in the same way mention some other **virtues** (74a)

In my opinion then courage is a virtue and [temperance] and wisdom and dignity and many other things.

This puts us back where we were. In a different way we have discovered a number of virtues when we were looking for one only. This single virtue, which permeates each of them, we cannot find.

No. I cannot yet grasp it as you want, a single virtue covering them all, as I do in other instances (74b). . . .

And the same with **color**—if he asked you what it is, and on your replying, 'White,' took you up with, 'Is white **color** or *a* **color**?' you would say that it is *a* **color** because there are other **colors** as well (74d) . . .

Well now, let's try to tell you what shape is. **See** if you accept this definition. Let us define it as the only thing which always accompanies **color**. Does that satisfy you, or do you want it in some other way? I should be content if your definition of virtue were on similar lines (75c). . . . **Tell me, therefore, whether you recognize the term 'end':** I mean [limit] or [boundary]—all these words I use in the same sense (75e) . . . And again, you recognize '[surface]' and '[solid]' as they are used in geometry? . . . Then with these you should by this time understand my definition of **shape**. To cover all its instances, I say that **shape is that in which a solid terminates, or more briefly, it is the limit of a solid**

Image
Likeness, Eyes

Knows

(76a) . . . **Color** is an effluence from **shapes** commensurate with **sight** and **perceptible** by it (76d)

So with virtue now. **I don't know** what it is. You may have **known** before you came into contact with me bu now you **look as if you don't** (80c).

Does Not Know

To put it another way, even if you come right up against it, how will **you know** that what you have found is the thing you **didn't know**?

I know what you mean. Do you realize that what you are bringing up is the trick argument that a man cannot try to discover either what he **knows** or what he **does no know**? He would not seek what he **knows**, for since he **knows** it there is no need of the inquiry, nor what he **does not know**, for in that case he **does not even know** what he is to look for (80e).

EUTHYDEMUS

Tools
Knows

Does Not Know, Simple

Ignorant

Play

And Euthydemus said. There are **people** you call **teachers**, aren't there?
He agreed (276a).
The **teachers are teachers of the learners**; for example the **music** master and the **grammar** master were **teachers of you and the other boys**, and you were learners?
He said yes.
Of course at the time when you were learning, you **did not yet know the things you were learning**?
No, he said.
Then you were wise when **you did not know** these things? (276b)
If not wise, then **ignorant**?
Yes.
So you boys, while learning what **you did not know**, were **ignorant** and were learning?
The boy nodded.
So the **ignorant** learn, my dear Clinias, not the wise as you suppose . . . Which of the boys learned the things dictated, wise or **ignorant**? (276c)
The wise ones, said Clinias.
Then the wise ones learn and not the **ignorant**, and you answered wrong just now to my brother . . . He said. Do the learners learn **what they know, or what they don't know**? (276d) . . .
Meanwhile Clinias answered Euthydemus that the learners learned what they **did not know**, and he went on in the same way as before: Very well; **do you not know** your letters? (277a) . . . Then he dictates a bit of **what you know, if you know** them all?
He agreed to this too.
Very well, said he, *you* do not learn what someone dictates, but only the on who **does not know** letters learns them? Eh?
No, no, he said. I do learn them.
Then you learn **what you know**, since **you know** all the letters
He agreed (277b) . . .
Just tell me, is not learning getting **knowledge** of whatever one learns?
He said yes.
Then **not to know** is not yet to **have knowledge**? . . .
There is dancing and **play** there also, as **you know** if you have been initiated; and now these are only dancing round you in **play**, meaning to initiate you afterward (277d-e). So consider now that you are hearing the beginnings of the **sophistic** ritual. For you must learn first of all, as Prodicus says, the right us of **words**; and this is just what the two visitors are showing to you, because **you did not know** that people use the word *learn* in two senses—first,

when one has no knowledge at the beginning about something. and then afterward gets the knowledge. and second. when one already having the knowledge uses this knowledge to examine this same thing done or spoken. The second is called understanding rather than learning. but sometimes it is also called learning. But you missed this. as these show it; they hold the same word as applying to people in opposite senses. to one who knows and one who does not. It was much the same in the second question. in which they asked you whether people learn what they know or what they don't. Well. all this is just a little game of learning. and so I say they are playing with you; I call it a game, because if one learned many such things or even all of them. one would be no nearer knowing what the things really are. but would be able to play with people because of the different sense of the words ... (278a-c) So you must consider that all this was a game on the part of these gentlemen. but I feel sure. Clinias. that from

Serious

now on this distinguished pair will show you serious things. and I will give them a lead as to what they promised me to provide (278 c)

Simple

He was astonished. so young and simple he is (279e). ... Well then. on a campaign. which would you like better to share danger

Ignorant

and fortune with. a wise captain or an ignorant one?

A wise one.

And if you were ill. which would you prefer to run risks with. a wise physician or an ignorant one?

A wise one.

Don't you think. then. I said. that it would be better fortune to do anything along with a wise man. than with an ignorant one? (280a)

Very well. in the working and the use of woodwork. that which produces the right use is just simply knowledge of carpentry. don't you think so (281a)

Then what follows from what has been said? That none of the things is either good or bad. except these two. and of these wisdom is good and ignorance bad (281e)

Public

Very well. when the orators speak in public. do they do nothing? (284b) ...

Private

... I am only speaking against what I think he is not speaking nicely to me (285d) ...

Statesman

Then Ctesippus said. Truly amazing things you do say. honorable gentlemen of Thurii or Chios .. (289a)

Demagogue

... they are doing conjuring tricks with us like Proteus. the Egyptian Sophist

Imitation
Divine
Human
Original, Image
Likeness
Semblance

Mimicry

Tools

Does Not Know

Ignorant

Simple

Public
Statesman

We should **imitate** the nature of the thing: the elevation of our hands to **heaven** would mean lightness and upwardness: heaviness and downwardness would be expressed by letting them drop to the ground: if we were describing the running of a horse, or any other **animal**, we should make our bodies and their gestures as **like** as we could to them ... (423a).

I do not see that we could do anything else.

We could not, for by **bodily imitation** only can the *body* ever express anything ... And when we want to express ourselves, either with the voice, or tongue, or mouth, the expression is simply their **imitation** of that which we want to express ... Then a name is a vocal **imitation** of that which the vocal imitator names or **imitates**? (423b)

The **musician** and the **painter** were the two names which you gave to the two other **imitators (424a)** ... just as, in **painting**, the **painter** who wants to depict anything sometimes uses purple only, or any other color, and sometimes mixes up several colors, as his method is when he has to **paint** flesh color or anything of that kind—he uses his colors as his figures appear to require them. And so too, we shall apply letters to the expression of objects, either single letters when required, or several letters, and so we shall form syllables, as they are called, and from syllables make nouns and verbs and thus, at last, from the combinations of nouns and verbs arrive at language, large and fair and whole. *And as the painter made a figure, even so shall we make speech by the art of the namer or the rhetorician, or by some other art* (425a).

Shall we leave them, then? Or shall we seek to discover, if we can, something about them, according to the measure of our ability, saying by way of preface, as I said before of the gods, that of the truth about them **we know nothing**, and do but entertain human notions of them (425c) ... And yet any sort of **ignorance** of first or primitive names involves an **ignorance** of secondary words, for they can only be explained by the primary (426a)

For I have long been wondering at my own wisdom. I cannot trust myself. And I think that I ought to stop and ask myself. What am I saying? For there is nothing worse than **self-deception**—when the **deceiver** is always at home and always with you—it is quite terrible, and therefore I ought often to retrace my steps and endeavor to 'look fore and aft.' in the words of the aforesaid Homer (428d).

Names, then, are given in order to instruct?

Certainly.

And naming is an **art**, and has [artificers]?

Yes.

And who are they?

The **legislators**, of whom you spoke at first (429a)

Human	And does this art grow up among **men like** other arts? Let me explain what I mean. Of **painters**, some are **better** and some
Original, Image	**worse?** ... The **better painters** execute their works. I mean their
Likeness	figures, better, and the **worse** execute then **worse**. And of
Tools	**builders** also, the **better** sort **build** fairer **houses**, and the **worse** build them worse.

True.

And among **legislators**, there are some who do their work figures **better** and some **worse?**

No, there I do not agree with you.

Then you do not think that some [laws] are **better** and others **worse?** No, indeed (429b).

Or that one name is **better** than another? ... Then all names are rightly imposed?

Yes, if they are names at all.

Well, what do you say to the name of our friend Hermogenes, which was mentioned before—assuming that he has nothing of the nature of Hermes in him, shall we say that this is a wrong name, or not his name at all? (429c)

I should reply that Hermogenes is not his name at all, but only **appear** to be his, and is really the name of some*body* else, who has the nature which corresponds to it. ...

Mimicry
Simple
Ignorant

Are you maintaining that **falsehood** is impossible? (429d) For if this is your meaning I should answer that there have been plenty of **liars** in all ages. ...

But let us see, Cratylus, whether we cannot find a meeting point, for you would admit that the name **is not the same** with the thing named? I should (430a).

Image

And would you further acknowledge that the name is an **imitation** of the thing? ... And you would say that **pictures** are also **imitations of things**, but in another way? ... I believe you may be right, but I no not rightly understand you. Please to say then, whether both sorts of **imitation**—I mean **pictures** or words—are not equally attributable and applicable to the things of which they are the **imitation** (430b).

Likeness

First look at the matter thus. You may attribute the **likeness** of the man to the man, and of the woman to the woman, and so on? (430c)

And are both modes of assigning them **right**, or only the first? Only the first.

That is to say, the mode of assignment which attributes to each that which belongs to it and is **like** it? ... May I not go to a man and say to him. This is your picture, showing him his own **likeness**. Or perhaps the **likeness** of a woman, and when I say show. I mean

Eyes

bring before the **sense of sight** (430e). ... And may I not go to him again, and say. This is your name? *For the name, like the picture, is an imitation* (431a). ... But if I can assign names as well as **pictures** to objects, the **right** assignment of them we may call truth, and the **wrong** assignment of them **falsehood** (431b). .

And further. primitive [nouns] may be compared to **pictures**. and in **pictures** you may either give all the appropriate colors and figures. or you may not give them all—some may be wanting—or there may be too many or too much of them—may there not?
Very true.
And he who gives a perfect **picture** or figure. and he who takes away or adds also gives a **picture** or figure. but not a good one. .

Semblance
Mimicry

. . In like manner. he who by syllables and letters **imitates** the nature of things. if he gives all that is appropriate will **produce** a good **image**. or in other words a [name]. but if he subtracts or perhaps adds a little. he will make an **image**. but [not a good one]:

Knows, Does Not Know

whence I infer that some [names] are **well and others are ill made** (431d)
That is true.
the **artist of names** may sometimes be good or he may be bad?
Yes (431e).
And this artist of names is called the legislator? (431e)
Yes.
Then like other **artists** the **legislator** may be good or he may be

Statesman

bad: it must surely be so if our former admissions hold good . .
I believe that what you say may be true about [numbers]. which must be just what they are. or not be at all. For example. the

Original

[number] ten at once become other than ten if a unit be added or subtracted. and so of any other [number]. but this does not apply to that which is qualitative or to anything which is represented under an **image**. I should say rather that the **image**. if expressing in every point the entire reality. would no longer be an **image**. Let

Image

us suppose the existence of two objects. One of them shall be Cratylus. and the other the **image** of Cratylus. and we will suppose. further. that some **god** makes not only a representation such as a **painter** would make of your outward form and color. but also creates an inward organization **like** yours. having the same warmth and softness. and into this infuses motion. and soul. and

Likeness

mind. such as you have. and in a word **copies** all your qualities and places them by you in another form. Would you say that this was Cratylus and the **image** of Cratylus. or that there were two Cratyluses?
I should say that there were two Cratyluses.
Then you see. my friend. that we must find some other principle of truth in **images**. and also in [names]. and not insist that an image is no longer and **image** when something is added or subtracted.

Eyes

Do you not **perceive** that images are very far from having qualities which are the exact counterpart of the realities which they represent (432d)
And the proper letters are those which are **like** the things? (433c)
. . . Enough then of names which are rightly given. An in names which are incorrectly given. the greater part may be supposed to be made up of proper and similar letters. or there would be no **likeness**. but there will be **likewise a part which is improper and**

spoils the beauty and formation of the word. You would admit that? (433c). There would be no use. Socrates. in my quarreling with you. since I cannot be satisfied that a name which is [incorrectly] given is a name at all. Do you admit a [name] to be the **representation** of a thing? (433d)

Representation by likeness. Socrates. is infinitely better than **representation by** any chance sign (434a)

Very good, but if the [name] is to be **like** the thing, the letters out of which the first [names] are composed must also be **like** things. Returning to the **image** of the picture. I would **ask how anyone could ever compose a picture which would be like anything at all, if there were not pigments in nature which resembled the things imitated, and out of which the picture is composed** (434a-b).

Good. but still the word is intelligible to both of us. When I say σκλαρός (hard). **you know** what I mean (434e).

The use of names. Socrates. as I should imagine. is to inform. The **simple** truth is that he who **knows** [names] **knows** also the things which are expressed by them (435d)

Well. but do you not see. Cratylus. that he who follows [names] in search after things. and analyzes their meaning, is in great danger of being **deceived**? (436b) How so?

Why clearly he who first gave names gave them according to his conception of the things which they signified—did he not? True. And if his conception was [erroneous]. and he gave [names] according to his conception. in what position shall we who are his followers find ourselves? Shall we not be **deceived** by him? (436b)

And much the same way . . . **ignorance** may be explained . . . (437b)

Are we to count them like votes? And is correctness of [names] the **voice of the majority** (437d)

. . . But let us have done with this question and proceed to another. about which I should like to **know** whether you think with me. Were we not lately acknowledging that the first givers of [names] in states. both Hellenic and barbarous, were the **legislators.** and that the **art** which gave [names] was the art of the **legislator?** . . . Tell me. then. did the first **legislators,** who were the givers of the first [names]. **know** or **not know** the things which they named?

They must have **known.** Socrates.

Why. yes. friend Cratylus. they could hardly have been **ignorant** (438a)

Then how came the giver of the [names]. if he was an inspired being or god. to **contradict** himself? (438c

Why. yes. friend Cratylus. they could hardly have been **ignorant.**

Semblance
Tools

Mimicry

Knows

Simple

Ignorant

Public

Statesman

Contradiction-Making

Art
Production
Divine, Image
Semblance, Shadow

Human

Knows

Does Not Know

Simple

Ignorant

Private

Public

Do we not. moreover. recognize that in every art and craft the artist and the [craftsman] who work under the direction of this same **god** achieve the brightest fame. while those that lack his influence grow old in the **shadow** of oblivion? It was longing and desire that led **Apollo** to found the arts of archery. healing and **divination**—so he. too was a scholar in the school of Love (197a) Love that charms both **mortal** and **immortal** hearts (97e)

My dear sir. protested Socrates. what chance have I or anyone of **knowing** what to say. after listening to such a flood of eloquence (98b)

And then I saw what a **fool** I'd been to agree to take part in this eulogy of yours. and what was worse. **to claim a special knowledge of the subject, when, as it turned out, I had not the least idea how this or any other eulogy should be conducted.** I had imagined in my innocence that one began by stating the facts about the matter in hand. and then proceeded to pick out the most attractive points and **display** them to the best advantage. And I [flattered] myself that my speech would be a great success. because I knew the facts. But the truth. it seems is the last thing the successful eulogist cares about: on the contrary. what he does is **simply** to run through all the attributes of power and virtue. however irrelevant they may be. and the whole thing may be a **pack of lies.** for all it seems to matter (98d-e)

I take it then that what we undertook was to [flatter], rather than to praise. the god of love. and that's why you're all prepared to say the first thing about him that comes into your heads. and to claim that he either is. or is the cause of. everything that is loveliest and best. And of course the **uninitiated** are impressed by the beauty and grandeur of your encomiums: yet **those who know** will not be taken in so easily. Well, then. I repeat, the whole thing was a misunderstanding. and it was only in my **ignorance** that I agreed to take part at all (199a).

But I don't mind **telling you** the truth about Love. if you're interested: only. if I do I must **tell it in my own way.** for I'm not going to make a **fool** of myself. at my age. trying to **imitate** the grand manner that sits so well on the rest of you. Now Phaedrus. it's for you to say. Have you any use for *a speaker who cares whether his matter is correct and leaves his manner to take care of itself?* (199b-c)

Whereupon Phaedrus and the others told him to go ahead and make whatever kind of **speech** he liked (199c0.

Ask what you like, said Phaedrus. I don't mind.

Very well. said he. but there's just one other thing. Has our chairman any objection to my asking Agathon a few **simple** questions? I want to make certain we're not at cross purposes before I begin my **speech**.

Whereupon Socrates began. so far as Aristodemus could trust his memory. as follows. . . .

Whereupon. My dear Diotima. I asked. are you trying to make me believe that Love is bad and [ugly] (202a).

Why. naturally.

And that what isn't learned must be **ignorant**? *Have you never heard of something which comes between the two?*

And what's that?

Don't you know. she asked. that holding an **opinion** which is in fact [correct]. without being able to give a reason for it. is neither true **knowledge**—how can it be **knowledge** without a reason?—nor **ignorance**—for how can we call it **ignorance** when it happens to be **true**? *So may we not say that a [correct opinion] comes midway between knowledge and ignorance?*

Knows

[Correct Opinion]
Ignorance

Yes. I admitted. that's perfectly true (202b).

Very well. then. she went on. why must you insist that what isn't [beautiful] is [ugly]. and that what isn't good is bad? Now. coming back to Love. you've been forced to agree that he is neither good nor [beautiful]. but that's no reason for thinking that he must be bad and [ugly]. *The fact is that he's between the two* (202b).

Divine

And yet. I said. it's generally agreed that he's a great god.

It all depends. she said. on what you mean by 'generally.' Do you mean **simply** people that **don't know** anything about it. or do you include the **people that do**?

Human

I meant everybody.

At which she laughed. and said. Then can you tell me, my dear Socrates. how people can agree that he's a great god when they deny that he's a **god** at all? (202c)

What **people** do you mean? I asked her.

You for one. and I for another.

What on earth do you mean by that?

Oh. it's **simple** enough. she answered. . . . The if he [Love] has no part in either goodness or [beauty]. how can he be a **god**? (202d)

I suppose he can't be. I admitted.

And now. she said. haven't I proved that you're one of the **people** who don't believe in the **divinity** of Love?

Yes. but what can he be. then? I asked her. A **mortal**?

Not by any means.

[Intermediate]
[Love]
[Immortal]
[Mortal]
[Spirit]

Well. what then?

What I told you before—[halfway between [**mortal** and **immortal.**]

What do you mean by that Diotima?

A very powerful [spirit]. Socrates. and *[spirits]. you know are half-way between god and man.*

What powers have they. then? I asked (202e)

They are the envoys and interpreters that ply between **heaven and earth.** flying upward with our worship and our prayers and descending with the **heavenly** answers and commandments. and

since they are between the two estates they weld both sides together and merge them into one great whole. They form the [medium] of the prophetic arts. of the priestly rites of sacrifice. initiation. and incantation. of divination and of sorcery. for the **divine** will not mingle directly with the **human.** and it is only through the mediation of the [spirit] world that **man** can have any intercourse. whether waking or sleeping. with the **gods**. And the **man** who is **versed in such matters** is said to have spiritual powers. as opposed to the mechanical powers of the **man** who is expert in the more mundane arts (203a)

So Love is never altogether in our out of need. and *stands. moreover. midway between* **ignorance** *and wisdom* (204a)

And so it follows that Love is a lover is wisdom . and. being such *he is placed between wisdom and* **ignorance** (204b)

In this passage from the *Symposium.* we are given a number of opposites and then we are offered intermediates.

	Intermediate	**Intermediate**	
Wisdom	**Knowledge**	**Correct Opinion**	**Ignorance**
Divine	**Love**	**Human**	[ ]
Immortal	**Spirit**	**Mortal**	[ ]
Heaven	**Medium**	**Earth**	[ ]

Knows, Does Not Know

Likeness
Eyes
[Sees. Does Not See]

We were asking whether **one who had become acquainted with something and remembered it** could **fail to know** it. Then we pointed out that a man so shuts his **eyes** after **seeing** something remembers but **does not see**. and so concluded that at the same moment he both remembers the thing and **does not know** it. That. we said. was impossible. And so no one was left to tell Protagoras/ tale. or yours either. about **knowledge** and **perception** being the same thing

So it appears (165d-e).

Let me put. the. the most formidable poser of all. which I take to be this. Can the same person **know** something and also **not know** that which he **knows**? (165b)

Well. Theaetetus. what are we to answer?

That it is impossible. I suppose.

Not if you say that **seeing** is **knowing** (165b).

Contradiction-Making

Well, I conclude that the consequence **contradicts** my thesis (165d).

Simple, Ignorant
Knows, Does Not Know

Let the truth be told. They are what they fancy they are not. all the more for **deceiving themselves**. for they are **ignorant** of the very thing it most concerns them **to know**—the penalty of injustice (176d)

Contradiction-Making

Likeness
Eyes
[Sees. Does Not See]
Ignorant

Knows, Does Not Know

Contradiction-Making

Yes. for now we are rid of the **contradiction** about people **not knowing** what they **do know**. That no longer implies our not possessing what we do possess. whether we are [mistaken] about something or not. But it strikes me that a still stranger consequence is coming in **sight** (199c). . . .

On this showing. the presence of **ignorance** might just as well make us **know** something. or the presence of **blindness** makes us **see**—if **knowledge** can ever make us **fail to know** (199d).

Then tell me. what definition can we give with the least risk of **contradicting** ourselves? (200e)

384

PARMENIDES

The *Parmenides*, along with the *Phaedo* and the *Philebus*, contains some of the most direct and extensive discussions of the main tenets Aristotle attributed to Plato. We learn more about the opposite first principles of the One and the Unlimited, where the latter consists of the duality of the great and small (140a-145a; 148a-151e; 159c-161c); and the intermediate class (where the "inequalities" of the great and small are "always kept apart from one another" by "equality;" which is placed "between the two" (161d-e). There is, as well, a conversation concerning the designation of various analogies based on their "participation" in the forms (132c-d; 155e). Further, we are twice offered, in descending order of value, the arrangement of three of the four parts of knowledge. At 155d, the sequence is identified as "knowledge and opinion and perception of it" (155d); then at 164b, the series is repeated once again. Remember that it has already been established in a number of previous passages that "wisdom" is the highest form of knowledge, and that knowledge is one thing with many parts which are the same (since they are all part of knowledge), and also different (from one another). Thus, the sequence, from lowest to highest, would be: first, sense perception, a kind of likeness (which descends to ignorance); then second opinion; followed by knowledge; leading ultimately to wisdom. Finally, to the list of the kinds of forms expressly identified from 254c-260a in the *Sophist*—(1) being; (2) motion; (3) rest; (4) sameness; (5) difference; (6) is not being; and (7) discourse—there is added: (8) like; (9) unlike; (10) equal; (11) unequal which includes the characters great and small or greater and lessor; (12) unlimited; (13) limit; (14) even; (15) odd; and also (16) one, unity or wholeness and the (17) "indefinitely numerous," many or plurality. Finally, there is a lengthy discussion of the nature of contraries (129a; 146d; 149e-151e).

Image

Semblance

Likeness
Tools

Further, they will seem, as we are saying, to have a smallest in them, but this smallest **appears** as a 'many,' which is great in comparison with the smallness of each of that many. Also each mass will be **imagined** equal to the many smalls, for it could not pass in **appearance** from larger to smaller without seeming to reach the *intermediate* stage, which will be a **semblance** of equality (165a). ... To a dim and distant view such a thing must **appear** as one, but to closer and keener inspection each must **appear** without limit of multitude, being destitute of that one which does not exist (165b-c). Thus, if there is no one, but only things other than the one, each of these others must **appear** both unlimited in multitude and limited, both one and many. Also, they will **appear** both **like** and unlike. As with scene **paintings**, to the distant spectator all will **appear** as one thing, and seem to have the same character and so to be **alike**, but if you approach nearer, they seem many and different and this **semblance** of difference will

Mimicry

make them seem different in character and unlike one another. Thus these masses must appear both **like** and unlike themselves and each other (165d).

STATESMAN

The *Statesman* adds more pieces to the puzzle. We obtain through a discussion of "excess and defect" a "standard of length" for dividing all topics. This involves an "art of measurement" that embraces "all arts" and which is divided into a "section concerned with the relative greatness or smallness of objects"—including the arts of measuring number, length, depth, breadth, or velocity—and another part that deals with their "size in relation to a fixed norm" or "due measure"— "due occasion, due time, due performance, and all such standards as have removed their abode from the extremes and are now settled about the mean" (283c-284e).

Likeness	Thus **likened to the universe and following its destiny through all time, our life and our begetting are now on this wise, now on that** (274d) Stranger: Here let our work of storytelling come to its end, but now we must use the story to discern the extent of the mistake we made in our earlier argument in our delineation of the **king** or **statesman** (274e) . . . We were asked to define the **king** and **statesman** of this present era, and of **humanity** as **we know** it, but in fact we took from the contrary cosmic era the **shepherd of the human flock** as it then was, and described him as the **statesman** (275a). He is a **god** not a **mortal.** We went as far astray as that. Furthermore, we showed him as **ruler of all the life of the state** but did not specify the manner of this **rule** . . . we must try to define the way in which the **statesman** controls the state. We can be reasonably confident that in doing this we shall achieve the complete definition of the **statesman.** Young Socrates: Very good. Stranger: But our aim when we actually introduced the story was to show two things at once concerning 'nurture of the herd.' We were anxious to show the host of rivals with whose claims to be 'nurturers of the herd' that **statesman** whom we now seek has to complete, but were still more anxious to follow out our **analogy** and to see the **statesman** himself in a clearer light as being alone entitled to be called 'shepherd of the people," feeding humankind in the way shepherds feed their sheep and cowherds their cattle (275b). Young Socrates: True. Stranger: It **appears** to me now, Socrates, that the **divine shepherd** is so exalted a figure that no **king** can be said to attain to his eminence. **Those who rule these states of ours in this resent era are like their subjects,** far closer to them in training and in nurture than ever [sic] **shepherd** could be to flock. Young Socrates: Yes, that is certainly so. Stranger: But whether they are **human** or **superhuman creatures,**
Statesman	
Human	
Divine **Original**	
Image, Likeness	
Semblance	
Mimicry	
[Creatures], *Human*	

Divine, Nature

Living

Tame (Human)

Knows
Does Not Know
Simple

Food for the Body

Food for the Soul

we are still as committed as we were—neither more so nor less—to the task of seeking to reveal their true **nature**.

Young Socrates: Of course.

Stranger: We must go back again for reconsideration of one of our divisions. We said that there is a 'predirective' **art** concerned with *living creatures*. and with these in herds rather than as individuals. Without further division, we described this as 'the science of the *rearing of herds*.' You recall this, do you not? (275d)

Young Socrates: Yes. I do.

Stranger: It was at a point in our tracking down of this **art** that we began to lose the scent. We did not catch the **statesman** at all in this definition or name him properly. He eluded us **without our knowing it while we were intent on the process of naming.**

Young Socrates: How did he do it?

Stranger: There is no other *herdsman who is not charged with the bodily nurture of his herd. This characteristic is absent in the statesman and yet we call him a herdsman. We should have used a wider name. covering all guardians. whether nurturers or not* (275e).

Young Socrates: You are right if there is in fact such a name.

Stranger: Surely 'concern' is available as such a class name: it implies **no specific limitation to bodily nurture** or to any other specific activity. If we had named the **art** 'concern for herds.' 'attention to herds.' or 'charge of herds'—all of them terms which cover all species—we could have included the **statesman** with the rest. for the run of the argument was indicating to us that we ought to do this.

Young Socrates: True. but how would the subsequent division have proceeded?

Stranger: On the same lines as before. We divided *'nurture of herds'* into *nurture* of *land animals. wingless.* noninterbreeding, and hornless. We could have divided 'care of herds' in the same way and our definition would then have included both the **shepherd king of the reign of Cronus and the ruler of our present era.**

Young Socrates: That seems clear. but I still want to **know** what follows.

Stranger: It is clear that if we had used this term *'concern for herds'* we should not have had to face the unreasonable objection that some make. that ruling is in *no* sense and *art of tendance*. as well as the other reasonable objection we met that there is no specific *art of nurture of human beings* and if there were. there would be many more directly involved in its exercise than any ruler is (276b).

Stranger: However clearly we had determined in our minds that there exists an **art of nurture of two-footed herds**, we were not entitled without further examination to name this **art kingship** or **statesmanship** . . . (276c)

Stranger: By one division we should have set apart the **divine**

Land Animals
Wingless

Tame (Humans)

[Two-Footed]

[Divine Shepherd]

[Human Shepherd]

Force
Persuasion

Ignorant

Public

Demagogue

Statesman

Likeness

Art
Production

Human
Original
Forms and Colors

Image
Likeness
Waking Eyes, Dream

shepherd and the human tender of men (276d)

Young Socrates: By what division?

Stranger: By distinguishing *enforced tendance* from *tendance voluntarily accepted.*

Young Socrates: Surely.

Stranger: I think we really went wrong at this point in our earlier definitions; we made a confusion—a needlessly **stupid** one—of the **king** and the **tyrant**, and these are entirely different people, **different in the manner of their rule.**

Young Socrates: Yes, they are.

Stranger: Then let us be right this time, and, as I said, let us divide the art of concern for men into two—**enforced tendance and tendance accepted voluntarily.**

Young Socrates: Certainly.

Stranger: **Tendance of human herds by violent control** is the **tyrants art, tendance freely accepted by herds of free bipeds we call statesmanship.** Shall we now declare that he who possesses this latter **art** practices this tendance is **the true kind and the true statesman?**

Young Socrates: Yes, and I should think, sir, that at this point we have really completed our definition of the statesman (277a).

Stranger: That would be excellent, Socrates, but it is not enough for you to think so. I must think so too.

Now as a matter of fact I think that the **likeness** of the **statesman** has not been perfectly drawn yet. **Sculptors** sometimes rush at their work in ill-timed enthusiasm and then elaborate the details of the work to such an extent that they have to bring in extra material to complete it and this in the end slows down their progress. Something like this happened earlier in our discussion, when we wanted to make it immediately clear where we were [mistaken] and to give a really impressive demonstration of the point. Supposing that where a king was concerned only large-scale illustrations could be suitable, we reared our massive myth and then had to use more myth material than the occasion warranted; thus our demonstration became too long and we did not give the myth a complete form after all. Our definition, too, seems to me like a portrait which is as yet an outline sketch and **does not represent the original clearly,** because it has still to be **painted in colors** properly **balanced** with one another. Remember, however, that a definition couched **in words** is a better description of a living creature than a **drawing** or any [model] of it can be—a better description. I mean, for those capable of following such a definition; for those who cannot do so, the model or *visible* illustrations appropriate enough

Yes, that is true, but pray make clear where you still find our description of the **statesman** inadequate (277c)

It is difficult, my dear Socrates, to demonstrate anything of real importance without the use of examples. Every one of us is **like** a man who **sees** things in a **dream** and thinks that he **knows** them

perfectly and then **wakes up**, as it were to find that he **knows nothing** (277d).

What do you mean by this?

I have made a real **fool** of myself to discuss our strange **human** plight where the winning of **knowledge** is concerned. . . . We know that they distinguish particular letters only in the shortest and **simplest** syllables . . . (278a)

We must also look at another group—quite a large mob, in fat, which is coming clearly into view now that all these particular groups have been distinguished (291a)

And who are these you speak of?

A very queer crowd.

What do you mean?

Semblance

Mimicry

|Characters|
Knows

A race of many tribes—or so they seem to be at first sight. Some are like lions, some like **centaurs**, or similar **monsters**. A great many are **satyrs** or **chameleons**, beasts that are **masters of quick change in order to conceal** their weakness. Indeed they take each other's shapes and |characters| with bewildering rapidity. Yes. Socrates. and **I think I have now identified these gentlemen** (291b).

Tell me about them. You seem to look upon a strange sight.

Does Not Know
Public

Yes. strange until recognized! I was actually impressed by them myself at first sight. Coming suddenly on this strange cry of players acting their part in **public** life I **did not know** what to make of them.

What players can these be? (291c)

Demagogue

Statesmen

The chief wizards among all the **Sophists**, the chief pundits of the **deceiver's art**. Such **impersonators** are hard to distinguish from the **real statesmen and kings**: yet we must distinguish them and thrust them aside if we are to see clearly the kind we are seeking (291c)

Serious

Then again do you remember how spectators of a **tragedy** sometimes feel pleasure and weep at once? (48a) . . . And if you take the state of our minds when we see a **comedy**, do you realize that here again we have a mixture of pain and pleasure? . . .

Play
Ignorant
Simple

Now **ignorance**, or the condition we call **stupidity**, is an ill thing (48c)

Well?

That being so, observe that nature of the ridiculous

Be kind enough to tell me.

Taking it generally it is a certain kind of badness, and it gets its name from a certain state of mind. I may add that it is a species of the genus 'badness' which is differentiated by the opposite of the inscription at Delphi.

Knows
Does Not Know
Simple

You mean, 'Know thyself,' Socrates?

I do. Plainly the opposite of that would be for the inscription to read, '**By no means know** thyself' (48d)

Of course.

Now, Protarchus, that is what you must split up into three parts; see if you can.

How do you mean? I am quite sure I can't.

Do you then mean that I must make this division here and now?

That is what I mean, and indeed I beg you to do so.

If anyone does not know himself, must it not be in one of three ways? (48d)

Production
Divine
Human
Original
Image
Likeness

Then as to wisdom, do you observe how our [law] from the very first made a study of the whole [order] of things. extending even to prophecy and medicine which gives health. out of these **divine** elements deriving what was needful for **human** life. and adding every sort of knowledge which was akin to them. All this *order* and *arrangement* the goddess first imparted to you when establishing your city. and she chose the spot of earth in which you were born. because she saw that the happy temperament of the seasons in that land would **produce** the wisest of **men**. Wherefore the **goddess**. who was a lover both of war and wisdom. selected and first of all settled that spot which was the most likely to **produce men likest** herself (24c-d).

And having been created in this way. the world has been framed in the **likeness** of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable. and must therefore of [necessity]. if this is admitted. be a **copy** of something. Now it is all-important that the beginning of everything should be according to nature . And in speaking of the **copy** and the **original** we may assume that words are akin to the matter which they describe . . . (29b). In the **likeness** of what animal did the creator make the world? It would be an unworthy think to **liken** it to any nature which exists as a part only. for nothing can be beautiful which is **like** any imperfect thing. But let us suppose the world to be the very **image** of that whole of which all other animals both individually and in their tribes are portions (30d). . . When the **father** and **creator** saw the creature which he had made moving and living, the created **image** of the eternal gods. he rejoiced. and in his joy determined to make the **copy** still more **like** the **original**. and this was an eternal living being. he sought to make the universe eternal. so far as might be. Now the nature of the **ideal** being was everlasting. but to bestow this attribute in its fullness upon a creature was impossible. Wherefore he resolved to have a moving **image** of eternity, and when he set in order the **heaven**. he made this **image** eternal. but moving according to *number*. while eternity itself rests in *unity*. and this **image** we call time (37d-e). And there is a third nature, which is space eternal. and . . . provides a home for all created things. and is apprehended. when all sense is absent. by a kind of spurious reason. and is hardly real—which we. **beholding** as in a **dream**. say of all existence that it must of [necessity] be in some place (τόπῳ) and occupy a space. but that what is neither in **heaven** nor in earth has no existence. Of these and other things of the same kind. relating to the **true** and **waking reality** of nature. we have only this **dreamlike sense**. and we are unable to cast of sleep and determine the truth about them. For an **image**. since **the reality after which it is modeled does not belong to it**. and it, and it exists ever as the fleeting **shadow** of some other . . . (52c)

Eyes
Dream

Semblance, Reflection
Shadow

Production
Divine
Human

Original

Image, Likeness
Semblance. Tools
Mimicry, Knows
Does Not Know

Simple

In fact. Timaeus. upon an audience of **human beings** it is easier to **produce** the impression of adequate treatment when speaking of **gods** than in discoursing on **mortals** like ourselves (107a). The combination of unfamiliarity and sheer ignorance in an audience makes the task of one who is to treat a subject toward which they are in this state easy in the extreme. and in this matter of **gods. we know.** of course. how the case stands with us. But to make my meaning still clearer. kindly follow an illustration. All statements made by any of us are. of course. bound to be an affair of **imagery** and **picturing**. Now. suppose we consider the ease or difficulty with which an **artist's portraiture** of figures **divine** and **human.** respectively. **produces** the impression of satisfactory **reproduction** on the spectator. We shall observe that in the case of **earth, mountains, rivers, woodland, the sky as a whole, and the several revolving bodies** located in it. for one thing. the **artist** is always well content if he can **reproduce** them with some faint degree of **resemblance.** and for another. that since our **knowledge of such objects is never exact.** we submit his design to no criticism or scrutiny. but acquiesce. in these cases. in a **dim and deceptive outline.** But when it is our own human form that the **artist** undertakes to **depict.** daily familiar observation makes us quick to detect shortcomings and we show ourselves severe critics of one who does not present us with **full and perfect resemblance.** Well. we should recognize that the same is true of **discourses.** Where the subjects of them are **celestial** and **divine.** we are satisfied by mere fain verisimilitudes: where **mortal** and **human.** we are exacting critics. So with our present unrehearsed narrative: if we do not succeed in **reproducing the proper touches perfectly.** allowances should be made (107e)

EPINOMIS

This dialogue involves a relatively straightforward rendering of the definition with minimal elaborations on the basic scheme. It is also the text that discusses the "divine device" that Taylor saw as tallying with Aristotle's description (*Epin.* 990d-992b). There is a lengthy conversation concerning the way that objects are analogous to numbers; how numbers are conceived as ratios, and why they are then assigned to different areas in geometric constructions which in turn unfold in conformance to the patterns of melodic progressions.

Production	But, after all, the **production** of barley and wheat and the making of food from them, admirable things though they are, will never make a man wholly wise—why, the very word *produce* might tend to create a certain repugnance to the **product**—and the same thing is true of all husbandry. It is not so much from science as from a
Divine	native instinct implanted by **God** that we all seem to have taken the
Human	soil in hand. We may say so much of the construction of
Original, Image	dwellings, **building** in its various forms, and the manufacture of
Likeness, Semblance	all sorts of furniture, smithwork, carpentry, pottery, weaving and
Tools	equally of the provision of **tools** of every sort . . . (975b).
	Now since, as we see, our necessities are provided by **art**, but by
Does Not Know	**arts none of which can make a man wise**, all that is left over is
Play, Serious	**play, imitative play**, for the most part, but of no **serious** worth. For **imitation** is effected by a great variety of **instruments**, and **likewise**, of **attitudes**, and those none too dignified, of the *body* itself in declamation and the different forms of **music** and all the offshoots of the **art** of **drawing**, and the numerous variegated patterns they produce in fluid or solid mediums, but none of these branches of **imitation** makes the practitioner in the least wise, no matter how earnestly he labors (975d)

GREATER HIPPIAS

Divine

.

Human

Original

Image
Likeness

Tools

Semblance

Knows

Does Not Know

Simple

Ignorant

Does Not Know

Socrates: 'The wisest of **men**, when compared to a **god**, will **appear** but an ape in **wisdom** and **beauty** and all else?' (289b)

Shall we admit, Hippias, that the most **beautiful maiden** is ugly in comparison with the race of **gods**?

Hippias: That no one can deny, Socrates.

Socrates: If then we make this admission, he will laugh and say, Socrates, do you remember what you were asked? (289c)

Yes, I shall answer, I was asked what **beauty** by itself is.

He will rejoin, Then when you are asked for **beauty**, do you offer in reply that which you yourself acknowledge to be no more **beautiful** than ugly? Apparently, I shall say. What do you advise me to reply?

Hippias: As you do reply, for of course he will be right in saying that **in comparison with gods the human race is not beautiful.**

Socrates: He will continue, If I had asked you at the beginning what is both beautiful and ugly, and you had answered me as now, would not your answer have been correct? But do you still think that that is a maiden, or a mare, or a **lyre**?

Hippias: But still, Socrates, if this is what he wants, it is the easiest thing in the world to tell him what is that beauty which orders all other things in loveliness and makes them **appear** beautiful when it is added to them. The fellow must be a perfect **fool, knowing nothing** about things of beauty. If you reply to him that this about which he is asking, beauty, is nothing else than gold, **he will be at a loss** and will not attempt to refute you. For I suppose **we all know** that if anything has gold added to it, it will **appear beautiful** when so adorned even though it appeared ugly before.

Socrates: **You do not know** what a ruffian he is. He accepts nothing without making difficulties.

Hippias: What do you mean? He must accept an accurate statement, on pain of ridicule (290a).

Socrates: Well, my friend, this answer of yours he will no only refuse to accept, but he will even scoff at me viciously, saying, You **blockhead**! Do you reckon Phidias a bad **artist**?

I suppose I shall answer, Not in the least.

Hippias: Quite right.

Socrates: Yes, so I think. But when I agree that Phidias is a good artist, he will say, Then do you fancy that Phidias was **ignorant** of this beauty of which you speak? I shall reply, What is the point? And he will rejoin, The point is that he did not give his Athena eyes of gold or use gold for the rest of her face, or for her hands, or for her feet, as he would have done if supreme beauty could be given to them only by the use of gold; he made them of ivory. Clearly he made this mistake through **ignorance, not knowing** that it is really gold that confers beauty on everything to which it is added (290b).

And what is love of gain? What can it be. and who are the lovers of gain? (225a)

In my **opinion**. they are those who think it worth while to make gain out of things of no worth.

Knows
Does Not Know
Simple

Is it you **opinion** that they **know** those things to be of no worth. or do they **not know**? For if they **do not know**. you mean that the lovers of gain are **fools**.

No. I do not mean they are **fools**. but rascals who wickedly yield to gain. because **they know that the things out of which they**

Ignorant

dare to make their gain are worthless, and yet they dare to be lovers of gain from mere shamelessness ((225b). . . .

Do you not admit that the lover of gain **has knowledge** of the worth of the thing from which he thinks it worth while to make gain? (225c)

I do.

Then who **has knowledge** of the worth of plants. and of the sort of season and soil in which they are worth planting—if we too may throw in one of those artful phrases which adroit pleaders use to

Public
Statesman

trick out their **speeches** in the **law courts**?

Then do not attempt to **deceive** me. who am now quite an elderly person. and you so young . . . (226a)

Then whoever can they be. your **lovers of gain**? For I presume they are not the people whom we have successively mentioned. but

Demagogue

people who know their worthless things, and yet think they are to make gain from them (226d)

So you see. you are attempting to **deceive** me. for you deliberately

Contradiction-Making

contradict what we agreed to just now (228a).

Knows

Then what is the **knowledge** which rightly punishes the licentious and law-breaking people in our cities? Is it not judicature? (137d). Yes.

And is it any other **art** than this that you call justice? No. only this.

And that whereby they punish rightly is that whereby they **know** the good and bad people?

It is (137d)

And whoever **knows** one will **know** many also? Yes.

Does Not Know

And whoever **does not know** many will **not know** one? I agree

Then if one were a horse. and **did not know** the good and

Simple

[wicked] horses. would one **not know** which sort one was oneself? (137e)

Well now. when one is a man and **does not know** the good and bad men. one surely **cannot know** whether one is good or [wicked] oneself. since one is a man also oneself? (138a)

He granted this.

And is "**not knowing oneself**" being [temperate]. or [not being temperate]?

[Not being temperate].

So "**knowing oneself**" is being [temperate]? I agree. he said.

So this is the message. it seems. of the Delphic inscription—that one is to practice [temperance] and justice. It seems so.

And it is by this same art that **we know** also how to punish rightly? Apparently.

Then that whereby **we know** how to punish rightly is justice. and that whereby **we know** how to distinguish our own and other's quality is [temperance]?

It seems so.

And further. it is thus. you **know**. that cities are well ordered—when the wrongdoers pay the penalty.

That is true. he said.

Statesman

Hence this is also called **statecraft** (138b).

Hence they are all the same. it seems—king. despot. **statesman**. house-manager. master. and the [temperate] man and the just man: and it is all one art—the kingly. the despotic. the **statesman's** the master's the house-manager's and justice and [temperance].

Does Not Know

Knows

Well, you know, Demodocus, they do say that advice is a holy thing (122b).

And which sort of man do you call wise, those who **have knowledge** of such and such a thing, whatever it may be, or **those who have not**

Those who **have knowledge**, I say.

Well now, has not your father taught and educated you in the subjects which form the education of everyone else here—all the sons of [noble] and [honorable] fathers—in letters, I mean, and harping and wrestling and the other sorts of contest? (122e)

Yes, he has (123a)

And you think you are still lacking in some **knowledge** which it behooves your father to provide for you?

I do.

What **knowledge** is it? Tell us on our side, that we may oblige you.

He **knows it**, as well as I, Socrates, since I have often told him; only he says this to you of set purpose, making as if **he did not know** what I desire. For he assails me too with other statements of the same sort, and refuses to place me with any instructor.

Private

Well, what you said to him before **was spoken, as it were, without witnesses; but now you shall take me as a witness, and declare before me what is this wisdom that you desire.** Come now: suppose you desired the wisdom whereby men steer a ship ... (123b)

Ignorant

And the driver's art too is wisdom? Or do you think is **ignorance**? (123d)

MINOS

Statesman

And is it anyone else than **statesmen** and royal persons **who know**?

It is they, to be sure (317a).

Then what people call "laws" are treatises of state—writings of kings and good men.

That is true (317b).

Knows

And must it not be that **those who know** will not write differently at different times on the same matters?

They will not.

Nor will they ever change one set of accepted rules for another in respect of the same matters.

No, indeed.

So if we see some persons anywhere doing this, shall we say that those who do so **have knowledge**, or have none?

Does Not Know

That they have **no knowledge** (317c).

Now here in Homer we have a eulogy of Minos, briefly expressed, such as the poet never composed for a single one of the heroes.

Demagogue

For that Zeus is a **sophist**, and that **sophistry** is a highly honorable art, he makes plain in many other places, and particularly here (318c)

ALCIBIADES I

The *Alcibiades* I was for centuries. according to Proclus. the introductory Platonic text.

Production

Good and Evil

|Noble|

|Base|

Socrates: So we may fairly describe each of these workings as follows: as you call either of them *evil* because of the *evil* it **produces.** so you must call it *good* because of the *good* it **produces.** (116a)

Alcibiades: I believe that it is so.

Socrates: And again. are they |noble| inasmuch as they are *good*. and |base| inasmuch as they are *evil?*

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Then in saying that the rescue of one's friends in battle is [noble] and yet *evil*. you mean just the same as if you called the rescue *good*, but *evil*.

Alcibiades: I believe what you say is true. Socrates.

Socrates: so nothing [noble]. in so far as it is [noble]. is *evil* and nothing [base]. in so far as it is [base]. is *good*.

Alcibiades: Apparently.

Socrates: Now then consider it again in this way: whoever does [nobly]. does well to . does he not? (116b)

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: And are not those who do well happy?

Alcibiades: Of course

Acquisition

Socrates: And are they happy because of the *acquisition* of *good* things

Alcibiades: Certainly.

Socrates: And they *acquire* these by doing well and [nobly].

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: And doing well is *good?*

Alcibiades: Of course.

Socrates: And welfare is [noble]?

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Hence we have seen again that [noble] and *good* are the same thing. (116c)

Alcibiades: Apparently.

Socrates: Then whatever we find to be [noble] we shall find also to be *good*. by this argument at least?

Alcibiades: We must.

Socrates: Well then. are *good* things [expedient] or not?

Alcibiades: [Expedient].

Socrates: And do you remember what our admissions were about just things?

Alcibiades: I think we said that those who do *just* things must do |noble| things.

Socrates: And that those who do [noble] things must do *good* things?

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: And that good things are [expedient]? (116d)

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Hence just things. Alcibiades. are [expedient].

**Contradiction Making
Ignorant**

Socrates: Then if you involuntarily give **contradictory** answers. clearly it must be about things of which you are **ignorant**. (117a)

Alcibiades: Very likely.

Socrates: And you say you are bewildered in answering about just and unjust. [noble] and [base]. evil and good. [expedient] and [inexpedient]? Now. is it not obvious that your bewilderment is caused by your **ignorance**.

Alcibiades: I agree.

Socrates: Then is it the case that when a man **does not know** a thing he must needs be bewildered in spirit regarding that thing? (117b)

Alcibiades: Yes. of course.

Socrates: Well now. do **you know** in what way you can ascend to **heaven**?

Alcibiades: On my word. not I.

Socrates: Is that too a kind of question about which your judgement is bewildered?

Alcibiades: No. indeed.

Socrates: Do **you know** the reason. or shall I state it?

Alcibiades: State it.

**Does Not Know
Simple**

Socrates: It is. my friend. that while **not knowing the matter you do not suppose that you know it.**

Alcibiades: Here again. how do you mean? (117c)

Socrates: Do your share. in seeing for yourself. Are you bewildered about the kind of thing that you **do not know and are aware of not knowing**? For instance. **you know.** I suppose. that **you do not know how** to **prepare a tasty dish**?

Alcibiades: Quite so.

Socrates: Then do you think for yourself how you are to prepare it. and get bewildered. or do you entrust it to the person who **knows**.

Alcibiades: I do the latter.

Ignorant

Socrates: And what if you should be on a ship at sea? Would you think whether the tiller should be moved **inwards** or **outwards**, and in your **ignorance** bewilder yourself. or would you entrust it to the helmsman and be quiet?

Alcibiades: I would leave it to him.

Knows

Socrates: So you are not bewildered about what you do not know, so long as **you know that you do not know**?

Alcibiades: It seems I am not.

Socrates: Then do you note that [mistakes] in action also are due to this **ignorance of thinking one knows when one does not.**

Alcibiades: Here again. how do you mean?

Mimicry

Socrates: We set about **acting.** I suppose. when **we think we know what we are doing.**

Alcibiades: Yes.

Simple

Socrates: But when **people think they do not know.** I suppose they hand it over to others? (117e)

Alcibiades: To be sure.

Ignorant

Socrates: And so that kind of **ignorant** person makes no [mistakes] in life, because they entrust such matters to others.

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Who then are those who make [mistakes]? For. I take it, they cannot be **those who know.**

Alcibiades: No. I indeed

Socrates: But since it is neither **those who know**, nor those of **the ignorant who know that they do not know,** the only people left. I think, are **those who do not know, but think they do.** (118a)

Alcibiades: Yes, only those.

Socrates: This **ignorance** is a cause of evils, and is the discreditable sort of **stupidity.**

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: And when it is about the greatest matters, it is most injurious and [base]?

Alcibiades: By far

Socrates: Well then, can you mention any greater things than the just, the [noble], the good and the [expedient]?

Alcibiades: No, indeed.

Socrates: And it is about these, you say, that you are bewildered?

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: But if you are bewildered, is it not clear from what has gone before that you are not only **ignorant** of the greatest things, but **while not knowing them you think that you do?**

Alcibiades: I am afraid so.

Divine

Socrates: And the next step, we see, is to take care of the **soul,** and look to that. (132c)

Alcibiades: Clearly.

Socrates: While handing over to others the care of our **bodies** and our coffers.

Alcibiades: Quite so.

Socrates: Then how shall we obtain the most certain **knowledge** of it? For if we know that, it seems we shall know ourselves also.

Original

In **Heaven's** name, do we fail **Delphic inscription,** which we mentioned just now?

Alcibiades: With what intent do you say that, Socrates?

Socrates: I will tell you what I suspect to be the real advice which

Image
Likeness, Eyes

that **inscription** gives us. (132d) I rather think there are not many **illustrations** of I to be found, but only in the case of **sight.**

Alcibiades: What do you mean by that?

Human, Original
Image
Likeness
Eyes

Socrates: Consider in your turn: suppose that, instead of speaking to a **man,** it said to the eye of one of us, as a piece of advice—"**See thyself**"—how should we apprehend the meaning of the admonition? **Shouldn't the eye be looking at something in which it could see itself?**

Alcibiades: Clearly.

Socrates: Then let us think what object there is anywhere, by looking at which we can see both it and ourselves.

Alcibiades: Why clearly. Socrates, mirrors and things of that sort. (132e)

Socrates: Quite right. And there is also *something of that sort* in the eye, that we see with?

Alcibiades: To be sure.

Semblance
Reflection
Mimicry

Socrates: An have you observed that the face of the person who looks into another's eye is shown in the optic confronting him, as in a mirror. We call this the 'pupil,' for in a sort it is an **image of the person** looking. (133a)

Alcibiades: **Apparently.**

Socrates: But if it looks at any other thing in man or at anything in nature but what resembles this, it will not see itself.

Alcibiades: That is true. (133b)

Socrates: Then if an **eye** is to **see** itself, it must look at an **eye**, and at that region of the **eye** in which the *virtue* of an **eye** is found to occur; and this, I presume, is **sight**.

Alcibiades: That is so.

Knows

Socrates: And if the soul too, my dear Alcibiades, is **to know herself**, she must surely look at a soul, and especially at that region of it in which occurs the virtue of a soul—wisdom, and at any other part of a soul which resembles this.

But it won't see itself if it looks at anything else in a man, or anything else at all, unless it's similar to the eye.

Alcibiades: I agree, Socrates.

Socrates: And can we find any part of the soul that we call more **divine** than this, which is the seat of **knowledge** and thought? (133c)

Alcibiades: We cannot.

Socrates: Then this part of her **resembles God**, and comes to know all that is **divine**, will gain thereby the best knowledge of himself.

Alcibiades: **Apparently.**

Socrates: And **self-knowledge** we admitted to be [temperance].

Alcibiades: To be sure.

Does Not Know

Socrates: So if we have **no knowledge of ourselves** and no temperance, shall we be able to know our own belongings, good or evil?

Alcibiades: How can that be. Socrates?

Socrates: For I expect it seems impossible to you that **without knowing** Alcibiades you should know that the belongings of Alcibiades are in fact his. (133d)

Alcibiades: Impossible indeed, upon my word.

Simple

Socrates: Nor could we know that our belongings are ours if we **did not even know ourselves**?

Alcibiades: How could we?

Socrates: And so, if we did not so much as **know** our belongings, we could **not know** the belongings of our belongings

Alcibiades: Apparently not.

Socrates: Then we were not quite correct in admitting just now that there are **people** who, without knowing themselves, know their belongings, while other know their belongings' belongings. For it seems to be the function of one **man** and one **art** to discern all three—himself, his belongings, and the belongings of his belongings (133e)

Alcibiades: It **looks like** it.

Ignorant
Private

Socrates: And anyone who is **ignorant of his belongings will be similarly ignorant, I suppose, of the belongings of others.**

Alcibiades: Quite so

Alcibiades: **And if ignorant of others' affairs, he will be**

Public

ignorant also of the affairs of states.

Alcibiades: He must be.

Demagogue

Socrates: Then **such a man can never be a statesman.**

Alcibiades: No, indeed.

Socrates: No, nor an economist either.

Alcibiades: No, indeed.

Socrates: **Nor will he know** what he is doing.

Alcibiades: No, I agree.

Socrates: And will not he who **does not know** make [mistakes]?

Alcibiades: To be sure.

Socrates: And when he makes [mistakes], will he not do ill both in **private** and in **public**?

Socrates: And doing ill he will be wretched?

Alcibiades: Yes, very.

Socrates: And what of those for whom he is doing so?

Alcibiades: They will be wretched also.

Socrates: Then it is impossible to be happy if one is not [temperate] and good.

Alcibiades: Impossible.

Socrates: So it is the bad men who are wretched. (134b)

Alcibiades: Yes, very.

Socrates: And hence it is no he who has made himself rich that is relieved of wretchedness, but he who has made himself [temperate].

Alcibiades: Apparently.

Socrates: So it is not walls or warships or arsenals that cities need, Alcibiades, if they are to be happy, nor numbers, nor size, without virtue.

Alcibiades: No, indeed.

Statesman

Socrates: And **if you are to manage the city's affairs properly and honorably, you must impart virtue to the citizens.**

Alcibiades: Of course.

Socrates: But could one possibly impart a thing that one had not? (134c)

Alcibiades: How indeed?

Statesman

Socrates: Then you or anyone else who is to be **governor** and curator, not merely of himself and his belongings in **private**, but

of the **state and its affairs.** must first acquire virtue himself.

Alcibiades: That is true.

Socrates: Hence it is not licence or authority for doing what one pleases that you have to secure to yourself or the state. but justice and |temperance|.

Alcibiades: Apparently.

Socrates: **For you and the state.** if you act justly and [temperately], will act so as to please **God.** (134d)

Alcibiades: Naturally.

Socrates: and. as we were saying in what went before. you will act with your eyes turned on what is **divine** and bright.

Alcibiades: Apparently.

Socrates: Well. and looking thereon you will behold and **know** both **yourselves** and your good.

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: And so you will **act** aright and well?

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Well, now. if you act in this way. I am ready to warrant that you must be happy. (134e)

Alcibiades: And I can rely on your warranty.

Socrates: But if you **act** unjustly. with your **eyes** on the **godless** and dark. the probability is that your acts will **resemble** these through your **ignorance of yourselves.**

Art
Production
Human
Original
Image
Semblance
Tools, Knows

Does Not Know
Simple

Ignorant

. . . we conceive of some men as artisans. do we not? (140a)
Certainly.

That is. **cobblers** and **carpenters** and statuaries and a host of others. whom we need not mention in particular: but any way, they have their several departments of **craft**. and all of them are **craftsmen**: yet they are not all **carpenters** or **cobblers** or **statuaries**. though these taken together are **craftsmen**. No indeed.

In the same way. then, have men divided **unwisdom** also among them. and those who have the largest share of it we call "**mad**," and those who have a little less. "**dolts**." and "**idiots**:" thought people who prefer to use the mildest language term them sometimes "**romantic**." sometimes "**simpleminded**". or again. "**innocent**." "**inexperienced**." or "**obtuse**:" and many another name will you find if you look for more. But all these things are unwisdom. though they differ. as we observed that one art or disease differs from another. Or how does it strike you? (140b-d)
That is my view.

Then let us turn at this point and retrace our steps. For we said, **you know**. at the beginning that we must consider who the **unwise** can be. and who the **wise**: for we had admitted that there are such persons. had we not?
Yes. we have admitted it.

Then you conceive those to be **wise** who **know** what one ought to do and say?
I do.

And which are the **unwise**? Those who **know neither of these things**? (140e)

But perhaps. my excellent friend. some person who is wiser than either you or I may say we are wrong to be so free with our abuse of **ignorance** unless we can add that it is **ignorance** of certain things. and is a good to certain persons in certain conditions. as to those others it is an evil (143c)

How do you mean? Can there be anything of which it is better for any*body* in any condition whatsoever. to be **ignorant** than cognizant . . . (143c). Then it seems that **ignorance** of what is best. and to be **ignorant** of the best. is a bad thing (143e)

So you see that **ignorance** of certain things is for certain persons in certain states a good, not an evil. as you supposed just now (144d)

Consider it this way: must it not be the case. in your opinion. that when we are about to do or say anything. we first **suppose that we know**. or **do really know**. the thing we so confidently intend to say or do?
I think so.

Well. take the *orators*. for example: they either **know**. or they

Private

Public

Statesman

Demagogue

think they know. how to advise us on various occasions—some about war and peace. and others about building walls or fitting up harbors: and in a word. whatever the city does to another city or within herself. all comes about by the advice of the **orators** (144e).

Then observe the consequence.

If I am able.

Why. surely you call men either wise or unwise?

I do.

And the many unwise and the few wise?

Precisely

An in either case you name them in reference to something?

Yes.

Then do you call a man wise **who knows how to give advice without knowing when or for how long a time it is better to make war?** Nor. again. a man **who knows** how to kill another. or seize his property. or make him an exile from his native land **without knowing** when or to whom it is better so to behave?

No. to be sure.

Then it is a man **who knows something** of this sort. and is **assisted by knowledge of what is best**—and this is surely the same as **knowledge of the beneficial.** is it not?

Yes.

And we shall call him wise. and a competent advisor both of the city and of his own self: but **a man not so qualified we shall call the opposite of these** (145c)

ON JUSTICE

Tools

Mimicry

Knows

Does Not Know

Simple

Ignorant

Socrates: Well, then, when we want to distinguish what's just and what's unjust, what **instrument** do we use to examine them? And besides this **instrument**, what skill do we use in dealing with them? Or doesn't this way make it clear to you either? (373b)

Friend: But **you know, Socrates**, the old saying holds true, that **singers** tell many **lies** (374a).

Socrates: But I'd be surprised if this **singer lied** about this. If you have the time, let's consider whether he tells the truth, or **lies**.

Friend: Well, I do have the time.

Socrates: Then which do you think is just, **lying** or telling the truth?

Friend: Telling the truth, obviously.

Socrates: **Lying** then, is unjust?

Friend: Yes.

Socrates: So, telling the truth, not **deceiving**, and helping are just, but **lying**, harming, and **deceiving** are unjust?

Friend: Yes, by Zeus, definitely (374c).

Socrates: Now, who can perform surgery and cauterize and reduce swelling, if and when he should? (375a)

Friend: A doctor.

Socrates: Because **he knows** how, or for some other reason?

Friend: Because **he knows** how.

And who can cultivate and plow and plant when he should?

Friend: A farmer.

Socrates: Because **he knows** how, **or because he doesn't**?

Friend: Because **he knows** how.

Socrates: Isn't this true for the other cases as well? The **one who knows how** can do what he should, if and when he should, but the **one who doesn't know how can't**?

Friend: So it is.

And what about **lying** and **deceiving** and giving help. Can the **one who knows how** do each of these acts when he should and at the right time, but the **one who doesn't know how** can't (375b).

Socrates: Then a just person is just because of his **knowledge**.

Yes

Isn't the unjust person unjust for the opposite reason?

So it seems.

And the just person is just because of his **wisdom**?

Yes.

The unjust person is unjust, then because of his **ignorance**.

I guess so.

So it looks like justice is what our ancestors handed down to us as wisdom, and injustice is what they handed down to us as **ignorance**

I guess so.

Are people **ignorant** willingly, or unwillingly? (375d)

Knows

.

Socrates: And again. athletic coaches **know** by looking which traits of the **human** *body* are good or bad for each of the events. and in older or younger boys which are going to e their most valuable traits, where they have high hopes for them to succeed in what their bodies can perform well.

Friend: That's true (378e)

Now can you tell me which skill is dedicated to, and capable of judging, the natural qualities of good men?

Does Not Know

Friend: No, I can't.

Private

Socrates: And yet it would surely be worth a great deal, as would those who possess it. for they could **show us which** of the young, while still boys. are going to be good. We would take them and

Public

guard them in the acropolis at **public** expense. like silver, only more carefully. so that no harm would come to them. from battle or any other danger. They would be stored up for the **city** as guards and benefactors when they came of age. But really. I dare say that it's neither by nature nor by teaching that men become virtuous.

Friend: How then do you suppose, Socrates. that they become virtuous. if it's neither by nature nor teaching? How else could they become good?

Statesman

Socrates: I don't think it's very easy to explain this. My guess, however. is that the possession of virtue is very much a **divine** gift and that **men** become good just as the **divine prophets** and **oracle-mongers** do. For they become what they are neither by **nature** nor skill: it's through the inspiration of the **gods** that they become what they are. Likewise. good **men** announce to their cities the likely outcome of events and what is going to happen. by the inspiration of **god**. much better and much more clearly than the

Demagogue

fortune-tellers. Even the **women**, I think. say that this sort of **man** is **divine**. and the Spartans, whenever they applaud someone in high style. say that he is **divine**. And often Homer uses this same compliment. as do other poets. Indeed, whenever a **god** wishes a **city** to become successful, he places good **men** in it, and whenever a **city** is slated to fail. the **god** takes the good **men** away from that city. So it seems that virtue is neither teachable nor natural. but comes by **divine** allotment to those who possess it (379d)

Knows
Does Not Know

Simple

Public

Ignorant
Private

Suppose. on the other hand. that is *is* impossible to give good and informed advice on such matters: then surely it would be absurd if there were **no knowledge** on the basis of which it is possible to give good and **informed advice** on these matters—and if there *is* some **knowledge** on the basis of which it is possible to give good advice about such matters. then there must be some **people who in fact know** how to give good advice on such matters; and if there *are* some **people who know** how to give advice on the matters **you are meeting to discuss**. then necessarily in you own case either **you know** how to give advice on these matters, or **you do not know** how to do so. or else some of **you know** and **others do not know** (380b). Now if you all **know**. who do you still need to **meet to discuss** the question? Each one of you is competent to give advice. If **none of you know**. then how can you discuss the question? And what will you gain from this **assembly** if you cannot discuss the question. If some of **you know** and **others do not know**. and if the latter need advice. then—supposing that it is possible for a man of sense to give advice to those who are uninformed—surely one man is enough to give advice to those of **you who lack knowledge**. For presumably those who **know how to give advice** all give the same advice. so that you ought to hear one man and then be done with it. But this is not what you are actually doing: rather, you want to hear several advisers. You are assuming that those who are undertaking to give you advice **do not know** about the matters on which they are giving advice; for if you assumed that your advisers did **know**. then you would be satisfied when you had heard just one of them. Now it is surely absurd **to meet to hear people** who **do not know about these matters**. with the thought that you will thereby gain something (381a).

You ought not to allow such people. any more than **madmen**. to give advice. But if you are going to judge neither the informed nor the **uninformed**. then who *are* you judging? (381d)

Surely it is ridiculous for you to meet to take advice. which implies that you need advice and are *not* **yourselves competent**, and then. having met. to think that you ought to **vote**. which implies that you *are* competent to judge. For it can hardly be the case that as individuals you are **ignorant** and yet **having met you** become wise: or that in **private** you are perplexed . . . (381e)

SISYPHUS

Does Not Know	Sisyphus: Can it really be that **you don't know** what deliberation is? (387d)
Simple	Socrates: **Indeed I don't**, Sisyphus, at least if it differs at all from what's done by **a man who lacks understanding** on some matter calling for action, **guessing his answer by divining or making it up**: **he says whatever comes into his head**, just like people who play odds-and-evens: they have no ideas, of course, whether they're holding an even or an odd number of things in their hands, yet when they say which it is, they hit upon the truth. Perhaps
Knows	deliberation is also something like that, **then I do know** roughly what deliberation is; but if it's not like that, **then I don't understand** it at all.
Ignorant	Sisyphus: But surely, it's not like being utterly and completely **ignorant** of some matter, but like being familiar with part of it, while not understanding the rest (388a).

HALCYON

[Creatures]
Living, **Water**
Winged **Air**

Human

Image
Likeness

Earth

Semblance
Reflection

Mimicry

Does Not Know

Simple

Divine
Nature

Fire

Chaerephon: Socrates. what was that voice that reached us from way down along the beach, under the headland. It was so sweet to my ears! What [creature] can it be that makes that sound? Surely [creatures] that *live* in the sea are silent (1)

Socrates: it's a sort of *sea bird*, Chaerephon. called the halcyon, much given to lamenting and weeping. There is an ancient account about this *bird*, which was handed down as a myth by men of old. They say that it was once a **woman**. the daughter of Aeolus the **son of Hellen**, who ached with love and lamented the death of her wedded **husband**, Ceyx of Trachis, the son of Eosphorus the Dawn Star—a **handsome son of a handsome father**. And then, through some act of **divine will, she grew wings like a bird** and now *flies* about the sea searching for him, since she could not find him when she wandered all over the face of the **earth**.

Chaerephon: Is it Halcyon that you're referring to? I had never heard the voice before: it really did strike me as something exotic. Anyway, the creature certainly does produce a mournful sound. About how big is it, Socrates (2).

Socrates: Not very large. Yet great is the honor she has been given by the gods because of her love for her husband. For it's when the halcyons are nesting that the cosmos brings us what are called the ‘halcyon days’ in mid-winter, days distinguished by their fair weather—today is an especially good example. Don't you see how **bright** the sky above is and how the whole sea is calm and tranquil, like a **mirror**, so the speak?

Chaerephon: You're right, today does seem to be a halcyon day, and yesterday was much **like** it. But by the gods, Socrates! How can we actually believe those ancient tales, that once upon a **time birds turned into women or women into birds**? All that sort of thing seems utterly impossible.

Socrates: Ah, my dear Chaerephon. we seem to be utterly short-sighted judges of what is possible or impossible—we make our assessment according to the best of our human ability, which is **unknowing**, unreliable and blind. Many things which are feasible seem, to us, nor teasible, and many things which are attainable seem unattainable—often because of **our inexperience**, and often because of the **childish folly in our minds**. For in fact all human beings, even very old men, really do seem to be as **foolish as children**, since the span of our lives is small indeed, no longer than childhood when compared with all eternity. My good friend, how could people who **know nothing** about the **powers of the gods** and **divinities**, or of nature as a whole, possible or impossible?

Did you notice Chaerephon, how big a storm we had the day before yesterday? Someone pondering those **lightning flashes**

Air
Earth

Human, Original

Image, Likeness
Semblance, Tools
Mimicry

Human

Original
Image, Likeness

Knows

Does Not Know
Tools
Mimicry
Animals

Lifeless
Living. Land. Water
Animals that Swim
Winged

and **thunderbolts** and the tremendous force of the **winds** might well be struck by fear: one might have thought **the whole inhabited world** was actually going to collapse. But a little later there was an astounding restoration of fair weather which has lasted right up to the present moment. Do you think, then, that it is a greater and more laborious task to conjure up this kind of fair weather out of such an overwhelming storm and disturbance and to bring the entire *cosmos* into a state of calm, than it is to **reshape a woman's form and turn it ino a bird's**? Even our **little children who know how to model such things out of clay or wax can easily work them into all kinds of shapes, all out of the same material.** Since the divinity possesses great power, incomparably greater than ours, perhaps all such things are actually very easy for it. After all, how much greater than yourself would you say that the whole of heaven is?

Chaerephon: Socrates, who among men could **imagine** or find words for anything of the sort? Even to say it is beyond **human** attainment (5).

Socrates: When we compare **people** with each other, do we not see that there are vast differences in their abilities and inabilities? **Adult men**, when compared to mere **infants** who are five or ten days old, have an amazing superiority in their ability at virtually all the practical affairs of life, those carried out by means of our sophisticated skills as well as those carried out by means of the *body* and soul: these things cannot, as I said, even cross the minds of young **children**. And how immeasurably superior is the physical strength of one **man** grown to full sise, compared to them, for one **man** could easily vanquish thousands of such **children**; and it is surely natural that in the initial stages of life **men** should be utterly helpless and incapable of anything. When **one person**, as it seems, is so far superior to another, how are we to suppose that the powers of the **whole heaven** would appear, compared with our powers, to **those who are capable of grasping such matters**? Perhaps indeed many peiole will think it plausible that, just as the size of the cosmos surpasses the form of Socrates or Chaerephon:, so its power and wisdom and intelligence will to the same degree surpass our condition.

For you and me and many other like us, many things are impossible which are quite easy for others to do (7). For as long as they **lack the knowledge**, it is more impossible that people who cannot **play the flute** should do so or that the illiterate should read or write, than it is to **make women out of birds or birds out of women**. **Nature** virtually tosses into a honeycomb an *animal* which is *footless* and *wingless*: then she gives it *feet* and *wings*, adorns it with all kinds of variegated and beautiful colors and so produces a bee, wise producer of heavenly honey; and from *mute and lifeless eggs* she shapes many species of *winged, walking* and *water-dwelling animals*, using (as some say) the sacred arts of the vast aether. We are mortal and utterly trivial, uable to see clearly

either **great or small** matters and in the **dark** about most of the things which happen to us: so we could not possible make any reliable claim about the mighty powers of the immortals, whether as regards **halcyons** or as regards **nightingales** (8).

CLITOPHON

Tools
Mimicry
Does Not Know

In fact, the same applies to skills: for someone who **doesn't know** how to use his own **lyre** will hardly be able to use his neighbor's **lyre**, nor will someone who **doesn't know** how to use the **lyre** of others be capable of using his own **lyre**, nor any other **instrument** or possession whatsoever. Your **speech** delivers a wonderful coup de grace when it concludes that someone who **doesn't know** how to use his soul is better off putting his soul to rest and not living at all rather than leading a life in which his actions are based on nothing but personal whim. If for some reason his must live, it would be better for such a man to live as a slave than to be free, handing over the rudder of his mind, like that of a ship, to

Knows
Public

somebody else who **knows** that skill of steering men which you, Socrates, often call **politics**, the very same skill, you say, as the *judicial skill and justice* (408a-b).

Private

I was therefore very interested in what would come next after these arguments: at first I asked not you, Socrates, but your **companions** and **fellow enthusiasts**, or **friends**, or what ever you should call their relationship to you (408d).

Knows

Does Not Know

Human Original

Image
Likeness

Semblance

Tools
Mimicry

Knows

Does Not Know

Simple

Ignorant

Now weren't we under the impression earlier that it took a gentleman **to know** when and how to use each of these things? (403b)

We were.

Then these things would be useful only to gentlemen, since they're the ones **who know** how they should be used. But if these are useful only to them, then to them alone, it seems, would these things be property. It appears, moreover, that if someone were to take a **person who knew nothing** about riding a horse and who owned horses which were useless to him, and then make him **knowledgeable** about horses, he would have made him at the same time wealthier too, since he has taken what was previously useless to this man and made it useful. For by giving the man some **knowledge** he's instantly made him wealthy.

It seems so (403c).

Would you say that some things are useful for **house builders** when they are constructing a **house**? (403e)

Yes. I think so.

Would we say that **those things are useful which they use for this construction—stones, bricks, boards, and that kind of thing**? Or are these things also useful, the **tools they used to build the house** and with which they provided themselves with the boards and the stones, **and likewise the tools for *these* tools** . . .

Then likewise **the things with which these last things were made, and anything that came before them**, and again, the things with which these were made, and once more the things that preceded them, on and on endlessly—do all these things appear useful for the **production** of our work? (404a).

Do you suppose that a person could obtain money by wicked and disgraceful means, and in return get hold of the medical **knowledge** by which he would be able to hear after having been unable to hear, and that he could make use of that same ability for excellence or for other things of a similar kind? (404e)

If things are useful for one purpose or another, and this purpose couldn't come into existence unless those things existed beforehand, tell me, what would you say about that? Can **ignorance** be useful for knowledge, or sickness for health, or wickedness for virtue? (405a)

I don't think so.

Then it would appear that those things which are required for the creation of something else are not necessarily also useful for that thing. Otherwise it would seem that **ignorance** is useful for **knowledge** . . . (405b)

Public	I think that nothing is more irksome than **politics**. **That's clear to everyone** involved. You speak, of course, as a distant observer,
·	
Knows	but those of us who go through the experience **know** it perfectly
Does Not Know	well. The **electorate**, my dear Socrates, is an ungrateful, fickle, cruel, malicious, and boorish thing: a **club**, so to speak, of violent
Simple	**fools** drawn from the rabble in the street (369a-b)

Well, Axiochus, since you regard the most reputable calling of all as more to be rejected than all the others, what are we to think of *life's* other pursuits? Shall we not escape from them?

Living — Once I also heard Prodicus say that *death* concerns neither the *living* nor *those who have passed away.*

Lifeless — If you hadn't started out, Axiochus, by **ignorantly** supposing, somehow or other, that the *dead* also have some sensation, you could never have been alarmed by *death* (370a).

Ignorant

As well as many other fine arguments for the immortality of the *soul*, a mortal nature would surely not have risen to such lofty accomplishments that it disdains the physical superiority of *wild*

Animals.
Water, Land, Wild
Tame, **Public, Statesman**

animals, traverses the *seas, builds cities,* **establishes governments**. . . (370b)

CHAPTER TWELVE

VARIATIONS III

This section of the study adds to the catalogue of occurrences of the definition the sequence in Xenophon's *Memoribilia* and in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

XENOPHON, *MEMORABILIA*, IV. II, 13 - 35

We turn now to the work of another student of Socrates. Xenophon, Plato's contemporary and rival. Diogenes Laertius said that both Plato and Xenophon "wrote similar narratives" (*Lives* III. 36-39). Both wrote *Defenses* (that is, versions of the speech that Socrates offers at his trial). However, as Paul W. Gooch has remarked. "the character and commitments revealed in those two speeches couldn't belong to the same personality" (Gooch 1996: 5). We will see, however, that the two speeches do have one thing in common. They were both are structured on the lines of the definition of art in the traditional system. In other words. the one thing that Plato's *Apology* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* have in common is the pattern.

	Then Socrates exclaimed: "Surely. Euthydemus. you don't covet the kind of excellence that makes good **statesmen** and manager. competent rulers and benefactors of themselves and **mankind** in general?" (11)
	"Yes. I do, Socrates," answered Euthydemus, "that kind of excellence I greatly desire."
Art	"Why," cried Socrates, "it is the noblest kind of excellence, the greatest of **arts** that you covet, for it belongs to kings and is dubbed 'kingly.' However," he added, "have you reflected
Production	whether it be possible **to excel in these matters** without being a
Human	just **man**?"
	"Yes. certainly: and it is. in fact. impossible to be a good citizen without justice."
	"Then tell me. have you got that?" (12)
	"Yes. Socrates. I think I can show myself to be as just as any man."
Original	"And as **carpenters can point out their works, should just men**
Image	**be able to rehearse theirs?"**
Likeness	"Do you suppose," retorted Euthydemus. "that I am unable to
Semblance	**rehearse the works of justice?** Of course I can—and **the works**
Tools	**of injustice** too, since there are many opportunities of seeing and hearing of them every day."
	"I propose, then, that we write 'J' in this column and 'I' in

416

that, and then proceed to place under these letters, 'J' and 'I',
what we take to be the works of justice and injustice
respectively." (13)

"Do so, if you think it helps at all."

"Having **written down the letters** as he proposed, Socrates went
on: "**Lying** occurs among men, does it not?" (14)

Mimicry

"Yes, it does."

"Under which heading, then, are we to put that?"

Simple
(Deceived in the Self)

"Under the heading of **injustice**, clearly."

"**Deceit**, too, is found, is it not?"

"Certainly."

"Under which heading will that go?"

"Under injustice again, of course."

"What about doing mischief?"

"That too."

"Selling into slavery?"

"That too."

"Then we shall assign none of these things to justice,
Euthydemus?"

"No, it would be monstrous to do so." (15)

"Now suppose a man who has been elected general enslaves an
unjust and hostile city, shall we say that he acts unjustly?"

"Oh no!"

Ignorant
(Deceives Others)

"We shall say that his actions are just, shall we not?"

"Certainly."

"And what if he *deceives the enemy* when at war?"

"That too is just."

"And if he steals and plunders their goods, will not his actions be
just?"

"Certainly; but at first I assumed that your questions had reference
only to friends."

"Then everything that we assigned to injustice should be assigned
to justice also?"

"Apparently." (16)

"Then I propose to revise our classification, and to say: It is just to
do such things to enemies, but it is unjust to do them to friends,
towards whom one's conduct should be scrupulously honest."

"By all means." (17)

Public

"Now suppose **that a general seeing** that **his army** is
downhearted, tells a lie and says that reinforcements are
approaching, and by means of this **lie** checks discouragement
among the men, under which heading shall we put this
deception?"

"Under justice, I think."

Private

"Suppose again, that **a man's son** refuses to take a dose of
medicine when he needs it, and **the father** induces him to take it
by pretending that it is food, and cures him by means of this lie,
where shall we put this deception?"

"That too goes on the same side, I think."

"And again. suppose on has a friend suffering from depression. and for fear that he may make away with himself. one takes away his sword or something of the sort. under which heading shall we put that now?"

"That too goes under justice. of course."

"You mean. do you. that even with friends straightforward dealing is not invariably right?" (18)

"It isn't. indeed! I retract what I said before. if you will let me."

"Why. I'm bound to let you; it's far better than getting our lists wrong. (19) But now. consider *deception practiced on friends to their detriment* we mustn't overlook that either. Which is the more unjust deception in that case. the intentional or unintentional?"

"Nay. Socrates. I have lost all confidence in my answers; for all the opinions that I expressed before seem now to have taken an entirely different form. Still I venture to say that the **intentional** deception is more unjust than the **unintentional**."

"Do you think there is a doctrine and science of the just. as there is of letters?" (20)

"Yes."

"Which. in your judgment. is the more literate. the man who intentionally blunders in writing and reading. or the man who blunders unintentionally?"

"The one who blunders intentionally. I presume; for he can always be accurate when he chooses."

"May we not say. then. that the intentional blunderer is literate and the unintentional is illiterate?"

"Indeed we must."

Statesman
Demagogue

"And which **knows what is just**. the **intentional liar and deceiver**. or the unintentional?"

"The intentional. clearly."

"You say. then. as I understand. that **he who knows** letters is more literate than **he who is ignorant** of them?"

"Yes."

Knows

"And **he who knows** what is just is more just than **he who does not know**?"

"Apparently; but here again I don't feel sure of my own meaning." (21)

"Now come. what do you think of the man who wants to tell the truth. but never sticks to what he says; when he shows you the way. tells you first that the road runs east. then that it runs west; and when he casts up figures. make the total now larger. now smaller?"

Does Not Know

"Why. I think he shows that **he doesn't know what he thought he knew**."

"Are you aware that some people are called slavish?" (22)

"Yes."

"To what do they owe the name, to **knowledge** or to **ignorance**?"

"To **ignorance**. obviously."

"To ignorance of the smiths' trade. shall we say?"

"Certainly not."

"Ignorance of carpentry perhaps?"

"No. not to that either."

"Of cobbling?"

"No. to none of these: on the contrary. those who are skilled in such trades are for the most part slavish."

"Then this name given to those who are ignorant of the beautiful and good and just?"

"That is my opinion."

"Then we must strain every nerve to escape being slaves." (23)

"Upon my word. Socrates. I did feel confident that I was a student of a philosophy that would provide me with the best education in all things needful to one who would be a gentleman. But you can imagine my dismay when I realize that in spite of all my pains I am even incapable of answering a question about things that one is bound **to know.** and yet find no other way that will lead to my improvement."

"Hereupon Socrates exclaimed: "Tell me. Euthydemus. have you ever been to Delphi?" (24)

"Yes. certainly: twice."

"Then did you notice somewhere on the temple the inscription ˙**Know thyself**˙?"

I did."

"And did you pay no heed to the inscription. or did you attend to it and try to consider who you were?"

"Indeed I did not: because I felt sure that I knew that already: for I could hardly know anything else if I did not even know myself."

"And what do you suppose a man must know to know himself, his own name merely? (25) Or must he consider what sort of a creature he is for human use and get to know his own powers: just as those who buy horses don't think that they know the beast they want to know until they have considered whether he is docile or stubborn, strong or weak, fast or slow. and generally how he stands in all that makes a useful or a useless horse?"

"That leads me to think that **he who does not know his own powers is ignorant of himself.**"

"Is it not clear too that **through self-knowledge men come to much good, and through self-deception to much harm?** (26) For **those who know themselves know what things are** expedient for themselves an discern their own powers and limitations. And by doing what they understand, they get what they want and prosper: by refraining from attempting what they do not understand. they make no mistakes and avoid failure And consequently through their power of testing other men too. and through their intercourse with others. they get what is good and shun what is bad. (27) **Those who do not know and are deceived in the estimate of their own powers, are in the like condition with regard to other men and other human affairs.**

Knows

Does Not Know
Simple
Ignorant
Private

They know neither what they want, nor what they do, nor those with whom they have intercourse; but mistaken in all these respects, *they miss the good and stumble into the bad.* (28) Furthermore, **those who know** what they do win fame and honor by attaining their ends. Their equals are glad to have dealings with them; and those who miss their objects look to them for counsel, look to them for protection, rest on them their hopes of better things. and for all these reasons love them above all other men. (29) But **those who know not** what they do. choose amiss, fail in what they attempt and, besides incurring direct loss and punishment thereby, they earn contempt through their failures, make themselves ridiculous and live in dishonor and humiliation."

Public

"And the same is true of **communities**. You find that whenever a state. in **ignorance** of its own power, goes to war with a stronger people. it is exterminated or loses its liberty."

"Socrates." answered Euthydemus. "you may rest assured that I fully appreciate the importance of **knowing** oneself. ..." (30)

"But wisdom now. Socrates. -- that at any rate is indisputably a good thing; for what is there that a **wise man** would not do better than a **fool?**" (33) ...

... III. "Skill in speaking and efficiency in affairs, therefore, and ingenuity. were not the qualities that he was eager to foster in his companions." (2)

Statesman

... IV. Again, concerning Justice he [Socrates] **did not hide his opinion, but proclaimed it by his actions. All his private conduct was lawful and helpful: to public authority he rendered such scrupulous obedience in all that the laws required, both in civil life and in military service, that he was a pattern of good discipline to all.** " (18) **When chairman in the Assemblies he would not permit the people to record an illegal vote, but, upholding the laws, resisted a popular impulse that might even have overborne any but himself. And when the thirty laid a command on him that was illegal, he refused to obey.** (3) Thus he disregarded their repeated injunction not to talk with young men; and when they commanded him and certain other citizens to arrest a man on a capital charge. he along refused. because the command laid on him was illegal.

Demagogue

(4) Again. when he was tried on the charge brought by Meletus. whereas it is the custom of defendants to **curry favor** with the jury and to indulge in **flattery** and illegal appeals, and many by such means have been known to gain a verdict of acquittal. he rejected utterly the familiar **chicanery** of the courts; and though he might easily have gained a favorable verdict by even a moderate indulgence in such stratagems. he chose to die through his loyalty to the laws rather than to live through violating them.

Such views frequently found expression in his conversations with different persons; I recollect the substance of one he had with Hippias of Elis concerning Justice. Hippias, who had not been in Athens for a considerable time. found Socrates

Contradiction Making

talking " (5)

. . ."About letters and figures Socrates. I always say the same thing, just like you. As for Justice. I feel confident that I can now say that which neither you nor anyone else can **contradict.**"

"Upon my word, you mean to say that you have made a great discovery. if jurymen are to cease from voting different ways. citizens from **disputing** and **litigation,** and from **wrangling** about the justice of their claims. cities from **quarreling** about their rights and making war; and for my part. I don't see how to tear myself away from you till I have heard about your great discovery" (8).

"But I vow you shall not hear unless you first declare your own opinion about the nature of Justice: for it's enough that you mock at others, questioning and examining everybody, and never willing to render an account yourself or to state an opinion about anything."

"Indeed, Hippias! Haven't you noticed that I never cease to declare my notions of what is just?" (10)

"And how can you call that an account?"

"I declare them by my deeds. anyhow. if not by my words. Don't you think that deeds are better evidence than words?"

"Yes. much better. of course: for many say what is just and do what is unjust: but no one who does what is just can be unjust."

"Then have you ever found me dealing in perjury or calumny, or stirring up strife between friends or fellow-citizens. or doing any other unjust act?" (11)

"I have not."

"To abstain from what is just. don't you think."

"Even now. Socrates. you are clearly endeavoring to avoid stating what you think Justice to be. You are saying not what the just do, but what they don't do."

ARISTOTLE: THE *POETICS*

We turn now to the version of the sequence that governs the overall structure of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Ryle, it will be recalled, showed that Aristotle was familiar with some (but not all) of the dialogues, that he was not aware of the content of some of Plato's most significant books, that he never mentioned anything about his own experience at the Academy, about Plato as an individual, about the events surrounding the life of his teacher, or about Plato's interactions with others. Aristotle, he asserted, knew some of Plato's dialogues, but he did not know "Plato the man" (Ryle 1966: 2-10). According to Ryle, we need to revise our picture of Aristotle as studying philosophy under the "personal tutelage" of the historical Plato. Add to this the analysis of Jaeger, who pointed out that some of the books in the Aristotelian canon were collected and assembled after the master's death (Jaeger 1948: 168). This evidence, taken together with the discovery that the overall "story pattern" of the *Poetics* conforms to the paragon sequence, indicates that one and possibly more of the treatises in the collection credited to Aristotle are, like Plato's dialogues, the product of a tradition.

Art **Production** **Human** **Original** **Image** **Likeness, Semblance** **Tools** **Mimicry**	**I** *Basic Considerations* The **art of poetic composition** in general and its various species, the function and effect of each of them: how the plots should be constructed if the composition is to be an **artistic** success (1447a8-10). They differ from each other, however, in three ways, namely by virtue of having (1) different means, (2) different objects, and (3) different methods of **imitation** (15) **II** *The differentiation according to medium* First, in the same way that certain people **imitate** a variety of things by means of **shapes** and **colors**, making **visible replicas** of them (some doing this on the basis of **art**, others out of habit), while another group **produces** its **mimicry** with the voice, so in the case of the **arts** just mentioned: they carry on their **imitation** through the media of rhythm, **speech**, and melody, but with the latter two used separately or together. Thus the **arts of flute and lyre music**, and any others of similar nature and effect such as the **art of the panpipe**, **produce their imitation** using melody and rhythm alone, while there is **another which does so using speeches or verses alone**, bare of music, and either mixing the verses with one another or employing just one certain kind—an art which is, as it happens, nameless up to the present time. In fact we could not even assign a common name to the **mimes** of Sophron and Xenarchus and the Socratic discourses . . . (1447a20-25|1447b8).

III   *The Objects of Imitation*

Since those who imitate men in action. and these must necessarily be either **worthwhile** or **worthless** people (for definite characters tend pretty much to develop in men of action). it follows that they **imitate men** either **better** or **worse** than the average. as the **painters** do—for Polygnotus used to portray superior and Pauson inferior men: and it is evident that each of the forms of **imitation** aforementioned will include these differentiations . . .Finally, the difference between **tragedy** and **comedy** coincides exactly with the master-difference: namely the one tends to **imitate** people **better**. the other one people **worse**. than the average. . . (1448a1-1448l5)

V   *Jottings, chiefly on comedy*

. . . In fact. some authorities maintain that is why **plays** are called dramas. because the **imitation is of men acting**. . . . They use the names "comedy" and "drama" as evidence: for they say that they . . . wandered from one village to another. being degraded and excluded from the city—and that they call 'doing" or "acting" . . .(48a25-38|48b1)

Comedy

Comedy is as we said it was. an imitation of persons who are inferior: not. however. going all the way to full villainy. but imitating the ugly. of which the ludicrous is one part(49a354). Now the stages of development of **tragedy**. and the men who were responsible for them. have not escaped notice. but comedy did not escape notice in the beginning because it was not taken **seriously** (49b1).

Epic and tragedy

Well then. epic poetry followed in the wake of tragedy up to the point of being a (1) good-sized (2) **imitation** (3) in verse (4) of people who are to be taken **seriously**: but in its having its verse unmixed with any other and being narrative in character. there they differ (49a10).

The constituent elements are partly identical and partly limited to tragedy. Hence anybody **who knows** about good and bad tragedy **knows** about epic also: for the elements that the epic possesses appertain to tragedy as well. but those of tragedy are not all found in the epic (49a15-20).

Tragedy and its six constituent elements

Our discussion of **imitative poetry** in hexameters, and of **comedy**, will come later: at present let us deal with **tragedy**, recovering from what has been said so far the definition of its essential nature, as it was in development. **Tragedy**, then, is a process of **imitating an action** which has **serious** implications, is complete, and possesses magnitude: by means of language which has been made

[left margin labels:]

Serious
Play

Mimicry

Serious

Knows

Serious

sensuously attractive. with each of its varieties found separately in
the parts: **enacted by the persons themselves and not presented
through narrative**: through a course of pity and fear completing
the **purification** of **tragic acts** which have those emotional
characteristics. By "language made sensuously attractive" I mean
language that has rhythm and melody. and by "its varieties found

Play

separately" I mean the fact that certain parts of the **play** are carried
on through spoken verses alone and others the other way round.
through song (49b25-34)

Simple and complex plots

Simple

Among the **simple** plots and actions the episodic are the worst . .
. Such structures are composed by the bad poets because they are
bad poets. but by the good poets because of the actors (51b35)
Some plots are **simple**. others are complex: indeed the actions of
which the plots are imitations already fall into these two categories.
By "**simple**" action I mean one the development of which being
continuous and unified in the manner above. the reversal comes
without peripety or recognition or peripety or recognition, and by
"complex" action one in which the reversal is continuous but with
recognition or peripety or both (52a15-18).
And "recognition" is. as indeed the name indicates, a shift from

Ignorant

ignorance to awareness. pointing in the direction either of close
blood ties or of hostility. of people who have previously been in a
clearly marked state of happiness or unhappiness (52a30)
The tragic side of tragedy: pity and fear and the patterns of the
complex plot
Since, then the construction of the finest tragedy should not be
simple but complex, and at the same time **imitative** of fearful and
pitiable happenings (that being the special character of this kind of
poetry), it is clear first of all that (1) neither should virtuous men
appear undergoing a change from good to bad fortune. for that is
not fearful. nor pitiable either. but morally repugnant: nor (2) the
wicked from bad fortune to good—that is the most untragic form
of all. it has none of the qualities that one wants: it is **productive**
neither of ordinary sympathy nor of pity nor of fear—nor again (3)
the really wicked man changing from good fortune to bad. for that
kind of structure will excite sympathy but neither pity nor fear.
since the one (pity) is directed towards the one who is like the rest
of mankind—what is left is the man who falls between these
extremes. Such a man who is neither a paragon of **virtue** and
justice nor undergoes the change to misfortune through any real
badness or wickedness but because of some [mistake]: one of
those who stand in great repute and prosperity. like Oedipus and
Thyetes: conspicuous men from families of that kind.
    So then. the artistically made plot must necessarily be
single rather than double. as some maintain. and involve a change
not from bad fortune to good fortune but the other way round.
from good fortune to bad, and not thanks to wickedness but

because of some [mistake] of great weight and consequence. by a man such as we have described or else on the good rather than the bad side (53a1-20).

Hence those who bring charges against Euripides for doing this in his tragedies are making the same [mistake]. His practice is [correct] in the way that has been shown (53a25).

Private

Public

Second comes the kind which is rated **first by certain people**, having its structure double like the *Odyssey* and with opposite endings for the good and bad. Its being put first is due to the weakness of the **audiences**; for the poets follow along, catering to their wishes (53a35).

Pity and fear and the tragic act

Knows

Does Not Know

Ignorant

It is possible. then. (1) for the act to be performed as the older poets presented it. **knowingly and wittingly**: Euripides did it that way also, in Medea's murder of her children. It is possible (2) to refrain from performing the deed **with knowledge**. Or it is possible to (3) perform the fearful act. but **unwittingly**, then recognize the blood relationship later, as Sophocles' Oedipus does; in that case the act is outside the **play**, but it can be in the **tragedy** itself, as with Astydamas' Alcmean . . . A further mode, in addition to these, is (4) while intending because of **ignorance** to perform some black crime, to discover the relationship before one does it. And there is no other mode besides these; for one must necessarily either do the deed or not, and **with or without knowledge** of what it is (53a26-39) . . . . Better is to perform it in **ignorance** and recognize what one has done afterward . . . (54a1).

Art Production Original Image

Likeness
Semblance
Tools
Mimicry

Since **tragedy** is an **imitation** of persons who are better than average, one should **imitate** the good portrait **painters**, for in fact, while rendering **likenesses** of their sitters by reproducing their individual **appearance**, they also make them better-looking; so the **poet, in imitating men** who are irascible or easygoing or have other traits of that kind, should make them, while still plausibly drawn, morally good, as **Homer portrayed Achilles** as good yet **like** other men (54b10).

Thought

Under "thought" fall all the effects that have to be deliberately and consciously achieved through the use of **speech**. Elements of this endeavor are (1) proof and **refutation** and (2) the stimulation of feelings such as pity, fear, anger, and the like . . . (56a35).

There is just this much difference, that the emotional effects ought to carry across to the **spectator** without explicit **argument**, while the proofs have to be deliberately **produced in speech**, by the speaker, and come as a result of the **speech**. For what would be the use of a speaker it things appeared in the wished-for light without the **speech** (56b5).

Verbal expression: the elements of language

Knows

Does Not Know
Simple Ignorant

Private

Public

Among the phenomena of expression through language, one branch of theory has to do with the modes of **utterance**: for example, what is a command and what a prayer: statement and threat. question and answer. and so on. **Knowledge** of these belongs to the art of delivery and concerns the man who possesses that master-art of poetic interpretation. **But not the poet**: for no criticism worth **serious** attention is directed towards poetry on the basis of knowledge or **ignorance** of these matters (56b8-12).

Final Comparison of epic and tragedy
The question can be raised. which is superior, the epic form of **imitation** or the **tragic**. For if, as some say. the less vulgar genre is superior, and the one that is addressed to a higher type of **listener** is less vulgar. it would clearly follow that an **art which imitates** anything and everything is vulgar. Namely (they say) the **actors** engage in all kinds of "business" on the assumption that the **public** will not catch what is going on . (61b25-30)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

VARIATIONS IV

We turn now to the definition in two other ancient texts: first. in the Chinese classic. the *Chuang Tzu*. and second. in Genesis 1-3 of the Septuagint (LXX)—the earliest surviving translation of the *Old Testament*.[1] Now that we have gone through a catalogue of several dozen occurrences of the paragon definition (an example from every one of the dialogues in the Platonic collection. plus one each from Xenophon and Aristotle), we have reconstructed enough of the system to begin to tap into the matrixes of meaning encoded by the traditional frames of reference. Going through so many different examples of the same series has shown us how the unique elements of each instance of the definition are linked by traditional usage to a background of implied meaning that extends far beyond any singular occurrence of it. Though we may not be initiates in this style. our understanding of the definitions as a communicative medium should be sufficient to enable us to recognize that the opening chapters in the *Chuang Tzu* and in the *Old Testament* are both structured on the lines of Plato's forms.

The versions of the definition from each of these two texts is preceded by a brief explanatory gloss that provides the evidence that links the tradition to Plato (in the case of the Old Testament). or which shows that such a connection was possible (in the case of the *Chuang Tzu*).

CHUANG TZU

According to legend. the *Chuang Tzu* was named after its author. The only record of the identity of Chuang Tzu is documented in the *Shih chi*. or *Records of the Historian* (ch. 63) by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145?-89? B.C.E.). This entry notes that Chuang Tzu lived during the reigns of King Hui of Liang (370-319 B.C.E.) and King Hsüan of Ch'i (319-301 B.C.E.), and also that he served as "an official in the lacquer garden in Meng." thought to have been located south of the Yellow River in what is now Honan.[2]

Though we can only speculate about the circumstances that led to the diffusion of ideas that link the philosophy of the *Chuang Tzu* with the tradition in Plato. we may be somewhat more certain about the route this transcontinental diffusion took. From prehistoric times. the "Silk Road" connected

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[1] Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, trans.. *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (1851: reprint ed.. United States of America: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998).

[2] Chuang Tzu. *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. trans.. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press. 1968).

the valley of the Yellow River to the Mediterranean.³ The route passed through the cities of Kanser and the oases of modern-day Iran. Iraq and Syria. Since the late nineteen-seventies. archeological excavations in the desert sands along the route have uncovered the remains of scores of Caucasian people that have been dated by radiocarbon to the period from 2000 to 400 B.C.E.⁴ The DNA tests prove that the Caucasoid remains represent a variety of European and Mediterranean people. These results are corroborated by the textiles and the style of clothing found on the bodies. by the pottery that was buried with them. as well as by present day linguistic evidence based on root words in the languages. This evidence reveals that there was continuous contact for "millennia" among "virtually all of the early population groups of Eurasia." Victor H. Mair (coordinator for a series of multinational expeditions for furthering research on the graves). asserted that there is a "growing mountain of hard evidence which indicates indubitably that the whole of Eurasia was culturally and technologically interconnected." History books record that by the second century B.C.E., the Silk Road was formalized with settlements. post stations and frontier walls.⁵ "This is wrong." Mair stated. "for there never was a time when people were not traveling back and forth across the whole of Eurasia . . . East and West have never been separated."⁶

Though legend attributes the book of *Chuang Tzu* to an ancient author. discoveries in tombs of manuscripts written on bamboo during the Han (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) and earlier show that the texts that have survived to the present day originally had

> no fixed titles and no known authors. They were the work of many hands that
> compiled them over several centuries on the basis of oral traditions during which they
> were transmitted in different versions with only extremely limited circulation and
> access. Eventually. each was edited into a more definitive form (sometimes in the late
> Warring States. often during the Former Han). It was only then that they acquired the
> titles (and "authors") by which they were known in succeeding centuries right up to
> our own day."⁷

This evidence is supported by textual features in the *Chuang Tzu* itself. Repetitions (e.g., the cicada

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³ Jacques Gernet. *A History of Chinese Civilization* (1972: reprint ed., Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press. 1999). p. 133.

⁴ Victor H. Mair. "The Prehistoric Corpses of the Tarin Basin, *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Vol. 23 (1995): 3-4, and ten other articles in this issue that deal with the evidence uncovered at the sites and the implications of the findings. See also the bibliographies of these studies for additional published research dealing with these discoveries. See as well T.K. Chen and F.T. Hiebert. "The Late Prehistory of Xinjiang in Relation to its Neighbors." *Journal of World Prehistory*, Vol. 9 (1995): 243-300.

⁵ Endymion Wilkinson. *Chinese History: A Manual* (Cambridge and London: Published by Harvard University Asia Center and distributed by Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 704-705.

⁶ Mair, p. 303.

⁷ Wilkinson., p. 453.

passage). inconsistencies. and breaks in the discourse are the types of anomalies that point to a tradition of composition. These can be distinguised from anomalies that crept into the text during the course of a complex transmission history. For example. there are disruptions in the series where two or three stages are missing from the sequence. These sections then appear later on. where their occurrence interrupts the order of a different series. These types of textual irregularities are consistent with the kinds of disruptions typically found in the ancient Chinese manuscripts. and which stem from the writing materials used and the methods of storing the scrolls on which the texts were written.

Writing in China: Preservation and Storage of Compositions

The Chinese had adopted writing by 1300 B.C.E. Epigraphic evidence from inscriptions on bones. shells. jade. seals. coins. brick. and pottery indicate that an early Chinese script developed in the Shang period (1751-1112 B.C.E.).[8] During the Warring States era (403-322 B.C.E.). manuscripts painted on silk began to appear. Maps and short documents were painted on wood tablets. while manuscripts and books were written on bamboo strips. By the late Han (206-220 C.E.). paper gradually came into use. However. even as the use of paper spread. the practice of writing on bamboo continued to the fourth century C.E.

Knowing that the composition must have been preserved on bamboo strips and also that there were several major interruptions in transmission makes the anomalies encountered in the *Chuang Tzu* more understandable. Each strip of bamboo typically held one or two rows of characters. The script was brush painted with ink vertically down the inside surface, following the grain of the material. Individual strips were tied together with a single thread at the head. or with one thread at each end. and then rolled from left to right into a bundle.[9] Strips varied in length according to the document. Sometimes. several bundles were required to record a complete manuscript. This method of writing and storing the bamboo strip bundles probably contributed to the types of corruptions found in the texts. There were. in addition. two major interruptions in the transmission of the ancient treatises. First in 213 B.C.E.. when the emperor ordered the "burning of the books." and next in 207 B.C.E.. when all the copies of ancient works stored in the Quin Academy were destroyed. The only scrolls that were spared were historical records. as well as books on medicine. agriculture. divination. and forestry. On three occasions during the former Han (200 B.C.E. 124 B.C.E.. and 26 B.C.E.). court archivists. historians and librarians were charged with locating surviving manuscripts from all over the empire and

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[8] Ibid.. p. 416.

[9] Ibid.. p. 436.

putting into order the imperial collection.

To restore the collection, recovered bundles had to be organized correctly. Often, editors found that someone had previously put them in the wrong order. Threads tended to disintegrate over time and this complicated the task of reassembling them into the proper arrangement. Strips were frequently broken or missing. Sometimes an editor added new material to blank strips at the end of a bundle, creating a puzzle for future editors. All these peculiarities of the medium became a common cause of confusion and variant readings in subsequent eras.

The Text

In spite of probable disruptions in its transmission history, the opening chapters of the Chuang Tzu preserve the sequence with a remarkable degree of accuracy. Once again, the ideas are discernable even in translation. The text begins with two parallel renditions of the pattern. That this multi-part sequence is repeated twice makes it less likely that its occurrence in this book is a coincidence. Moreover, the most striking feature of the sequences in the *Chuang Tzu* is their similarity to both Plato's *Halcyon* and to the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. All these works describe a two level structure with, for example, the waters of earth at one order of magnitude and the waters of heaven at another. Also worth noting is that the *Chuang Tzu* lists the kinds of forms. When we compare them to the opposites set forth in the *Sophist*, and with those in the list of the Pythagorean contraries described by Aristotle, we can see that the contraries in the *Chuang Tsu* are Platonic and not Pythagorean. Notice as well that the text refers to statements recorded in the *Universal Harmony*. Though some have suggested that *Universal Harmony* is the name of a man, Burton Watson maintained that this is a reference to an more ancient composition.[10]

ONE: FREE AND EASY WANDERING

Swimming Animals	In the Northern darkness there is a *fish* and his name is K'un. The
Water (Fish)	K'un is so huge **I don't know** many thousand li he measures. He
Winged (Fowl)	changes and becomes a *bird* whose name is P'eng. The back of
Does Not Know	the P'eng measures **I don't know** how many thousand li across
	and, when *he rises up and flies off*, his *wings* are like clouds all
	over the *sky*. When the sea begins to move, this bird sets of for the
Divine, Original	southern darkness, which is the *Lake of Heaven*.
	The *Universal Harmony* records various wonders, and it says:
Water	"When the P'eng journeys to the southern darkness, the **waters** are
	roiled for three thousand li. He beats the **whirlwind** and rises
Air	ninety thousand li, setting off on the sixth-month gale." **Wavering**

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[10] Watson. *Chuang Tzu*. p. 29.

Fire, Earth
Forms and Colors
Eyes
Great and Small
Image

Likeness

Plants
Semblance, Tools
Mimicry

Food for the Body

Knows
Food for the Soul
Land Animals
[Creeping]

Mimicry

Water
Swimming Animals (Fish)
Does Not Know
Air. *Swimming Animals*
Winged (Fowl)
Forms and Colors
Eyes
Light and Dark
Great and Small

Plants

heat. bits of dust. *living things. blowing each other about*—the *sky* looks very blue. Is that its real color. or is it because it is so far away and has no end? When the *bird* looks down. all he sees is *blue* too.

If *water* is not piled up *deep* enough. it won't have the strength to bear up a *big* boat. Pour a cup of *water* into a hollow in the floor and bits of trash will sail on it *like* boats. But set the cup there and it will stick fast. for the *water* is too *shallow* and the boat too *large*. If *wind* is not piled up *deep* enough, it won't have the strength to bear up *great wings*. Therefore when the P'eng rises ninety thousand li. he must have the *wind* under him *like* that Only then can he mount on the back of the *wind*. shoulder the *blue sky*, and nothing can hinder or block him. Only then can he *set his eyes* to the south.

The *cicada* and the *little dove* laugh at this. saying. "When we make an effort and *fly* up. we can get as far as the *sapanwood tree*, but sometimes we don't make it and just fall down on the ground. Now how is anyone going to go ninety thousand li to the south!" If you go off to the *green woods* nearby. you can take along *food for three meals* and come back with your *stomach* as full as ever. If you are going a hundred li. you must **grind your grain** the night before: and if you are going a thousand li. you must start getting the provisions together three months in advance. What do these two *creatures* understand? *Little* understanding cannot come up to *great* understanding: the *short*-lived cannot come up to the *long*-lived.

How do I know this is so? The morning mushroom **knows nothing** of twilight and dawn: the summer cicada **knows nothing** of spring and autumn. They are the *short*-lived. South of Ch'u there is a [caterpillar] which counts five hundred years as one spring and five hundred years as one autumn. Long. long ago there was a *great* rose of Sharon that counted eight thousand years as one spring and eight thousand years as one autumn. They are the *long-lived*. Yet. P'eng-tsu alone is famous today for having lived a long time. and **everybody tries to ape him**. Isn't it pitiful! Among the questions of T'ang to Ch'i we find the same thing. In the bald and barren north. there is a dark **sea**. the Lake of Heaven. In it is a *fish* which is several thousand li across. and **no one knows** how long. His name is K'un. There is also a *bird* there. named P'eng. with a back like Mount T'ai and *wings* like clouds filling the *sky*. He beats the **whirlwind**. leaps into the **air**. and rises up ninety thousand li. cutting through the clouds and *mist*. shouldering the **blue** *sky*. and then he turns his **eyes** south and prepares to journey to the southern *darkness*.

The **little quail** laughs at him. saying. "Where does he think *he's* going? I give a *great* leap and *fly* up. but I never get more than ten or twelve yards before I come down *fluttering* among the *weeds and brambles*. And that's the best kind of *flying* anyway! Where does he think *he's* going?" Such is the difference between *big* and

Public

Private
Demagogue

Statesman

Divine
Human, Original

Great and Small
Earth. Air
Wild
Plants

Image
Likeness

Semblance

Tools
Mimicry

Knows. *Great and Small*
Words and Phrases
Dream

little.

Therefore a man who has wisdom enough to fill one office effectively, good conduct enough to impress one community. virtue enough to please one ruler. or talent enough to be called into service in one state. has the same kind of self-pride as these little creatures. Sung Jung-tzu would certainly burst out laughing at such a man. The whole world could praise Sung Jung-tzu and it wouldn't make him exert himself: the whole world could condemn him and it wouldn't make him mope. He drew a clear line between the internal and the external. and recognized the boundaries of true glory and disgrace . . . Therefore I say. **the Perfect man has no self; the Holy Man has no merit; the Sage has no fame**.

TWO: DISCUSSION OF MAKING ALL THINGS EQUAL

Tzu-chi's of south wall sat leaning on his armrest. staring up at the sky and —vacant and far away. as though he'd lost his companion. Yen Ch'eng Tzu-yu. who was standing by his side in attendance, said. "What is this? Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before!"

Tzu-ch'i said. "You do well to ask the question. Yen. Now I have lost myself. Do you understand that? You hear the **piping of men**. but you haven't heard the **piping of earth**. you haven't heard **the piping of Heaven!**"

Tzu-yu said. "May I venture to ask what this means?"

Tzu-ch'i said. "The *Great Clod* belches out *breath* and its name is *wind*. So long as it doesn't come forth. nothing happens. But when it does. then ten thousand hollows begin crying *wildly*. Can't you hear them. *long* drawn out? In the *mountain forests* that lash and sway. there are *huge trees* a hundred spans around with hollows and openings **like** noses. **like** mouths. **like** ears. **like** jugs, **like** cups. **like** mortars, **like** rifts, **like** ruts. They roar **like** waves, whistle **like** arrows. screech. gasp. cry. wail. moan. and howl, those in the lead calling out *yeee!*. those behind calling out *yuuu!* In a gentle *breeze* they answer faintly, but in a *full gale* the chorus is gigantic. And when the fierce *wind* has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again. Have you never seen the tossing and trembling that goes on?"

Tzu-yu said. "by the **piping** of *earth*. then. you mean simply the sound of these hollows. and by the **piping of man** the sound of flutes and whistles. But may I ask about the **piping of Heaven?**"

Tzu-ch'i said. "*Blowing* on the ten thousand things in a different way. so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves. but who does the sounding?

Great understanding is *broad* and unhurried: *little* understanding is *cramped* and busy. *Great* words are clear and limpid: *little* words are shrill and quarrelsome. In sleep, men's

Waking Vision
Soul and Body

Right and Wrong

Light and Dark

Does Not Know

Existence and
Is Not Existence

Shapes and Colors
Unity and Plurality

Motion and Rest

Simple

spirits go visiting; in **waking** hours, their *bodies* hustle. With everything they meet they become entangled. Day after day they use their *minds* in strife, sometimes *grandiose*, sometimes *sly*, sometimes *petty*. Their *little* fears are mean and trembley; their *great* fears are stunned and overwhelming. They bound off like an arrow or a crossbow pellet, certain that they are the arbiters of *right* and *wrong*. They cling to their position as though they had sworn before the gods, sure that they are holding on to victory. They *fade* like fall and winter—such is the way they dwindle *day by day*. They drown in what they do—you cannot turn them back. They grow *dark*, as though sealed with seals—such are the excesses of their old age. And when their minds draw near to *death*, nothing can restore them to the *light*.

Joy, anger, grief, delight, worry, regret, fickleness, inflexibility, modesty, willfulness, candor, insolence—**music** from empty holes, mushrooms springing up in dampness, *day* and *night* replacing each other before us, and **no one knows** where they sprout from. Let it be! Let it be! It is enough that *morning* and *evening* we have them, and they are the means by which we *live*. Without them we would *not exist*; without us they would have *nothing* to take hold of. This comes close to the matter. But **I do not know** what makes them the way they are. It would seem as though they have some True Master, and yet *I find no trace of him*. He can act—that is certain. Yet I cannot *see his form*. He has identity but *no form*. The hundred joints, the nine openings, the six organs, all come together and *exist* here as my *body*. But which part should I feel closest to? It would seem as though there must be some True Lord among them. But whether I succeed in discovering his identity or not, it neither adds to nor detracts from his Truth.

Once a man receives this fixed *bodily form*, he holds on to it, waiting for the end. Sometimes clashing with things, sometimes bending before them, he *runs his course like a galloping steed, and nothing can stop him*. Is he not pathetic? Sweating and laboring to the end of his days and never seeing his accomplishment, utterly *exhausting* himself and **never knowing** where to look for **rest**—can you help pitying him? I'm not *dead* yet! He says, but what good is that? His *body* decays, his mind follows it—can you deny that this is a *great* sorrow? Man's life has always been a muddle like this. How **could I be the only muddled one, and other men not muddled?**

If a man follows the mind given him and makes it his teacher, then who can be without a teacher? Why must you comprehend the process of change and form your mind on that basis before you can have a teacher? Even **an idiot** has his teacher. But to fail to abide by this mind and still insist upon your *rights* and *wrongs*—this is like saying that you set off for Yüeh today and got there yesterday. This is to claim that **what doesn't exist exists**. If you claim that *what doesn't exist exists*, then even the holy sage Yü couldn't understand you, much less a person like me!

True and False *(Discourse)*	*Words* are not just *wind. Words have something to say.* But *if what they have to say is not fixed. then do they really say something?* Or do they say *nothing?* People suppose that **words** are **different** from the peeps of baby *birds.* but *is there any difference. or isn't there?* What does the Way rely upon. that we have *right* and *wrong.* How *can the Way go away and not exist?* How *can words exist and not be* acceptable? When the Way relies on *little* accomplishments and words rely on **vain show.** then we have the *rights* and *wrongs* of the Confucians and the Mo-ists. What one calls *right* the other calls *wrong;* what one calls *wrong* the other calls *right* But if we want to *right* their *wrongs* and *wrong* their *rights.* then the best thing to use is clarity.
Sameness and Difference	
Right and Wrong	
Ignorant (Vain Show) *Right and Wrong*	

Everything has its "that," everything has its "this." From the point of view of "that" you cannot *see* it. but through understanding **you can know it**.

	Nieh Ch'üeh asked Wang Ni. **"Do you know** what all things agree in calling right?""
Knows	
	"**How would I know that?**" said Wang Ni.
Does Not Know	"**Do you know that you don't know it?**"
	"How would I know that?"
	"Then do **things know nothing?**"
	"How would I **know that?**" However. suppose I try saying something. What way do I have of **knowing** that if I say **I know something I don't really not know it?** Or what way do I have of **knowing** that if I say **I don't know something I don't really in fact know it?** . . .
Simple	Ordinary men strain and struggle; the sage is **stupid and blockish**. He takes part in ten thousand ages and achieves **simplicity** in oneness.

FIVE: THE SIGN OF VIRTUE COMPLETE

Living and Lifeless **Divine, Human**	Confucius said. "*Life* and *death* are *great* affairs. and yet they are no change to him. Through **heaven** and **earth** flop over and fall down. it is no loss to him. He sees clearly into what has no *falsehood* and does not shift with things. He takes it as fate that things should change. and he holds fast to the source."
	"What do you mean by that?" asked Ch'ang Chi.
Sameness and Difference *Unity and Plurality* **Original, Image, Likeness** **Eyes**	Confucius said. "If you look at them from the point of view of their *differences.* then there is liver and gall. Ch'u and Yüeh. But if you look at them from the point of view of their *sameness.* then the ten *thousand things are all one.* A **man like** this **doesn't know** what his ears or **eyes** should approve Yühe lets his mind play in the harmony of virtue. As for things, he **sees** them as one and **does not see** their loss. He regards the loss of a foot as a lump of earth thrown away."

Ch'and Chi said. "In the way he goes about it, he uses his **knowledge** to get at his mind. and uses his mind to get at the constant mind. Why should things gather around *him?*"

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Semblance
Reflection

Tools, Mimicry
Knows

Public

Private

Statesman

Demagogue

Confucius said. "Men do not **mirror** themselves in running water—they **mirror themselves in still water**. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things. Of those that receive life from the earth. the pine and cypress alone are best—they stand at the head of the ten thousand things. Luckily they were able to order their lives. and thereby order the lives of other things. Proof that a man is holding fast to the beginning lies in the fact of his fearlessness. A brave soldier will plunge alone into the midst of nine armies. He seeks fame and can bring himself to this. How much more. then. is possible for **a man who governs Heaven and earth**, stores up the ten thousand things. **lets the six parts of his body be only a dwelling. makes ornaments of his ears and eyes. unifies the knowledge of what he knows**, and in his mind never tastes death. He will soon choose the day and ascend far off. **Men may become his followers**, but how could he be willing to bother himself about things?"

Shen-tu Chia. who had lost a foot, was studying under Po-hun Wu-jen along with Tzu-ch'an of Cheng. Tzu-ch'an said to Shen-t'u Chia. "If I go out first. you stay behind. and if you go out first. I'll stay behind."

Next day **the two of them were again sitting on the same mat** in the small hall. Tzu-ch'an said to Shen-t'u Chia. "If I go out first. you stay behind. and if you go out first. I'll stay behind! Now I will go out. Are you going to stay behind or aren't you. **When you see a prime minister, you don't even get out of the way—do you think you're the equal of a prime minister?**"

Shen-t'u Chia said. "Within the gates of the Master, is there any such thing as a **prime minister**? You take delight in being a **prime minister and pushing people behind you**. But I've heard that if the **mirror is bright, no dust settles on it; if dust settles, it isn't really bright**. When you live around worthy men a long time. you'll be free of faults. You regard the Master as a great man. and yet you talk like this—and still you claim to be better than Yao! Take a look at your virtue and see if it's not enough to give you cause to **reflect**.

GENESIS 1-3:25, SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

According to tradition, Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). However, scholars recognized in the nineteenth century that Moses could not have been the author. As with other ancient texts, "we lack substantial information as to how it was composed and reached its present form."[11]

For over a century, the main stream of biblical scholarship has concentrated on explaining the origins of the Pentateuch as the result of a long-term process of textual formation involving the compilation of different written documents from various time periods. The classical Documentary Theory, stemming from the work of Julius Wellhausen and others. separates the first five books in the Old Testament into four distinct strands: J, E, D, and P. The earliest written source, J (which is named after the writer. the Jahwist or Yahwist, who referred to God by the name Yahweh), is dated to the ninth century B.C.E. The E document (so-called from the author. the Elohist, who used the Hebrew word. *ĕlōhīm*, for God), has been traced to the eighth century B.C.E. The J and E sources are thought to have been combined by an editor about the middle of the seventh century. D, Deuteronomy, which is assumed to be a separate text dating from 621 B.C.E., is believed to have been put together with the JE material sometime during the sixth century. The final source, P (named after its Priestly redactor), was combined with the older documents about 400 B.C.E.[12]

This identification of separate written material in the Pentateuch is the subject of a "remarkable level of long-standing consensus." Thus, the theory that has been the "majority view" for over a century analyzes the text into its component "documents" based on criteria applicable to literary texts. Though some scholars have challenged the Document Theory in recent years, no other theory has gained any wide support, so JEDP Theory remains the point of departure for all study of the date and origins of the Pentateuch.[13]

The major alternative methodological approach to documentary analysis is Form-Critical theory. inaugurated by Hermann Gunkel, which deals with the literary "types" or "forms" (e.g.. legends. myths. folk-tales. or historical narratives) in the Pentateuch. This approach makes the same assumptions concerning the various documents that were combined in the Old Testament, but the

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[11] Robert C. Culley, "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," *Oral Tradition* 1/1 (1986): 3-65.

[12] Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)., p. 1391.

[13] Norman C. Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 18-28

emphasis is on recovering the pre-history of the various textual sources that lie "deeper" than the contributions of individual authors. Form critics attempt to trace the literary sources of the Pentateuch back to their pre-textual origins in order to reconstruct the "original form" of the oral tradition and its "setting in life." The goal is to track the entire development of the text from the early "oral versions" of the documents through the various literary formulations, to the final result which has come down to us as the Pentateuch.

More recently still, studies in the techniques of oral composition and performance have argued that "our understanding of the ancient literature has suffered badly" from "a bias in favor of literary models and categories" that were "tied to historical and theological studies rather than to anthropological and sociological analysis." These studies have called into question the theory of a literary growth of the Pentateuch.

> Largely captive to written documents, and immune to the constraints which direct observation can provide, OT scholars have been preoccupied with textual models—structure, content, and style—with oral transmission mostly conceived as being analogous to literary accretion. While understandable, this emphasis has to be judged as seriously flawed.[14]

According to the theory of oral traditions, digressions, repetitions, rough transitions and so forth "cannot be explained by a theory of conflated literary sources, or even combined oral 'versions'."[15] It is possible, for example, to see the whole of Genesis as one long "performance."

In his review of the discussion of oral tradition in Biblical research, Robert C. Cully concluded that "almost all agree that the Bible probably has oral antecedents, but there is little agreement on the extent to which oral composition and transmission have actually left their mark on the text or the degree to which one might be able to establish this lineage."[16]

The Greek Version of the Pentateuch

The earliest surviving manuscripts of the Pentateuch were found at Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls), and are dated to the second century B.C.E. Manuscripts of this Greek version of the Pentateuch (known as the Septuagint, or LXX) were found alongside the Hebrew versions of the text. Scholars have determined that the Hebrew from which these manuscripts of the LXX were translated pre-dates the form of the language in the earliest Hebrew versions found at that site, making the Greek translation

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[14] Burke O. Long, "Recent Field Studies in Oral Literature and their Bearing on Old Testament Criticism," *Vetus Tesramentum* 26 (1963): 113-125.

[15] Ibid., p. 195.

[16] Cully, "Oral Tradition and Biblical Studies," pp. 30-65.

older than all the other versions of the manuscripts known to us. Further, there are a number of variations in the wording and language used in different LXX manuscripts found at Qumran, which suggests that it is misleading to speak as though a single original book had once existed.[17]

The Legend Concerning the Translation of the Pentateuch into Greek

The name of the Septuagint is derived from a story preserved in Greek in the *Letter of Aristeas* to his brother Philocrates. This document has been dated to early in the second century B.C.E. The writer professes to be a courtier and a Greek who is interested in Jewish antiquities. He tells his brother that Demetruius Phalereus, a librarian for the royal collection in Alexandria, suggested to Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282-246 B.C.E), then king of Egypt, that the library should acquire a Greek translation of the Jewish Laws (the Torah, i.e., the Pentateuch). Apparently, Philadelphus dispatched an embassy to Jerusalem with a letter to the High Priest, asking him to send to Alexandria six learned elders from each of the tribes of Israel to execute the work of translation. Seventy-two men, whose names Aristeas lists, arrived in Egypt, bringing with them a copy of the Hebrew Laws written in gold letters on rolls made of skins. At a banquet, the elders discussed *statesmanship* with the king and impressed him with their wisdom. After that, the translators were taken by Demetrius to a residence on the island of Pharos, far from the distractions of the city. Aristeas says that Demetrius

> exhorted them to accomplish the work of translation, since they were well supplied with all that they could want. So they set to work, comparing their several results and making them agree; and whatever they agreed upon was suitably copied under the direction of Demetrius. . . In this way the transcription was completed in seventy-two days, as if that period had been pre-arranged.[18]

The *Letter* relates that the elders completed the work in seventy-two days, harmonized their independent versions, and then they gave a recitation. Aristeas's story is repeated by Philo (*Life of Moses*. II. 5.), and by Josephus (who paraphrases it in *Antiquities* 12).

After completion of the first installment, the bulk of the translation was probably carried out by different hands and at different times between the second century B.C.E. and the beginning of the Common Era. Later Christian writers probably changed the number of translators from seventy-two to seventy because of the widespread use of this number elsewhere in Jewish tradition. At some point, the story was extended to include beside the Pentateuch the other books in the Old Testament. It was

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[17] Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 1391.

[18] Aristeas. *Letter of Aristeas* edited by H. St J. Thackery Henry Barclay, in Henry Barclay Swete. *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (1902; revised by Richard Rusden Ottley. reprint ed.. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc.. 1968), pp. 534-606.

also embellished by representing the Seventy as having worked in separate rooms, and at some point, the notion was added that when the results were compared at the end, they were found to be identical. Today, scholars generally accept, as the one kernel of fact in the story, that the Septuagint was commissioned by Ptolemy Philadelphus. This fact is attested by the oldest authenticated record concerning the LXX translation that has come down to us.[19]

Aristobulus on Plato's Assimilation of the Hebrew Doctrines

The earliest evidence for the dating of the translation of the Septuagint comes from Aristobulus (probably the second half of the second century B.C.E.), who was the author of a commentary on the Pentateuch known to us only through quotations in Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* I. 22), Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* XIII, 12) and Anatolius. The main argument of Aristobulus' book was that Plato had based parts of his philosophy on a Greek translation of the Old Testament that was even earlier than the Septuagint. Eusebius writes:

> And I will quote first the words of the Hebrew philosopher Aristobulus, which are as follows: 'It is evident that Plato closely followed our legislation, and has carefully studied the several precepts contained in it. For others before Demetrius Phalereus, and prior to the supremacy of Alexander and the Persian, have translated both the narrative of the exodus of the Hebrews our fellow countrymen from Egypt, and the fame of all that had happened to them, and the conquest of the land, and the exposition of the whole Law; so that it is manifest that many things have been borrowed by the aforesaid philosopher, for he is very learned: as also Pythagoras transferred many of our precepts and inserted them in his own system of doctrines. But the entire translation of all the contents of our law was made in the time of the king surnamed Philadelphus, thy ancestor, who brought greater zeal to the work, which was managed by Demetrius Phalereus.'[20]

Thus, the quotation from Aristobulus that scholars accept as the sole documentary evidence for dating the translation of the Septuagint occurs within the context of a discussion describing the existence before 400 B.C.E. of an early Greek translation of the Pentateuch to which Plato had access. A similar claim has been found in the statement attributed by Psuedo-Aristeas to Demetrius of Phalerum.[21] In fact, the view that the teachings of Plato and Pythagoras relied on the Hebrew tradition was widespread among the Alexandrian Jews of the second century, and the story that Plato incorporated Hebrew philosophy into the dialogues was passed on to the early Christian school of Alexandria. Thus, Origen, in his *Contra Celsum* (IV. 39, VI. 19) understood that Plato:

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[19] Hornblower and Spawforth, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 161.

[20] Eusebius. *Praeparatio Evangelica (The Preparation for the Gospel)*, trans. E.H. Gifford (London: OXINII, 1925). p. 718.

[21] Swete, *Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 1-2.

on his visit to Egypt. he [Plato] met even with those who interpret the Jews' traditions philosophically. and learnt some ideas from them. some of which he kept. and some of which he slightly altered. since he took care not to offend the Greeks by keeping the doctrines of the Jews without making any change.[22]

No fragments of these early translations have been found.[23] The lack of any textual evidence to support this idea of an early version of the Hebrew philosophy has prompted Christian scholars to attribute the legend to "a desire on the part of the Hellenistic Jews to find a Hebrew origin for the best products of Greek thought."[24] However. the evidence of the definition in the opening chapters of Genesis suggests that we cannot so easily dismiss the testimony of Aristobulus.

Now. it is possible that a written version of a Greek translation of the first five books in the Old Testament existed prior to the Septuagint. for the Hebrews possessed writing somewhat in advance of the Greeks. However. since copies of this earlier version of the Hebrew tradition have not been found, this "argument from silence" suggests the possibility that the earlier account was preserved orally.[25]

The Book of Genesis

Let us narrow the focus of the inquiry from the Pentateuch as a whole to the book of Genesis. and within that. to the first three chapters. Document theorists hold that the creation story of Genesis 1-3 is made up of two originally separate accounts that were later combined. Genesis 2:4-3. describing the man and woman. is considered the older of the two. The account in Genesis 1-2:3. now placed first. is the more recent. Since these chapters have been attributed to the Priestly writer. they are thought to have been put together in linear sequence during the postexilic period (400 B.C.E.).[26]

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[22]Origen. *Contra Celsum*. trans.. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: University Press. 1953), pp. 215-216.

[23] Henry Barclay Swete. *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (1902: revised by Richard Rusden Ottley with an appendix containing the *Letter of Aristeas* edited by H. St J. Thackery. reprint ed., New York: KTAV Publishing House. Inc.. 1968). pp. 1-5.

[24] Ibid.. p. 2.

[25]The origin of the alphabet has been traced to speakers of Semitic languages who lived in the area from modern Syria to the Sinai. during the second millennium B.C.E. They took the Egyptian hieroglyphs and removed the logograms. determinative and signs for pairs and trios of consonants and kept just the signs for single consonants. They placed the letter forms in a fixed sequence, gave them easy to remember names, and made indicators for vowels by adding either small extra letters. hooks, lines or dots. (The Greeks went on to derive the forms for their vowel letters α - ε - η - ι - o by using five letters from the Phoenician alphabet for which there were no consonantal sounds in Greek). Three lines of descent evolved from the early Semitic alphabet: the first led from the early Arabian alphabets to the modern Ethiopian: a second line of descent was via the Aramaic alphabet. used for official documents of the Persian Empire, into Hebrew. Arabic. Indian and the Southeast Asian alphabets: and (3) the third led via the Phoenicians to the Greeks. then to the Etruscans and after that to the Romans. Chinese writing appears to have evolved independently [Jared Diamond, *Guns. Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 1998). pp. 225-231].

[26] Elaine Pagels. *Adam. Eve. and the Serpent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), p. xxii.

The evidence that these three chapters were originally two independent compositions that were later woven together by a final redactor is taken from breaks, doublets, and the occurrence of fractures in the narrative. The strongest evidence that different sources were combined is the correlation of breaks, fractures and doublets with differences in terminology, writing style, and perspective, or ideology. This is exactly what Documentary Theorists claim to have found. The passage at 2:4 is the major seam marking the point where the two different accounts of the creation of animals, plants, and human beings were joined. There are fractures around the seam (between 2:1 and 2:4b), which occur in tandem with a shift in voice and the interjection into the narrative of a statement that expresses an ideological perspective. "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all his works which God began to do."

These features coincide with differences in terminology, style, and perspective. In Genesis 1-2:4a, the designation for the divine entity is "God" (ὁ Θεὸς, or Elohim in Hebrew), and the word "create," ποίησεν (1:1, 21, 27; 2:4a) is used to describe what the divine being made. The style of this account is solemn and austere. There is repetition of expression ("and there was evening and there was morning . . ."). God uses a method of "division" and "collection" to produce a cosmos that is ordered into balanced, symmetrical structures, so that there is a separation into two distinct orders—the water "above" and the water "below," for example. This strand of Genesis portrays God as a sovereign entity—a divine craftsman—who speaks the cosmos into being, and then judges the product from the vantage point of a detached observer looking at his creation from a distance.

From 2:4b onward, the terminology changes. The divine being is referred to as "Lord" (YHWH, Yahweh), or "Lord God" (κύριος ὁ Θεὸς, Yahweh Elohim). The expression "create" does not recur and instead, the term "form," ἔπλασεν (2:7, 8, 19) is used to describe what the God does. Since the name Yahweh does not appear in the first section, the terminology for this usage is the major piece of literary evidence supporting the view that the creation story in Genesis is a combination of documents from two originally independent sources.[27] However, the two versions differ on more than just terminology. The style from 2:4b onward is more picturesque than what we find in the 1:2:4a strand. It lacks the repetitions and the precise delineations found in 1:2:4 and there is no mirroring of creative actions. Gone are the spoken commands. Instead, we have the introduction of dialogue—between the Lord God and the humans, with the serpent and even with the other deities—"It is not good that the man should be alone, let us make for him a help suitable for him," or, "Behold, Adam is become as one of us." The portrait of God is also significantly different from 2:4b onward.

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[27] Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament,* pp. 18-28

In this second strand. the divine being is present in the world. he molds man from earth. breathes life into him. makes the woman. walks in the garden. and he talks directly to the humans.[28]

Some scholars, however. have recognized that the literary structure of Genesis is different from all the other works in the Old Testament. Genesis is conceived in parallel and inverted sequences called. in Biblical studies. "chiastic ordering" or "palistrophes." Though it is believed that these "symmetrical framings in the narrative reflect a considered technique of composition." commentators are not certain as to the meaning of these "multiple envelopes in the formal structure of the text." what purpose they might serve. or how they fit in with the documentary hypothesis.[29]

The pages that follow show that what is known as the Priestly redaction of Genesis 1-3:25 is shaped by the definition of art (τέχνη) that structures the discourse in every one of Plato's dialogues. In fact. the chapters concerned with the creation and fall make up the opening frame of a ring composition. which is counterbalanced on the responsion side of the sequence by the flood narrative (which conforms to the definition of animals in Plato's *Statesman*). Recognizing that a Platonic definition serves as the pattern that orders the sequence of events in these chapters of Genesis makes it obvious that the breaks and doublets. the terminological differences. the changes of style, and the shifts in perspective are not simply anomalies. inconsistencies. and disjunctions that appear in the final composition because previously existing documents were imperfectly amalgamated. Seen in light of Plato's forms and with some knowledge of the traditional frames of reference, it becomes apparent that the these opening chapters in Genesis represent a completely unified "performance." What makes the case so powerful is that the story of the creation and fall combines all the different branches of the definition set forth in the Plato's *Sophist*, the first definition of the *Statesman*. as well as numerous other parts of the system outlined in other dialogues in the Platonic collection.

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[28] David M. Carr. *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville. Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1996). p. 1-77.

[29] Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake. Indiana, 1986), pp. 8. For a bibliography of studies that have analyzed the interconnecting sequences in Genesis, see Gordon J. Wenham. "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern. Literary. and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), pp. 437-457.

Art, Production, Divine Originals

Fire

*Separation. Discrimination
Division Like from Like
Good from Bad
Purification of Souls
Outward and Inward
Invoives Discourse and
Speech*
Air

Water

Earth
*Discrimination of Lifeless
Bodies*
Image, Likeness
*Living Bodies
Fulling and Furbishing
Plants. Seeds. Fruits*

Fire

Air

Great and Small

*Living. Animals
Water
Swimming Animals
Water (Fish)
Winged (Fowl)*

In the beginning **God made** the **heaven** and the **earth.** ²But the **earth** was unsightly and unfurnished. and darkness was over the deep. and the **Spirit** of **God** moved over the *water.* ³And God said. Let there be **light.** and there was **light.** ⁴And God saw the **light** that it was *good.* and God divided between the **light** and the darkness. ⁵And God called the **light** Day. and the darkness he called Night. and there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And **God** said. Let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the **water,** and let it be a division between **water** and **water,** and it was so. ⁷And God made the **firmament.** and God divided between the **water** which was under the **firmament** and the **water** which was above the **firmament.** ⁸And **God** called the **firmament Heaven.** and **God** saw that it was *good.* and there was evening and there was morning. the second day.

⁹And God said. Let the **water** which is under the **heaven** be collected into one place. and let the **dry land** appear. and it was so. And the **water** which was under the **heaven** was collected into its places. and the **dry land** appeared. ¹⁰And God called the **dry land Earth** and the gatherings of the **waters** he called **Seas,** and God saw that it was *good.* ¹¹And **God** said. Let the *earth* bring forth the *herb of grass bearing seed* according to its kind and according to its **likeness,** and the *fruit-tree bearing fruit* whose *seed* is in it. **according to its kind** on the *earth.* and it was so. ¹²And the *earth* brought forth the *herb of grass bearing seed* according to its kind and according to its **likeness,** and the *fruit tree bearing fruit whose seed* is in it. according to its kind on the earth. and **God** saw that it was *good.* ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the **third** day.

¹⁴And **God** said. Let there be **lights** in the firmament of the **heaven** to give **light** upon the **earth,** to divide between day and night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for years. ¹⁵And let them be for **light** in the **firmament of the heaven.** so as to **shine** upon the **earth,** and it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two *great* **lights.** the *greater* **light** for regulating the day and the *lesser* **light** for regulating the **night.** the **stars** also. ¹⁷And God placed them in the **firmament** of the **heaven.** so as to **shine** upon the **earth.** ¹⁸and to regulate day and night. and to divide between the **light** and the darkness. And God saw that it was *good.* ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said. Let the *waters* bring forth *reptiles* having *life,* and *winged creatures flying above the earth in the firmament of heaven.* and it was so. ²¹And God made great *whales.* and every *living reptile* which the *waters* brought forth according to their kinds. and *every creature that flies with wings* according to its kind. and God saw that they were *good.* ²²And God blessed them. saying. Increase and multiply and fill the *waters* in the *seas,* and let

the *creatures that fly* be multiplied on the *earth*. [23]And there was evening and there was morning. the **fifth** day.

[24]And God said. Let the *earth* bring forth the *living creature* according to its kind. *quadrupeds* and *reptiles* and *wild beasts* of the *earth* according to their kind. and it was so. [25]And God said. Let us make *man* according to our **image** and **likeness**, and let them have dominion over the *fish of the sea*, and over the *flying creatures of heaven*, and over the *cattle* and all the *earth*, and over all the reptiles that creep on the *earth*. [27]And God made *man*, according to the **image** of God he made him. *male* and *female* he made them. [28]And God Blessed them. saying, Increase and multiply. and fill the *earth* and subdue it, and have dominion over the *fish of the seas* and *flying creatures of heaven*, and all the *cattle* and all the *earth* and all the *reptiles* that *creep on the earth*. [29]And God said. Behold I have given to you every *seed-bearing herb sowing seed* which is upon all the *earth*. and every *tree* which has in itself the *fruit of seed* that is sown. to you it shall be for *food*. [30]And to all the *wild beasts* of the *earth*, and to all the *flying* creatures of heaven, and to every *reptile creeping* on the *earth*, which has in itself the *breath of life*, even every *green plant for food*: and it was so. [31]And God saw all the things that he had made, and, behold, they were very *good*. And there was evening and there was morning, the **sixth** day.

[1]And the heavens and the earth were finished. and the whole world of them.

[2]And God finished on the sixth day his works which he made, and he ceased on the seventh day from all his works which he made. [3]And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. because in it he ceased from all his works which god began to do.

[4]This *is* the book of the *generation of heaven and earth* when they were **made**, in the day in which the Lord God made the *heaven* and the *earth*. [5]and every *herb of the field* before it was on the *earth*, and all the *grass of the field* before it sprang up, for God had not *rained* on the *earth*. and there was not a man to cultivate it. [6]But there rose a *fountain out of the earth*, and *watered* the whole face of the earth. [7]And God formed the I *of dust of the earth*, and *breathed upon his face the breath of life*, and the man became a *living* soul.

[8]And God *planted a garden* eastward in Edem, and placed there the man whom he had formed. [9]And God made to spring up also out of the *earth* every *tree* beautiful to the eye and *good for food*, and the *tree* of *life* in the midst of the *garden*, and the *tree of learning* the **knowledge** of *good* and *evil*. [10]And a river proceeds out of Edem to *water* the *garden*, thence it divides itself into four heads. [11]The name of the one, Phisom, this it is which encircles the whole land of Evilat, where there is gold. [12]And the gold of that land is *good*. there also is carbuncle and emerald. [13]And the name of the second river is Geon, this it is which encircles the whole land of Ethiopia. [14]And the third river is Tigris, this is that which

Food for the Body
Food for the Soul
Serious.
Knowledge of Virtue
(Good and Evil)
Original

Image, Likeness

The Hunter
Power and Art, Acquisition
Conquest. Hunting
(Divided into Land
and Water of another Sort
Angler and Sophist
Diverge). Living Animals
Hunts Animals. Land
Animals. Tame (Human)
Hunts Humans
by Persuasion. Privately
Eyes

Waking Eyes
Semblance, Tools
Mimicry
Persuasion
Private Inducement
Gift (Love)
Baits Hook with Promise of
Virtue

flows forth over against the Assyrians. And the fourth river is Euphrates. ¹⁵And the Lord God took the man whom he had formed. and placed him in the *garden* of Delight. to cultivate and keep it. ¹⁶And the Lord God gave a charge to Adam. saying. *Of every tree which is in the garden thou mayest freely eat.* ¹⁷ *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—of it ye shall not eat. but in whatsoever day ye eat of it. ye shall surely die.*

¹⁸And the Lord God said. *It is* not good that the **man** should be alone. let us make for him a help suitable to him. ¹⁹And God formed yet farther out of the *earth* all the *wild* beasts of the *field.* and all the *birds* of the sky. and he brought them to Adam. to see what he would call them. and whatever Adam called any *living* creature. that was the name of it. ²⁰And Adam gave names to all the *cattle* and to all the *birds of the sky.* and to all the *wild* beasts of the field. but for Adam there was not found a help **like** to himself.

²¹And God brought a trance upon Adam. and he slept. and he took one of his ribs. and filled up the flesh instead thereof.

²²And God *formed the rib* which he took from Adam into a woman. and brought her to Adam. ²³And Adam said. This now is bone of my bones. and flesh of my flesh. she shall be called woman. because she was taken out of her husband. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife. and they two shall be one flesh.

¹And the two were naked. both Adam and his wife. and were not ashamed.

²Now the *serpent* was the most *crafty* of all the *brutes* on the earth. which the Lord God made. and the *serpent* said to the woman. Wherefore has God said. Eat not of every tree of the garden? ³And the woman said to the serpent. We may *eat* of the *fruit* of the *trees* of the *garden.* ⁴but of the *fruit of the tree* which is in the midst of the *garden.* God said. Ye shall not *eat* of it. neither shall ye touch it. lest ye die. ⁵And the serpent said to the woman. Ye shall not surely die. ⁶For God **knew** that in whatever day ye should eat of it your **eyes** would be opened. and ye would be as gods. **knowing good** and *evil.* ⁷And the woman saw that the *tree* was *good* for *food.* and that it was pleasant to the **eyes** to look upon and beautiful to contemplate. and having taken of its *fruit* she ate. and she gave to her husband also with her. and they ate. ⁸And the **eyes of both were opened.** and they **perceived** that they were naked. and they sewed fig leaves together. and made themselves aprons to go round them. ⁹And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the *garden* in the afternoon: and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the *trees of the garden.* ¹⁰And **the Lord God called Adam and said to him.** Adam, where art thou? ¹¹And **he said to him. I** heard thy voice as thou walkedst in the *garden.* and I feared because I was naked and I hid myself. ¹²And **God said to him.** Who told thee that thou wast naked. unless thou hast eaten of the

Does Not Know
Simple

Ignorant
Public
Demagogue
Purification of Obstacles
Education, Disease
Rougher
Chastisement, Admonition
Publicly Refutes Vain
Conceit of Wisdom

Education, Deformity
Smoother, Private
Advisement so Stupid
People Think They Know
Only What They Know and
No More

Public, Statesman

tree concerning which I charged thee of it alone not to eat? [13]And Adam said. The woman whom thou gavest to be with me—she gave me of the *tree* and I ate. [14]And the **Lord God said to the woman,** Why hast thou done this? And **the woman said.** The serpent **deceived** me and I ate.

[15]And the **Lord God said to the serpent.** Because thou hast done this **thou art cursed above all cattle and all the brutes of the earth,** on thy breast and belly thou shalt go, and thou shalt eat earth all the days of thy life. [16]And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy *seed* and her *seed,* he shall watch against thy head, and though shalt watch against his heel. [17]And to **the woman he said,** I will greatly multiply thy pains and thy groanings: in pain thou shalt bring forth children, and thy submission shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

[18]And to **Adam he said,** Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and *eaten of the tree* concerning which I charged thee of it only not to eat—of that thou hast eaten, cursed *is* the ground in thy labors, in pain shalt thou eat of it all the days of they life.

[19]Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the *herb of the field.* [20]In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for earth thou art and to earth thou shalt return. [21]And Adam called the name of his wife *Life,* because she was the mother of all *living.* [22]And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and clothed them.

[23]And **God said, Behold, Adam is become as one of us, to know** *good* and *evil,* and now lest at any time he stretch forth his hand, and take of the *tree of life* and eat, and *so* he shall live for ever—[24]So the Lord God sent him forth out of the *garden* of Delight to cultivate the ground out of which he was taken. [25]And he cast out Adam and caused him to dwell over against the *garden* of Delight, and stationed the cherubs and the fiery sword that turns about to keep the way of the *tree* of *life.*

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RESULTS

Two main questions served as the focus of this inquiry. Now that we have completed our investigation, how shall we answer them?

My response to the first question is that Plato's dialogues are not strictly an expression of prose writing. They are also an oral literature created by way of a traditional system of composition. As such, they are the recorded document of a philosophy of education that existed prior to and during the shift from mnemonics to the phonetic alphabet as the primary technology for storing and preserving communication.

My answer to the second question is that there *is* a "doctrine" in the written dialogues and it is open to all learners. The Platonic doctrine has to do with the techniques and conventions of the traditional system itself. Further, there are many explicit statements in the text that correspond to Aristotle's explanation of the key tenets of this teaching.

In this, the penultimate chapter, I shall first recapitulate the main lines of the route taken to arrive at this answer. Then I will review the original hypotheses in light of my findings.

Since the acceptability of the hypotheses can be measured to some extent by comparing their explanatory power against other, competing hypotheses, I will, in the course of the review, draw attention to those aspects of the investigation that demonstrated the advantages of my theory in dealing with the problem relative to other interpretations. The theory has allowed us to uncover a consistent and hitherto unidentified pattern in Plato. It can deal with inconsistencies and anomalies that cannot be reconciled in other approaches. It can account for more of the evidence than alternative explanations. It can also shed light on evidence that was not deemed relevant by rival interpretations. Moreover, it can be used to diagnose the errors in those other views. For all these reasons, I maintain, my theory presents a more comprehensive account than competing views and therefore, it has more to recommend it than major alternatives.

Recapitulation

Chapters One through Eight of this study presented the theory, the problem, the argument, the evidence, and the competing theories of interpretation. The remaining chapters considered the definition of τέχνη in selected passages as examples of the different versions of this structure, examining at the same time the way the prose discourse conforms—in whole or in part—to an identical multi-part sequential order. These chapters in the second half of this study also explained how certain repeating "patterns" of argument may be used to identify, in Plato's writings, some of the doctrines of Aristotle's report; and how they lead to

the fundamental principles governing the construction of Plato's mnemonic.

Chapter One argued that the changes in our culture and education brought about by the current revolution in communications technology are analogous to the changes in Greek education wrought by the transition to the use of the technology of the phonetic alphabet. This historical context set the stage for the exploration of the dialogues in this study. The first chapter considered the findings of Rys Carpenter and Milman Parry, and the way their work was developed by scholars associated with the University of Toronto—McLuhan, Eisenberg, Innis, Havelock, Frye, Bogdan, Gooch, or their associates—Ong, Yates, and Whitman. I cited the evidence that dates Plato's writings to the time period of the transition from orality to literacy. I also pointed to evidence that shows that texts composed during the shift from speech to writing tend to preserve many oral features, and they also reflect the tension and competition between oral and written modes of communication. I argued that we should expect to find in Plato's writings evidence of this tension and competition along with traces of these oral patterns.

In the second chapter. I presented the evidence for the problem known in the history of interpretation as "the riddle of the ancient Academy"—Socrates' critique of writing, the gaps and omissions at crucial points in the dialogues, as well as the discrepancy between the philosophy in the collected works and the testimony of Aristotle and the later commentators concerning Plato's doctrines.

The third chapter offered a preliminary critique of the theory of communications technology of the Toronto School (especially Havelock and Ong), and also of the formulation of the "riddle" problem. Then. I laid out the questions. hypotheses. rationale. objectives. a tentative explanation of the method that was employed in this project. as well as a capsulization of the argument.

Chapters Four and Five pinpointed the issues in Plato interpretation that have been the focus of recent debate. These two chapters dealt with inconsistencies and disjunctions first, between different passages in any one dialogue; second. between different dialogues in the corpus, and third, between the philosophy presented in the collected works and the doctrines that were ascribed to Plato by Aristotle and the later tradition.

In the chapter that concentrated on anomalies in individual dialogues as well as in the Platonic canon as a whole. I identified the obstacles to the interpretation that have led many commentators to conclude that there is no unified systematic underpinning to Plato's writings. I drew a parallel. Whereas in Milman Parry's day. studies of ancient Greek literature sought to answer the two-part "Homeric Question:" (Who was Homer? and What do his writings represent?), I pointed out that the current debates in Platonic studies center on the two-part "Plato Question:" (Why did Plato write dialogues? and How should they be interpreted?) In the case of Homeric poetry. Parry showed that the poets were able to recite the epics from memory through the use of mnemonic formulas—stock phrases that fit into a given metrical

unit and join with all the other formulas to "make up a diction that is the *material* for a completely unified technique of verse making" (Parry 1971: 329). In the case of Plato's dialogues. I asserted. the topics. and their interconnections. make up a system of education in the use of a technology that provides the *forms* for a completely unified technique of philosophical discourse making. The research in Chapter Four showed that existing paradigms for interpreting Plato's philosophy all presuppose a modern concept of authorship and textual formation. I demonstrated that the theory of oral traditions provides an explanation for every one of the issues at the center of current debate. and that it can account for difficulties that other theories cannot explain.

Chapter Five dealt with discrepancies between the philosophy in the dialogues and the theoretical principles Aristotle attributed to the Pythagoreans and to Plato. Here. I looked closely at the two passages that scholars have deemed most relevant to the case of the "riddle of the ancient Academy." The first was Aristotle's testimony in the *Metaphysics*. In this text. Aristotle said that Plato's contribution to Greek philosophy was that he assimilated Socrates' universal definitions and the Heraclitian theory of motion to the system that was invented by Pythagoras and developed further by his successors. The second report. in the *Physics*. contained Aristotle's remarks about the "unwritten doctrines." These passages were examined in order to develop an outline sketch of the main tenets of the doctrine of principles. This chapter went on to reformulate the "Plato Question." and showed that the "system" and "doctrines" Aristotle describes involved a memory system based on the proportions of the musical intervals which he says was invented by the Pythagoreans and refined by Plato. At the end of Chapters Four and Five. I explained how understanding the techniques and conventions used by the Greek oral culture to store and preserve knowledge in living memory makes it possible to comprehend the doctrines Aristotle explained in his report. thereby removing some significant incongruities between the philosophy in the collected dialogues. and the system and doctrines credited to Plato by his successors.

At the end of Chapters Four and Five. I showed how putting an understanding of the historical evidence together with the information about how oral technologies of communication worked. allows us to distinguish four different kinds of irregularities that we should expect to find in Plato's texts. Three of these were classed as inadvertent consequences of a long-term process of composition and transmission. Only one would qualify as a calculated plan. I argued that corruptions and omissions that occurred during the transmission of the dialogues from antiquity to the present day: disruptions and inconsistencies that characterize works composed by way of an oral traditional system: and the confusions brought on by adjustments Plato made to the Pythagorean tradition are the types of discrepancies that should probably be classed as inadvertent. The gaps and blanks in the doctrine that must be filled in by the learner fall into the category of a deliberate. educational strategy. Separating the anomalies that are

a consequence of inadvertence. from those that reflect the educational aim of the dialogues. put us in a position to sort through and make sense of some of the inconsistencies and disjunctions in Plato's writings. so that we could move ahead with the task of unraveling the esoteric teachings

Chapters Six through Eight developed the critical tools that enabled us to work through the problems with our reconstruction of this ancient philosophy. The purpose of these three chapters, taken together, was to develop a theory that was based on a more accurate picture of Plato's role in the transition from orality to literacy.

Chapter Six took a closer look at studies that have identified parts of the puzzle, but have provided only pieces of the synthesis that has been missing. The purpose of this chapter was twofold. The first goal was to identify the major alternative interpretations of the "riddle problem." A superior theory should be able to account for more of the evidence than alternative explanations. To make the claim that my theory has more to recommend it than other ways of looking at the issues surrounding the Platonic system and doctrines. it was necessary to distinguish the main strategies of interpretation in play today. and to determine the commitments entailed by each approach in terms of the evidence included or excluded by each approach. The second aim was to revisit the parts of the theory of communication contributed by Havelock and Ong in order to sort out the errors in their findings. This investigation showed that the approaches to interpretation that have arisen since the advent of modern historical and literary-critical methods of textual of analysis (including the Toronto theory). all take for granted that Plato's texts were formed in the same way that contemporary books are created. This model of literary production has predisposed commentators to ignore. reject. or explain away textual features produced by the long-term process that has shaped the material in works composed in this traditional medium. Our understanding of traditional compositions led us to reject most of the paradigms of interpretation that dominate current philosophical analyses of Plato. and to amend and reorient the findings of Havelock and Ong.

The research in Chapter Seven provided the theoretical basis for the argument that Plato should be placed on the oral side of the transition from speech to writing. I presented the evidence that shows that during the time in which the dialogues were composed. Greek education was still largely oral, and recitation from memory remained dominant in all aspects of the culture. This was found to be consistent with statements in Plato. Moreover. references to reciting famous philosophical discussions from memory in Plato's writings suggest that there was an oral tradition of philosophy *distinct* from the poetic and sophistic traditions. I reconsidered the evidence concerning ancient mnemonics in Cicero. Quintilian, the *Ad. C. Herennium libri IV.* and in Plato's dialogues themselves. This evidence confirmed that there were two different strands of the memory tradition. both of which were traced to Pythagoras. who was said to have learned it from the Egyptians. One branch. associated with the poets and sophists, utilized a

technique of memorization that employed backgrounds and images. The other branch of the tradition de-emphasized the use of images and focused instead on a technique of dividing and arranging in an orderly manner the material to be remembered. I showed that Socrates in the dialogues explicitly condemns the "memory art" of both the poets and the sophists—a reflection of the tension and competition between oral and written technologies during the time in which the dialogues were put into writing—and that he argues instead for "a superior kind of study" that downplays the use of images, emphasizing a procedure of division and arrangement into sequential patterns. Further, I demonstrated that this superior study described by Socrates has all the attributes Aristotle mentioned in connection with the Pythagorean system of idea-numbers. I also proved that the passages in the *Republic* cited by Havelock to bolster his argument that Plato was inventing abstract, literate categories do not provide this support. Socrates attributes these classifications to the Pythagorean tradition which was, at the time the dialogues were written, hundreds of years old.

Chapter Eight represented the culminating stage in the construction of the theoretical tools needed to put together a key section of the puzzle of this ancient philosophy. For the final refinements to the theory of communications technology, we considered issues first anticipated by Toronto scholars, McLuhan, Eisenberg, Bogdan and Gooch. This chapter revisited the question of an esoteric doctrine. Up to this point, the focus of the investigation centered on the "oral" side of the "oral tradition" and on the way that the repeating patterns at different levels of organization aided composition and performance. Since the notion of esotericism entails modes of communication that can be grasped only by an inner circle of advanced or initiated disciples, we shifted the lens of the inquiry to the other side of the equation. This chapter considered the "tradition" in "oral tradition," concentrating on the way that long established customs of usage affect the reception of the work by the audience. I introduced the findings of John Miles Foley (a successor of Parry and Lord and a follower of Ong), on the interaction of composition and reception in works patterned on the traditional style. He explained that the recurrent patterns in traditional systems were "ancient technologies of representation" that bore "secret meanings" beyond their literal sense. These meanings were grounded in a context of a long-term history of shared institutionalized practices and conventions, and they "continued to deliver their secrets as long as there was an audience or readership who knew the code." Since these "secret meanings" depend on the composer and listener's shared cultural knowledge, the meanings that were understood by informed ancient audiences gradually over twenty-five hundred years became closed to learners as the traditional art was eclipsed by the technology of writing. After that, I pointed to statements from Plato's dialogues and from Xenophon 's *Memorabilia* in which Socrates says that right "from the start" and "all the time," he has been "speaking of" the "covert" object of investigation, even though his listeners "have not noticed." He says that his

doctrine is to be found "in his deeds if it is not in his words." Socrates' companion accuses him of avoiding any clear statement that defines what a philosophical notion *is*, offering only comments about what it *is not* (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, IV. II. 13 - 35). I proposed that these paragraphs in the *Republic* and in the *Memorabilia* offer a succinct description of the way in which the techniques of hiddenness and indirection are used in the dialogues to conceal the esoteric doctrines in "plain view." I then suggested that the figure-ground relationship might serve as a model for understanding how the doctrines could have been openly communicated without our noticing them. The research in this chapter suggested how we might devise a critical apparatus that would allow us to tune into the meanings encoded in the formulaic structures. What created an initiate, I argued, was repeated exposure to the tradition. Observing many different presentations of works shaped by the same style allowed the original spectators to learn the rules governing performances in this medium. I suggested that there might be a way to simulate the type of exposure to repeated usages that would have made Plato's original public knowledgeable. I proposed that if we select one key example of a sequence (i.e., one formula type or theme), search through different books to find passages that follow the rules of this one convention, and then collect together all these instances of the same type or theme and compare them, then some of the background meanings encoded by the traditional frames of reference should start to become recognizable. Such an exercise, I argued, would make it possible to realign our perception of the discourse: to shift from the foreground organization of the content that varies with the situation, to the alternative organization that forms its stable background. It should also make it possible for us to begin to put together the "ideal" version of the pattern by combining the elements listed in any one class in each instance, to come up with the total repertoire—the "field of discourse"—from which each version draws. Attending to all the items in a collection under each topic, I asserted, would enable us to discern not only where parts of the structure were omitted in any one version, but to tentatively fill in some of the missing parts of the puzzle.

Chapter Nine offered an in-depth investigation of the *Sophist*. I considered the specification of the lines that distinguish the sequence of topics (τόπος) that make up the definition of "art" or technique (τέχνη), focusing, in particular, on the branch of the sequence that deals with imitation (μίμμσις). I demonstrated that this sequence of topics manifests all the features of a formula type or theme. I also showed that it is made up of a series of topics in patterns characteristic of the mnemonic place system: that the text provides instructions for generating a geometric structure and mapping philosophical distinctions onto it; and that the geometry consists of the ordered arrangement of "frames within frames" that typifies the typology of the ring composition. I argued that drawing the lines between the topics is the basis for the construction of the "places" that function as the "background" or "frames of reference" in the Platonic memory system. Each place is a number, and the collections of items classed in the spaces in *this*

definition are the "kinds of forms" that organize and store the "ideas." I also pointed to statements that tally with Aristotle's explanation of the doctrines held by Plato. I showed, in addition, how this dialogue establishes a classification scheme such as Aristotle attributed to the Pythagoreans. It is arranged into columns and it draws on the notions of polarity, analogy and symmetry. Numerous statements advocate the use of a method of dialectic which emphasizes division and the orderly arrangement of the content of the composition. At the same time, the use of deceptive images is discredited. Through the analysis of this one sample definition, I showed how to pinpoint the exact location of some of the gaps, omissions, and other intentional irregularities that constitute the "indirect" portions of the doctrines that are "unwritten." I also showed how the identification of the absences in a sequence is the pre-requisite to filling in the missing pieces of the puzzle—of that which is unwritten—by using the material that is "written" in conjunction with the rules and procedures of the system. The division into kinds by forms, the sequential order of the topics, and the geometric structure of the definition that was the outcome of this investigation served as the template and "standard of correctness" for uncovering all the different variations on it in other books.

The analysis in Chapter Ten investigated the passages that have been the focus of debate concerning Plato's views of poetry, sophistry, writing, and deception: namely, the critiques of the written word in the *Phaedrus, Protagoras,* and *Seventh Letter,* as well as the comments concerning poets and poetry in the *Republic* and the *Laws.* I showed how these passages that have figured so prominently in this debate are all structured in a string patterned sequence that conforms exactly to the order of the topics in the definition of the imitative branch of productive art in the *Sophist.* I demonstrated as well that variations on the pattern follow the principles of expansion, compression and alteration of the basic motifs. Observing multiple instances of the same pattern made it more obvious why the forms are not easy to identify. They are buried in layers of prose, so that the sequence of topics is embedded in the narrative, forming a kind of stratum, just as we would expect from a text composed during the transition from speech to writing. In this and the previous chapter, I pointed out that Socrates establishes a number of proportions that correspond to Aristotle's description of the Pythagorean system, where sensibles and intelligibles are matched to numbers based on the ratios of the musical intervals. Given that the passages that have been the focus of the discussion concerning Plato's views of poetry, sophistry, writing, and deception in philosophy are all composed by way of the same sequence of forms, and also that there is no case of a major discussion of these subjects where parts of the series do not occur, I concluded that it is not likely that the order of the topics is either random or accidental. These passages are all variations on a pattern that we recognize from our studies of the oral traditional style.

Chapter Eleven proved that this sequence of forms—or parts of it—may be found in every

dialogue in the canon. including most of the works that have been regarded as spurious (recall that the *Definitions* and the *Epigrams* are the two exceptions). This exercise produced a line-up of different versions of the pattern so they could be compared one to another. Setting passages "side by side." as the dialogues themselves suggest (*Rep.* 435a; *Stsmn.* 285b-c), added to our understanding of how the ideas are organized into a collection under each topic in the definition. It is clear—at least in the case of the branch of productive art concerned with imitation—that the sections of the dialogues that deal with this topic all manifest an architectonic that is consistent with the conventions of the traditional art. Generating so many different examples of the same sequence was a device that helped us break out of the thought barriers imposed by our immersion in the technology of writing, so that we could glimpse into the thinking of a civilization whose conventions for communicating were foreign to us. This definition was only one example. Yet. it is clear that the same principles that govern the structure of the imitative aspects of production apply to other. more complex. definitions in the system. That all these passages in different dialogues manifest the same underlying sequence of topics brings more weight to bear on my theory that Plato's writings represent an entire tradition of philosophy. The argument is strengthened further by the fact that we found so many overt references to philosophical ideas that correspond to the key tenets of the doctrines Aristotle attributed to Plato. Finally. the fact that the same multi-part sequence may be observed in every one of these books suggests that the oral traditional system itself is the unifying feature that ties together all these passages from diverse works in the collected dialogues.

In Chapter Twelve. I demonstrated that the same sequence of topics is repeated in Xenophon's report of Socrates in the *Memorabilia*. and in Aristotle's *Poetics*. This confirmed the presence of the pattern in two other ancient Greek texts. Confirmation of the definition in two independent sources tipped the balance in favor of the conclusion that this style is the product of a tradition. The chances are almost nil that an identical sequence with so many parts could accidentally turn up in works credited to two other authors.

The identification of all these different iterations of the sequence put us in a position to recognize that Plato's definition of τέχνη influenced the structure of the opening chapters of both the Chinese Taoist classic. the *Chuang Tzu*. and the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. Chapter Thirteen presented the versions of the pattern from these two books. Confirmation of the definition in these two other ancient source texts brought the total number of independent sources to four. The evidence was now of a wholly different order of plausibility than if the pattern were just in Plato's dialogues. or even in works credited to other authors in the Greek philosophical tradition. Random chance cannot account for the occurrence of the multi-part definition in the *Chuang Tzu* and in the Bible. All this converging evidence suggests that these books are independent renderings of the same philosophical system.

Chapter Fourteen. now underway, restates the results of the study. I started off by recapitulating the main lines of the argument and I pointed out that an understanding of traditional modes of composition has cleared up many of the perplexities between Plato's philosophy and the ancient accounts of it. The philosophy that has come down to us in the form of a textual record had its origins in orality. The rules and procedures that give shape to the discourse. taken together with the explicit statements of doctrine in the dialogues. provide the parameters for the construction of the framework of the defining categories of Plato's philosophical system. Thus. the system and doctrines may be recovered based on information provided in the dialogues alone—without recourse to the secondary accounts provided in books credited to other ancient authors (though there is no doubt that for a complete account of the traditional system and doctrines. these other texts would have to be consulted). The philosophy uncovered by this study is consistent with the descriptions of Plato's system offered by Aristotle and other early sources. It manifests the features of the "division and composition" branch of the mnemonic described by Yates. as well as the geometric ring structure identified by Whitman. All this evidence leads to the conclusion: sections of the *Memorabilia.* the *Poetics.* the *Chuang Tzu,* and Genesis 1-3:25 were all influenced by the oral tradition of philosophy set forth in Plato's dialogues.

Findings of the Study

Thus. the two hypotheses in this study were both confirmed by the analysis. First. the formal structures identified in the discourse in the dialogues substantiate the hypothesis that Plato's writings are the literature of a tradition of philosophy distinct from the poetic and sophistic schools. The dialogues manifest patterns that characterize works written by way of the oral traditional medium. Second. we found numerous statements that provide evidence of a Platonic doctrine in these writings. This evidence verifies the hypothesis that the doctrines in the collected dialogues deal with the rules governing the traditional system itself. The doctrine also has features corresponding to the main points of Aristotle's description of Plato's philosophy.

Confirmation of the First Hypothesis

Plato's writings have attributes associated with written works composed by way of an oral traditional system.

(1) All the different versions of the definition we uncovered were patterned into a sequence of topics that follow (in whole or in part) a progression that proceeds from beginning to end treating each stage in a nearly identical order (Parry 1971: 357). This feature. known as the "formula type," is one of the main characteristics of literature composed in the traditional style.

(2) The analysis pinpointed statements in the dialogues that displayed inconsistencies and disruptions typical of orally-derived compositions. where anomalies indicate the imperfect amalgamation of contributions from more than one source. Remarks made in the opening sequence of the *Sophist*. in tandem with comments made in the *Theaetetus*, *Statesman*, and *Parmenides* were cited in this regard. So too were discrepancies between Books II and III of the *Republic* relative to Book X. The conflicting comments concerning the value of poetry were also cited in this regard.

(3) Works composed in a traditional style encapsulate the oral society's storehouse of cultural information so that it can be passed on from one generation to another. They often do this by compressing all experience into a great story. in fact a compendium of different stories loosely linked together by the device of one or two agents that speak and act in a fairly consistent way. Plato's dialogues clearly satisfy this requirement. For we have in Plato a great collection of philosophical stories. inexactly connected to one another through the character of Socrates or one of the Strangers.

(4) Another feature of orally derived texts is the way in which the formal and ideational pattern of topics manifests a nearly identical shape. Events change with the particular situation but the overall outline and ideational content remain constant from one instance to the next. This feature is a larger and more complex structuring technique than formula types. In the case of Homer. these sorts of patterns indicated that the "memory art" based on topics. images. and numerical place markers was used to shape the verse. In Plato, the method of dialectic based on the topics (which organize groups of ideas into different places) are used to structure the philosophical prose discourse. Alike things are grouped in "collections" so that "causes," "effects," "contraries," "comparable things," and "related things" are located in similar regions in a geometric space. We discovered that the discourse in the dialogues moves through the same sequence of ideas every time the topic of discussion concerns poetry, sophistry, writing or deception in philosophy. We found in addition that division and collection is one of the mnemonic techniques that make up the method of dialectic. It is used to separate topics into different places and to group analogous ideas together. In contrast to the sophisticated memory art that employed images that bore no relation to the original idea, the system in the dialogues uses accurate images and advocates as well the use of sequential order and the systematic arrangement of the elements in a composition.

(5) Oral compositions accomplish pattern variation through expansion, compression, or modification of basic motifs. At the beginning of the transition from speech to writing, when the oral composition is first converted into a written text. contradictions and disjunctions that were not really noticeable in a recitation become more obvious when it is possible to scan backwards and reflect on how the subject matter is organized. Anomalies marking the places where traditional elements were woven together are much more apparent in a text that can be read and re-read. In consequence, there is a

tendency to elaborate on the original work by adding words to smooth out the disjunctions where traditional elements were patched together. However, early prose continues to conform to the previous rules for orality. When statements are added to cover over discrepancies in the work, they tend to be inserted into the topics. so that the sequential order of the divisions remains the same, even as the work is expanded and becomes more intricate in structure. This feature, too, is characteristic of the Platonic texts, as we demonstrated at length in this study. The sequential order of the topics remains the same even though the forms in many dialogues are "expanded and split by other words."

(6) The investigation pointed to the structures in Plato that manifest the pattern of the "topic" mnemonic—or ring-composition—that is the residue of the oral traditional style and a defining feature of Greek art created during the Geometric period. Moreover, the doctrines concerning the mnemonic system in Plato match Yates's description of the branch of the memory tradition that relied on the principles of division and orderly arrangement of material. My analysis of the *Sophist* proved that the ring composition forms a "geometric pattern," wherein the discourse is structured in a "nested" organization of "frames within frames." It also showed that the geometric structure serves as a schematic framework for the ideas, so that the more general or inclusive aspects of the topic come first, descending thence through a series of dichotomized classifications to subdivisions containing more specialized or individual aspects. Moreover, the sequence of proportions of the divided line, Brumbaugh's findings concerning the "elaborate latent structure" of the *Republic*, as well as Thesleff's discovery of the "pedimental architectonic" in the *Phaedo, Symposium, Theaetetus, Protagoras, Euthydemus* and *Meno* were offered as evidence that the discourse in many other dialogues is organized into a symmetrical A-B-C-B-A pattern as well.

(7) A narrative pattern defined by frequent digressions is a characteristic of the traditional style. In my commentary on the *Sophist*, I pointed out that digressions were intrinsic to the method of collection. Meaning is built up gradually over a number of passages. In order to get a clear picture of any one conception, listeners must consider material presented in one passage in light of material established previously in the same work. They must continually go back over the statements in prior sections of a dialogue, make correlations based on the modes of argument and methods of explanation that govern the structure of the discourse in these texts, and integrate all this information to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning. Often, explanations given in a passage shed new light on previous material, forcing the reader to backtrack, reassess and either verify or correct a previous understanding. The material from any one dialogue must then be collected together with conceptions established in other works. A further point is that what often appears to be a digression is in fact a full explanation of a topic, i.e., one that proceeds from the beginning to the end of a definition, covering every

topic in the right order without leaving out a single place in the sequence.

(8) In oral compositions. the author is anonymous. In the dialogues. Plato has no voice within the discourse. This is what we would expect from an orally-derived literature structured "on the lines" of the traditional medium.

In short. the underlying system that unites all of these works may be found in the way that the subject matter. or topics that come up in the course of the dialogue's discussion are connected thematically and spatially to form the overall contours—the shape and structure—of the narrative sequence.

(9) Parry argued that the scope and economy of the oral diction in Homer was too complex to have been created by a single individual. Each of the epics. he maintained, must be the composition of one bard working within the conventions of a system constructed by generations of oral poets over centuries My understanding of scope and economy as applied to Plato's works is different from Parry's findings in connection with Homer. Still. I maintain that the system used to frame all the different variations of the definition is too complex. extensive. and rich in alternatives to have been made up by any one person. The extreme economy of the wording throughout the dialogues—especially evident in passages that present the descriptions of the lines in the *Sophist* and the *Republic*—makes it unlikely that these works are the *creation* of a single philosopher—though a number of them could well have been *composed* by one person or put together by a single *redactor*.

There is. of course. a fundamental difference between poetry and philosophy. Whereas the poets used pre-fabricated formulas that linked together in rhythmic sequences so that the poets could extemporize in hexameter verse under the stress of performance. the philosophers—exemplified by Plato's Socrates—composed by way of the "forms." using a system of mental classifications wherein related ideas are grouped in collections that are tethered one to another in an ordered arrangement based on a geometric framework (*Rep.* 509e-601b). To express a new or different idea, the poet had to choose an existing formula and model the new one after it. so that the oral diction was extended by *imitation of an original pattern*. In contrast. to express something new using Plato's forms. the philosopher drew upon the collection of notions in an existing definition to give shape to a conception. so that the forms were extended by *participation in the original pattern*. rather than by a strict imitation of it. Thus. in comparison with formulas. the forms described in the Platonic texts provide a much more flexible and versatile system for giving expression to new and different thoughts.

Scholars have either not noticed or not understood the significance of these patterns embedded in the text. Nor have they observed the evidence confirming that Plato held the doctrines that Aristotle attributed to him. The study demonstrated that there *was* a connection between the shift of Greek culture from "oral" to "written" systems of education. and Aristotle's comments concerning Plato's "unwritten"

teachings "

Confirmation of the Second Hypothesis

There is a doctrine in the dialogues and it is open to every serious and careful learner. The doctrine is accessible by way of Plato's dialogues in the sense that all the information required to uncover this teaching is contained in the treatises. However, readers must have some knowledge of the techniques and conventions of the oral style in order to reconstruct the esoteric, unwritten doctrine. The unwritten doctrine must be "produced" by those who know the system well enough to ascertain where the structure is missing, and to use their understanding of the techniques that generate the structure to go on and fill in the unwritten pieces. Reconstructing the doctrine involves a kind of puzzle or test for those "subtle thinkers" who are able to refine the matter (the definitions or sequence of topics), from the total written content, to combine this with a knowledge of the forms (the formal structure of the system), to put this together with the method (the mechanics that determine its construction), and to move on and reason out the highest principles. Thus, the unwritten doctrine is impressed on the written dialogues in the way that the content is organized into an overall form, so that the genuine teaching is not just in the content but in the form of the content—in the rules that go into the creation of the structure, and in the completion of the incomplete parts of it in accordance with the principles of the system.

(10) The doctrine is accessible by way of the oral traditional system described and explained in the dialogues themselves. Over the course of the commentary, I highlighted statements that describe the educational aim of the dialogues as well as comments that denounce the practice of deception. Remarks that establish the dialogues as the paragon of education indicate that making learners work out the principles for themselves was probably an educational strategy rather than an attempt at secrecy or prevarication. I explained how the doctrines were embodied in the explicit statements of a dialogue's written content; how they are implicit in the text by way of the structuring principles of the traditional system; and how they may be inferred by taking the information that has been given (or written), and using the method of dialectic to fill in the gaps. Said differently, the study has spelled out two ways in which the dialogues carry out their stated educational goal—through hiddenness and indirection. This research has shown that the Platonic writings contain both an exoteric and an esoteric doctrine. The exoteric teaching, on the one hand, is presented in the direct, "written" statements of Socrates or one of the Strangers. However, the condensed presentation (economy) of the philosophy in the text creates many different layers (a depth or profundity) of meaning so that the formulation of statements seems ambiguous and hence, it is subject to various interpretations. This makes the genuine teaching seem *hidden* in the discourse so that the learner has to sort it out from the range of possible interpretations. The esoteric

doctrine. on the other hand. must be contributed by the learner through a knowledge of the tradition. However. even the most appropriate words—or numbers—are unreliable and inaccurate for expressing the ideas at what Aristotle calls the "apex of the system." To ascend to the ultimate principles. words and numbers must be treated as "hypotheses. underpinnings. footings and springboards" (*Rep* 511b). Or. in *Chuang Tzu*'s version of the angler. "The fish trap exists because of the fish: once you've gotten the fish. you can forget the trap. The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit: once you've gotten the rabbit. you can forget the snare. Words exist because of meaning: once you've gotten the meaning. you can forget the words." *Chuang Tzu* adds. "Has anyone met a man who has forgotten words so that I can have a word with him?"[1]

Further to this hypothesis concerning words. and in line with the passage concerning Socrates' secrecy in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. the genuine teaching may be found in "his deeds if it is not in his words." It can be ascertained through the separation and combination of forms and by determining "what is constant behind many shapes and guises." In other words. from the unspoken but consistent use of the "language rules" that govern the order and arrangement of the topics into formal patterns. Further. the authentic doctrines are rarely presented in statements of "what a conception is." but rather. "what it is not." What any conception "is" must be reasoned out based on the information given about what it "is not." and by way of the principles that may be discerned from the deed of Socrates' statements. That is. by understanding why Socrates presents an idea in any context: what he is doing when he raises an issue. or by discerning how a topic is described (in terms of the *object*. the *state* of mind. the *power*. or the *cause*. for example).

(11) In the course of this study. I pointed to statements in the Platonic treatises that correspond to Aristotle's account of Plato's theory. At the same time. I have shown that there is reason to suspect that at least some of the works credited to Aristotle—the *Poetics* for instance—conform to the prescribed patterns of the traditional medium. This makes them subject to the same types of irregularities associated with the Platonic compositions and probably some that are unique to the Aristotelian texts. However. even though there may be discrepancies of detail between Aristotle's account and the Platonic writings. overall. the teaching in the dialogues still meshes with the descriptions of it in the *Metaphysics*.

The style of the dialogues indicates that the text is rooted in an oral tradition of philosophy and that the scheme which Plato adapted was a memory system comprising many different techniques and devices that were developed and refined by generations of thinkers over centuries. Comparing the characteristic

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[1] Chuang Tzu, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. trans.. Burton Watson. (New York. Columbia University Press. 1968). p 302.

features of the memory art attributed to Simonides and the style found in Homer with what we find in the dialogues allows us to tap into some of the rules of this medium. Understanding the devices used to structure the composition allows us to make more sense of Aristotle's comments concerning Plato's doctrines. Now that we have looked closely at how the system works in the dialogues, we can see why Plato confused the "uninitiated" audience in his public lecture when he described the good in terms of magnitudes, sciences and numbers.

The Explanatory Power of the Theory of Communications Technology

The theory allowed us to uncover a consistent and previously undetected pattern in the discourse in Plato's dialogues and in four other ancient texts thought to have been written during the same time span (428-319 B.C.E). Thus, the theory sheds new light on material that is of acknowledged philosophical and religious significance. The theory was able to suggest solutions for a group of problems that scholars have come to recognize as critical and to which the philosophical community has previously only drawn attention. Thus, the theory is better than its competitors in dealing with outstanding issues of interpretation. Since the theory allowed us to expose the inadequacies of other explanations, it is to that degree more powerful than rival perspectives. For all these reasons, my amended version of the theory of communications technology has greater explanatory value in comparison with interpretations offered by others.

Evidential Advantages. These advantages provide a presumption in favor of the theory, but they do not of themselves decide the issue. Not only only does the theory provide the best explanation of the evidence, it also has implications for a wider domain that will require further testing. On a number of dimensions, the theory interacts with the data of the riddle problem and connects this data into a broader network of evidential relations so that all the facts come together in an even larger paradigm. That the sequence of topics in the model definition from the *Sophist* appears in the discourse in Aristotle's *Poetics*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the book of *Chuang Tzu*, and the opening chapters of Genesis suggests that the written records of all these different compositions were structured in accordance with the definition described and explained by the doctrine set forth in Plato's dialogues. I have shown that this discovery is consistent with existing evidence: textual, epigraphic, linguistic, and archeological. For example, Diogenes Laertius reported that Plato incorporated into the dialogues a number of earlier works, while the testimony of Aristobulus, Clement, and Eusebius related that the system of Pythagoras and Plato borrowed heavily from an early translation of the Hebrew Laws. Given the number of reports, it would be surprising if there were no evidence of the definitions in other texts that have been dated to the same time in history. Moreover, it stands to reason that if the dialogues are the literature of an entire tradition, we should expect to find the definitions in other ancient works from this time period, especially if the body of material that

survived is large enough to provide a broad enough sample to serve as a basis of comparison.

The presence of an identical underlying pattern in many different ancient books was the main source of textual evidence. Research by scholars on living oral traditions. especially South Slavic epic. provided the evidence to back up the theories concerning the interaction of composition and reception in ancient traditions that survive only in manuscripts. Inscriptions on the Dipylon vase. the *Parian Chronicle*. the Moabite Stone. on bones. shells. jade. seals. coins. and brick provided the epigraphic evidence for the development of Hebrew. Chinese. and Greek writing. as well as for the pre-Platonic origins of the memory system. Linguistic usage was brought to bear on the late dating of the *Laws* relative to other dialogues in Plato's collection. Pottery provided archeological evidence for determining when the alphabet was introduced into Greece. It was also used to date the Geometric typology of the ring composition to the Mycenaen Era. Physical evidence unearthed along the "Silk Road" confirmed that the people from the East were in contact with Western people for millennia. Therefore. the convergence of many different lines of evidence provides support for the theory. The discovery therefore fits into a broader network of evidence and to that extent. it opens up rich avenues for further research. Based on evidential criteria then. the theory has the advantage over the alternatives.

Philosophical Advantages. The philosophical advantages offered by the theory are by far the most important context for judging competing hypotheses. The ultimate test is how satisfactorily the theory integrates the diverse components of Plato's philosophy. The discovery that the definitions are the underlying threads that tie together the discourse in all of the dialogues makes possible a synoptic perspective on the Platonic texts. As far as I know. my theory is the only one that offers such an opportunity. Moreover. the theory holds out the potential that this unified perspective may be extended to encompass works that have come down to us from other traditions as well. On the basis of philosophical criteria then. my theory has the advantage over rival alternatives.

Historical Advantages. The historical advantage of the theory is a function of its ability to situate Plato in a plausible historical context. to generate a new dimension of continuity from Plato to Aristotle. and to forge historical links with the source texts of other traditions that were hitherto considered unconnected. By contrast. many of the prevailing approaches to interpretation. including Havelock and Ong's version of oral theory. stress the *discontinuity* of the tradition. Most of these alternative theories make their case by rejecting large portions of the evidence from the documents and materials that have come down to us through history. The fact that so many different texts written during the same time frame appear to manifest identical structural patterns means that evidence that has gone unrecognized backs up the ancient reports of historical connections (in Aristobulus. for example). that scholars have previously ignored or dismissed. From a historical point of view then. my theory has the advantage.

Biographical Advantages. The theory also fits in with the biographical evidence. It explains why it *appears* that none of the Platonic texts were lost and why Plato's writings *seem* to have survived transmission intact whereas works by other ancient authors did not fare nearly so well. Once we understand the dialogues as the literature of a tradition, we can see that there would have been many different versions of this material, making preservation of so many of the works in this style more likely. As well, Aristotle and the other ancient authorities most often refer to the dialogues by their titles. Both Plato and his rival, Xenophon, wrote an *Apology*, a *Symposium*, and a *Republic*. We also know from the lists of books recorded by Diogenes and others that many philosophers were credited with works with the same names as the double titles of Plato's dialogues (e.g., the *Statesman*). Since the titles matched the names of the books in the Platonic canon, it was *assumed* that when an ancient commentator referred to the "*Symposium*," the reference was to a book written by Plato: this could be why it looked like all of the corpus survived. In addition, seeing the dialogues as the product of a tradition of philosophy helps explain why so many texts that could not have been written by Plato—indeed, over one third of the canon—were nevertheless preserved as part of the collection from so early on. Even though it was well known in antiquity that certain treatises were not authentic, they were passed down, Thrasyllus related, because their inclusion was part of an "earlier tradition."

The theory reduces the urgency of the need to identify and expunge from the canon those works that could not have been written by Plato. Since every dialogue in the collection preserves part of the tradition, they are all, in a sense, authentic. Even though they may not have been *written* by the historical Plato, they could well have been either *composed* or *compiled* by him. At the same time, the theory provides a way to deal with inconsistent statements without contesting the legitimacy of certain dialogues because they contain remarks clearly at odds with explanations in other books in the collection. The theory also does away with the need to develop elaborate philosophical theories to explain anomalies, inconsistencies and disjunctions. Knowing that in reconstructing Plato's philosophy, we are dealing with a puzzle that contains pieces from many different sources and from different time periods will make it possible to devise techniques for discriminating among those sources and dates.

The theory provides a more comprehensive interpretive approach to Plato. It is more powerful in organizing and exploiting the data as evidence: it has advantages over competing theories in the contexts of history and biography; and it avoids and exposes the difficulties of other leading interpretations. Above all, my theory opens up new territory for further research and exploration.

This leads to the conclusion, and the final chapter of this thesis.

CONCLUSION

We have now put together a major section of the puzzle of this ancient philosophy of education. It is time to stop, take a step back, and look at how all the pieces fit together into a total picture.

The conclusion is that sections of the discourse in every dialogue in the Platonic collection, along with passages in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, the *Chuang Tzu* and Genesis 1-3:25 in the Old Testament are ordered in a multi-part sequence of topics that corresponds, point by point, to the mnemonic pattern of the definition of art (τέχνη) described and explained in Plato's *Sophist*. Passages in all these ancient texts appear to be shaped by the techniques and conventions of an oral traditional system of philosophy.

Current research indicates that the source texts from three different philosophical and religious traditions—Western philosophy (Plato and Aristotle); Chinese Taoist philosophy (stemming from the *Chuang Tzu*), and the Jewish and Christian religions (beginning with the first three books of Genesis in the Old Testament)—were all committed to writing during the same time frame (428- 301 B.C.E.). These treatises that were written down when civilizations moved from orality to writing manifest the same underlying structural patterns. That key sections of these ancient books manifest an identical formal pattern means that the tradition was not confined to Plato but was more widespread. Converging lines of evidence from many fields—textual, epigraphic, linguistic and archeological—suggests that earlier oral material came to be documented by means of a system of philosophy that existed prior to and during the shift to writing as the technology for storing and preserving communication. The implication is that the memory technology of an ancient philosophical tradition has been preserved in different versions and transmitted down through history to the present day.

Plato's dialogues provide a course of *education* in the traditional style (in that numerous texts in the collected dialogues set forth, both directly and indirectly, the doctrines that explain the rules and procedures governing the definitions that make up this traditional system).[2] The discourse in the *Chuang Tzu* makes use of many of the topics in the upper regions of the system that are rarely stated explicitly in Plato. Aristotle's treatise on *Poetics* and sections of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* have all the markings of texts *composed* on the lines of the system. The Old Testament stands out in contrast to all these other texts. The structure of Genesis 1-3:25 suggests that the system was used to form the final version (what

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[2] Though clearly, other works in the Platonic collection—especially the texts historically regarded as spurious—merely use the definitions.

Document Theorists refer to as the Priestly redaction of earlier source material). If sections of these writings store and document different versions of the same pre-literate tradition of philosophy; if Plato's dialogues preserve the techniques of instruction needed to gain access to this mnemonic system; if the patterns are consistent from one group of texts to another, so that sections of the system that are never given by way of express statement in Plato are presented in other sources; then if we put all this material together, we should have a sufficient body of evidence to reconstruct a significant portion of the framework of definitions that make up this ancient mnemonic technology.

Relationship Between This Study and Previous Research

The argument in this study was based on evidence from the frontiers of a number of different fields of research. I looked at the problems with our existing paradigms for reconstructing and interpreting the textual evidence that has come down to us from the ancient world. I traced the history of thinking about these problems and then combined the most plausible explanations offered over the course of several centuries of discussion, with an amended version of the research concerning the transition from orality to the technology of writing. The objective was to locate this study within the body of existing knowledge in order to show that *my argument is contingent on a mere shift in emphasis in the interpretation of previous findings.* In fact, a great portion of this study was devoted to specifying exactly where and why I branch off from previous thinking, so that my research can be duplicated and my results verified or falsified. Basically, I part company with previous research in my view that the findings concerning the formulaic structures in Homer must be extended (with modifications) to Plato as well. The most widely held view is that Homer, Plato and Aristotle each represent a radically different stage of language (with Homer epitomizing poetry, Plato the transition, and Aristotle the fully developed technical vocabulary conducive to abstract philosophical writing). I argue that Homer and Plato represent different strands of the Greek oral tradition: (Homer the poetic and Plato the philosophic), while Aristotle stands for a later version of the branch of the tradition found in the dialogues. Whereas the current scholarship sees Aristotle as an unreliable source for the views of his philosophical predecessors and posits a radical disjunction between Plato and Aristotle, I see Aristotle as a more or less accurate account of Plato, with the proviso that some of the Aristotelian texts are likely the product of a tradition themselves. Another point of departure from the most widely accepted view is my position that our understanding of all these ancient treatises has been hampered by applying to them literary methods derived from the study of modern texts.

The Challenge to Credibility

The challenge to credibility is in accepting the possibility that there is a connection between all these different source texts. Nevertheless, this study cited the research that shows that the presence of the system in these books fits in with the textual. epigraphic. linguistic. and archeological evidence. so that the conclusion is upheld by intersecting lines of support from a number of different fields of inquiry. Moreover. I have shown how evidence that does not fit in with the historical and theoretical paradigms that prevail today but which *does* fit in with my theory has either been ignored by scholars. explained away. or simply not taken seriously.

Judaism. Christianity and Islam can be traced to a common source. Is it such a strain on credibility to follow this lineage further back to the ancient Greek. Chinese and Hebrew traditions?

While this discovery forces a reconsideration of certain prevalent pre-suppositions concerning the authorship and literary formulation of these ancient texts. it confirms and enriches a great deal of existing philosophical and theological scholarship. In fact. considerable support for my theory comes from the way that statements in Plato intermesh with statements in the other ancient texts cited in this study. For example. reading the definition in Genesis in tandem with the variations on the theme in Plato makes it apparent that these patterns serve as connecting links between texts. so that parts of tradition concerning the first three chapters in the Old Testament can be clarified by means of information set forth in the patterns in some of Plato's works. These connections add dimensions of meaning to understandings that have been passed down as part of our intellectual heritage. but which have no textual basis in the Bible itself. The serpent. for instance. is one of the most enigmatic characters in the Old Testament. We only gain from the knowledge that the Lord God is the shepherd who tends mortal creatures. while the snake is the lying sophist who hunts the tame human animals with the intention of taking their souls for food (*Soph.* 222a). Or conversely. that the serpent is classified as a "superhuman creature" (*Stsmn.* 275b-d) along with others beings "like lions. some like centaurs. or similar monsters. A great many are satyrs or chameleons. beasts that are masters of quick change" (*Stsmn.* 291b) such as "caterpillars" (*Chuang Tzu.* Watson 1968: 30). The new information *confirms* traditional understandings *without negating* the theology concerning the creation and fall. Perhaps this is because Greek philosophy and Western religion have never been wholly disconnected. Whereas the Bible has been in the foreground of the Western world view. Greek thought has always served as a philosophical background to Western Judaism and Christianity.

If the material from other traditions can be integrated without any radical challenge to the existing religious tradition (and vice versa). it may be due to the fact that down through history. the words of the *content* have provided a concrete limit to the interpretation of these books. However, interpreting these

ancient texts word for word is one thing: comprehending them fully and apprehending the cultural implications behind the words requires an altogether different level of understanding. What appears to have been missing—or lost—is an understanding of the traditional implications encoded by Plato's *forms*. The identification and comparison of multiple instances of the same pattern across different texts makes it possible for us to reconstitute enough of the cultural code to recognize the traditional context of the forms. thereby *expanding the range of meanings* that are already so much a part of our own traditions concerning these texts.

This gain will. of course. be offset by some loss. What is at stake are the interpretive paradigms that rely on contemporary models of authorship. models that have arisen. as I have shown. over the last three hundred years. Also at stake is the assumption that the ancient world was made up of isolated groups of primitive people who had neither the capacity nor the technology for abstract thought. As it turns out. a significant challenge will be to our assumptions about the nature of technology itself.[3]

Limitations of the Study

This study attempted to develop a theory that would apply to the dialogues as a whole and not just to a few texts in the collection. To respond adequately to the complexities of the riddle problem and to the question of a Platonic system and doctrine. it was necessary to draw on material from many different fields (philosophy. religion. education. history. oral theory. communications. and literary theory). Scholars from these diverse disciplines may find my use of the material from their domains too brief and oversimplified. Refining a theory. testing it across so many books. and then compressing it into a study—even one of this size—made brevity and oversimplification inevitable. Yet. the compression brought a compensating benefit: synthesizing the findings from separate disciplines and drawing upon them to make a comparison of the definition across so many different books yielded insights that could not have been won from more concentrated research on individual texts. I trust that future studies can provide the in-depth treatment that will compensate for my selective use of material from other domains.

As I see it. the greatest limitation has to do with my own ability to understand the system and to carry out the task of recollection. As I stated at the outset. I am certain that my reconstruction and argument contains a number of errors—both great and small. Therefore. one of my objectives has been to make explicit my reasoning and to lay out the investigation in a way that makes my results falsifiable by subsequent investigators.

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[3] Many assume that communications technology involves external tools for storing and retrieving information. Plato rejects the use of external instruments: statements in the dialogues recommend instead training the human mind to store things in memory and to retrieve them from within.

This inquiry was also restricted to one narrowly circumscribed example. the definition of τέχνη. and in particular. to the branch of it concerned with imitative production. This is a significant limitation in itself. Though I specified many of the joints and articulations that connect this definition to other parts of the system. and traced this one theme through all the dialogues. into the texts of Xenophon and Aristotle. and then over to the *Chuang Tzu* and the Old Testament. it remains. in the end. one test case. Putting together the total system and *confirming its presence* in these ancient treatises as well as in other texts remains only a future promise based on the findings in this one instance. My theory and the ground I have covered in this study represents only the genesis of a new approach. Even as the theory finds explanations for some problems. it opens up new questions that will require further testing and future study.

Directions for Future Research

A host of issues raised by this discovery remain unresolved. I have offered some partial answers. and I can suggest a research agenda for the future. The challenge now is to identify works that contain passages composed in this style and to reconstruct. as fully as possible. the field of discourse for all the definitions that make up the system as well as their interconnections. Also needed is a way to integrate the material from these different traditions so as to expand our picture of the ancient world. There would also be value in bringing together methods developed in other fields and applying them to Plato and vice versa (for example. the literary. linguistic. and historical methods developed for analysis of the Bible would prove useful in the field of Platonic studies). We need. in addition. to develop and extend the range of techniques for verifying findings. More detailed suggestions for this work are as follows.

The most straightforward extension of this investigation will be to specify further, and thus to establish more convincingly. the system of techniques and conventions at all levels of organization. The present study was limited to the presentation of one sample of the definition from each of the works cited in this investigation. The next step would be to expand the catalogue of occurrences to include every instance of the definition from each book in order to continue building up the collections in the topics. The goal would be to carry out the reconstruction of the greater portion of the system that is alluded to indirectly by the smaller. written portions of the philosophy set forth in the written statements in these treatises.

A second extension of this inquiry. and the next phase of my own research. will concentrate on delineating the forms of the "method of dialectic" in all of these treatises. This research will trace the use of the sequential procedure outlined in the mathematical and methodological sections in the *Timaeus* and in the *Philebus* (where it is called the method of "inquiry, learning and teaching"). I believe that this

pattern determines the links between the topics in the definition of the imitative branch of production in the *Sophist*. Since the background places in the memory system are fixed, there is need of a method for establishing the divisions between classes, for collecting together the various ideas that may be assigned to a topic, for moving about in the system, and also for *separating and combining definitions*. Just as I traced the theme and variations in this study, the next stage of this research will follow the thread of the method of dialectic across all of the books that appear to be connected to this tradition

The need to synthesize material from different traditions looms large on the future research agenda. Even a preliminary reading of the versions of the pattern in the *Chuang Tzu* and in Genesis shows that these variations use the patterns in a slightly different way from how they are used in Plato. The material in Plato's dialogues seems much more homogenous in comparison. As we begin to recognize what is redundant in a presentation of a definition, we find that the more unique the rendering of it, the more valuable the information it conveys. Integrating the material from these different traditions will provide an incalculable advantage in the effort to recreate the definitional framework for the total system.

In addition, this research should proceed hand in hand with efforts to fit these textual findings together with evidence from linguistics, archeology, and other domains so as to enlarge our image of the ancient world.

Methodology is another important avenue for further study. A great deal of work needs to done to refine the techniques for studying the patterns and to develop new methods that will make it possible to sort through anomalies and to cross-check findings across traditions

Implications

I hope that the present research will provide a secure foundation for future research as well as a point of departure for more concentrated studies.

When we began this investigation, I suggested that the modulation from an oral to a written technology in ancient Greek civilization might shed light on the technological revolution now underway in our own time, and that the story of the ancient Greeks is, in some sense, our own story.

As it turns out, we are confronted with the same challenge that faced Plato. Archytus and the ancient Chinese editors and compilers. Remember that the Chinese historians and librarians were twice charged with locating surviving manuscripts from all over the empire in order to recreate the imperial collection. Plato and Archytus were collaborating on an effort to find, record and preserve certain "treatises and some classifications" in order to "keep alive" some sort of "incredible doctrines" (*Ltr. II* 314-315). The law-givers and educators were instructed to conduct a search and they were told that if they found "connected and similar matter in the verse of our poets. in our prose literature, or even in the

form of simple unwritten discourses of the same type as the present. by no means neglect it but get it put into writing" (*Laws* 811 a-e). So too. in our own era. we need to locate all the treatises that are "connected" in a "similar" way. collect them together. and put them into a new form.

In Plato's search. the "patterns" in the *Laws* served as the guide for discerning which documents should be included in the collection. In our own time. all of Plato's dialogues provide the "standard" against which other compositions composed in this manner can be measured. Just as the dialogues are a collection of many earlier works composed in the traditional medium. so we need to put together a compendium of works composed by way of this traditional system. Guided by the art of memory and the science of dialectic set out in Plato. we need to search through all the books that have come down to us from the ancient world in order to "recollect" the knowledge "we had once before" (*Rep.* 501b; *Phd.* 75e).

We learn from the *Laws* (811a-e) that there was some sort of "divine guidance about the matter." so that the content in many different compositions came to be "framed" so that the "discourses are marshaled. as it were. in close array." If Plato was correct. then these ancient texts in which the subject matter is linked by the definitions constitute the "unwritten law." i.e.. the body of laws and other oral traditions of our forebears. We were told that these ancient traditions

> are the mortises of a constitution. the connecting links between all the enactments already reduced to writing. and preserved by it. and those yet to be recorded. a true corpus of ancestral and primitive tradition which. rightly instituted and duly followed in practice. will serve as a sure shield for all the statutes hitherto committed to writing . . . (*Laws* 793b).

"Today our means of retrieval of historical cultures and events is so extensive." said Marshall McLuhan. "that it involves our time in depth in ancient cults and mysteries."[*] Perhaps the discovery of the "connecting links" between all these "enactments already reduced to writing" comes at a time when our own technologies for storing and retrieving communication make it easier to locate material and to build up the data base from which to recover the "true corpus of ancestral and primitive tradition" that is the philosophical foundation of our own cultural knowledge.

Central to this dissertation was the argument that the revolution in Greek culture was not from an absence of technology to the technology of the alphabet. Rather. the shift was from a technology of memory to a technology of written record. Plato's dialogues show the participants in the abstract philosophical discussions of the day relying on powers of memory that surpass anything we are familiar with in our literate civilization. In dialogues like the *Phaedrus* and *Sophist*. Plato's Socrates and Stranger classify this art of memory as a form of τέχνη. Just as the Greek mnemonic technology was defined as

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Marshall McLuhan. *From Cliche to Archetype*. (New York: The Viking Press Inc.. 1970), p. 118.

a kind of τέχνη. so too. our own philosophical theories of technology are all grounded in the definition of τέχνη: for we use its descendants to describe developments in communications and information storage and retrieval occurring today.

Τέχνη—art. technique. craft. skill. expertise. profession—is the defining idea that forms a bridge across all these different texts. and between these ancient civilizations and our own. Τέχνη has been a defining feature in the development Western culture itself. and we are convinced that technology holds the key to our future. As it turns out. it may hold a key to our past as well. Technology in the ancient world was far different from our own. Yet. by defining τέχνη and living through a revolution in communications technology. the ancient philosophers set the stage for our own civilization.

So it turns out that the ancient Greek story *is* relevant to educators at the dawn of this new millennium. I am optimistic that studies of these ancient literatures can be pursued with profit to our understanding of a parallel technological transformation now in progress in own society. by teaching us what shaped the modern world. and what might shape the future.

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