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Platonic Education:
Teaching Virtue in a Constantly
Changing Moral Culture

by

Michael Richard Hart
(0557961)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Dedication

To Edward and Hilda Garside.

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work; there was no collaboration involved.

Translation and Transliteration

I have, for the most part, used the translations of others; and in respect to Plato's works, I have generally favoured the Loeb editions, except for the *Republic*, in which I chose Allan Bloom's excellent version. Whenever rendering Greek into English, I have typically, although not always, opted for straight transliteration (διαλεκτική into *dialektikē* for example), but in the case of proper nouns, I have taken something of a middle ground, i.e., rendering Σωκράτης as Sokrates rather than as Sōkratēs. However, in the case of some names, such as Plato, I have followed tradition.

Abstract

In this thesis I shall argue (1) that for Plato 'moral' education, rightly understood (or 'Platonic education' as I shall call it), can be an effective method for *cultivating* virtue in *non-ideal societies*; (2) that Platonic education is a process that occurs (or Plato hopes might occur) through an *engagement* with some of the dialogues; (3) that Platonic education strongly mirrors *Sokratic discourse* in its aims; (4) that Plato's whole approach to education should be understood mainly from the context of the problem of *teaching virtue* in imperfect societies; (5) that Plato intends some of the dialogues to serve as a *propaedeutic* for a possible education in virtue and not as a method for creating fully virtuous people. Lastly, (6) Platonic education is primarily concerned with *human* virtue, and insofar as it can support a notion or notions of civic virtue, it cannot do so unequivocally. The evidence for these claims is found not chiefly in the educational programmes and theories of the *Republic* and the *Laws* but in a number of techniques, such as protreptic rhetoric, life-models, argumentation, and myth, which Plato employs in some of the dialogues. Platonic education is specifically designed to function in imperfect societies. With this in mind therefore, an additional concern of this thesis is with whether we could imagine any of Plato's educational principles or techniques being used to improve moral education today.

Introduction

One of the problems that Plato was seeking to address in writing the dialogues is one that still faces us today: *the problem is not merely 'how do we teach virtue?' but 'how do we teach virtue in an imperfect society?'* In the ideal polis this problem does not exist because here the dream of true education becomes a reality.[1] But such a society has never existed; virtue has never been taught. For Plato virtuous people did exist, but their virtue was derived not from teaching but from divine providence.[2] And since, the argument runs, these people have never had the opportunity to practice their virtue for the benefit of the whole community, we remain, as we have always remained, in the dark, that is to say, largely ignorant about the true nature of virtue, happiness, and the good life.

The problem of teaching virtue in imperfect societies rests not necessarily on the absence of adequate teachers, but on the difficulty of such a task in the face of the counter-influence of the prevailing, and state sponsored educational culture.[3] However, for Plato there is still a way of making moral education, if not entirely successful, then at least more effective. The effectiveness of moral education does not depend upon its ability to create *good citizens* only, or citizens who unquestioningly accept the moral culture into which they are born,

but rather it depends upon its ability to create individuals who will try, against all the odds, to become virtuous.

In his simile of the cave Plato gives us a powerful image of our nature in παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας (*Republic* 514a2). As I shall elaborate more thoroughly in Chapter Four, at the heart of Plato's conception of education is the idea that the chief function of teaching is to *turn the soul around* from our shifting and illusionary moral culture towards true being. Education enables us to see our world for what it is, in all its complexity, and to recognise that the moral terms that we employ, and our conventional opinions about 'right and wrong' and 'good and bad,' as well as our conceptions of virtue and character, are in constant flux, never remaining the same and never fully reflecting the kind of truth that would set ethics on a firm footing.[4] Plato directly identifies true education with the ascent out of the cave, and hence with the pursuit of and the desire for wisdom: *education is philosophy*.

According to book 7 of the *Republic*, philosophy (understood as a subject) is the mastery of a group of scientific disciplines guided by the dialectical method. The most thorough education a person can receive is an education in philosophy, the aim of which is knowledge of the Good. Nowhere in any other dialogue are we given so complete a picture of the education of the philosopher, and it is one

that is set within the context of the ideal polis; it is taught in the state

by the state for the state.[5]

Therefore, for many scholars Plato's theory of education is found

almost exclusively in his 'Utopian' works.[6] Such a view is advanced

most strongly by I. M. Crombie. According to Crombie 'Plato never

talks about education except as it would be in his Utopias, and what

he would recommend about education in normal circumstances has

to be conjectured from this.'[7] For Julia Annas Plato's discussion of

education in the *Republic* appears to be a 'structural part' of his

overall argument, and therefore 'he is not offering a detachable

"philosophy of education" that can safely be extracted from the

argument about the state.'[8] The aim of education in the *Republic*, and,

indeed, the *Laws*, seems to be clear, the creation and maintenance of

'Utopias.'

But did Plato write about 'Utopias'? The term utopia (no-place) is not

one that Plato used,[9] although it is in many ways an appropriate

name. The problem with the term utopia, however, is its necessarily

negative connotation with respect to the practicability of the

imagined society to which it is assigned.[10] What Plato envisions in the

Republic is a city in speech (369a4, 369c9, 472d9-10, 592a11-b1), a

eutopia (good-place), or, to be precise, a *kallipolis* (527c2),[11] a fine,

beautiful or noble city. Is Plato's ideal polis a serious proposal for political action?

As Myles Burnyeat observes, 'the non-existence of the ideal city is a fact of history, not of metaphysics':[12] utopian thinking is, and always has been, a feature of political theorising.[13] This is why we can appreciate Halloway's maxim,[14] and it is also why one must exercise caution when approaching questions of intent and practicability.[15] Even if some of Plato's 'proposals' are impossible,[16] whether by design, naivety or error, we are still presented with a thesis about how a person can attain the highest virtue.

Contra Popper, some scholars dismiss the idea that Plato's Kallipolis is a blueprint for political action,[17] and in light of this the question of practicability takes on a new significance.[18] According to Leo Strauss,[19] in his *The City and Man*, the just city is impossible, 'it is impossible because it is against nature,' hence 'the *Republic* conveys the broadest and deepest analysis of political idealism ever made,' Allan Bloom concurs.[20] A better course would be to acknowledge that the priority,[21] both ontologically and logically, is with the person and not the city; this is where Plato's real concern lies (and where, moreover, we should look when considering his theory of education).

In writing the *Republic* it was Plato's intention, I would argue, to show the limitations,[22] not of the city first and foremost, but of men, both in their political actions and their private ones.[23] I shall have more to say on this later. In respect to the ideal polis, however, what many scholars stress, quite rightly, is that the just polis of the *Republic* is an approximation[24] of an ideal, and not the ideal itself.[25] The difficulty is not so much in approximating the ideal but in maintaining it, and, as we shall see, Plato was well aware of this.[26]

However, and as I shall argue in this thesis, we are not to understand Plato's theory of education as being one which rests upon either the desirability or the probability of ideal *poleis*, and nor should we understand Plato's contribution to educational theory as being restricted to what we learn from the *Republic* and the *Laws* as such. My interest is not so much with what Plato *says* about education, but rather with *Platonic education*, that is, a process that can occur, or Plato meant to occur, when a person engages with certain dialogues. It is important to realise, therefore, that Platonic education is specifically designed to function in imperfect societies.

I contrast Platonic education with 'Sokratic education,' by which I refer to the process that occurs (or is shown to have occurred) in the world of Platonic drama. These two forms of education are related in two ways. First, Sokratic education is embedded within the medium

of the other, that is, the dialogues; and second, they both share the same aims. The aim of both Sokratic and Platonic education is *to turn people towards the pursuit of virtue*, and I wish to distinguish this form of education from one that has a higher aim, that is, the creation of fully virtuous individuals, people who have attained *perfect human virtue*. I call this form of education 'ideal,' such as the education of the philosopher rulers in the Kallipolis. However, my primary concern in this thesis is with the more limited aim of Platonic education.

Platonic education is carried out through an engagement with the dialogues, through *written discourse*. The written word, however, only has so much power, a power that is commensurate with the level of reality that it is able to communicate. The dialogues are a Sokratic call to virtue; and they can only be such, as I shall discuss in Chapter Four, if they contain no truth. The dialogues are not educational manuals containing facts, but rather they present the reader with various hypotheses on virtue, the good life, and happiness. It is not the task of the dialogues to tell the reader what is true but rather to urge them to try and discover it for themselves. Therefore, like the master they seek to emulate, *the dialogues teach nothing*.[27]

What do the dialogues do if they do not teach? They inform, they entertain, they enrage, and a great many other things. Principally they recommend a method of teaching: *dialektikē* or discussion. The

dialogue is an image of dialectic, its offspring if you will. Sokrates'

reticence to speak of the Good in the *Republic* is not just a testament to

a Sokratic principle, but also, and importantly, it is a reflection on the

educational limitations of the dialogue form.[28] However, even though

the dialogues can only turn a person towards virtue and not lead

them to it, this does not represent a failure: it represents a

fundamental insight into the educative process.

Platonic education uses a number of techniques in order to try to

solicit this end: protreptic rhetoric (which I shall discuss in Chapter

Two), argumentation, and myth (both of which are dealt with mainly

in Chapter Four), 'life-models' (an analysis of which I shall provide in

Chapter Five), all of which are embedded within the dialogues. Of

course none of these techniques is sufficient for the creation of

virtuous people, although Plato does regard them, I shall argue, as a

necessary step towards that end.

Plato may be silent about *why* he wrote dialogues as such, but as we

shall see in Chapter Four, it is reasonably clear why he chooses the

dialogue form over other types of written composition, one which

lends some support to the idea that some of the dialogues could be

seen as having a specific pedagogical aim. The best type of written

discourse has, as well as its capacity to amuse, the ability to move a

person towards the kind of subjects represented within it. The

dialogues, of course, are not mere discourses, accounts on any given subject: they are *stories* containing characters set within a historical (if not historically accurate) context. Therefore, the dialogues are not historical documents, they are *inquiries* interwoven with both history and myth (and the two often overlap); they represent a Sokratic Cycle, a dialogical story of the philosopher and his inquiries. It is a story with a predominately ethical context, and to understand this context represents a major challenge to Platonic scholarship.

In recent years this aspect of the dialogues has come to be recognised by scholars.[29] Angela Hobbs, in her *Plato and the Hero*, stresses the educative aspect of Plato's works and in particular his use of role-models or 'life-models' within the dramatic setting of the dialogues:

> In choosing the dialogue form, Plato…allows us to see a wide range of potential or actual role models in action, whether they are self-proclaimed authorities and guides such as Protagoras and Hippias, *ancien régime* officers such as Nicias and Laches, or charismatic mavericks such as Callicles and Alcibiades. Furthermore, we shall find that through the skilful use of forward-shadowing we are enabled to glimpse not only what their lives are currently like, but what they will shortly become. Far from tossing us vague injunctions, Plato wishes to ensure that our choices are as concrete as possible.[30]

Harvey Yunis, in his "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*," echoes the broad thrust of Hobbs' analysis, arguing that 'Plato's overarching purpose in writing the *Republic* was to effect a change in his readers similar to the change that Glaucon and Adeimantus undergo at

Socrates' hands in the fictional world of dialogue.'[31] According to Yunis 'Plato's purpose as a philosophical writer was not merely to present compelling arguments about how one should live, but to present them in such a way that the reader would most likely be compelled by them to choose to live in a particular way.'[32] This puts Plato in the position of being both a *philosopher* and an educator (indeed, these roles are largely synonymous for Plato), who not only actively seeks to exhort his readers to virtue but also provides, within the formal and literary apparatus of the dialogues, techniques that might in some way contribute to this end.

In this respect I follow Jill Gordon and others in claiming that one of the chief purposes of the dialogues 'is to turn reader and audience toward the philosophical life by engaging them in philosophical activity in the form of deep examination.'[33] A key component of this, argues Gordon, is the literary and dramatic aspects of the dialogues. On this reading, which is increasingly popular, Plato endeavours to affect his readers, not solely through argument, but also through other techniques embedded within the narrative.[34]

The dialogues present us with various claims and counter-claims about how life should be lived, and they, like Sokrates himself, force us to stand back from and to scrutinise the conventions of our society. Indeed, it is integral to this idea of education as an art of turning

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around that, strictly speaking, true education, outside of the ideal polis, cannot be too deeply embedded within the culture that it is seeking to distance us from; one must retain a critical distance from one's culture if one is ever going to be in the position to question it and its presuppositions.

That is one of the reasons, perhaps, that for the most part Plato is so sceptical about the possibility of a public and state run education in virtue. With the dialogues, however, Plato is able to create the necessary distance between the pupil and his moral culture; to present the pupil with a critical view of society without drawing him too close to it and its corrupting influence. It is left to the reader, ultimately, to decide which kind of life is the best and which is the most likely to lead to happiness, and, moreover, which methods are best employed to achieve that end. The dialogues can only take us so far on this journey, they can only *recommend* philosophy, they can only prepare the ground for the pursuit of wisdom; as Sokrates says in the *Euthydemus*, the value of philosophy is something that we have to decide for ourselves (307b7-c6).

How a person responds to philosophy is going to depend largely on how much they have been corrupted by conventional education. In an imperfect society *all* potential philosophers will be subjected to non-Platonic education from an early age; there is nothing Plato can

do about this. Sokrates sought out talented young Athenians, and by such intervention tried his best to repair the damage caused by his educational rivals. Plato prefers a rather different method of intervention. If Plato was unwilling or unable to challenge conventional education in person, then he could at least do so *indirectly*, and perhaps, on account of this, do so more effectively. With a wider audience, and with the benefit of hindsight, and bolstered by his considerable artistic and philosophical ability, Plato thus continues Sokrates' mission.

✦

In modern moral education in the UK and with how morality or ethics is dealt with throughout the curriculum as a whole, the issue is not just with competing claims about virtue or the good life (as it was for Plato)**,** but rather with the educational system's apparent inability or unwillingness to make any strong claims about what they mean by virtue, good character, and the good life. In a diverse society like the UK, there are many ways in which the good life is conceived. In itself this does not necessarily present a problem, that is to say, the issue is not with the fact that moral diversity exists but rather with the impact that its existence has on the ability of government to recommend or establish in mainstream education a robust programme of public moral education. In a morally diverse society no one single and

concrete view of virtue (or whatever term or terms we choose to use) can be privileged over another.

The main issue in moral education today, argues James Davidson Hunter in his *The Death of Character*, is with *inclusivity*.[35] Indeed, in recent years the language of inclusivity has become more pervasive, and not just in the UK, as this sample taken from the Canadian Ministry of Education's *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools* illustrates:

> Character development is the deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes upon which schools and communities find consensus. These attributes provide a standard for behaviour against which we hold ourselves accountable. They permeate all that happens in schools. They bind us together across the lines that often divide us in society. They form the basis of our relationships and of responsible citizenship. They are a foundation of excellence and equity in education, and for our vision of learning cultures and school communities that are respectful, safe, caring and inclusive…Excellence in education includes character development. Through character we find common ground.[36]

The report does not mention in any great detail what *sort of character* that they are recommending *ought* to be developed in schools.[37] We do learn, however, that the *development* of character is threefold: 'it develops a whole student as an individual, as an engaged learner and a citizen.'[38] Hence: 'character development is about excellence in education, communities that are vibrant and caring, and students who will think critically, feel deeply and act wisely.' The language is

predominantly concerned with the nature of character development rather than what character itself is. The exhortation for pupils to *think critically*, *feel deeply* and *act wisely* says very little. The report is wary of charges of indoctrination and is, therefore, eager to point out that character education is not about 'a government imposing a set of moral standards.'[39]

The key thinking here, and one that has been in vogue for many years, and one that is particularly indebted to the influence of Lawrence Kohlberg, is that rather than transmitting to pupils a specific set of moral values one should develop their natural moral capacity: 'character development strives for an ever-growing depth of self-awareness, reflection and understanding';[40] it is about 'the universal attributes upon which diverse communities find common ground.'[41] Inclusivity is an essential element of this: 'inclusivity is not an option; it is a moral choice that must be made and someone must lead the way.'[42] For Hunter there is a direct correlation between the lack of moral content in modern moral education and the drive towards inclusivity:

Against the urgent demand made in every generation for a common moral education, is the question: how can it be conducted in a way that satisfies everyone? What are the moral parameters of its pedagogy? Who defines its principles? How shall these principles be taught, and by whom? By what authority and reasoning shall they be grounded? Every effort to find a solution that is both effective and inoffensive has eventually fallen apart by revealing its particularity[43]

For Hunter, because of the fragmentation of modern society and culture, and, in turn, of the moral culture on which it is dependent 'there has been a dissolution in the system of dispositions that give meaning to our moral vocabulary and coherence and purpose to our moral aspirations.'[44] Therefore, if, as Hunter argues, character is socially embedded, then the disintegration of society will necessarily entail the demise of the dominant conceptions of character embedded within it.[45] In the face of this, the strategies that educators and educational institutions employ are largely ineffective and, indeed, counterproductive.[46] This rests upon what Hunter calls the 'paradox of inclusion,' wherein every generation seeks and fails to make moral education 'inclusive and universal.'[47] This failure is due to the denial or downplaying of the 'particularity' that is 'central to moral reflection and engagement and decisive to character development.'[48] In a bid to deal with the 'expanding pluralism in modern society and culture,'[49] moral education has committed itself to inclusivity in order to neutralise 'the possibility of conflict.'[50] The problem, Hunter states, is this, that

culturally speaking, *particularity is inherently exclusive*. It is socially awkward, potentially volatile, offensive to our cosmopolitan sensibilities. By its very nature it cuts against the grain of our dominant code of inclusivity and civility. In our quest to be inclusive and tolerant of particularity, we naturally undermine it. When the particular cultures of conviction are undermined and the structures they inhabit are weakened, the possibility of character itself becomes dubious. By now, the moral vocabularies available to us are so inclusive that nearly all particularity has been evacuated.[51]

What has given rise to this? The theories of Lawrence Kohlberg in particular have had a massive influence on moral education. One of the defining characteristics of the developmental approach to moral education is its antipathy towards virtue oriented theories of ethics. Indeed, for developmentalists, and Kohlberg especially, the language of virtue, that is, any talk about virtue, habit, character and so on, is not only unhelpful in the pursuit of a viable programme of moral education but also fundamentally flawed. 'The psychologist's objection to the bag of virtues,' complains Kohlberg, 'is that there is no such thing.'[52] Virtues and vices are nothing but labels by which people award 'praise or blame' and have little value, Kohlberg claims, in determining 'moral goals.'[53]

For Kohlberg the most important aspect of moral development is moral reasoning:[54] as James Hunter puts it, 'the essence of morality for Kohlberg was found in the kinds of reasoning brought to bear on situations of tension and conflict – the way a person decides what to do when confronted by a moral dilemma.'[55] The thinking behind this, as Hunter observes, is that by understanding the stages of moral development in children one can get a better understanding of how to educate them morally.[56]

The Kohlbergian response [...] to the problem of value pluralism is to argue that there are real possibilities for moral consensus if development is sufficiently motivated to the highest stages of moral development[57]

As a Kantian, Kohlberg's attitude to virtue and the role of virtue in moral development should not surprise us. However, even Kant, who has often been criticised on the same grounds, finds a place for virtue in his theory of character development.[58]

The central problem is this: that by rejecting the 'bag of virtues' Kohlberg places too little emphasis on the *content* about which moral reasoning is ultimately concerned: as David Carr says 'an account of the nature of morality which focuses pretty well exclusively on moral reason and judgement can hardly be sufficient *or* necessary to comprehend all that we should ordinarily take to be implicated in moral life and conduct.'[59] As Robert T. Sandin observes in his *The Rehabilitation of Virtue*:

Kohlberg's dismissal of the philosophy of virtue as an example of an underdeveloped moralism is a grotesque distortion of the tradition of ethics. Aristotle, who assigned a central place to cognitive factors in moral development and decision making, nevertheless emphasised the importance of nurturing moral traits of character through habit formulation[60]

According to Hunter, developmental psychology has consistently attacked the 'religious and classic virtues associated with strong character,' and in turn has downplayed the relevance of moral content and the particularity central to character and moral culture.[61]

The issue for Hunter is primarily cashed out in terms of the *authority* of moral culture:

I take it as a given that learning (as well as life itself) is dialectical or reciprocal in nature. The individual acts in the world, to be sure, but the world also acts back on the individual. Indeed, a defining moment in this dialectic is the internalisation of that *nomos* as the very structure of our worldview and…the organising categories of our very identity in all its fluidity and complexity. The moral culture, in other words, is not merely the environment within which identity plays out. It is, even more, a reality that frames the categories of identity, structures of identity, and even indelibly stamps identity. Without the authoritative presence of moral culture, internalised into subjective consciousness, there can be no character or "character development"[62]

What people generally understand as good character or what they think the moral person is like is going to originate largely from how they view their relationship with their society, either narrowly in terms of their immediate communities, or more broadly to include the nation as a whole. The more diverse a society is, politically, ethnologically, and intellectually, and in its religions, the greater are the ways in which good character or what the moral person is like can be interpreted and understood. Whether a society is diverse or not, what the majority of its people think is good character is not going to be one which can be divorced from how they see themselves as social entities belonging to a distinct group or community. In each case, for most individuals and their communities, good character or the moral person is 'this' and not 'that' and not 'this *and* that': it is particular.

The particularity of moral culture certainly operates in a way that all of us are conscious or aware of. Even more powerful, however, are the ways in which it frames deeper, unconscious attitudes and attachments. Indeed, the power of culture is always measured by its power to bind us, to compel us, to oblige us in ways we are not fully aware of. In this, particular moral cultures define the horizons of our moral imagination in ways that we are not fully conscious. They set out the possibilities that we can envision in specific circumstances[63]

Therefore, it is part of Hunter's thesis that how character is actually conceived and developed is dependent upon a complex set of factors peculiar to the culture and society from which it originates: 'character may possess a common form but is, by definition, diverse in manifestation and practice.'[64] Hence, from differing ideas of the common good come differing ideas about which model of character will best satisfy the collective aims of society, and, in turn, *differing* educational strategies dedicated to this aim.

Hunter cites the ideal polis of Plato's *Republic* as a prime example of a society with an authoritative moral culture and a strong notion of good character created by and grounded in an effective moral education. However, Hunter is not endorsing the ideal polis, and nor does he think that any reform of moral education today would result in any substantial results, because 'the enterprise of moral education is a prism through which we observe a larger and changing moral culture,'[65] hence:

The question is not about how to reform moral education in order to make it work better, for moral education is inextricably bound to the moral culture within which it is found. Rather, the question is about how moral cultures change and what, if anything, people might do to influence that change in ways that secure benevolence and justice…in the meantime, perhaps the most we can do is to create greater space in our social life (and not just in private life) for what remains of our wide-ranging and diverse moral communities to be renewed and to renew[66]

Is Hunter right to be so pessimistic about the potential that moral education has to restore a strong sense of character? Considering the agenda of inclusivity, perhaps the best we can do is to preserve what little moral particularity now remains. Certainly, a government in a morally diverse society could not easily promote a particular conception of good character, and still less initiate a public and universal programme of education dedicated to that aim.

A good deal depends upon whether character, as Hunter argues, is inextricably bound to particular society and culture; whether or not it may be possible to envision a notion of good character (or indeed virtue) that stands apart from and is resistant to an uncertain and changing society.[67] In England, moral education is seen mainly against the backdrop of civic awareness, political literacy, and of moral and social responsibility, in a word, *citizenship*.

For Plato, however, the effectiveness of moral education in an imperfect society seems to demand *a total divorce between educator and*

government. In modern moral education in England, whether through subjects like Citizenship Education and PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education), or in more traditional subjects (especially religious education and history), the teaching of 'morality' (usually understood in terms of 'values') is one which is firmly placed within a distinct social and political context (liberal, democratic, and multicultural), and it is this context which also forms the basis of how morality and ethical issues are to be understood. The good person is the good citizen and ethical issues are largely those issues which confront the citizen rather than the human. This view, which is still very much in vogue in educational policy, is one which I wish to question in this thesis. For Aristotle the human being *is* a citizen of a certain kind, and a person's civic life, of whatever variety, is (or ought to be) the natural outlet for the expression of or the practicing of virtue; but for Plato, however, virtue in the imperfect society, in contrast to the perfect society, can only be indirectly and secondarily civic: the whole purpose of attaining virtue is to gain that happiness that is peculiarly human, and where one happens to find oneself is of little importance.

Plato would argue that, for the person who wishes to be virtuous, whether he is a Spartan or an Athenian citizen, or a citizen of the United Kingdom, the method is the same, *philosophia*. However, this does not mean that one's duties and rights as a citizen are ignored or

taken lightly, they just become subsidiary to something which is obviously of higher value, one's *psychē*. It is, of course, a good question to ask to what degree one can pursue philosophy (as Plato understands it) and at the same time be recognizable by one's fellow citizens as being a good citizen (as they would understand that concept): for Plato there is very little chance of this. However, the philosopher is not interested in ruling others (not even in the best polis) or taking part in democratic procedures (although he may do so); his interest is with ruling himself and urging others to follow his example.[68] Philosophy helps one to master oneself, not others.

Given the political reality, that is, the diversity of modern society and current educational trends, it would be very difficult to teach a notion of virtue or character that is not in some way understood in terms of citizenship first and foremost. In ancient Greece, in communities far less inclusive than ours, it was natural (and more expedient) to understand virtue as primarily civic (this, of course, was not the case for Plato and Aristotle). Today, in our culturally and religiously diverse society, in which we have many competing opinions on what the moral person is like, we have been forced to give up on the search for true virtue, finding it much easier to swallow the rhetoric of this and the previous government. Instead, and like so many before us, we are content *to be good citizens* (or worse still 'consumers') rather

than *trying to be good humans*. Indeed, we do not even know what it means to be human today.

Can Plato's dialogues address these problems, or perhaps, point the way towards a solution? Despite current educational policy and practice, and indeed the general political, social and ethical climate, I will submit that there is such a possibility, although it is one which, if imbedded within the school system, would have serious repercussions for how moral education is currently delivered within the National Curriculum.

Endnotes

[1] *Republic* 414d4.

[2] *Republic* 492e2-493a1.

[3] *Republic* 492e3-493a2.

[4] Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, trans. P. Christopher Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980 (p.78).

[5] *Republic* 420b2-c2.

[6] 'Plato's Theory of Education is developed formally and with some approach to systematic constructiveness in two Dialogues only: the *Republic* and the *Laws*' (R. C. Lodge, *Plato's theory of Education*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1947, p.1). Lodge's book is the most comprehensive in the English language that deals explicitly and exclusively with Plato's educational theory, although primarily within the context of the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Earlier works, such as those by Richard Lewis Nettleship and John Ernest Adamson, are restricted to an examination of Plato's theory of education as outlined in his *Republic*.

[7] I. M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines 1. Plato on Man and Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962 (p.199).

[8] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1981 (p.80).

[9] It was Thomas More who created the distinction (handy for us here) between a practical utopia, a good-place, and a mere utopia, a no-place, and in doing he claimed a light-hearted victory over Plato.

'Utopia was once my name,
That is, place where no one goes,
Plato's Republic now I claim
To match, or at least at its own game;
For that was just a myth in prose,
But what he wrote of, I became,
Of men, wealth, laws a solid frame,
A place where every wise man goes;
Eutopia is now my name.'

Slightly adapted from the translation by Paul Turner, *Thomas More: Utopia*, London: Penguin, 1965 (p.27). For the relationship between Plato's *Republic* and More's *Utopia* see Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979 (pp.118-122).

[10] Malcolm Schofield, *Plato*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 (p.234).

[11] *Republic* 544a1.

[12] M. F. Burnyeat, "Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City," *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 (p.297).

[13] Schofield, *Plato* (pp.201-203). Utopian thinking is just as evident in John Rawls as it was in Hobbes, Rousseau, and, for that matter Russell. See Keith Graham's "Consensus in Social Decision-Making: Why is it Utopian?," *Utopias*, ed. Peter Alexander and Roger Gill, London: Duckworth, 1984 (chapter 5, pp.49-60) and David Knights and Hugh Willmott, "Autonomy as Utopia or Dystopia," *Utopia and Organization*, ed. Martin Parker, Blackwell, 2002 (pp.59-81). Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991 (pp.28-29); Milan Simecka, "A World With Utopias or Without Them," *Utopias*, ed. Peter Alexander and Roger Gill, London: Duckworth, 1984 (pp.169-170). 'If the unification of mankind is ever to be realised, it will be necessary to find ways of circumventing our largely unconscious primitive ferocity, partly by establishing a region of law, and partly by finding innocent outlets for our competitive instincts.' What Russell has in mind here is a 'world state' (Bertrand Russell, *Authority and the Individual*, London: Routledge, 1991, p18, cf. pp.81-82). Cf. Lodge, *Plato's Theory of Education* (p.263).

[14] 'The utopias of yesterday are the realities of today' and hence are no longer utopias, strictly speaking (Mark Holloway, "The Necessity of Utopia," *Utopias*, ed. Peter Alexander and Roger Gill, London: Duckworth, 1984, p.185).

[15] George Klosko argues that, with certain provisos, Plato was quite in earnest about the possibility that his ideal poleis could be realised in practice: 'When I say that the ideal state discussed in the *Republic* is not as "utopian" as these scholars maintain, I mean that Plato designed it with political reform in mind, and that he thought seriously about how to bring it into existence. This does not, however, imply that the ideal state is likely to be realized, or that Plato ever thought it was, but only that Plato wished to bring it into existence and thought this was possible, should extraordinary good fortune bring the necessary conditions into existence' (George Klosko, "Plato's Utopianism: The Political Content of the Early Dialogues," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 1983, p.483).

[16] It might also be a good idea not to confound realism with practicability. That an idea may turn out to be impractical does not mean that the idea is unrealistic in the sense of it being a fantasy, for example, to implant Spartan practices in Athens is unrealistic but the proposals themselves are not impractical as such and nor are they fantasies. As Burnyeat points out, what concerns Sokrates is whether his ideas are 'consistent with nature' ("Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City," *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fail, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.306). See also Donald R. Morrison's "The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City," *Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (p.235).

[17] Guthrie dismisses the possibility with little argument and concludes 'the search is less for a city than for personal righteousness' (W. K. C. Guthrie, *Plato: The Man and his Dialogues Earlier Period, A History of Greek Philosophy IV*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.486). Zdravko Planinc describes the *Republic* and the *Laws* in respect to their political aims thusly, 'they are not intended to have direct and immediate political relevance in the sense of being programs for action or abstract political blueprints to be implemented unthinkingly in the political realm' (*Plato's Political Philosophy*, London: Duckworth, 1991, p.269). He also adds that Plato's 'political' dialogues were written 'in order to lead his readers past the follies of sophistry and idealism towards the truly philosophical life' (p.269). Schofield defines 'utopian thinking' as 'the imagining of a blueprint for a desired world which is nevertheless located in present-day concerns, with questions about practicability and legitimacy not necessarily excluded, but regarded as secondary' (*Plato*, p.199). I think this captures quite nicely what Plato has in mind with his utopian projects, certainly in his *Republic*.

[18] The question of the practicability of the ideal polis is raised at various points in the dialogue (457d4-458b7, 466d5-7, 471c4-473b2, 473c2-473e4, 501e2-5, 487b1-d4, 502c5-7).

[19] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964 (p.127).

[20] 'What then was the use of spending so much time and effort on a city that is impossible? Precisely to show its impossibility…the striving for the perfectly just city puts unreasonable and despotic demands on ordinary men, it abuses and misuses the best men, and his vision is never clouded by the blackness of moral indignation, for he knows what to expect of men. Political idealism is the most destructive of human passions' (pp.409-410). 'Socrates constructs his utopia to point up the dangers of what we would call utopianism; as such it is the greatest critique of political idealism ever written' (Allan Bloom, "Interpretative Essay," *The Republic of Plato*, New York: Basic Books, 1968, p.410).

[21] G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005 (p.45).

[22] Strauss, *The City and Man* (p.138).

[23] See the *Republic*: 3434d4-e6, 345e1, 362b7, 443e2, 519c4, 540b1.

[24] See Burnyeat, "Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City" (pp.299-300) and Morrison, "The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City" (p.244).

[25] 'I presuppose that the *Republic* really is – among other things – a political work. Granted, if "politics" is a matter of reconciling opposing interests in the community, of finding ways in which different groups can scratch along beside each other, then the *Republic*, which imagines and argues for the possibility of eradicating political conflict altogether, is no truly "political" work. But at the same time there seems no good reason in principle why the construction of utopias should not legitimately be seen as a part of political theorising; that is, if there is meant to be some way of *approximating* to what is depicted in utopian mode, as there is surely meant to be some way of approximating to the Callipolis of the *Republic*' (Christopher Rowe, "The *Republic* in Plato's Political Thought," *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p.28). According to Annas, Plato 'does waver on this issue' and the reason is clear, the *Republic* 'does not have a single aim' (Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (p.185). According to Ferrari: 'If I had to give my approach a name I would dub it the writerly type, because its most distinctive feature is to see the *Republic* as a political and sincerely utopian work and at the same time as a project of utopian writings, primarily, rather than of utopian reform' (*City and Soul in Plato's Republic*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005, p.118).

[26] Nevertheless, as Morrison points out, the failure of the Kallipolis in speech does not mean that it was the result of faulty thinking ("The Utopian Character of Plato's Ideal City," p.144).

[27] *Apology* 33a6-7. For a different view see Xenophon, *Apology of Socrates* 26.

[28] *Republic* 506c2-e5.

[29] In particular Zdravko Planinc (*Plato's Political Philosophy*, pp.21-22), Mark J. Lutz (*Socrates' Education to Virtue: Learning the Love of the Noble*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), Nalin Ranasinghe (*The Soul of Sokrates*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000): 'I suggest that far from being a summation of Plato's deepest thoughts on the art of ruling, the *Republic* is a labyrinthine process of pedagogy that tests the reader's reason and desires to the utmost. In other words, the forms and content of a dialogue are not at variance. This means that reading the *Republic* is every bit as difficult as climbing out of the cave' (p.1). See also Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 (p.xiii). Thomas A. Szlezak, *Reading Plato*, trans. Graham Zanker, London: Routledge, 1999. Jill Gordon's *Turning Toward Philosophy: Literary Device and Dramatic Structure in Plato's dialogues*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

[30] Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (p.65).

[31] Yunis "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the *Republic*," *Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (p.4).

[32] *Ibid* p.1.

[33] Gordon, *Turning Toward Philosophy* (p.8).

[34] Such techniques are used, not as a substitute for argument, but as an alternative way of conveying certain ideas to his audience. The dialogues cannot *force* one to care for one's soul. All they can do, and all Plato tries to do in them, is persuade.

[35] James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age without Good or Evil*, New York: Basic Books, 2000.

[36] *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K–12*, June 2008 (p.3).

[37] Apart, that is, from a fleeting reference to self-discipline (p.5).

[38] *Ibid* p.5.

[39] *Ibid* p.7.

[40] *Ibid* p.5.

[41] *Ibid* p.7.

[42] *Ibid* p.5.

[43] Hunter, *The Death of Character* (p.78).

[44] *Ibid* p.223.

[45] *Ibid* p.xiii.

[46] *Ibid* p.225.

[47] *Ibid* pp.9-10; cf. p.77.

[48] *Ibid* p.11.

[49] *Ibid* p.250.

[50] *Ibid* p.11.

[51] *Ibid* p.12.

[52] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education", *Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. C. M. Beck, B. S. Crittenden, E. V. Sullivan, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971 (p.75, cf. p.77, 'What then is the place of virtues (i.e., approved "traits" of character) in defining moral education?', 'My own uncertain answer to this question is that praise and blame are necessary parts of moral development, but should not be used to define its ends')

[53] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education", *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*, ed. Brenda Munsey, Birmingham: REP, 1980 (p.79).

[54] *Ibid* p.75.

[55] Hunter, *The Death of Character* (p.85).

[56] *Ibid* p.85.

[57] Clark Power and Daniel K. Lapsley, *The Challenge of Pluralism: Education, Politics, and Values*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992 (p.174).

[58] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and Trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 (6:380-409); *The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant*, trans & ed. Edward Franklin Buchner, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904 (pp.113-203).

[59] David Carr, *Educating the virtues: An essay on the philosophical psychology of moral development and education*, London: Routledge, 1991 (p.167, as Carr goes on to say: 'To omit any reference to the virtues in our account of morality *in favour of* a theory of moral reasoning or to conceive some topic-neutral process of moral reasoning as offering a route to understanding morality alternative to one which makes reference to moral dispositions is simply incoherent').

[60] Robert T. Sandin, *The Rehabilitation of Virtue: Foundations of Moral Education*, New York: Praeger, 1992 (p.86).

[61] *Ibid* pp.69-70.

[62] *Ibid* p.24.

[63] Hunter, *The Death of Character* (p.22).

[64] *Ibid* p.21.

[65] *Ibid* p.229.

[66] *Ibid* pp.229-230.

[67] See M. F. Burnyeat, "Utopia and Fantasy: The Practicability of Plato's Ideally Just City," in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fine, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 (pp.297-308).

[68] Indeed, it might seem that Plato's political ideal comes much closer to the 'city of pigs' rather than with the beautiful polis of books 3-8 of the *Republic*, his true community being one of autonomous individuals, self-sufficient and secure in their personal virtue.

Chapter One

Ethics and Exile

ἡ πατρίς, ὡς ἔοικε, φίλτατον βροτοῖς[i]

In the *Apology* Sokrates defends himself; in the *Crito* he defends Athens. Taken together, we might say, the *Apology* and the *Crito* force us to consider Sokrates the Athenian *citizen* and Sokrates the *philosopher* as a *single entity*. But how can this dual defence work? How can Plato have Sokrates declare his loyalty *both* to philosophy and to the state? In the *Apology*, Sokrates makes it clear that, made to choose, he would obey god rather than the law, and yet, at least according to the *Crito*, he owes Athens and her laws a great debt, great enough to make him submit to unjust execution.

But what does Sokrates owe Athens? He owes Athens his very life, his upbringing, and, importantly, the opportunity to practice philosophy. So, despite what we learn in the *Republic*, the philosopher does seem to owe the bad regime something after all (*Republic* 520b1-2). For the most part, however, Sokrates keeps his civic responsibilities at a distance. Nevertheless, he is not altogether inactive: he fought in Athens' wars, and, when it cannot be sensibly

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[i] 'Dearest to men, it seems, is native soil' (*Phoenician Women* 406).

avoided, he fulfils his democratic obligations; and he takes his 'moral and social' responsibilities very seriously.[1] Indeed, Sokrates sees his philosophical mission not only as being beneficial to himself but also to his fellow Athenians.

Paradoxically, however, to pursue philosophy as Sokrates does, makes him *less recognisable as a citizen and yet more devoted to his polis and to his fellow citizens*. This 'devotion,' however, is not unthinking patriotism, and nor is it uncritical of political structures. In a sense, it is a devotion that subsumes the duties of citizenship to a higher set of obligations. The Sokratic way of life, however, cannot be embraced by every citizen (or by the ruling elite) without radically altering the society in which they live. Outside the ideal polis the philosopher's engagement with politics may be limited in scope (and incomprehensible to his fellow citizens), but he remains, according to Plato, and again however paradoxical this may seem, the only true statesman and the only citizen for whom the salvation of his society is his life's concern (*Gorgias* 521d6-8).

Sokrates' dual defence could perhaps point to a possible reconciliation between the philosopher and society, but it seems much more likely, however, that Sokrates' dual defence points to the tension that exists, and will always exist between the philosopher and the city and their aims.[2] But it must be so. As I shall detail more

thoroughly in the coming chapters, the philosopher must always stand slightly apart from his society for his creditability and power as an educator depends upon precisely this. All I wish to explore here, before moving on to discuss Sokratic education in the next chapter, is the philosophical implications of Sokrates' rejection of exile (φυγὴ) in the *Apology* and the *Crito*, and in particular these three questions: first, in what respect is Sokrates' mission shaped by his Athenian citizenship? And second, does Sokrates' ability to conduct philosophy depend upon his residence in Athens? And finally, how essential, for Plato, is one's civic identity for philosophy, virtue and happiness?

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§1

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Sokrates Defends Himself

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And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say (Luke 12.11-12, *The Holy Bible*, KJV)

As Sokrates sees it, the Athenian jury has a simple choice to make: either accept him and his philosophy or condemn them both (*Apology* 30b8-10). The jury chooses to condemn them (38d1-2), as Sokrates makes clear at 39c8-11: 'νῦν γὰρ τοῦτο εἴργασθε οἰόμενοι μὲν

ἀπαλλάξεσθαι τοῦ διδόναι ἔλεγχον τοῦ βίου.'[ii] But what were Sokrates' alternatives and how seriously did he take them? Despite the guilty verdict and the penalty of death proposed by Meletos, Sokrates has the opportunity to put forward a counter penalty: 'τιμᾶται δ᾽ οὖν μοι ὁ ἀνὴρ θανάτου. εἶεν· ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ τίνος ὑμῖν ἀντιτιμήσομαι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι; ἢ δῆλον ὅτι τῆς ἀξίας' (36b3-5).[iii]

This statement is certainly provocative. However, in asking to be sentenced according to what he deserves, Sokrates is not referring to the charges brought against him but to his role as a public benefactor. As a ἐξεταστής and gift from god (31a10-31b1), what does Sokrates deserve? What else but free meals in the Prytaneum. However, this is not a genuine counter penalty, as Sokrates was well aware;[3] he may well believe that he ought to be treated like an Olympic victor[4] but insofar as he is following the rules of the court (which he must) it is incumbent upon him to choose a genuine counter penalty,[5] one that fits the charges against him. Sokrates has three options: imprisonment, a fine, or exile. Sokrates rejects imprisonment and exile, and eventually settles for a fine, since this entails the least harm,

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[ii] 'For now you have done this to me because you hoped that you would be relieved from rendering an account of your lives...' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.137).

[iii] 'And so the man proposes the penalty of death. Well, then, what shall I propose as an alternative? Clearly that which I deserve, shall I not?' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.129).

and proposes the modest sum of one silver mina, which, with the help of his friends, is raised to thirty (38a9-c1).[6] Sokrates rejects exile out of hand, even though, as he says, this sentence might be to the jury's liking (37c5-6; 37d4-6). Why was Sokrates not willing to countenance exile?

First we should ask: what is exile and what would it have meant for the typical Athenian? In 5th Century B.C. Athens exile was a punishment, a legal act, but it could also be an act of political aggression or expediency.[7] Although they are closely related, we must distinguish between exile in either of these senses and ostracism.[8] Ostracism was a tool of democratic Athens, used to check the power of the leaders of the state, whilst exile was normally, in the classical period at least, either a legal penalty enacted by the judiciary or an extreme and often dubious political act.[9] The relationship between political exile, forced or otherwise, and ostracism is certainly strong, and both are, to a degree, political phenomena.[10]

To be an exile is to have no city (ἄπολις),[11] and as an 'ordeal,' as Robert Gorman states, it has both 'physical and psychological aspects.'[12] The exile's most immediate concern would be the loss of his property and the prospect of poverty. More pressing perhaps would be the loss of civic rights, and this would also be compounded by the loss of support from friends, family, and fellow citizens. An

exile would therefore be at the mercy of strangers, and would no longer be master of his own destiny. With his expulsion, the exile leaves behind the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship, which, in an age of city-states, meant leaving behind much of value.[13]

In Greek tragedy exile is nearly always presented as a political act, the legitimacy of which is often questionable.[14] This should not surprise us, of course, since exile and reclamation was such a strong feature of the internal power struggles that marred Athens in the second half of the 5th Century B.C. The fullest treatment of the consequences of exile in Greek drama is found in Euripides' *Phoenician Women*. In the stichomythia between Iokaste and Polynikes, the essentials of a life in exile are sketched out: the exile has no freedom of speech (*PW* 391), lives like a slave (*PW* 392; 395), is dependent on bad rulers (*PW* 393-394), is denied the help of his friends (*PW* 402-403), and is not even guaranteed safety in spite of his noble birth (*PW* 404-405).

Some of these seem particularly appropriate to Sokrates. However, Sokrates' rejection of exile is not only based upon such considerations (*Apology* 37d4-6).[15] For Sokrates it is a particular type of free speech[16] and a particular type of freedom that he values. For Sokrates the chief problem with exile is that it would mean that he would be unable to continue his philosophical inquiries, since they require him to not

only be residing in a city but in a city which will allow him to question its citizens, from the humble potter to the powerful politician (21b11-21e3). As Sokrates points out, if the Athenians cannot endure his words then who else could (37c7-37d5)?

καλὸς οὖν ἄν μοι ὁ βίος εἴη ἐξελθόντι τηλικῷδε ἀνθρώπῳ ἄλλην ἐξ ἄλλης πόλεως ἀμειβομένῳ καὶ ἐξελαυνομένῳ ζῆν. εὖ γὰρ οἶδ᾽ ὅτι ὅποι ἂν ἔλθω, λέγοντος ἐμοῦ ἀκροάσονται οἱ νέοι ὥσπερ ἐνθάδε· κἂν μὲν τούτους ἀπελαύνω, οὗτοί με αὐτοὶ ἐξελῶσι πείθοντες τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀπελαύνω, οἱ τούτων πατέρες δὲ καὶ οἰκεῖοι δι᾽ αὐτοὺς τούτους (*Apology* 37d6-e2)[iv]

Wherever Sokrates went he would be in the ridiculous position of either being driven out himself or driving others away (ironically, he would be in the position of 'exiling' others).[17] Sokrates' reputation ensures that he would not be able to practice philosophy, as Meno puts it in the eponymous dialogue: 'καί μοι δοκεῖς εὖ βουλεύεσθαι οὐκ ἐκπλέων ἐνθένδε οὐδ᾽ ἀποδημῶν· εἰ γὰρ ξένος ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει τοιαῦτα ποιοῖς, τάχ᾽ ἂν ὡς γόης ἀπαχθείης' (*Meno* 80b5-8).[v] In that case, comes the objection, perhaps Sokrates ought to remain quiet (*Apology* 37e4-5). But for Sokrates this would be more terrible than

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[iv] 'A fine life I should lead if I went away at my time of life, wandering from city to city and always being driven out! For well I know that wherever I go, the young men will listen to my talk, as they do here; and if I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to drive me out, and if I do not drive them away, their father and relatives will drive me out for their sakes' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.133).

[v] 'In my opinion you are well advised not to leave Athens and live abroad. If you behaved like this as a foreigner in another country, you would most likely be arrested as a wizard' (*Meno* 80b5-8, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie p.128).

either exile or death since to do this would be to disobey the god (37e6-8).[18] Sokrates' 'happiness' is entirely predicated on his ability to live the examining life; to be an exile or remain and be silent makes little difference – both would entail ὁ ἀνεξέταστος βίος (38a5-6).

With the jury's rejection of his counter penalty Sokrates is sentenced to death. Considering what Sokrates has said about the implications of his philosophical mission, both for himself and for the city, we might expect, if we did not know better, that death would be no less of an evil than exile. For Sokrates will no longer be able to serve god and develop his and his fellow citizens' understanding of virtue, and in turn the city will lose its greatest benefactor. But Sokrates is quick to emphasise that death, such a grim prospect for others, is for him a trifling matter. Indeed, Sokrates' language is even stronger than this (40a4, 40b11). Since his daimon had not opposed him in any way, Sokrates feels sure that the outcome of his trial, his own death, cannot be a bad thing (40c1-4).

At the very worst, claims Sokrates, death is nothing, a dreamless sleep (40c6-e3), or it is a change and migration of the soul to another place.[19] In the first instance, death is easily preferable to exile, since Sokrates would not be aware of what he was missing, and, presumably, it would be in accordance with god's will (cf. *Crito* 43d9-44a1), and in the second case, Sokrates would be able to continue his

investigations on a higher level, and what could be finer than that (*Apology* 40e4-41c8, cf. *Phaedo* 67b7-c3)? As Sokrates makes plain at 28b2-10, he does not consider death or the fear of death to be an adequate reason for not doing philosophy, or, indeed, any action. The most pertinent factor in any consideration of how one should act is the justice or injustice of the proposed action and whether it is representative of a good or a bad man (28b8-10, as it is in the *Crito* 49a2-50a4).

At his trial Sokrates imagines a hypothetical situation where the jury would consent to release him on the condition that if he were caught doing philosophy again that he would be promptly put to death (*Apology* 29c7-11). In such a case, Sokrates declares, he would obey god rather than the jury (29d3-6); he would continue to practice philosophy and accept the consequences.

Drawing on his military experiences, Sokrates sketches out an analogy between the obligation a soldier has to his commanding officer and the obligation that he has to god, a god who has ordered him to spend his life doing philosophy and examining himself and others (28e5-29a6). Since Sokrates does not know if death is an evil (indeed, it could be the greatest good), he will not be led by an unfounded fear in to disobeying god, for ἀδικεῖν καὶ ἀπειθεῖν τῷ

βελτίονι καὶ θεῷ καὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, ὅτι κακὸν καὶ αἰσχρόν ἐστιν οἶδα'

(29b7-9).[vi]

It has to be noted, however, that there was no Athenian law that prohibited 'philosophy,' although there were certainly laws against impiety and the corruption of the young. What then do we make of Sokrates' hypothetical situation? Strictly speaking, Sokrates is not on trial for being a philosopher and practicing philosophy but for impiety and corrupting the young. Sokrates must be implying that the charges brought against him are seen by the jury as a consequence of his philosophical activities, otherwise Sokrates' hypothetical case would make little sense. This suggests, rightly in my opinion, that, as Plato presents it, Sokrates' accusers are judging him as if he were a sophist.[20]

Indeed, Sokrates expresses this concern early in the *Apology*, saying that the oldest prejudice against him, that he is a cross between a natural scientist and a rhetorician, is the most damaging. Sokrates' defence rests on convincing the jury that he is not a sophist (which is not helped by his rhetorical style or by his questioning of Meletos), in short, that he is neither impious nor a corrupter of the young (since it is these two crimes that are most readily attributable to Sophistic

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[vi] 'I do know that it is evil and disgraceful to do wrong and to disobey him who is better than I, whether he be man or god' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.107).

teaching).[21] By 'threatening' to disobey the jury Sokrates is actually stating his commitment to piety and to the welfare of the young; he is suggesting that by obeying god and practising philosophy he is the person who *is least likely to be guilty of the charges raised against him*. Sokrates' chief concern *is* with obeying god and with the moral well being of all Athenians, young or old.[22] Therefore, as we shall see, when Sokrates expresses his obedience to the law in the *Crito* he is really just restating this point (*Crito* 50c4-51c6, cf. *Apology* 24e1-4).[23]

§2

Sokrates Defends Athens

τῷ δὲ νόμῳ πειστέον…(*Apology*19a8)[vii]

Despite Sokrates' statement in the *Apology*, that he would abide by his sentence (*Apology* 39b6-8), in the *Crito* the question as to whether he should live or die is still an open one. Therefore, Sokrates must defend himself yet again, but this time not to a jury but to his friend Krito.[24] *This defence will apply not only to himself and his decisions as a philosopher but also to his obligations as a citizen of Athens and also to Athens herself.*[25]

[vii] 'The law must be obeyed.'

Krito's arguments are based largely around the considerations of friendship, shame, and a traditional conception of justice.[26] Before we look at these arguments, it is probably worth noting that Krito is not going to be arguing in favour of exile, but in so far as Sokrates' escape and subsequent flight from Athens would involve his leaving the city he must try his best to make exile, never the most pleasing of prospects, at least seem like a viable alternative to death. In the case of someone other than Sokrates this strategy might have worked. But, as we will see, because of Krito's inability to see beyond conventional morality (of which he is undoubtedly a spokesman) his arguments will have little impact on Sokrates.[27]

Krito's first point is this, that if Sokrates dies then he (Krito) will lose his oldest and greatest friend (*Crito* 44b5-8). And second, if Sokrates does not escape then it may appear as though his friends did not help him, and Krito's own reputation would suffer as a consequence (44b8-c6). Krito's third point runs as follows, whether Sokrates is refusing to escape out of concern for the welfare of his friends and the consequences it may have on them (44e1-45a5). To which Sokrates answers that he is thinking of this, and other things besides.[28] Krito is delighted to hear this and re-assures Sokrates that he need have no worries on their part; not only do Krito and his friends have sufficient funds to pay off informers, but they also have friends in Thessaly who could help him (45a7-c4). Krito's last line of attack is as follows:

in not escaping and saving himself Sokrates is betraying himself and his family, dying when he could live (an irrelevant objection if one considers the *Apology* 29a6-11), thus giving his enemies an easy victory, and again all this will also reflect badly on his friends (*Crito* 45c5-46a10).[29]

Krito's first point is not directly addressed by Sokrates.[30] A greater concern for Sokrates at this moment is Krito's insistence that reputation and the opinion of *hoi polloi*, particularly in respect to virtue, are pertinent considerations as to whether he should escape and evade his sentence (44d1-5).[31] Sokrates wants Krito to accept this principle: that one should only esteem good opinions (46d10-e2; 47a3-8). Good opinions are those that are held by the wise, the bad by the foolish (47a10-11). In all matters one should obey the good and the wise, that is, those that hold correct opinions based upon a sound knowledge of the issues involved (47a10-47c4).[32] To do otherwise, to follow the opinion of *hoi polloi*, would be to incur harm, not just to one's body but to that part of oneself which 'περὶ ὃ ἥ τε ἀδικία καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐστίν' (47e10-48a1).[viii] And life is hardly worth living if one's body is ruined (47e4-5), so how much more wretched would one's life be if one were harmed in respect to that which makes it possible for one to εὖ ζῆν (48b7-8)?[33] Hence, for Sokrates' *own good*, the consideration for whether he ought to escape must not be based

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[viii] 'Is concerned with right and wrong' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.167).

upon the opinion of *hoi polloi* but on whether it is *just* for him to do so, and in this respect he will defer to the opinions of the wise and the good.[34]

After having hopefully reminded Krito that in all matters concerning what is just one should defer to the moral expert, and perhaps claiming this expertise for himself, Sokrates can reinforce his philosophical authority and proceed with his main argument. (Is it ironic that it is only by such anti-democratic reasoning that Sokrates can then proceed to defend his obligations to Athens, a democratic polis?). The argument can be summed up in the following way:

1. (49a2-6): One should never do injustice intentionally.

2. (49b5-8): Doing injustice is bad for the agent.

3. (49b10): 'Then we ought not to do injustice at all' (οὐδαμῶς ἄρα δεῖ ἀδικεῖν).

4. (49b12-13): One should never requite injustice with injustice.

5. (49c2): One should never do evil.

6. (49c4-5): One should never requite evil with evil.

7. (49c7): Doing evil is the same as doing injustice.

8. (49c9-49d1): 'Then we ought neither to requite injustice with injustice nor to do evil to anyone, no matter what he may have done to us' (οὔτε ἄρα ἀνταδικεῖν δεῖ οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων, οὐδ᾽ ἂν ὁτιοῦν πάσχῃ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν).

Krito readily agrees with all these principles (whether he actually believes them is or not is another point, cf. *Crito* 49d1-6), so Sokrates moves on to the next, and crucial, stage in the argument:

9. (49e7-8): 'Ought a man to do what he has agreed to do, provided it is right, or may he violate his agreements?'[ix]

'Yes' comes Krito's answer, if a man has agreed to do something right he ought to abide by that agreement. Therefore:

10. (49e9-50a4): If Sokrates escapes from prison he will be doing evil to the city by not abiding to do what was agreed to be just.

Krito is puzzled. Krito accepts that one must abide by agreements, providing that they are just, but he is unable to transfer this principle to Sokrates' current predicament (49e7-8). Krito is having a difficulty

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[ix] 'πότερον ἃ ἄν τις ὁμολογήσῃ τῳ δίκαια ὄντα ποιητέον ἢ ἐξαπατητέον;'

conceptualising this agreement between Sokrates and Athens. Krito cannot understand why if Sokrates escapes he will harm Athens. Even if Krito does believe that one must not requite evil with evil, he does not see Sokrates' escape as an example of injustice (50c3), hence his confusion.

Everything is going to depend upon the nature of Sokrates' Athenian citizenship, and it is exactly on this point, as we shall see, that the Laws will make their stand.

Indeed, Krito's failure to understand the final move in Sokrates' argument forces him (Sokrates) to speak in a different voice (50a6-9). Therefore, we now have the rather ironic situation of Sokrates arguing on behalf of the law and the city that has condemned him to death.[35] Why does Sokrates do this? As Roslyn Weiss[36] puts it 'for whom do the laws speak?'[37] I think the most tempting answer would be to say that the Laws speak both for themselves and for Sokrates.[38] As Kraut puts it 'the speech of the Laws is a complicated mixture of Socratic philosophy and Athenian legal practice.'[39]

But considering Krito's feelings about the verdict (and the whole judicial process) and his failure to transfer Sokratic principles to Sokrates' obligation to Athens and her laws, it is not easy to see how this change of tack would be successful.[40]

The first point that the Laws make is that if Sokrates attempts to evade his sentence he would be destroying both the city and the laws it is built upon (50a9-b2).[41] This seems rather strong. But the key thing to remember, as Andrew Barker and others have stated, is that this is not a consequences argument. The Laws are not really claiming that if Sokrates disobeys them that Athens will be destroyed, indeed, such a claim would be quite ridiculous. The point is that by disobeying the laws, Sokrates will not destroy Athens as such, but only in respect to the sense that to break laws and undermine the judicial process is an attack on an important principle of the Athenian state – it is not an actual attack on the city itself but on an ideal: that Athens is a city founded upon a justice system.

Krito is not convinced by the above argument (50a9-b2); he still holds that if the verdict against Sokrates is unjust then that is all the motivation Sokrates needs in trying to evade his sentence, the laws of Athens be damned (50b10-50c3). Sokrates therefore switches back to his main point, first raised at 49e9-50a4, and therefore he will now demonstrate to Krito the nature of the agreement between himself and Athens as both a citizen and a philosopher. As John B. Morral puts it:

the dialogue raises the problem with which Plato was to wrestle in varying forms and with varying degrees of success throughout his entire philosophical career. How could the wholehearted pursuit of truth by the

philosopher square with his obligation to be a good and fully active citizen?[42]

As a citizen of Athens and as a human being, Sokrates cannot find fault with those laws upon which both his civic identity and his existence depend. It is because of the city and its laws that Sokrates has lived and enjoyed the benefits of citizenship, and on account of which he was reared and received his education (I do not think Sokrates is being ironic here, 50d8; 50e2). And not only did Sokrates choose to remain in Athens he was also content to beget and rear his children in the city, and he also passed over the chance of leaving Athens at his trial, refusing exile as his counter penalty (52b11-c6). The relationship between the city and Sokrates is like that between a father and son; the relationship is not based on equality, and since the city has provided so much for him, Sokrates has no right to disregard its laws and hence the city itself. Indeed, the reverence and respect one ought to hold to one's city is even greater than that shown to one's parents and ancestors (50d9-c6, cf. *Laws* 804d7-8).

Moreover, as the Laws point out, all citizens have the right and recourse to persuasion (*Crito* 51c1), and where this has failed (as it had when Sokrates failed to persuade the jury at his trial),[43] one must suffer whatever consequences the city sees fit (51b5). And, if this is not to a citizen's liking, they could have taken up residence elsewhere

(51d2-11, the implication being that Sokrates was aware of this but chose to stay anyway; he took his chances like every other Athenian). But if a citizen chooses to stay this means, necessarily, that a citizen is happy with the way his city is governed. And, in a democracy like Athens, a citizen has some opportunity to affect policy, or, if charges are brought against him, to defend himself in court. The choice is simple: *persuade or obey* (51e1-52a4).

Now the Laws move from these general comments about the duties that a citizen has to his city and to its laws to Sokrates' own case, which, as we will see, seems to commit him to *an even greater obligation to the city* than his fellow citizens (52a5-8).

Σώκρατες, μεγάλα ἡμῖν τούτων τεκμήριά ἐστιν, ὅτι σοι καὶ ἡμεῖς ἠρέσκομεν καὶ ἡ πόλις· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε τῶν ἄλλων Ἀθηναίων ἀπάντων διαφερόντως ἐν αὐτῇ ἐπεδήμεις εἰ μή σοι διαφερόντως ἤρεσκεν, καὶ οὔτ᾿ ἐπὶ θεωρίαν πώποτ᾿ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἐξῆλθες, ὅτι μὴ ἅπαξ εἰς Ἰσθμόν, οὔτε ἄλλοσε οὐδαμόσε, εἰ μή ποι στρατευσόμενος, οὔτε ἄλλην ἀποδημίαν ἐποιήσω πώποτε ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι, οὐδ᾿ ἐπιθυμία σε ἄλλης πόλεως οὐδὲ ἄλλων νόμων ἔλαβεν εἰδέναι, ἀλλὰ ἡμεῖς σοι ἱκανοὶ ἦμεν καὶ ἡ ἡμετέρα πόλις (*Crito* 52b1-11)[x]

By refusing exile at his trial and throughout his life, Sokrates has committed himself to the city and to its laws (52c6-d7). Sokrates has

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[x] 'Socrates, we have strong evidence that we and the city pleased you; for you would never have stayed in it more than all other Athenians if you had not been better pleased with it than they; you never went out from the city to a festival, or anywhere else, except on military service, and you never made any other journey, as other people do, and you had no wish to know any other city or other laws, but you were contented with us and our city' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.183).

grown old in Athens, with all the 'wisdom' that his years suggest, and yet he made no attempt to leave Athens for another city, not even the most praised Sparta or Krete, so to leave now would seem ridiculous (52e2-7). Indeed, he has spent even more time in the city than the lame and the blind: 'οὕτω σοι διαφερόντως τῶν ἄλλων Ἀθηναίων ἤρεσκεν ἡ πόλις τε καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ νόμοι δῆλον ὅτι' (53a3-5).[xi]

The Laws round off their argument by speaking about exile more explicitly.[44] Other well-governed *poleis* that Sokrates might flee to, such as Thebes or Megara, would look upon him as an enemy (53b6). Moreover, if Sokrates' friends helped him they would run the risk of being exiled themselves.[45] How could Sokrates claim to speak for justice in these cities when his very presence would contradict him (53b6-c5)? How, when he has fled Athens and evaded his sentence, could Sokrates claim to care about justice; and what kind of discourses would he engage in? He could say nothing, or else he would risk his words contradicting his deeds (53c9-13). What about more lawless lands, Thessaly for example, how would they receive Sokrates?[46] Would he be respected or appreciated? Not likely. He would be a virtual slave, whose intellect would be neither welcome nor tolerated (53c5-d9); he would spend his time feeding his belly

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[xi] 'So much more than the other Athenians were you satisfied with the city and evidently therefore with us, its laws' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.185).

rather than his mind (53e7-54a1).[47] As Weiss rightly points out,[48] the Laws force home to Krito just what exile would be like for a man like Sokrates, *both* as a philosopher and as a citizen of Athens.[49]

If leaving Athens would hinder Sokrates' philosophical mission then it is clear that in some sense his ability to conduct philosophy is dependent on his Athenian citizenship, or, at the very least, on his being a citizen as such. Indeed, being an Athenian citizen would certainly have had extra benefits for Sokrates the philosopher, as not only was Athens the cultural centre of Greece, but it gave him, up until the moment of his death, the chance to converse freely and openly with citizen and foreigner alike, as Richard Kraut puts it: 'the freedom Athens gave its citizens…is the very thing that made Socrates prefer it to any other legal system.'[50] And it was *partly* because of this freedom that Sokrates was content to remain in Athens.

The Exile Theme in the **Republic** *and the* **Phaedrus**

Sokrates' refusal to compromise, to renounce philosophy, and to become, at least according to his accusers' conception, a 'good citizen', did not mean that he was willing to *unjustly* disobey the laws of Athens. Sokrates remained true to *both* Athens and his philosophical mission. Sokrates is unjustly convicted, but insofar as he recognises this and yet is still willing to abide by the court's decision, this shows a level of commitment to his polis that throws Meletos' *philopolis* into the shade.

This commitment is both to the city in which he was born and to his fellow citizens and also in a sense to the city as an abstract ideal. Sokrates' loyalty is to that which is stable and enduring; his loyalty is not, perhaps, to the Athens of Meletos but to what Athens could become: a polis founded upon true justice.

It is then as a citizen of Athens that Socrates examines the lives of others. And since all citizens share a common life, the examination of one's own life is also an examination of the life of the city. Only in this way and in this context is it possible for philosophy and politics to be reconciled without compromise; giving philosophy a new subject matter, the polis, and making the highest norms and laws of political action the chief problem of philosophy. While this is true, it is also one-sided. For Socrates is not just a citizen. Nor does he owe everything to Athens. The polis and laws gave him all the good things they could, but they could not give him everything. (His

daimon owes nothing to the polis.) Nor are the laws of Athens to which he offers such unconditional obedience simply the laws of contemporary Athens. Rather they are idealizations of an abstract archaic law. It is to this idea of law and of Athens that Socrates offers his obedience. And by making this law holy and the embodiment of wisdom, tradition, and the will of the gods, he implicitly condemns any legal practices that depart from it. Thus in the very process of being a good citizen of Athens, Socrates shows the corruptness of the city.[51]

For the philosopher in the ideal polis there is no alternative to obedience. The philosopher ruler returns to the city because he owes his very existence to it, but political activity, as with Sokrates, is not his true concern. Their training and education, however (*Republic* 520b7), coupled with their lack of ambition, make the philosopher rulers the only possible candidates for leadership, and, despite what they actually desire (519c8-520a4), ruling is central to their purpose. Sokrates also owes his existence to Athens, and, as far as he can, he fulfils his obligations, and he too rejects political ambition, for such a career, if it had been earnestly followed, would have been fatal (*Apology* 31d9-31e1), hence: ἀλλ᾽ ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι τὸν τῷ ὄντι μαχούμενον ὑπὲρ τοῦ δικαίου, καὶ εἰ μέλλει ὀλίγον χρόνον σωθήσεσθαι, ἰδιωτεύειν ἀλλὰ μὴ δημοσιεύειν (32a1-3).[xii] Indeed, it appears as though a full and proper exercise of one's citizenship is impossible for a philosopher in the imperfect polis. [52]

[xii] 'A man who really fights for the right, if he is to preserve his life for even a little while, must be a private citizen, not a public man' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.115).

In book 6 of the *Republic* Sokrates and Adeimantos discuss why, generally, those who have the greatest philosophical potential end up abandoning this calling and turn instead to the affairs of state (*Republic* 494a10-495c6). The very qualities that constitute the philosophical nature when combined with bad rearing cause these young men to become exiled from philosophy,[53] hence: 'Οὗτοι μὲν δὴ οὕτως ἐκπίπτοντες, οἷς μάλιστα προσήκει, ἔρημον καὶ ἀτελῆ φιλοσοφίαν' (495b8-c1).[xiii] With her true parents in exile philosophy becomes orphaned (495c3), and with the way now clear, a gang of squatters move into her territory, the sophists,[54] peddling their cheap recycled wisdom (495c8-e1). The love of fame, honour and glory, the whims and fancies of *hoi polloi*, the conventional claptrap of the Sophists, all combine to make it impossible for the young philosopher to emerge (412e2-414a5).

However, a small group of genuine philosophers remain uncorrupted, and there are five conditions which make their survival possible: (1) when a well reared and noble character is kept in check by exile (a reference to Dion perhaps?); (2) when a great soul is reared in a small city, and looks beyond its narrow borders to something more; (3) when other men come to it from other arts (Plato possibly); (4) the example of Theages (mentioned in the *Apology* at 33e9), whose

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[xiii] 'So these men, for whom philosophy is most suitable, go thus into exile and leave her abandoned and unconsummated' (trans. Allan Bloom p.175).

bodily aliments prevented him from being exiled from philosophy,[55] and lastly; (5) the Sokratic daimon (496a10-496e2). Philosophy (the love or desire for wisdom), then, can exist without the ideal conditions of the ideal city, provided that the philosopher does not seek political office (592a1-592b4). In Athens, or indeed any city, the philosopher can never be the best citizen and can never excel in the political field.

καὶ τούτων δὴ τῶν ὀλίγων οἱ γενόμενοι καὶ γευσάμενοι ὡς ἡδὺ καὶ μακάριον τὸ κτῆμα, καὶ τῶν πολλῶν αὖ ἱκανῶς ἰδόντες τὴν μανίαν, καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεων πράττει οὐδ' ἔστι σύμμαχος μεθ' ὅτου τις ἰὼν ἐπὶ τὴν τῷ δικαίῳ βοήθειαν σῴζοιτ' ἄν, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ εἰς θηρία ἄνθρωπος ἐμπεσών, οὔτε συναδικεῖν ἐθέλων οὔτε ἱκανὸς ὢν εἷς πᾶσιν ἀγρίοις ἀντέχειν, πρίν τι τὴν πόλιν ἢ φίλους ὀνῆσαι προαπολόμενος ἀνωφελὴς αὑτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἂν γένοιτο—ταῦτα πάντα λογισμῷ λαβών, ἡσυχίαν ἔχων καὶ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττων, οἷον ἐν χειμῶνι κονιορτοῦ καὶ ζάλης ὑπὸ πνεύματος φερομένου ὑπὸ τειχίον ἀποστάς, ὁρῶν τοὺς ἄλλους καταπιμπλαμένους ἀνομίας, ἀγαπᾷ εἴ πῃ αὐτὸς καθαρὸς ἀδικίας τε καὶ ἀνοσίων ἔργων τόν τε ἐνθάδε βίον βιώσεται καὶ τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν αὐτοῦ μετὰ καλῆς ἐλπίδος ἵλεώς τε καὶ εὐμενὴς ἀπαλλάξεται (*Republic* 496c5-e3)[xiv]

[xiv] 'Now the men who have become members of this small band have tasted how sweet and blessed a possession it is [philosophy]. At the same time, they have seen sufficiently the madness of the many, and that no one who minds the business of the cities does virtually anything sound, and that there is no ally with whom one could go to the aid of justice and be preserved. Rather – just like a human being who has fallen in with wild beasts and is neither willing to join them in doing injustice nor sufficient as one man to resist all the savage animals – one would perish before he has been of any use to city or friends and be of no profit to himself or others. Taking all this into the calculation, he keeps quiet and minds his own business – as a man in a storm, when dust and rain are blown about by the wind, stands aside under a little wall. Seeing others filled full of lawlessness, he is content if somehow he can live his life here pure of injustice and unholy deeds, and take his leave from it graciously and cheerfully with fair hope' (trans. Bloom p.176).

This man, who is content to live his life free from injustice and impiety, is quite possibly Sokrates (or more likely Plato). But living such a life is not enough; so much more could be achieved if someone like Sokrates lived in a city sympathetic to philosophy (497a3-5). Since there is no city worthy of the philosophical nature (497b1-2), then the philosopher must 'mind his own business' (496c11) or suffer the consequences. The antagonism between Sokrates and Athens is paradigmatic of the awkwardness between the philosopher and his city; the philosopher needs the city (if only to philosophise) whilst the city will never accept the authority of philosophy (488a2-489a2).[56] But there is more to it than this, however.

Sokrates' attachment to polis life is briefly sketched out in the *Phaedrus*. Here we find that Sokrates' love for the polis and his commitment to philosophy are closely associated: 'φιλομαθὴς γάρ εἰμι· τὰ μὲν οὖν χωρία καὶ τὰ δένδρα οὐδέν μ᾽ ἐθέλει διδάσκειν, οἱ δ᾽ ἐν τῷ ἄστει ἄνθρωποι. σὺ μέντοι δοκεῖς μοι τῆς ἐμῆς ἐξόδου τὸ φάρμακον ηὑρηκέναι' (*Phaedrus* 230d4-7).[xv] To Phaedrus, Sokrates acts like a stranger when outside the city walls (230c8-d3, as he does in the court room, *Apology* 17d1-18a7; cf. *Theaetetus* 173d1-4), and Sokrates confesses that he only follows him out of the city because of what he hopes to learn (*Phaedrus* 230e1). As a lover of learning

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[xv] 'I am, you see, a lover of learning. Now the people in the city have something to teach me, but the fields and trees won't teach me anything' (trans. Walter Hamilton p.26).

Sokrates is not bound to the city, *whether it is Athens or any other*, but to men (243d4). Does this suggest that philosophy can transcend the polis?

In a limited sense perhaps it does. But Sokrates' brief absence from the city is possible and tolerable only insofar as he can continue philosophising. Sokrates' love for philosophy is greater than his love for his city. Sokrates' trip outside the city walls in the *Phaedrus* is akin to his trip to the Piraeus in the *Republic*: in both cases philosophy is seen as residing beyond Athens. However, philosophy cannot remain in exile indefinitely; philosophy must reclaim the city (*Republic* 473c11-e4, 499c6-d6), since, ultimately, it must reclaim mankind. Philosophy and the life of justice ought not to be alienated from the city, even if, as Plato thought, *contemporary* political and social trends made this almost inevitable.

For the most part, nevertheless, the dialogues present us with a picture of philosophy that *is* firmly rooted in Athens and Athenian cultural life.[57] However, it is an Athens of the past; it is Sokrates' Athens. This enables Plato to say so much more, and to state fully the quarrel between the philosopher and the imperfect society; it allows each side to slug it out in a bloodless though not insignificant contest. However, a more drastic measure may be required in order to turn a city towards virtue; a city where Sokratic education becomes an

institution, and where the philosopher's word is final. Before we come to that, however, we need to look in some detail at Sokratic education, and it is to this subject that I shall now turn.

Endnotes

[1] Cf. *Gorgias* 473e9-a2.

[2] The reconciliation is this: that the philosopher is loyal to the city and constitution in which he resides and operates (the philosopher is not required, directly at least, to bolster a regime but nor is he required to undermine it), and that in turn the city allows the philosopher to conduct his mission unhindered; and that while the philosopher may say things that the city cannot say or endorse, in so saying them he must not forget his civic obligations and responsibilities.

[3] C. D. C. Reeve, *Socrates in the Apology: An Essay on Plato's Apology of Socrates*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989 (p.172).

[4] See *Republic* 465d2-465e2.

[5] For an alternative view see Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989 (p.220).

[6] Is this number significant? Also note that Sokrates is condemned only by thirty votes.

[7] See Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, ed. Gould, trans. H. Rackham, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1996 (22, 3-4).

[8] In the case of ostracism, the exile did not suffer the loss of property and income was not affected. David Stockton, *The Classical Athenian Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1990 (pp.33-34).

[9] Xenophon, *Hellenica* 11.4.14.

[10] 'Even where political motives may not be inferred from judicial sentences of exile, such sentences were political insofar as it was the political authority of the state that decided which acts were to result in the removal of a person from the community' (Sara Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece*, New York: Princeton, 2005, p.9).

[11] See Euripides, *Medea* 646, and Sophokles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1357.

[12] Robert Gorman, "Poets, Playwrights, and the Politics of Exile in Ancient Rome and Greece," *International Journal of Refugee Law* Vol. 6 No. 3, 1994 (p.411).

[13] The legitimacy of the exile's expulsion is one question, as with Polynikes; another of equal importance is the responsibility that the exile has himself in respect to his own expulsion. Exile is symptomatic of an already exiting conflict between a man and his city. To be in exile merely exacerbates this conflict, driving a wedge between the exile's ēthos and ethos; character is freed from its habitation causing an ethical estrangement between the exile and his homeland.

[14] And, for the most part, it is portrayed as the only acceptable alternative to kin killing (*Oedipus Rex* 640-641, 658-659; *Orestes* 897-902).

[15] Sokrates does not reject exile on the grounds that it will make him poor; Sokrates is poor, his mission saw to that (*Apology* 36b8).

[16] Cf. *Gorgias* 461e1-4.

[17] Sara Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005 (p.273).

[18] Colaiaco, agreeing partially with Xenophon, sees Socrates' refusal to consider exile as being due to his desire not to legitimise the indictment as to do so might be seen as an admission of guilt (James A. Colaiaco, *Sokrates against Athens: Philosophy on Trial*, London: Routledge, 2001, p.176). Cf. Xenophon, *Apology* of *Socrates* 23.

[19] Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950 (pp.463-464).

[20] See Thomas G. West, *Plato's Apology of Socrates*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1979 (pp.81-133) and Kenneth J. Dover, "Socrates in the Clouds", *The Philosophy of Socrates: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Gregory Vlastos, New York: Anchor Books, 1971 (p.71).

[21] Cf. Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

[22] See *Theaetetus* 143d3-5.

[23] As Brickhouse and Smith observe, Sokrates' 'moral commitment to legal obedience is not unique to the *Crito*,' so in respect to civil obedience, we should not find his arguments in the *Crito* to be in any way peculiar (Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Socrates on Trial*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Cf. Forsdyke (*Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy*, p.272) and Reeve (*Socrates in the Apology: An Essay on Plato's Apology of Socrates*, Hackett, 1989, p.121). It is also worth noting with Santas that at 54c1 the Laws make the distinction between the law as such and the way in which it is practiced by men; hence, it is men who are to blame for Sokrates' trial and sentence and not the laws and the city which they serve (Gerasimos Xenophon Santas, *Socrates: Philosophy in Plato's Early Dialogues*, London: Routledge & Kegan, 1979, p.19). This rests on the distinction between law and the application of law, as Allen states 'the argument of the *Crito* itself assumes that laws are things which are distinct from though not independent of the verdicts rendered according to them' (R. E. Allen, *Socrates and Legal Obligation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980, p.96).

[24] In the *Phaedo* Sokrates is forced to defend himself for one last time (63b3, 63e-64a4, 69d8, 69e3-5).

[25] On a similar vein, J. Peter Euben states: 'The dialogue with the laws is not only or even primarily addressed to Crito's specific lack of understanding, but to his general perplexity about the relevance and usefulness of philosophical reasoning. Since this is also Socrates' concern, the dialogue with the laws cannot simply be an answer to Crito or for Crito's exclusive benefit. It is also an attempt by Socrates to define his relation to things of the world; to his friend Crito and the considerations he puts forward, to the many, to politics and Athens, even to philosophy as a worldly activity' (J. Peter Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's Crito," *Political Theory*, Vol. 67, No. 2, 1978, p.162).

[26] Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1960 (pp.226-232).

[27] Roslyn Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied: An Analysis of Plato's Crito*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2001 (pp.49-50); Allen, *Socrates and Legal Obligation* (pp.67-70).

[28] Perhaps Sokrates is concerned about what may happen to his friends if he flees Athens (*Crito* 53ba9-b4).

[29] Cf. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (p.264).

[30] Andrew Barker, "Why did Socrates refuse to escape?" *Phronesis* Vol. 22 No. 1, 1977 (pp.22-23).

[31] Sokrates points out that despite Krito's fears *hoi polloi* are not in a position to harm anyone, or, for that matter, do them any good either. For arguments' sake Krito agrees, but nevertheless continues to try to convince Sokrates to escape (*Crito* 44e1-45a4).

[32] Where does this leave the jury that convicted him? Remember that Sokrates is not necessarily obeying them, rather, he is obeying God.

[33] Due to the peculiar nature of Sokrates' notion of the soul it is no surprise that he does not elaborate on this point. Krito would not understand.

[34] Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (p.266).

[35] Colaiaco, *Socrates Against Athens* (p.200).

[36] Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied* (p.86, see also p.148).

[37] Richard Kraut, *Socrates and the State*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984 (p.6; p.40); Allen, *Socrates and Legal Obligation* (p.81); Gary Young "Socrates and Obedience," *Phronesis* Vol. 19 No. 1, 1974 (pp.8-9).

[38] 'The speech of the Laws is tailor made for Crito. It addresses concerns specific to him, concerns that from a philosophical point of view are of no importance and to which no philosophical response could be given' (*Ibid* p.148).

[39] Kraut, *Socrates and the State* (p.78).

[40] It is important to remember that the argument of the Laws has to offer an alternative reason, other than the philosophical, why Sokrates should not escape.

[41] As Barker points out, this is not a consequences *argument* ("Why did Socrates refuse to escape?", p.15), rather is it as Kraut (*Socrates and the State* p.42) suggests, 'their [the Laws] idea is that if Sokrates tries to escape he is willing to destroy for city *for his part*,' the key wording in this passage being 'τὸ σὸν μέρος', as Barker also observes: 'Of course no one man, through one such act of disobedience, can produce this species of social chaos. But if one man acts in such a way that a general imitation of his behaviour would bring about social chaos, he is fulfilling his μέρος, doing what one man can do towards that end, and hence must fall under the condemnation, even if one else imitates him, or is likely to be inspired by his action to similar crimes' (Barker, "Why did Socrates refuse to escape?", p.18).

[42] John B. Morral, *Aristotle*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977 (p.34).

[43] Cf. *Gorgias* 455a48.

[44] Darrel D. Colson, "Crito 51A-C: to what does Socrates owe obedience?" *Phronesis*, Volume 34, No. 1-3, 1989 (pp.36-37).

[45] See *Crito* 45c1-4.

[46] Note how this contradicts Krito's statement at 45c1-4.

[47] 'Bad men live to eat and drink, good men eat and drink to live (Plutarch, *Listening to Poetry* 21e, 9.1.1.2).

[48] Weiss, *Socrates Dissatisfied* (p.149).

[49] Such arguments, of course, could not be applied to a sophist (See *Protagoras* 316c7-5).

[50] Kraut, *Socrates and the State* (p.227).

[51] Euben, "Philosophy and Politics in Plato's Crito" (pp.164-165).

[52] However, Sokrates did participate in the affairs of state, albeit only once; he is not, therefore, the archetypical 'quiet Athenian' (see *Apology* 32b1-7). Cf. L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986 (p.40; p.188).

[53] *Republic* 495a4-8.

[54] *Republic* 496a2-5.

[55] *Theages*, trans and ed. W. R. M. Lamb, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979 (130c-e, pp.341-384).

[56] How can a city embrace philosophy without being destroyed? (*Republic*, 497d6-9). Philosophy's exile from the city is evident in the very project of the *Republic* itself; with the ideal city Plato creates philosophy a new home, a home that not merely accommodates philosophy but serves it and is built entirely upon its principles. In the *Crito* we saw how Sokrates has to reconcile his philosophical principles with his civic obligation, by the time of the *Republic* such philosophical principles becomes these very laws. In the ideal city laws will be few and far between. The over reliance of *written* law (*Republic* 425b4-5) is a sign that a society is heading for trouble, and the strife free Kallipolis will have little use, therefore, for laws of this kind (*Republic* 425d9-426a4): it is education and custom that will ensure the smooth running of the city (*Republic* 425c1-5).

[57] Plato's Academy was outside the city walls, about a mile north-west of Athens.

Chapter Two

Sokratic Education

παρακαλοῦμέν σε, ὃ καὶ παρεκαλέσαμέν ἤδη, χρῆσαι σεαυτὸν ὁλοκλήρως τῇ συνηγορίᾳ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ ταῖς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐγγινομέναις τῇ διανοίᾳ σου ὁρμαῖς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ σύστασιν[i]

The subject of this chapter is Sokratic education. What do I mean by 'Sokratic' education? Very broadly, when I refer to Sokratic education I refer to Sokrates' engagement with educational questions in the dialogues. And more explicitly, I refer to Sokrates' principal educational aims and method as Plato presents them in the dialogues. The principal method of Sokratic education is the combination of *elenkhos* and *exhortation*, and its principal aim is to get people to *care for their souls*. Sokratic education, moreover, is largely defined by its concern with a key set of ethical questions: What is virtue? Is virtue teachable? How should one live?

The inquiry into virtue, happiness, and 'moral' culture generally, is seen as valuable in its own right, but importantly it is also seen as

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[i] '…we urge you, as we have urged you before, to devote yourself entirely to the advocacy of the truth, and to those impulses which are implanted by God in your soul for the establishment of good' (Saint Basil, *Letter VII*, trans. Roy. J. Deferrari, slightly adapted, p.47).

being of direct benefit both to the inquirer and those whom he or she engages with.

Another notable feature of Sokratic education is the peculiar nature of its teacher pupil relationship. Any educative endeavour requires a certain degree of communication between a supposed expert and a (hopefully) willing pupil, who, talent and perseverance withstanding, might just learn something. In ancient Greece the teacher might be a schoolmaster, a male parent or relative, an epic poet or dramatist, or, as was increasingly the case as the 5th Century B.C. progressed, a sophist. All of these teachers might, in some sense, claim to be able to teach virtue. Not so Sokrates. Although his life was dedicated to learning, he did not claim to be able to teach virtue. This is an astonishing assertion but, as we shall see, a necessary first step in the Sokratic project. Sokrates, perhaps unlike anyone before him, refused the mantle of a teacher of virtue because he felt no *shame* in admitting his ignorance. To sum up, and to anticipate much of what I will go on to say in this chapter, Sokratic education is non-institutional, inclusive, free, but it comes with no guarantees, no promises of wealth, success, or even honour, at least in the conventional sense; it is painful, at times disheartening, but, according to Sokrates, it is the only possible *anthrōpōn epimeleia*.

To reiterate, Sokratic education is something that Plato attributes to Sokrates, or rather, and to state the matter more accurately (and cautiously), it is something that the character of Sokrates is shown to practise and endorse in certain dialogues. Nevertheless, I see the aims of Sokratic and Platonic education as being the same: *care of the soul*.[1] Therefore, even though I restrict the term 'Sokratic education' to Sokrates' pedagogical method in the dialogues, I am not suggesting that there is any *fundamental* difference between its central tenets and those that we find in Platonic education,[2] or indeed any essential difference between Sokrates' educational method *in the dialogues* and Plato's educational method *as a writer of dialogues*.

I will begin, in section one, by saying a few words about education in ancient Athens and the cultural context into which Sokratic teaching is set in the dialogues. Then, in section two, I shall discuss exhortation (*parakeleuma*), *elenkhos*, and *epimeleia* or care of the soul, their relationship with each other and the role that they play in Sokratic education.

Teaching Virtue in Athens

Whatever we make of the authenticity of the *Clitophon*, we find within it a clear presentation of Plato's main concern with the way that education was conceived by his fellow Athenians. The Athenians regarded their education, which for the most part consisted of gymnastics, *mousikē* (a term we shall discuss shortly), and grammar, to be a complete education in virtue, which, the complaint runs in the *Clitophon*, it is clearly not. Therefore: 'πῶς οὐ καταφρονεῖτε τῆς νῦν παιδεύσεως οὐδὲ ζητεῖτε οἵτινες ὑμᾶς παύσουσι ταύτης τῆς ἀμουσίας' (*Clitophon* 407c4-6).[ii] But why did the Athenians think that their educational system was adequate for creating virtuous people? and, more crucially, what did they mean by virtue (*aretē*)?[3]

For the Greeks the purpose of education was to foster those traits and potentialities that would best enable a person to fulfil their duty to their *polis*, whether this meant participating in political decisions or fighting in wars. Hence, differently constituted societies had different educational objectives, as with Athens and Sparta for example.[4] But in all cases, it seems, the general aim of education was to produce

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[ii] How is it that you do not condemn this present mode of education nor search for teachers who will put an end to your lack of culture [*mousikē*]?' (trans. Michael Richard Hart).

virtuous *citizens*. To be an Athenian citizen was to be an *active*[5] member of the polis.[6] The Athenian citizen had, first and foremost, an obligation to the laws of his city,[7] but he also had certain rights and privileges that clearly distinguished him from non-citizens.[8] It was in the political field[9] that the benefits of Athenian citizenship could most clearly be seen: the right to hold office and to participate in the judicial process.[10] With Athens, as with other Greek *poleis*, citizenship was inextricably bound up with the political constitution of the polis.[11] To be an Athenian citizen meant that one was, at least formally, a democratic citizen.[12]

The existence of character or 'moral' education as a distinct discipline, or, in the case of school curricula, as a taught subject, is not something that the Greeks would have recognised. This has a lot to do with the way in which the Greeks generally thought about education. The nature of the Greek polis, as R. L. Nettleship remarks, meant that 'the influence of personal character upon society and politics was more direct and unmistakable than it can be in the vast organization of a modern nation, where the members at the circumference may be almost unconscious of their connexion with the centre.'[13] Education, then, was always based upon a conception of *character*,[14] and its form, content, and execution was driven almost exclusively by this:[15] the Greeks, as Werner Jaeger observes: 'were the first to recognize that education means deliberately moulding human

character in accordance with an ideal.'[16] Again as Jaeger says: 'education is such a natural and universal function of society that many generations accept and transmit it without question or discussion';[17] paideia is not simply 'education' as in 'schooling'; its meaning is much broader: it refers to a person's assimilation into a culture.[18]

As William Barclay states, for the Greeks 'education 'was the birthright of the child, and an essential part of anything which could be called civilisation.'[19] However, education in Athens in the 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. was poorly regulated.[20] Attendance at schools was not enforced, and the quality and duration of a child's education was dependent upon the financial situation of his parents. Education was restricted to boys; girls received no *formal* education in Athens. Education for boys, at Athens for example, consisted mainly of *mousikē*, gymnastics, and reading and writing, and usually took place in schools.[21] Boys were sent to the *grammatistēs*, the *kitharistēs* and the *paidotribēs*, to be taught letters, *mousikē* and physical training (*gumnastikē*) respectively,[22] as we learn, for example, in Plato's *Protagoras*.[23]

But what could Greek parents expect their children to learn from such a rudimentary education? On the one hand, an education of this sort instilled harmony of movement and speech, and on the other, it

introduced the child, through recitals and grammar, to the myths, rituals and heroic figures which would go on to form an essential role in their lives.[24] *Mousikē*, a term that is nigh impossible to translate, which was partly concerned with musical training (singing and playing the lyre) and part cultural study, formed the bedrock of a young Athenian's *liberal* education (cf. *Protagoras* 338e7-339a2, ἐγὼ ἀνδρὶ παιδείας μέγιστον μέρος εἶναι περὶ ἐπῶν. δεινὸν εἶναι· ἔστιν δὲ τοῦτο τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν λεγόμενα οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι συνιέναι ἅ τε ὀρθῶς πεποίηται καὶ ἃ μή, καὶ ἐπίστασθαι διελεῖν τε καὶ ἐρωτώμενον λόγον δοῦναι).[iii]

The poets, especially Homer, exerted a powerful influence over Greek education.[25] From an early age boys would learn about the great heroes, about their exploits and their virtues. It was within their cultural-musical education (*mousikē*) that children were introduced to the poets and the great heroes. Homer was seen as an educator,[26] as were many other poets.[27] Poetry was considered didactic; and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* contain a heroic code and ideal and, at the same time, a tragic presentation of human striving and achievement.[28]

[iii]' I consider…that the greatest part of a man's education is to be skilled in the matter of verses; that is, to be able to apprehend, in the utterances of the poets, what has been rightly and wrongly composed, and to know how to distinguish them and account for them when questioned' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb pp.183-185).

The educational import[29] of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* may not be easy for us to appreciate, however these works provided the Greeks with not only a heroic 'history' but a model of heroic action and speech,[30] and as such it gave them two of their greatest and most paradigmatic heroes, Akhilleus and Odysseus.[31] However, the Greeks of the 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. were not Homeric in the proper sense of the word. In the main, Homer's poems depicted a tribalistic, feudal world, a world of warlords and chieftains. This was a time before democracy, where the power of authority stemmed not so much from written law but from divine sanction and brute force.

However, the fascination that the Greeks had with Homer's poems hinged not on a total identification with the heroes within them but on the central ethical message that the poems were thought to contain: 'αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων' (*Iliad* VI.208). Excellence or 'being the best' could be reduced to two human spheres, words and deeds, hence the Homeric 'maxim': 'μύθων τε ῥητῆρ᾽ ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων' (*Iliad* IX.443).[32] Excelling in words and deeds was the Greek ideal, therefore, and between them Akhilleus and Odysseus shared all that was considered to be the most excellent. This ideal may have been problematic, even ambiguous, but it epitomized what the Greeks praised most highly: rhetorical skill and martial prowess.

Exhortation was implicit in the study of *mousikē*, and seems to have been used as a way of transmitting values from one generation to the next, as we learn in *Protagoras* at 322e4-326a4. It might seem rather incongruous for a 4th Century B.C. Greek boy to seek to emulate Aias or Diomedes, but what they would be seeking to emulate, as we have already indicated, is not the specific achievements of such heroes but the virtues that they typified.[33]

Gymnastics has its obvious uses: basic physical training, grace and poise, and athleticism; these could be all called upon in times of civic emergency, and frequently were. Traditionally, the 'basic Greek education,' if one can call it such, was geared towards 'the soul and the body'[34] rather than economic factors. Indeed, the notion of 'utility' was an 'anathema to the cultured Greeks'; as Barclay says: 'anything which enables a man to make money is necessarily an ungentlemanly thing; and anyone engaged in making money is *ipso facto* unfit to be a citizen.'[35] Education, therefore, was not for the Greeks simply the transmission and preservation of facts and figures,[36] it was concerned almost exclusively with the creation and promotion of a conception of human character; to be educated is not merely to learn but *to become*; as Kant puts it: 'Man can become man through education only. He is only what education makes him.'[37] From the 5th Century B.C. onwards, in Athens at least, 'traditional education' of this kind could be supplemented. The Sophists, not only to Plato's disapproval,

provided a 'higher education,' one that advanced and refined their pupils' linguistic and argumentative powers.[38] Protagoras taught his pupils to excel in words and deeds, and by this he meant in the affairs of the city; in Sokrates' words he claimed to be able to make people better citizens.[39]

One's definition of a 'better citizen' will depend, generally speaking, on the demands of citizenship and the nature of the polis and its *politeia*. In a sense, sophistic training filled the void left by the lack of formal training in citizenship in Athens. Indeed, the only institution that provided anything like citizenship training was the *ephēbeia*. Initially this had been little more than a cadet force, where young Athenians were enlisted to defend Athens' borders, but by 335 B.C. this institution, possibly as the result of the Macedonian threat from the north, came to include a stronger educational component.[40]

The *ephēbeia* aside, however, within mainstream education there were no specific courses of study devoted to citizenship. Civic education was provided for 'on the job' so to speak, and any specific skills that would help a young man to achieve success as a citizen were the responsibility of the family, friends, and in some cases, lovers.[41] Their education, as we have said, was liberal, its purpose was precisely to avoid specifics and to train body and 'mind' according to the mores

of the previous generation, to instill good character, and to leave everything else to providence.

Going back to our initial two questions, the Athenians thought that their educational measures were adequate for the creation of virtue because first and foremost the whole point of education for them was to a make a potential Athenian become an actual Athenian; and the teaching of virtue was not considered to be a difficult matter. Distinct virtues, such as courage and temperance, were not seen to work independently of the civic framework and the duties and obligations of citizenship. Therefore, the virtues that education were thought to inculcate were seen primarily through the prism of citizenship and the needs of the polis. That, at least, was the idea. There was in fact a great deal of tension between notions of virtue as such and the idea, relatively new in the first part of the 5th Century B.C., that virtues ought to be civic, if not in origin, then at least in application.[42]

However, despite the fact that the Athenians were fairly confident in their ability to teach the younger generation how to become good citizens (although by the end of the 5th Century B.C. that confidence was on the wane), we should be under no illusion about the complexity of Greek ethics at this time, nor underestimate the level of confusion that existed regarding the nature of virtue.[43]

As Athens expanded, both politically and culturally, and the demand

grew for a more professional approach to citizenship education, this

mixture of confidence and confusion proved fertile ground for the

sophists. As we see in Aristophanes, however, sophistic education

was seen as a major threat to traditional pedagogy and its notion of

the *kaloagathos*.[44] However, the threat was seen to come not only from

the sophists, who, for the most part, were foreigners, but from one of

their own, Sokrates.

Parakeleuma, Elenkhos, and Epimeleia

οἷον, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ποιεῖς ἡγούμενος, εἰ ὅτι μάλιστα σὲ ἐλέγχω, ἄλλου τινὸς ἕνεκα ἐλέγχειν ἢ οὗπερ ἕνεκα κἂν ἐμαυτὸν διερευνῴμην τί λέγω, φοβούμενος μή ποτε λάθω οἰόμενος μέν τι εἰδέναι, εἰδὼς δὲ μή. καὶ νῦν δὴ οὖν ἔγωγέ φημι τοῦτο ποιεῖν, τὸν λόγον σκοπεῖν μάλιστα μὲν ἐμαυτοῦ ἕνεκα, ἴσως δὲ δὴ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιτηδείων: ἢ οὐ κοινὸν οἴει ἀγαθὸν εἶναι σχεδόν τι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, γίγνεσθαι καταφανὲς ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ὅπῃ ἔχει; (*Charmides* 166c8-d7)[iv]

In the early dialogues Sokrates is often directly engaged with questions about the nature of particular virtues or excellences (*aretai*). Plato's early works, however, are not merely 'definitional' dialogues, whose chief purpose is to delineate the meaning of ethical terms.[45] In fact, as scholars are now becoming increasing aware

the goal of the dialogical Socratic method is fundamentally of an educative and ethical nature and only secondarily and indirectly of a logical and epistemological nature. Socratic dialectic aims at exhorting man to virtue. It aims at convincing human beings that the soul and the care of the soul are the maximum good for man. It aims at purifying the soul by basically testing it precisely through questions and answers in order to liberate it from errors and to dispose it towards the truth.[46]

[iv] 'How can you think, I said, if my main effort is to refute you, that I do it with any other motive than that which would impel me to investigate the meaning of my own words – from a fear of carelessly supposing at any moment, that I knew something while I knew it not? And so it is now: that is what I am doing, I tell you. I am examining the argument mainly for my own sake, but also, perhaps, for that of my other intimates. Or do you not think it is for the common good, almost, of all humans, that the truth about everything there is should be discovered?' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb, slightly adapted, p. 55).

To exhort, of course, is not to teach, still less to teach virtue. But granted that virtue can be taught, who and where are its teachers? This is a key problem in Sokratic education. It seems to Sokrates that virtue is a kind of knowledge, and yet this is nowhere demonstrated, that is to say, there are no teachers who are able to impart this knowledge, virtue. Hence, the conclusion runs, virtue cannot be knowledge because a primary feature of knowledge is that it is communicable. Nevertheless, and despite the *aporia* that is a common feature of the early dialogues, Sokrates continues to exhort people to pursue virtue and therefore to find the moral expert.

When Sokrates urges people to find a true expert, as he does in the *Laches* (201a2-b5), he is not to asking them to abandon him, or to take him to be the expert; the exhortation 'find a teacher of virtue' is not ironic. By telling people to seek out the expert he is inviting them *to join him* on his mission. But how does Sokrates accomplish this?

In a society in which most people (and especially 'moral' conservatives) would be convinced that they know what the virtues are (*Meno* 93a2-3; *Apology* 24c10-25a9), and that they either possess virtue themselves or are committed to pursuing it (without, of course, really knowing what virtue is), and that they are in a position to teach others the same virtue, how is it sensible to try and get people to spend any time trying to find someone who can tell them what they

already know? Simple: show them that they are ignorant about what virtue is and that as a consequence they are not in fact virtuous, and, assuming that they still want to be virtuous, state the obvious and say: 'find a teacher of virtue!'

Exhortation and elenkhos are at the heart of Sokratic education and between them they constitute the principal method by which Sokrates pursues his main pedagogical aim: the care of the soul.[47] As we saw earlier, exhortation was common in traditional education, particularly in *mousikē*, and was an important moral-educative device. To exhort a person is to induce an action or course of action, to 'persuade, press upon or win over' (*Peithō*). The Greek verb *Protrepō* means, for example, 'to urge forward.' Exhortation is common in any rudimentary form of ethical system, and amounts to little more than recommending a person to act in such and such a way or be like such and such a person, or, in more abstract terms, to 'be brave', i.e., to be one thing rather than another. Homer's *Iliad* is full of such exhortations (II.188-210; 244-264; III.38-75; IV.234-250; 255-400; 401-418; IX.432-605; XIII.274-294). In Homer's poems exhortation is often combined with rebuke and admonishment, and often its function is largely to persuade, in particular by appealing to a person's sense of honour or pride. It is a basic and rather rough and ready form of moral education.[48] However, its use in the *Iliad* is largely corrective, and is therefore not specifically a method for

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teaching 'virtue' but rather it is a rhetorical device for correcting deviant views or behaviour (Aias' speech to Akhilleus in book 9 of the *Iliad* is a fine example of this, IX.624-642).[49]

In the *Apology* we learn that Sokrates spent the majority of his adult life exhorting his fellow Athenians to virtue, and, according to the *Clitophon*, his 'teaching' is restricted to the use of exhortation (*parakeleuma*, *parainesis*). Clitophon is deeply critical of Sokrates' apparent unwillingness to move beyond merely hortatory (*protreptikos*) statements, no matter how laudable they may be, and actually teach people how to be virtuous.[50] It is all very well telling people that they *ought to pursue justice* (for example), complains Clitophon, but what we want to know is how we are *to become* just. Indeed, Clitophon goes as far as to say that Sokrates' method (as he understands it) is a positive hindrance in the pursuit of virtue: 'μὴ μὲν γὰρ προτετραμμένωι σε ἀνθρώπωι ὦ Σώκρατες ἄξιον εἶναι τοῦ παντὸς φήσω, προτετραμμένωι δὲ σχεδὸν καὶ ἐμπόδιον τοῦ πρὸς τέλος ἀρετῆς ἐλθόντα εὐδαίμονα γενέσθαι' (*Clitophon* 410e5-8).[v]

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[v] 'For I will maintain, Socrates, that for a man who isn't yet persuaded by your exhortations you are worth the world, but for someone who is you're actually almost a stumbling-block for reaching complete virtue and so becoming truly happy' (trans. S. R. Sling, *Plato: Clitophon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.259, slightly adapted).

However, I would suggest that far from amounting to a serious critique of the Sokratic method or more particularly of his use of exhortation, the *Clitophon* actually helps us to draw out more clearly the distinction between an unreflective form of exhortation, which is almost certainly the target of the author's criticism, and the kind that we see Sokrates use in the dialogues. Indeed, if one looks to the dialogues then one sees that Sokrates wastes little time in explicit exhortation. The main problem with exhortation of this sort is that it is entirely uncritical, like the exhortations one finds in poetry it does not tell people *why* they must be virtuous and still less what virtue *is*. Indeed, questions such as these would render explicit exhortation impotent. How can one exhort a person to be just if one does not know what justice is?[51]

Therefore, Sokratic education must include a feature that gets people to question whether they do indeed understand what the virtues are, and this is the elenkhos. In the *Laches* we are given an example of just this procedure. Ostensibly concerned with defining courage (*andreia*), the *Laches* is more interested in the nature of Sokratic education, and in particular how it differs from its two main rivals, traditional and sophistic education.

In the *Laches*, Lysimakhos and Melesias call upon Nikias, Lakhes, and Sokrates to give educational advice in respect to their sons, Aristeides

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and Thukydides. That Lysimakhos and Melesias feel compelled to ask others for advice on how to raise their sons is revealing. According to the *Meno*, and with obvious irony, we are told that Lysimakhos and Melesias had received the finest education that Athens could offer, and yet despite this neither was able to excel their neighbours in virtue let alone match the achievements of their famous fathers.[52] However, in the *Laches* both men complain of how their fathers *did not* properly attend to their education, and do not want the same fate to befall their own sons.

However, as poorly educated men themselves, neither Lysimakhos nor Melesias feel sufficiently confident in their judgement to be able to take make the important decisions regarding their sons' *further* education. This speaks volumes about the education that the boys have already received; it is clear that neither father thinks that it was sufficient to enable their children to become virtuous.

Importantly, however, Lysimakhos and Melesias are painfully aware of their own shortcomings (an important first step in one's susceptibility to Sokratic education), and concerned that their sons will turn out more like them than their more illustrious fathers they are motivated to call upon 'expert' advice. Therefore, despite their own experiences both men retain some hope that there could be an educational solution.

This solution comes in the form of *hoplomakhia* (literally 'fighting in armour'), a new form of military training pioneered by Stesilaus (*Laches* 183c9). Therefore, Lysimakhos and Melesias invite Nikias and Lakhes to watch this new training technique, to see if they think it would be suitable for their sons.

Both Nikias and Laches are all too ready to give their advice. As something of an educational progressive, Nikias has no doubt that *hoplomakhia* would be of educational benefit, and that, among other things, it would be useful for the inculcation of *andreia* (181d10-182d6).[53] Lakhes, however, holds a more traditional view of warfare, and hence of the nature of courage; and he does not think therefore that fighting in armour would be of much value (182d8-184c8).[54] Much of their response to the question of the usefulness of *hoplomakhia* is based on their attitudes towards educational expertise but more particularly on their differing understanding of the nature of courage.

Since Nikas and Lakhes are at odds in respect to the efficacy of *hoplomakhia*, at the request of Lysimakhos, they now look to Sokrates to cast the deciding vote. Typically, of course, Sokrates will have none of it; this matter cannot be settled by vote, by majority approval, but only by the expert (184d5-e9).

The first thing to establish is the nature of educational expertise. Nikias is confused: is not the question in hand whether *hoplomakhia* ought to be learned or not? Fighting in armour, however, is only a means to an end; and it is the end that the educator must keep constantly in mind (185d1-3).

For Sokrates the present discussion, in the broadest sense, is concerned with an accomplishment that is studied for the sake of young men's souls (185d9-e1). In order to know whether fighting in armour is valuable one must first understand the nature and needs of the soul. So which of the present company is skilled in the 'treatment' of the soul (*therapeia*, 185d9; 185e3)? What Sokrates is asking, although he has yet to make this explicit, is which of them has any knowledge of virtue.

Sokrates, of course, denies that he has any knowledge of virtue and therefore also denies that he has any educational expertise. Nevertheless, and with characteristic irony, he is willing to admit that Nikias or Lakhes may well do so, and therefore if this is the case, he would like them to tell him who they learned it from, or, if they came to this knowledge independently, to give him a display of their knowledge (186c6-187b8). Sokrates is asking Nikias and Lakhes to subject themselves to Sokratic examination.[55]

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Behind Sokrates' questioning of Nikias and Lakhes, and behind the Sokratic elenkhos as such, is an attack on two common assumptions that are often held by Sokrates' interlocutors: (1) the interlocutors' belief that they have been taught virtue; and (2) that they in turn have taught (or could teach) others to be virtuous. In order to undermine these assumptions, Sokrates has to show his interlocutors that they have no understanding of virtue. And, if that is shown, then they can no longer safely assume that they have been taught virtue or taught others to be virtuous (189d4-190b1). At the end of the *Laches*, no satisfactory definition of *andreia* is agreed upon. Therefore, the only remaining course of action, declares Sokrates, is for all of them to urgently seek out a teacher of virtue (201a2-b5).

Superficially at least, Sokratic elenkhos bears some similarity with sophistic eristics, the art of refutation (much to Sokrates' expense). In the *Euthydemus*, however, the only other dialogue that deals specifically with exhortation, the difference between eristic and Sokratic styles of 'refutation' is carefully distinguished.[56]

In the *Euthydemus* the young brothers, Euthydemos and Dionysodoros, who at 273d8-9 claim to be able to teach virtue, are challenged by Sokrates to give a demonstration of this power: τουτονὶ τὸν νεανίσκον πείσατον, ὡς χρὴ φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπιμελεῖσθαι, καὶ χαριεῖσθον ἐμοί τε καὶ τουτοισὶ πᾶσι (275a5-7,

dynamis cf. 274d2).[vi] The brothers are only too happy to oblige Sokrates, and they proceed to examine Cleinias, who is to be the target of their wisdom. We should note, however, that the brothers' indifferent tone is an indication of the fact that they will not be faithful to the remit that Sokrates has set for them. The brothers will not exhort Cleinias to virtue but will instead subject him to verbal trickery (278c6-7). In response to Euthydemos and Dionysodoros' examination of Cleinias, Sokrates delivers his own protreptic display.

Sokrates begins with this axiom: that all human beings wish to fare well (*eu prattein*). Then he asks: how does one fare well? The answer is: by possessing many good things (*polla kagatha*). The next question, inevitably, is: which things are good? Such things as wealth, health, good birth, talent, honour, and, moreover, *sophrosunē*, *andreia*, *dikaiosunē*, and, of course, wisdom. The greatest good, however, is good fortune, which, it turns out, is nothing other than wisdom. Having thus established (with a little too much ease and with some humour) that wisdom is the greatest good Sokrates takes Cleinias through his main argument, the main points of which can be listed thus:

[vi] 'You are to persuade this young man here he ought to pursue wisdom and practise virtue, and by doing so you will oblige both me and all these present' (trans. Michael Richard Hart).

1. Good (things) must be beneficial

2. Beneficial things must be used and not merely possessed

3. Knowledge determines correct usage

4. Other goods (those other than wisdom) are only beneficial when combined with wisdom

5. Other goods are harmful if they are not accompanied by wisdom but by ignorance

6. Wisdom is good; ignorance is bad.

7. Wisdom is teachable

Conclusion: (given that everyone wishes to fare well and that wisdom is the greatest good and is teachable) wisdom should be pursued (278e5-282d5). Sokrates then says to Dionysodorus and Euthydemus: 'οἵων ἐπιθυμῶ τῶν προτρεπτικῶν λόγων εἶναι, τοιοῦτον, ἰδιωτικὸν ἴσως καὶ μόλις διὰ μακρῶν λεγόμενον' (282d8-10).[vii]

Sokrates has not unearthed any important truths here, all he has done (and despite what he says, in a very truncated form), is to place Cleinias in a position where he is able to state his wish to become wise. Whether Cleinias will go on to pursue wisdom is another matter. (The same thing happens to Charmides in the eponymous dialogue, *Charmides* 176a6-b5).[57]

[vii] 'That is my illustration of what I desire a hortatory argument [*protreptikōn logōn*] to be – rough and ready, perhaps, and expressed at laborious length' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.417).

To exhort, unlike what we hear in the *Clitophon*, is not merely to urge people to be virtuous; it constitutes an inquiry into the very nature of virtue itself.[58] In the case of Cleinias, much work still has to be done, but the groundwork, at least, has been laid. Sokrates has begun the process of turning Cleinias away from material concerns and towards a concern for virtue,[59] and, therefore, towards a concern for his own soul.[60]

The exhortation 'care for your soul' is implicit within the elenkhos.[61] Hence we come back to this phrase (*Laches* 185d9-e5; *Protagoras* 312cb7-313c3; *Charmides* 156b1-157c6; *Alcibiades I* 132c1-2; *Phaedo* 82d2-3, *Apology* 30a2-b5; *Clitophon* 410d8-9).[62] It is not until the *Republic* that we really understand what this means in practice. Just quite what the average Athenian would have thought of such an exhortation is unclear. In terms of the *Apology*, 'care for your soul' is an exhortation that is loaded with meaning and with a plea to change one's life radically. It does not merely say 'act like this', 'do that', it says, 'give your life to the pursuit of wisdom and virtue,' and that philosophy is more important than life precisely because without it one cannot *live* well, one cannot be *eudaimon*. However, as Francisco J. Gonzalez states: 'Socrates is claiming, not that elenctic examination in search of virtue *promises* to produce a great good for us, but rather that *it is itself our greatest good*.'[63]

Sokrates' alternative education is going to rest therefore not on explicit exhortation, which is problematic and practically useless, but on the implicit exhortation embedded within the elenkhos. The point of the elenkhos thus understood is to get people to the stage where the care of their souls is their paramount concern; the actual 'caring of the soul' is achieved through philosophy, through gaining (or trying to gain) wisdom and hence virtue (*Apology* 20d7-23b9; 28e6-7; 29d3-30b5; 36c5-11).

Returning briefly to the *Laches*, we are given a characterisation of the fundamentally ethical orientation of Sokratic education:

ὃς ἂν ἐγγύτατα Σωκράτους ᾖ [λόγῳ ὥσπερ γένει] καὶ πλησιάζῃ διαλεγόμενος, ἀνάγκη αὐτῷ, ἐὰν ἄρα καὶ περὶ ἄλλου του πρότερον ἄρξηται διαλέγεσθαι, μὴ παύεσθαι ὑπὸ τούτου περιαγόμενον τῷ λόγῳ, πρὶν <ἂν> ἐμπέσῃ εἰς τὸ διδόναι περὶ αὑτοῦ λόγον, ὅντινα τρόπον νῦν τε ζῇ καὶ ὅντινα τὸν παρεληλυθότα βίον βεβίωκεν: ἐπειδὰν δ᾽ ἐμπέσῃ, ὅτι οὐ πρότερον αὐτὸν ἀφήσει Σωκράτης, πρὶν ἂν βασανίσῃ ταῦτα εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς ἅπαντα (*Laches* 187e5-9-)[viii]

This, of course, is what happens in the *Laches*. Initially the discussion was about the educational efficacy of fighting in armour, and in particular whether this was a useful pursuit for the young. However,

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[viii] 'Whoever comes into close contact with Socrates and has any talk with him face to face, is bound to be drawn round and round by hm in the course of the argument – though it may have started at first on a quite different theme – and cannot stop until he is led into giving an account of the manner in which he now spends his days, and of the kind of life he has lived hitherto; and when once he has been led into that, Socrates will never let him go until he has thoroughly and properly put all his ways to the test' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.37).

by the end of the dialogue the focus has turned away from *just* the young people in question and towards the whole party; and the subject under discussion is no longer fighting in armour but with life and how it should be lived.

Sokratic education is, however, problematic, not just in respect to what it claims and the manner in which it proceeds but also in respect to what it opposes. It opposes received notions about virtue and about the status of teachers. By questioning conventional educational practices, Sokrates also undermines faith in the vivacity of his ethical tradition (even more so than the Sophists). If virtue cannot be taught in Athens, if no Athenian can be good (*agathos*), then what hope is there for the future? If Sokratic education is seen a rival to the standard pedagogies, and it came without any pretensions to wisdom, then it must be seen as dangerous and corrupting. Philosophers can quibble all they like about the meaning of ethical terms, an Athenian might say, but we must retain and promote some form of civic virtue, and the old notion of the *kaloagathos* must remain unscathed. If traditional education is attacked then so is the polis, such was the importance of *paideia* to the Greeks.[64]

As we saw in the last chapter, Sokrates saw himself as a benefactor. His divine, educative mission, to goad Athens from its slumber, was nothing other than an attempt to *turn* the whole of the polis away

from material concerns and towards virtue. Uniquely, Sokratic education is supposed to have a positive effect even *without* claiming to teach virtue.[65] Can a society that values virtue support such a programme? Can a polis like Athens admit that its conception of virtue is almost without ground and take up, as the philosopher would ask, the search for true virtue? Sokrates can only do so much to recommend his alternative educational programme, and, for the most part, his power to convert his fellow citizens towards his view of virtue is greatly diminished because of the counter-influence of traditional education. This is not just a problem that Sokrates faces *in the dialogues* but also one that Plato faces *in writing them*.

Endnotes

1 Cf. Kenneth Seeskin, *Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method*, New York: Sate University of New York Press, 1987 (p.90).

2 However, Sokratic education is not *merely* a stage in Plato's development of a theory of education (although it is certainly that), one that is superseded or rejected. On this reading, in the fictional world of the dialogues, Sokrates is an exponent of 'Platonic' education.

3 We shall see that the answers to these two questions are closely related, and that Sokrates' scepticism regarding the possibility for the teaching of virtue is bound up with his more general concerns about his contemporaries' view on the coextensive nature of virtue and the particularities of Athenian citizenship.

4 Aristotle, *Politics* 1337a11-20.

5 'For the classical period, it is difficult to talk about a purely "passive" meaning of Politeia, that is, as an abstract legal status, because Greek citizenship was defined by the active participation of the citizen in public life' (Philip Brook Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, p.5).

6 'In short, citizenship was membership in the Athenian polis, with all that this implied – a legal status, but also the more intangible aspects of the life of the citizen that related to his status. It was simultaneously a complement of formal obligations and privileges, and the behaviour, feelings, and communal attitudes attendant upon them' (*Ibid* p.7).

7 'The chief obligation of citizens was to obey the laws of the polis' (*Ibid* p.9).

8 'Since the polis was in essence its citizens, clear boundaries between the member and the non-member existed; within the boundaries of membership, defined by a fixed constitution, the citizens had the right to participate in the community's deliberative and/or judicial functions whose exercise normally took place in a civic center. And among the citizens at least partly on the shared belief that as members of their community they would have access to, and benefit from, justice' (*Ibid* p.54).

9 'It was above all in the political sphere that the citizen was distinctive: here, in particular, one might expect freedom and equality – the hallmarks of the Athenian citizen – to be seen most strikingly in operation' (R. K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.31).

10 'Political power has come to rest with an assembly of men who are not themselves, as individuals, powerful; unity is no longer to be secured by traditional authority or respect for social hierarchy; the assembly is to direct Athenian policy, yet individuals members may be inexperienced, uneducated, unused to responsibility' (Cynthia Farrar, *The Origins of Democratic Thinking: The Invention of Politics in Classical Athens*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.27).

11 'The absence of property qualification for the exercise of citizenship rights was a basic principle of the Athenian political order' (Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, p.193).

12 The right to hold office could be withheld from a citizen who proved to be of bad character, and, in a similar vein, ostracism existed to curb the power of over-ambitious or corrupt citizens. Cf. *Aeschines: Against Timarchos*, trans. Nick Fisher, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001 (1.19-20, p.78).

13 R. L. Nettleship, *The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935 (p.48).

14 Athenian education was 'cultural' rather than 'technical' it was 'directed towards character training and citizenship, not towards craftsmanship and personal profit' (Frederick A. G. Beck, *Greek Education: 450-350 B.C*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1964, p.240).

15 Paideia as 'training', for example, in the mechanic arts, would be an education in a very narrow sense.

[16] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume 1: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965 (p.xxii).

[17] *Ibid* p.3.

[18] 'At the widest it may be said that education among the Athenians was education for culture' (William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*, Michigan: Baler Book House, 1974, p.84). For a slightly different view, see T. B. L. Webster's *Athenian Culture and Society*, London: Batsford, 1973 (pp.58-78).

[19] Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World* (p.79). Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), '1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.' As Kenneth J. Freeman puts it: 'the Hellene felt that it was quite as much his duty to the state to educate her future citizens properly as it was to be ready to die in her course, and he did both ungrudgingly. If the laws which made the teaching of letters compulsory at Athens fell into desuetude, it was only because the citizens needed no compulsion to make them do their duty. Nor had the State to pay the school bills; for every citizen, however poor, was ready to make the necessary sacrifices of personal luxuries and amusements in order to do his duty to the community by having his children properly taught. The State only interfered to make schooling as cheap and as easy to obtain as possible' (M. J. Rendall, *School of Hellas: An Essay on the Practice and Theory of Ancient Greek Education from 600 to 300 B.C.*, London: MacMillian and Co, 1907, pp.281-282). Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.2.6, 'And it is not merely a matter of rearing children. When they seem to be capable of learning, their parents teach them themselves whatever they can teach that is valuable for life; but if they think that there is anything that is better taught by somebody else, they incur the expense of sending their children to that person. They leave nothing undone in their concern to see that their children's development is a perfect as possible' (trans. O. J. Todd p.111).

[20] Wilkins, p.66.

[21] 'There was no definite age in Athens at which children began school, nor at which they ended schooling', the factors were economic (Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World*, p.105).

[22] *Ibid* pp.112-142.

[23] *Protagoras* 324c6-326c3.

[24] Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (pp.227-230).

[25] And is something that forms, for instance, the main background to Plato's critical response to it in the *Republic*.

[26] *Republic* 595b9-c1.

[27] *Republic* 363e-8-9.

[28] 'Heroic poetry…aims naturally at the creation and perpetuation of a heroic ideal. Its educational aim and influence are far greater than that of all other types of poetry, because it gives an objective picture of life as a whole, and portrays men at hand-grips with destiny, struggling to win a noble prize (Werner Jaeger *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume I: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945, p.43).

[29] *Ibid* p.36.

[30] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, London: Duckworth, 1985 (p.121).

[31] 'On the one hand there was the man of valour, typified by Achilles, and on the other side there was the man of wisdom, typified by Odysseus. But in the Athenian ideal these two ideals were united, and, at its highest, the Athenian ideal united these two ideals and sought to produce the man, who, at one and the same time, was the philosopher and the man of action' (*Ibid*).

[32] 'The first endeavour in moral education is to establish a character. Character consists in the readiness to act according to maxims' (*The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant*, trans & ed. Edward Franklin Buchner, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904, p.187).

[33] Just actually how these values chimed with those of the Athens of the 5th and 4th Centuries B. C. is, of course, another question.

[34] *Republic* 376e3.

[35] William Barclay, *Educational Ideals in the Ancient World* (p.82).

[36] 'Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of fact and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principles that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing anything over' (Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, ed. Kate Flint, London: Penguin, 2007, p.10).

[37] *The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant* (p.107).

[38] Aristophanes' *Clouds* (934-937, 961-983, 985-999), ed. & trans. Jeffrey Henderson, The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

[39] *Protagoras* 319a5.

[40] The Ephēbic oath ran thus: 'I will not disgrace my sacred weapons nor desert the comrade who is placed by my side. I will fight for things holy and things profane, whether I am alone or with others. I will hand on my fatherland greater and better than I found it. I will hearken to the magistrates and obey existing laws and those hereafter established by the people. I will not consent unto any that destroys or disobeys the constitution, but will prevent him, whether I am alone or with others. I will honour the temples and the religion which my forefathers established. So help me Aglauros, Enualios, Ares, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone.'

[41] *Phaedrus* 233b6; 239b1-4.

[42] This tension can be seen as early as Homer's *Iliad* in the dispute between Akhilleus and Agamemnon, and also in dramatic works such as Aiskhylos' *Seven Against Thebes* and Sophokles' *Antigone*. The civic usefulness of virtue was not in question for Sokrates, but what he did reject was the idea that virtue could be defined by reference to their social expediency alone. Such a view is more suited to, although in significantly different ways, Thrasymakhos and Protagoras. For Sokrates however the question as to what virtue is has to be settled first. The Homeric understanding of virtue is inadequate, and its antagonism to civic virtue, the so-called quiet virtues of Adkins, is manifest. And, as we learn in dialogues like the *Apology* and the *Crito*, neither is virtue solely a matter of toeing the party line. Indeed, if Sokrates did have a notion of what civic virtue is it must be one that runs counter to the one held by his fellow Athenians. Before one can begin to talk about whether virtue is primarily civic or philosophical one must first ask the more basic question, and one must ask for reasons other than more curiosity or points scoring.

[43] Cf. Adkins, *Merit and Responsbility* (pp.266-278).

[44] Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1013-1017; 1069-1073.

[45] Cf. Seeskin, *Dialogue and Discovery* (p.3).

[46] Giovanni Reale, *A History of Ancient Philosophy 1. From the Origins to Socrates*, trans. John R. Catan, New York: State University of New York, 1987 (pp.239-240).

[47] Cf. *Republic* (*therapeia*) 585d2.

[48] '…Nestor's talk was invariably emotional and psychological, aimed at bolstering morale or at soothing overheating tempers, not at selecting the course of action' (M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, London: Penguin, 1991, p.115).

[49] Taken alone, and for adults certainly, exhortation is of questionable value. For instance, most Athenians would already be convinced of the need to be virtuous, and would probably consider themselves to be so. As such, exhorting an Athenian to 'be just' would be at best meaningless and at worst insulting. What Athenian would admit to not being just, or being courageous or pious? and since they would not do so, they must, by implication, think that they understand thoroughly what these virtues are and what it means to possess them.

[50] As Francisco J. Gonzalez states, the source of Clitophon's frustration 'is the view that philosophy should be more than the protreptic Socrates offers, a belief that he considers justified by the fact that *other technai are* more than this' (Francisco J. Gonzalez, "The Socratic Elenchus as Constructive Protreptic," *Does Socrates Have A Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*, ed. Gary Alan Scott, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002, p.164).

[51] Note that Sokrates exhorts people *to pursue* virtue and wisdom rather than *to be* virtuous or wise.

[52] *Meno* 94a5-c6.

[53] (1) It improves health, for it is strenuous form of exercise (the weight of the armour presumably being a factor); (2) and it is, therefore, following the liberal conception of education, fitting for a free citizen; (3) it also has some benefit for actual battle (amazing that this is third on the list!); (4) the greatest advantage, however, is when the formation breaks and a hoplite is forced to fight independently. This is a rather Homeric notion, and is not strictly speaking in keeping with the ethos of hoplite battle and the close order of the phalanx (a point with Lakhes picks up on later); (5) another benefit is that it leads to other related skills; it is seen by Nikias as a stepping stone to other techniques associated with warfare; (6) and, most crucially, it makes a person 'bolder and braver (*andreios*)' in war; (7) and finally, it makes the hoplite look more impressive in battle, and therefore more terrifying (providing, as Lakhes says, he doesn't end up making a fool out of himself).

[54] On the sophistic credentials of fighting in armour, see *Euthydemus* 271c3-272b4. 'He [Lakhes] does not raise the wider question of whether this [fighting in armour] is really the way for young men to be spending their time if they want to acquire the qualities of the elder Thucydides and Aristeides' (T. H. Irwin, "Common Sense and the Socratic Method," *Method in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Jyl Gentzler, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, p.39). Lakhes' first point is not particularly strong. If, he says, *hoplomakhia* were an accomplishment, then surely the Spartans would have taken notice of it and employed it, but since they have not, and the supposed experts in *hoplomakhia* have not gone to Sparta to sell their wares, then it must not be of any account. However, the Spartans would be the last people on earth to take anyone's advice on matters concerning war and education (on this subject see *Hippias Major* 283a-284c). Therefore, just because it is not employed by the Spartans it does not mean that it is not useful. Lakhes' other objection is also not very credible. He has seen such an expert with his own eyes, and he struck him as a ridiculous figure – if the expert could expose himself to ridicule in this way then god help his pupils. Unfortunately the example given is not very relevant; Lakhes is attacking the expert and not the expertise.

[55] It is now time for Sokrates to step out from the ranks so to speak, and begin his assault on Nikias and Lakhes. Are the generals adequately prepared? Nikias, as befitting an amateur follower of Sokrates, does know what to expect (and he shows courage therefore, since he 'dares' to go into battle against Sokrates). Nikias' willingness to submit to the Sokratic method has a touch of arrogance behind it, and not without merit, for, as we will see, Nikias thinks he has a secret weapon. Lakhes, however, is not well acquainted with Sokrates or his method of questioning (so much for his earlier recommendation we might say!). But as long as Sokrates' words conform to his deeds he is happy to proceed. Indeed, Lakhes does not know what this will entail. Sokrates may have been forced to retreat from Delium, but he will not retreat from Nikias or Lakhes, on the contrary, it is they who will be forced to give way (Lakhes will not be able to remain at his post). It is telling that it is Nikias who is the more prepared of the two generals, and that Lakhes is at a disadvantage, for that is in keeping with both their views on the impact that skill and forethought have when one is facing one's opponents.

[56] This dialogue, as Sling points out, is not a protreptic dialogue, but a dialogue about protreptic (Sling, *Plato: Clitophon*, p.148).

[57] 'ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί᾽, ἦ δ᾽ ὅς, ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ οἶδα οὔτ᾽ εἰ ἔχω οὔτ᾽ εἰ μὴ ἔχω· πῶς γὰρ ἂν εἰδείην ὅ γε μηδ᾽ ὑμεῖς οἷοί τέ ἐστε ἐξευρεῖν ὅτι ποτ᾽ ἔστιν, ὡς φῂς σύ; ἐγὼ μέντοι οὐ πάνυ σοι πείθομαι, καὶ ἐμαυτόν, ὦ Σώκρατες, πάνυ οἶμαι δεῖσθαι τῆς ἐπῳδῆς, καὶ τό γ᾽ ἐμὸν οὐδὲν κωλύει ἐπᾴδεσθαι ὑπὸ σοῦ ὅσαι ἡμέραι, ἕως ἂν φῇς σὺ ἱκανῶς ἔχειν.' ('Why, upon my word, Sokrates, I do not know at all whether I have it or have it not [temperance]. For how can I know, when even you two are unable to discover what this thing is? So you say, but of this you do not at all convince me; and I quite believe, Sokrates, that I do need the charm, and for my part I have no objection to being charmed by you every day of my life, until you say I have had enough of the treatment' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.89).

[58] 'He [Plato] reduces the true Socratic method to two main devices: exhortation (*protrepikos*) and examination (*elenchos*). Both are couched in the form of questions. The question-form is a descendant of the oldest type of *parainesis*, or encouragement, which we can trace back through tragedy to the epic' (Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume II: In Search of the Divine Centre*, trans. Gilbert Highet, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945, p.37).

[59] 'Elenchus is precisely the means by which Socrates attempts *to turn* the Athenians away from their excessive concern with material goods to a concern for virtue. Through its ability to expose their ignorance, the elenchus is the most effective means of persuading the Athenians to look after their souls. Both Clitophon's critique of Socrates' practice and Socrates' own reflection on this practice in the *Apology* are therefore not in conflict with what Socrates does in other dialogues: both simply make explicit what is only implicit elsewhere: *the protreptic function of the elenchus*. Socrates indeed "merely exhorts," but his primary means of exhortation is the elenchus' (Francisco J. Gonzalez, "The Socratic Elenchus as Constructive Protreptic," *Does Socrates Have A Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*, ed. Gary Alan Scott, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002 (pp.166-167).

[60] Roslyn Weiss, "Socrates: Seeker or Preacher," *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, p.249.

[61] Sling, *Plato: Clitophon* (pp.144-145).

[62] It is clear from the *Apology* that what Sokrates is primarily exhorting people to do is to care for their souls (is that done through philosophy?) – 'for I go about doing nothing else than urging you (*peithōn*), young and old, not to care for your persons or your property more than for the perfection of your souls ' (30a8-b1, trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.109). We get a glimpse of what this means later at 36c5-9: 'For I tried to persuade (*peithein*) each of you to care for himself and his own perfection in goodness and wisdom rather than for any of his belonging' (trans.W. R. M. Lamb p.129).

[63] 'Socrates makes the boy [Clinias] dialectical by doing nothing more than turning him towards the pursuit of wisdom and virtue. The benefit here is accomplished entirely through protreptic or exhortation' (Gonzalez, "The Socratic Elenchus as Constructive Protreptic," p.177, cf. p.180).

[64] 'Education is such a natural and universal function of society that many generations accept and transmit it without question or discussion: thus the first mention of it in the literature is relatively late. Its content is roughly the same in every nation – it is both moral and practical. Its consists partly of commandments like *Honour the gods*, *Honour thy father and mother*, *Respect the stranger*; partly of ancient rules of practical wisdom and prescriptions of external morality; and partly of those professional skills and traditions which (as far as they are communicable from one generation to another) the Greeks named *technē*' (Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume I: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945, p.3).

[65] Sokrates' seeming scepticism was confused with Sophistic relativism.

Chapter Three

Character Education

Education is the tendency of one man to make another just like himself[1]

As we learn in the *Republic*, both through the course of the argument and through the example of Sokrates and his interlocutors, philosophy or the pursuit of wisdom requires a very distinctive *character*, a person who is both thoughtful and dogged, a person who, although not strictly speaking virtuous, has the necessary qualities or dispositions that, providing they have a reasonable amount of intelligence, may become so. In the ideal polis of the *Republic* this is only possible once the guardians have received their character education, for it is this which makes it possible for some of them to go on to become philosopher rulers.

Therefore, even though for Plato philosophy may be largely an intellectual pursuit, requiring a certain attitude to learning, it is also one that requires not merely character but 'good character,' and this applies to the philosopher no matter where he may find him or herself. But can a meaningful notion of character be taught and developed in imperfect societies?

For Plato it depends not only on the form and content of education but also on its medium; in a society like 4th Century B.C. Athens or 21st Century A.D. England moral or character education can only be effective, Plato would seem to suggest, if it operates entirely as a private enterprise. Importantly, however, it would also require that the centrality of character and virtue and their relationship with the soul is taken seriously.

Despite the re-emergence of virtue ethics,[2] the language of virtues and character is largely absent from contemporary moral education, especially in the United Kingdom. This, as we saw in the Introduction, is due to various factors, not least the inability in a diverse society to come to a common agreement as to what sort of conception of good character should be promoted. Before a society can even think of educating character it must know precisely what it is seeking to educate. Virtue terms can be found in the National Curriculum, in subjects such as PSHE and Citizenship Education, but they are introduced with little critical reflection, and they play no significant role in the aims and objectives of these subjects and how they are taught. For us, unlike the Greeks, 'good character' is a rather nebulous term.

As I discussed in Chapter Two, a Spartan or an Athenian would have had a reasonably clear understanding of good character; and it was

one that was almost exclusively framed within the context of citizenship. The inclusivity of ancient societies such as classical Athens and Sparta, and the relatively small size of such communities, meant that individuals could be more confident in their ability to define good character.

Today, however, we tend to resist national stereotypes, and we would not, in the post-war period at least, be comfortable with talking about a 'British type.' The difficulty that we have in speaking about what it means to be British has little to do with political correctness, but rather with the British citizen's genuine struggle to define his or her national and cultural identity. The call for a debate on the issue of national identity and 'Britishness' by the previous government has done little to address the problem; indeed, perhaps the days where one could speak about distinctively 'British virtues' (tolerance and fair-play for instance) are over, and perhaps with good reason: 'the idea that there were antique virtues which will generally be accepted and which can be recaptured is naïve, but common, in middle-aged and elderly individuals and civilizations.'[3]

In light of this, as Peter McPhail argued over thirty years ago, maybe it would be better to stay away from the notion of character, being as it is largely unmanageable and, to some degree, redundant, and adopt a new approach to moral education where the chief focus is

with what kind of world our children are to live in and what conditions make for a happier, healthier, and more fulfilling life.[4] This is, in fact, the position that moral education finds itself in today. However, the language and goals that McPhail endorses are in no way inconsistent with a 'moral' vocabulary that includes a term like 'character.' However, and even before getting into what we understand as 'good' character, the term 'character' itself and the ways in which it can be used must be made clear.

The best way into this issue is to make a series of distinctions, and here I follow R. S. Peters' excellent analysis from his *Moral Development and Moral Education*.[5] Peters identifies three ways in which we can speak about character. First, there is the common, 'non-committal' use of character, that is, as a term that we use to refer to the 'sum total' of a person's character traits. Second, we can speak of 'character types,' by which 'some distinctive pattern of traits is indicated or some distinctive style in which the traits are exhibited,' the *spirited* type for example. Third, we can say that a person 'has character,' and this refers not to specific traits or groups of traits but to a certain *strength* of character: 'when we talk of a person's character a trait like honesty springs to mind; but when we speak of a man as having character, it is something like integrity, incorruptibility or consistency.'[6] Hence:

Character-traits, in the first and non-committal sense of character, could be merely the imprint of the social code on a man. Such a man, like the Spartans, could behave consistently in a particular social group; but when he went abroad he would fall an easy victim to the corrupting influences of potentates, priests and profligates…But a man who has character, in this third sense, would have developed his own distinctive style of rule-following. This would involve consistency and integrity.[7]

The foundation of character, says Kant, 'consists in the firm resolution of the will to do something, and then in the actual execution of it.'[8] Virtue, for Kant, was closely linked to this idea that character was in some sense a propensity to direct one's will towards the enactment and completion of moral duties: 'virtue is the strength of a human being's maxims in fulfilling his duty.'[9] James Davison Hunter, as we saw in the Introduction, defines character (or 'good character') in much the same way. 'Good character' is synonymous with, for the majority of people, and scholars like Hunter, the term 'having character', that is, in the sense of Peter's rule-following person of integrity. As Hunter points out, this is how Plato understands the kind of role that good character plays in the ideal polis. Indeed, Plato sees moral education as having to accommodate all three of these senses of character.

In this chapter, 'Good character' (which Plato has various ways of expressing) means, for the person whom I understand as using it, 'virtuous'.[10] It remains the case, of course, that for Plato 'good

character' and virtue are not identical to 'good character' and virtue for, say, Kephalos or Thrasymakhos.

Outside of the ideal polis, however, character education of the sort envisioned in the *Republic* would, in its entirety, be impossible. For in the perfect community character education has a focus and singularity of purpose that moral education in modern schools cannot have, and it also has the benefit of having no rivals: it is run in the state for the state. But what of the dialogues, could these not serve, in perhaps a greatly reduced sense, to train a person's character and to make them the kind of person that would pursue virtue? Considering the age of Plato's audience, this is unlikely. Character is formed early in a person's life. And whilst it is true that Plato seems to see character, as with everything else, as subject to change, he would see fundamental changes in an adult's character (a change from tyrannical to philosophical for example) as being improbable.[11]

However, and as I shall discuss at the end of this chapter, it is not so much that the dialogues function to train a person's character (although in a limited capacity this may remain a possibility) but rather to test it, as Sokrates himself tests the character of his interlocutors through his discussions with them. Before that, however, I shall begin in the first section by exploring the role that character plays in the overall shape and argument of the *Republic*. In

section two, I shall discuss Plato's character ideal – the thoughtful yet dynamic philosopher – before moving on in section three to examine how, in the educational programme of the guardians, Plato thinks that such a character could in principle be created.

§1

Character Themes in the Republic

In Greek there are numerous terms that can be used when speaking about character, disposition, and habit.[12] Plato generally (but not exclusively) employs words such as τρόπος, sometimes translated as 'character', 'manner' or 'way,' depending on the context, ἦθος to denote 'character' or, occasionally, 'disposition,' ἔθος to mean habit, and ἕξις meaning 'condition' (usually in the context of the condition of the soul) or, again, and more typically, 'disposition.' The word τρόπος is used 13 times (in the sense which we are interested in), ἦθος, by far the most common, appears 33 times, ἔθος, far less regular, 8 times, and lastly ἕξις, which makes an appearance 10 times (the use of words that denote character *traits* is far more numerous).[13]

This in itself, of course, means very little. But what we shall find is that Plato pays close attention to character terms in the *Republic*, and this is because of the close relationship between character and soul.[14]

This relationship between character and soul is not only very close but it is also rather problematic. I shall have more to say about this in Chapter Five. All I wish to do in this section, before proceeding to discuss Plato's ideal character, is to make a few brief points concerning the relationship between character and soul in the *Republic* as well as to show how the subject of character, just as much as that of the soul (indeed, the two complement each other), plays an important role in the overall ethical framework of the dialogue. I understand the ethical and educative framework of the *Republic* to be dominated by (but not limited to) an examination of human virtue and the chief human virtue in particular, that is, *dikaiosunē* (justice). And it is within this context, i.e., in Plato's examination of human virtue, that character plays a significant role. One of Plato's concerns in the *Republic*, I would argue, is to try and make the relationship between character/character traits and the soul/faculties more explicit. Plato does this primarily in order to show that character is subordinate to the condition of the soul and its faculties and that a full understanding of character is dependent upon a full understanding of the soul. To educate character, therefore, one must first understand the nature of the soul.

The subject of character, and specifically good and bad character, is raised at nearly every level of the argument right through the *Republic* (effectively ending in book 10 at 621c6); and even though some

scholars have noted its importance it is generally overlooked.[15] I. M. Crombie is the only one, to my mind, who has not only understood its relevance to *eudaimonia*, but also, and by implication, its relevance to justice. According to Crombie, the *Republic*'s central question 'what is justice?' is

an attempt to achieve insight into the pattern of character the value of which has been implicitly recognised by common morality in the application of the laudatory expression 'just' to those men who tend to behave in characteristic ways, and that the purpose of asking the question is to put himself into the position in which he can decide what precisely the pattern of character is which deserves to be valued in this way.[16]

I think this view is broadly correct.[17] However, as C. D. C. Reeve suggests, there is more going on here. For Reeve the challenge that Kephalos poses to Sokrates is this: that a man can appear to be virtuous without having ever studied philosophy, and hence without actually knowing, at least for Sokrates, what the virtues are.[18]

It is a problem that is raised at various times in the dialogue, most memorably in the myth of Er. Here, Plato revisits the notion of the decent (*epieikeia*) man, a man, as we shall see, like Kephalos, who has lived a 'virtuous' life *without philosophy*, and precisely because of his lack of philosophical insight, chooses to be reincarnated as a tyrant (a clear indication that a conventionally 'virtuous' person, no less than the unconventional, would see such a life as appealing). One's notion

of what constitutes good character will shape one's view about what justice is and what the parameters of just actions are.

It is Kephalos who first raises the issue of character (*tropos*) early on in book 1 of the *Republic* (329d4).[19] Character, says Kephalos, is useful in respect to those matters 'πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους' (329d3).[i] Moreover, Kephalos argues that character is the most pertinent factor in respect to whether one is able to bear the miseries of old age (329d4). If one is 'κόσμιοι καὶ εὔκολοι,' then, like Sophokles perhaps, one is more able to come to terms with the burdens of old age. However, the usefulness of good character is not restricted to the elderly; it is decisive for all the stages of a person's life (330d7-8).

Indeed, it is through this discussion of character that the theme of justice is introduced. The just man (the one who is honest and repays his debts), is a man of decent (*epieikeia*) character; a man who uses his wealth sensibly, and lives an orderly and well mannered life. Kephalos' understanding of what it means to be just is framed solely in terms of what he thinks of as good character.[20] The deficiency of Kephalos' position is quite clear. Despite what he says about the kind of character that is likely to be just and avoid wrongdoing, it is clear that, according to Kephalos, poverty would impinge on the ἐπιεικής

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[i] 'that concern relatives' (trans. Bloom p.5).

person's ability to refrain from injustice: the ἐπιείκής person is not self-sufficient in respect to his capacity to be just.

The ἐπιείκής person, in the figure of Kephalos, has been found wanting in respect to his understanding of justice and to his argumentative powers; and although Polemarkhos attempts to rescue his father's definition, he too is eventually refuted. Now is the time for a more robust contribution to the question of the nature of justice, one given by a more uncompromising individual, Thrasymakhos.[21]

The polite exchange between Sokrates and Polemarkhos enrages Thrasymakhos, who is used to people forcing their views on others; argument for him is combative like his temperament.[22] Therefore, and with conduct hardly becoming of a ἐπιείκής man, Thrasymakhos pounces: 'ὑμᾶς πάλαι φλυαρία ἔχει, ὦ Σώκρατες; καὶ τί εὐηθίζεσθε πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὑποκατακλινόμενοι ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς;' (336c1-2).[ii]

The term εὐήθεια, used here for the first time, is Thrasymakhos' contribution to the development of the theme character in the dialogue. The word εὐήθεια literary means 'well disposed' or 'good-natured' but in the above context, as was fairly common, the meaning is closer to 'foolish', 'naïve' or 'innocent.'[23] For Thrasymakhos the

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[ii] 'What is this nonsense that has possessed you for so long, Sokrates? And why do you act like fools making way for one another?' (trans. Bloom p.13). Compare with Critias' impatience in the *Charmides* 162c1-7.

εὐήθης man is the just man, a good-natured fool like Kephalos or Polemarkhos. The discussion between Sokrates and Polemarkhos was altogether too polite for Thrasymakhos' liking, but it is the manner of Sokrates' victory over Polemarkhos that so annoys the sophist. Sokrates' refusal to answer questions himself, his characteristic irony, are all methods, so Thrasymakhos has it, of gaining an unfair (and unjust) victory over an *innocent* and inexperienced opponent.[24]

It is clear from what follows, however, that Thrasymakhos actually endorses such behaviour. The unjust man has no scruples; in Thrasymakhos' polis men like Polemarkhos would receive some pretty rough treatment.[25] In the revolution of ethics that Thrasymakhos is proposing, simple, noble character would be swept aside:[26]

δικαιοσύνη καὶ τὸ δίκαιον ἀλλότριον ἀγαθὸν τῷ ὄντι, τοῦ κρείττονός τε καὶ ἄρχοντος συμφέρον, οἰκεία δὲ τοῦ πειθομένου τε καὶ ὑπηρετοῦντος βλάβη, ἡ δὲ ἀδικία τοὐναντίον, καὶ ἄρχει τῶν ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐηθικῶν τε καὶ δικαίων, οἱ δ' ἀρχόμενοι ποιοῦσιν τὸ ἐκείνου συμφέρον κρείττονος ὄντος, καὶ εὐδαίμονα ἐκεῖνον ποιοῦσιν ὑπηρετοῦντες αὐτῷ, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ οὐδ' ὁπωστιοῦν (*Republic* 343c3-d1)[iii]

[iii] 'Justice and the just are really someone else's good, the advantage of the man who is stronger and rules, and a personal harm to the man who obeys and serves. Injustice is the opposite, and it rules the truly simple and just; and those who are ruled do what is advantageous for him who is stronger, and they make him whose whim they serve happy but themselves not at all' (trans. Bloom p.21).

If Sokrates cannot grasp this, if he cannot understand this reality, then he too, like the just man, is εὐήθεια.[27] The just man inadvertently serves the unjust, in so far as the unjust man exploits every situation to his advantage.[28] The just man, on the contrary, 'gives way,' and hence he loses out in every respect, both in public (πρὸς τὴν πόλιν, 343d7) and private (οἰκείοις, 343e3). The political manifestation of the unjust man, injustice on a polis wide scale, is tyranny:[29] 'ἢ οὐ κατὰ σμικρὸν τἀλλότρια καὶ λάθρᾳ καὶ βίᾳ ἀφαιρεῖται, καὶ ἱερὰ καὶ ὅσια καὶ ἴδια καὶ δημόσια, ἀλλὰ συλλήβδην' (344a8-344b1).[iv]

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Thrasymakhos rejects Kephalos' account of a person's motivation in being just, 'οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν τὰ ἄδικα ἀλλὰ τὸ πάσχειν φοβούμενοι ὀνειδίζουσιν οἱ ὀνειδίζοντες τὴν ἀδικίαν' (344c3-4).[v] It is not fear of what happens to one's soul (or to oneself after death), but what might happen to one here and now and the consequences of human punishment. The just person refrains from injustice because he fears the earthly consequences.[30]

In the polis of good men (πόλις ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν, 347d2),[31] Sokrates reintroduces the ἐπιείκεια man (347c6),[32] who is now identified with

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[iv] 'Which by stealth and force takes away what belongs to others, both what is sacred and profane, private and public, not bit by bit, but all at once' (trans. Bloom p.22).

[v] 'For it is not because they fear doing unjust deeds, but because they fear suffering them, that those who blame injustice do so' (trans. Bloom p.23).

the reluctant ruler. Thrasymakhos maintains that the just person is a good-natured fool (348c10), while the unjust person is a sound counsellor (εὐβουλίαν, 348c10), and not κᾰκοήθεια (of bad character)[33] as Sokrates naturally supposes (348d1). Sokrates has a challenge on his hands (348e4-6). The ἐπιείκεια man like Kephalos does not seek to have more than his fair share, unlike the unjust man, who is characterised by his πλεονεξία (349b-350c). In any case, anyone who does not look after their own interests is εὐήθεια or, in modern parlance, a loser (349b5).

However, it is Thrasymakhos who is shown to be the fool we might say, when he blushes in shame at his defeat (350d4). Thrasymakhos has shown himself to be *naïve* in argument; he was unable to compete with Sokrates, therefore *the just fool got the better of the unjust man*. Henceforth, Thrasymakhos mocks the Sokratic style (350e2-8), as he did at 336bc1-d6.

The course of the argument, however, is ultimately unsatisfactory; it is not enough to refute Thrasymakhos,[34] since Sokrates admits that he is still in the dark about what justice is, in such a case: ʽσχολῇ

εἴσομαι εἴτε ἀρετή τις οὖσα τυγχάνει εἴτε καὶ οὔ, καὶ πότερον ὁ ἔχων αὐτὸ οὐκ εὐδαίμων ἐστὶν ἢ εὐδαίμων' (354c2-4).[vi]

Glaukon picks up Thrasymakhos' comparison between the perfectly unjust man (τὴν τελεωτάτην ἀδικίαν, 344a4) and the just man in the strongest sense, that is, when considered without external benefit (360e1-361d4). The perfectly unjust man (τὴν τελεωτάτην ἀδικίαν, 361a7) gets the benefits of a just reputation, while the just man (also following the Thrasymakhean pattern) is 'ἁπλοῦν καὶ γενναῖον' (361b7).[vii]

Despite their robust attack on justice neither Glaukon nor Adeimantos is convinced that injustice is superior, and if Sokrates was not sure of their character[35] he might, through the power of their arguments, be led to think otherwise (368b1-4). Taking this as his cue, Sokrates begins his defence of justice.

It is, perhaps, too late for the likes of Kephalos (or for Polemarkhos, who is very much his father's son), who, at his age and with his lack of sophistication, is unlikely to either understand or countenance the theory of human virtue that Sokrates will go on to outline. Kephalos'

[vi] 'So long as I do not know what the just is, I shall hardly know whether it is a virtue or not and whether the one who has it is unhappy or happy' (trans. Bloom p.34).
[vii] 'simple and noble' (trans. Bloom p.39). Cf. 348b8-d9.

decent but unphilosophical life has not made him the ideal participant in Sokratic inquiry or education.[36] What Sokrates needs are younger, more philosophically minded men, young men, moreover, with not only an ability to learn but with ambition, men who are both *spirited* and *philosophical*. But what is it about these characteristics, especially spiritedness, which makes them so important for the pursuit of virtue?

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§2

Warp and Woof: The Fabric of Good Character

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οὔτε γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις οὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ὁρῶμεν τὴν ἀνδρίαν ἀκολουθοῦσαν τοῖς ἀγριωτάτοις, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τοῖς ἡμερωτέροις καὶ λεοντώδεσιν ἤθεσιν (*Politics* 1338b17-20)[viii]

γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ (*Sophist* 231a6)[ix]

The ideal guardians of the soon to be ideal polis must possess two key characteristics, those qualities that in combination will make them best able to perform their job. The guardians, states Sokrates, must be both *philosophical* and *spirited*, both *gentle* and *harsh* (*Republic* 376c3-5). Why does Sokrates see the combination of these qualities in

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[viii] 'For neither in the lower animals nor in the case of foreign races do we see that that courage goes with the wildest, but rather with the gentler and lion-like temperaments' (trans. H. Rackham p.624).

[ix] '…and a wolf is very like a dog, the wildest like the tamest of animals' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.317).

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particular as being important? Indeed, Glaukon's puzzlement is not at all surprising (375e8-376a1). However, on the surface Sokrates' reasoning is quite simple. As both soldiers and 'peace-keepers' the guardians must be trained to respond, almost by instinct, in the appropriate way to friends and enemies.[37] Far from being the ferocious beasts that Aristotle claims them to be,[38] these noble puppies will be the ideal hoplites, peaceable at home and indefatigable on the battlefield (375a1-2; 375d6-e2; 375c1-3). As Sokrates observes at 375c4-6, however, it is extremely difficult to successfully combine in the same person these apparently contrary qualities.

A concern of Plato's in the *Republic*, we might say, and one that forms much of the sub-text to the education of the guardians, is with the creation of individuals who are neither too *Spartan* nor too *Athenian*,[39] but who must somehow embody the best of both (and reject the worst of both).[40] This 'Athenian-Spartan blend'[41] will have the requisite physical attributes *and* a positive attitude towards philosophy and learning (376b10-c5). The paradigm, as we learn in at 543a4-6, is with guardians who excel at both philosophy and war.[42] Therefore, the implicit background in books 2 and 3 of the *Republic* is Plato's observations and reservations about the Spartan[43] and Athenian societies and, in particular, their systems of education.[44]

The main problem with the Spartan type regime is its fear of wisdom and its predilection for war (547e1-548a2). Although training one's citizens for war is, for any polis, undoubtedly useful, if it is pursued too rigorously it is apt to make its people overly savage (the Spartans were, for instance, notoriously brutal to their slave population, the Helots, 375b9-10).[45] Where the Spartan type does get top marks is with his tameness to his fellow citizens and his obedience to his rulers (548e4-549b3).[46] The Spartan type is 'φίλαρχος δὲ καὶ φιλότιμος, οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ λέγειν ἀξιῶν ἄρχειν οὐδ' ἀπὸ τοιούτου οὐδενός, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ἔργων τῶν τε πολεμικῶν καὶ τῶν περὶ τὰ πολεμικά, φιλογυμναστής τέ τις ὢν καὶ φιλόθηρος' (549a4-6).[x] However, this alone is not enough. The problem stems, as always with Plato, with education.[47] The Spartan education is one of force; they neglect music and philosophy, preferring to rely almost exclusively on gymnastics (548b6-c1),[48] hence the most distinctive feature of Spartan life is its love of honour and victories (548c6).[49] The Spartiate is still a lover of music and hearing, as Plutarch confirms,[50] but he is adept at neither.[51]

While it is said that the Spartan type regime is a mixture of good and bad (548c3),[52] Sokrates' account of democratic Athens, however, is largely negative, sometimes perversely so. If the guardians must also be part Athenian then what part does Sokrates have in mind? The

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[x] 'A lover of ruling and of honor, not basing his claim to rule on speaking or anything of that sort, but on warlike deeds and everything connected with war; he is a lover of gymnastic and the hunt' (trans. Bloom p.226).

Spartans were not a philosophical people,[53] and that is precisely what the guardians must be (375e8-9),[54] and this naturally leads us to think that it will be Athens that will supply this vital ingredient.

However, democracy and the democratic man are hardly characterized by Sokrates as having an excessively philosophical pre-disposition. Rather, democratic Athens and the democratic man are characterized by their love of freedom, free speech, and license (*exousia*), according to which each person is free to live their personal lives as they wish (557b4-8). Due to this, and the variety of people who occupy it, democracy appears to be the fairest regime (557c1-10). And because it contains all the species of regimes, it is, rather ironically, the perfect place in which to organize, and perhaps establish, a polis (557d1-e, an indication, perhaps, that the Kallipolis would be realised in a democracy).[55] There is one sense in which the Athenian *resembles* the philosopher, and that is in respect to their unquenchable thirst for sights and sounds, as we learn in book 5 (476b2-4). We also learn at 435e5-436a1, and with some irony, that the Athenians are noted for their love of learning.

At 561b9-d10 we get this picture of the Athenian type: he is a man of many desires, sometimes drinking and listening to the aulos, sometimes abstaining from alcohol and going to the gymnasium, sometimes remaining idle, and sometimes engaging in philosophy or

politics, sometimes admiring the soldier, sometimes the business man.[56] This is, in part, a caricature of the Athenian gentleman, and particularly of the Athenian ideal endorsed by Perikles.[57] Of course what Plato does here is to make the Athenian character distinct in its indistinctness; to be an Athenian is, in effect, to demonstrate the qualities of all peoples. In terms of character, the Athenian is a jack of all trades and master of none.[58] But it is precisely this flexibility that interests Plato. The Athenian is the woof to the Spartan warp. What the Athenian character can also offer is an antidote to Spartan aggression; it also offers a greater breadth of mind and willingness to learn.[59] The Athenian is not philosophical as such but does have certain qualities that, given the right tutelage, could be turned towards a more noble cause.

It is not only in the *Republic* that Plato shows this fascination with this type of character. In the *Statesman* and the *Laws* the *Sparthenian* (as we might call him) makes a return.

The weaving analogy of the *Statesman* (introduced at 279a7-b7) reinforces what in the *Republic* is only hinted at.[60] The fundamental opposition (the warp and woof of human dispositions which the statesman must weave together) in the *Politicus* is between ἀνδρεία and σωφροσύνη and their associated character traits (305b1-311c8; 306c9-b2). Broadly speaking, there are two types of people or

character, the *quick* and *acute* and the *gentle* and *orderly* (306c7-307c7). Each type has its own set of traits, the quick or acute type is typically quick of body, soul (*psukhē*), and voice; it is on the basis of these traits that a person is *commonly* called courageous (*andreios*). The gentle or orderly type is more restrained and cautious in his actions, he is the model of decorum. To possess these traits is an *indication* of temperance (*sōphrosunē*).

These traits, and the actions that typically follow from them, however, are often praiseworthy, but not always. To a degree, quickness to rage may be desirable on the battlefield, but not so in a domestic argument. Conversely, the gentle man's approach to a minor dispute is laudable, but gentleness in defending one's home and hearth against a deadly threat could be considered perverse. Therefore, each of these types, in respect to the strength of their traits, has their own failings or vices. The quick or acute type can be too quick and too hard; such people are prone to violence and madness; and the gentle type is liable to be cowardly, slow, and sluggish (A similar opposition between the quick and the slow is explored in the *Charmides*, 159b1-160d2). Those who incline towards orderliness tend to mind their own business perhaps a little too much (αὐτῶν πράττοντες, *Statesman* 307e4).[61] Hence, the meeker aspects of the gentle type can lead the state from freedom to slavery (308a1-2). And in turn, the aggressive tendencies of the quick type can lead the state

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into either war or internal slavery. In both cases, the result is, as it is for the ideal polis of the *Republic*, tyranny. The job of the statesman is to weave the woof and the warp of human character; to eliminate excess and deficiency.[62]

In the *Laws*, and again with the same concern in mind, the Athenian declares: 'θυμοειδῆ μὲν δὴ χρὴ πάντα ἄνδρα εἶναι, πρᾷον δὲ ὡς ὅτι μάλιστα' (*Laws* 731b3-4).[xi] The good man, the Athenian says, is both spirited and gentle (731d7-8).[63] Again employing the weaving analogy to describe the ideal character type, the Athenian states:

καθάπερ οὖν δή τινα συνυφὴν ἢ καὶ πλέγμ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ὁτιοῦν, οὐκ ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν οἷόν τ᾽ ἐστὶν τήν τε ἐφυφὴν καὶ τὸν στήμονα ἀπεργάζεσθαι, διαφέρειν δ᾽ ἀναγκαῖον τὸ τῶν στημόνων πρὸς ἀρετὴν γένος—ἰσχυρόν τε γὰρ καί τινα βεβαιότητα ἐν τοῖς τρόποις εἰληφός, τὸ δὲ μαλακώτερον καὶ ἐπιεικείᾳ τινὶ δικαίᾳ χρώμενον (734e4-735a2)[xii]

Returning to the *Republic*, this tension between philosophical and spirited is also played out in the discussion between Sokrates and Thrasymakhos, and provides the main sub-text to their conflicting views on justice. After Thrasymakhos succumbs to Sokrates' argument, his initial savagery is quelled (cf. *Republic* 336b1-8); where

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[xi] 'Every man ought to be at once passionate and gentle in the highest degree' (trans. R. G. Bury p.337). Cf. 645a5-b1.

[xii] 'Now it is impossible, when dealing with a web or any piece of weaving, to construct the warp and the woof from the same stuff: the warp must be of a superior type of material, decent and just in character, while the woof is softer and suitably workable' (trans. Michael Richard Hart).

previously he had been *angry* he has now become *gentle* (*Republic* 354a9-10).[64]

However, Plato's fascination with this character ideal runs even deeper, and finds its source not merely in the political struggle between Athens and Sparta but also, and originally, in Homer's *Iliad*,[65] and in particular with Akhilleus, the poem's most outstanding warrior.[66] Akhilleus received a specialised education suited to the type of life he was expected to live, which even extended to his diet.[67] Akhilleus was reputedly fed on lions' and bears' entrails and honey, in order to give him strength, *courage* and *gentleness*. But this education, far from helping to create a well-balanced character, seems to have created a man of violent extremes.[68] Akhilleus' revenge driven *aristeia*,[69] his treatment of Hektor's body, the human sacrifices,[70] and his lack, at times, of humanity,[71] all point to an excessive harshness and self-centredness. But at other times he is a model of decorum, grace and friendliness.[72] It appears, therefore, that Kheiron's tutelage failed,[73] as for that matter did Phoinix's.[74] The rulers (or founders) of the ideal polis cannot afford to make the same mistake with the education of the guardians.

Akhilleus was corrupted by his education, but Sokrates, despite having had a traditional Athenian education, remained unscathed (*Crito* 50d8; 50e2). According to the *Republic*, Sokrates was saved by

his daimon, and also by, we might say, divine providence (496a10-496e2). Whatever virtue Plato portrays Sokrates as having, he does not seem to have gained this virtue through any organised system of education. Sokrates' mission was, it is true, foisted upon him by the Delphic oracle, but his desire to know (which was presumably already present) is one that appears to have developed within him spontaneously. Sokrates' interlocutors, those from whom he wishes to learn, become not his teachers but, whether they would all acknowledge this or not, his fellow students in the search for wisdom (but not always with good grace).

In the ideal polis the key to creating a well-balanced individual (and, moreover, a virtuous one), is the correct combination of *mousikē* and gymnastics. More than this, as we shall see in the next section, it requires a thorough overhaul of this traditional education.

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§3

Character Education in the Ideal Polis and Beyond

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Λόγου […] μουσικῇ κεκραμένου· ὃς μόνος ἐγγενόμενος σωτὴρ ἀρετῆς διὰ βίου ἐνοικεῖ τῷ ἔχοντι (*Republic* 549b5-7)[xiii]

[xiii] 'Argument mixed with music […] it alone, when it is present, dwells within one possessing it as a saviour of virtue throughout life' (trans. Bloom p.226).

The educational system described in the *Republic* has two interrelated stages.[75] The early stage described in books 2 and 3 is an education in guardianship and, as Julia Annas observes, is more akin to what we might call today 'moral education,'[76] and as such it appears to be exclusively geared towards the training of character (*ēthos*). The next stage of education, the higher education of the philosopher rulers outlined in book 7, is broadly an education in philosophy and truth.[77] In consequence the second stage includes an extensive range of academic subjects, such as mathematics, geometry, and, of course, dialectic.[78] Here, however, I wish only to concentrate on the guardians' character education.

The character education of the guardians is composed of two main subject areas, *mousikē* and *gumnastikē* (*Republic* 376e5);[79] and it is this complementary education that will help to create the aggressive yet philosophically minded guardians. Although the value of the latter is more readably intelligible than that of the former, it will be *mousikē* that will form the most essential component of the young guardians' education.

From an early age, mostly through their 'musical' education and training, every Athenian was subjected to a wide range of *mythoi*. Today we would call such tales 'fictional,' but the truth of these tales, whose subject matter ranged from stories about the birth of the gods

to the exploits of the great heroes, was rarely disputed (I shall come back to this in the next chapter). However, even though skepticism[80] became, at least among the intellectual elite, more common as the 5th Century B.C. progressed, for the majority, as with Kephalos, these tales remained an important part of their cultural and, crucially, historical and 'national' identity. And this is something that in the *Republic* Sokrates is keen to exploit.

The peculiar power of myth is found, in part, in musical performance. But Sokrates' first concern is with the content of traditional tales. The guardians must be pious and courageous and, claims Sokrates, the content of myth is hardly conducive to either of these.[81] The gods were thought of as being the highest, and most blessed of beings (something that Sokrates does not dispute), but despite this they were also vicious, self-serving, and, to put it politely, inordinately lusty.[82] If Zeus is the father of the gods,[83] and, in a special sense, of Man, then he is a very harsh father indeed. How can we expect children to show respect for their parents when Zeus failed to do so (*Republic* 378b1-3)? As C. M. Bowra puts it: 'a people gets the gods which it deserves,'[84] and for the ideal polis, nothing short of ideal gods will do. This will mean that 'theology,' so long the province of poets and, to a lesser extent, priests and their oracles, must now become a major concern for the philosopher.[85]

Sokrates cannot supplant the gods as the chief objects of worship,[86] even in the ideal polis, but what he can do is to insist that if they are worshiped, and that if they are to be called gods at all, that they be good (*agathos,* 391d3-6). Now, that the gods are good would not be contested,[87] but Sokrates is using the term 'good' in a highly specialised sense (379b1-380c4).[88] If the gods are to be worshiped, then they must be beyond reproach. The traditional tales, therefore, can only be retained if they are suitably modified as to represent the gods as being good, perfect, and paradigms of truth (380d1-382c3). The gods are not devious shape-changers; they are, like the *eidē* (*Republic* 380e1), immutable and incorruptible, models of truth and stability (380d1-383a4).[89] This early education in truth and philosophy is crucial, not least because for most of the guardians it is all that they will receive. All the guardians, however, whether they go on to become philosopher rulers or not, must receive this philosophical primer.[90]

The next stage of their 'musical' education is designed to make the guardians brave (386a3-5). In order to make a person brave, Sokrates states, one has to make them unafraid of death (like Sokrates)[91] and he intends to accomplish this by banning the terrifying stories about the underworld, common in Homer, because they are likely to induce in the guardians an over fondness for life.[92] Of course, and as we learn in the *Phaedo* for instance, the willingness to die (or not to hang

on to life at any cost) is a key attitude of the philosopher. But why would a rejection of such stories make a person brave?

In order to see what Sokrates is getting at we have to understand that his primary concern is actually to do with the account of the human soul that is contained within Homer's poems, the kind of conception that is held by Kephalos and his ilk.

In Homeric thought the soul (*psukhē*) is *dormant* in the living organism and upon death leaves the body and 'travels' to Hades and continues to exist as a witless, gibbering shade (cf. *Odyssey* 24.1-10).[93] In addition to the soul there are certain intellectual and emotional faculties, which are located in the body, either the midriff, the heart or the lungs.[94] According to conventional belief, however, the intellectual and emotional faculties do not survive the death of the body and nor were they in any way related to the soul. The Greek afterlife was not, if the poets are to believed, a very pleasing prospect.[95]

Plato's concern, however, is more with the philosophical implications of the Homeric conception of the soul and the affect that it will have on the intellectual development of the guardians rather than with Greek 'theology.' A central tenet of the philosopher (as Plato understands him) is that the soul is rational, and that whatever may

happen to the body the soul is immortal and continues to be, as it was in life, an *active* faculty. The guardians, regardless of whether they become philosopher rulers, must get used to this idea.

What the guardians require, in addition to their resolve in the face of death and belief in the immortality of the soul, is *sōphrosunē* (*Republic* 389d8-e9; 390d1-6). Unfortunately, as we have already seen, this is not a trait that is common to the hero of Greek myth and poetry. Only Odysseus, who Sokrates himself cites, displays anything like the type of self-control required of the guardians (and only then after a life of hardship had shown him the error of his ways).[96]

Odysseus, however, is the exception to the rule; most heroes, and Akhilleus in particular, are not noted for their self-control. Indeed, in respect to Akhilleus, who is clearly Sokrates' main target here (and for good reason), he identifies eight heroic vices: sorrow, excessive displays of mirth, lying to one's superiors, insolence, intemperance, greed, impiety, and cruelty (387d1-388d10; 388e6-389b1; 389b2-d7; 389e9-390a3; 390a5-c9, 391d1; 390d7-391a1, 391c5; 391a3-b5, 391d2-3; 391b6-8). These vices are distinctly un-Sokratic,[97] and, more particularly, unbecoming for guardians of the ideal polis.[98]

In a sense the paradigm is Sokrates himself. Sokrates' disdain of wealth and material possessions, his easy temper and his almost

super human ability to bear punishment easily and restrain his emotions,[99] certainly fits the model set out for the guardians. However, there is some irony in Sokrates' condemnation of Akhilleus. In the *Apology* Sokrates is charged with precisely what he is now charging Akhilleus, of impiety and corrupting the young.[100] The charges against Sokrates, of course, arise from a misconception, but what of Sokrates' charges against Akhilleus?[101] Sokrates is a little unfair to Akhilleus,[102] but in a sense and within the context of the guardians' education this is understandable. Akhilleus is the paradigmatic Greek hero, young, aggressive, noble, and loyal (to his friends), and this, much more than anything else, makes him an ideal target for Sokrates. As Allan Bloom says: 'Socrates brings Achilles to the foreground in order to analyse his character and ultimately to do away with him as the model for *the* young.'[103]

Having dealt with the presentation of gods and heroes in epic and dramatic poetry, Sokrates moves on to the presentation of 'human beings:'[104]

οἶμαι ἡμᾶς ἐρεῖν ὡς ἄρα καὶ ποιηταὶ καὶ λογοποιοὶ κακῶς λέγουσιν περὶ ἀνθρώπων τὰ μέγιστα, ὅτι εἰσὶν ἄδικοι μὲν εὐδαίμονες πολλοί, δίκαιοι δὲ ἄθλιοι, καὶ ὡς λυσιτελεῖ τὸ ἀδικεῖν, ἐὰν λανθάνῃ, ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη ἀλλότριον μὲν ἀγαθόν, οἰκεία δὲ ζημία· καὶ τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα ἀπερεῖν λέγειν, τὰ δ' ἐναντία τούτων προστάξειν ἄδειν τε καὶ μυθολογεῖν (*Republic* 392b1-5)[xiv]

[xiv] 'I suppose we'll say that what both poets and prose writers say concerning the most important things about human beings is bad – that

Sokrates is talking about poetry and prose, and hence about poets and sophists. In book one Sokrates had silenced Thrasymakhos (354a8); in the ideal polis the sophist will be silenced permanently: the sophist will play no role in the education of the guardians. Indeed, the subject of justice (*dikaiosunē*) will not be, as it was for Sokrates and Thrasymakhos, a matter for dispute. However, at this stage in the argument, prior to the definition of justice that he will offer in book 4, Sokrates is unwilling to disclose what kind of speeches about human beings will be permitted (392c1-4).[105]

After having dealt with 'what must be said,' Sokrates moves on to style (*lexis*): 'ὡς λεκτέον παντελῶς ἐσκέψεται' (392c6).[xv] Sokrates is now moving into the realm of artistic performance therefore his concern is going to be with imitation (*mimēsis*).[106] I shall not say too much about that here, since I will be discussing imitation and its role in the guardians' education in Chapter Five.

Sokrates divides narrative (*diēgēsis*) into three kinds: simple (non-imitative, reported speech for example), imitative (tragic drama), and a mixture of both (narrative with both imitative and non-imitative

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many happy men are unjust, and many wretched ones just, and that doing justice is profitable if one gets away with it, but justice is someone else's good and one's own loss. We'll forbid them to say such things and order them to sing and to tell tales about the opposite of these things' (trans. Bloom p.70).

[xv] 'How it must be said' (trans. Bloom p.71).

parts, *Republic* 392d6-7, such as Homer's *Iliad*). Initially it appears as though the guardians are not to be skilled in any form of imitation since their primary function is guarding the polis. But at 395c3-5 we learn that imitation will be permitted, as long as it is imitation of men[107] who are courageous, moderate, holy, free, and 'τὰ τοιαῦτα πάντα' (395c5).[xvi] Indeed, imitation is an important device for formulating character. Taking on good roles, imitating good models (the actions or deeds of noble men), is a way of habitualising behaviour and hence of building character.

Plato clearly sees the guardians' character education as beginning quite early in their lives, perhaps as early as seven years old. But how does this education work? The idea, as we saw, is that character is formed through the imitation of certain kinds of behaviour. But why would imitating behaviour help to formulate character? On the surface the answer is simple: the imitation of behaviour helps to create certain dispositions or traits of character. The hope is that by continually imitating the right kinds of behaviour a person will become habitualised to them: imitation creates habits of behaviour.

Eventually, a person is no longer imitating, that is, copying behaviour, but just behaving in the right way by a kind of instinct. But since instinct is not rational, at some point habits have to be

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[xvi] '…everything else of the sort (trans. Bloom p.74).

rationally justified. By that juncture, however, the behaviour in question is a habit, and habits are hard to break. Habits seem to have nothing to do with choice: habits are not chosen; they are formed through unreflective repetition. Of course, if reasons are eventually given to justify a person's habits, and those habits are 'good', as Plato has in mind with the guardians, the problem is largely illusory. Still, the idea is this: that one becomes virtuous (or at the very least one develops the dispositions that will allow one to become so) through the formulation of habits via imitation. One becomes of good character by acting *like* people of good character do. However, if, for example, a child acts like a just person, what is to stop one from calling that child just? The classic formulation of this problem is first found in Aristotle:

Ἀπορήσειε δ᾽ ἄν τις πῶς λέγομεν ὅτι δεῖ τὰ μὲν δίκαια πράττοντας δικαίους γίνεσθαι, τὰ δὲ σώφρονα σώφρονας· εἰ γὰρ πράττουσι τὰ δίκαια καὶ σώφρονα, ἤδη εἰσὶ δίκαιοι καὶ σώφρονες, ὥσπερ εἰ τὰ γραμματικὰ καὶ τὰ μουσικά, γραμματικοὶ καὶ μουσικοί (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a17-20)[xvii]

In his response to this problem, Aristotle begins by exploring this analogy between the actions of the artisan and the actions of the virtuous agent. In the case of the arts, it is possible for a person to

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[xvii] 'A difficulty may however be raised as to what we mean by saying that in order to become just men must do just actions, and in order to become temperate they must do temperate actions. For if they do just and temperate actions, they are just and temperate already, just as, if they spell correctly or play in tune, they are scholars or musicians' (trans. H. Rackham pp.83-85).

perform an action correctly out of chance or through prompting. In the example Aristotle uses, for a person to be actually called a grammarian, that person must act in the way a grammarian does, that is, through knowledge of grammar (this idea is similar to but not identical with Thrasymakhos' faultless ruler, *Republic* 340c7-9). But the arts, states Aristotle, are not analogous to the virtues because the nature of their 'productions' is quite different. The merit of a pot (although owing its existence and quality to the potter) resides in the pot alone – we do not judge the value of a pot as a pot by reference to the potter.

With the 'products' of virtue – the just or temperate action – they can only be called just or temperate if the agent (1) acts with knowledge, (2) having deliberately chosen the act and chosen it for its own sake, (3) and when that action arises at the same time from a fixed and permanent disposition of character. To be an artisan, argues Aristotle, requires the presence of knowledge, whereas for the virtues knowledge alone is not sufficient to make an action virtuous without the other two conditions being in operation. The only way for a person to have the right dispositions of character, from which virtuous actions can spring, is by developing the right habits (as Plato

phrases it: 'κυριώτατον γὰρ οὖν ἐμφύεται πᾶσι τότε τὸ πᾶν ἦθος διὰ ἔθος', *Laws* 792e1-2).[xviii]

There is simply no other way for a person to become virtuous other than by first (and at least) mimicking virtuous acts in order to become habitualised to them (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a21-b5; cf. 1103b14-25). Of course, reason and deliberation must eventually be added – but without the right character, reason and deliberation could not gain any purchase. Reason cannot alter character, hence character must be instructed according to a rational plan – a system of education – prior to the instruction of the intellectual faculties, which in turn will, hopefully, come to justify why a person has and will continue to act. This diagram illustrates the various stages of character education as Aristotle understands it:

Imitative acts become habitual acts – creates dispositions

Dispositions become fixed

Reason and deliberation are added

Virtuous acts

Plato never makes any of the above explicit in his works, although he seems, despite being slightly freer with the way that he uses certain

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[xviii] 'For because of the force of habit, it is in infancy that the whole character is most effectually determined' (trans. R. G. Bury p.19).

terms, to have something very similar in mind with the character education of the guardians. Despite the fact that Plato does not systematically lay out the relationship between habit and character in his dialogues, in various places in the *Republic* we are given a clue as to the importance he gives to habit and how it contributes to character formation.

The practice of imitation is fundamental to the formation of *habits*: 'ἢ οὐκ ᾔσθησαι ὅτι αἱ μιμήσεις, ἐὰν ἐκ νέων πόρρω διατελέσωσιν, εἰς ἔθη τε καὶ φύσιν καθίστανται καὶ κατὰ σῶμα καὶ φωνὰς καὶ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν' (*Republic* 395d1-4).[xix]

The polis is just, in part, through the *dispositions* of its classes (435b7). The dispositions that Sokrates has in mind here, presumably, are meant to be those that will ensure that each class performs its own function. Indeed, the dispositions of all people seem in some way to be related to the role they play in society: 'ὅτι γε τὰ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἔνεστιν ἡμῶν εἴδη τε καὶ ἤθη ἅπερ ἐν τῇ πόλει' (435e1-3).[xx]

The soul and the body have their own dispositions – those inculcated through education. Moreover, the habits associated with virtue, and

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[xix] 'Or haven't you observed that imitations, if they are practiced continually from youth onwards, become established as habits and nature, in body and sounds and in thought?' (trans. Bloom p.74).

[xx] 'The very same forms and dispositions as are in the city are in each of us' (trans. Bloom p.114).

the 'health' it signifies, are ranked higher than the health of the body (585a9-b6); the dispositions of the body should fall in line with those of the soul (591b1-9).

A disposition for Plato is: the way that the soul or the body works that is responsible for our actions (a pre-disposition) – when the soul or the body is working well – hence producing good actions – we can speak of the soul or the body as having virtue.

The virtues of the body (ἀρεταὶ…τῶν τοῦ σώματος) are created by habit (*ethos*) and practice (518d7-e2). What are these bodily virtues? It seems unlikely that Sokrates has any of the 'cardinal' virtues in mind here, since they are, in the *Republic* at least, expressive of psychic harmony, that is, the correct functioning and relation of the three parts of the soul. Perhaps, then, we should understand the bodily virtues as being expressive of physical harmony. This is only partly true however. A bodily virtue is perhaps not a virtue in the true sense – indeed, how could it be? – but rather some excellence of the body which is sympathetic or complementary to the virtues of the soul or is in some way reflective of them.

Does this mean that character education only attends to the bodily virtues? This next passage may help to clarify the matter. Sokrates, speaking about the guardians' musical instruction, says:

ἔθεσι παιδεύουσα τοὺς φύλακας, κατά τε ἁρμονίαν εὐαρμοστίαν τινά, οὐκ ἐπιστήμην, παραδιδοῦσα, καὶ κατὰ ῥυθμὸν εὐρυθμίαν, ἔν τε τοῖς λόγοις ἕτερα τούτων ἀδελφὰ ἔθη ἄττα ἔχουσα, καὶ ὅσοι μυθώδεις τῶν λόγων καὶ ὅσοι ἀληθινώτεροι ἦσαν (*Republic* 522a4-8)[xxi]

Mousikē, then, does not educate by knowledge but by habit, and by this I think we can take Sokrates as meaning: 'creating dispositions of character through imitation', that is, through imitating good or *harmonious* models of behaviour contained in certain myths or in 'speeches of a truer kind' (what Sokrates might mean by 'speeches of a truer kind', I shall consider in the next chapter). In some sense, therefore, *mousikē* must attend to virtues of character, and hence indirectly and incompletely to the soul itself. To restate: character education does have an impact on the soul – but only on those parts that are essentially mortal in nature.

So, even though, as we learn in book 10, the soul can become educated in its habits (which I take to mean some sort of character education, 606a9), more ideally it must become educated in reason. A similar contrast is drawn a few pages later where Sokrates makes a distinction between those who participate in virtue by habit and those who participate in virtue by philosophy (619c8-d1). In this,

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[xxi] 'It educated the guardians through habits, transmitting by harmony a certain harmoniousness, not knowledge, and by rhythm a certain rhythmicalness. And connected with it were certain habits, akin to these, conveyed by speeches, whether they were tales or speeches of a truer sort' (trans. Bloom p.200).

Plato and Aristotle would seem to agree: it is only the 'moral' (*ēthikos*) virtues that are educated through habit. However, even though taken alone character education cannot create 'soul virtues', without it, no matter what the additional education, and contrary to popular belief, a person cannot attain the necessary character traits or dispositions that will make virtue a possibility. As Aristotle puts the matter in one of his more Platonic moods:

οἱ πολλοὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὐ πράττουσιν, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν λόγον καταφεύγοντες οἴονται φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ οὕτως ἔσεσθαι σπουδαῖοι, ὅμοιόν τι ποιοῦντες τοῖς κάμνουσιν, οἳ τῶν ἰατρῶν ἀκούουσι μὲν ἐπιμελῶς, ποιοῦσι δ᾽ οὐδὲν τῶν προσταττομένων. ὥσπερ οὖν οὐδ᾽ ἐκεῖνοι εὖ ἕξουσι τὸ σῶμα οὕτω θεραπευόμενοι, οὐδ᾽ οὗτοι τὴν ψυχὴν οὕτω φιλοσοφοῦντες (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b13-18)[xxii]

Sokrates' discussion of *gumnastikē* is intended to be complementary to his discussion of *mousikē*, and as a consequence he is interested not so much with the practical aspects of physical training but with how such training could be useful for the further development of character. What is called for is a 'ἁπλῆ που καὶ ἐπιεικὴς γυμναστική' (*Republic* 404b7)[xxiii] not the type that is currently associated with athletic training,[108] but one that will suit the dual

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[xxii] 'The mass of mankind, instead of doing virtuous acts, have recourse to discussing virtue, and fancy that they are pursuing philosophy and that this will make them good [*spoudaioi*] men. In so doing they act like invalids who listen carefully to what the doctor says, but entirely neglect to carry out his prescription. That sort of philosophy will no more lead to a healthy state of soul than will the mode of treatment produce health of body' (trans. H. Rackham p.87).

[xxiii] 'Simple and decent gymnastics' (trans. Bloom p.83).

purpose of guardianship: philosophy and war (525b7; 404a1-6). Sokrates' theory of physical education rests on this principle: 'ψυχὴ ἀγαθὴ τῇ αὑτῆς ἀρετῇ σῶμα παρέχειν ὡς οἷόν τε βέλτιστον' (403d2-3).[xxiv] As a consequence, Sokrates' chief concern in his account of *gumnastikē* is not with the body at all, but with the soul.[109]

In the *Timaeus* the relationship between the body and soul is also discussed (87c1-88c7). Every living creature is a compound of body and soul, the quality of each having a direct impact on the other; and ideally there should be a harmony between the body and the soul. If the soul is more powerful than the body, whether in the expression of its passions or in its intellectual pursuits, the body suffers ill health. And conversely, when a strong body is united with a weak intellect, the desires of the former overwhelm those of the latter, making the person dull-witted, forgetful, and ignorant. In respect to these two evils, physical weakness and ignorance, there is only one remedy:

μήτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνευ σώματος κινεῖν μήτε σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς, ἵνα ἀμυνομένω γίγνησθον ἰσορρόπω καὶ ὑγιῆ. τὸν δὴ μαθηματικὸν ἤ τινα ἄλλην σφόδρα μελέτην διανοίᾳ κατεργαζόμενον καὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀποδοτέον κίνησιν, γυμναστικῇ προσομιλοῦντα, τόν τε αὖ σῶμα ἐπιμελῶς πλάττοντα τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνταποδοτέον κινήσεις, μουσικῇ καὶ πάσῃ φιλοσοφίᾳ προσχρώμενον, εἰ μέλλει δικαίως τις ἅμα μὲν καλός, ἅμα δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὀρθῶς κεκλῆσθαι (*Timaeus* 88b8-c7)[xxv]

So, against the dominant view, and returning to the *Republic*, both music and gymnastics are said to be 'ἀμφότερα τῆς ψυχῆς ἕνεκα τὸ μέγιστον καθιστάναι' (*Republic* 410c4),[xxvi] this being the case, both are necessary conditions for guardianship, and both are equally important. Engaging in too much gymnastics at the expense of music, or too much music at the expense of gymnastics, creates an imbalanced individual: in the former case, the person is apt to be too *harsh*, and in the latter, too *soft* (410c6-d2). Indeed, it is the neglect of *mousikē* that is the hallmark of degenerate societies, and is in part responsible for the demise of the ideal polis (546d7-9).

Good character, in the first instance, depends upon the correct application of *mousikē*, and this is just as true in a tyranny as it is in the ideal polis. In the imperfect society, with its corrupting culture and cultural education, good character as Plato understands it cannot perhaps be taught, and certainly not taught by state institutions. Sokratic education, as we saw in Chapter Two, can be seen as an attempt to counter-act traditional education, and as such it operates, as I would argue the dialogues do, not only as an alternative *paideia*, which is critical, ironic, and even sceptical, but also as an alternative *mousikē*.

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gymnastics; while he who is diligent in moulding his body must in turn, provide his soul with motion by cultivating music and philosophy in general, if either us to deserve to be called truly both fair and good' (trans. R. G. Bury p.241).
[xxvi] '…established both chiefly for the soul' (trans. Bloom p.89).

Could, therefore, Plato have envisioned the dialogues as having been used in such a way as to educate character? Perhaps, and in addition to the difficulties discussed at the start of this chapter, such a task, in Athens, for example, would have been problematic because every child was subjected to traditional education and hence would already be corrupted by the time they came upon the dialogues (or entered Plato's academy). For an unknown few this corruption would have perhaps been limited by their superior natures, and therefore Plato might have retained some hope that for this audience (presumably quite small) the dialogues would have helped to build upon an already existing, though underdeveloped, nobility of character.

A person's response to the dialogues, I would argue, is for Plato an indication of their attitude towards philosophy as well as their potential for becoming a philosopher.

In book 3 of the *Republic*, Sokrates outlines the procedure for deciding which of the guardians will become the rulers of the ideal polis – the philosopher rulers of book 5. The rulers of the ideal polis must be those who can stick to this principle: that they will devote their lives to doing what they judge to be in the best interest of the community and never to act against it (412d7-e3, 413c5-8). Only those guardians who will never reject this principle will be chosen as rulers; and in

respect to this all the guardians will be subjected to three tests (413e7-414a2).

The first test is designed to induce the guardians to involuntarily reject the principle (this rejection is called 'involuntary' because no one, and especially not the guardians, would ever wish to be relieved of such a principle). As such, the guardians will be subjected to 'witchcraft,' by which Sokrates presumably means sophistry; the educators of the ideal polis will try to persuade the guardians that truth is falsehood and that good is evil (412e3-413c4).

With the second test (413c8-d2), the guardians are to be set a number of tasks. What tasks does Sokrates have in mind? On the face of it this test seems no different from the last, since Sokrates is concerned with seeing whether the guardians can be misled or deceived into forgetting the principle. However, I think we could understand these tasks as those which are somehow relevant to the *thumos*. If the first test is designed to test the guardians' calculating faculty, then perhaps the second test is designed to test that aspect of themselves which is concerned with honour, and the honour in ruling in particular.

Understanding these tests as being designed specifically to assess the guardians' souls seems partly justified when we look at the third test.

The aim of the third test is to see if the guardians will abandon the principle based on fear and pleasure, and therefore this test is focused on the appetitive and spirited 'parts' of the soul. Taken together, these tests seem to be designed to ascertain which guardians have the ability to become rulers rather than philosophers, since their purpose seems to be restricted to testing their attitude towards the well-being of the state. This is not quite the case however. It will be the rulers' grasp of the truth that makes them able to adhere to the principle, and therefore it is philosophy that makes them able to judge and act on behalf of their community. It is not the ability to rule in other people's interests that makes a person an ideal ruler but rather it is a person's grasp of the truth that makes them ideal rulers. Ruling is, in a sense, a consequence of knowledge.

Outside the ideal polis the principle: that one does what is the best interest of one's community, can be interpreted in many ways, and not all of them favourable. I would argue, however, it is a principle that Plato has Sokrates exemplify, and it is also one which he sees as fundamental to the pursuit of philosophy and therefore to his own philosophical project in writing the dialogues. This, however, does not mean that for Plato the philosopher must seek political office in conventional societies, but only that, as a citizen, although largely in a private capacity, the philosopher will seek the well-being of his fellow citizens, whether they like this or not.

Endnotes

[1] Leo Tolstoy, *On Education*, trans. Leo Wiener, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967 (p.111).

[2] In moral philosophy virtue ethics has been 're-emerging' for 40 years or more, but so far it has failed to have a significant impact on popular morality and educational policy.

[3] Peter McPhail, "Moral Education or Education for a Better Life," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 1 No. 2 (1972) p.109.

[4] *Ibid* p.110.

[5] R. S. Peters, *Moral Development and Moral Education*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981.

[6] *Ibid* pp.29-30.

[7] *Ibid* p.30.

[8] Immanuel Kant, *The Educational Theory of Immanuel Kant*, trans & ed. Edward Franklin Buchner, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1904 (pp.201-202). Cf. p.187 'Character consists in the readiness to act according to maxims.'

[9] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 (6: 394).

[10] Generally but not necessarily, when Plato applies the adjective '*agathos*' to a person he is implying that the person in question has *aretē*, meaning not that the person is excellent in some functional non-ethical sense – having excellent eyesight for example, but that they have some virtue, e.g., *andreia*, *sōphrosunē* etc. In the *Republic*, it is probably best to understand the term *agathos* (when it refers to a person in an ethical sense) as only applying to the person who has complete human virtue, that is, the person who is *dikaios*, and hence *andreia*, *sōphrosunē*, and *phronimos*. Here, with his notion of human virtue, Plato is exploiting both the ethical sense of *aretē* and the functional sense: the fully virtuous person is the perfectly functioning person (*Republic* 444d1-9).

[11] Indeed, Plato witnessed this for himself in Sicily.

[12] ὀργὴ, φυὴ, λῆμα, νόημα, among others.

[13] The presence of two other closely associated words should also be noted, these are ἐπιείκεια and εὐήθεια, the former appears 20 times and the latter 11.

[14] Indeed, at certain times Plato even seems to use the terms interchangeably. However, they are not synonymous (*Republic* 409a1-409d2, 435b3-436a2, and 544d3-e1).

[15] For Bernard Bosanquet 'character is the secret of happiness, not circumstance' (*A Companion to Plato's Republic for English Readers*, New York: Macmillan, 1895, p.39); and for Nettleship 'character is the arbiter of happiness' (*The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935, p.16); Torsten Andersson puts it this way, 'man's happiness is dependent on the nature of his character' (*Polis and the Psyche: A Motif in Plato's Republic*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971, p.59); and C. D. C. Reeve, who says 'a person's character influences the quality of life more than anything else' (*Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p.5); and Strauss says 'the most important condition is good character' (p.66). Rosen relates the theme of character in book 1 with the dynamic between *eros* and *sōphrosunē*, and, interestingly, with tyranny (*Plato's Republic*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, pp.25-26). Those who ignore the issue completely are Julia Annas (*Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, p.19), Leon Harold Craig (*The War Lover: A Study of Plato's Republic*, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), W. K. C. Guthrie (*Plato: The Man and his Dialogues Earlier Period, A History of Greek Philosophy IV*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), R. C. Cross and A. D. Woozley (*Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary*, London: Palgrave Mcmillan, 1979), A. E. Taylor (*Plato: the Man and his Work*, New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2001), and Nickolas Pappas (*Plato and the Republic*, London: Routledge, 1995), Paul Shorey (*What Plato Said*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), J. N. Findlay (*Plato: The Written*

and Unwritten Doctrines, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), Nicholas P. White (*A Companion to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979).

[16] Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines: 1. Plato on Man and Society* (p.79).

[17] Annas ignores the fact that it is Kephalos who brings up the subject of character, and instead paints him as being shallow and 'morally complacent'; 'right and wrong consist for him in the performance of certain actions (which riches help you to do): the *kind* of person you are does not matter' (*An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, p.20). There is some truth to this, Kephalos does see justice in terms of 'certain actions', which being wealthy helps one to accomplish, but he clearly believes that these actions can only be performed if one is a certain *kind* of person. Now, there is nothing startling in this claim, but if we ignore it then we will miss the whole point of the opening discussion.

[18] Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings: The Argument of Plato's Republic* (p.6).

[19] 'With the figure of Kephalos, a 'head', Plato condenses various themes and concerns which will emerge in the dialogue. Kephalos' brief appearance, and reprise at 619c, contains the central questions concerning the benefits of justice, happiness, and the superiority of the philosophical life' (John Sallis, *Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975, p.324).

[20] In fact, all the players in the *Republic* have a strong idea of what they mean by good character, but only Sokrates knows what he means by soul.

[21] He is, we might say, a 'thumosopher' (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 877).

[22] See *Republic* 345b6-7.

[23] Cf. *Alcibiades II* 140c9.

[24] Thrasymakhos is a hypocrite.

[25] As Polemarkhos did at the hands of the Thirty Tyrants.

[26] As indeed it was, if the testimony of Thukydides is anything to go by: Οὕτω πᾶσα ἰδέα κατέστη κακοτροπίας διὰ τὰς στάσεις τῷ Ἑλληνικῷ, καὶ τὸ εὔηθες, οὗ τὸ γενναῖον πλεῖστον μετέχει, καταγελασθὲν ἠφανίσθη, τὸ δὲ ἀντιτετάχθαι ἀλλήλοις τῇ γνώμῃ ἀπίστως ἐπὶ πολὺ διήνεγκεν '(Thukydides, *Pelopennesian War* 3.83.1)

[27] εὐηθέστατε (343d2).

[28] This is only possible because the majority are 'just'; in the Kallipolis this situation is reversed; only the minority, personally speaking, are just.

[29] Thrasymakhos sees tyranny as a consequence of democracy just as much as Sokrates does.

[30] It is doubtful whether Thrasymakhos believes that Kephalos has been entirely honest about his business dealings. As a shrewd businessman Kephalos could hardly be called εὐήθεια; Thrasymakhos target here is not the 'middle-classes', or indeed anyone with Oligarchic sympathies, but the 'many', those whom Kephalos himself cites. Since Thrasymakhos rates justice and injustice in terms of exploitation, Kephalos sits somewhere in the middle we might say, as befitting a man with oligarchic tendencies.

[31] A forerunner to the ideal polis, the Kallipolis.

[32] ἐπιεικεῖς (347c6).

[33] κακοήθειαν (348d1).

[34] Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines: 1. Plato on Man and Society* (p.84), and Nettleship, *The Theory of Education in the Republic of Plato* (p.28).

[35] τρόπου (368b2).

[36] Indeed, if Sokrates was in a position to build his ideal polis, poor old Kephalos would be one of the first to be exiled.

[37] 'The apparent problem about the opposition between fierceness and gentleness is an illusion; these two attributes are directed towards two different objects: strangers and friends' (Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Republic*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, p.85).

[38] Aristotle, *Politics* 1327b38-41.

[39] Cf. *Laws* 641e4-642a1.

[40] A desire that perhaps finds its origins in the aftermath of the harrowingly long and debilitating Peloponnesian war.

[41] H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, London: Penguin Classics, 2005 (p.144).

[42] See the example of Sokrates in the *Charmides* (153a1-d5).

[43] The *Agoge*, 'character and training,' see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 13.

[44] 'In spite of the fact that Plato identifies the gentle element of the soul with her philosophic disposition, and in spite of the fact that philosophy is going to play such a dominant role in the later parts of the *Republic*, he is not at all biased in favour of the gentle element of the soul, or of the musical, i.e. literary, education. The impartiality in balancing the two elements is the more remarkable as it leads him to impose the most severe restrictions on literary education, compared with what was, in his time, customary in Athens. This, of course, is only part of his general tendency to prefer Spartan customs to Athenian ones. Plato's political principles of literary education are based upon a simple comparison. Sparta, he saw, treated its human cattle just a little too harshly; this is a symptom or even an admission of a feeling of weakness, and therefore a symptom of the incipient degeneration of the master class. Athens, on the other hand, was altogether too liberal and slack in her treatment of slaves. Plato took this as proof that Sparta insisted just a little too much on gymnastics, and Athens, of course, far too much on music. This simple estimate enabled him readily to reconstruct what in his opinion must have been the true measure or the true blend of the two elements in the education of the best state, and to lay down the principles of his educational policy' (Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies: Volume 1 The Spell of Plato*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p.53). For a slightly more balanced view see Malcolm Schofield's *Plato*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 (pp.35-43).

[45] Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 28.

[46] Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 30.

[47] Augustus Samuel Wilkins, *National Education in Greece in the fourth Century before Christ*, LaVergne: Bibliobazaar, 2010 (p.43).

[48] Cf. *The Lovers* 132c8-10.

[49] 'φιλονικίαι καὶ φιλοτιμίαι' (*Republic* 548c6).

[50] Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 21.

[51] Wilkins, *National Education in Greece in the fourth Century before Christ* (p.37).

[52] 'κακοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ' (*Republic* 548c3).

[53] Although King Cleomenes apparently had an interest in philosophical matters (Plutarch, *Cleomenes* 2).

[54] *Republic* 375e8-9. Although Sokrates may appear to have a certain respect for the simplicity of the Spartan way of life, he also recognises, as we learn in book 8, that a way of life devoted almost entirely to war is not one that sits comfortably with a way of life governed by philosophy. Plato's most extended critique of the Spartan way of life is found in his *Laws* (Plato is not wholly critical, cf. *Laws* 691d9-692c9). The discussion between the Athenian and his Spartan and Kretan interlocutors, Kleinias and Megillos, is prompted by the view, generally accepted, that the Spartan and Kretan constitutions create courageous individuals, but this comes at the expense, Plato (The 'Athenian') claims, of the other 'virtues,' virtues which, however perverted in form, were promoted in Athens (*Laws* 688a1b3).

[55] *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, ed and trans. E. I. J. Rosenthal, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969 (557c-e, p.213).

[56] Cf. *Laws* 831c3-832a2.

[57] Thukydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.37-41.

[58] Cf. Thukydides 2.41.1-2.

[59] Wilkins, *National Education in Greece in the fourth Century before Christ* (p.91).

[60] *Republic* 401a1.

[61] This makes us think, of course, back to the *Republic*: 'τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν,' (433a8), 'τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν' (433b4), 'τοῦ οἰκείου τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἕξις τε καὶ

πρᾶξις᾽ (433e10), 'τούτων τὸ αὑτοῦ πράττοντος᾽ (434c9), 'αὐτῇ πράττειν᾽ (441d8), 'αὑτῷ πράττῃ᾽ (441d10).

[62] There is, of course, something of Aristotle's doctrine of the mean in all of this.

[63] The problem, perhaps, both in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, looked at from purely a political view, is about how one might combine the Sokratic lawgiver with the suitably modified Akhillean τύραννος. The 'combination' in the individual or in the ruling elite of the Akhillean and Sokratic is an ideal. The most important thing says the Athenian, speaking for the Legislator, is that the state be ruled by a tyrant who is 'νέος καὶ μνήμων καὶ εὐμαθὴς καὶ ἀνδρεῖος καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὴς φύσει᾽ (709e5-6, 'Young, and possessed by nature of a good memory, quick intelligence, courage and nobility of manner', trans. R. G. Bury p.273). However, the most important quality of the tyrant's ψυχῇ is *sōphrosunē* (710a3; 709e7-710a2), which is hardly a virtue that one would associate with Akhilleus. But that would be a simplification. A great deal of τύχη is needed for the young tyrant to meet and benefit from the noble lawgiver (710c7-8). Kleinias sums up the Athenian's position: 'ἐκ τυραννίδος ἀρίστην φὴς γενέσθαι πόλιν ἄν, ὡς φαίνη, μετὰ νομοθέτου γε ἄκρου καὶ τυράννου κοσμίου, καὶ ῥᾷστά τε καὶ τάχιστ᾽ ἂν μεταβαλεῖν εἰς τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ τοιούτου᾽ (710d6-8, 'You mean, apparently, that the best state would arise from a tyranny, when it has a first-rate lawgiver and a virtuous tyrant, and these are the conditions under which the change into such a state could be effected most easily and quickly…', trans. R. G. Bury, slightly adapted, p.275). The young, bold but importantly self-controlled τύραννος is, with the backing of the experienced lawgiver ideally placed to *quickly* (710b2, 711c5) affect the necessary changes in society: 'οὐδὲν δεῖ πόνων οὐδέ τινος παμπόλλου χρόνου τῷ τυράννῳ μεταβαλεῖν βουληθέντι πόλεως ἤθη, πορεύεσθαι δὲ αὐτὸν δεῖ πρῶτον ταύτῃ, ὅπηπερ ἂν ἐθελήσῃ, ἐάντε πρὸς ἀρετῆς ἐπιτηδεύματα, προτρέπεσθαι τοὺς πολίτας, ἐάντε ἐπὶ τοὐναντίον, αὐτὸν πρῶτον πάντα ὑπογράφοντα τῷ πράττειν, τὰ μὲν ἐπαινοῦντα καὶ τιμῶντα, τὰ δ᾽ αὖ πρὸς ψόγον ἄγοντα, καὶ τὸν μὴ πειθόμενον ἀτιμάζοντα καθ᾽ ἑκάστας τῶν πράξεων᾽ (711b4-c3, 'The fact that a tyrant, when he decides to change the moral habits of a state, needs no great efforts not a vast length of time, but what he does need is to lead the way himself first along the desired path, whether it be to urge the citizens towards virtue's practices or the contrary; by this personal example he should first trace out the right lines, giving praise and honour to these things, blame to those, and degrading the disobedient according to their several deeds', trans. R. G. Bury, slightly adapted, p.277). The motif of *quickness* combined, of course, with temperance (712a6) appears to be central. The swiftness with which the changes could occur given the right conditions is at the forefront of the Athenian's mind. Decisiveness is the key to social reform. The illusion that the τύραννος is in charge is a necessary one. The question about the supremacy of law, which in both the *Politicus* and the *Laws* takes its departure from a μῦθος (*Laws*, 713a6, and in the *Politicus*, μῦθος, 268e3), the so called 'age of Kronos', is raised from the perspective (also evident in the foundation myth of the *Republic*, 415a1-c8) of the absolute necessity of fostering the divine element within ourselves ('ἀλλὰ μιμεῖσθαι δεῖν ἡμᾶς οἴεται πάσῃ μηχανῇ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ Κρόνου λεγόμενον βίον, καὶ ὅσον ἐν ἡμῖν ἀθανασίας ἔνεστι, τούτῳ πειθομένους δημοσίᾳ καὶ ἰδίᾳ τάς τ᾽ οἰκήσεις καὶ τὰς πόλεις διοικεῖν, τὴν τοῦ νοῦ διανομὴν ἐπονομάζοντας νόμον᾽, *Laws* 713e6-714a2, 'And it deems that we ought by every means to imitate the life of the age of Cronos, as tradition paints it, and order both our homes and our states in obedience to the immortal element within us, giving to reason's ordering the name of "law"', trans. R. G. Bury p.287), a divine element which is perhaps most indicative of Akhilleus and Sokrates. However, the divine element needs the proper nurture and education. Homer too, it seems, associates quickness with boldness and also disaster and violence Moving on to the central premise of the *Iliad*, Akhilleus acts first, calling an assembly in order to discover the reason for Apollo's displeasure (τῇ δεκάτῃ δ᾽ ἀγορὴν δὲ καλέσσατο λαὸν Ἀχιλλεύς, *Iliad* I.54, '…on the tenth [day] Achilleus called the people to assembly', trans. Lattimore p.60). Naturally the πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς speaks first

(he speaks first because he called the assembly). He is quick to reassure Kalkhas and instil him with θάρσησε: 'Τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς (*Iliad* I.84, 'Speak, interpreting whatever you know, and fear nothing', trans. Lattimore p.61). Latacz puts it like this 'we see Akhilleus as the intrepid protector of the weak, but also as impulsively quick to take on weighty personal obligations' (Joachim Latacz, *Homer: His Art and His World*, trans. James P. Holoka, Michigan: Michigan University Press, 1996, p.96); and is the first to confer the misplaced anger of Agamemnon, 'Μὴ δ᾽ οὕτως ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν, θεοείκελ᾽ Ἀχιλλεῦ, κλέπτε νόῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐ παρελεύσεαι οὐδέ με πείσεις' (*Iliad* I.130-131, 'Not that way, good fighter though you be, godlike Achilleus, strive to cheat, for you will not deceive, you will not persuade me', trans. Lattimore p.62). He was, perhaps, too quick, too predominant, when the ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς declared earlier 'Ἀτρεΐδη κύδιστε, φιλοκτεανώτατε πάντων, πῶς γάρ τοι δώσουσι γέρας μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοί; οὐδέ τί που ἴδμεν ξυνήϊα κείμενα πολλά' (*Iliad*. I.120-123, 'Son of Atreus, most lordly, greediest for gain of all men, how shall the great-hearted Achaians give you a prize now?', trans. Lattimore *ibid*). The result is a switch of responsibility from Agamemnon to Akhilleus. Initially the Akhaians suffered (*Iliad* I.47-52), but at least 'αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί' (*Iliad* I.52, 'The corpse fires burned everywhere and did not stop burning', trans. Lattimore p.60) but compared to the next crisis it was nothing ('ἣ μυρί᾽ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε᾽ ἔθηκε, πολλὰς δ᾽ ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν ἡρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι', *Iliad*. I.2-6). Akhilleus' disobedience, necessitated somewhat by the shoddy leadership of Agamemnon, causes a division, Zeus' will aside, which underscores the whole piece. The Akhaians have a low-key civil war. Whatever the Homeric merits of Akhilleus' actions, or indeed Agamemnon's, it is, for Plato, a clear case of 'disharmony', or to be more precise in this case, of an overweening boldness and quickness to temper, as the Stranger of Plato's *Politicus* puts it: 'Παιδιὰ τοίνυν αὕτη γέ τις ἡ διαφορὰ τούτων ἐστὶ τῶν εἰδῶν· περὶ δὲ τὰ μέγιστα νόσος ξυμβαίνει πασῶν ἐχθίστη γίγνεσθαι ταῖς πόλεσιν' (307d7-9, 'Now this opposition of these classes is mere child's play; but when in affects the most important matters it becomes a most detestable disease in the state' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.183). This sentiment is very reminiscent of the *Republic* at 424d4 ('ὡς ἐν παιδιᾶς γε μέρει καὶ ὡς κακὸν οὐδὲν ἐργαζομένη'). If we now turn to Hektor we can develop this further. As a defender Hektor may appear to be a more sympathetic character than Akhilleus. But perhaps in Hektor the polarity of harsh and gentle is even more evident. Aias says of Hektor 'οὐ μὰν ἔς γε χορὸν κέλετ᾽ ἐλθέμεν, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθαι' (*Iliad* XV.507-508, 'He is not inviting you to come to dance. He invites you to battle' (trans. Lattimore p.323). This is somehow very appropriate for Hektor. Perhaps like no other, Hektor who, on the one hand is 'μεγάθυμος' (*Iliad* XV.440), and on the other hand has tender moments with wife and child (*Iliad* VI.395-500), embodies the peculiar affect of war. It is a dichotomy that every soldier faces and is painfully aware of:

πάντων μὲν κόρος ἐστὶ καὶ ὕπνου καὶ φιλότητος
μολπῆς τε γλυκερῆς καὶ ἀμύμονος ὀρχηθμοῖο,
τῶν πέρ τις καὶ μᾶλλον ἐέλδεται ἐξ ἔρον εἶναι
ἢ πολέμου· Τρῶες δὲ μάχης ἀκόρητοι ἔασιν
(*Iliad* XIII.636-640)

'Since there is satiety in all things, in sleep, and love making, in the loveliness of singing and the innocent dance. In all these things a man will strive sooner to win satisfaction than in war; but in this the Trojans cannot be glutted' (trans. Lattimore p.288).

There is the sense that one cannot have both gifts; that martial qualities are distinct from qualities associated with peace,

ἄλλῳ μὲν γὰρ ἔδωκε θεὸς πολεμήϊα ἔργα,
ἄλλῳ δ᾽ ὀρχηστύν, ἑτέρῳ κίθαριν καὶ ἀοιδήν
(*Iliad* XIII.730-731)

'To one man the god has granted the actions of warfare, to one to be a dancer, to another the lyre and the singing' (trans. Lattimore pp.290-291).

If we contrast the domestic circumstances of Hektor and Akhilleus we shall find the obvious dissimilarities[63] but we shall also see a fair degree of parity. As C. M. Bowra puts it: 'The strength of the contrast is between the natural, sympathetic humanity of Hector and the remote, terrifying magnificence of Achilles' (C. M. Bowra, *Homer*, London: Duckworth, 1972, p.115). It must be pointed out that both men made their homes within and from the perspective of war (both, even, conceiving children). Home comforts are even more important in times such as theirs. However, the concerns of Hektor are of a different order to those of Akhilleus. As a defender Hektor has it all to lose, as an attacker Akhilleus can only gain. Again, this misses the point. We must only consider the kind of home that Akhilleus made for himself (*Iliad* XXIV.447-455), with which he shared with his beloved Patroklos (and Briseis). Even Akhilleus had his gentler side ('τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ᾽ ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν', *Iliad* IX.186, 'With this [singing and player the lyre] he was pleasuring his heart, and singing of men's fame', trans. Lattimore p.203) and perhaps this is why it is best not to portray Akhilleus as the paradigmatic fighting man (I would say that this 'title' is better suited to Aias).

[64] Thrasymakhos' gentleness is only a conceit however, like that of the newly established tyrant (*Republic* 566e4).

[65] When one reads book 10 of the *Iliad* one cannot help being struck by both the way in which Odysseus and Diomedes, in terms of their respective abilities, the *cunning intelligence* of Odysseus and the *fierce spiritedness* of Diomedes, carry out their grim mission and the methods of characterisation that Homer employs. I admit that I am reading Plato's psychological theories on to Homer, but there is, surely, still the question (undoubtedly legitimate) as to the degree to which Plato was perhaps led, partially of course, in forming his beliefs regarding the soul through his exposure to and assimilation of the poets. After Nestor's speech (ὦ φίλοι οὐκ ἂν δή τις ἀνὴρ πεπίθοιθ᾽ ἑῷ αὐτοῦ θυμῷ τολμήεντι μετὰ Τρῶας μεγαθύμους ἐλθεῖν…, X.203), the assembly is silent until Diomedes says: 'Νέστορ ἔμ᾽ ὀτρύνει κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ ἀνδρῶν δυσμενέων δῦναι στρατὸν ἐγγὺς ἐόντων Τρώων' (X.219).

Diomedes chooses Odysseus as his companion, not only because 'οὗ πέρι μὲν πρόφρων κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ ἐν πάντεσσι πόνοισι' (X.244-245) and, of course, his association with Athene but also because 'ἐπεὶ περίοιδε νοῆσαι' (X.246-247). And whilst Odysseus prays to Athene in his accustomed way (X.277), Diomedes offers a prayer to Atrytone ('unwearied,' X.284), symbolising, perhaps, the dual aspect of intelligence and spirit that coalesces with the combination of Odysseus and Diomedes. Aided by Athene, Diomedes (ἐπαΐσσων and κρατερὸς) captures Dolon (X.365-370). Odysseus (πολύμητις) calms the petrified Dolon with a necessary falsehood (X.382-383). Dolon's folly, it seems, is the result of his own θυμὸς (and his greed: ἦ ῥά νύ τοι μεγάλων δώρων ἐπεμαίετο θυμὸς ἵππων Αἰακίδαο δαΐφρονος) and, so he claims, the 'deceptions' of Hector (πολλῇσίν μ᾽ ἄτῃσι παρὲκ νόον ἤγαγεν Ἕκτωρ, X.391-392). The lone figure of Dolon, both cowardly and, unlike Odysseus (πολύμητις, X.400) sorely lacking in counsel, never stood a chance. Diomedes' responses to Dolon are on the whole hostile and serve to preface his wanton violence against Rhesus and his personal guard. Odysseus, in contrast, is measured, eliciting vital information from Dolon to ensure the success of the mission.

Towards the end, however, Odysseus struggles to bring Diomedes to heel (even whistling to the belligerent Diomedes, X.503). Diomedes is 'divided in his mind' (X.504), whether to steal more treasures or slaughter more Thracians (which would indicate for Plato typical Spartan vices). Diomedes' indecision forces the intervention of Athene (X.505-515). The mission, however, is a success, but perhaps only just, highlighting the precarious nature of the alliance between *reason* and *spirit*, even with exemplars such as Odysseus and Diomedes.

The *Rhesus*, which, on the whole, only resembles book 10 superficially, contains similar concerns regarding the heroic character. Aeneas expresses his wish to Hector

that he 'could make plans [εὔβουλος] as well as you can fight', continuing 'But so it is: the same man cannot well be skilled in everything; each has his special excellence, and yours is fighting, and it is for others to make good plans [βουλεύειν καλῶς], not you' (105-108). Mostly interesting is the period between 565 and 595. Here the cautious nature of Odysseus is contrasted with Diomedes' eagerness. However, and with a typically Euripidean twist, our heroes falter; Odysseus convinces Diomedes to head back, and it is only by a quite different intervention from Athene that the heroes return to their mission.

[66] *Iliad* 1.412.

[67] Apollodoros, *Library* III.13.6, Philostratos, *Eikones* 341k.16-342k.25.

[68] Hobbs calls him 'the archetypal exemplar of the *thumos* gone awry' (Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.199).

[69] Akhilleus' aristeia begins in book 20:

'αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
Ἕκτορος ἄντα μάλιστα λιλαίετο δῦναι ὅμιλον
Πριαμίδεω· τοῦ γάρ ῥα μάλιστά ἑ θυμὸς ἀνώγει
αἵματος ἆσαι Ἄρηα ταλαύρινον πολεμιστήν'

(*Iliad* XX.75-79).

[70] *Iliad* XXIII.22-23.

[71] Aiskhylos, *Myrmidones*, fragment 59 (131), 'τάδε μὲν λεύσσεις, φαίδιμ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, δοριλυμάντους Δαναῶν μόχθους, οὓς [προπεπωκὼ] εἴσω κλισίας [θάσσεις].'

[72] He receives Agamemnon's messengers with good grace (*Iliad* I.334), as he does the Embassy (*Iliad*. IX.196), which finds him relaxing and playing the lyre (*Iliad* IX.189-190), and he behaves reasonably well towards Priam (*Iliad* XXIV.471-670).

[73] *Republic* 391c2. Cf. *Epinomos* 989b6-c3.

[74] Phoinix no longer has any influence over Akhilleus:

'φοῖνιξ ἄττα γεραιὲ διοτρεφὲς οὔ τί με ταύτης
χρεὼ τιμῆς· φρονέω δὲ τετιμῆσθαι Διὸς αἴσῃ,
ἥ μ' ἕξει παρὰ νηυσὶ κορωνίσιν εἰς ὅ κ' ἀϋτμὴ
ἐν στήθεσσι μένῃ καί μοι φίλα γούνατ' ὀρώρῃ.
ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι·
μή μοι σύγχει θυμὸν ὀδυρόμενος καὶ ἀχεύων
Ἀτρεΐδῃ ἥρωϊ φέρων χάριν· οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ
τὸν φιλέειν, ἵνα μή μοι ἀπέχθηαι φιλέοντι.
καλόν τοι σὺν ἐμοὶ τὸν κήδειν ὅς κ' ἐμὲ κήδῃ·
ἶσον ἐμοὶ βασίλευε καὶ ἥμισυ μείρεο τιμῆς'

(*Iliad* IX.607-616).

But why this double tutelage? According to C. J. Mackie: 'Chiron and Phoenix together help to reveal different aspects of his personality, different skills and impulses that motivate him during the war at Troy. To have a single teacher like Phoenix, who is a kind of generic old man figure, would do little justice to a unique warrior like Achilles. The separation and isolation of Achilles from the other Achaean princes, and some of the special features of his person require special characteristics reaching back into his childhood, and for this reason Chiron is never excluded entirely from the poem. The complete suppression of Chiron's name would leave Achilles with a background very much the same as the other princes, something which would scarcely be appropriate for such a warrior figure' (C. J. Mackie, "Achilles' Teachers: Chiron and Phoenix in the 'Iliad'," *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1997, p.4).

[75] Christopher Gill, *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996 (p.267).

[76] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981 (p.83). Cf. Richard Lewis Nettleship, *The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935 (p.44).

[77] This stage of education covers a period of time, which for us would include primary, secondary and higher education, terminating when the guardians reach twenty years of age. However neither stage has any specific elements or courses of study devoted to statesmanship or politics as we would understand these terms.

[78] There are two noticeable omissions from the guardians' education, weapons training and grammatistikē (reading and writing). To my mind there must be some sound philosophical reason why these are omitted. In the case of training for war perhaps there is just very little that is philosophically pertinent to say. The most important thing is courage rather than skill with arms (cf. *Laches* 182d-184c). The omission of *grammatistikē* does require clarification. It would perhaps be odd to hear Sokrates speak about reading and writing. Sokrates is more concerned with good speech rather than the ability to read and write well. The ability to read and write is not required for guardianship or philosophy. This is also clearly a hit against Athenian and Spartan preoccupations.

[79] As it is in the *Laws* (795d8-9).

[80] C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience*, London: Cardinal, 1973 (pp.73-78). See Thukydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.11.

[81] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, trans. P. Christopher smith, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980 (p.43).

[82] Euripides, *Ion* 446-448.

[83] Not necessarily literarily, but in the sense of the being the eldest and most powerful. See Walter Burkert's *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987 (p.129).

[84] Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (p.55).

[85] The depiction of the gods in Greek literature, throughout the classical era, is entirely consistent with received religious ideas and practice. There were critics of course, but in the main, and following the enormously popular poems of Homer and Hesiod, the majority never sought to challenge established religion. But we should not see Sokrates' *critique of Homer* as being a challenge to religion as such, still less to 'state religion,' rather, his concern was with certain ethical implications that he thought could be drawn from the portrayal of the gods and the heroes in poetry.

[86] Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (p.71).

[87] Since 'good' was synonymous with 'best.'

[88] For the 'ordinary,' 5th Century B.C. Greek conception of 'agathos' see Arthur Adkins' *Merit and Responsibility*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960 (pp.231-232).

[89] According to Bloom 'it would seem necessary to infer that the warriors are not to be wise and that the beliefs about the gods are their substitute for wisdom. Those beliefs about the gods are a nonphilosophic equivalent of knowledge of the whole' ("Interpretative Essay," in *The Republic of Plato*, New York: Basic Books, 1991, p.352), but as he also says 'the gods are a prefiguration of the *ideas* which are known to the philosophers. The man who believes in these gods, while loving the city and justice, will not hate and consider impious the philosopher who teaches the *ideas*' (*ibid* p.353).

[90] Sokrates intends that the power, mystery and persuasiveness of myth be fully exploited in the ideal polis. But since the accuracy of myths cannot be fully determined all one can do is to make them as truthful as possible (*Republic* 382d2). This, in a sense, is how Plato uses myth in his dialogues; far from being an alternative to intellectual vigour, Plato sees myth as ancillary to philosophical truth, succeeding, perhaps, where the unadorned truth itself might fail. In certain circumstances, myth makes the truth more digestible, and, for some, more persuasive. I shall return to these themes in Chapter Four. On Plato's use of myth, see Diogenes, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, III.80.

[91] *Apology* 28b5-10.

[92] Wilkins, *National Education in Greece in the fourth Century before Christ* (p.63).

[93] 'Man is a living creature, conscious of himself and intelligently active, only so long as the psyche remains within him. But it is not the psyche which communicates its own faculties to man and gives him capacity for life together with consciousness, will

and knowledge. It is rather that during the union of the psyche and the body all the faculties of living and acting lie within the empire of the body, of which they are functions. Without the presence of the psyche, the body cannot perceive, feel, or will, but it does not use these or any of its faculties through or by means of the psyche. Nowhere does Homer attribute any such function to the psyche in living man: it is, in fact, only mentioned when its separation from the living man is imminent or has occurred. As the body's shadow-image it survives the body and all its vital powers' (Rohde, *Psyche*, pp.5-6).

[94] *Ibid* p.30; Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954 (p.24).

[95] K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the time of Plato and Aristotle*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 1974 (pp.243-246).

[96] *Republic* 620c2-d2. Cf. *Odyssey* 7.311-315.

[97] 'If Achilles is the model, men will not pursue philosophy, that what he stands for is inimical to the founding of the best city and the practice of the best way of life. Socrates is engaging in a contest with Homer for the title of teacher of the Greeks – or of mankind. One of his principal goals is to put himself in the place of Achilles as the authentic representation of the best human type' (Allan Bloom, "Interpretative Essay," p.354).

[98] This concern with the ethical content of myth, and by implication poetry, does not originate with Plato. In fact, such concerns could be as old as poetry itself. And yet, if Aristophanes is to be believed, one of the purposes of the poet, dramatic, comedic or otherwise, is to teach:

Εὐριπίδης
πότερον δ᾽ οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοῦτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας ξυνέθηκα;
Αἰσχύλος
μὰ Δί᾽ ἀλλ᾽ ὄντ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τόν γε ποιητήν,
καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ᾽ ἡβῶσι ποιηταί.
πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.
Εὐριπίδης
ἢν οὖν σὺ λέγῃς Λυκαβηττοὺς
καὶ Παρνασσῶν ἡμῖν μεγέθη, τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τὸ χρηστὰ διδάσκειν,
ὃν χρῆν φράζειν ἀνθρωπείως;
Αἰσχύλος
ἀλλ᾽ ὦ κακόδαιμον ἀνάγκη
μεγάλων γνωμῶν καὶ διανοιῶν ἴσα καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τίκτειν.
κἄλλως εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι χρῆσθαι·
καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμῶν χρῶνται πολὺ σεμνοτέροισιν'
(*Frogs* 1053-1061)

'Euripides: And did I invent the story of Phaedra?
Aeschylus: No, no, such things do happen. But the poet should keep quiet about them, not put them on the stage for everyone to copy. Schoolboys have a master to teach them, grown-ups have the poets. We have a duty to see that what we teach them is right and proper.
Euripides: And you think that the right and proper way to teach them is to write your kind of high-flown Olympian language, instead of talking like a human being?
Aeschylus: My poor dear fellow, noble themes and noble sentiments must be couched in suitably dignified language. If your characters are demi-gods, they should talk like demi-gods – and, I might add, they should dress like demi-gods' (trans. David Barrett p.195).

[99] *Phaedo* 117c2-e1.

[100] *Euthyphro* 2c2-3d2, *Apology* 24b2-c1.

[101] The absence of Akhilleus in the myth of Er is understandable. It is not, as Bloom has it, an indication of Plato's rejection of the Akhillean model: 'Achilles no longer exists, alive or dead, in the new poetry or the new Socratic world' (Bloom p.436).

However, Akhilleus is absent precisely because for Plato he is, metaphorically speaking, still alive in the Sokratic ideal. The charges brought against Sokrates seem to bear this out, and perhaps indicate the tension between the Akhillean and the Sokratic within the man himself.

[102] Bloom, "Interpretative Essay" (p.356)

[103] *Ibid* p.354.

[104] *Republic* 392b1, *anthrōpos*.

[105] This clearly distinguishes Sokrates from the sophists, who were, according to Plato, never shy in giving their 'opinions' about virtue.

[106] Since Sokrates has already censored the depiction of the heroes in poetry, his qualms about the affects of imitation seem rather puzzling.

[107] Cf. Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero* (p.13).

[108] Athletes, as we learn from the *Iliad* (XXIII.667-671), were not famed for their military prowess.

[109] 'Socrates' comments on his educational proposals tell us that the purpose of combining physical and cultural training is not what is commonly supposed – physical training for the good of the body, cultural training for the good of the soul. On the contrary the good of the soul is the end of both kinds of training. Cultural education is designed to strengthen the rational element, physical training to strengthen the spirited, and the balance of the two types of training is designed to balance the two elements so that a man becomes neither too zealous a lover of culture at the expense of spirit nor too zealous a follower of honour at the expense of wisdom' (I. M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines: 1. Plato on Man and Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p.92).

Teaching Virtue in the Cave

Πρὶν δέ γε ἀρετὴν ἔχειν, τὸ ἄρχεσθαι ἄμεινον ὑπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος ἢ τὸ ἄρχειν ἀνδρί, οὐ μόνον παιδί (*Alcibiades I* 135b7-8)[i]

Οὐκοῦν ἵνα καὶ ὁ τοιοῦτος ὑπὸ ὁμοίου ἄρχηται οἷουπερ ὁ βέλτιστος, δοῦλον αὐτόν φαμεν δεῖν εἶναι ἐκείνου τοῦ βελτίστου καὶ ἔχοντος ἐν αὑτῷ τὸ θεῖον ἄρχον, οὐκ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τῇ τοῦ δούλου οἰόμενοι δεῖν ἄρχεσθαι αὐτόν, ὥσπερ Θρασύμαχος ᾤετο τοὺς ἀρχομένους, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἄμεινον ὂν παντὶ ὑπὸ θείου καὶ φρονίμου ἄρχεσθαι, μάλιστα μὲν οἰκεῖον ἔχοντος ἐν αὑτῷ, εἰ δὲ μή, ἔξωθεν ἐφεστῶτος, ἵνα εἰς δύναμιν πάντες ὅμοιοι ὦμεν καὶ φίλοι, τῷ αὐτῷ κυβερνώμενοι…Δηλοῖ δέ γε […] καὶ ὁ νόμος ὅτι τοιοῦτον βούλεται, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ πόλει σύμμαχος ὤν· καὶ ἡ τῶν παίδων ἀρχή, τὸ μὴ ἐᾶν ἐλευθέρους εἶναι, ἕως ἂν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ ἐν πόλει πολιτείαν καταστήσωμεν, καὶ τὸ βέλτιστον θεραπεύσαντες τῷ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν τοιούτῳ ἀντικαταστήσωμεν φύλακα ὅμοιον καὶ ἄρχοντα ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ τότε δὴ ἐλεύθερον ἀφίεμεν (*Republic* 590c9-d-6; 590e1-591a3)[ii]

It is a case of 'either or': *either* we submit to the wise rule of others *or*

we become wise ourselves, and govern our lives accordingly.

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[i] 'But before one acquires virtue it's better to be ruled by somebody superior than to rule; this applies to men as well as boys' (trans. D. S. Hutchinson p.595).

[ii] 'In order that such a man also be ruled by something similar to what rules the best man, don't we say that he must be the slave of that best man who has the divine rule in himself? It's not that we suppose the slave must be ruled to his own detriment, as Thrasymachus supposed about the ruled; but that it's better for all to be ruled by what is divine and prudent, especially when one has it as his own within himself; but, if not, set over one from outside, so that insofar as possible all will be alike and friends, piloted by the same…and the law […] as an ally of all in the city, also makes it plain that it wants something of the kind; and so does the rule over the children, their not being set free until we establish a regime in them as in a city, and until – having cared for the best part in them with the like in ourselves – we establish a similar guardian and ruler in them to take our place; only then, do we set them free' (trans. Bloom p.273).

However, the education of character is not enough to ensure personal autonomy, only philosophy can achieve this.[1] *The task of philosophy is freedom*.[2] But how does philosophy set one free and what does it set one free from? It sets us free from our belief that we possess knowledge and it does so by leading us *towards* that which we do not know, the truth (cf. *Meno* 84b7-c2). As a process of liberation, philosophy is the only means of attaining happiness.

As I shall discuss in the first section, the *Republic* is the only dialogue where philosophy is seen as being endorsed by a state, where true virtue is taught, and the philosopher becomes the ruler. Sokrates' education in *speech* begins in book 2 at 376d10 and ends in book 7 at 540d9,[3] in between the ideal polis is constructed, justice is snared,[4] and the philosopher is established as the ruler. Only 7 Stephanus pages later, however, the ideal polis is sliding into ruin (545d5). By the end of book 8 the ideal polis has vanished completely, and in its place, tyranny. I would suggest therefore, that Plato's faith in the educational system that he outlines in the *Republic* is tempered by a deep pessimism. Although the educational proposals are thought to be sufficient for the creation of the kinds of people who will make an approximation of the ideal polis possible, no level of education can prevent a perishable entity from perishing. Not even the philosopher rulers can govern by reason alone, and, even if they could, nature has her own processes which cannot be thwarted (546a1-6). Rather like

Diotima, all the philosopher ruler can do is to put off the inevitable.[5] In the long term, education is a struggle against nature, a struggle that education can never win.

For the philosopher, however, the ideal polis remains, in principle, intact, and he buries the lessons that he drew from its realisation, i.e., the nature of justice, deep into his breast. As I shall argue in section two, this does not stop the philosopher from trying, as with Sokrates, despite the failure of the ideal polis (and in spite of its non-existence), to exhort his fellow cave dwellers to care for their souls and to practice philosophy, and, in particular, his former colleagues, the victory-loving auxiliaries, who are now in charge, men such as Alkibiades and the corrupt band of 'wise' men who follow in their train, men like Thrasymakhos. But *will* these men listen? *Can* they listen?[6] In the final section of this chapter, I shall begin to detail Plato's solution to the problem of teaching virtue in a constantly changing moral culture, Platonic education: a process which is specifically designed to overcome the limitations of Sokratic education.

The Kallipoleia: Education and its Limits

There is a kind of mutual competition for the common good, in which one man seeks to give better advice than another, or hold office better than another…and this is beneficial strife, faction between citizens for the public good (Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* IV.8)[7]

A fully effective moral education cannot be state sponsored in a democracy, or indeed in any other type of constitution, other than in the ideal: for virtue to be taught in a state that endorses it that state must be structured entirely towards that aim, the teaching of virtue. In his *Republic*, Plato imagines such a state, the ideal polis. For the ideal polis to become a reality, philosophers must rule. Therefore the first concern of the founders of the ideal polis, therefore, will be with a system of education that will produce not only philosophers (a hard enough task), but also philosophers who can rule.[8]

The education of character is the first step in this process. All the guardians, as we saw in the last chapter, have to be of a certain character, both *spirited* and yet *susceptible to reason*. For some guardians, those earmarked for leadership, this initial philosophical training will be supplemented by an additional course of studies. The higher education of the philosopher rulers consists of mathematics,

solid and plane geometry, astronomy, harmonics, and dialectic. Since

this is an education that is reserved for the rulers,[9] we should expect

it to be an education that will in some way be useful for the purpose

of ruling, and ruling well. And so this is the case. However, Sokrates

does not enumerate, as we might expect (as he does for instance in

the *Gorgias*), a science of politics, but rather his focus is with

philosophy. The task of philosophy is to turn the soul towards being

(πρὸς οὐσία),[10] and it is the above subjects, and dialectic in particular,

which will make this possible. Philosophy *is* the mastery of a set of

scientific subjects guided by the dialectical method of inquiry, the

ultimate aim of which is knowledge of the Good.[11] Possessing this

knowledge will give the philosopher rulers an unprecedented

advantage in the world of practical affairs (*Republic* 520c1-5).

However, knowledge of the Good makes a philosopher a suitable

ruler not because the Good is essentially a political concept but

because whoever manages to attain knowledge of such a remarkable

entity *automatically* becomes the person most qualified to rule (cf.

Republic 484a1-d10). And yet, even with this knowledge, the

philosopher rulers are not infallible. The ideal polis will fall.[12]

The beginning of the end of Sokrates' ideal polis is caused, bizarrely,

because of an oversight by the philosopher rulers.[13] The philosophers

who rule the Kallipolis, claims Sokrates, despite being wise, and

having had the most thorough education, will ʽοὐδὲν μᾶλλον

λογισμῷ μετ' αἰσθήσεως τεύξονται, ἀλλὰ πάρεισιν αὐτοὺς καὶ γεννήσουσι παῖδάς ποτε οὐ δέον' (546b2-3).[iii] Such children, as Aristotle observes, will be beyond the influence of education (*Politics* 1316a8-10). This is not actually how Sokrates puts it, but the implication is clear enough, as we learn at 546b1-3 (ᾇς ὅταν ἀγνοήσαντες ὑμῖν οἱ φύλακες συνοικίζωσιν νύμφας νυμφίοις παρὰ καιρόν, οὐκ εὐφυεῖς οὐδ' εὐτυχεῖς παῖδες ἔσονται).[iv]

It is clear that the smallest change in the ideal polis signals the beginning of the end. The change may be small but, as we shall see, its consequences are huge. Before I move on to that, we should ask how it can be that the rulers could make such an error, and in what sense they can be blamed for it. We have to remember that the philosopher rulers do not want to rule, indeed this is what makes them so suitable to rule, and therefore we might want to question their commitment to the finer points of administration and to the running of state institutions, such as that which controls the breeding programme. However, there is little suggestion that the rulers consciously 'take their eye off the ball,' but rather the suggestion is that it is a problem with how their knowledge is affected by material

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[iii] '…nonetheless fail to hit on the prosperous birth and barrenness of your kind with *calculation aided by sensation*, but it will pass them by, and they will at some time begat children when they should not' (my emphasis, trans. Bloom p.224).

[iv] 'And when your guardians from ignorance of them cause grooms to live with brides out of season, the children will have neither good natures or good luck' (trans. Bloom *ibid*).

conditions. It is as if the application of the philosopher rulers' knowledge is in some sense at the mercy of the unpredictable world of sensation.

However, this cannot be the whole picture, otherwise we could imagine the rulers making nothing but mistakes, and this is not the picture that we are given. In fact the problem appears to be the philosopher rulers' ignorance of the divine human number, 12, 960, 000 (something which we can perhaps forgive them).[14] Divine births can only occur during a certain period, and this period can only be ascertained through the knowledge of this perfect number (*arithmos teleios*, 546b5).

Quite why the rulers are not invested with this most crucial piece of knowledge is unclear. It seems to suggest that the philosopher rulers are far from perfect, both in respect to the fact that they lack knowledge of the divine human number and also because they themselves (unless chance had it) *are not its products*. In such a case we fall back on divine providence, which is Plato's preferred explanation for the existence of virtuous individuals (*Meno* 100b1-2). Plato's ideal polis is therefore far from ideal, even as an approximation.

Πῶς οὖν δή, εἶπον, ὦ Γλαύκων, ἡ πόλις ἡμῖν κινηθήσεται, καὶ πῇ στασιάσουσιν οἱ ἐπίκουροι καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους τε καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτούς; ἢ βούλει, ὥσπερ Ὅμηρος, εὐχώμεθα ταῖς Μούσαις εἰπεῖν ἡμῖν ὅπως δὴ πρῶτον στάσις ἔμπεσε (*Republic* 545d5-545e1)[v]

Sokrates warns us not to take his account of the degeneration of the ideal polis too *seriously* (545e1-3). The transformation from philosophical aristocracy to timarchy is *inspired* by the muses[15] (and perhaps by Homer?),[16] and therefore it is not intended to be either historical or wholly logical (in fact the transition has elements of fantasy and elements of fact, and this, we might say, entirely in keeping with the *tragic* demise of the ideal polis).[17] It is not only tragic (545e1) but it is also playful (545d7-e3), and perhaps even comic[18] (450e2; 549c2-e2), the creation of the ideal polis, one might venture, could only be penned by the philosopher (*Symposium* 223d2-6).

Let us look at the first transition in detail. The cause of any change in a regime, claims Sokrates, comes about when faction (*stasis*) arises among the ruling classes:

πειρώμεθα λέγειν τίνα τρόπον τιμοκρατία γένοιτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀριστοκρατίας. ἢ τόδε μὲν ἁπλοῦν, ὅτι πᾶσα πολιτεία μεταβάλλει ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος

τὰς ἀρχάς, ὅταν ἐν αὐτῷ τούτῳ στάσις ἐγγένηται· ὁμονοοῦντος δέ, κἂν πάνυ ὀλίγον ᾖ, ἀδύνατον κινηθῆναι; (*Republic* 545c9-d3)[vi]

The consequence of the philosopher rulers' failure to safeguard the breeding programme is the mixing of metals; this is the cause of faction in the ideal polis:

ὁμοῦ δὲ μιγέντος σιδηροῦ ἀργυρῷ καὶ χαλκοῦ χρυσῷ ἀνομοιότης ἐγγενήσεται καὶ ἀνωμαλία ἀνάρμοστος, ἃ γενόμενα, οὗ ἂν ἐγγένηται, ἀεὶ τίκτει πόλεμον καὶ ἔχθραν. ταύτης τοι γενεῆς χρὴ φάναι εἶναι στάσιν, ὅπου ἂν γίγνηται ἀεί (*Republic* 547a1-5)[vii]

Sokrates quotes Homer again ('ταύτης τοι γενεῆς,' see above), the full line running thus: 'ταύτης τοι γενεῆς τε καὶ αἵματος εὔχομαι εἶναι' (*Iliad* VI.211).[viii] The context of this quote in book 6 of the *Iliad* is the confrontation between Glaukos and Diomedes (*Iliad* VI.119-236).[19] After meeting each other on the battlefield, they compare genealogies, whereupon they discover a kinship between their two families, so, at Diomedes' insistence, they exchange armour: 'ὄφρα

[vi] 'Let's try to tell the way in which a timocracy would arise from an aristocracy. Or is it simply the case that change in any regime comes from that part of it which holds the ruling offices – when faction arises in it – while when it is of one mind, it cannot be moved, be it composed of ever so few?' (trans. Bloom p.223).

[vii] 'And the chaotic mixing of iron with silver and of bronze with gold engenders unlikeness and inharmonious irregularity, which, once they arise, always breed war and hatred in the place where they happen to arise. Faction must always be said to be 'of this ancestry' wherever it happens to be' (trans. Bloom p.224).

[viii] 'Such is my generation and the blood I claim to be born from' (trans. Lattimore p.158).

καὶ οἵδε γνῶσιν ὅτι ξεῖνοι πατρώϊοι εὐχόμεθ᾽ εἶναι᾽ (*Iliad* VI.230-231).[ix]

However:

ἔνθ᾽ αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς,
ὃς πρὸς Τυδεΐδην Διομήδεα τεύχε᾽ ἄμειβε
χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἑκατόμβοι᾽ ἐννεαβοίων
(*Iliad* VI.234-236)[x]

With the mixing of the metals complete, and with gold substituted for bronze, the ideal polis is no longer just. Stasis has arisen between the rulers and the auxiliaries. What happens next?

Στάσεως…γενομένης εἱλκέτην ἄρα ἑκατέρω τὼ γένει, τὸ μὲν σιδηροῦν καὶ χαλκοῦν ἐπὶ χρηματισμὸν καὶ γῆς κτῆσιν καὶ οἰκίας χρυσίου τε καὶ ἀργύρου, τὼ δ᾽ αὖ, τὸ χρυσοῦν τε καὶ ἀργυροῦν, ἅτε οὐ πενομένω ἀλλὰ φύσει ὄντε πλουσίω, τὰς ψυχὰς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν ἀρχαίαν κατάστασιν ἡγέτην· βιαζομένων δὲ καὶ ἀντιτεινόντων ἀλλήλοις, εἰς μέσον ὡμολόγησαν γῆν μὲν καὶ οἰκίας κατα νειμαμένους ἰδιώσασθαι, τοὺς δὲ πρὶν φυλαττομένους ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν ὡς ἐλευθέρους φίλους τε καὶ τροφέας, δουλωσάμενοι τότε περιοίκους τε καὶ οἰκέτας ἔχοντες, αὐτοὶ πολέμου τε καὶ φυλακῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι (*Republic* 547b2-547c3)[xi]

[ix] 'So that these others may know how we claim to be guests and friends from the days of our fathers' (trans. Lattimore p.159).

[x] 'But Zeus the son of Kronos stole away the wits of Glaukos | who exchanged with Diomedes the son of Tydeus armour | of gold for bronze, for nine Oxen's worth the worth of a hundred' (trans. Lattimore *ibid*).

[xi] 'Once faction had arisen…each of these two races, the iron and bronze, pulled the regime towards money-making and the possession of land, houses, gold, and silver; while the other two, the gold and the silver – not being poor but rich by nature – led the souls toward virtue and the ancient establishment. Struggling and straining against one another, they came to an agreement on a middle way: they distributed land and houses to be held privately, while those who previously were guarded by them as free friends and supporters they then enslaved and held as serfs and domestics; and they

The stasis appears to be between the rulers and the ruled, and not, as Sokrates stated earlier, between the rulers exclusively. But this is not quite right. The ruling classes have already fallen out, what we have now is the *consequence* of this, that is, a dispute about how the polis should be run, not between the rulers but between the rulers and the ruled. How does this happen? Once the rulers are no longer of one mind (although at this stage it is not clear in what sense) the producers, left to their own devices, try and impose their way of life on to the rulers and the city at large, and the rulers, despite having fallen out, attempt to maintain order and the old regime. It is not clear how the producers are now in a position to do this: we can only assume that the rulers are in open conflict (although Sokrates does not say this), and this allows the producers an opportunity for making mischief. This tension is resolved by a rather dubious synthesis. Private property, which was previously reserved for the producers, is now surrendered to the rulers, and the producers are in turn enslaved.[20] Because the ruling class is in dissension, they are no longer able to 'guard' the lower class as they did before, they have little alternative other than to use force, where before deceit and persuasion had been sufficient. We now have something similar to Sparta, because the city is now divided into two, the Spartiate rulers and the Helot producers.[21]

occupied themselves with war and with guarding against these men' (trans. Bloom pp.224-225).

But what becomes of the uncorrupted philosophers in the now corrupt, former ideal polis?[22] Does the philosopher become, as Sokrates stated earlier in book 5, useless? The philosopher becomes useless only insofar as his activities are no longer seen as valuable for the running of the (corrupt) state. His activities remain ostensibly the same however, although his influence is all but eradicated. However, the philosopher has no obligation to the bad regime, so now, perhaps, he will devote himself to pure philosophy, unencumbered by political office – this at least is the picture we are given in the *Theaetetus*.

Is this Plato's ideal – the apolitical philosopher – or is it rather the case that, typically, the philosopher finds himself in the position where he is unable to contribute 'politically'? The consummate philosopher of the *Theaetetus* has never known his way to the agora (*Theaetetus* 173d1); he does not associate *meaningfully* with his fellow citizens. He is an otherworldly figure, entirely uninterested in high society and party politics:

μᾶλλον αὐτὸν λέληθεν ἢ οἱ τῆς θαλάττης λεγόμενοι χόες. καὶ ταῦτα πάντ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὅτι οὐκ οἶδεν, οἶδεν: οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτῶν ἀπέχεται τοῦ εὐδοκιμεῖν χάριν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι τὸ σῶμα μόνον ἐν τῇ πόλει κεῖται αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπιδημεῖ, ἡ δὲ διάνοια, ταῦτα πάντα ἡγησαμένη σμικρὰ καὶ οὐδέν (*Theaetetus* 173e1-5)[xii]

[xii] 'Our philosopher is less aware of these matters than he is of how many drops there are in the proverbial ocean. In fact, he doesn't even know that he doesn't know these things. I mean, he is detached from them not because he is after reputation, but the truth is that only his body has taken up residence in the city and can be found there, while his mind disdains all these matters, seeing them as petty and worthless' (trans. Waterfield p.69).

The philosopher is barely aware of the existence of his own neighbours. The philosopher spends his time studying the heavens and geometry, and, importantly, ethical questions about: τί δέ ποτ᾿ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος καὶ τί τῇ τοιαύτῃ φύσει προσήκει διάφορον τῶν ἄλλων ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν᾿ (174b8-9).[xiii] Nevertheless, the philosopher can hardly be called a citizen, so little does he participate in the affairs of the city.

The philosopher stands above evil, above the city; like the philosopher in the *Republic*, he shields himself. He remains in the heavens and models his soul on what he sees there; this is the philosopher's only salvation (*Republic* 592b2-5).[23]

But perhaps – and returning more explicitly to the deposed philosopher ruler – now that his official duties are over, he will be more 'happy'? and, in consequence, we must understand him as being less 'happy' when he is ruling? If the answer to these questions is 'yes,' then perhaps the philosopher will be all too glad to see the back of the ideal polis.

When Glaukon raises the objection that, by compelling the philosopher, after having made his ascent out of the cave, to return

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[xiii] 'What it is to be a human being? What behaviour or experiences are proper to just this type of being and differentiate it from all others.'

back to rule, this will make him less happy, Sokrates replies in much the same manner as he did before, by stating that his concern is not with the happiness of a single element of the polis but all of it; and to ensure that the whole polis is *eudaimon*, the philosopher must rule (519d7-520a5). This seems clear enough: the philosopher would be happier if he did not return to the cave, but the polis, of course, would suffer in his absence.

I would argue, however, that the philosopher's ruling in the ideal polis helps to secure his happiness. Taking the ideal polis literally, this seems implausible (although I argue that even in this sense the philosopher ruler's happiness is partly dependent on ruling), but taking it as a metaphor for the functioning of the soul, it could make more sense. Ruling the ideal polis is akin to reason ruling over the body and the lower elements of the soul, the *thumoeides* and the *epithuētikon*. In a sense, reason would rather remain in the realm of the forms (especially since for Plato there is a natural affinity between the forms and the *logistikon*),[24] and ignore the body and those elements of the soul that are not required for knowledge of the Good. However, the body and the lower elements of the soul cannot be ignored (the philosopher is still, after all, human), they must be ruled at all times, as to leave them to their own devices would result in psychic disharmony, just as to leave the auxiliaries and the working classes to their own devices in the ideal polis would lead to stasis.

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The philosopher must be able to rule himself if he is going to be able to pursue philosophy.

But surely the deposed philosopher ruler, and returning to a literal reading of the ideal polis, is in a better position to devote his time to ruling himself and therefore of maintaining his knowledge of truth now that he is freed from political office? Not necessarily. Now that the philosopher is in a society that does not look as kindly on his philosophical activities, and one, moreover, which is corrupt, the philosopher may not have things so easy, and certainly not if he wished to do more than merely contemplate upon truths that he already knows, that is to say, he would not be as ideally placed to help others attain that knowledge (or even make them value it). In such a case, perhaps, he has two choices: to be become the consummate philosopher of the *Theaetetus* – and to reject the role as educator – or to become Sokrates, educate and be killed for it.[25] The choice is between radical politics or quiet acceptance and withdrawal.

However, the portrait of the philosopher we are given in the *Theaetetus* is something of a caricature (and in terms of his inquiries, overly academic), and seems to represent the philosopher of popular belief rather than Plato's ideal lover of wisdom, for – and recalling the *Apology* – even in the bad regime the philosopher cannot be apolitical, not by his *own* standards.[26] But by the standards of the dominant

politics he remains beyond the pale, nevertheless the philosopher sticks to his claim, that it is he who is the true statesman (*Gorgias* 521d6-8). But although in essence the philosopher in Athens, in terms of his personal commitment to philosophy, is identical to the philosopher of the ideal polis, his educative task becomes immeasurably harder, and, for that matter, more urgent.[27] As a solution to society's ills, the ideal polis is not Plato's definitive answer. Indeed, with his description of the failure of the city in speech Plato prompts us to seek an alternative way of becoming virtuous.

<center>**§2**</center>

<center>*Teaching Virtue in a Constantly Changing Moral Culture*</center>

Virtue is always in progress and yet always starts from the beginning[28]

The problem of teaching virtue in a constantly changing moral culture rests almost exclusively with the *counter-influence* of non-Sokratic education. The Sokratic and non-Sokratic educator value some of the same qualities in the young people that they hope to teach. But the non-Sokratic educator has an advantage over his Sokratic rival. All the Sokratic educator can offer his student is the

chance to become virtuous while his non-Sokratic opponent can guarantee 'virtue.' Sokratic education is both difficult and distressing. There are no easy answers in Sokratic education, no corners cut, and no end to the questions it asks: it is potentially limitless in scope and duration. Given this, which young person, ambitious for success, would choose Sokrates over Protagoras?

It takes a very special individual to submit him or herself to an education that is so all-embracing, and one, moreover, that is largely condemned as useless or corrupting. Sokratic education requires a very special type of pupil. In the *Theaetetus* and the *Symposium*, perhaps more than in any other dialogues, we are given a sense of the relationship between the philosopher and his pupil, one which we might also imagine Plato as having thought would exist between the philosopher ruler and the trainee guardian (something which is strangely absent in the *Republic*). In the *Theaetetus*, we are presented with the ideal pupil, the young geometer and mathematician. Indeed, Theaetetus is the very model of the young guardian and philosopher ruler elect; and he shares the main characteristics of the philosopher that we find in the *Republic* (cf. *Republic* 503c2-7), he is both *gentle* and *courageous*:

τὸ γὰρ εὐμαθῆ ὄντα ὡς ἄλλῳ χαλεπὸν πρᾷον αὖ εἶναι διαφερόντως, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀνδρεῖον παρ᾽ ὁντινοῦν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὔτ᾽ ἂν ᾠόμην γενέσθαι οὔτε ὁρῶ γιγνόμενον: ἀλλ᾽ οἵ τε ὀξεῖς ὥσπερ οὗτος καὶ ἀγχίνοι καὶ

μνήμονες ὡς τὰ πολλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὰς ὀργὰς ὀξύρροποί εἰσι, καὶ ᾄττοντες φέρονται ὥσπερ τὰ ἀνερμάτιστα πλοῖα, καὶ μανικώτεροι ἢ ἀνδρειότεροι φύονται, οἵ τε αὖ ἐμβριθέστεροι νωθροί πως ἀπαντῶσι πρὸς τὰς μαθήσεις καὶ λήθης γέμοντες. ὁ δὲ οὕτω λείως τε καὶ ἀπταίστως καὶ ἀνυσίμως ἔρχεται ἐπὶ τὰς μαθήσεις τε καὶ ζητήσεις μετὰ πολλῆς πρᾳότητος, οἷον ἐλαίου ῥεῦμα ἀψοφητὶ ῥέοντος, ὥστε θαυμάσαι τὸ τηλικοῦτον ὄντα οὕτως ταῦτα διαπράττεσθαι. (*Theaetetus* 144a3-b8)[xiv]

He also resembles Sokrates, not merely physically, but also in virtue of his intellectual talents (*Theaetetus* 143e4-144a3, 155d1-8). But he is, at this time, unskilled in dialectic.

The subject under discussion is the nature of knowledge, the most vital of studies for the trainee philosopher and philosopher ruler. The discussion in the *Theaetetus* represents, at one level, the long way that Sokrates was forced to abandon in the *Republic* (435c8-d5, 504b1-5), and perhaps we can see the inquiry into knowledge in the *Theaetetus* as a companion to Sokrates' discussion of the philosophical education that he outlines for the philosopher rulers.[29] Since Theaetetus has the potential to become a philosopher ruler, at least according to the criteria of the *Republic*, Sokrates has to convince him that knowledge

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[xiv] 'For someone to be remarkably intelligent and yet exceptionally unassuming, and moreover to have courage that would bear comparison with anyone's – well, I would not have credited it. It's not a phenomenon that I've seen before: such quickness, acuity and retentiveness usually go hand in hand with emotional instability – the image of unballasted ships being tossed about come to mind – and lack of control, rather than courage. On the other hand, the steadier ones tend to approach intellectual matters somewhat sluggishly, and their ballast is forgetfulness. But this lad tackles his lessons and research so calmly and precisely and efficiently, and in such an unassuming manner – like a soundless stream of liquid oil – that it's amazing to find one so young setting about like that' (trans. Waterfield pp.17-18).

is not perception, although it may be akin to perception. (And, perhaps, he has to show him that there are no simple answers and to avoid the trap that the philosopher rulers fell into).

This is a task that is beyond Theaetetus' current teacher, Theodoros, who is also unskilled in dialectic and is now too old to learn (*Theaetetus* 146b1-7). Despite his knowledge of science, Theodoros is not an adequate teacher, and he can only take Theaetetus so far (145a7-8). A teacher unskilled in dialectic would have no place in the educational institutions of the ideal polis, but he is at the forefront of what passes for education in Athens.

The *Theaetetus*, like the early 'Sokratic' dialogues, ends in *aporia*, but Sokrates reminds us that this need not be thought of as a failure: 'ἐὰν γὰρ οὕτω δρῶμεν, δυοῖν θάτερα, ἢ εὑρήσομεν ἐφ᾽ ὃ ἐρχόμεθα, ἢ ἧττον οἰησόμεθα εἰδέναι ὃ μηδαμῇ ἴσμεν· καίτοι οὐκ ἂν εἴη μεμπτὸς μισθὸς ὁ τοιοῦτος' (187b9-c2).[xv] But what happens if the Sokratic pupil is unwilling to continue, perhaps dissatisfied with his apparent lack of progress? It must be disconcerting to be in a position where one has to admit that one lacks knowledge of such essential matters as virtue. For Theaetetus, a young man who already seems

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[xv] 'If we carry on like this, then one of two things will happen: either we will find what we're after, or we will be less inclined to think we know what we do not know in the slightest – and even this is a handsome reward' (trans. Waterfield p.91).

committed to the pursuit of knowledge, this early 'set back' might prove to be a spur for additional inquires. But for someone more ambitious, someone for whom self-doubt on such matters cannot be easily countenanced, the prospect of further birth pangs might lead him into the arms of a less discerning midwife.

In the world of Platonic drama, Sokrates' most famous (or infamous) pupil is Alkibiades, the charismatic Athenian nobleman. He, like Theaetetus, when first acquainted with Sokrates, is a talented young man, intelligent, eager to learn, and, in addition, beautiful (cf. *Theaetetus* 210c9-d1). Unlike Theaetetus, however, Alkibiades is an unstable character; intelligent but emotionally volatile.

We learn little about the exact details of Sokrates' tutelage of Alkibiades in the *Symposium*. What we are presented with, in the voice of the pupil, is a humorous and often pathetic description of the personal dynamics between the philosopher and his student, which also gives us a further insight into the relationship between the philosopher ruler and the aspiring guardian.

The contrast that Plato is drawing in the *Symposium* with Alcibiades' encomium of Sokrates is between the lover of wisdom and the lover of honour: of a man governed by his reason and a man driven by his *thumos*.[30]

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As a lover of the Muses, Sokrates is a musician; indeed this is how Alkibiades describes him in the *Symposium*. Sokrates is like an aulos player but with words (*Symposium* 215c1-e4, cf. *Statesman* 268a8-b7; *Laches* 188d4); and he, like the dialectician of the *Phaedrus*, is able to charm the souls of his audience. Sokrates' words force Alkibiades to reconsider his life; with his words he tries to direct him away from politics and towards the philosophic life, a life like Sokrates' (*Symposium* 216a1-b1). If Sokrates is a musician (the philosopher ruler) then Alkibiades is more sympathetic to gymnastics (like the auxiliary or corrupt guardian); this is his preferred method, and it is one that he uses to try to seduce Sokrates. Alkibiades relies on his physical appearance as Sokrates relies on the beauty and force of his words (217c1-5).

Inside Sokrates the Silenus is something divine, something golden (217a1); and it is something that Sokrates is unwilling to relinquish (as the rulers of the Kallipolis were forced to do). They served together in battle, and they shared the same mess. Sokrates *seems* to embody the best of what it means to be a Greek, but his excelling is somehow peculiar, *he is adept at both philosophy and war*. He spends his time seeking wisdom *and* valour, but will accept no honour from the latter. In terms of honour, Alkibiades takes the rewards (219e7-221a1, Sokrates, like the dead philosopher ruler, receives his honours after his death).

Sokrates is something more than human; he cannot be compared to anyone. He is a fantasy figure, like the philosopher ruler, unique, untimely (221d1-5). Alkibiades, however, is a man most suited to his times.[31]

The possibility of the philosopher ruler is framed within a broader consideration of the difficulty that philosophical education has in the face of its educational rivals. Alkibiades' education is a case in point of course. As we learn in the *Alcibiades I*, the young nobleman received a typical Athenian education, and was, therefore, already damaged goods well before Sokrates' intervention (106e3-9). In the imperfect society, the philosopher is either thought of as useless or corrupt (considering Sokrates' trial, we might say 'thought to be corrupt'). The uselessness of the philosopher is no fault of his own (*Republic* 489c2-3, cf. *Statesman* 259a5-7). In the imperfect constitution what official role can the philosopher possibly have?

The counter-influence of non-Sokratic education is so strong that it can even corrupt a young man of such promise. What the imperfect society sees in the young philosopher is not his potential to become a philosopher, but his nascent virtues and his other qualities, such as wealth, social position, and beauty (*Republic* 491b8-c4). Indeed, the better the nature of a person's soul the more thoroughly can bad education corrupt it (*Republic* 491e1-6).

Interestingly, it is not the sophist who is primarily to blame: his influence is limited, and, moreover, his teachings are really only reflective of the general educational culture that he himself is part of. It is the people on mass who corrupt the young philosopher (contra Meletus' assertion in the *Apology* 24d2-25a9), because it is they, through the assembly and the law courts, and any other public gathering, who offer their praise and blame. A person's private education (even a philosophical one) can do little against such opposition:

ἢ ποίαν [ἂν] αὐτῷ παιδείαν ἰδιωτικὴν ἀνθέξειν, ἣν οὐ κατακλυσθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου ψόγου ἢ ἐπαίνου οἰχήσεσθαι φερομένην κατὰ ῥοῦν ᾗ ἂν οὗτος φέρῃ, καὶ φήσειν τε τὰ αὐτὰ τούτοις καλὰ καὶ αἰσχρὰ εἶναι, καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσειν ἅπερ ἂν οὗτοι, καὶ ἔσεσθαι τοιοῦτον; (*Republic* 492c4-8)[xvi]

No sophist or private teacher can compete with a society that, in its education 'systems,' works consistently to corrupt the best among them. The difficulty of Sokratic education has never been so clearly stated:

οὔτε γὰρ γίγνεται οὔτε γέγονεν οὐδὲ οὖν μὴ γένηται ἀλλοῖον ἦθος πρὸς ἀρετὴν παρὰ τὴν τούτων παιδείαν πεπαιδευμένον, ἀνθρώπειον, ὦ ἑταῖρε—θεῖον μέντοι κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν ἐξαιρῶμεν λόγου: εὖ γὰρ χρὴ

[xvi] 'How will whatever sort of private education he received hold up for him, and not get swept away by such praise and blame, and be carried off by the flood wherever it goes, so that he will call the same things beautiful or ugly as these people, practice what they practice, and become like them'? (trans. C. D. C. Reeve p.186).

εἰδέναι, ὅτιπερ ἂν καὶ γένηται οἷον δεῖ ἐν τοιαύτῃ καταστάσει πολιτειῶν, θεοῦ μοῖραν αὐτὸ σῶσαι λέγων οὐ κακῶς ἐρεῖς (*Republic* 492e2-493a2)[xvii]

What is required, therefore, is a more robust approach against these corrupting educational structures; what is needed is an alternative learning environment, an alternative culture. And it is one which Plato will provide with his dialogues.

§3

Dialectic and Dialogue

Εἰκόνες ὄντως τῶν ψυχῶν εἰσὶν οἱ λόγοι[xviii]

The Simile of the Cave is central to our understanding of not only Plato's notion of the philosopher (and the teacher) but also of what he saw as the main problem with contemporary Athenian culture.[32] Sokrates makes an image of our nature (*phusis*) in 'παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας' (*Republic* 514a1-2).[xix] For Plato, as we shall see, the

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[xvii] 'You see, there is not now, never has been, nor ever will be, a character whose view of virtue goes contrary to the education these provide. I mean a human character, comrade – the divine, as the saying goes, is an exception to the rule. You may be sure that if anything is saved and turns out well in the political systems that exist now, you won't be mistaken in saying that divine providence saved it' (trans. C. D. C. Reeve *ibid*).

[xviii] In truth words are the images of the soul' (Saint Basil, *Letter IX*, trans. Roy. J. Deferrari, slightly adapted, p.93).

[xix] 'Its education and want of education' (trans. Bloom p.193).

very quality of our existence is dependent upon the type of education that we have received. Such is the power that education has to shape our view of the world!

Because of their lack of education, the prisoners in the cave are unable to grasp that their culture and all that they hold to be of value is mere illusion. But what kind of education are they lacking?[33] The education they lack, of course, is an education in philosophy; and it is only through philosophy that a person can be released from the bondage of the shadowy world of contemporary Athens, or any polis for that matter.[34] But what does such an education amount to? Briefly, for I shall return to this question throughout the chapter, to be educated in philosophy is to be educated in the means to be able to *pursue* wisdom. A person with this education *wants* to be wise, recognises that this will make them happy (or more happy), and, knowing its importance, may never be truly satisfied with any answer.

Consequently, education, says Sokrates, is not what people think it is (*Republic* 518b6-c1). It is not, as Thrasymakhos would have it, a force feeding of the soul (345b3-5, cf. 344d1-4), rather it is the *turning* of the whole soul away from becoming towards being (518c7). Education is the *art* of *turning* around the soul (518d3-4); and the concern of the

educator is with how to turn a person's soul towards the truth (533d3).

Sokrates' account of the release of the prisoner and this ascent out of the cave is, of course, partly illustrative of the effects of Sokratic education and the process of turning in particular. The first stage in this journey, and one that will be instantly recognisable to anyone familiar with the early dialogues, is the moment where the interlocutor (the prisoner) engages with Sokrates (and has his bonds temporarily loosened), and through Sokratic questioning, becomes puzzled by his own inability to get to grips with the essence of a particular notion or topic.

This stage is frequently followed by pain, a certain mental irritation that comes with an inability to articulate what one still believes to be the case.[35] In such a situation a person has two options, either turn back to the images on the cave wall, that is, to convention and received opinion, or tough it out and submit himself to further examination (usually out of a sense of shame or competition rather than a genuine desire to know). Finally, all things being well, the prisoner is forcibly dragged, much to his consternation, out of the cave into the harsh, blinding light. With the world he once knew behind him, the prisoner is now free to gaze upon reality, not all at

once, but bit by bit, from the shadows cast by objects then finally to Helios himself.

Sokrates may well have the power to loosen a person's bonds of ignorance and false conviction (at least momentarily), but does he have the power to lead them to the sun? Within the early dialogues at least, it is not clear if any of Sokrates' interlocutors ever found himself in this position. In the *Republic* too Sokrates can only take Glaukon and Adeimantos so far, as far as he himself is able to go (533a1-5). The success of the Sokratic method, however, is contingent upon how far his interlocutors are willing to be freed from their former convictions. As we learn in the *Symposium*, the power that dialectic has is not solely in the hands of the teacher. The pupil has to display willingness and surrender himself to the dialectical process.[36] However, the teacher's role in the dialectical process must receive full recognition:

πολλοὶ ἤδη τοῦτο ἀγνοήσαντες καὶ ἑαυτοὺς αἰτιασάμενοι, ἐμοῦ δὲ καταφρονήσαντες, ἢ αὐτοὶ ἢ ὑπ᾽ ἄλλων πεισθέντες ἀπῆλθον πρῳαίτερον τοῦ δέοντος, ἀπελθόντες δὲ τά τε λοιπὰ ἐξήμβλωσαν διὰ πονηρὰν συνουσίαν καὶ τὰ ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ μαιευθέντα κακῶς τρέφοντες ἀπώλεσαν, ψευδῆ καὶ εἴδωλα περὶ πλείονος ποιησάμενοι τοῦ ἀληθοῦς, τελευτῶντες δ᾽ αὑτοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔδοξαν ἀμαθεῖς εἶναι. ὧν εἷς γέγονεν Ἀριστείδης ὁ Λυσιμάχου καὶ ἄλλοι πάνυ πολλοί: οὕς, ὅταν πάλιν ἔλθωσι δεόμενοι τῆς ἐμῆς συνουσίας καὶ θαυμαστὰ δρῶντες, ἐνίοις μὲν τὸ γιγνόμενόν μοι δαιμόνιον ἀποκωλύει συνεῖναι, ἐνίοις δὲ ἐᾷ, καὶ πάλιν οὗτοι ἐπιδιδόασι (*Theaetetus* 150e1-151a6, cf. *Republic* 496a2-3)ˣˣ

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ˣˣ 'Often in the past people have not been aware of the part I play: they have discounted me, and thought that they themselves were responsible for the delivery. Either of their own accord, or under the influence of others, they

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Sokratic education is a subtle blend of persuasion and argumentation, requiring from the student some degree of knowledge, goodwill and frankness (*Gorgias* 487a3-4, cf. *Theaetetus* 171d7).[37] However, none of these components taken alone is sufficient for turning a person towards philosophy. The likes of Kallikles, for example, are perhaps too tightly bound, held fast by their convictions, and thus can never be turned away from the shadowy world that they call home. Indeed, Sokratic education is a difficult and disquieting process.[38]

In the early dialogues, the elenkhos is largely used in order to establish a person's ignorance (although as I argued in Chapter Two it also has a more positive function). In the ideal polis, however, the principal philosophic method is not the elenkhos but dialectic.

Exactly what is the relationship between the elenkhos (refutation) and dialectic (discourse)? This question can perhaps only be answered by reference to their context in the higher education of the philosopher rulers.

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left me sooner than they ought to. Then, because they kept bad company, they proceeded to have only miscarriages, and they spoiled all the offspring I had delivered with wrong upbringing. They placed more weight on counterfeits and illusions than on the truth. Eventually, they gained a reputation for stupidity, and thought themselves stupid too. Aristides the son of Lysimachus was one of these people, but they were plenty of others. If they come back, begging and doing goodness knows what for my company, sometimes the supernatural sign that I get does not allow me to let them be with me, but in some cases it does, and these are the ones who make progress again' (trans. Waterfield p.28).

Sokratic dialectic [Guthrie's term for Sokratic elenkhos] practised often on young boys innocent of higher mathematics, led from particulars to Forms, but in this higher dialectic a mind already trained in mathematics, using its *hypotheses* as such and not as first principles, deals with the Forms alone, and by studying them in the same way, that is, in order to grasp their interrelations as it earlier grasped the connexions between objects of the various branches of mathematics...finally reaches the self-authenticating source of their existence and intelligibility: the Form of the Good.[39]

Elenkhos could also be seen as constituting the early stage of a dialectical discourse, or rather, as being a stage that helps to bring about the possibility of a genuine discussion into the truth of a particular matter: before a philosophical conversation can begin those involved have to be willing to admit that they do not know the truth of that which they are searching.

In the higher education of the trainee philosopher rulers, dialectic is the final stage in a long course of intellectual studies. From the age of twenty, and lasting ten years, the trainee philosopher rulers study mathematics, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonics (*Republic* 522a4-531bc).

After this, at the age of thirty, students begin a five year course in dialectic. However, despite coming last, dialectic is in fact the loadstone of their education. All of these sciences are studied because of their ability to stimulate the understanding and opening up the possibility of acquiring knowledge of the good and the beautiful

(531c6); and mathematics in particular is something that is 'ἑλκτικῷ ὄντι παντάπασι πρὸς οὐσίαν' (523a2).[xxi]

The dialogues, however, even if they can represent dialectic, are not examples of this method in action, and the dialogues cannot be used as a substitute for philosophical discussion: dialectic is spoken not written.

According to the *Phaedrus*, the dialectician is the true master of words, and he, unlike the archetypical rhetorician, can use his knowledge of the human soul to full effect (*Phaedrus* 270c1-3). The dialectician's knowledge of human nature enables him to customise his words according to the character of his audience (*Phaedrus* 271c10-e4). Therefore, and contrary to prevailing opinion:

ὡς ἐὰν μή τις τῶν τε ἀκουσομένων τὰς φύσεις διαριθμήσηται, καὶ κατ᾽ εἴδη τε διαιρεῖσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ μιᾷ ἰδέᾳ δυνατὸς ᾖ καθ᾽ ἓν ἕκαστον περιλαμβάνειν, οὔ ποτ᾽ ἔσται τεχνικὸς λόγων πέρι καθ᾽ ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀνθρώπῳ (*Phaedrus* 273d10-e4)[xxii]

The emphasis is on the persuasive power of speech rather than the written word, which, as we shall see, is another matter entirely

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[xxi] 'in every way is apt to drew men towards being' (trans. Bloom p.201, slightly adapted).

[xxii] '…that unless a man take account of the characters of his hearers and is able to divide things by classes and to comprehend particulars under a general idea, he will never attain the highest human perfection in the art of speech' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.559).

(274b7-9). According to the *Phaedrus* writing is akin to painting: 'καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἕστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ᾽ ἀνέρῃ τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ. ταὐτὸν δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι· δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρῃ τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἕν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταὐτὸν ἀεί' (275d4-7).[xxiii] Sokrates contrasts this illegitimate, bastard form of writing with its legitimate brother: 'ὃς μετ᾽ ἐπιστήμης γράφεται ἐν τῇ τοῦ μανθάνοντος ψυχῇ, δυνατὸς μὲν ἀμῦναι ἑαυτῷ, ἐπιστήμων δὲ λέγειν τε καὶ σιγᾶν πρὸς οὓς δεῖ' (276a5-7).[xxiv] Unlike the living breathing word, the written word is most useful as an aid for reminding us of what we already know, or as a source of *amusement*, both for the author and for his readers. However, such works also appear to have some educational value, as they can be used to stimulate people who might *wish to follow the same path* (276d1-9).

Telling noble stories about justice is one thing, but serious, dialectic discourse about such matters is far nobler (276e5-277a5). And it is in this field of serious discourse that the dialectician excels. In terms of speech, the dialectician is able to tailor his words according to the

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[xxiii] 'For the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.563).

[xxiv] 'The word which is written with intelligence in the mind of the learner, which is able to defend itself and knows to whom it should speak, and before whom to be silent' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.567).

needs and abilities of his audience; he is able to make simple speeches for simple souls for the purpose of *persuasion* and complex speeches for complex souls for the purpose of *teaching* (277b6-c8).

Can we imagine such speeches being committed to writing, and perhaps, as being something we might encounter in the dialogues? The question is a difficult one, for even though we are told that the dialectician can *speak* and *write* about serious topics, providing he knows the truth about that which he speaks and writes (277b7-10), writing is still for the most part *paidia* (277d1).

In the *Statesman* the method of division and classification is used in order to define the true nature of the statesman and the art of kingship. However, the Stranger also uses a story (*mythos*) to help him illustrate a point and also for the sake of amusement (*paidia*, 268d9).[40] Is this how Plato understands his myths to operate in the dialogues, as partly to illustrate a point and partly to amuse?

It might be helpful here to consider more generally how the ancient Greeks understood myth. As early as Thukydides, myth could be contrasted with history (*historikos*), that is, with something which is 'exact', 'precise,' or 'scientific.' From the same root as *historikos* there is also *historeo*, which, according to Liddell and Scott, means an inquiry 'into or about a thing', or indeed, 'a person.' History is

concerned with events and people in a sense that is exact, precise, or scientific. History, therefore, is not myth. However, we are getting ahead of ourselves, for the nature of myth has yet to be defined.[41]

A myth is a narrative that includes events and people that are supposed to have occurred – or is always related to have occurred – at some time in the distance past. The question: 'is this myth true?' is a redundant one, since a myth is by its very nature immune to such a question. Myths belong to a period before history: myths are pre-historic. Myths are not therefore ahistorical, indeed some myths may, however imperfectly, included elements of historical truth, and many of the things that a myth relates can be understood as having happened in a period of time (if not, strictly speaking, in a period of history). But asking whether a particular aspect of a myth may be 'true' in the sense that it is more or less accurate in respect to something which may have happened (that a palace complex in what is now modern day Turkey was destroyed in a fire possibly as a result of being sacked by foreign forces), is not the same as to ask whether a myth as such is true. Even today, with our clearly defined boundary between history and fiction, a story can be 'not true' (Nabokov's *Bend Sinister* for example), and depict a world which is not ours, but still be a recognisable world with recognisable characters striving for recognisable goals in recognisably human ways. So, even in respect to a piece of fiction, it is difficult to say, at

least in any meaningful sense, 'it is not true,' and with a myth even more so.

Plato's myths are not merely 'stories', as with traditional myths, they are true accounts. This, at least, is what we learn from the *Gorgias* (523a1-3). A myth, then, need not be opposed, in respect to the truth that it may contain, to a *logos*. Plato's myths are, perhaps, allegorical.

In the case of the closing myth of the *Gorgias* this does not appear to be the case, it seems rather that Sokrates is merely telling a true story. There is no hidden truth in this myth, just what is quite plainly stated: that all souls will be judged after death; and the same, perhaps, could be said of the 'eschatological' myths of the *Phaedo* and *Republic*.[42]

Ludwig Edelstein sees two basic types of myth in the dialogues, historical and scientific myth and ethical myths; and he distinguishes their function along these lines: 'the ethical myth [...] is an addition to rational knowledge; it does not take the place of rational knowledge, as do the historical and scientific myths.'[43]

I am not sure how helpful this distinction is for our understanding of *why* Plato employs myth in the dialogues. In the case of the *mythos* of the *Timaeus*, which, as Edelstein has it, is a historical myth, it is

obviously vastly different from the eschatological or ethical myths of the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*, so much so in fact, that to identify them by the same name, 'myth,' seems perverse.

We should probably only call one of Plato's 'myths' a myth if it in some way conforms to the structure and content of a pre-existing and traditional tale (such as the Orphicistic myth of Er or the Golden Age myth of the *Statesman*). This is one of the reasons why we should not see the *Timaeus* story of the secret history of Athens as a myth. Indeed, the *Timaeus* story (which I shall from here on in call it) is always called a logos and never a myth (*Timaeus* 21a8; 21c7; 21a4, 8), albeit a strange one (20d6-7). It is a logos that Critias, as the one recalling it, is asked to provide evidence that it is true (21d8-9). A myth, in contrast, is something like the tale of Deukalion and Pyrrhas, that is, a traditional tale (22a8-10). Importantly, however, a myth, such as the Greek myth of the great inundation, can, suitably rationalised, be said to convey a truth (22c8-d3). Myths such as the tale of Deukalion and Pyrrhas only exist because of the absence of written records, that is, of recorded history (23a3-b4; 23c2-4). Indeed, compared to a logos a myth is little more than a children's story (23b5-6). A myth, then, is a traditional tale which, although in a non-allegorical sense, could be said to contain truth; a logos – other than in the sense of a rational discourse – is a non-traditional though

historical account that may be thought to be true or false given the available evidence.

There is still the suggestion, however, that the *Timaeus* story, if not a myth, still shares some of the characteristics of a myth. It was a story told to Critias when he was a young boy (26b2-4); it was told verbally (Critias' grandfather did not have recourse to the Egyptian archives). And, lastly and most importantly, the *Timaeus* story, and recalling the *Statesman*, gave the young Critias much pleasure and amusement (*paidia*, 26b7).

Nevertheless, the *Timaeus* story, within the dramatic frame of the dialogue, is described as a logos, that is, a realistic account, and one that in some way could be useful for historicising or lending credence to a myth, the myth of the ideal polis: transporting Sokrates' ideal community into the realm of fact (26c6-d4). Sokrates is quick to agree with this procedure, particularly in light of the fact that Critias' logos is a true account and not a myth (26e2-6).

But the Critias logos can have hardly have been thought of as a myth by Plato's readers simply because it is not a traditional tale. What, then, is Plato up to here?

By having a logos that appears as a myth outside the context of the dialogue, Plato has created the first example of freely-invented prose fiction. But perhaps what most characterises Plato's 'myths', is that they are, unlike philosophical *logoi*, unfalsifiable.

In his now classic account of the nature of Platonic myth, Luc Brisson argues that as examples of 'unfalsifiable discourse' myth, as such and in Plato's use of it, must be strongly contrasted with logos, not in the sense of 'discourse', because a myth can be a logos in this sense, but in the sense of a falsifiable discourse.[44] This, of course, fits in with what we have already stated about myth, that it is not susceptible to validation.

Brisson sees Plato's uses of myth as part of his acceptance of the fact that not everyone is susceptible to rational arguments.

He [Plato] knows very well that philosophy is restricted to a small number of men in society and that, in man, philosophy has recourse only to reason. So, to be able to convince the majority within society and, within man, to be able to tame emotions as powerful as pleasure and fear, the philosopher has recourse to the marvellous instrument of persuasion: myth.[45]

Brisson's analysis is too lengthy to be discussed in any detail here, however I agree with this idea that Plato uses some myths as an alternative method of teaching.[46] For Janet E. Smith, who largely

agrees with Brisson, the educational function of myth differs according to whether the student is philosophical or unphilosophical:

The most fundamental difference between them [the use of myth in education] is that the unphilosophic are discouraged, not to say prohibited...from questioning the myths, whereas the philosophic are encouraged to question the myths, as all else. Indeed, it is the value placed on the questioning which chiefly distinguishes the education of the philosophic from that of the unphilosophic.[47]

Therefore, it is not the case that there are different types of myth, in Edelstein's sense, but that *educationally* Plato's myths can be exploited in two keys ways (of course, this is not the only possible function of Plato's myths, as Smith recognises[48]).

It is also important to note, however, that how Plato sees myth as functioning for the education of the guardians of the ideal polis, which, we might conjecture, could conform broadly to Smith's division between philosophical and unphilosohical uses of myth, is not necessarily the same as how he sees myth as functioning in the dialogues (either for those taking part in the discourse or for the reader). The *Timaeus* myth is a case in point – it has a mythical quality (unfalsifiable, ancient and playful) and yet it remains a logos.

Returning to the *Phaedrus* and to Plato's attitude towards the written word, most of what is contained in a written work, and not just myth,

is playful (277e5), *but not all*. Perhaps we are to understand complex 'stories' as being the only serious element in written works, and that by this Plato means passages of writing that are dialectical. Certainly, it would be difficult to conceive of them as merely playful, especially when compared to myths, such as those that feature in many of the dialogues. Nevertheless, Sokrates restates his claims against the written word and particularly the superiority of spoken dialectic (277e4-278b5).

In his critique of philosophical writing in the *Seventh Letter*, Plato's target is treatises on *first principles*. Unlike other branches of knowledge, Plato claims, first principles do not lend themselves easily (or at all) to written exposition (the authenticity of the *Seventh Letter* may be contentious, but exactly the same position is stated in the *Timaeus* at 48c3-9, cf. *Phaedrus* 272d4).

If such things could be written down, says Plato, then it is he himself who *would have* done so. However, and notwithstanding Plato's assumption that such things have never been committed to writing, if they were ever to be so then they must only be read by people who know the truth of the matters that the written work is dealing with, that is, the dialectician (therefore, such works would not be used for teaching as such). As for the common run of men, those not skilled in dialectic, it is best for them never to read such materials since they

take things at face value and have a largely uncritical approach to everything they read.

Therefore, even if such writings did exist, it is not clear what value they would have. Indeed, in the case of metaphysical treaties, works which (purportedly) contain truths, such a function would be redundant because the truth once known *cannot be forgotten*. But what about if one does not know the truth, would not works which contain truths be useful for imparting such truths? In the simple case of 'facts' this is indeed true. But truths about first principles can only be grasped through a process which demands a level of communication between teacher and pupil which *cannot be replicated by the written word*.

Although the type of writing discussed in the *Phaedrus* and the *Seventh Letter* is not of the same kind, in both cases it is contrasted with a superior method of philosophical communication, dialectic. The only conclusion I wish to draw from this is that, even if Plato is silent on the merits of the dialogue form (other than what is made manifest in reading the dialogues themselves), for the written word to be of any value (we shall come on to what that value is later) it must be written by someone who *knows* inside out the subject matter in question, and that the condition of all writing is that it does not, and indeed cannot, contain truths. And it is this that is partly

responsible for the educational value of the dialogues. However, it is not merely the absence of truth that makes a work educational: a work is educational (philosophical) if it is a piece of writing that can inculcate in the reader a desire to know truth.[49] Therefore Leo Strauss is partially[50] correct when he says:

The proper work of a writing is truly to talk, or to reveal the truth, to some while leading others to salutary opinions; the proper work of a writing is to arouse to thinking those who are by nature fit for it[51]

A philosophical work (a work written for those who would never be satisfied with it) demands that a person does not take what it says as being definitive, which, we might conjecture, is one of the reasons why Plato finds it advisable not to 'speak' in his own voice. However, a philosophical work has to do more than this, it has to reinforce the philosophical spirit, to exhort a person towards further study, but above all it must facilitate the turning of the reader's soul. A philosophical work, as a work of education, contains no truth but it must have a power *even greater* than an epic poem, even greater than the combined forces of non-Sokratic education.

The dialogues, of course, do not just warn us against the limitations of the written word but also the spoken, as this passage from the Protagoras demonstrates:

μαθήμασιν δήπου…καὶ ὅπως γε μή…ὁ σοφιστὴς ἐπαινῶν ἃ πωλεῖ ἐξαπατήσῃ ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ οἱ περὶ τὴν τοῦ σώματος τροφήν, ὁ ἔμπορός τε καὶ κάπηλος. καὶ γὰρ οὗτοί πού ὧν ἄγουσιν ἀγωγίμων οὔτε αὐτοὶ ἴσασιν ὅτι χρηστὸν ἢ πονηρὸν περὶ τὸ σῶμα, ἐπαινοῦσιν δὲ πάντα πωλοῦντες, οὔτε οἱ ὠνούμενοι παρ᾽ αὐτῶν, ἐὰν μή τις τύχῃ γυμναστικὸς ἢ ἰατρὸς ὤν. οὕτω δὲ καὶ οἱ τὰ μαθήματα περιάγοντες κατὰ τὰς πόλεις καὶ πωλοῦντες καὶ καπηλεύοντες τῷ ἀεὶ ἐπιθυμοῦντι ἐπαινοῦσιν μὲν πάντα ἃ πωλοῦσιν, τάχα δ᾽ ἄν τινες…καὶ τούτων ἀγνοοῖεν ὧν πωλοῦσιν ὅτι χρηστὸν ἢ πονηρὸν πρὸς τὴν ψυχήν· ὡς δ᾽ αὔτως καὶ οἱ ὠνούμενοι παρ᾽ αὐτῶν, ἐὰν μή τις τύχῃ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὖ ἰατρικὸς ὤν. εἰ μὲν οὖν σὺ τυγχάνεις ἐπιστήμων τούτων τί χρηστὸν καὶ πονηρόν, ἀσφαλές σοι ὠνεῖσθαι μαθήματα καὶ παρὰ Πρωταγόρου καὶ παρ᾽ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν· εἰ δὲ μή, ὅρα…μὴ περὶ τοῖς φιλτάτοις κυβεύῃς τε καὶ κινδυνεύῃς. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ πολὺ μείζων κίνδυνος ἐν τῇ τῶν μαθημάτων ὠνῇ ἢ ἐν τῇ τῶν σιτίων. σιτία μὲν γὰρ καὶ ποτὰ πριάμενον παρὰ τοῦ καπήλου καὶ ἐμπόρου ἔξεστιν ἐν ἄλλοις ἀγγείοις ἀποφέρειν, καὶ πρὶν δέξασθαι αὐτὰ εἰς τὸ σῶμα πιόντα ἢ φαγόντα, καταθέμενον οἴκαδε ἔξεστιν συμβουλεύσασθαι, παρακαλέσαντα τὸν ἐπαΐοντα, ὅτι τε ἐδεστέον ἢ ποτέον καὶ ὅτι μή, καὶ ὁπόσον καὶ ὁπότε· ὥστε ἐν τῇ ὠνῇ οὐ μέγας ὁ κίνδυνος. μαθήματα δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ ἀγγείῳ ἀπενεγκεῖν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀνάγκη καταθέντα τὴν τιμὴν τὸ μάθημα ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ψυχῇ λαβόντα καὶ μαθόντα ἀπιέναι ἢ βεβλαμμένον ἢ ὠφελημένον (*Protagoras* 313c8-314b4)[xxv]

[xxv] 'With doctrines…we must take care…that the sophist, in commending his wares, does not deceive us, as both merchant and dealer do in the case of our bodily food. For among the provisions, you know, in which these men deal, not only are they themselves ignorant what is good or bad for the body, since in selling they commend them all, but the people who buy from them are so too, unless one happens to be a trainer or a doctor. And in the same way, those who take their doctrines the round of our cities, hawking them about to any odd purchaser who desires them, commend everything that they sell, and there may well be some of these too…who are ignorant which of their wares is good or bad for the soul; and in just the same case are the people who buy from them, unless one happens to have a doctor's knowledge here also, but of the soul. So then, if you are well informed as to what is good or bad among these wares it will be safe for you to buy doctrines from Protagoras or from anyone else you please: but if not, take care…that you do not risk your greatest treasure on a toss of the dice. For I tell you there is far more serious risk in the purchase of doctrines than in that of eatables. When you buy victuals and liquors you can carry them off from the dealer or merchant in separate vessels, and before you take them into your body by drinking or eating you can lay them by in your house and take the advice of an expert whom you can call in, as to what is fit to eat or drink and what is not, and how much you should take and when; so that in this purchase the risk is not serious. But you cannot carry away doctrines in a separate vessel: you are compelled, when you have handed over the price, to take the doctrine in your very soul by learning it, and so to depart either an injured or a benefited man' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb, slightly adapted, pp.107-109).

Plato uses his dialogues not only to critique Homer and the other 'educationalists,' traditional and sophistic, but also to present his own vision of education. However, considering his audience, Plato cannot dismiss his rivals out of hand; they must be given a hearing. Like the poet who wishes to display his wares in the ideal polis, Plato's educational rivals are given the opportunity to state their case, sometimes in their 'own' voice and sometimes through a third party.[52] He does this not by reporting or summarising their claims, or indeed their actions, but by setting their views and deeds within an educational context where an analysis of these views is carried out dialectically either with or for the benefit of the young student. As Kent Moors puts it:

In dialogue, while worthy and unworthy arguments and actions are presented, the distinction between what is valuable and what is not can still be made. Dialogue distils and dissects points of view, dialogue compares and contrasts. It does not simply present.[53]

The dialogue form, however, does have its limitations, and this must be recognised by the student himself if he is going to benefit from them. As William Johnson stresses, even though the dialogues operate in a way that is intended to draw us towards philosophy, and towards the truth, they are not, 'strictly speaking, either the doing of philosophy or philosophy itself.'[54] As John Fisher says: 'Socratic dialogues are useful for education, but even Socratic dialogues cannot

take the place of philosophy.'[55] Indeed, this is an important message in the dialogues: that philosophy must remain primarily an oral discipline. Speaking about the *Republic,* John Evan Seery comments:

The difficulty of writing and reading such a book is that the *paideia* of the book cannot be transmitted directly from one person to another (as Homer's poetry could be). Hence the book wrestles with and embodies the logical paradox involved in any truly liberal education: How do you teach others the virtue of thinking for themselves?[56]

In addition to this, moreover, the dialogues have to take into consideration the reader even more directly, for, as Moors states: 'unlike a treatise – which can choose its mode of expression in terms of the subject matter being examined – a dialogue must say different things to different participants (and readers).'[57]

Moors suggests, and I would agree with him up to a point, that we must ask ourselves why certain characters appear in the dialogues as such, rather, say, with being too preoccupied with the historical background of Sokrates' interlocutors, and also to reflect upon what this might say about the kind of audience that Plato was seeking.[58]

The audience that Plato was seeking when he wrote the dialogues, as we touched upon at the end of the last chapter, is spirited but philosophically minded young people. And, no matter how widely

read the dialogues may be today, especially in certain university and college courses where such reading is mandatory, the audience remains the same.

Sokrates often *stands between* the supposed expert and the young pupil eager for wisdom. As Fisher says (and I shall come back to this idea in Chapter Six):

> The true lover is the philosopher, that daimonic man whose understanding of the important things precludes the possibility that a speech or a book could communicate his knowledge to another. Rather the truth comes as an illumination only realizable after long association, conversation, exposure to elenchus and ultimate dialectical activity in the companionship of one who knows.[59]

Sokrates' intervention is essential if the young pupil is to be shielded from the corrupting influence of the sophist and his pseudo-wisdom (*Republic* 539b1-6). The example of Sokrates is not one which is *forced* upon the reader. Whether all the readers of the dialogues, past, present or future, would take Sokrates as a role model is not certain. In any case, we should not even see this as Plato's primary aim with his portrayal of Sokrates. What Plato is pushing, through argument, exhortation, and even myth, is philosophy not a Sokratic way of life. We cannot but help imitate that which we admire, and Plato's task is to get us to admire the one who seeks the truth and not mere refutation (539c6-d1).

However, as readers and potential pupils, we must make our own minds up about whether we admire the philosopher or the sophist,[60] we must, as Sokrates says to Krito:

ἀλλ᾽ ἐάσας χαίρειν τοὺς ἐπιτηδεύοντας φιλοσοφίαν, εἴτε χρηστοί εἰσιν εἴτε πονηροί, αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα βασανίσας καλῶς τε καὶ εὖ, ἐὰν μέν σοι φαίνηται φαῦλον ὄν, πάντ᾽ ἄνδρα ἀπότρεπε, μὴ μόνον τοὺς ὑεῖς: ἐὰν δὲ φαίνηται οἷον οἶμαι αὐτὸ ἐγὼ εἶναι, θαρρῶν δίωκε καὶ ἄσκει, τὸ λεγόμενον δὴ τοῦτο, αὐτός τε καὶ τὰ παιδία (*Euthydemus* 307b7-c6)[xxvi]

A full recognition of the necessity of philosophy for happiness is not one that the dialogues alone can furnish – only actually 'doing' philosophy can achieve that.

[xxvi] 'Let those who practise philosophy have their way, whether they are helpful or mischievous; and when you have tested the matter itself, well and truly, if you find it to be a poor affair, turn everyone you can away from it, not only your sons: but if you find it to be such as I think it is, pursue and ply it without fear, both you, as they say, and yours' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.505).

Endnotes

[1] As R. C. Lodge puts it: 'A man is educated when he is master of himself; when the self-initiated motion residing in his brain is in full control of everything taken into the system, whether body or of mind. Such a man is always master of his fate because he is the captain of his soul and body; and Plato's education is always an education of free men for even greater freedom.' *Plato's Theory of Education*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1947 (p.116).

[2] Within the context of the ideal polis, this may seem somewhat absurd. Neither the guardians nor the producers seem to be free in the conventional sense. The guardians are public servants, with no private property and no private life, and the producers are nothing more than glorified slaves, with no say in the administration of the polis. The philosopher rulers could be said to be free in a more important sense. If nothing else, this tells us that philosophy, either as the pursuit or the possession of truth, is not something undertaken purely for one's own sake. Our first priority as philosophers is, of course, care of our souls, but the real trajectory of philosophy is the good life, which, at its most consistent, is sought not merely for our own sakes but also for the sake of others. Hence in the ideal polis the happiness of the whole is more important than the happiness of any one of its parts. For more on the relationship between philosophy and freedom see *Lysis* 207d6-210d4).

[3] *Republic* 534d4.

[4] *Republic* 432b2-444e3.

[5] *Symposium* 201d4-5.

[6] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964 (pp.59-60).

[7] Trans. C. P. Jones (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970 (p.91).

[8] In part we can see this as a continuation of Sokrates' response to Kallikles in the *Gorgias*. However, in the *Republic* this position is taken even further (519b7-c6); in his *Philebus* Plato also stresses the practical abilities of the philosopher, 62a2-b2).

[9] *Republic* 521c1-3.

[10] *Republic* 523a3.

[11] Which is also hinted at in other dialogues (*Laches* 199d4-e1, *Hippias Major* 297b2-7, *Phaedrus* 237d6-e3.

[12] There are, of course, good structural reasons why Sokrates is moved to describe the degeneration of the ideal polis, because he wants to discuss the variety of imperfect societies and souls. However, the tragedy of the rise and fall of the ideal polis, the *Kallipoleia* if you will, serves a more important function: it stands to reminds us about the limits of *public* education.

[13] Aristotle's criticisms of Plato's *Republic* in books 2 and 5 of his *Politics* are not always apposite, nevertheless some of his remarks are quite telling (See Robert Mayhew's *Aristotle's Criticisms of Plato's Republic*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997 (in particular pp.1-2).

[14] For how one might arrive at this number, see Desmond Lee n.1, pp.299-300 (*Plato: Republic*, Penguin: London, 1987).

[15] The ideal polis is bookmarked by the healthiest polis, the 'city of sows,' and the unhealthiest, the tyrannical polis (*Republic* 369a4-372d4). Why does Sokrates choose this procedure? Aside from its pleasing symmetry (the Healthy city (including: Democracy, Oligarchy, and Timarchy) – Kallipolis – Timarchy – Oligarchy – Democracy – The Unhealthy city (tyranny), it enables Sokrates to make the knowingly false claim that *all forms of existing constitution are derivations of a once existing ideal*, in order to make the somewhat more plausible claim that *no existing regime is perfect, or even near to perfect.*

[16] By invoking Homer's *Iliad* Sokrates tempts one to think of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Akhilleus, especially these lines from the opening book: Διὸς δ᾽ ἐτελείετο βουλή, | ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε | Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς (my emphasis, *Iliad* I.5-7, 'And the will of Zeus was accomplished | since that time when first stood in division of conflict | Atreus' son

the lord of men and brilliant Akhilleus' (trans. Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, p.59). Should one resist this temptation? If all depends upon how seriously one is willing to entertain the possibility that Sokrates is drawing a parallel between the philosopher rulers and the auxiliaries and Agamemnon and Akhilleus. This seems unlikely, as neither Agamemnon nor Akhilleus has a true counterpart in the ideal polis. This is truer of Agamemnon than it is for Akhilleus, but we must remember, as we saw in Chapter Three, that Sokrates makes a point of distancing his young guardians from the example of Akhilleus. Agamemnon is no more a suitable ruler (and hardly a philosopher ruler!) than Akhilleus is a suitable auxiliary; neither could be trusted to be guardians of society in the way that Sokrates maintains. (The line that Sokrates quotes is more likely, perhaps, to be adapted from book 16 of the *Iliad*, ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαι, | ὅππως δὴ πρῶτον πῦρ ἔμπεσε νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν (XVI.12-13). This is Bloom's view ("Interpretative Essay," p.467).

[17] Cf. John D. Harman, "The Unhappy Philosopher: Plato's "Republic" as Tragedy," *Polity*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1986 (pp.577-594).

[18] Cf. William Chase Greene, "The Spirit of Comedy in Plato," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Vol. 31, 1920 (pp.64-65); Ludwig Edelstein, "The Function of Myth in Plato's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1949 (p.480).

[19] Byran Harries sees the meeting between Diomedes and Glaucos as serving an educational function: 'Diomedes triumphs here, as intellectually supreme in his contest of wits with Glaucus as he is militarily supreme in the previous book. His triumph here is one which the reader of the *Iliad* is invited to emulate: the reader who can read the past as a constructive influence on our current moral choices and understand its formative value for our cultural perceptions, such a reader has a Diomedes-like advantage in all the 'strange meetings' that confront us nearer home' (Byran Harries, "'Strange Meeting': Diomedes and Glaucus in 'Iliad' 6," *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 40, No. 2, 1993, pp.13-14).

[20] Taking the property away from the producers is necessary because it is now a source of their power, since they were formerly in control of large estates and farms.

[21] Surely the ideal polis has now become more like a traditional aristocracy?

[22] What evidence is there that Sokrates imagines that any of the philosopher rulers emerge from the transition uncorrupted? Well, considering that it is unlikely that any philosopher ruler is the produce of the system alone, then it may well be the case that there are some who, being so good by nature, will not be corrupted, although this depends on them not being involved in any subsequent political activity.

[23] Cf. John B. Morrall, *Aristotle*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977 (p.39).

[24] *Phaedo* 100c2-107b9.

[25] There is, perhaps, a third alternative, to become a Plato.

[26] Cf. Paul Stern, "The Philosophic Importance of Political Life: On the "Digression" in Plato's "Theaetetus"," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 96, No. 2, 2002 (pp.275-289).

[27] The philosopher of the *Theaetetus* has, of course, some affinities with Sokrates: both are strangers in the law courts, and we think, naturally of the *Apology*, indeed the *Theaetetus* ends with Sokrates preparing to go to the King Archon to hear the charges against him (*Theaetetus* 210d1-3). We can see Sokrates here as the philosopher ruler, he is a matchmaker, not of physical bodies, but of souls. In Athens Sokrates' mental midwifery is a secret; his reputation is one of an 'eccentric and someone who confuses people' (*Theaetetus* 149a8). But despite what Sokrates says, or, rather, what Plato continually hints in the dialogues, Sokrates was hardly a fish out of water at his trial.

[28] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 (6:409).

[29] For a discussion on what this longer way might be see Mitchell Miller's "Beginning the Longer Way," *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007 (pp.310-344).

[30] According to the hierarchy of the *Phaedrus*, the lover of wisdom and the Muses is the true lover (*Phaedrus* 248d3-4). But where does Alkibiades rank? The second place goes to the lawful king or the warrior, the one who values honour above wisdom (248d5; 256b9-d12).

[31] Alkibiades complains 'Σωκράτους παρόντος τῶν καλῶν μεταλαβεῖν ἀδύνατον ἄλλῳ' (*Symposium* 223a5-b1). Agathon and Alkibiades, the poet and the statesman, fight over Sokrates, they want his praise – but neither can get it in an unqualified sense.

[32] Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1981 (p.258).

[33] If the idea of freedom is an important principle of Athenian democracy, then it is significant that in the cave, which is surely a representation of Sokrates' Athens, people are described as prisoners; the freedom that they are so proud of, however, is merely an illusion.

[34] 'How, then, can we correlate the first stage of education, which is based on oral/aural activities geared towards ethical and political praxis, with the radically different aims and claims of the second stage – with an education which is directed towards intellectual "vision" or contemplation achieved by dialectic?' (Andrea Wilson Nightingale, "Education in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*", *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Yun Lee Too, Boston: Brill, 2001, p.149). As many scholars have noted, the imagery that Plato employs in the Cave is not altogether consistent, and is not easy to reconcile, in particular, with the previous similes of the Sun and the Line. What one should be aware of, however, is the implicit criticism here of Heraclitos. The Cave is the world of becoming, and, as such, it is sharply contrasted with the 'realm of the forms,' the world beyond the Cave, and thus this can often make a direct comparison with the Sun and Line difficult. Indeed, Plato seems to have made the separateness of the Cave and the realm of the forms too complete. As Nightingale observes: 'Although the first stage of education served to free the individual from bondage to the irrational parts of the soul (as well as from false logoi), the second stage frees it from the external influences of all human affairs and all physical phenomena. Dialectic and the "contemplation" of truth confers complete knowledge and freedom even as it denigrates "our" world with its manifold enticements' (*Ibid* p.148). The obvious tension between the practical and the contemplative is hard to resolve. When Sokrates moves on to describe the education of the philosopher rulers this tension is eased somewhat, although other questions remain. Nevertheless, and continuing with the Cave, what we should focus on is the picture that Sokrates is drawing of the current state of education and its resulting affects.

[35] The released prisoner is Meno, or, indeed, any person who, on account of the Sokratic elenkhos has reached the stage where they are no longer sure about their former convictions. For some interlocutors, Alkibiades for instance, this process is too much.

[36] As we see in the *Protagoras*, after a dialogical discussion has broken down (usually due to unwillingness on the behalf of his interlocutor to continue), Sokrates considers his work to be finished (335b1-3). Protagoras claims skill in being able to answer a question with brevity (*Protagoras* 335a1-4, and Sokrates also claims this skill for Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*), as does Gorgias (*Gorgias* 449b9-c2); but neither is as adept at dialectic as Sokrates (*Protagoras* 336c1-d3).

[37] Is Sokrates always 'frank' in his interaction with his interlocutors? Cf. Jerry Stannard, "Socratic Eros and Platonic Dialectic," *Phronesis*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (1959), p.39.

[38] For Kallikles, Alkibiades, and Thrasymakhos it is a doubly disquieting process. The life of the philosopher is, according to these men, hardly enviable: Alkibiades would rather be dead than live without honour (*Alcibiades I* 105a5-8), and Kallikles takes philosophy to be child's play (*Gorgias* 484c5-9), while Thrasymakhos has nothing but contempt for Sokrates.

[39] W. K. C. Guthrie , *Plato: The Man and his Dialogues Earlier Period, A History of Greek Philosophy IV*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (pp.525-526).

[40] 'The myth, while offering needed relief, also makes a contribution to the pursuit of the nature of the statesman; it is play with a serious purpose' (Janet E. Smith, "Plato's use of Myth in the Education of Philosophic Man," *Phoenix*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1986, p.25, cf. *Laws* 803c, 814d, *Sixth Letter* 323d1).

[41] For an excellent account of the nature of Greek myths, see G. S. Kirks' *The Nature of Greek Myths*, London: Penguin, 1974.

[42] Cf. Julia Annas, "Plato's Myths of Judgement," *Phronesis*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1982).

[43] Ludwig Edelstein, "The Function of Myth in Plato's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1949 (p.474).

[44] Luc Brisson, *Plato the Myth Maker*, trans. and Ed. Gerard Naddaf, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998 (pp.91-111).

[45] *Ibid* p.11.

[46] 'We listen attentively because we dimly imagine that if we could interpret them, we should gain rich instruction. But we listen in vain; the only instruction we receive is the instruction how to listen attentively' (Philip Merlan, "Form and Content in Plato's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1947, p.411).

[47] *Ibid* p.24.

[48] 'An examination of the use of myth in the dialogues shows that myths serve several functions: (1) they are "playful" in a way which is vital to philosophy; (2) they serve the related purpose of providing insights or hypotheses for examination; (3) they help keep the dialogues "undogmatic" and encourage further investigation of topics probed in the dialogues; (4) they serve Plato's philosophical goal of shifting one's attention from the World of Becoming to "worlds beyond" which include the World of Forms and the afterlife; and (5) they tend to draw together many of the concerns and images of the dialogue as a whole' (Janet E. Smith, "Plato's Use of Myth in the Education of Philosophic Man," *Phoenix*, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1986, p.21).

[49] In its entirety, Homer's *Iliad* is not educational, although certain passages could well be appropriated for the purpose of teaching, those which, for example, would be used in the education of the guardians. A written speech by Lysias or Isokrates, may have various merits, as perhaps would Protagoras' *On Truth*, but none could be called educational because in each case such works are taken as sufficient, self-contained, and as not requiring any further inquiry.

[50] I say 'partially' because the dialogues do not reveal truth, although they may indicate a path towards it.

[51] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (p.54).

[52] Gorgias/*Gorgias*, Protagoras/*Protagoras*, *Theaetetus*, Thrasymakhos/*Republic*, Parmenides/*Parmenides*, Lysias/*Phaedrus*, Homer/*Ion*, Heraklitos/*Theaetetus*, Kratylos/*Cratylus* etc.

[53] Kent F. Moors, "Plato's use of Dialogue," *The Classical World*, Vol. 72, No. 2, October, 1978 (p.93).

[54] William A. Johnson, "Dramatic Frame and Philosophic Idea in Plato," *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 119, No. 4, 1998 (p.594).

[55] John Fisher, "Plato on Writing and Doing Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 27, No. 2, April – June, 1966 (p.171).

[56] John Evan Seery, "Politics as Ironic Community: On the Themes of Descent and Return in Plato's *Republic*," *Political Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 2, May, 1988 (p.247).

[57] Moors, "Plato's use of Dialogue" (p.77).

[58] *Ibid* pp.88-89.

[59] Fisher, "Plato on Writing and Doing Philosophy" (p.168).

[60] 'The realization of philosophy, however, is exclusively the individual's. It is, ultimately, he, and no other, who must persuade himself to follow the lead of philosophy and seek out the truth. While the interlocutor is led by the dialogue to perceive the inadequacies of appearance and opinion, it still remains solely the task

of the interlocutor to set in motion the final persuasion' (Moors, "Plato's use of Dialogue," p.79).

Chapter Five

Seeming and Being in Plato's Ethics

ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πάνυ εὐφυὴς ᾖ καὶ πόρρω τῆς ἡλικίας φιλοσοφῇ, ἀνάγκη πάντων ἄπειρον γεγονέναι ἐστὶν ὧν χρὴ ἔμπειρον εἶναι τὸν μέλλοντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐδόκιμον ἔσεσθαι ἄνδρα. καὶ γὰρ τῶν νόμων ἄπειροι γίγνονται τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν, καὶ τῶν λόγων οἷς δεῖ χρώμενον ὁμιλεῖν ἐν τοῖς συμβολαίοις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ, καὶ τῶν ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν τῶν ἀνθρωπείων, καὶ συλλήβδην τῶν ἠθῶν παντάπασιν ἄπειροι γίγνονται (*Gorgias* 484c9-d8)[i]

In this chapter I shall be looking at emulation and role adoption, *ethical complexity* (a term which I use in reference to Plato's theory of the relationship between a person's character traits and their *psukhē*), and the problem of *ethical deception* (an issue that arises due to a certain feature of character traits which impacts on our ability to judge a person's character and *psukhē*). I shall begin, in the first section, by outlining Plato's theory of the complex, and often changing,[1] relationship between the *psukhē* and character, and the challenge this represents for ethical judgement (something which is a particular concern of Plato's, cf. *Gorgias* 463e5-464a9; 470c8-e2). Next,

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[i] 'However well endowed one may be, if one philosophizes far on into life, one must needs find oneself ignorant of everything that ought to be familiar to the man who would be a thorough gentleman and make a good figure in the world. For such people are shown to be ignorant of the laws of their city, and of the terms which have to be used in negotiating agreement with their fellows in private or in public affairs, and of human pleasures and desires; and, in short, to be utterly inexperienced in men's character' (W. R. M. Lamb p.389).

in section two, I shall discuss role models and role adoption more generally, particularly in respect to ethical complexity. In section three I shall discuss the use of 'role-models' in the character education of the guardians, and Plato's solution for countering ethical deception, before finishing, in section four, with an examination of Plato's use of 'life-models' in the dialogues.

<center>§1</center>

<center>*Seeming rather than Being: Ethical Deception*</center>

It is not enough that your Designs, nay that your Actions, are intrinsically good, you must take Care they shall appear so[2]

According to Plato there can be no *real* disparity between a person's character (*ēthos*) and their soul (*psukhē*) because the former is representative of the latter; to speak about specific character traits (*ēthē*) is to speak about specific virtues (*aretai*) or vices, and, more generally, to speak about a person's character is to speak about their virtue or vice (*Republic* 400d10-400e3; 401a5-8; 401b1-4). At least in respect to the psychology of the *Republic*, the soul has three 'parts' or faculties: the 'calculating' faculty (*logistikon*), the 'spirited' faculty (*to thumoeides*), and the 'appetitive' faculty (*epithuētikon*); and it is the perfect functioning of each of these faculties which gives rise to

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specific excellences or virtues. For example, the virtue of the *logistikon* or calculating 'part' is wisdom (*sophia*), or, to put it another way, that excellence, wisdom, which we can predicate of a person, is due to the perfect functioning of the calculating faculty. But we must also bear in mind that the particular arrangement of a person's soul is also relevant to the presence of virtue, and that this has an effect on the quality of their character traits. That is to say: it is not just the fact that character traits depend upon the parts or faculties of the soul but also that how these parts or faculties are related to each other will determine the range and force of their associated character traits. *A person's character, therefore, is a summation of their virtue or vice*.[3]

If this is the case, then, it should be fairly easy to ascertain a person's virtue, even in cases where the person in question is not well known to us. Who, for example would doubt Brasidas' courage when he stormed Amphipolis? And what about Domitian's piety, his devotion to Athene was well known? And there would be no need to ask who is the happiest, a beggar or Kroesus, the latter's treasure stores give ample evidence. As even Orestes recognised, however, true character and nobility is more than skin deep, so we must be able to sharply distinguish between the reputation for virtue and virtue itself (Euripides, *Electra* 367-379). This, however, is not an easy thing to do: for few of us get to delve into a so-called virtuous person's life, and to unmask them, to see their naked souls. But supposing that we wished

to be virtuous, and to emulate the virtuous, how is it possible to do this safely? How do we know if our paradigms or role models are as virtuous as they would like us to believe? And what does it matter if we are mistaken in this?

Early in the *Republic*, when Socrates is countering Simonides and the traditional view of *dikaiosunē* (helping one's friends and harming one's enemies), he asks Polemarkhos: 'φίλους δὲ λέγεις εἶναι πότερον τοὺς δοκοῦντας ἑκάστῳ χρηστοὺς εἶναι, ἢ τοὺς ὄντας, κἂν μὴ δοκῶσι, καὶ ἐχθροὺς ὡσαύτως;' (334c1-2).[ii] Polemarkhos replies: 'οὓς ἄν τις ἡγῆται χρηστοὺς φιλεῖν, οὓς δ' ἂν πονηροὺς μισεῖν' (334c3-4).[iii] However, as Socrates points out, people are liable to make mistakes in this crucial regard. The problem, although it is not at this point stated in these terms, is that it is possible to imitate good character, and therefore in a sense one must look beyond the character presented (the classic model, which Plato indeed refers to, is *Seven against Thebes*, 'οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι θέλει', 591-592). This, of course, is easier said than done.

[ii] 'Do you mean by friends those who seem to be good to an individual, or those who are, even if they don't seem to be, and similarly with enemies? (trans. Bloom p.11).
[iii] '[It's likely, he said] that the men one believes to be good, one loves, while those he considers bad one hates' (trans. Bloom *Ibid*).

However, as Adiemantos says later: 'οὐ ῥᾴδιον ἀεὶ λανθάνειν κακὸν

ὄντα' (*Republic* 365c6).[iv] Nevertheless, there are various options open

to the would-be dissembler:

ἐπὶ γὰρ τὸ λανθάνειν συνωμοσίας τε καὶ ἑταιρίας συνάξομεν, εἰσίν τε
πειθοῦς διδάσκαλοι σοφίαν δημηγορικήν τε καὶ δικανικὴν διδόντες, ἐξ
ὧν τὰ μὲν πείσομεν, τὰ δὲ βιασόμεθα, ὡς πλεονεκτοῦντες δίκην μὴ
διδόναι (*Republic* 365d2-4)[v]

The possibility, therefore, of the vicious person appearing to be

virtuous, rests upon their ability to *dissemble*. We are sufficiently

sophisticated and experienced to be able to *pretend* to be something

we are not (indeed, this assumption is central to Plato's concern about

the power of dramatic performance). In these cases, as Plato suggests,

such misjudgements are most often due to ignorance or naivety, that

is, to people's inability to discern *imitation* from *reality* – to see

through the masquerade of the unjust dissembler. However, what I

am primarily interested in here is not so much with moral

dissembling, but with what I call *ethical deception*. Ethical deception

occurs when a person is led, by no serious fault of their own, to make

false judgements about whether a person is virtuous or vicious based

upon some aspect of that person's *character*, that is, on the character of

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[iv] 'It's not always easy to do bad and get away with it unnoticed' (trans.
Bloom p.42).

[v] 'To remain uncovered we will form secret societies and political clubs. And
there are teachers of persuasion to make us clever in dealing with assemblies
and law courts. Therefore, partly by persuasion, partly by force, we will
contrive to do better than other people, without paying the penalty' (trans.
C. D. C. Reeve p.43).

the person that they wish to emulate. The possibility of ethical deception is going to depend, therefore, on a feature of certain character traits, and, more fundamentally, on the relationship between character, virtue, and the soul.

The possibility of ethical deception rests upon the fact that although a person's *genuine* character traits always represent the condition of their soul some character traits are not necessarily peculiar to a particular type of soul, that is, certain character traits can be predicated of differently arranged souls (even if Plato would not think this an appropriate thing to do). According to the psychology of the *Republic*, therefore, some character traits that we could attribute to a virtuous person could also be attributed to a vicious one. Gentleness and harshness are a case in point. Let us consider these traits in respect to two types of people, the philosopher and the tyrant. Although they represent the extremes of what is humanly possible, the philosopher and the tyrant, insofar as they are human, could, in principle, be gentle or harsh.[4] Indeed, for the philosopher these character traits are supposed to be representative of at least part of their virtue, and the correct functioning of their *thumos* in particular (indeed: 'οἵ γε δίκαιοι ἥμεροι,' *Gorgias* 516c3). In terms of the guardians of the ideal polis, gentleness is mainly spoken of in terms of their philosophical nature and their moderate behaviour towards their fellow citizens and each other. Due to certain measures

in their early education, as we saw in Chapter Three, the guardians are disposed to act to those they know with gentleness and to those they do not know with harshness (*Republic* 375a2-376c5, cf. *Timaeus* 17d4-7; 18a3-7).

With the tyrant, of course, the matter is not so straightforward. Bearing in mind the nature of the tyrant, at least the sort that Plato is interested in, we might want to deny outright that such a person could be gentle. Certainly, when Plato does speak about the tyrant's gentleness he thinks of it mainly as a conceit, and therefore the tyrant's gentleness is an example of moral dissembling (*Republic* 566d8-e3). Plato neither denies nor asserts whether he thinks that it is possible for the tyrant to be gentle, although the idea, though perhaps counterintuitive, is not impossible.

However, even if we deny the possibility that a tyrant could be gentle, or at least gentle in any way that resembles the gentleness of the philosopher, it is more obviously the case that the tyrant could be harsh, indeed, it is, for Plato, a key feature of his personality. The tyrant's harshness, however, is not only reserved for his enemies but is directed to the entire populace. As I have already indicated, Plato explains the difference in the scope, force, and range of these character traits in terms of the arrangement of the soul that they originate from. In the *Republic* gentleness and harshness are

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associated with the *thumos*, but since the *thumos* never acts alone, we have to understand such character traits as emerging from the relationship between the other two elements of the soul. The philosopher is gentle and harsh to the right degree, and she acts in a gentle way in situations that call for gentleness and acts in a harsh way in situations that call for harshness. In Aristotle's language, the philosopher hits the mean every time. For the philosopher this is possible because she knows which situations call for gentleness and harshness; her *thumos* listens to reason, and thus she is disposed to act in the appropriate way in the appropriate circumstances. The tyrant's soul is under no such constraints, and therefore he acts accordingly, venting his anger capriciously and without consideration.

Ethical deception taken alone is not necessarily a problem because, typically, the way that we formulate judgements about people's character and virtue is not entirely dependent on the estimation of a single character trait. When judging whether a person is virtuous we would probably, and ideally, demand as much 'ethically relevant' information as possible. Where the impact of ethical deception can be felt most strongly is when it arises in situations where a more thorough knowledge of person's character is either impossible or undesirable; and one such situation is role adoption. In order to see why this is the case we have to examine what role adoption entails and, more particularly, what a role-model is.[5]

Role-Models and Role Adoption

Typically a role-model is a person who, in respect to the role (or roles) they are thought to excel in or exemplify, is the subject of emulation by another person or persons. Generally the roles that a person might seek to adopt are either specific or general. For example, Bill could be a model father to Richard in the sense that for Richard, Bill is, all round, a good example of what a father should be like in *general*. Or it could be the case that for Richard that Bill is a good model of a father in a *specific* way or in specific situations. Perhaps Bill is a good father in the sense that he listens to his children. But in cases where it is a specific role that is being highlighted for adoption, it is quite often the case that the model as a whole is not endorsed, either accidentally or deliberately. Bill might be a good listener but perhaps he spends too much time away from his children. In this case, perhaps, Richard is only interested in emulating a single aspect of Bill, that is, his ability or tendency to listen to his children. Richard does not want to spend less time with his children, so the level of identification that he has with Bill is limited to this single aspect.

We might want to bring in here a distinction that Robert King Merton makes in his *Social Theory and Social Structure*, between a role-model and a reference individual. For Merton the main difference between a role-model and a reference individual is cashed out in terms of the level of identification that is involved in each case: 'the concept of a role-model can be thought of as more restricted in scope, denoting a more limited identification with an individual in only one or selected few of his roles,' however 'the person who identifies himself with a reference individual will seek to approximate the behaviour and values of that individual in several roles.'[6] Whether a person can be chosen as a reference individual rather than as a role-model will depend, not just on whether such a move is advisable in the given circumstances, but also upon the level of social interaction between the person and the individual that they wish to emulate. I shall come back to this notion of a reference individual in the last section, for now I want to concentrate on a problem that is more often associated with the kind of role adoption common to the convention of role-models.

The very nature of role adoption is that it is partial and the level of identification that it involves is restricted to a single, or, at most, a handful of roles; it must ignore, either by design or by accident, those aspects which are not thought to be suitable for emulation, either because they are not relevant or because they are morally suspect. It

is only by selecting the desirable aspects and ignoring the undesirable that a role-model can be chosen: discrimination is a key feature of role adoption. Role adoption can often involve a minimising or disguising of the *ethical complexity* of the role-model.

All I mean by ethical complexity is that network of traits, dispositions, wants, and desires, that compose a person's 'personality,' and that from which knowledge of that person's motivations and intentions are better understood. (I admit that not all role adoption has to be moral in nature, but what I am particularly interested in is the ethico-pedagogical efficacy of role adoption, rather than an analysis of role adoption in all its varieties).

The problem with role-models is that they are one-dimensional. Role-models, as they appear to the prospective role-player, present an incomplete picture of the role-model's character, which in turn denies or obscures the kind of ethical complexity fundamental to the individual. Role adoption, of the type where the object of emulation is understood only in respect to the role that a person seeks to emulate, causes what I call the *sandglass effect*, which can be illustrated thus:
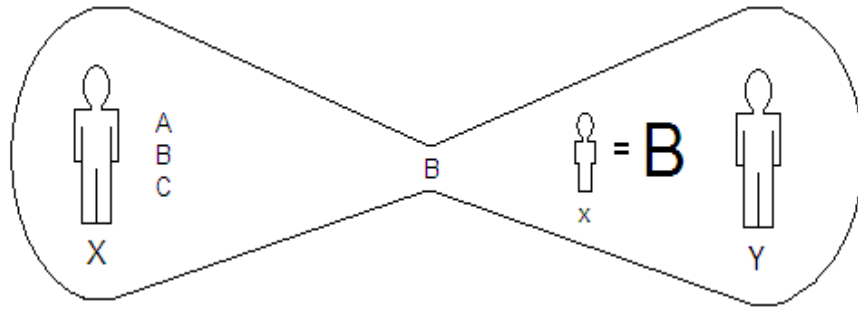
The first figure on the left-hand side of the glass, X, is a possible role-model for Y, who is on the right-hand side of the glass. A, B, and C represent the role options that a person, including Y, may want to adopt. The narrow opening in the centre of the sandglass represents the moment where Y chooses a role option, in this example B, to the exclusion of A and C. The small figure next to Y (x) represents Y's view of X, who is now largely understood in terms of the role B. In respect to the role he has adopted Y now identifies himself with B/x; Y emulates X in respect to B. This has an impact on ethical complexity in the following way. Since Y has chosen, at whatever level, to ignore A and C, his wish to become like X in respect to B is taken out of its original and specific context, a context which for X not only includes the relationship between A, B and C (and for that matter E, F, G etc.) but also the intricate pattern of his life, behaviour and character.

Role adoption de-contextualises the role, and it creates a one-sided picture of the character of the role 'giver.' Roles are un-

problematically transferable, discrete, and unambiguous. In a sense, role-adoption, in the largely uncritical and unreflective sense in which it is often employed, is a source of 'bad faith.'

A good example of the issue of partiality and denial of ethical complexity in respect to role adoption can be found in Homer's *Odyssey*.[7] Early on in book one of the *Odyssey* we are introduced to Telemakhos, who, because of the disastrous situation in his household caused by the suitors, is badly in need of guidance, and, largely because of his father's absence, a strong role-model, and this is where Orestes comes in. But what we shall see is that the eligibility of Orestes as a role model to Telemakhos is only possible when certain facts about him are suppressed, that is, when ethical complexity is ignored.

In the *Odyssey* Orestes is twice held up as a role model for Telemakhos, the first time by Athene:

ἦ οὐκ ἀίεις οἷον κλέος ἔλλαβε δῖος Ὀρέστης
πάντας ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπους, ἐπεὶ ἔκτανε πατροφονῆα,
Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα;
καὶ σύ, φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ᾽ ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε,
ἄλκιμος ἔσσ᾽, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπη
(*Odyssey* 1.298-302) [vi]

[vi] 'Or have you not heard what glory was won by great Orestes among all mankind, when he killed the murderer of his father, the treacherous Aigisthos, who had slain his famous father? So you too, dear friend, since I can see you are big and splendid, be bold also, so that in generations to come they will praise you' (trans. Lattimore p.35).

The example is sold to Telemakhos by suggesting that if he acts like

Orestes then he too will win glory (*kleos*),[8] and be well spoken of (*eu

eipē*) for generations to come. Athene urges Telemakhos to be bold

(*alkimos*) like Orestes, who is praised for avenging his father,

Agamemnon, who was killed by his wife's lover, Aigisthos. As the

following lines suggest, Telemakhos will also gain praise by killing

his mother's suitors and protecting his father's household (1.295-296).

Telemakhos is urged to relinquish his childhood, to become a man,

and act accordingly, as Orestes did when he returned from Athens to

avenge his father (1.296-297). These themes are revisited in book 3 in

Nestor's speech to Telemakhos:

ὡς ἀγαθὸν καὶ παῖδα καταφθιμένοιο λιπέσθαι
ἀνδρός, ἐπεὶ καὶ κεῖνος ἐτίσατο πατροφονῆα,
Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα.
καὶ σὺ φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ᾽ ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε,
ἄλκιμος ἔσσ᾽, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ
(*Odyssey* 3.196-200)[vii]

By emphasising this moral, that it is good for a father to have an

avenging son, Nestor's speech serves to reinforce Athene's words at

1.298-302.[9] However, neither Athene nor Nestor sees fit to mention to

Telemakhos that Orestes is responsible for his mother's death. Could

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[vii] '…so it is good, when a man has perished, to have a son left after him, since this one took vengeance on his father's killer, the treacherous Aigisthos, who cut down his glorious father. So you too, dear friend, for I see you are tall and splendid, be brave too, so that men unborn may speak well of you' (trans. Lattimore p.56).

the endorsement of Orestes as a role-model depend upon this crucial fact being suppressed?

The murder of his mother, his subsequent pollution, trial and absolution, form the centrepiece of the Orestes myth, in particular the dramatic representations by Aiskhylos, Sophokles, and Euripides. But in book 3 of the *Odyssey* (309-310), although we learn that Klytemnestra is dead, the author is silent about how she met her end. There are various possible reasons for this omission. It may be that Homer was not aware of this part of the myth, or, if he was, deliberately omitted it, or, as it has been suggested by some scholars, it may be the case that the story postdates the composition of the *Odyssey*.[10] Whatever the reason, as we learn in book 3 that Klytemnestra is dead and that she is implicated in her husband's murder, and it is not much of a stretch to assert that she was probably killed by Orestes or, at the very least, that he was involved in her death, and that Homer must understand his characters as being aware of this.[11] It is not, therefore, the case that Telemakhos might not know that Orestes killed his mother, but that, for the purposes of recommending him as a role-model, Athene and Nestor think it prudent to omit mention of the crime.

But why would being a matricide affect Orestes' eligibility to be a role-model to Telemakhos? The roles suggested to Telemakhos are to

avenge this father and protect his household, and in this respect Orestes is an acceptable (or at least understandable) role-model, what does it matter that he is *also* his mother's murderer?[12] It could be argued that matricide, or indeed any obviously ethically dubious act, is not only relevant to our understanding of a person's character and life but also to the roles that they play and those that could be adopted by others. In the case of some roles this is not so clear, particularly when the role in question is morally neutral, but where it presents a bigger problem is when a suggested role carries with it tacit claims about the ways in which a person ought to behave and the kinds of things that a person ought to value. To take another example: Akhilleus may be a suitable role-model in respect to his martial prowess, his skill with a spear for instance, but his fighting skill is used for certain purposes, which presuppose a commitment to certain aims (killing Hektor, avenging Patroklos, winning honour etc), which fighting well helps to achieve, and a certain moral standpoint (honour is a good thing, avenging one's friends is a good thing etc). When we decide to emulate another person, to take on one or more of their roles, it might be better to have some understanding of why they themselves perform these roles, and to what end, and to see, moreover, if their claims are justified.[13]

Plato's own view of role-adoption is complex. On the one hand, and within the confines of the ideal polis, role-models must be tailor-

made, morally unambiguous, and have clearly defined motivations. Ethically complexity, in other than in the case of virtuous role-models, must be denied because of the way that role-adoption is used in the character education of the guardians. On the other hand, under the auspices of Platonic education, and therefore situated within imperfect societies, Plato has a more subtle approach to role-adoption.

<h3 style="text-align:center">§3</h3>

Emulation in the Ideal Polis

The warts and all Orestes would not be a suitable role-model for the guardians, as is clear from book 3 of the *Republic* (386a1-392c4).[14] Nevertheless, role adoption and emulation is, as I have indicated, central to the young guardians' education in the *Republic*.

There is, of course, no Greek word for 'role-model,' however, there are two terms that Plato uses which come close to the same meaning: τύπος (type) and παράδειγμα (paradigm, model). As I say, neither of these is equivalent to the English term 'role-model'[15] but both appear, nevertheless, in certain contexts at least, to be associated with role-taking and emulation. τύπος features heavily in books 2 and 3, where Sokrates outlines the educational program for the guardians.

παράδειγμα features mostly in the later books, and is often a term which is used in the context of the *forms* (472c3-d2,[16] 484c7-d4,[17] 500d9e5).

Importantly τύπος plays a special role in Plato's notion of mimesis.[18] τύποι can refer either to specific forms of musical presentation or content (377cb2, c9, 379a2, 389b3, 397c7); in the case of the latter Sokrates calls these τύποι laws (νόμοι, 383b10[19]). Sokrates identifies three models or laws that are of particular importance. The first comes in book 2, to the effect that god is not the cause of all things, but only of good things (*Republic* 380c6-7).[20] The second comes at 380d1-383a5,[21] and stipulates the gods are not wizards and nor do they mislead, either in speech or deed.

The third law, pertaining to how heroes are to be represented, is particularly pertinent to the guardians' early education (386a-392a2).[22] In book 3 at 365a5-1b Adeimantos points out how the behaviour not only of gods but also of men in the traditional *mythoi* are used by the young as a guide for 'what sort of man one should be and what way one must follow to go through life best.'[23] And, as we saw in the Chapter Two, these traditional stories were embedded within traditional education, specifically in *mousikē*.

The regulation of *mousikē*, therefore, is an important first step in Sokrates' formulation of the guardians' educational program, as we learn at 377a10-b2: 'Οὐκοῦν οἶσθ' ὅτι ἀρχὴ παντὸς ἔργου μέγιστον, ἄλλως τε δὴ καὶ νέῳ καὶ ἁπαλῷ ὁτῳοῦν; μάλιστα γὰρ δὴ τότε πλάττεται, καὶ ἐνδύεται τύπος ὃν ἄν τις βούληται ἐνσημήνασθαι ἑκάστῳ' (my emphasis).[viii] The young are impressionable and, therefore, particularly susceptible to any model (τύπος) that one would want to impress on them. Janaway calls this the 'Principle of Assimilation, 'which states that people come to resemble what they enact.'[24] Therefore, the kinds of people that one might imitate are especially relevant. As Aristotle states, 'Ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας, ἀνάγκη δὲ τούτους ἢ σπουδαίους ἢ φαύλους εἶναι' (*Poetics* 1448a1-2),[ix] and, in respect to the education of the guardians, only the former can be countenanced.

In respect to the mimicry common in musical performance the young guardians must restrict their imitation to the words and deeds of good men. The guardians will be ashamed to mimic the words and deeds of bad men on two counts: first, because they are unpractised at such imitations, and second, because of their disgust with fitting in

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[viii] 'Don't you know that the beginning is the most important part of every work and that this is especially so with anything young and tender? For at that stage it's most plastic and each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give it' (trans. Bloom p.54).

[ix] 'Those who imitate must imitate agents, and these agents must necessarily be either admirable or inferior' (trans. Michael Richard Hart).

with, and taking possession of, such *models* (τύποι, *Republic* 396c3–396e3).

τὸ μὲν πολλὴν μίμησιν καὶ ποικίλην ἔχει, τὸ ἀγανακτητικόν, τὸ δὲ φρόνιμόν τε καὶ ἡσύχιον ἦθος, παραπλήσιον ὂν ἀεὶ αὐτὸ αὐτῷ, οὔτε ῥᾴδιον μιμήσασθαι οὔτε μιμουμένου εὐπετὲς καταμαθεῖν, ἄλλως τε καὶ πανηγύρει καὶ παντοδαποῖς ἀνθρώποις εἰς θέατρα συλλεγομένοις· ἀλλοτρίου γάρ που πάθους ἡ μίμησις αὐτοῖς γίγνεται (*Republic* 604e1-5)[x]

As part of their education in *mousikē*, the trainee guardians are exposed to good models of character and are shielded from the bad. Consequently, poets like Homer, whose works contained the traditional models of behaviour, are to be censored, since heroes like Akhilleus and Agamemnon, at least how Homer presents them, are not suitable models for the guardians. The early education of the guardians, as we saw in Chapter Three, is intended to produce characters of a certain kind, people who are both philosophical and spirited, people who can excel at both philosophy and war (*Republic* 543a1-5; *Timaeus* 24d1-4, cf. Euripides' *Rhesus* 105-108). Hence, and considering these very specific roles, the guardians are not to emulate anything other than suitable 'role-models.'[25] It will not do, therefore, for the guardians to emulate the Akhilleus of Homer's *Iliad*, who,

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[x] '…the irritable disposition affords much and varied imitation, while the prudent and quiet character, which is always nearly equal to itself, is neither easily imitated nor, when imitated, easily understood, especially by a festive assembly where all sorts of human beings are gathered in a theater. For the imitation is of a condition that is surely alien to them' (trans. Bloom p.288).

despite his undoubted spiritedness, could never be called philosophical and is not, therefore, guardian material.

However, there could be a problem with the censorship that runs through the guardians' role emulation. What protects the guardians in respect to bad role-models in their education would frankly be a hindrance if they ever come face to face with fully rounded, three dimensional, and crucially, unjust people. Because the use of role-models in their education is restricted only to those types deemed worthy and useful, the guardians have no knowledge of bad character or vice (they do, of course, know of the existence of such people, but this seems to be as far as their association with such types will go, *Republic* 396a2-3). If, therefore, a young guardian were to meet a clever villain, he would, we might conjecture, be easily duped, either deliberately through moral dissembling or accidentally through ethical deception.

It could be objected that the guardians, being watchful sheepdogs, are trained to respond in anger to those they do not know, and hence they would automatically be on their guard against any enemy of them and their society. This is hardly reassuring, for ignorance can hardly be called a valid criterion for action. What, then, is the answer?

Plato has a solution however. In the *Republic* Plato side steps the issues of moral dissembling and ethical deception by bypassing character, insisting instead that judgements on a whether a person is virtuous or vicious be based on an understanding of a person's soul. In order to be a good judge of character, and hence of virtue, the guardians must be late learners of bad character and vice, gaining a knowledge of it not through their own soul, through personal experience, but through studying it in the souls of other people:

πονηρία μὲν γὰρ ἀρετήν τε καὶ αὑτὴν οὔποτ' ἂν γνοίη, ἀρετὴ δὲ φύσεως παιδευομένης χρόνῳ ἅμα αὑτῆς τε καὶ πονηρίας ἐπιστήμην λήψεται. σοφὸς οὖν οὗτος, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁ κακὸς γίγνεται' (*Republic* 409d7-e1)[xi]

It is the bad man who is the poor judge of character, knowing only his own type, since he acts only according to his own paradigms (*paradeigmata*). The bad man can never study the souls of others and can hence never understand moral goodness (409d1-4). The good judge by contrast is a sound appraiser of the character of others; he has moved beyond the simple stage of the young guardians' education that involves role-models. His view of character is total and he cannot therefore be taken in by the reputation or the seeming goodness of the bad man. In the myth of the *Gorgias*, we learn that the

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[xi] 'For badness would never know virtue and itself, while virtue in an educated nature will in time gain a knowledge of both itself and badness simultaneously. This man, in my opinion, and not the bad one, becomes wise' (trans. Bloom p.88).

only way to judge the virtue of a person is by examining their naked soul, that is to say, as it is when it is freed from the body and its adornments (*Gorgias* 523a1-d4). The true judge is the one

ὃς δύναται τῇ διανοίᾳ εἰς ἀνδρὸς ἦθος ἐνδὺς διιδεῖν καὶ μὴ καθάπερ παῖς ἔξωθεν ὁρῶν ἐκπλήττεται ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν τυραννικῶν προστάσεως ἣν πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω σχηματίζονται, ἀλλ᾽ ἱκανῶς διορᾷ (*Republic* 577a3-6)[xii]

It is, unlike Kallikles' assertion in the *Gorgias* (484c9-d8), the task of philosophy to enable a person to gain experience in human character. However, if role adoption is to be a useful method for developing virtue it must be employed in a way that is sensitive to moral dissembling and ethical deception and the more diverse nature of human character in less than ideal societies.

§4

Life-Models

In her *Plato and the Hero*, Angela Hobbs offers another reading of how Plato uses 'role-models' in the dialogues, which extends beyond their use in the educational system of the ideal polis of the *Republic*. For

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[xii] 'Who is able with his thought to creep into a man's character and see through it – a man who is not like a child looking from outside and overwhelmed by the tyrannic pomp set up as a façade for those outside, but who rather sees through it adequately (trans. Bloom p.257, slightly adapted).

Hobbs a role-model is an historical or fictional person 'who serves as a model to be emulated to a greater or lesser extent.'[26] According to Hobbs' definition we should place less emphasis on the emulation of specific roles and more on the life as a whole. In this sense Hobbs' definition of a role-model is closer to what Merton calls a reference individual, and this is important. However, we need to note that Hobbs is not arguing that we should seek to emulate a person as closely as possible, or seek total identification, but rather that what we should be seeking to 'adopt' is not so much discrete roles but a certain model of living, with all the complexity and ambiguity that this may suggest. As Hobbs goes on to say, the term 'life-model' is more appropriate (a term that I have already used but have yet to elaborate on). The term 'life-model' is especially useful because of its more obvious ethical connotations. What distinguishes a life-model from a role-model is that with the former one is able to reflect on the overall *structure* of the life rather than a particular and incomplete part of it. The stress is no longer on specific roles but on a broad but subtle understanding of a person's life, where the roles that they choose can be seen within their ethical context. As such, life-models can help to give our own lives a kind of a structure that they might otherwise not have or that we might be struggling to find:

If we need to feel that our lives have meaning, then one way of achieving this would be to feel that they possess shape as a whole; the question 'how should life be lived?' also seems to lead in this direction. It is, however,

usually very difficult to discern any kind of structure and shape from inside the stream of one's own experiences: the messy onward rush of everyday life can all too easily strike us as just one damned thing after another. It is often easier to discern some sort of shape in the lives of others, particularly if those lives are in some sense complete – either because the people are dead, or because they are fictional. Reflection on the overall structure of these whole lives then makes two further moves possible. Firstly, through comparison and contrast one may come to perceive some sort of structure emerging in one's own life. Secondly, through emulation one may be able consciously to *impart* some kind of structure to one's life.[27]

This stress on historical (deceased) and fictional characters suits this purpose well, because it is easier to appraise a life when it is complete and therefore open to a thorough examination. Such life-models are, of course, present in the dialogues, and, therefore, as Hobbs states, in the dialogues Plato is able to present the reader with 'a range of potential or actual role-models in action.'[28] As Hobbs goes on to say:

We shall find that through the skilful use of forward-shadowing we are enabled to glimpse not only what their lives are currently like, but what they will shortly become. Far from giving us vague injunctions, Plato wishes to ensure that our choices are as concrete as possible.[29]

Making the right choices requires a thorough examination of the proposed life-model that we might be thinking of 'adopting.' We want to know how that person fared with the choices they have made; we want to see whether the reasons that they gave for living as they did turned out to be justified. It is easy for the tyrant, at the height of his powers, to consider himself happy, and for others, perhaps, to look on in envy (cf. *Gorgias* 470d1-471a2). Kroesos may

appear enviable when he is surveying his vast riches but not so much when he is about to be burnt alive. A person's life, and hence their character, can only truly be assessed once that person is dead: in Solon's words one must *telos horan*.[30]

In the myth of Er in book 10 of the *Republic* the use of life models or patterns is explicitly referred to (*Republic* 617d5; 618a2). Life models or patterns are chosen by the souls who are about to be reincarnated. All the souls are free to choose whatever life model they wish, although their choice is heavily determined by the kind of character they had in their previous lives (cf. *Phaedo* 81d6-82c9, *Timaeus* 90e8-92c2). However, the kind of character that the souls will develop in their new lives, and the attending daimon, is the choice of the individual (οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς δαίμονα αἱρήσεσθε, *Republic* 617e1-2).[xiii]

The dialogues are rich in human drama and personality; Plato chooses Sokrates' adversaries carefully. The interlocutors are not merely foils to Sokratic irony they also play an important role in the overall shape and meaning of the dialogues in which they appear. Plato pits Sokrates against the greatest thinkers of his (Sokrates') day, such as Gorgias, Protagoras, and Parmenides, and he does so not just

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[xiii] 'The blame belongs to him who chooses; the daimon is blameless' (trans. Bloom p.300, slightly adapted).

to test their ideas but to clearly set out in the reader's mind just what sort of men make what sort of claims; not just what they say but how they say it and in what context. Indeed, because the dialogues are set in Plato's past he is able to do even more: he can test the speaker's words against their deeds; he can show (insofar as his audience would have known most of the dialogues' participants and their fates) how men fare in respect to the *choices* that they make.

It is not so much the case that the dialogues help us to make the right choices but rather that through them we become aware that we have choices to make, and that, whatever direction that we decide to go in, that it is we who are responsible. More than this, the dialogues make a specific case, that it is philosophy, not conventional opinions and customs, however treasured, which will enable us to make the right choices.

It is through the dialogue form that this concern with choice and responsibility is situated and which is brought out through Plato's skilful handling of character and dramatic setting. Through the dialogues a picture of various lives, and the philosophical life, the life of Sokrates, are expertly developed, and in the *Republic* in particular, where we are not only shown the model city (from birth to death) but also the model of the just individual, the philosopher.

Endnotes

[1] *Symposium* 207e3-4.

[2] Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones, A Foundling*, ed. Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely, Penguin: London, 2005 (Book III, Chapter VII, p.128).

[3] Torsten J. Andersson, *Polis and the Psyche: A Motif in Plato's Republic*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971 (p.107).

[4] Such extremes are rare, see *Phaedo* 90a4-9.

[5] Meriel Downey and A. V. Kelly, *Moral Education: Theory and Practice*, London: Harper & Row, 1978 (pp.70-72). See Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, *Educating for Responsible Action*, Grand Rapids: Ethics and Public Policy Center 1980 (pp.51-62).
 'Our elders are no longer our models. Few young people aspire to resemble or occupy the position of their same sex parent at the same age and many parents would not wish it so. Other young people may see little prospect of matching the levels of status and security achieved by their parents and regard the advice or more explicit moral injunctions of their parents as out of touch and irrelevant to their lives, either now or in the future. In this they are mostly right, for neither their experience nor the social and moral world in which they have lived the corresponding part of their lives bears much resemblance to the present of foreseeable future. When the future is no longer easily predictable or clearly present before our eyes in the shape of our elders, delayed gratification may seem a dubious strategy compared with enjoying now and facing the consequences later' (Colin Wringe, *Moral Education: Beyond Teaching of Right and Wrong*, Dordrecht: Springer, 2006, p.8)

[6] Robert King Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York: The Free Press, 1968 (pp.356-357).

[7] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume 1: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965 (pp.35-38). As Werner Jaeger has pointed out, the 'Telemachia' in the early books of the *Odyssey*, explicitly addresses the paideia of Telemakhos. Running parallel to this is Homer's 'Oresteia,' his story of Orestes, which, as we shall see, forms an important backdrop to Telemakhos' education.

[8] Cf. Peter V. Jones, "The Kleos of Telemachos: Odyssey 1.9," *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 109, No. 4, 1988 (pp.496-506).

[9] Note also the repetition of 'καὶ σὺ φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ᾽ ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε, ἄλκιμος ἔσσ᾽, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ' from 1.301-302, which could suggest some thematic relationship between the passages.

[10] The decision, if indeed it was a decision, could be due to artistic rather than moral reasons. Considering the important part played by Penelope, and the tensions that existed between mother and son, it may have been too suggestive to have Orestes' part in his own mother's murder made too explicit.

[11] *Odyssey* 3.261-272; 24.97, and 199-200.

[12] For a different view, see John Passmore: 'When, in the Odyssey, Athena exhorts Telemachus to take Orestes as his model, she does not suggest that Orestes was a perfect man; he is, rather, a perfect example of how a man ought to act in a particular situation, a perfect revenge-taker. His perfection is a technical perfection, not an immaculate perfection' (*The Perfectibility of Man*, London: Duckworth, 1970. p.29).

[13] As with Akhilleus, cf. *Odyssey* 10.487-490).

[14] For Plato's view of Orestes, see *Craytlus* 394e6-10 (Ὥσπερ γε καὶ ὁ Ὀρέστης, ὦ Ἑρμόγενες, κινδυνεύει ὀρθῶς ἔχειν, εἴτε τις τύχη ἔθετο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα εἴτε καὶ ποιητής τις, τὸ θηριῶδες τῆς φύσεως καὶ τὸ ἄγριον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὀρεινὸν ἐνδεικνύμενος τῷ ὀνόματι).

[15] A word coined by Merton in the 60s.

[16] 'It was, therefore, for the sake of a pattern, I said, that we were seeking both for what justice by itself is like, and for the perfectly just man, if he should come into being, and what he would be like once come into being; and, in their turns, for injustice and the most unjust man' (trans. Bloom p.152). 'Παραδείγματος ἄρα ἕνεκα,

ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, ἐζητοῦμεν αὐτό τε δικαιοσύνην οἷόν ἐστι, καὶ ἄνδρα τὸν τελέως δίκαιον εἰ γένοιτο, καὶ οἷος ἂν εἴη γενόμενος, καὶ ἀδικίαν αὖ καὶ τὸν ἀδικώτατον.᾽

[17] 'Well, does there seem to be any difference, then, between blind men and those men who are really deprived of the knowledge of what each thing is; those who have no clear pattern in the soul, and are hence unable – after looking off, as painters do, towards what is truest, and ever referring to it and contemplating it as precisely as possible – to give laws about what is fine, just, and good, if any need to be given, and as guardians to preserve those that are already established?' (trans. Bloom p.164). 'Ἦ οὖν δοκοῦσί τι τυφλῶν διαφέρειν οἱ τῷ ὄντι τοῦ ὄντος ἑκάστου ἐστερημένοι τῆς γνώσεως, καὶ μηδὲν ἐναργὲς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχοντες παράδειγμα, μηδὲ δυνάμενοι ὥσπερ γραφῆς εἰς τὸ ἀληθέστατον ἀποβλέποντες κἀκεῖσε ἀεὶ ἀναφέροντές τε καὶ θεώμενοι ὡς οἷόν τε ἀκριβέστατα, οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε νόμιμα καλῶν τε πέρι καὶ δικαίων καὶ ἀγαθῶν τίθεσθαί τε, ἐὰν δέῃ τίθεσθαι, καὶ τὰ κείμενα φυλάττοντες σῴζειν.᾽

[18] In books 2 and 3.

[19] 'I am in complete agreement with these models, he said, and would use them as laws' (trans. Bloom p.61). 'Παντάπασιν, ἔφη, ἔγωγε τοὺς τύπους τούτους συγχωρῶ, καὶ ὡς νόμοις ἂν χρῴμην.᾽

[20] 'Now, then, I said, this would be one of the laws and models concerning the gods, according to which those who produce speeches will have to do their speaking and those who produce poems will have to do their making: the gods is not the cause of all things, but of the good' (trans. Bloom p.58). 'Οὗτος μὲν τοίνυν, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, εἷς ἂν εἴη τῶν περὶ θεοὺς νόμων τε καὶ τύπων, ἐν ᾧ δεήσει τούς τε λέγοντας λέγειν καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας ποιεῖν, μὴ πάντων αἴτιον τὸν θεὸν ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν.᾽

[21] 'Do you agree, I said, that this is the second model according to which speeches and poems about gods must be made: they are neither wizards who transform themselves, nor do they mislead us by lies in speech or deed?' (trans. Bloom p.61). 'Συγχωρεῖς ἄρα, ἔφη, τοῦτον δεύτερον τύπον εἶναι ἐν ᾧ δεῖ περὶ θεῶν καὶ λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν, ὡς μήτε αὐτοὺς γόητας ὄντας τῷ μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτοὺς μήτε ἡμᾶς ψεύδεσι παράγειν ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ.᾽

[22] The first and second models are designed for the rulers in particular; the third is for the auxiliaries.

[23] Translation by Bloom (p.42).

[24] Christopher Janaway, *Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1995 (p.97).

[25] The terms that Plato most frequently uses in this respect and those that most closely resemble our term 'role-model' are *tupos* and *paradeigma*, cf. *Republic* 377a10-b2; 396c6-e1; 409c6.

[26] Angela Hobbs, *Plato and the Hero: Courage, Manliness and the Impersonal Good*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (pp.59-60).

[27] *Ibid* p.64.

[28] *Ibid* p.65.

[29] *Ibid*.

[30] Herodotos, *Histories* 1.30-33.

Chapter Six

Heroes and Daimons: Plato's Cult of the Philosopher

Sokrates, like the great heroes whom Plato censors, is part fact and part fiction; he is both historical and mythical, hero of history and Platonic drama. However, Sokrates is not a hero after the fashion of an Oedipus or an Orestes, and nor is he a cult hero in the traditional sense. Sokrates' heroization entails neither suffering nor recompense, but a confirmation of the philosophical life. The emulation of Sokrates by some of his followers, humorously depicted by Plato in the *Symposium* (173b1-4, 172cb-173a5, 173c2-e3), may point to a Sokratic cult, however, as Plato also makes plain in the same dialogue, Sokrates is unique, and his uniqueness makes him, to use modern parlance, a rather hard act to follow. Despite his inimitability, however, Sokrates stands as an example to us as the ideal polis stands as an example to legislators.

As a rival to Homer, Plato presents us with his champion, a doer of deeds and a speaker of words: Sokrates the warrior-dialectician.[1] In fact, as we shall see, Sokrates has more in common with the daimon than he does with the traditional hero of poetry, drama, or religion. I do not refer simply to the Sokratic daimon but rather to the daimonic character of Sokrates himself.

In the *Symposium*, Plato carefully draws out Sokrates' daimonic nature and the eroticism of the philosophical experience (*Symposium* 203c7-204a7). In this immensely complex dialogue, we catch a glimpse of what Sokratic education would be like, its heights and its limitations. In the *Republic* we learn little about *how* the dialectical process is carried out between teacher and pupil. We are told that dialectic is the only sure path to truth, standing over and above the other sciences, but Sokrates does not go into the specifics of the philosopher ruler's role as an educator (cf. *Republic* 540a4-c2). And while it is true that in the similes of the sun, the line, and the cave we are given a broad understanding of the intellectual journey the philosopher must take, he appears to take this journey *alone*.

This, however, is not the whole picture. As long as Sokratic teaching remains the benchmark of true education (as it does in most the dialogues, the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*, are not, strictly speaking, dialogues), then the relationship between master and pupil remains at centre stage. The Sokratic teacher, unlike his rivals, does not claim to know the truth, and nor must his pupil; both the teacher and the pupil must loudly exclaim their ignorance, for 'οὔκουν ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ μὴ οἰόμενος ἐνδεὴς εἶναι οὗ ἂν μὴ οἴηται ἐπιδεῖσθαι' (*Symposium* 204a5-7).[i] Education *begins* at the moment of this recognition, and it

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[i] 'The man who does not feel himself defective has no desire for that whereof he feels no defect' (trans. W. R. M. Lamb p.183).

ends (if it can ever be said to end), when one no longer lacks knowledge. Whether Plato envisions such a possibility is uncertain. But what is certain is that it is only dialectic that can help us to attain knowledge of the beautiful and the good, a daimonic task indeed (δαιμόνιον γάρ, *Republic* 531c5), and it is not one that the dialogues themselves can perform. As I discussed in Chapter Four, the dialogues can only ever serve as a *propaedeutic* to an education in virtue, and this is not the kind of education that can lead to a vision of the beautiful and the good. But what makes the dialogues such a suitable vehicle for this *propaedeutic* education?

One way in which the dialogues could help to facilitate the educational process is by operating as a *medium* between the teacher and the student in the way that Sokrates operates as a medium (or *midwife*) between the knowledge that he and his interlocutor seek and the interlocutor himself. This puts Plato in the position of a teacher in a subtly different sense than that we would attribute to Sokrates. Nevertheless, the Sokratic dialogue like Sokratic discourse stands between us and the truth; the philosopher is a mediator. This truth, however, is not something that the dialogues can reveal. The realm of the dialogue like the realm of the daimon is one of true opinion; it stands between the truth that the *author* possesses and our ignorance.

Hero Cult and Daimon Worship in Plato's **Republic**

καὶ μόλις ἂν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἀρετῆς οὐχ ὁμοῖοι, ἀλλ' ὀλίγῳ χείρους κριθεῖτε. φθόνος γὰρ τοῖς ζῶσι πρὸς τὸ ἀντίπαλον, τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐμποδὼν ἀνανταγωνίστῳ εὐνοίᾳ τετίμηται. εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ (Thukydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.45.1)ⁱⁱ

The origin of the hero cult, and more particularly, its relationship with the Homeric tradition, is not clear.[2] What is clear, however, is that hero cults did play a significant part in the religious life of the ancient Greek polis.[3] The hero cult also had a social and political aspect.[4] The creation of a hero cult was a deliberate social act,[5] and as Friedrich Solmsen says, 'cultic and religious institutions could not remain unaffected by changes in the political order.'[6] Indeed, the political exploitation of the hero was widespread, and was due in part to the *localised* nature of hero worship; as Robert Parker states 'no god was an Athenian, whereas many heroes and heroines had been so.'[7] Heroes were in some sense 'national.'[8]

ⁱⁱ '…even if you rise to the greatest heights of heroism, it will be a hard thing for you to get the reputation of having come near, let alone equalled, their standard. When one is alive, one is always liable to the jealousy of one's competitors, but when one is out of the way, the honour one receives is sincere and unchallenged.'

What the Greek citizen seeks in his worship of the hero, Martin
Nilsson says, 'is not first and foremost his own personal interest, but
that of the state, the general good.'[9] As Erwin Rohde states: 'the
spirits of Heroes hovered nearer to men; in good fortune and bad,
men traced their handiwork.'[10] The hero protects from beyond the
grave and 'is a centre of local group identity,'[11] therefore 'in all the
circumstances of human life, in happiness or in need, for individuals
or the city, the Heroes are thus very near to men,'[12] and nearer, as
Walter Burkert observes, than the gods.[13] The hero of cult has a
permanent place in the community through his grave.[14]

In addition to the hero of cult is the hero of poetry and drama. There
is a considerable overlap between the hero of worship and the hero of
poetry, because, for the most part, the great heroes that we encounter
in epic poetry and in drama did have their own cults. However, not
all cult heroes were represented in epic poetry or drama, and they
were, for the most part, a rather less glamorous bunch.[15]

Related to the hero is the daimon. It is important to note that the hero
and the daimon, although they share many characteristics, are not
identical. Typically the daimon is a natural power,[16] a spirit. This
represents the daimon of popular belief. Daimons also had chthonic
and underworld abstractions, as we see in Aiskhylos' *Libation Bearers*:

κηρύξας ἐμοὶ
τοὺς γῆς ἔνερθε δαίμονας κλύειν ἐμὰς
εὐχάς, πατρῴων δωμάτων ἐπισκόπους,
καὶ Γαῖαν αὐτήν, ἣ τὰ πάντα τίκτεται,
θρέψασά τ᾽ αὖθις τῶνδε κῦμα λαμβάνει
(124-129)[iii]

And it is in this respect that the daimon falls into the domain of the hero.[17] However, the daimon, as B. C. Dietrich says, could be 'present anywhere and virtually at any time,'[18] while the hero, and his power, was bound to his grave. The term 'daimon' although often connected with mysterious, ancient powers, and even, as with Homer, the Olympian gods, could also be applied to deceased men or women, as in Hesiod:

τοὶ μὲν δαίμονες ἁγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι καλέονται
ἐσθλοί, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
(*Works and Days* 122-123)[iv]

Hesiod's daimons belong to the golden race, those who in death have become guardians over the subsequent, degenerate races of humankind. The daimon, therefore, is superior to the hero (cf. *Laws* 717b3-6). As Dietrich observes: 'the daemons in Hesiod displayed certain moral qualities and thus were superior in some measure to the

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[iii] 'Announce my prayers to the charmed daimons underground, who watch | over my father's house, that they may hear. Tell Earth | herself, who brings all things to birth, who gives them strength, | then gathers their big yield into herself at last' (trans. Lattimore, slightly adapted, p.97).

[iv] 'But still they live as daimons of the earth | Holy and good, guardians who keep off harm' (trans. Dorothea Wender, slightly adapted).

heroes and kindred spirits who often employed their powers at random.'[19] Indeed, Hesiod seems to have played an important role in the development of the idea of the daimon as a superior kind of hero, and also the idea, as Burkert has observed, that the deceased person could come to be worshipped not only as a hero but also, where appropriate, as a daimon.[20] This was rare, however, because daimons were thought of as minor deities, while the divide between men and gods, even heroes and gods, was vast.

The only exception to this rule was Herakles, *hēros-theos*, both hero and god. For the Greeks such a notion was rather puzzling, even contradictory;[21] however the blurring of such distinctions became more common from the 4th Century B.C. onwards, and this is especially evident in Plato's treatment of hero and daimon worship, to which we shall now turn.

In the ideal polis of the *Republic*, the formal aspect of hero worship, as with the creation of individual hero cults, is to follow standard practice, as the next passage makes clear:

Ἱερῶν τε ἱδρύσεις καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἄλλαι θεῶν τε καὶ δαιμόνων καὶ ἡρώων θεραπεῖαι· τελευτησάντων τε αὖ θῆκαι καὶ ὅσα τοῖς ἐκεῖ δεῖ ὑπηρετοῦντας ἵλεως αὐτοὺς ἔχειν. τὰ γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα οὔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς οἰκίζοντές τε πόλιν οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ πεισόμεθα, ἐὰν νοῦν ἔχωμεν, οὐδὲ χρησόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ πατρίῳ· οὗτος γὰρ δήπου ὁ θεὸς περὶ τὰ

τοιαῦτα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πάτριος ἐξηγητὴς ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ καθήμενος ἐξηγεῖται (*Republic* 427b4-c5)[v]

However, the hero of cult in the ideal polis, we assume, as with the hero of poetry and drama, must differ drastically from traditional models. The hero of cult would have to conform to the ethical standards of the Kallipolis, *with no exception*, and this would represent a radical departure for the hero of cult.[22] It is not clear if any of the traditional heroes, however sanitised, would be worshipped in the ideal polis. Who, then, are the heroes of cult in the ideal polis? If anyone would be worshipped as a hero in the ideal polis, we imagine, it would be a guardian, and most likely a philosopher ruler. Indeed, the hero and the guardian have much in common. Both are benefactors and protectors of their communities and both are, in a sense, and, recalling the imagery of the cave, chthonic beings: both remain *underground* for the benefit of others (*Republic* 415a1-c7).[23]

The hero's continued 'existence' in the grave, however, is recompense for his deeds in life, or, in some cases, reparation for crimes perpetrated against the hero himself; in either case, as Burkert states,

[v] 'The founding of temples and the institution of sacrifices, and other services to the gods and spirits and heroes, besides the arrangements for the burial of the dead and the rites we must pay to the powers of the other world to secure their goodwill. We know nothing of these things ourselves, and when we found our state we won't entrust them, if we have any sense, to anyone but their traditional interpreter. And it is Apollo who by tradition is the interpreter of such matters to all men, delivering his interpretation from his seat at the earth's centre' (trans. Bloom p.105).

the hero demands the honour appropriate to him.[24] The deceased guardian also receives honours upon his death:

καὶ τὸν ἀεὶ ἔν τε παισὶ καὶ νεανίσκοις καὶ ἐν ἀνδράσι βασανι ζόμενον καὶ ἀκήρατον ἐκβαίνοντα καταστατέον ἄρχοντα τῆς πόλεως καὶ φύλακα, καὶ τιμὰς δοτέον καὶ ζῶντι καὶ τελευτήσαντι, τάφων τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μνημείων μέγιστα γέρα λαγχάνοντα (*Republic* 414a1-2)[vi]

The honours that the guardian receives upon his death also reflect his deeds in life, but his worship is not *recompense* or *reparation*; the guardian's rewards for his service to the community range far beyond the mortal offerings associated with the hero cult. Indeed, considering what we learn in the myth of Er, it is not clear how seriously we should understand hero worship in the ideal polis as being *genuine worship* rather than just another method for controlling all the classes, and, perhaps, of Plato's readiness to exploit traditional beliefs for higher ends. However, far from identifying the guardians with heroes Plato prefers to identify them with daimons. In book 5 Sokrates tells Adiemantos:

Διαπυθόμενοι ἄρα τοῦ θεοῦ πῶς χρὴ τοὺς δαιμονίους τε καὶ θείους τιθέναι καὶ τίνι διαφόρῳ, οὕτω καὶ ταύτῃ θήσομεν ᾗ ἂν ἐξηγῆται … Καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν δὴ χρόνον ὡς δαιμόνων, οὕτω θεραπεύ σομέν τε καὶ προσκυνήσομεν αὐτῶν τὰς θήκας; ταὐτὰ δὲ ταῦτα νομιοῦμεν ὅταν τις

[vi] 'And the one who on each occasion, among children and the youths and among men, is tested and comes through untainted, must be appointed ruler of the polis and guardians; and he must be given honours, both while living and when dead, and must be allotted the greatest prizes in burials and the other memorials' (trans. Bloom p.93, slightly adapted).

γήρᾳ ἤ τινι ἄλλῳ τρόπῳ τελευτήσῃ τῶν ὅσοι ἂν διαφερόντως ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἀγαθοὶ κριθῶσιν (*Republic* 469a3-469b2)[vii]

It is only those who have proved themselves as being of the *gold* standard that can hope for such an honour (468e3-5). And, referring to the rulers of the Kallipolis, and slightly adapting a passage from *Works and Days*, Sokrates declares that: 'οἱ μὲν δαίμονες ἁγνοὶ ἐπιχθόνιοι τελέθουσιν, ἐσθλοί, ἀλεξίκακοι, φύλακες μερόπων ἀνθρώπων' (469a1-3).[viii] In death the philosopher ruler becomes a daimon, and continues his service to the community *in this new capacity*.

The same lines are referenced in the *Cratylus*. According to Sokrates, Hesiod's meaning is not that daimons are actually golden but rather he describes them as golden to reflect their good and noble natures. Moreover, and in a passage clearly invoking the *Republic*, Sokrates states that Hesiod would also consider good men in present day Athens as golden. The good, golden man is also wise, and a clue to this is contained in the word daimon, from which Sokrates rather

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[vii] 'We'll inquire, therefore, of the god how the demonic and divine beings should be buried and with what distinction, and we'll bury then as he indicates…And for the rest of time we'll care for their tombs and worship at them as at those of demons. And we'll make the same conventions for any one of those who have been judged exceptionally good in life when dying of old age or in some other way' (trans. Bloom p.149).

[viii] 'They become holy daimons dwelling on earth, | Good, warders-off of evil, guardians of humans | endowed with speech' (trans. Bloom p.149, slightly adapted).

slyly derives *daēmones* (knowing). Importantly, however, Sokrates states that a good and wise man can be called a daimon in *life* and well as in death (*Cratylus* 397e7-398c4). But what, if anything, does this mean in a wider sense, and why, in the final analysis, is the philosopher (as a ruler or otherwise) better understood as *daimonic* rather than *heroic*?

To answer this we must bear in mind Plato's attitude towards, not just the hero of cult or even to the hero as a concept, but also the hero as described in poetry and drama. What concerns Plato about the hero as depicted in, for example, Homer's poems, is what he is said to value above all else: *timē* (honour). The hero does, of course, value his strength and martial abilities, but such excellences are worthless without the recognition; indeed, it is only for such recognition that a hero will display his 'virtue.'

Honour drives the hero. It drove Akhilleus, Agamemnon and Hektor to make some dubious, and indeed, fatal decisions. If the philosopher and the hero disagree about the nature of human excellence, then they are, although in different senses, at least united by the principle that human excelling must inevitably lead to their death. In the case of the hero this is often ambiguous. Akhilleus is aware of his impending death, even at moments where he is at his most vital.[25] The hero of cult demands honour and respect from his grave, small

comfort perhaps. One thing is apparent however: death does not prevent one from desiring or pursuing honour (and nor does it necessarily prevent the philosopher from desiring and pursuing the truth, indeed, it may enhance it).[26] Akhilleus hates death, but despite his famous words (*Odyssey* 11.488-491), he retains his old conception of honour. Nothing pleases him more than to hear about the exploits of his son, Neoptolemos (*Odyssey* 11.491-540). Death, as Jean-Pierre Vernant says, is necessary for the heroic ideal.[27]

The philosopher, as an over-ground being, has a conception of honour cleansed of all physical impurities and inclinations. The 'free soul'[28] of the philosopher is not bound to the earth in quite the same way as the hero's, in life or in death. The hero seeks to gain honour, in life, through good repute and material possessions, and in death through sacrifice. The heroes' desire for honour informs their whole outlook on life and death, and one can say, tentatively, that it is central to their conception of happiness. In book 9 of the *Republic*, Sokrates weighs the happiness of the philosopher against the 'gain-lover' and the 'honour-lover'. Each of these, the lover of gain, the lover of honour and the philosopher (the lover of wisdom) have their own motivation and pleasure: the lover of gain is motivated by greed, and he desires, above all else, profit; the lover of honour is motivated by the desire to be of good repute, and his chief pleasure is in victory.

The lover of wisdom seeks only to possess the truth, and his pleasure is the pleasure of knowing the truth.

The question, as Sokrates poses it, is which life is the most pleasant? Each type would answer that it is their own life that is the most pleasant. So, says Sokrates, 'τίνι χρὴ κρίνεσθαι τὰ μέλλοντα καλῶς κριθήσεσθαι; ἆρ' οὐκ ἐμπειρίᾳ τε καὶ φρονήσει καὶ λόγῳ; ἢ τούτων ἔχοι ἄν τις βέλτιον κριτήριον;' (*Republic* 582a3-5).[ix] Given these criteria, it is the philosopher who is best able to judge, a happy coincidence indeed.

However, there is a substantial claim here. The philosopher is in a unique position. She, unlike the other two types, can not only claim to have the highest and most pleasurable of pursuits, but can also claim to have a superior understanding and appreciation of the pleasures of the other two types. The philosopher has inhabited the same world as the lover of gain and the lover of honour; he too has tasted their pleasures, but none is as true as the pleasure derived from intellectual activity (586d9); and it is only by following the guidance of wisdom,[29] however, that one will come to realise the proper merit of the pleasures of victory and gain, and intelligence.

[ix] 'But what are things to be judged, if they are to be judged rightly? Is it not by experience, intelligence and discussion?' (trans. Paul Shorey p.377).

Interestingly, as he does elsewhere, Plato sees the life of the honour lover as a second best (583a7-10). In the context of the *Republic* this makes sense. The auxiliaries are not philosophers, indeed, and insofar as they are supposed to both represent and be manifestations of the *thumos*, the auxiliary is easily identifiable with the hero, and this idea is supported by their rigorous character education, which, as we saw in Chapter Three, is designed to inhibit the excesses that can often be the result of spiritedness, and those which so often characterise the hero. The 'heroes' of the ideal polis, however, are not, like so many of the heroes of poetry and drama, rulers. Given that spiritedness and the qualities that are associated with it are not enough to qualify a person to rule, this duty is passed on to the philosophers.

Plato recognises the oddity of this reversal. The philosopher does not even want to rule, and this could hardly be said of the honour-lover (475a7-b3). In book 1 of the *Republic*, Sokrates presses the point that, in respect to ruling, and indeed all services, care for one's subjects is distinct from the payment that one receives for this service: that the benefit of ruling is not the act of ruling but the payment that one gets for undertaking it (345e1-346a1). Sokrates sees two basic types of payment for ruling depending on the nature of the ruler: ʿμισθὸν δεῖν ὑπάρχειν τοῖς μέλλουσιν ἐθελήσειν ἄρχειν, ἢ ἀργύριον ἢ

τιμήν (347a4-5).[x] However, no decent person would accept a position of authority, Sokrates says, for wealth or honour. Even at this earlier stage Sokrates has the philosopher in mind. But it is also clear from Glaukon's reaction to Sokrates' comments that he is also drawing on a stereotype; the unambitious man (or the reluctant hero as we might say today), the opposite of the contemporary politician. It is such a person, not the types currently running for office (the honour or money lovers), who must be forced to take power, either through the fear of punishment or through the fear that someone worse will take their place (347a9-d1). What, however, is the philosopher ruler's payment? At this stage in the argument, prior to the introduction of the philosopher rulers, this question is not addressed. However, as I stated in Chapter Four, the philosopher does receive some compensation for his official duties: he 'sees' the Good.

But what about the auxiliaries, what do they get out of participating in the running of the ideal polis? Early in the *Republic*, before the division is made between guardians that rule and those that do not, Adeimantos raises this objection: other rulers have fine houses and gold, all the trappings of wealth *and* honour. The guardians are the leading citizens and the polis belongs to them, and yet they seem to be nothing but glorified caretakers (419a1-420a2).

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[x] '…pay must be provided for those who are to consent to rule, either in the form of money or honour or a penalty if they refuse' (trans. Paul Shorey p.79).

Later in the *Republic*, as we have seen, Sokrates tries to prove that, at least in respect to the philosopher ruler, it can be shown that he could be in some recognisable sense 'happy.'

Prior to this, however, Sokrates merely makes the point that, on the central issue of happiness, the ideal state does not promote the happiness of one class above the other (420b3-8). This being the case, the auxiliaries must be happy in the way that auxiliaries are happy, as Sokrates puts it 'νῦν μὴ ἀνάγκαζε ἡμᾶς τοιαύτην εὐδαιμονίαν τοῖς φύλαξι προσάπτειν, ἢ ἐκείνους πᾶν μᾶλλον ἀπεργάσεται ἢ φύλακας' (420d5-e1).[xi] The auxiliary's happiness is bound up with his status; he cannot, as with the philosopher, seek a kind of happiness that is not consistent with it (466b3-7), and not, moreover, which is inconsistent with the proper functioning of the *thumos*. And as for the honour the auxiliary may crave, he will be amply satisfied both in life and death (465e1-3).

[xi] 'Don't compel us to attach to the guardians a happiness that will turn them into everything except guardians' (trans. Bloom p.98).

Daimonology in the Myth of Er

The subject of this work must first be considered according to the letter, then be considered allegorically. The subject of the whole work, then, taken in its literal sense alone, is simply "The state of souls after death," for the movement of the whole work hinges on this. If the work be taken allegorically, the subject is "Man – as, according to his merits or demerits in the exercise of his free will, he is subject to reward or punishment by Justice".[xii]

Dante did not know Greek, although he was aware of Plato, mainly through the Latin poets and the Neo-Platonists. Still, in the above passage, taken from his letter to Can Grande, we see, aside from the Christian doctrine of freewill, something which is very reminiscent of the *Republic*. Justice and death are intertwined in the *Republic*; indeed, the work is framed by these two *interrelated* themes. In book 1, Kephalos' beliefs about justice are dependent, in at least some respects, upon his views on the afterlife. And, if one looks ahead to the myth of Er in book 10, in some respects so too are Sokrates.'

Both Kephalos and Sokrates have concerns about the afterlife. Kephalos is concerned, chiefly because he is close to death, and hopes, that the life he has led will safeguard him from the horrors of

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[xii] Dante, *The Divine Comedy Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. Mark Musa, London: Penguin Classics, 1984.

Hades that in his youth he used to take so lightly (*Republic* 330e1).

Sokrates is also, although in a different sense, concerned with the 'popular' depiction of the underworld. The popular view is faulty in an important respect: *it fails to discriminate between the just and the unjust*. The common complaint, and the one that was in danger of eroding traditional religion,[30] was that the wicked go unpunished and justice is never valued for itself; and that among heroes and men, 'πώποτε ἔψεξεν ἀδικίαν οὐδ' ἐπήνεσεν δικαιοσύνην ἄλλως ἢ δόξας τε καὶ τιμὰς καὶ δωρεὰς τὰς ἀπ' αὐτῶν γιγνομένας' (366e4-5).[xiii]

Much of the remainder of the *Republic* is dedicated to countering Glaukon's challenge. However, in book 10 Sokrates returns to the theme of the rewards of the just life, not in order to mollify the likes of Kephalos, but to put the finishing touches to his analysis of the relationship between good character (*euētheia*) and happiness (*eudaimonia*), and the relationship between one's character and one's daimon.

Er is a ἄλκῐμος man like the guardian, and his journey, like the philosopher's, has a distinct purpose: 'ἑαυτοῦ δὲ προσελθόντος εἰπεῖν ὅτι δέοι αὐτὸν ἄγγελον ἀνθρώποις γενέσθαι τῶν ἐκεῖ καὶ

[xiii] '…there is not one who has ever blamed injustice or praised justice other than for the reputations, honors, and gifts that come from them' (trans. Bloom p.43).

διακελεύοιντό οἱ ἀκούειν τε καὶ θεᾶσθαι πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ'

(614d1-3).[xiv] After his remarkable journey, Er will return to the land of

the living, much like the philosopher, and speak of the truth that has

been revealed to him. What is this truth? Not merely that one can

expect to be punished for one's crimes or rewarded for one's virtue,

but the fact that we are responsible for the kind of life that we choose

to live.

Plato sees happiness as dependent upon character, specifically good

character. But Plato would not agree with Heraklitos ('ἦθος

ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων').[31] One's daimon is not one's character as such,

but that aspect of character that makes a person more or less

consistent in their behaviour, despite the continual changes that they

undergo. One's daimon is one's soul insofar as it has character.

According to the myth of Er, as we saw in the last chapter, the kind of

character that one will develop in one's life, and the attending *daimon*,

is the *choice* of the individual ('οὐχ ὑμᾶς δαίμων λήξεται, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς

δαίμονα αἱρήσεσθε', 617e4-5, there is a similar mythology in the

Phaedo 68d2-13, 82a9-b4, 83e5-8).[xv] One chooses one's character

insofar as one chooses to live a certain type of life. And it is we who

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[xiv] '…they said that he had to become a messenger to human beings of the things there, and they told him to listen and to look at everything in the place' (trans. Bloom p.298).

[xv] 'A daimon will not select you, but you will choose a daimon' (trans. Bloom p.300, slightly adapted).

are responsible for our lives, and not our daimon (cf. *Phaedo* 107d4). The *type of soul* that one will develop in one's new incarnation will depend solely on the kind of life chosen: 'ψυχῆς δὲ τάξιν οὐκ ἐνεῖναι διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαίως ἔχειν ἄλλον ἑλομένην βίον ἀλλοίαν γίγνεσθαι' (*Republic* 618b3-4).[xvi] Generally, the lives that the souls pick are informed by their previous lives and characters, 'κατὰ συνήθειαν γὰρ τοῦ προτέρου βίου τὰ πολλὰ αἱρεῖσθαι' (620a2-3).[xvii] After the choice has been made, for better or worse, the daimon will *guard* (φύλαξ) the soul in its new incarnation ensuring that it remains true to the life it chooses (620d7-e1).

The story of the first soul illustrates this. The first soul to step forward, despite a previous good record, rather like Kephalos perhaps ('ἐν τεταγμένῃ πολιτείᾳ ἐν τῷ προτέρῳ βίῳ βεβιωκότα, ἔθει ἄνευ φιλοσοφίας ἀρετῆς μετειληφότα', 619c9-d1),[xviii] chooses foolishly, picking from the selection the greatest tyranny ('μεγίστην τυραννίδα'). This soul's ten thousand year spell travelling the heavens did nothing for its judgement. This is to be expected (*Phaedrus* 249c4-7). This aspiring tyrant is not a philosopher; as Bloom says, 'the correct choice of a life depends on knowledge of the soul,

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[xvi] 'Because of necessity it is not possible for the order of the soul to become different having chosen another life' (trans. Bloom p.302).

[xvii] 'For the most part the choice was made according to the habitation of their former life' (trans. Bloom p.302).

[xviii] He had 'lived in an orderly regime in his former life, participating in virtue by habit [*ethos*], without philosophy' (trans. Bloom p.302).

not on the practice of moral virtue.'[32] Knowledge of the soul is, of course, the main task of the philosopher. Indeed, the 'practice of moral virtue' is worth little without the wisdom to accompany it:

ἔνθα δή, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, ὁ πᾶς κίνδυνος ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα μάλιστα ἐπιμελητέον ὅπως ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἀμελήσας τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος καὶ ζητητὴς καὶ μαθητὴς ἔσται, ἐάν ποθεν οἷός τ᾽ ᾖ μαθεῖν καὶ ἐξευρεῖν τίς αὐτὸν ποιήσει δυνατὸν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα, βίον καὶ χρηστὸν καὶ πονηρὸν διαγιγνώσκοντα, τὸν βελτίω ἐκ τῶν δυνατῶν ἀεὶ πανταχοῦ αἱρεῖσθαι· ἀναλογιζόμενον πάντα τὰ νυνδὴ ῥηθέντα καὶ συντιθέμενα ἀλλήλοις καὶ διαιρούμενα πρὸς ἀρετὴν βίου πῶς ἔχει, εἰδέναι τί κάλλος πενίᾳ ἢ πλούτῳ κραθὲν καὶ μετὰ ποίας τινὸς ψυχῆς ἕξεως κακὸν ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεται, καὶ τί εὐγένειαι καὶ δυσγένειαι καὶ ἰδιωτεῖαι καὶ ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἰσχύες καὶ ἀσθένειαι καὶ εὐμαθίαι καὶ δυσμαθίαι καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν φύσει περὶ ψυχὴν ὄντων καὶ τῶν ἐπικτήτων τί συγκεραννύμενα πρὸς ἄλληλα ἐργάζεται, ὥστε ἐξ ἁπάντων αὐτῶν δυνατὸν εἶναι συλλογισάμενον αἱρεῖσθαι, πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς φύσιν ἀποβλέποντα, τόν τε χείρω καὶ τὸν ἀμείνω βίον, χείρω μὲν καλοῦντα ὃς αὐτὴν ἐκεῖσε ἄξει, εἰς τὸ ἀδικωτέραν γίγνεσθαι, ἀμείνω δὲ ὅστις εἰς τὸ δικαιοτέραν. τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα χαίρειν ἐάσει· ἑωράκαμεν γὰρ ὅτι ζῶντί τε καὶ τελευτήσαντι αὕτη κρατίστη αἵρεσις (*Republic* 618b4-e3)[xix]

[xix] 'Now here, my dear Glaucon, is the whole risk for a human being, as it seems. And on his account each of us must, to the neglect of other studies, above all see to it that he is a seeker and student of that study by which he might be able to learn and find out who will give him the capacity and the knowledge to distinguish the good and the bad life, and so everywhere and always to choose the better from among those that are possible. He will take into account all the things we have just mentioned and how in combination and separately they affect the virtue of a life. Thus he knows the effects, bad and good, of beauty mixed with poverty or wealth and accompanied by this or that habit or soul; and the effects of any particular mixture with one another of good and bad birth, private station and ruling office, strength and weakness, facility and difficultly in learning, and all such things that are connected with a soul by nature or are acquired. From all this he will be able to draw a conclusion and choose – in looking off towards the nature of the soul – between the worse and the better life, calling worse the one that leads it towards becoming more unjust, and better the one that leads it to becoming juster. He will let everything else go. For we have seen that this is the most important choice for him in life and death' (trans. Bloom p.301).

The context of this passage takes its lead from Er's experiences, but it finds its true meaning in the broader context of our own lives. One's choice must be made according to a careful deliberation based upon a sound understanding of all the relevant factors. Philosophy is central to this. One must carefully scrutinise the kinds of life and the kind of life models that one is presented with, no matter how limited one's options may be.[33] This concrete understanding of all conditions, material and otherwise, which are likely to affect one's life, and which may lead one to justice or injustice, is essential for making the right choices in either life or death. And, if one is unable to do this alone, then one must take the lead from those who know and are able to distinguish between the good and the bad life. Through philosophy, specifically through the mediating power of the philosopher, we can be in a better position to make the right choices.

We have before us in the dialogues, as with the souls in the myth of Er, various patterns (*paradeigmata*) of life. Two of the greatest, that of the philosopher and that of the tyrant stand at opposite ends of what is humanly possible, and, even if, as Plato is fond of saying (cf. *Crito* 44d6-9), we may not be in a position to fully exercise ourselves for good or for evil, we still have a choice about which way we want to go and which patterns we take as being the most likely to lead us towards *eudaimonia*.

Between Gods and Men

Εἶς χορός, ἓν μέλος ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἀγγελιώταις, οὕεκεν ἄνθρωπος καὶ θεὸς ἓν γέγονε[xx]

Being a hero entails suffering and death; and the hero's suffering and death are of an epic magnitude. Heroes are 'tragic'; suffering is a key feature of the tragic life. The heroic life is not all bad however. It is a life of high achievement and great deeds; the free exercise of one's *aretē*. However, the gods are envious, and the greater the man the more the gods take notice. The gods give or withhold their favour as is their wont; but their power extends only so far, and no matter how mighty the hero may be he cannot escape his fate. The hero's death releases him from suffering, but death does not, as we have seen, necessarily signify the end of the hero's activities.

Akhilleus questions his status as lord of the dead (*Odyssey* 11.488-491), and by doing so questions the heroic code that he strove so hard to maintain, but we would expect no such complaints from Sokrates. This attitude to death, as we shall see shortly, is just one of the many

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[xx] 'One dance, one song for men and angels, for man and God are become one' (Agathias Scholasticus).

ways that Plato attempts to distance Sokrates from Akhilleus, and hence from the Akhillean model. Despite this, Sokrates actually (partly at least), compares himself to Akhilleus. Citing Akhilleus as his example, Sokrates claims one ought not to be afraid of death; in the face of danger there is only one consideration 'πότερον δίκαια ἢ ἄδικα πράττει, καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ ἔργα ἢ κακοῦ' (*Apology* 28b8-9, see *Crito* 48b6-d5)[xxi]. Neither Sokrates nor Akhilleus disregard their mortal existence, but both recognise a higher principle than life. For Sokrates this is his philosophical mission, and for Akhilleus it is his need to avenge Patroklos and restore his own diminished *timē*. Death was certainly an evil for Akhilleus, as it was for any Homeric hero, for all was in living and the expression of one's vital energy. Sokrates, however, has an open mind on this question, and insofar as he does not know whether death is an evil or a boon, he is unwilling to compromise himself and his principles (*Apology* 29d2-e2). As ever in his life, Sokrates places faith in his daimon and in the god who sanctified his mission (37e5-38a7).

The parallels between Sokrates and Akhilleus extend even further. On account of their outstanding *aretē* both Sokrates and Akhilleus faced undeserved punishment, Sokrates at the hands of Meletos and Anytos, and Akhilleus at the hands of his chief, Agamemnon. For

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[xxi] 'Whether the things he does are right or wrong and the acts of a good or bad man' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.105).

Sokrates the better man cannot be harmed by the worse, but Akhilleus would hardly agree with this. For Akhilleus his virtue is exercised for his honour alone. This is not the case with Sokrates. Sokrates cares for Athens, and he may sting it when necessary, but he, unlike the more narrowly partisan Akhilleus, kicks against the goad for the good of his fellow men, and not merely himself (30a6-b4).

Sokrates' dream concerning the day of his death ('ὦ Σώκρατες, ἤματί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἵκοιο', *Crito* 44b1-2),[xxii] is adapted from the *Iliad* ('ἤματί κε τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἱκοίμην', IX.363),[xxiii] and refers to Akhilleus' plan to sail home. Sokrates makes his journey, but Akhilleus does not. Both are given an option, both had the opportunity to leave and escape their fates. In the *Crito* Sokrates gives his reason for remaining to face his punishment. As we also learn in the *Republic*, the worst evil that one can do is to one's city (*Republic* 434c4-5). But there is even more at stake. The god's will must be obeyed. Akhilleus remains in order to restore his diminished *timē*, but at too high a price. Akhilleus' prison term, if one can call it such, results in an altogether different sort of anguish for his friends.[34] Both Sokrates and Akhilleus suffer death at the hands of another, and both

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[xxii] 'Sokrates, on the third day thou wouldst come to fertile Phthia' (trans. Harold North Fowler p.155).
[xxiii] 'on the third day thereafter we might raise generous Phthia' (trans. Lattimore p.207).

their deaths are presided over by the same god, Apollo.[35] It was Apollo's anger after Agamemnon's rough treatment of his priest that would eventually lead to Akhilleus' wrath, and it was Apollo, moreover, who would fire the fatal arrow.[36] Sokrates' own mission began with Apollo, and with his last words he paid him honour (*Phaedo* 118a8).

Sokrates has no divine parent, but he does have *aretē*, but not after the fashion of the Homeric heroes. Indeed, Sokrates is the antithesis of the hero whom Plato critiques in book 3 of the *Republic*. Sokrates may have this *aristeiai*, but his triumphs over his foes represent a failure rather than a victory. Sokrates cannot vaunt over his fallen opponents because he too falls with them; for Sokrates success, and the virtue that it represents, is always shared, as is the failure.

Integral to philosophy as a co-operative, educative process is the idea that love is not love of the beautiful or the good but a desire to produce something on account of and through the beautiful or the good (*Symposium* 206e3-7). Education is not copulation but pregnancy and giving birth. Knowledge is not *inserted* into a person but drawn out of them (*Republic* 518b6-c1). Hence, education can often be a painful process, and, for some, can prove too painful. The goodness of the beautiful young man, the potential that the Sokratic teacher

sees within him and motivates him to teach, is his fertility, and to speak less figuratively, his willingness to learn.

The power of Sokratic teaching extends beyond the man himself. Sokrates' discourses retain their effectiveness whether they are delivered by him or by *others* (*Symposium* 215c10-d6). There is no suggestion that Plato is referring to himself here, and certainly not to the dialogues. Nevertheless, the dialogues do at least *represent* Sokratic discourse. However, when Sokratic teaching, understood as a live educational process conducted between teacher and pupil, passes over into the dialogue form it cannot not survive this transformation unaltered. What ensures the educative effectiveness of discourse as written dialogue is the continued role of Sokrates as a *mediator*. The dialogues remain daimonic even after Sokrates' passing, and even though it is not his *voice* that speaks.

Death, for the hero, however, is always a relief and release from suffering. The Oedipus of Sophokles' *Oedipus at Colonus* is a prime example of the tragic hero: a once prosperous man brought low by a mixture of his own short-comings and the 'will of the gods.'[37] The theme of heroization and cult is present in other dramas, Herakles in his eponymous drama, Eurystheus in the *Children of Heracles*, even Orestes in the *Eumenides*. But only in *Oedipus at Colonus* are we presented with the full drama of heroization.[38] Oedipus evolved out

of the Theban Cycle as the subject of a series of Greek dramas, the most well received (and the best? Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452a31-33) being Sophokles' *Oedipus the Tyrant*, and he was later appropriated by the Athenians as a cult hero.[39] The location of the play is Kolonos, a district of Athens, the birthplace of Sophokles himself, whose founder, we are told in the play, is worshiped as a hero (*Oedipus at Colonus* 58-63). Oedipus comes to Kolonos already partially transformed (102-110), but for the transformation to be complete yet more suffering must befall him. The grove into which he unwittingly enters (although he is surely led to this place) is the home to the mysterious and terrifying Furies, punishers of kin-killers, which is most appropriate for Oedipus. We are led to think, and this was no doubt Sophokles' intention, of the *Eumenides* of Aiskhylos. With its theme of restoration and blame, the *Eumenides* fits in well with the pattern of *Oedipus at Colonus*. Heroes suffer, and, in part, heroization is a form of divine compensation.[40]

Oedipus is a 'man born for pain' (*Oedipus the Tyrant* 1181). This refers not just to Oedipus' characteristic deformity but also to the whole structure of his life (59-61), but not, it seems, to his death. Oedipus' language after discovering the truth hints at what is to come; Oedipus' sightlessness is a readiness for his new struggles ahead and his eventual heroization (1307-1311). Oedipus' self-mutilation is an acknowledgement of culpability and a foreshadowing of his later

self-immolation. Oedipus will go to a place whether he can neither hear nor see (*Oedipus at Colonus* 1312).

For Plato suffering must be extracted from heroization.[41] In terms of a tragedy like the *Oedipus at Colonus* this would be quite impossible. Plato knows this. Tragedy would have no role whatever in the Kallipolis. The connection between tragedy and hero cult, through such ideas as community and suffering, is strong; this being the case would a ban on tragedy affect the hero cult in the ideal state? I am not speaking here about the prohibition on excessive mourning (and lavish graves and offerings, as was typical with ancestor worship), but of the idea that the suffering of the hero, and his death, is ultimately beneficial, if not in its moment of realisation, then later, for the community where the hero eventually comes to rest, as Seaford explains:

Hero-cult may accordingly have promoted social cohesion by extending to a larger group the solidarity-in-lamentation of the kinship group at the funeral albeit perhaps in a less intense form. Such an extension may result in part from the collective significance of the hero's suffering, as having benefited or been caused by the community, or from their exceptional pathos.[42]

Kerenyi seems to go even further than this, suggesting that 'the cult and the myth of the hero contain tragedy in germ.'[43] For Bowra, through the hectic action of the play and Oedipus' transformation from beggar to hero (like, perhaps, Sokrates), 'the scenes are essential

to the whole design. They illustrate some vital points in the nature and state of a hero. Through them we see what the new power of Oedipus should mean to the ordinary man.'[44] As Bowra also points out, this theme is unique in Greek tragedy; *Oedipus at Colonus* is one of a kind, in it one sees 'the passing of Oedipus from a human to a heroic state.'[45] As Segal puts it:

Standing at the crossing of civilization and savagery, life and death, superior and subterranean powers, humanity and divinity, tragedy, like Oedipus, is rooted in local attachments but moves beyond them to the hidden places where the boundaries between man and god give way, where the biologically and socially conditioned passes into the timeless.[46]

The question of self-knowledge, so much a part of the Sokratic ethos, forms the psychological background to the Oedipus story. Oedipus unknowingly commits acts he was purposefully trying to avoid: 'no one errs willingly,' and this is true of Oedipus. Oedipus is the antithesis of Sokrates and, indeed, of the philosopher of the *Republic*: Oedipus' journey to knowledge is a descent but the philosopher's journey takes him up; knowledge is an ascent to the forms. The closer Oedipus gets to discovering the truth the closer he is to his own mortal destruction. The philosopher too will perish, but both she and Oedipus will, the former in life and the latter in death, serve the community from the grave (as Sokrates does in the dialogues).

Oedipus' 'journey' has three stages, and each one can be seen to fit into the pattern set down in book 7 of the *Republic*. The first stage is ignorance. For Oedipus this represents his ignorance of certain key facts concerning his origins, and, later, his ignorance of the cause of the plague that strikes Thebes. The second stage represents Oedipus' correct beliefs; this is the start of his journey towards knowledge. It begins when he decides to ask the Delphic oracle about the plague and it ends when he finally discovers the truth. Oedipus gains his knowledge but he does so at a price (Sokrates too visits the Delphic oracle, but he gains not knowledge but the recognition of his own ignorance). Oedipus' knowledge is tragic because it brings suffering. Death appears to follow knowledge, and we get a hint of his in the *Phaedo* (64a4-9).

Oedipus seeks his own death rather than return, and with it, the eventual destruction of his former community. Sokrates too, in the philosopher's sense, seeks death. Sokrates, however, does not seek to destroy Athens; the city is doing that all by itself. In contrast to Oedipus, however, Sokrates is still bound to his city; Oedipus seeks out another, Athens. And just as Sokrates will not save himself, Oedipus will not save Thebes (*Oedipus at Colonus* 840). Moreover, the Athens of Sokrates is not just, but the Athens of Theseus is (1040). But both Sokrates and Oedipus are not over keen on life, although for

different reasons; Oedipus is a tragic figure and the Sokrates of Plato certainly is not (1380).

Oedipus is known in equal measure for his wisdom and his folly. The wisdom of the blind but perceptive Tiresias is set in contrast to the blinkered sight of Oedipus (cf. *Meno* 100a3-7). Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx but the riddle of his own life, although it was eventually solved, brings, it appears, not salvation but damnation. It is fitting that Oedipus will never get to see the sun again, not in life or death (*Oedipus at Colonus* 1760). The situation is different for the philosopher. It is in this respect, as we shall see below, the philosopher and the cult hero are to be distinguished. What does the 'hero' gain through his heroization? For Herakles his death brought a welcome end to his labours, for Oedipus it brought a similar relief. The Delphic riddle of Sokrates is the riddle of knowledge as such; it is a riddle that led both Herakles and Oedipus to their graves and out of suffering (the death of Sokrates). A more positive doctrine must be found, however, the search for knowledge must not be blocked (*aporia*); one must be allowed to leave the cave. The key thing, of course, is that the philosopher does not suffer. The philosopher must die, sometimes for philosophy itself, but his passing is to himself of no consequence.

Sokrates also returns as the 'hero' of Platonic dialogue, and, in common with Er and the hero of cult, he returns as a *benefactor*; and he returns with a message. It is through his mission, rather than in a more traditional, 'heroic' sense, that Sokrates calls himself a benefactor of Athens (*Apology* 30e3-7). Only by being elevated to the status of a daimon can Sokrates help Athens, or indeed, any society; only by returning as Er does with his message, can Sokrates continue to educate from beyond the grave.

Endnotes

[1] However, as we saw in Chapter Three, the Akhillean type has much in common with the young guardian, and, as we see in his presentation of figures such as Kallikles and Alkibiades, Plato is not so much interested in *eradicating* the old heroic ideals but rather with giving them a new focus. I shall return to this theme later in the chapter.

[2] 'Heroic poetry is, so far as we know it, unconnected with cult. The hero with his cult is more differentiated from the hero of Epic than from the hero of Tragedy, which after all presents an act of cult' (C. Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1959, p.3). As J. N. Coldstream says 'Greek hero-worship has always been a rather untidy subject,' "Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 96. 1976 (pp. 8-17). Homeric heroes and heroes of cult 'do no more in the classical period than overlap' (Parker 1996, p.36). The origin of the hero cult is not to be found in Homer's epics (Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, trans. W. B. Hillis, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950 (p.119-121). 'In Homer the hero is the strong man alive, mighty in battle; in cultus the hero is the strong man after death, dowered with a greater, because a ghostly, strength' (Jane Ellen Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903, p.333). Cf. Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp.197-199). For a discussion on Hero cult in Homer's poems, see Theodora Hadzisteliou Price, "Hero-Cult and Homer," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 22, H. 2, 1973 (pp. 129-144) and Roy Kenneth Hack, "Homer and the Cult of Heroes," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, Vol. 60, 1929 (pp. 57-74).

[3] 'δοκῶ μέν, ἃς μή τις πράξας μηδὲ αὖ μαθὼν τὸ παράπαν οὐκ ἄν ποτε γένοιτο ἀνθρώποις θεὸς οὐδὲ δαίμων οὐδὲ ἥρως οἷος δυνατὸς ἀνθρώπων ἐπιμέλειαν σὺν σπουδῇ ποιεῖσθαι· πολλοῦ δ' ἂν δεήσειεν ἄνθρωπός γε θεῖος γενέσθαι μήτε ἓν μήτε δύο μήτε τρία μήθ' ὅλως ἄρτια καὶ περιττὰ δυνάμενος γιγνώσκειν, μηδὲ ἀριθμεῖν τὸ παράπαν εἰδώς, μηδὲ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν διαριθμεῖσθαι δυνατὸς ὤν, σελήνης δὲ καὶ ἡλίου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἄστρων περιφορὰς ἀπείρως ἔχων. ταῦτ' οὖν δὴ πάντα ὡς μὲν οὐκ ἀναγκαῖά ἐστι μαθήματα τῷ μέλλοντι σχεδὸν ὁτιοῦν τῶν καλλίστων μαθημάτων εἴσεσθαι, πολλὴ καὶ μωρία τοῦ διανοήματος· ποῖα δὲ ἕκαστα τούτων καὶ πόσα καὶ πότε μαθητέον, καὶ τί μετὰ τίνος καὶ τί χωρὶς τῶν ἄλλων, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν τούτων κρᾶσιν, ταῦτά ἐστιν ἃ δεῖ λαβόντα ὀρθῶς πρῶτα, ἐπὶ τἆλλα ἰόντα τούτων ἡγουμένων τῶν μαθημάτων μανθάνειν. οὕτω γὰρ ἀνάγκη φύσει κατείληφεν, ᾗ φαμεν οὐδένα θεῶν οὔτε μάχεσθαι τὰ νῦν οὔτε μαχεῖσθαί ποτε' (*Laws* 818b9-e2). 'Those, as I believe, which must be practised and learned by every god, daimon, and hero, if he is to be competent seriously to supervise mankind: a man certainly would be far from becoming godlike if he were incapable of learning the nature of one and of two, and of even and odd numbers in general, and if he knew nothing at all about counting, and could not count even day and night as distinct objects, and if he were ignorant of the circuit of the sun and moon and all the other stars. To suppose, then, that all these studies are not "necessary" for a man who means to understand almost any single one of the fairest sciences, is a most foolish supposition. The first thing we must grasp correctly is this – which of these branches of study must be learnt, and how many, and at what periods, and which of them in conjunction with others, and the method of combining them; this may proceed to the learning of the rest. For such is the natural order of procedure as determined by Necessity, against whom, as we declare, no god fights now, nor ever will' (trans. R. G. Bury pp.101-103).

[4] 'The states needed divine champions, and the heroes seemed to have been created on purpose to satisfy particularist demands for champions of the kind' (Martin P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion*, trans. F. J. Fielden, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949, p.233, also see Robert Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p.37, p.131)

[5] Some, probably most, hero cults are very ancient indeed; their conception therefore would be a matter for dispute. But the maintenance of a specific cult is still a social act; cults could dwindle or be superseded. The existence of worship must imply a duty of care to the dead hero and would follow from the understanding that the hero had something to offer the community.

[6] Friedrich Solmsen, *Plato's Theology*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967 (p.7).

[7] Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (p.446).

[8] Rohde, *Psyche* (p.115).

[9] Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (p.252).

[10] Rohde, *Psyche* (p.135).

[11] 'An important difference between the hero cult and the cult of the gods is that a hero is always confined to a specific locality: he acts in the vicinity of his grave for his family, group or city' (Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p.206).

[12] Rohde, *Psyche* (p.137).

[13] 'The gods are remote, the heroes are near at hand' (Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p.207).

[14] Rohde, *Psyche* (p.121).

[15] Many heroes were founders of colonies, contemporary war heroes or, indeed, public benefactors. And this is important. Heroes can be created and do not have to belong to the existing canon, and, logically speaking, the number of heroes is inexhaustible.

[16] B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods: The Development of a religious idea in Greek Popular belief and in Homer*, London: The Athlone Press, 1965 (pp.18-19).

[17] Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (p.29).

[18] *Ibid* p.56.

[19] Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (p.57).

[20] Burkert, *Greek Religion* (p.181).

[21] The literature bears testimony to the peculiar position of Herakles. Herakles' famous trip to the underworld and his apotheosis frame a remarkable life (and death), and, in the *Odyssey* at least, this is reflected in Herakles' ambiguous status as both a chthonic and an Olympian deity (*Odyssey* 11.717-747, see also *Philoctetes* 1411-12). Herakles suffered the most: his labours, the murder of his children, and his painful death and self-immolation. Even the great Herakles, favoured son of Zeus, could not call himself fortunate until he had died ('νῦν δ᾽ ἤδη θεός ἐστι, κακῶν δ᾽ ἐξήλυθε πάντων', Hesiod, *Gynaikōn Katalogos* Fr. 22.26, *Hesiod: The Shield, Catalogue of Women, other fragments*, trans. and ed. Glenn W. Most, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007, p.76).

[22] See the example of Cleomedes in Pausanias 6.9.6-9.

[23] The guardians, indeed, the whole populace, is earth-born (autochthonic). This is hardly a new idea (the founders of Thebes were said to have been sown from the teeth of the dragon that Cadmos slew, and the Athenians also had an autochthonic legend. These claims had their propaganda uses, and so it is with Plato) but Plato uses autochthony to explain, not only the bond between individual and community, but the existence of social hierarchy (*Republic* 414d1-e5).

[24] Burkert, *Greek Religion* (p.203).

[25] *Iliad* XXII 355-366.

[26] *Apology* 40e4-41c8.

[27] Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Death with Two Faces", trans. Janet Lloyd, *Reading the Odyssey: Selected Interpretive Essays*, ed. Seth L. Schein, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996 (p.58).

[28] Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Conception of Soul*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

[29] Τῷ φιλοσόφῳ ἄρα ἑπομένης ἁπάσης τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ μὴ στασιαζούσης ἑκάστῳ τῷ μέρει ὑπάρχει εἴς τε τἆλλα τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν καὶ δικαίῳ εἶναι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστον καὶ τὰς βελτίστας καὶ εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν τὰς ἀληθεστάτας καρποῦσθαι (586e-587a)

[30] 'The religion of the city-state could continue unquestioned as long as there was no doubt that the morality of the gods completely corresponded to the official morality

of the city and as long as the individual citizen's morality fell in with it as well' (Solmsen, *Plato's Theology*, p.15).

[31] Fr. 119.

[32] Bloom, "Interpretative Essay" (p.436).

[33] The last soul to make his choice is Odysseus, and he, unlike his unfortunate coeval, chooses more carefully. Odysseus, because of his former life of toil and hardship, chooses a life devoid of ambition.

[34] By this I mean his self-imposed withdrawal from battle; Akhilleus remains in his tent while his 'colleagues' fight and die.

[35] *Phaedo* 60d3.

[36] Paris (Alexandros) fired the arrow, Apollo guided it. As Neoptolemos says 'τέθνηκεν, ἀνδρὸς οὐδενός, θεοῦ δ᾿ ὕπο, τοξευτός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐκ Φοίβου δαμείς (Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 334-335). Neoptolemos' death also involved Apollo, as Peleus laments:

οὐ σπαράξομαι κόμαν,

οὐκ ἐμῷ ᾿πιθήσομαι

κάρᾳ κτύπημα χειρὸς ὀλοόν; ὦ πόλις,

διπλῶν τέκνων

μ᾿ ἐστέρησ᾿ ὁ Φοῖβος

(Euripides, *Andromakhe* 1209-1213).

[37] We cannot take *Oedipus at Colonos* to be definitive. As we saw earlier, it was the general practise to worship the hero at his grave, but with Oedipus this is prohibited, at least to anyone other than the rulers of Athens (*OC*, 1760-1767).

[38] Historical examples are generally confined to archaeology or to brief references in historical writers such as Thucydides, Herodotus, and 'travel writers', such as Pausanias and Strabo.

[39] 'The central theme is the transformation of Oedipus into a hero. As such he seems to have been honoured in Sophocles' own deme of Colonus, and it is likely that Sophocles invented the whole story. It was no doubt of little importance, but in the last years of the fifth century devout and patriotic Athens must have turned their minds to all the supernatural helpers that they could find', C. M. Bowra, *Sophoclean Tragedy*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press 1944 (pp.307-308).

[40] Bernard Knox, *The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964 (p.164).

[41] 'This play has two peaks: with one it reaches into the realm of spirits and heroes, with the other into the buffeting of fate that beset a life that is unique and plagued by suffering.' Karl Reinhardt, *Sophocles*, trans. Hazel Harvey and David Harvey, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979 (p.194).

[42] Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994 (p.111).

[43] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* (p.14).

[44] Bowra p.309

[45] *Ibid*.

[46] Charles Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981 (p.407).

Chapter Seven

Education and Ethics in Aristotle's Politics

For the *psukhē* of a state is nothing else than its *politeia*, having as much power over it as does the mind over the body…and all the members of the state must fare well or ill according to the kind of *politeia* under which they live[i]

In his *Politics* Aristotle argues that in imperfect *poleis* the chief function of education ought to be the safeguarding of the constitution, and that, with this in mind, the main aim of education should be the development of civic virtue. There is nothing remarkable about the notion that education should make provision for civic virtue and citizenship; it was, as I discussed in Chapter Two, the standard Greek view. However, Aristotle was perhaps the first educational thinker to insist that, *in any form of constitution*, education should be regulated by and be under the firm control of the state.

Aristotle's insistence that all states should undertake to educate their future citizens, and educate them in the responsibilities of citizenship, politics, and the workings of government, is one that is very much in vogue in educational policy and practice in contemporary England, particularly under the auspices of Citizenship Education.[1] Of course,

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[i] Isokrates, *Areopagitcus* 142, 14-15.

for Aristotle, true education as such is aimed at virtue, and he would not recognise, in respect to liberal education at least, a distinction between *paideia* and an education that aims at developing virtue (however conceived). This is not true of modern education, and nor, it is important to add, is Citizenship Education understood as the primary form of moral education in English schools; moral education is not restricted to Citizenship Education – it exists in various subjects across the National Curriculum. However, and importantly, as a statutory subject, and considering its relatively uncontroversial remit, Citizenship Education could become, if it has not become so already, the main platform for introducing pupils to moral issues and a conception of moral personhood and behaviour.

I am not suggesting that with Citizenship Education there is a deliberate attempt to usurp more traditional forms of moral education (such as they exist in the National Curriculum), but rather that, insofar as Citizenship Education could be seen as playing a leading role in moral education, it might seem to suggest that good character (or what the 'moral' person should be like) is reducible to a notion of what constitutes the good citizen.

However, as I discussed briefly in the Introduction (and will discuss in greater length in the next chapter) the reason for this, although in a sense accidental, is a direct consequence of the difficulty of moral

education in diverse societies. In any case, what state education would not, in some way, and to use rather neutral language, desire to teach pupils to be and act in a way that the state would consider to be beneficial to itself? However, the question I want to discuss here, before returning to Citizenship Education in the next chapter, is this: given Aristotle's claim that education is best under the control of the state, does this mean that the main aim of state education in imperfect societies should be civic virtue?

Perhaps; but this would not necessarily exclude the possibility of a non-civic moral education being provided privately. And this, of course, is what generally happens, although not in any systemised or formal sense. Can we trust private individuals to provide an organised moral education to children? In the case of parents educating their own children, we do. In any case, all private moral education still happens in conjunction with state taught moral education – and that must invite its own special problems.

§1

Politeia and Paideia

Arguing against Plato's conception of unity, Aristotle claims that the proper way is for a polis, while being a multitude, to be made a

partnership by means of education (*Politics* 1263b36-37).[2] To anyone even remotely conversant with the *Republic* and the education of the guardians in particular, this criticism seems rather misplaced. For Socrates seems to support exactly what Aristotle endorses, the idea that education is the key to social cohesion.

However, complains Aristotle, the stability of Plato's ideal polis is not based on education but on a particular conception of unity. Sokrates' error, states Aristotle, stems from his misunderstanding of the nature of the polis (*Politics* 1263b30-36). The polis is not a unity but a partnership. According to Aristotle's account of social evolution, the polis is a partnership (*koinōnia*) composed of several villages, which are in turn composed of family units, which are themselves composed of several key relationships (husband-wife, master-slave). Every polis is a sort of partnership (*koinōnia*); every partnership is formed with a view to some good (*agathon*). The partnership that is most supreme and the one that includes all the others will aim at (but not necessarily attain) the most supreme good; this partnership is the polis, the political partnership (1252a1-8).

Indeed, Aristotle is perplexed as to why Sokrates insists upon communism of property, wives and children to make his polis good (*spoudaios*) rather than by relying on habits, philosophy, and law (1263b40). With the exclusion of law, is not the ideal polis of the

Republic heavily reliant upon just what Aristotle says it should be, habit and philosophy?

In book 5 of the *Republic*, Sokrates claims that the community of women and children is the *cause* of the 'greatest good' (*megasiton agathon*) to the ideal polis (*Republic* 462a1-464b7). The greatest good of the ideal polis is its community of pleasure and pain (462a10-464a4), where all citizens feel in the same way about the same things. This community is only possible because of its communism of property, wives and children; and it is through holding everything in common[3] that the city can avoid the greatest evil, stasis.[4] The whole argument, therefore, can be reduced to this principle: *koinēi panta*.[5]

However, Aristotle doubts that any of these measures will create a stable and unified society. Moreover, Aristotle is particularly critical of the fact that only a few from a specific class are allowed to rule. Indeed, it is this, claims Aristotle, more than anything else which will cause the Plato's ideal polis to succumb to stasis (*Politics* 1264b7-23).

Sokrates, of course, has an answer to this, one that Aristotle characteristically chooses to ignore. A polis can only be stasis free, claims Sokrates, if those that rule it do not want to rule, hence eradicating the possibility that the rulers will compete for civic honours. The desire for ruling in any polis is the cause of stasis

(although could we not imagine the rulers of the Kallipolis falling out because of their desire not to rule?). This seems to suggest that no non-ideal polis can ever be stasis free.[6] Everything depends upon whether there is an alternative to ruling for those that rule, something that they value higher; and for the rulers of the Kallipolis this is philosophy. I shall return to this issue later.

As I discussed in Chapter Two, Plato recognises a tension between civic virtue and human virtue in imperfect societies; but does Aristotle? This is a complex question. Aristotle's idea that all citizens should be educated in the constitution of their polis seems to suggest he does, for he sees it as the most effective way for a state to avoid stasis and create political harmony and partnership.

As we learn in book 1 at 1260b15-17, for Aristotle how a partnership is achieved in a polis is quite simple. The answer is by making sure that the education of future citizens is conducted according to the form of the constitution (*politeia*) of their polis (1310a16). It is only by this method, civic education (1280b5-6; 1283a20; 1341a1), that a polis can successfully be governed according to its constitution (1310a16-23).[7]

Education may be essential for establishing stability in a polis (1310a13-14), but its purpose is not limited to this alone. The polis

comes into existence not merely for the sake of life but for the sake of the good life (1252b30-31, cf. 1280a31-32; 1280b33-34; 1280b40; 1291a17-19), and, as we learn in book 3, this is achievable only with education and virtue (1283a23-26). The dual function of education is political and social stability (by creating citizens who are sympathetic to the constitution of their polis) *and* the good life (through educating citizens in virtue, although not necessarily in full virtue).

Hence Aristotle holds the view that education in any society must be state sponsored and regulated.[8] In the best state education must also be, in respect to citizens, *uniform* and *universal*.[9] In Aristotle's ideal polis, as I shall discuss later, *all citizens must share in ruling and being ruled* to the same degree, and all are required to have the knowledge that enables them to rule and be ruled *well* (cf. *Laws* 762e1-5; 942c7-9).

In the case of less than ideal political communities, democracies for instance, an education that is one and the same for all would be simply infeasible, and even unnatural (and οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν παρὰ φύσιν καλόν, *Politics* 1325b10),[ii] because in such *poleis* there is, within the citizenship body, a wide range of functions, some of which are geared towards providing for the necessities of life and others that help to contribute to the community's excellence; most citizens in most *poleis* simply do not have the leisure or the ability to receive and

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[ii] 'Nothing that is against nature is noble' (trans. Michael Richard Hart).

benefit from an education in the fullest sense (1290b20-1291b14, cf. 1280b5-6, 1283a20, 1341a1, 1281b25-32).[10] This, however, does not mean that some citizens are not educated and educated in civic virtue, but rather that civic virtue, that excellence displayed in fulfilling one's civic duties, is relative to the functions that particular citizens carry out.

Since Aristotle understands education as ideally being relative to the constitution to which it serves, we should pause for a moment, and prior to moving on to look at Aristotle's ideal polis, to consider what he understands by constitution (*politeia*). A constitution, we are told at the start of book 3, 'τῶν τὴν πόλιν οἰκούντων ἐστὶ τάξις τις' (1274b38-39).[iii] More particularly, it is 'πόλεως τάξις τῶν τε ἄλλων ἀρχῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῆς κυρίας πάντων' (1278b9-10).[iv]

Here Aristotle is referring to government (of whatever kind). Indeed, constitution means the same as government (1279a26-27). Hence: 'πολιτεία μὲν γάρ ἐστι τάξις ταῖς πόλεσιν ἡ περὶ τὰς ἀρχάς, τίνα

[iii] 'Is a form of organization of the inhabitants of a state' (trans. H. Rackham p.173).
[iv] 'The ordering of a state in respect of its various magistracies, and especially the magistracy that is supreme over all matters' (trans. H. Rackham p.201, cf. 1290a8-9, 'πολιτεία μὲν γὰρ ἡ τῶν ἀρχῶν τάξις', 'for a constitution means the arrangement of the magistracies', trans. H. Rackham p.287).

τρόπον νενέμηνται, καὶ τί τὸ κύριον τῆς πολιτείας καὶ τί τὸ τέλος

ἑκάστης τῆς κοινωνίας ἐστίν' (1289a15-18).ᵛ

There are only a limited number of primary forms of constitution (as I shall discuss in a moment), although there are many more deviant forms, that is, types of constitution that share features with more than one of the primary forms.

According to Aristotle there are three basic forms of government (1279a26-28): government of the one, of the few, and of the many; and each of these forms of government comes in one of two categories, those which are administered with a view to the interest of the ruling class, and those which are administered with a view to the common interest. Aristotle calls those in the former category derivative forms and those in the latter correct forms.[11] The correct or best (*aristos*) form of single rule is kingship (*basileia*), the correct or best form of a polis that is governed by the few is called aristocracy, and finally the correct or best polis that is governed by the many is called 'polity' (*politeia*).[12] At the close of book 3 Aristotle states that 'τούτων δ᾽

ᵛ 'A constitution is the regulation of the offices of the state in regard to the mode of their distribution and to the question what is the sovereign power in the state and what is the object of each community' (trans. H. Rackham p.281).

ἀναγκαῖον ἀρίστης εἶναι τὴν ὑπο τῶν ἀρίστων οἰκονομουμένην'

(1288a33-34).[vi] But which of these correct forms is the best?

Here I shall only consider, and briefly, monarchy and aristocracy. Aristotle identifies five forms of monarchy (Spartan kingship, Oriental monarchy, dictatorship, Heroic monarchy, and absolute monarchy, *Politics* 1284b35-1285b33), although he will later reduce that number to two essential forms, Spartan kingship and absolute monarchy (1285b34-1288a32); and here I only wish to concentrate on the latter.

Aristotle begins his inquiry into absolute monarchy with this question: is it better to be ruled by the best men (ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀνδρός) or by the best laws (ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρίστων νόμων)?[13] Absolute monarchy, as Aristotle understands it (or rather, as he has its supporters and detractors understand it) is in opposition to the rule of law. However, at this time Aristotle is not so much interested with the absolute monarch's superiority over written law but with the more general problem of the inability of law to arbitrate in all cases. So, in these circumstances, where the law cannot decide, whose view is to be sovereign?

[vi] 'Of these the one governed by the best men must necessarily be the best' (trans. H. Rackham p.273).

Aristotle is of the view, very much against Plato, that, and particularly if those involved are *agathos*, that a majority decision is always superior to the decision of an *agathos* individual. Hence, in this matter at least, aristocracy is better placed than a monarchy ('εἰ δὴ τὴν μὲν τῶν πλειόνων ἀρχὴν ἀγαθῶν δ᾽ ἀνδρῶν πάντων ἀριστοκρατίαν θετέον, τὴν δὲ τοῦ ἑνὸς βασιλείαν', 1286b5-6).[vii]

Indeed Aristotle is largely critical of absolute monarchy, with the exception of when the monarch is possessed of the most outstanding virtue; and in such a case it is right for the wider community to yield to total obedience (1288a15-29).

But which does Aristotle think would be the best state of affairs for a polis, being governed by a king of outstanding virtue or by a body of equally virtuous citizens? This is an important question, because the answer must affect how we judge the ideal polis of books 7 and 8, which, as we shall see, resembles not monarchy (in any form) but the correct form of aristocracy.

Earlier on in the text, leading to his discussion of monarchy, Aristotle first introduces the problem of how a state (any state) is to accommodate the man of outstanding virtue. In democracies and

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[vii] 'If then the rule of the majority when these are all good men is to be considered an aristocracy, and that of the one man kingship, aristocracy would be preferable for the states to kingship' (trans. H. Rackham p.259).

oligarchies the man of outstanding virtue would present something of a problem, since this individual would pose a direct threat against the government. In the case of the best constitution (which here I take Aristotle to mean the 'ideal' constitution) there is some doubt as to what to do (1284b26-27).

For Aristotle, to ostracise such an individual, a fairly typical tactic in 5th Century B.C. Athens,[viii] is out of the question. Besides, who would think that it is right for such an exceptional person to submit to being ruled by the inferior?

κἂν εἰ τοῦ Διὸς ἄρχειν ἀξιοῖεν, μερίζοντες τὰς ἀρχάς. λείπεται τοίνυν, ὅπερ ἔοικε πεφυκέναι, πείθεσθαι τῷ τοιούτῳ πάντας ἀσμένως, ὥστε βασιλέας εἶναι τοὺς τοιούτους ἀιδίους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν (*Politics* 1284b31-34)[ix]

For people of equal standing, however, it is just and noble to share in government (1325b6-7), otherwise:

τὸ δὲ μὴ ἴσον τοῖς ἴσοις καὶ τὸ μὴ ὅμοιον τοῖς ὁμοίοις παρὰ φύσιν, οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν παρὰ φύσιν καλόν. διὸ κἂν ἄλλος τις ᾖ κρείττων κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ κατὰ δύναμιν τὴν πρακτικὴν τῶν ἀρίστων, τούτῳ καλὸν ἀκολουθεῖν καὶ

[viii] Although not necessarily because the person exiled was thought to be outstandingly virtuous, though Aristides the 'Just' maybe be one such person.

[ix] 'That would be the same as if they claimed to rule over Zeus, dividing up his spheres of government. It remains therefore, and this seems to be the natural course, for all to obey such a man gladly, so that men of this sort may be kings in the cities for all time' (trans. H. Rackham p.247).

τούτῳ πείθεσθαι δίκαιον. δεῖ δ' οὐ μόνον ἀρετὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ δύναμιν ὑπάρχειν, καθ' ἣν ἔσται πρακτικός (*Politics* 1325b7-14)[x]

The man of outstanding virtue (κατ᾽ ἀρετῆς ὑπερβολήν)[14] is characterised as a god among men (θεὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποις).[15] Indeed, the man of outstanding virtue (*aretē*) perhaps cannot even be considered a part of the polis (1284a5-8); such a person is either a beast or a god.[16]

Who or what does Aristotle have in mind here? Considering the era that Aristotle probably wrote the *Politics*, and also his political and personal connections,[17] it is not surprising that some scholars have conjectured that by the man of outstanding virtue and absolute monarch we are supposed to see Alexander the Great. Is this justified? Alexander was quite possibly a god to some (and quite possibly a beast to many more) – and he certainly had a power that ranged far beyond the polis – so perhaps there is something to this claim.

According to H. Kelsen's interesting analysis, the *Politics* includes an 'apology' for Macedonian kingship, and that, on the whole,

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[x] 'For those that are equal to have an unequal share and those that are alike an unlike share is contrary to nature, and nothing contrary to nature is noble. Hence in case there is another person who is our superior in virtue and in practical capacity for the highest functions, him it is noble to follow and him it is just to obey; though he must possess not only virtue but also capacity that will render him capable of action' (trans. H. Rackham p.551).

Aristotle's account of kingship is 'a vindication of monarchy.'[18] However, Aristotle's account of sovereignty is complex, and we should not draw our conclusions in haste. Besides, Aristotle is reasonably clear in his insistence that monarchy should only be employed and would only be constitutional if there is an individual who is evidently more virtuous than the rest; and I see no reason to believe that Aristotle thought Alexander to be such a man (but that he may have hoped that he would become so remains a possibility).[19]

There is no easy answer to the question how we are to understand Aristotle's attitude to the man of outstanding virtue or to his alleged endorsement of absolute monarchy. This much seems clear however – that if an individual of outstanding virtue did exist then certain consequences must follow, that is, that such a person must rule absolutely. This does not commit Aristotle to saying that such a person ought to exist, or that absolute monarchy is the very best form of constitution.

Aristotle's analysis of aristocracy is found, in the main, at various points in books 3 and 4. In book 3 we are given this definition: 'ἀριστοκρατικὸν δὲ ὃ πέφυκε φέρειν πλῆθος ἄρχεσθαι δυνάμενον τὴν τῶν ἐλευθέρων ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ τῶν κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν ἡγεμονικῶν πρὸς

πολιτικὴν ἀρχήν' (*Politics* 1288a10-13).[xi] According to book 4, 'ἀριστοκρατίας μὲν […] ὅρος ἀρετή' (1294a11),[xii] for aristocracy in the most complete sense distributes 'honour according to virtue' (1294a11); as Aristotle states earlier:

τὴν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἀρίστων ἁπλῶς κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν πολιτείαν καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὑπόθεσίν τινα ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν μόνην δίκαιον προσαγορεύειν ἀριστοκρατίαν, ἐν μόνη ἁπλῶς ὁ αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ πολίτης ἀγαθός ἐστιν, οἱ δ᾽ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἀγαθοὶ πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν εἰσὶ τὴν αὑτῶν (*Politics* 1293b4-9)[xiii]

Citizens in the 'best' (*aristos*) form of aristocracy are 'good' (*agathos*), not relatively, but absolutely, and 'ἀριστοκρατία βούλεται τὴν ὑπεροχὴν ἀπονέμειν τοῖς ἀρίστος τῶν πολιῶν' (1298b41-42).[xiv]

In addition to these best (*aristoi*) constitutions there is also an 'ideal' constitution (*kat' eukhēn*, 1295a25-32). Whether in this and other such passages Aristotle has the ideal polis of books 7 and 8 in mind is not altogether clear. The phrase '*kat' eukhēn*' does recur in book 7,[20] so

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[xi] 'A community fit for aristocracy is one that naturally produces a populace capable of being governed under the form of government fit for free men by those who are fitted by virtue for taking the part of leaders in constitutional government' (trans. H. Rackham p.271).

[xii] 'Virtue is the defining factor of aristocracy' (trans. H. Rackham p.317).

[xiii] 'For it is right to apply the name 'aristocracy' – 'government of the best' – only to the constitution of which the citizens are best in virtue absolutely and not merely good men in relation to some arbitrary standard, for under it alone the same person is a good man and a good citizen absolutely, whereas those who are good under the other constitutions are good relatively to their own form of constitution' (trans. H. Rackham p.313).

[xiv] 'Aristocracy means the assignment of the highest place to the best citizens' (trans. H. Rackham p.317).

even if we cannot be sure that in the above passage Aristotle is referring to the ideal polis of books 7 and 8, we should perhaps still understand the phrase '*kat' eukhēn*' in these contexts as referring to the best possible constitution with, therefore, the best possible material conditions,[21] rather than as another example of a best constitution to stand alongside the correct forms of aristocracy, monarchy and polity.[22]

However, as it seems that the correct form of aristocracy is very similar to the ideal constitution, if not in all the details then at least in respect to an important principle (that its citizens are virtuous absolutely and not merely relatively, 1332a10-11), how then are we to understand this contrast between best and ideal? We must, it seems, understand the correct form of aristocracy of books 3 and 4 as somehow falling short of the ideal, but in what respect? Perhaps the clue is in Aristotle's choice of words. '*kat' eukhēn*' literally means 'what one would pray for', hence the translation 'ideal' is not misplaced. It seems to refer to a state of affairs that does not exist, but that one hopes will. It is also fairly close in meaning to 'wish for', and sometimes with the connotation that what is being wished for is unrealistic or unattainable, like a day-dream (*Republic* 450d1-3, 456b12, 499c4, 540d1-3, *Laws* 841c4-7).

In the *Republic*, *eukhēn* and its derivations is used in the context of Sokrates' musings on the possibility of the ideal polis. Sokrates is anxious to point out that while his theory is, on the face of it, an attempt at wishful thinking, that nevertheless, and with the proviso that not everything in his theory will be realized in practice, the ideal polis is not a logical impossibility. And much, I would argue, is the same with Aristotle. In both cases, with both Plato's and Aristotle's ideal *poleis*, what we are presented with is an example of political theorizing.[23]

Aristotle adds the important qualifier that what has been imagined must not exceed the bounds of what is possible (*Politics* 1265a19). What will distinguish the correct form of aristocracy from the ideal form, therefore, will be that in the case of the latter what we get is a discussion of an aristocracy that may never have existed and one which will have every advantage possible that Aristotle can conceive.

Earlier in book 4, Aristotle makes it clear that it is the task of political science to consider the 'ideal' (*kat' eukhēn*) constitution (1288b25), and in book 2 he also declares that he takes as a subject of primary interest the political community that is '*πασῶν τοῖς δυναμένοις ζῆν ὅτι μάλιστα κατ᾽ εὐχήν*' (1260b26-29, my emphasis).[xv]

[xv] 'Best of all the forms for a people able to pursue the most ideal mode of life' (trans. H. Rackham p.69).

The investigation into the best form of constitution first requires an inquiry into the best mode of life and whether the same kind of life is desirable for both the individual and the polis (1323a14-1323a22). Aristotle concludes, of course, that the best life for the individual and the polis is the life of virtue (1323b40-1324a2). Following from this, it is also apparent that the *eudaimonia* of the individual is also the same as that of the state (*Politics* 1324a5-9), since happiness is defined as the life according to virtue (1325b15-17).

The best constitution, states Aristotle, is: 'τὴν τάξιν καθ᾽ ἣν κἂν ὁστισοῦν ἄριστα πράττοι καὶ ζῴη μακαρίως' (1324a23-25).[xvi]

However, even if we accept this, and accept that the virtuous life is the best, there is still, according to Aristotle, the problem that it is not absolutely clear which life of virtue is most desirable, the life of active citizenship or the life of the philosopher, detached from political participation (*Politics* 1324a25-29). This question is an important one, and especially for Aristotle's ideal polis, because politics and philosophy are chosen by those who are most anxious for virtue (1324a29-31).[24]

[xvi] 'The system under which anybody whatsoever would be best off and would live in felicity' (trans. H. Rackham p.541).

Evidently Aristotle does not want to consider the life that combines politics and philosophy. This, of course, is deliberate. Aristotle's ideal polis has no philosopher rulers, no men (or women) of outstanding virtue. Aristotle's perfect community is based on quite a different conception of justice: it is based upon the equality of virtue.

§2

The Good Citizen and the Good Man

σπουδαία πόλις ἐστὶ τῷ τοὺς πολίτας τοὺς μετέχοντας τῆς πολιτείας εἶναι σπουδαίους (*Politics* 1332a33-34)[xvii]

But who is this good citizen? Aristotle's discussion of citizenship is largely confined to book 3.[25] However, we shall find that what he says about the citizen in the best constitution (as he calls it in book 3) does seem to fit in with what we learn about the class structure and education of the ideal polis. A citizen, says Aristotle, is the one who has the right to share in deliberative and judicial office (*Politics* 1275b19-21). This is a broad definition. Citizenship, of course, differs from constitution to constitution.[26] In book 3 we are told that:

[xvii] 'The good of the polis is caused by the citizens who share in its government being virtuous' (trans. H. Rackham p.599).

πολίτης δὲ κοινῇ μὲν ὁ μετέχων τοῦ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαί ἐστι, καθ᾽ ἑκάστην δὲ πολιτείαν ἕτερος, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἀρίστης ὁ δυνάμενος καὶ προαιρούμενος ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν πρὸς τὸν βίον τὸν κατ᾽ ἀρετήν (*Politics* 1283b44-1284a3)[xviii]

Does this mean that for Aristotle the virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*agathos*) man is the same as that of the good (*spoudaios*) citizen (1276b16-19)? The answer, as we shall see, is that, given certain conditions, i.e., in the ideal polis, they are the same. Let us look at Aristotle's argument in detail.

The first stage of Aristotle's argument runs like this:

1. Citizens have a virtue (*aretē*) that is relative to the function (*ergon*) that they fulfill in their community

2. Citizens have a virtue (*aretē*) that is common to all citizens in all constitutions – that which helps to safeguard their particular constitution

3. The *aretai* of a citizen are relative to the constitution to which they belong

4. If there are various forms of constitution, there cannot be a single virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*spoudaios*) citizen (since functions differ

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[xviii] 'A citizen is in general one who shares in governing and being governed, although he is different according to each form of constitution, but in relation to the best form a citizen is one who has the capacity and the will to be governed and to govern with a view to the life in accordance with virtue' (trans. H. Rackham p.241).

according to the constitution, as do the means of preserving the constitution)

5. The good (*agathos*) man possesses perfect virtue (*aretē*)

6. Hence it is possible to be a good (*spoudaios*) citizen without having the virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*spoudaios*) man (1276b20-35)

But what about in respect to the best (*aristos* meaning 'ideal') polis:

1. Even the best polis cannot consist entirely of good (*spoudaioi*) men

2. Performing functions well is dependent on virtue (*aretē*)

3. All citizens cannot be alike because their functions are not alike

4. The virtue (*aretē*) of a citizen is not the same as the virtue (*aretē*) of a good (*agathos*) man

5. A necessary condition of the polis being the best is that all its members are good (*spoudaioi*) citizens

6. It is not possible for all citizens to possess the virtue (*aretē*) of a good (*agathos*) man since it is not necessary for all citizens in the best polis to be good (*spoudaios*) men.

7. Therefore the virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*spoudaios*) citizen and the good (*spoudaios*) man are not the same (1276b36-1277a5)

But perhaps the *aretē* of the *spoudaios* citizen of a particular sort will be the same as the *aretē* of the *spoudaios* man:

1. A good (*spoudaios*) ruler is wise (*phronimos*) and virtuous

2. The virtue (*aretē*) of the ruler is the same as the virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*agathos*) man

3. The virtue (*aretē*) of the citizen in general will not be the same as that of a man

4. The virtue (*aretē*) of a particular citizen is the same as that of the good (*agathos*) man

5. Therefore: the virtue (*aretē*) of the ruler and the non-ruling citizen are not the same (1277a13-25)

And finally:

1. The virtue (*aretē*) of the citizen consists in the ability to rule and be ruled well

2. The virtue (*aretē*) of the good (*agathos*) man is displayed in ruling

3. Therefore: the virtue (*aretē*) of the non-ruling citizen is not the same as the virtue (*aretē*) of the ruler/good (*agathos*) man (1277a25-29)

To sum up: the citizen has three *aretai*: virtue in respect to function; virtue in respect to the preservation of the constitution; (and in the best polis) virtue in respect to the capacity to rule and be ruled. When the citizen is a ruler he gains an additional virtue, that of being *phronimos*, and since being *phronimos* is a feature of the *agathos* man, the citizen who rules has the virtue of the *agathos* man, hence the

virtue of the citizen who rules is the same as the virtue of the *agathos* man.[27]

Although the virtues of the ruler and the ruled are different, the good (*agathos*) citizen must have both the knowledge and ability to rule and submit to rule, for the virtue of the citizen (as we saw above) consists in just this (1277b10-16).[28] The virtue of the good citizen consists in his knowledge of government from both sides; and it is in respect to this knowledge that a citizen is best able to discharge their political functions. Therefore, says Aristotle, both of these virtues (ruling and being ruled well) are characteristic of a good (*agathos*) man. In the 'best ordered' polis, says Aristotle, artisans and craftsmen will not be citizens, because citizenship in its fullest sense includes the right to hold the highest offices of the polis (1278a5-8). Therefore artisans and farmers are only quasi-citizens and not citizens in the fullest sense of the word; only the true citizen is capable of sharing in the honours of the polis (1278a35-38). The answer to the initial question has been answered therefore: *in the best polis there is a sense in which the virtue of the good citizen and the virtue of the good man is the same*, but in other, lesser regimes, this does not obtain (1278b1-5). But how are such individuals to be created? To wit, how does a person become a perfect citizen and at the same time a perfect man, capable of ruling and being ruled well according to virtue?[29]

Education in the Ideal Polis

Aristotle's formal discussion of education is carried out over two books, starting in book 7 at 1331b25 and finishing, incomplete, at the end of book 8 at 1342b35. The educational system of Aristotle's ideal polis has two related aims: a political aim, which is partly concerned with creating citizens who can rule (*Politics* 1332b11-1333a2), and an ethical aim, which is concerned with the character of the citizens.

For a ruler to be good (*kalōs*) it is necessary first for him to have *been ruled* (1331a3-5): for in order for a ruler to have a sound understanding of what it requires to govern others his experience as a subject is indispensable. Accordingly the citizen body in the ideal polis is divided into three groups:[30] soldiers (trainee rulers), councillors (actual rulers), and priests (retired rulers), and all citizens go through this process: starting out as soldiers (and as subjects), before becoming rulers themselves (and finally retiring to religious office, and becoming subjects once more).[31] Hence, and following this structure, education must also be the same but in another way different (1332b15-1333a2, a similar point is made in book 3 at 1276b16-20). As Aristotle put it earlier, it is almost the same education

that makes a good (*spoudaios*) man that also makes him capable as a citizen or king (1288a38-46).

His educational system is also designed to create people (or more accurately, men) who are both intelligent and spirited in the right degree (1327b18-1328a22). Sound familiar? For Aristotle, the Greeks occupy a mean position both geographically and ethnically; they can, therefore, be invested – correct education withstanding – with the perfect blend of spirit and intelligence. This idea, as I discussed in chapter three, was a common Greek preoccupation. Aristotle, of course, gives his own spin on it. Aristotle's ideal citizen, while being intelligent, should not, like Plato's guardians, be harsh towards strangers, but only towards wrongdoers. Again Aristotle is misinterpreting here. Plato does not state that the guardians must be harsh towards strangers, but only towards enemies of the state (who may or may not be *xenoi*).

Aristotle's next criticism is nearer the mark however. He points out that the chief function of anger (in the sense of 'righteous indignation') should be more properly reserved for friends or colleagues who err rather than one's enemies. I think this is a fairly good insight, and whilst Plato does not seem to consider it, I think that he would have expected nothing less of his guardians (1327b38-1328a16).

The first concern of the government of the ideal polis is with ensuring that suitable children are produced for the state, children who as adults will be able to take a full and active role in the polis, and this requires some rather strict rules governing marriage, sexual relations and procreation.

The first stage of a child's education in the ideal polis begins at home at the age of two and terminates at five. This early, pre-school education must focus on both the body (the purpose of which is to create physical health and appropriate bodily habits) and on 'moral' development. Official tutors will regulate – much like in the *Republic* and the *Laws* – which *mythoi* are suitable for young children. Children's games are to be conducted with a view to their future occupation; and with this in mind, children are not to be allowed to associate with slaves. Children are also to be shielded from indecent talk, behaviour and images, in both public and private. At five years of age children enter the state school system, where they will spend two years watching the older children work at the lessons that they themselves will eventually take up. At seven years old and up to puberty, children are to study gymnastics; and then, to the age of twenty-one, they will study *mousikē* (1334b29-1337a3).

Book 8 begins by restating some of the principles presented in the earlier books:

Ὅτι μὲν οὖν τῷ νομοθέτῃ μάλιστατευτέον περὶ τὴν τῶν νέων παιδείαν, οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀμφισβητήσειεν. καὶ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν οὐ γιγνόμενον τοῦτο βλάπτει τὰς πολιτείας· δεῖ γὰρ πρὸς ἑκάστην παιδεύεσθαι, τὸ γὰρ ἦθος τῆς πολιτείας ἑκάστης τὸ οἰκεῖον καὶ φυλάττειν εἴωθε τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ καθίστησιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, οἷον τὸ μὲν δημοκρατικὸν δημοκρατίαν, τὸ δ᾽ ὀλιγαρχικὸν ὀλιγαρχίαν· ἀεὶ δὲ τὸ βέλτιον ἦθος βελτίονος αἴτιον πολιτείας (*Politics* 1337a10-19)[xix]

Apart, perhaps, from the addition of drawing, Aristotle's educational syllabus in book 8 follows standard Athenian practice; the four formal subjects are (1) *grammatikē* (2), *gumnastikē* (3), *mousikē* (4), *graphikē* (1337b24-28).

The absence of mathematics, and, indeed, of any higher, philosophical studies, has been noted by scholars. This might reflect the singularly civic nature of Aristotle's educational programme, or it may imply, perhaps, an implicit criticism of the more ambitious educational system of the *Republic*. But we have to remember, however, that book 8 is unfinished, and that in terms of what

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[xix] 'Now nobody would dispute that the education of the young requires the special attention of the lawgiver. Indeed the neglect of this in states is injurious to their constitutions; for education ought to be adapted to the particular form of constitution, since the particular character belonging to each constitution both guards the constitution generally and originally establishes it – for instance the democratic spirit promotes democracy and the oligarchic spirit promotes oligarchy; and a better spirit always produces a better constitution' (trans. H. Rackham p.635).

Aristotle has to say about education, he does not really get beyond a discussion of character education, and it is unlikely that he would have had nothing more explicit to say about the education of the intellect. Besides, Aristotle does state at 1338a4-8 that, along with the education of character, that the intellect will also need educating; and in the *Ethics* we are told that intelligence is gained through instruction (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a14-16, cf. 1144a7), and this presumably means instruction in the sciences, or at least in some systemised programme of study whose aim is to refine and expand a student's 'mental' faculties.

The greater part of Aristotle's formal discussion on education is focused on *mousikē*. Again, as with Plato, this is testament to the centrality that this 'subject' had within traditional Greek education, and again to this idea that any reform in education, or any proper attunement of education, requires the educator or theorist to come to grips with it.

Before Aristotle can state whether music ought to be included within his educational programme its pedagogical merits must be ascertained (*Politics* 1339b12-13). Music, Aristotle informs us, is usually undertaken with a view to either amusement, entertainment, or because of its educative effects.[32] Despite this, however, its usefulness compared with the other educational pursuits is not

altogether clear (1338a13-25). The study of music must not result in a vulgar professionalism; education in music is not so much about mastering an instrument or gaining technical ability (although some technical ability is inevitably involved), but more about the effect that the music has on both the person performing and their audience.[33]

Through rhythm and melody the full range of character traits can be represented (1340a20); and through listening to music one is compelled to feel certain emotions. Playing and listening to music has a direct effect on human character and soul (1340b10-14). In fact music is imitative of character (μιμήματα τῶν ἠθῶν, 1340b40). And through playing or listening to the right kind of music (1341b33-35),[34] we are able to use its emotive effect and put it to a sound ethical purpose.[35] Aristotle sees a correspondence between the pleasure that one might derive from music and certain feelings that go along with ethically infused emotions, therefore music must be relevant to ethical habituation: 'δεῖ δῆλον ὅτι μανθάνειν καὶ συνεθιζεσθαι μηθὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ κρίνειν ὀρθῶς καὶ τὸ χαίρειν τοῖς ἐπιεικέσιν ἤθεσι καὶ ταῖς καλαῖς πράξεσιν' (1340a16-18)[xx].

As Aristotle does not get beyond a discussion of *mousikē* – and hence the education of character – we are not in a position to adequately

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[xx] …'there is obviously nothing that it is more needful to learn and become habituated to than to judge correctly and to delight in virtuous characters and noble actions' (trans. H. Rackham p.657).

judge if Aristotle's education is sufficient for the task that he sets for it – that is – the creation of a citizen body who can at some period all possess the virtue of the good man and the virtue of the good citizen.

But in the absence of the ideal condition of the ideal polis how are we to approach education? What is Aristotle's answer to the question of teaching virtue in imperfect societies? Aristotle concludes his *Nicomachean Ethics* with a discussion on education. One of the purposes of education is to create virtuous character; to create in the subject a love of what is noble and a hatred of what is base. The best way to accomplish this is through the law, that is, through state education, since through the law it is easier to regulate the kinds of habits, in the young and in adults alike, which are conductive to virtue.

τὸν ἐσόμενον ἀγαθὸν τραφῆναι καλῶς δεῖ καὶ ἐθισθῆναι, εἶθ᾽ οὕτως ἐν ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ἐπιεικέσι ζῆν καὶ μήτ᾽ ἄκοντα μήθ᾽ ἑκόντα πράττειν τὰ φαῦλα, ταῦτα δὲ γίνοιτ᾽ ἂν βιουμένοις κατά τινα νοῦν καὶ τάξιν ὀρθήν, ἔχουσαν ἰσχύν (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1180a15-19)[xxi]

Education at home, argues Aristotle, is very much a second best; ideally education should be state run. Paternal authority is not

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[xxi] 'In order to be a good a man must have been properly educated and trained, and must subsequently continue to follow virtuous habits of life, and to do nothing base whether voluntarily or involuntarily, then this will be secured if men's lives are regulated by a certain intelligence, and by a right system, invested with adequate sanctions' (trans. H. Rackham p.633).

always sufficient, and the law has greater force. But if such a system is not forthcoming, then it becomes the duty of the individual to oversee the training of their young. And an indispensable element in this is knowledge of government (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1179b20-1180b28). For Aristotle, education retains its essentially political nature even if it is conducted in the home.

Aristotle's 'universal' education can only work if a significant number of the residents are not given a liberal education and are not citizens: Aristotle's 'ideal' education, and the state which it serves, is exclusive, indeed more even exclusive than his contemporary Athens. In addition to this, Aristotle claims that the virtues of citizenship only find their expression (in varying degrees) in *poleis*.

This may appear ironic considering that Aristotle was writing during a time where the city-state, as a centre of power, was on the wane.[36] Whatever the reason for Aristotle's defense of the *polis* as a political unit,[37] he does seem to be of the view that, as a model of community living and as a necessary result of certain features of human nature, the polis is the most desirable form of human habitat.

I am not going to quarrel with Aristotle on all of these points. Suffice to say, he is probably wrong. Because he believes that moral education is essential to the stability of a state, Aristotle is not willing

to countenance a system of moral education that exists outside of state control (Aristotle does not consider the possibility that a non-state run moral education need not be at variance with the basic demands that the state makes of its citizens).

Plato, as I have argued, does. However, in his *Laws*, which describes a society which is less than ideal (although if it existed it would still rank as the most perfect of all imperfect societies), moral education is still under the control of the state.

<center>**§4**</center>

<center>*Education in Plato's* **Laws**</center>

The model of education that we are given in the *Laws* is very specific; like its sister in the *Republic* it is one which, taken in its entirety, is intended to serve a very particular kind of society. Magnesia, we are told, is the second best polis (*Laws* 739a6), does this mean, therefore, that its system of education is also second best? Possibly, but it is certainly not second rate.

Indeed, in the *Laws* Plato actually imagines a state of affairs where education is even more pervasive than it is in the best polis of the *Republic*. Not only is education extended to all the citizens (tailored,

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still, by their individual capabilities) but it is also even more heavily regulated, and regulated by persons dedicated to the task. This extra command and control is a result of the more imperfect nature of the polis, and of the emphasis on written *law* rather than on unwritten custom. Hence, more truly than the ideal polis of the *Republic*, Magnesia has a distinctly Orwellian feel. Indeed, reading through this rather curious dialogue one can at times do nothing but take the Athenian at his word; there seems to be nothing ironic or figurative about the second best polis.

In the *Republic* there is at least the suggestion that the bigger thing is being used to better illustrate the lesser (*Republic* 368e2-369a2, cf. *Statesman* 218d8-9), and that what Plato is most interested in is the *psukhē*; but there is no such suggestion in the *Laws*. The issue of how we should understand the relationship between the *Republic* and the *Laws*, their *poleis*, and Plato's intention when he wrote them, both as a philosopher and a political theoriser (if one can permit such a distinction), is not something that I wish to get into here.

I am more interested in the basic idea we find in the *Laws* that education is aimed at creating good citizens *across the board and not just with philosophers who rule*. Education still has as its final aim (in the best case scenario) *perfect virtue*, but it does appear to be the case that with the *Laws* Plato is offering a system of public education that

is more sympathetic to the realities of civic life and the general condition of Homo Sapiens.

The broadest definition of the function of education in the *Laws* is found at 643d1-3:

κεφάλαιον δὴ παιδείας λέγομεν τὴν ὀρθὴν τροφήν, ἣ τοῦ παίζοντος τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς ἔρωτα μάλιστα ἄξει τούτου ὃ δεήσει γενόμενον ἄνδρ᾽ αὐτὸν τέλειον εἶναι τῆς τοῦ πράγματος ἀρετῆς[xxii]

However, a few lines later at 643e6-9, the Athenian narrows his definition; contrasting it with mere vocational training, he declares:

εἶναι παιδείαν ὁ νῦν λόγος ἂν εἴη, τὴν δὲ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐκ παίδων παιδείαν, ποιοῦσαν ἐπιθυμητήν τε καὶ ἐραστὴν τοῦ πολίτην γενέσθαι τέλεον, ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἐπιστάμενον μετὰ δίκης[xxiii]

How this process of education works is fleshed out early in book 2:

τῶν παίδων παιδικὴν εἶναι πρώτην αἴσθησιν ἡδονὴν καὶ λύπην, καὶ ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴ ψυχῇ καὶ κακία παραγίγνεται πρῶτον, ταῦτ᾽ εἶναι, φρόνησιν δὲ καὶ ἀληθεῖς δόξας βεβαίους εὐτυχὲς ὅτῳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ γῆρας παρεγένετο· τέλεος παιδείαν δὴ λέγω τὴν παραγιγνομένην πρῶτον παισὶν ἀρετήν·

[xxii] 'First and foremost, education, we say, consists in that right nurture which most strongly draws the soul of the child when at play to a love for that pursuit of which, when he becomes a man, he must possess a **perfect mastery**' (trans. R. G. Bury p.65).

[xxiii] 'The education we speak of is an education from childhood in goodness, which makes a man eagerly desirous of becoming a **perfect citizen**, understanding how both to rule and be ruled justly' (trans. R. G. Bury p.65, slightly adapted).

ἡδονὴ δὴ καὶ φιλία καὶ λύπη καὶ μῖσος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἐν ψυχαῖς ἐγγίγνωνται
μήπω δυναμένων λόγῳ λαμβάνειν, λαβόντων δὲ τὸν λόγον,
συμφωνήσωσι τῷ λόγῳ ὀρθῶς εἰθίσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν προσηκόντων ἐθῶν,
αὕτη 'σθ᾽ ἡ συμφωνία σύμπασα μὲν ἀρετή, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς καὶ
λύπας τεθραμμένον αὐτῆς ὀρθῶς ὥστε μισεῖν μὲν ἃ χρὴ μισεῖν εὐθὺς ἐξ
ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους, στέργειν δὲ ἃ χρὴ στέργειν, τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ ἀποτεμὼν τῷ
λόγῳ καὶ παιδείαν προσαγορεύων, κατά γε τὴν ἐμὴν ὀρθῶς ἂν
προσαγορεύοις (652a5-c3)[xxiv]

A key word in all the above passages is *teleios*. The aim of education

(not necessarily fulfilled), any education, is the mastery of the

'subject' by the person being educated. For the young man studying

pottery, for example, the ultimate aim of his vocational education is

the ability to throw perfect pots, to become a master potter. In respect

to true education, the mastery does not refer to a skill or set of skills

but to the mastery of one's soul. True education is an education in

aretē, the object of which is to become perfect or at the very least a

perfect citizen. In the above passage, the Athenian seems sceptical

about the possibility of people, even in Magnesia, becoming 'perfect

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[xxiv] 'In children the first childish sensations are pleasure and pain, and that it
is in these first that goodness and badness come to the soul; but as to
wisdom and settled true opinions, a man is lucky if they come to him even
in old age; and he that is possessed of these blessings, and all that they
comprise, is indeed a **perfect human being**. I term, then, the goodness that
first comes to children 'education.' When pleasure and love, and pain and
hatred, spring up rightly in the souls of those who are unable as yet to grasp
a rational account; and when, after grasping the rational account, they
consent thereunto through having been rightly trained in fitting practices –
this consent, viewed as a whole, is goodness, while the part of it that is
rightly trained in respect to pleasures and pains, so as to hate what ought to
be hated, right from the beginning up to the very end, and to love what
ought to be loved – if you were to mark this part off in your definition and
call it 'education,' you would be giving it, in my opinion, its right name'
(trans. R. G. Bury p.91, slightly adapted).

human beings.' The aim of the education system of the second best polis appears to be the creation of virtuous citizens.

Education, claims the Athenian, owes its origin to Apollo and the Muses, and, to lesser extent, Dionysos (654a3-5; 672d1-3); and it is under their auspices, specifically through drinking parties and taking part in choral training, that children and adults receive their civic education. The well educated person will be able to sing and dance well (*eu*), provided, of course, that the songs and dances are good (*kalōs*, 654a7-c2). Indeed, it is by knowing which songs and dances are *kala* that we are able to determine who has received a proper education (6546-e2). Hence, from this point the Athenian goes on to describe the kinds of songs and dances which will form an integral part of the education of the Magnesians.

Insofar as song and dance involve rhythm and harmony, and, crucially, imitation, only those models which are indicative of orderliness and proportion will be appropriate. And, of course, in terms of the imitation of specific characters or kinds of behaviour, only those that inspire the right feelings and thoughts, particularly in respect to pleasure and pain, in both the performer and in the audience, are to be admitted (654e9-659c9). The Athenian still maintains, however, as the majority do, that the object of music (*mousikē*) is pleasure, but with the important difference that it is the

kind of pleasure that pleases the best man, the one who excels all others in education and virtue (*aretē*, 658e8-659a2). Hence, the Athenian comes back to the same conclusion:

ὡς ἄρα παιδεία μέν ἐσθ᾽ ἡ παίδων ὁλκή τε καὶ ἀγωγὴ πρὸς τὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου λόγον ὀρθὸν εἰρημένον, καὶ τοῖς ἐπιεικεστάτοις καὶ πρεσβυτάτοις δι᾽ ἐμπειρίαν συνδεδογμένον ὡς ὄντως ὀρθός ἐστιν: ἵν᾽ οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ παιδὸς μὴ ἐναντία χαίρειν καὶ λυπεῖσθαι ἐθίζηται τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου πεπεισμένοις, ἀλλὰ συνέπηται χαίρουσά τε καὶ λυπουμένη τοῖς αὐτοῖς τούτοις οἷσπερ ὁ γέρων (659d1-9)[xxv]

What education must seek to do in particular is make sure that what is thought of as just is *also* thought of as pleasant. It is the lawgiver's task as educator to tackle the more popular idea that what is unjust is pleasant and what is just is unpleasant:

νομοθέτης εἰ μὴ δόξαν εἰς τοὐναντίον τούτου καταστήσει, τὸ σκότος ἀφελών, καὶ πείσει ἁμῶς γέ πως ἔθεσι καὶ ἐπαίνοις καὶ λόγοις ὡς ἐσκιαγραφημένα τὰ δίκαιά ἐστι καὶ ἄδικα, τὰ μὲν ἄδικα τῷ τοῦ δικαίου ἐναντίως φαινόμενα, ἐκ μὲν ἀδίκου καὶ κακοῦ ἑαυτοῦ θεωρούμενα ἡδέα, τὰ δὲ δίκαια ἀηδέστατα, ἐκ δὲ δικαίου πάντα τἀναντία παντὶ πρὸς ἀμφότερα (663b8-c6)[xxvi]

[xxv] 'That education is the process of drawing and guiding children towards that principle which is pronounced right by the law and confirmed as truly right by the experience of the oldest and the most just. So in order that the soul of the child may not become habituated to having pains and pleasures in contradiction to the law and those who obey the law, but in conformity thereto, they must be pleased and pained at the same things as the old man' (trans. R. G. Bury pp.111-113, slightly adapted).

[xxvi] But our lawgiver will reverse the appearance by removing the fog, and by one means or another – will persuade people that their notions of justice and injustice are illusory pictures, unjust objects appearing pleasant and just objects most unpleasant to him who is opposed to justice, through being viewed from his own unjust and evil standpoint, but when seen from the standpoint of justice, both of them appear in all ways entirely the opposite' (trans. R. G. Bury p.125).

Even if this is not the case, that the just is identical to what the man of virtue considers to be pleasant (and Plato clearly thinks it is), the lawgiver must seek to persuade the citizens that it is, and he must devise all means possible to ensure that all the citizens use the same language whenever such matters are discussed, whether in tales, songs or serious discourse (664a4-10).

All the citizens of Magnesia receive the same basic education. However, and despite what the Athenian seems to imply for the majority of the discourse, there is a further education reserved for the elite. Plato is still of the view, apparently not shared by Aristotle, that only a few will be able to be educated to the fullest extent (817e5-818a3). Even though all of the citizens of Magnesia are required to study the 'divine' sciences, arithmetic, solid and plane geometry, and astronomy, it will only be a select few, the members of the Nocturnal Council, who will examine these subjects in any great detail (818a3-c4). The divine sciences are complemented by two philosophical pursuits: (1) a dialectical inquiry into the nature of virtue, the good, and the beautiful (965c8-e4, cf. 963c3-e9), and (2) the formulation of arguments and proofs for the existence of the gods (965a10-966d4).

The Nocturnal Council must possess every virtue. Its prime virtue, according to the Athenian, is its ability to fix its gaze on a single aim – obedience to the law for the sake of virtue (962d1-6; 963a1-4). It is not

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just that the council as a whole is fully virtuous but also – and paralleling the state soul analogy of the *Republic* – its individual members, the lawgivers and law-guardians (964b3-6). The Athenian likens the Nocturnal Council to the human skull, with the younger law-guardians playing the part of the eyes. They pass on their perceptions to the elder law-guardians, who serve in the analogy as memory and reason, acting wisely on the information they receive from their sharp-eyed colleagues (964e1-965a4).

Within this particular scheme – of the virtuous citizens and the more virtuous elite – the Athenian is not, insofar as he has the welfare of the whole polis in mind rather than one section of it, championing philosophical virtue over civic; he thinks that the happiness of any polis is going to rest upon the ability its educational system has of bringing out the best in its citizens; and no matter the superior quality of the elite's virtue, they must also possess the civic virtues. However, the law-guardians, on account of their greater wisdom and knowledge, and hence their greater political power and responsibility, do have the appearance of being better citizens than the majority.

However this is not necessarily the case. Civic virtue for Plato is function based – it is quantitative not qualitative. The civic virtue of a law-guardian is no greater than the civic virtue of any other law

abiding citizen. The elite's greater knowledge is primarily used for the sake of their official functions. In Magnesia there seems to be no sense in which people can be virtuous in a way that is not somehow relevant to their citizenship, and the same could be said of the inhabitants of the Kallipolis.

This should not, however, lead us into thinking that with Plato virtue has its higher expression in the political arena. However, the force with which Sokrates argues for the ideal polis and the rule of the philosopher can often colour our wider view of Plato's ethical and educational theory.

According to Alasdair MacIntyre, Plato's concept of virtue is a political concept, hence:

Plato's account of the virtuous man is inseparable from his account of the virtuous citizen. Indeed this is an understatement, there is no way to be excellent as a man which does not involve excellence as a citizen and *vice versa*. But the excellent citizen will not be at home in any actual city, in Athens or Thebes or even in Sparta.[38]

MacIntyre is partially correct in saying this, and although I would agree with him that Plato's 'excellent' citizen has no natural home, I want to question this idea the Plato's account of the virtuous man is

inseparable from his account of the virtuous citizen. The only sense in which this is true is in the ideal polis.

If Plato's concept of virtue does take civic virtue into consideration, which I believe it does, it has to do so in a way that makes sense in imperfect states. For, if the example of Sokrates is to be trusted, then Plato clearly sees virtue (leaving aside its political aspect) to be possible in a society such as 5th Century B.C. Athens. In respect to Sokrates' civic virtue, the issue is rather more complicated. On the one hand Sokrates might be of the opinion that his actions are beneficial to Athens, and in this light those actions could be said to be indicative of civic virtue. On the other hand, the nature of Sokrates' civic virtue is not one which is recognized by Athens herself or the majority of her citizens. Therefore, to speak about Sokrates' civic virtue is problematic.

Nevertheless, Plato seems to be of the view that it is possible to be a virtuous human being without being at the same time a virtuous citizen as measured by the standards of one's fellow citizens and despite the fact that the virtuous person is not a citizen of the ideal state. This does not mean, of course, that virtue is apolitical: it exists (and of course, must exist) in a political climate, but it should never be subordinated to it.

Endnotes

[1] See the Crick Report (p.10, 1.17; p.12, 2.6).

[2] The initial partnership is between man and woman, and it is formed, as Aristotle says, for the preservation of the species. And the second relationship is that of master and slave, formed for the purpose of security (*Politics* 1252a24-b15). The next partnership goes beyond mere material or physical necessities, and this partnership is the village, a unit composed of several families (*Politics* 1252b16-28). The partnership (*koinōnia*) finally composed of several villages (*Politics* 1252b29-31), says Aristotle, is the polis: it has at last attained the limit of virtually complete self-sufficiency. The individual person is more of a unity than the family, and the family is more of a unity than the polis, and, in terms of self-sufficiency, the individual is surpassed by the family, and the family by the polis. Hence, any drive to make the polis into a complete unity is more likely to destroy rather than preserve it.

[3] Strictly speaking the community of women and children is reserved for the guardian class, but 'τούτων μὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς μὴ στασιαζόντων οὐδὲν δεινὸν μή ποτε ἡ ἄλλη πόλις πρὸς τούτους ἢ πρὸς ἀλλήλους διχοστατήσῃ' (*Republic* 465b8-10).

[4] *Republic* 464d9, 464e2.

[5] These are Glaukon's words at 451e1.

[6] Is democracy the most stasis ridden constitution therefore?

[7] It would, for example, be counterproductive in a democracy, not to say dangerous, to educate the young in oligarchic principles.

[8] *Politics* 1337a33-1337b3.

[9] However, Aristotle's endorsement of universal education must be seen within its political context (a context which is surprisingly similar to the one that we find in Plato's *Republic)*.

[10] The most extreme and unstable form of democracy, says Aristotle, is the one where the people act like an unlawful monarch, despotically ruling over the better classes. And it is in such poleis that the artisan and the craftsmen are granted citizenship. Civil war everywhere is due to inequality and one of its chief objects and causes is honour (*Politics* 1302a32-b15). In the most extreme democracy, the principle of equality is taken to its limit; and in such a society the notables are deprived of their share of the honours. The life of politics, writes Aristotle in book 7 (*Politics* 1324a29-31), is chosen by those who excel in virtue (*aretē*), and such people would not want to vie for political honours with a blacksmith or a tanner.

[11] But even though aristocracy, monarchy and polity, rightly considered, are held up as the three best constitutions (with aristocracy being the best of these, the right circumstances permitting, see *Politics* 1286b5-6) in book 4 Aristotle is careful to distinguish these from another best form: 'τίς δ᾽ ἀρίστη πολιτεία καὶ τίς ἄριστος βίος ταῖς πλείσταις πόλεσι καὶ τοῖς πλείστοις τῶν ἀνθρώπων, μήτε πρὸς ἀρετὴν συγκρίνουσι τὴν ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἰδιώτας, μήτε πρὸς παιδείαν ἢ φύσεως δεῖται καὶ χορηγίας τυχηρᾶς, μήτε πρὸς πολιτείαν τὴν κατ᾽ εὐχὴν γινομένην, ἀλλὰ βίον τε τὸν τοῖς πλείστοις κοινωνῆσαι δυνατὸν καὶ πολιτείαν ἧς τὰς πλείστας πόλεις ἐνδέχεται μετασχεῖν;' (1295a25-33). But what is the best constitution and what is the best mode of life for the most cities and most of mankind, if we do not judge by the standard of a virtue that is above the level of private citizens or of an education that needs natural gifts and means supplied by fortune, nor by the standard of the ideal constitution, but a mode of life able to be shared by most men and a constitution possible for most states to attain?' (trans. H. Rackham p.327). This is the government of the middle-classes, which Aristotle identifies as another *aristos* constitution, meaning not that it is one that sustains a virtuous way of life but rather that it is one which is the *best possible* for most states (other than the correct forms) to attain – it is *aristos* relative to the kind of life that the majority in most societies can live. It is, in a sense, the next best form of constitution after the correct forms of monarchy, aristocracy, and polity.

[12] *Politics* 1279a28-33. Polity is the rule of the many, and in such a polis, given the sheer numbers involved in the running of the state, it is unlikely that the all the citizens will possess every kind of 'virtue' (*aretē*), but 'μάλιστα τὴν πολεμικήν' (*Politics* 1279a39-1279b5, 'They can excel in military valour' (trans. H. Rackham p.207). Aristotle's definition runs thus: πολιτικὸν δὲ ἐν ᾧ πέφυκεν ἐγγίνεσθαι πλῆθος πολεμικὸν δυνάμενον ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρχειν κατὰ νόμον τὸν κατ᾽ ἀξίαν διανέμοντα τοῖς εὐπόροις τὰς ἀρχάς' (1288a13-15, 'A republican community, [is] one in which there naturally grows a military populace capable of being governed and of governing under a law that distributes the offices among the well-to-do in accordance with merit' (trans. H. Rackham p.271). Polity is a mixture of oligarchy and democracy (*Politics* 1293b33-34; 1297a40-b1), and a good (*eu*) mixture is the one that takes the middle course between the policies of democracies and oligarchies (1294a30-b40). The example given is Sparta (cf. David Ross, *Aristotle*. p.259), and so a comparison with Plato's timarchy is not totally unwarranted (cf. Mary P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1991, p.64), but as most scholars agree, the polis that Aristotle has in mind here is probably Theramenes' Athens (*Politics* 1296a37-b2; 1297b2-7, cf. Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle*, p.xxiv). After the disastrous rule of the Four Hundred, Theramenes created a government of Five Thousand. It was, as Ehrenberg states, a government based on the middle-classes, and was, at least according to Thukydides the first good constitution in his lifetime, 'a mixture of oligarchy and democracy' and it was heralded by some as a return to an older, 'ancestral,' and more moderate form of democracy (*Peloponnesian War* 8.97.2, *patrios politeia*, cf. Victor Ehrenberg, *From Solon to Socrates*, London: Routledge, 1993, pp.320-321).

[13] *Politics* 1285a9-10. 'In the beginning authority over the peoples and nations of the world lay with monarchs, who rose to supreme power not because they courted popular support but because their restraint won the approval of honest men. There were not laws to regulate the masses; the decisions of the leaders were the law' (Justin, *Epitome of the Phillippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, trans. Y. C. Yardley, Atlanta: Atlanta Press, 1994, 1.1 1-2, p.14).

[14] *Politics* 1284a3-4.

[15] *Politics* 1284a11.

[16] The man who is incapable of entering into a political partnership (as we learn back in book 1) is either a beast or a god (*Politics* 1253a27-29).

[17] Aristotle was tutor to Alexander the Great and also a friend of Antipater (who was Macedonian regent whilst Alexander was in the East).

[18] H. Kelsen, "Aristotle and Hellenic-Macedonian Policy," *Articles on Aristotle 2: Ethics and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, Richard Sorabji, London: Duckworth, 1977 (p.173). Kelsen's textual evidence is based largely on a passage from book 5, where various monarchies (the Macedonian among them) are held out as being good.

[19] And certainly not after the death of Aristotle's nephew, Callisthenes, who was apparently killed on Alexander's orders.

[20] *Politics* 1325b36, 1330a25, 1332a30.

[21] See *Politics* book 2 (*kat eukhēn*, 1265a18).

[22] The 'ideal' polis requires the 'ideal' constitution (*politeia*), but what is the constitution of the 'ideal' polis of books 7 and 8? Like many of the questions pertaining to Aristotle's *Politics*, there is no straightforward answer. Some commentators identify the best constitution of books 7 and 8 with some sort of aristocracy; because even though Aristotle does not call it by this name, much of what he says in these books strongly indicates that this is what he has in mind. Aristotle describes the polis of books 7 and 8 as 'τῇ κάλλιστα πολιτευομένῃ πόλει' (*Politics* 1328b37); it is a virtuous polis with virtuous citizens (*Politics* 1329a23-25; 1332a34-40). It seems clear, therefore, that the polis of books 7 and 8 is a kind of aristocracy (*Politics* 1334a13).

[23] *Politics* 1288b11.

[24] In respect to this important question, Aristotle considers not just whether the external life of virtue is best for an individual, but also whether it is best for the state; and conversely, with the internal life of virtue. In both cases (for the individual and for the state) what is important is that, internally or externally, a life is comprised of virtuous activity.

[25] This issue, of course, raises the question of the composition of the *Politics*, the approach to which will impact on any attempt to find within it a consistent and coherent theory of education. Aristotle's most extended treatment on education is found in books 7 and 8 of his *Politics*; there are references to education in some of the other books, however, the political context of his educational theory appears to be the 'ideal' polis of the last two books. The educational system of books 7 and 8 is, therefore, designed for the 'ideal' constitution, and hence is one that will help create and maintain, by providing a suitably virtuous citizen body, the 'ideal' political community. But what of the references to education in the other books of the *Politics*? Are Aristotle's comments about education in books 1-6 consistent with those in books 7 and 8? There is, perhaps, no prima facie reason why there should not be a consistent theory of education in the *Politics* as a whole. However, considering the problematic composition of the work nothing can be taken for granted. The end of book 3 represents our biggest challenge. At the end of this book at 1288b3-7 Aristotle promises to move on to a discussion of the best constitution, therefore this passage is clearly meant to lead into book 7 and not, as it does, book 4. Because of this some editors, notably Newman, prefer to arrange the *Politics* in the following way: 1-2-3-7-8-4-5-6. This method has several disadvantages. Although it makes some sense, at least thematically, for books 7 and 8 to follow on from book 3 (if the MSS is to be trusted), the same cannot be said in respect to placing books 4-6 after books 7 and 8. Book 8 is concerned with education in the best polis and is unfinished, while book 4 is largely an analysis of existing constitutions. However, perhaps the apparently idiosyncratic ordering of books can be explained in another way. According to Jaeger's infamous analysis (Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, trans. Richard Robinson, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948 (pp.259-262), the *Politics* is an amalgamation of two separate works on politics composed at different times, one (encompassing books 2, 3, 7 and 8), dealing with an ideal polis 'in the manner of Plato' and possibly written at the time when Aristotle was still under his master's influence, and the other (books 4-6), dealing with more realistic and empirical topics, and supposedly written during Aristotle's time at the Lyceum (According to Jaeger, book 1 of the *Politics* was written after the two different versions of the work and was added as a general introduction (*Ibid* pp.271-273). Some scholars, with certain reservations (H. Kelsen, "Aristotle and Hellenic-Macedonian Policy," *Articles on Aristotle 2: Ethics and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield, Richard Sorabji, London: Duckworth, 1977, pp.170-194, Fritz and Kapp, "Development of Aristotle Political Philosophy," *ibid* pp.113-126, R. G. Mulgan, *Aristotle's Political Theory: An Introduction for Students of Political Theory*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, pp.307-322), are broadly in agreement with the German scholar's claims. Most, however, hotly contest Jaeger's conclusions. Jaeger's 'genetic method' has been adequately addressed by Barker, who suggests, quite rightly in my opinion, that we give up the search for 'chronological strata' and instead adopt the view that the *Politics* is a work made up several different though interrelated 'methods' (Ernest Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946, pp.xxvii-xxxix) and therefore that it is a mistake, as Ross argues, 'to suppose that there is an original or a proper order of the books of the *Politics*' (David Ross, *Aristotle*, London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1923, p.236). I have nothing new to add to the debate here. However, I will say, that even if it could be proved that the *Politics* is a combination of two separate works in the way that Jaeger maintains, this would not necessarily mean that we should expect Aristotle's pronouncements on education throughout the whole work to be inconsistent. Some of Aristotle's comments on education do appear to suggest that books 3 and 7-8 ought to be considered as being

particularly close; and in terms of education and its relationship with citizenship book 3, 7 and 8 are in basic agreement. But this probably has more to do with the similarity of the topics covered in these books rather than an indication that these two pairs of books ought to be grouped together. I would argue that the theory of education in the *Politics* is consistent and this consistency is derived from the fact that throughout the work education is seen to be, at its most effective, a means for establishing the best political community.

[26] *Politics* 1278a15-16.

[27] *Agathos* and *spoudaios* appear to synonymous terms here.

[28] Aristotle does add that in respect to the other virtues (temperance, justice), that they are not the same for the man who is in government and the man who is a subject. There is a type of justice that a man requires to rule and a type that he requires to be ruled, and so on for the other virtues. It is only 'wisdom' that always operates in the same way regardless of whether a person is ruling or being ruled.

[29] Cf. W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle Volume II*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1950 (p.240).

[30] This is an interesting twist on the Platonic model. In Plato's ideal polis the citizens are divided into three types: rules, auxiliaries, and farmers and artisans. In Aristotle's re-vamped model farmers and artisans are jettisoned, but the three-fold model is retained in the shape of the priestly class.

[31] *Politics* 1329a35-39; 1328b25-1329a39.

[32] Music is a leisure activity, and therefore noble and fitting for the freeman; it is an activity that can be pursued for the sake of pleasure (*Politics* 1338a33-35).

[33] *Politics* 1341b9-1342b35.

[34] *Politics* 1341b9-1342b35.

[35] As perhaps Akhilleus does:

Μυρμιδόνων δ᾽ ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἱκέσθην,
τὸν δ᾽ εὗρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ
καλῇ δαιδαλέῃ, ἐπὶ δ᾽ ἀργύρεον ζυγὸν ἦεν,
τὴν ἄρετ᾽ ἐξ ἐνάρων πόλιν Ἠετίωνος ὀλέσσας·
τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ᾽ ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν

(*Iliad* IX.185-189). 'Now they came by the ships of the Myrmidons and they found Akhilleus delighting his heart in a lyre, clear sounding, splendid and carefully wrought, with a bridge of silver upon it, which he won out of the spoils when he ruined Eetion's city. With this he was pleasuring his heart, and singing of men's fame.'

[36] The Athenian economy and culture blossomed under its empire, and even after the disastrous Peloponnesian war, Athens continued to exert its cultural dominance far into the 4th century B.C. (Moreover, the 4th Century B.C. witnessed a new development in Athenian education and wisdom with the emergence of the great schools and the great philosophers. Athenian culture was expanding far beyond Attica, and it would soon extend to the borders of modern day India). Nevertheless, the internal strife and factional infighting that had marred the 5th Century continued into the next, but the Athenian orator and 'philosopher' Isokrates had a remedy: to unite, again, and direct their energies against the Persians. This seemed an unlikely prospect (Individually and collectively the Greeks were highly competitive ('αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων', *Iliad* IV.208. This has become something of a cliché, but in essence it remains true. See Adkins' *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1960, pp.30-49), and, in terms of the internal politics of Greece, this frequently resulted in war and revolution. Treaties and pacts came and went, alliances were short lived and unreliable, except when they could be enforced militarily). Only twice in their living memory, and once in their mythical past, had the Greeks stood together (It has to be stated that not all the Greek city-states rallied to the course, Thebes was a notable exception, see Thukydides, *Peloponnesian War* IX.31-33, 67-69, and Arrian, *Campaigns of Alexander* 1.9 6-8), in the Persian Wars, and, of course, in the Trojan War. What did appear to unite

the Greeks was their education. What makes a Hellene a Hellene, claims Isokrates, is a shared education, or, more specifically, an Athenian education (καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μηκέτι τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδεύσεως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας. 'And she [Athens] brought it about that the name 'Hellenes' suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title 'Hellenes' is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood' (Isokrates, *Panēgyrikos* 50, *Isocrates Volume I*, trans. George Norlin, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1928). Philosophy (For Isokratean philosophy see *Antidosis* 270-294, *Isocrates Volume II*, trans. George Norlin, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1929), linguistic beauty and deftness are all Athenian gifts which, now thanks to men like Isokrates, are revered all over the Hellenic peninsula (Isokrates, *Antidosis* 295-296, and 299, *Isocrates Volume II*, trans. George Norlin, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1929). The Spartans, however, proved to be a notable exception. Looking at it from a purely cultural perspective, the Peloponnesian war represented an ideological contest between Greece's two greatest city-states, Athens and Sparta. It was a culture war; Athenian wisdom and love of words was set against Spartan military discipline and laconism. Spartan austerity may have been respected by men like Xenophon (Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 1.10-11), but their illiberalism (In opposition to the Athenian 'liberal education', Paul H. Hirst, "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge," *Philosophy of Education*, ed. R. S. Peters, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp.87-111) and ridge social life could not compete with the artistic freedom and buoyancy of democratic Athens. Fundamental to this contest were Athens and Sparta's divergent conceptions of education, as Perikles highlights in his funeral speech (Thukydides, 11.39, 29, *Thucydidis Historiae*, *Volume I*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1970). Perikles compares the Athenian and Spartan attitudes to education (Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, London: Duckworth, 2001, p.80), particularly in respect to courage, and by doing so critiques Athenian and Spartan conceptions of character and virtue. It is the Athenian way of life Perikles concludes, and not the Spartan, that has had the most influence; therefore, it is they and not the Spartans who have become the educators of Greece (Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1975, p.273). Some years later, Isokrates exploited this idea for his Panhellenic ideals. Considering Athens' cultural dominance, it is she that is the natural hegemon of Greece, not Sparta (cf. Isokrates' *Panathenaicus* 54. The inward looking Spartans never attempted to replicate their way of life, and nor could they have), and therefore it is the Athenians who should lead the alliance against the Persians (cf. Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. C. Richards, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967, p.45). But it would be under the leadership of Macedon, and not Athens, that the Hellenic cities would eventually go to war with Persia. However, they fought Persia, not as a coalition of free cities, but as subjects of Macedonian rule. The Spartans took no part in the adventure (other than starting a rebellion in 331 B.C.). Athens was not finished, and even under the Macedonian yoke, she retained some of old glory (As a naval power, however, Athens never recovered. Christian Habicht, *Athens from Alexander to Antony*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997, pp.36-42). Athenian culture was long lived ('Every nation which has reached a certain stage of development is instinctively impelled to practise education. Education is the process by which a community preserves and transmits its physical and intellectual character. For individuals passes away, but the type remains' (Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume I, Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965, p.xiii). However, Athenian culture and ideals were no longer hers alone. The parochialism of the city-state gave way to the cosmopolitanism of the Hellenic world (Ernest Barker, *The Cambridge Ancient History, Volume VI Macedon 401-301 B.C.*, ed. J. b. Bury, S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933, p.511), and Athens lost her identity along with her leadership. The 'classical Greek' (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of*

History, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover, 1956, p.273) world was over – the world had grown; the city-state lost its relevance (See D. Graham J. Shipley and Mogens H. Hansen, "The Polis and Federalism," *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Glenn R. Bugh, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.52 and p.59). Independent city-states and minor allegiances gave way to Hellenic kingdoms; Demosthenes and Athenian democracy gave way to Alexander and monarchy ('His [Demosthenes'] resistance to the forces moving his age was a fulfilment of a supra-personal law – the law by which every nation tries doggedly to maintain the pattern of life moulded by itself, founded on its natural disposition, and responsible for the highest achievements in its history' (Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Volume III: The Conflict of Cultural Ideals in the Age of Plato*, trans. Gilbert Highet, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, p.265). The influence and appeal of Athenian culture and education beyond its borders is evident in the rise of Macedonia power, and culminated, we might say, with Alexander the Great. Alexander was educated by Aristotle (John Maxwell O'Brian, *Alexander the Great: The Invisible Enemy, A Biography*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp.19-23), who, although yet to reach full fame, was preferable to the other candidates (Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks*, trans. Ruth Fraenkel Von Versen, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938, p.63). Alexander's favourite work was Homer's *Iliad*, and his favourite hero was Akhilleus, his ancestor (Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great*, London: Allen Lane, 1973, p.59, cf. pp. 145-146). On the whole Alexander's education was more Macedonian than Athenian (N. G. L. Hammond, *Philip of Macedon*, London: Duckworth, 1994, pp.41-42), as we would expect, but insofar as Macedonia sought to incorporate Greek ideals and cultural models (*Ibid* pp.42-43), we must understand his education as being heavily flavoured by the most dominant and marketable culture in the Greek world, the Athenian. The war against the Persians was Alexander's inheritance, and he pursued it with amazing vigour and success. However, Alexander's attitude to panhellenism is hard to gauge ('And to Alexander's Greek contemporaries, his emulation of Achilles would have appeared inseparable from his panhellenic claims to be avenging Greece, since in the popular imagination the Trojan War had long since become a mythic analogue for the Persian wars', Michael Flower, "Alexander the Great and Panhellenism," *Alexander the Great in Fact and fiction*, ed. A. S. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.108): part liberator (the Greek cities of Asia Minor for instance) part autocrat, Alexander exploited the panhellenic ideal where appropriate (Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks*, p.105, p.39). Alexander was a man of political realities; the romantic Alexander may not be entirely fiction Victor Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks*, pp.52-61), but Alexander was neither a champion of panhellenism nor a unifier of men (W. W. Tarn, *The Cambridge Ancient History, Volume VI Macedon 401-301 B.C.*, ed. J. b. Bury, S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933, p.437). Alexander was not a champion of the polis (although he had a certain affection for Athens), and he is not Aristotle's outstanding man of virtue, or even his ideal monarch. Greek unity came at a price. Alexander's short-lived empire and its rapid fragmentation after his death, is indicative of the very notion of Greek unity. It was an externally imposed and 'factitious unity'; 'Greek unification,' as Ernest Barker states, 'in the form in which it was achieved, meant the purchase of material progress at the price of moral regression' (Barker, *The Cambridge Ancient History, volume VI*, p.509).

[37] It might be the case, however (and also taking into consideration anti-Macedonian feeling), that is was precisely because the city-state was under threat that Aristotle extols it virtues so forcibly.

[38] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (p.141).

Chapter Eight

Teaching 'Virtue' in the United Kingdom

The end of Education is to render the individual, as much as possible, an instrument of happiness, first to himself, and next to other beings[1]

Education for the Greeks and for Plato is essentially an ethical practice, but what is it for us? In terms of wider educational policy, in the UK at least, the dominant principle, unsurprisingly, is *economic* rather than *ethical*: 'within policy, education is now regarded primarily from an economic point of view. The social and economic purposes of education have been collapsed into a single, overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education.'[2] The concern of schools and colleges is to prepare their students for the 'world of work'; the demands of business take precedence over broader social concerns, which are in turn seen mainly from the perspective of the market, the private sector and globalisation.[3] Education is mainly concerned with fiscal usefulness.[4]

This is to be expected, perhaps, because as soon as education becomes a concern of the state, with all the regulation and supervision that this

entails, then it becomes to a large extent enslaved to a set of interests that are for the most part economic in nature.[5]

This, of course, represents a radical departure from the Greek conception of education. The Greeks, as I discussed in Chapter Two, did not clearly distinguish between 'liberal' education and 'moral' education. The Athenians for example (excluding, of course, Plato, and to a lesser extent, Aristotle), believed that, first and foremost, education in the liberal sense was an education that would help to create the next generation of *citizens*. 'Men are born but citizens are made,'[6] and this was the main aim of *paideia* for the Greeks. However, education was not civic training in any deliberate sense. This has to do with how Greeks thought about citizenship. To be a citizen of Athens was not just to have certain privileges, obligations, and rights, but was to be assimilated into a *well defined* and *exclusive* culture. To be an Athenian meant more than the opportunity for political participation (although the Athenians did pride themselves on this aspect of their citizenship perhaps more than any other): it meant claiming one's birthright. However, being an Athenian was more than a matter of birth it was a matter of blood.[7]

Notions of what it meant to be a citizen differed from constitution to constitution, as did the character ideal contained within it. Athenians had, (whether they had genuine knowledge of the virtues they so

coveted or not), a distinctive view of what good character was and what it meant to be a good citizen, and even if their view was misconceived as Plato thought, it was, at least, teachable. In modern education the emphasis is, as we would expect, quite different from the ancient Greek. Although the word *paideia* suggests that the emphasis is on the young, the term is actually extremely broad. For us, perhaps, education is now almost synonymous with schooling; education is *art* rather than *culture*. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to think that the term education is no less an ambiguous and semantically generous term than *paideia*. It has, however, become somewhat departmentalised. The complexity of modern society and the specialism that follows in its train means that, properly speaking, *education cannot have a single aim*. However, even though the aims of modern education are many, the overriding concern, as we saw in the Introduction, is with, as James Mill calls it, 'technical' education, and it is one that is 'chiefly to do with *Intelligence*.'[8]

However, taking the notions of education and morality in a simple and uncontroversial sense, guidance in the use of moral language and reasoning occurs both in the home (often in a highly traditional and uncritical way) and, more formally, in the school; moral training is something that, in some form or another, all children are subjected to. Indeed, schools today, apart from stressing their academic

credentials, also lay considerable emphasis on their school's environment and the moral development of their pupils.[9]

Broadly speaking (and I am not necessarily talking of the 'hidden curriculum'),[10] moral education pervades the school environment. All schools have rules, student councils, forms of punishment and incentive, not to mention the interaction between the children and children and teaching staff, all of which will contribute, often in a rather haphazard way, to a pupil's moral development. Formal teaching also has a moral component: subjects such as history and English have scope in which to discuss ethical issues and opinions, and in subjects such as Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship Education (CE), and Religious Education (RE), ethics and morality are addressed more directly. The task of this moral education, however, is not to teach moral rules or norms, still less to indoctrinate pupils into a certain belief system. A common sense approach is preferred, where it is assumed that, generally speaking, the rights and wrongs of human conduct are fairly self-evident. It is not the responsibility of the school to inform children, as if for the first time, *that* stealing is wrong, but rather *why* stealing is wrong. The teacher's task, initially at least, is to strengthen a child's already existing but ill-formed moral sense. The teacher's power, of course, is limited; and the teacher is often in competition, openly or otherwise,

with other 'moral teachers,' such as the pupil's family or friends, or even, as is increasingly the case, with media or cultural figures.

The emphasis, for the most part, is on moral reasoning, on intellectual rather than moral virtue; but even so, there is no specific programme in UK schools, a la Kohlberg, for improving pupils' powers of moral reasoning. Instead, moral reasoning is seen more as a particular attitude to moral problems or issues. Pupils are encouraged to apply a critical approach to the judgements that they bring to bear on the behaviour of others. In addition to this, pupils must be sensitive to both the consequences of their and other's actions and to the possible motivations behind them; outright condemnation is rarely endorsed, except only in straightforward cases. Moral education is not about creating moral automata but agents who have some training in how they should act and judge in certain ethical situations.

For a society caught between moral traditionalism and cultural relativism (or moral diversity as I would call it), clothing the language of ethics in the language of citizenship becomes both prudent and, in a sense, inevitable. Which is the reason why, perhaps, that citizenship education has come to the fore in recent years, not only as an answer to political apathy and poor voter turnout but also as a way of dealing with moral pluralism. However, and even admitting the importance of teaching pupils about their political

systems and their future role within them, is citizenship education

the best method for dealing with the problems that arise from moral

diversity?

§1

Citizenship Education

After years of consultation between Government and various

educational bodies, citizenship education became part of the National

Curriculum in England on 12th September 2002.[11] The Advisory

Group on Citizenship, which issued its final report (the Crick Report),

"Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools,"

on 22nd September 1998, played a leading role in the latter stages of its

development. The Crick Report has an ambitious mandate for

citizenship education:

> We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both
> nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens,
> willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the
> critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on
> and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of
> community involvement and public service, and to make them individually
> confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among
> themselves.[12]

As the Crick Report states, citizenship education 'is novel to this country,'[13] however, the Report is unanimous in respect of its belief that citizenship education must be a statutory requirement in all secondary schools.[14] We shall look at the Crick Report's proposals in detail in a moment, but for now the question we should ask is: why is citizenship education required now? In the report of the Commission on Citizenship, *Encouraging Citizenship*, published in 1990, the reasons behind the need for an expansion of citizenship education are sketched out, 'since the war, Britain has been transformed into a multi-racial society. At the same time, shifts in the income, life style, nature of work and demographic balance of the population are affecting people's expectations.'[15] As Frances Morrell states, 'the context of the commission's work was the great changes that have affected our society and the sense that change is taking place at a faster pace than ever before.'[16]

The complexity of modern society is inimical to, it would appear, active political, and perhaps, to a lesser degree, social, participation. Hence, as the Commission states, 'we believe that citizenship is one of the most important concepts of modern political struggle and social development,'[17] and the Crick Report is largely in agreement. The 'worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life,'[18] reflected both in voter turnout and in attitudes towards public service, and the problems that arise from 'youth alienation'[19] and

antisocial behaviour seem to confirm that there is a substantial and growing problem,[20] all of which could be addressed through a program of civic education. As Tony Breslin puts it:

The promotion of citizenship education for all through the creation of a new foundation subject is clearly a statement about the duty of schools to contribute to the creation of active adult citizens and constitutes a reflection on a range of areas of concern: a lack of participation in political life, the apparent breakdown of a range of social structures (notably the family), concerns around the essential civility of the young…and, as a context for much of this, the reality of social exclusion.[21]

The background to the Commission's report is not only the issue of apathy and the changing nature of British society, but also about the knowledge and skills[22] that people would need in order to take full advantage of their roles as democratic citizens.[23] According to Jagdish Gundara:

The role of citizenship and politics in society is predicated on the fact that citizenship education itself is necessary for all sections of society. Politically undereducated or ill-educated and inactive members of societies are dangerous because they misrepresent the complexity of humanity and opt for simplistic solutions based on populist politics, often encouraging authoritarian and undemocratic solutions to complex societal issues.[24]

The Crick Report therefore places a substantial stress on *skills and aptitudes* and *knowledge and understanding*.[25] The purpose of citizenship education in schools is 'to make secure and to increase the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of

participative democracy; also to enhance the awareness of rights and duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens.'[26] Non-participation comes, in part, from the belief that a person cannot make any genuine contribution, which is perhaps indicative of a general ignorance about what being a citizen means. Therefore a key challenge in the development of citizenship education is coming to an understanding of what citizenship is; if citizenship is to be taught then there must be a clear definition of what being a citizen entails. The Crick Report, and before it, the Commission Report, draw heavily on T.H. Marshall's influential three-fold division of citizenship:

I shall call them parts, or elements, civil, political and social. The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. The last is of a different order from the others, because it is the rights to defend and assert all one's right on terms of equality with others and by due process of law. This shows us that the institutions most directly associated with civil rights are the courts of justice. By the political I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The corresponding institutions are parliament and councils of local government. By social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely connected with it are the educational system and the social services.[27]

The report of the Commission on Citizenship[28] broadly supports Marshall's definition of citizenship, as does the Crick Report,[29] which

recognised that they must adopt a definition of citizenship which is 'wide without being all things to everyone'[30] but which must also identify the three dimensions highlighted by Marshall.[31]

The first strand of the definition is *social and moral responsibility*: 'Socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other' – this is 'at the heart of the matter', 'guidance on moral values and personal development are essential preconditions of citizenships.'[32] The second strand is *community involvement*: 'Learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community.'[33] The third and final strand is *political literacy*: 'Pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values.'[34]

This represents a change in emphasis from Marshall's definition; there is, as many commentators have noted, a shift from rights to responsibilities, 'whereas Marshall viewed civil citizenship as the foundation of individual rights and freedoms, the Crick Report sees this level as the exercise of social and moral responsibilities of reciprocity and social trust as a foundation for sociability.'[35] Citizenship education is not merely about making people aware that they are citizens with certain rights but also that they are citizens

with certain responsibilities, which, if properly exercised, would benefit not only themselves but also the wider community. According to the Crick Report, citizenship education will have benefits for pupils, teachers, schools and society. The benefit for pupils is that they will be able to participate effectively in society as informed, critical and responsible citizens; and the benefit for society will be that it gains 'an active and politically literate citizenry convinced that they can influence government and community affairs at all levels.'[36]

As we saw, the Crick Report claims that there must be a strong connection between the duties of citizenship and social and moral responsibility. Eirini Pasoula, in her "Moral, Social and Civic Education in Greece," endorses the Crick Report's stress on the relationship between social, moral and civic, with the proviso that 'we understand the term 'moral' in its full sense and in relation to the 'social' and second, that we clarify which are the relevant [types of] knowledge, values, skills and dispositions.'[37]

The Crick Report does address this concern. An integral part of citizenship education (in theory at least) will be the acquisition of a set of *values and dispositions*: 'certain values and dispositions are appropriate to citizenship'; therefore 'pupils should be encouraged to 'recognise, reflect and act upon these values and dispositions,'[38]

They should be helped, in particular, to reflect on and recognise values and dispositions which underlie their attitudes and actions as individuals and as members of groups and communities. This is vital in developing pupils into active citizens who have positive attitudes to themselves, as individuals, and in their relationship with others.[39]

The Report is understandably quite hazy[40] about what these values and dispositions are and how they are to be cultivated: values and dispositions[41] range between active citizenship and the most general moral ideas, including a 'concern for the common good' and 'judging and acting by a moral code.'[42] The Report is wary of charges of indoctrination[43] and political bias:

It would not be appropriate for the government to give precise prescriptions on some politically or morally sensitive matters, the detail should be at arm's length from the state…in the very nature of citizenship there must be local discretion. It would have been paradoxical for a subject designed to encourage thought and action, action based on thought, to be too prescriptive.[44]

Perhaps it is simply not desirable, or even possible, to promote a single set of moral principles, values or virtues within a state programme of education.[45] The central question, as Graham Haydon frames it, is this: 'in a society which is not only liberal but plural in its cultures and traditions, can the promotion of a set of virtues be compatible with inclusion and the proper recognition of diversity?'[46] By promoting, for example, a single set of virtues we risk, unless they are suitably inclusive (as I discussed in the Introduction), excluding a

section or sections of society that do not, for whatever reasons, prescribe to them.

Therefore, perhaps the greatest challenge for citizenship education, as Jagdish Gundara states, 'is the molding of the one out of the many and to construct appropriate educational responses to difference and diversity within British society.'[47] The Crick Report does address this concern, [48] but a recent report by the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, "Citizenship and Education," following the recommendations of Sir Keith Ajegbo,[49] has stressed the need for citizenship education to address the issues of multiculturalism, race, religion, and identity, in greater depth:

Since the publication of the Crick Report and the introduction of National Curriculum citizenship education, several tragic events have occurred – including the terrorist bombings on London's transport network on the 7 July 2005 – which have in some quarters been interpreted as a sign that society is coming unstuck at the edges and is increasingly lacking ties that binds all citizens together.[50]

Whether or not these events were directly caused by a lack of cohesion in British society, they are certainly indicative of a failure to satisfactorily create a sense of national identity and commonality of purpose that reflects the diversity of modern Britain. Therefore, a key concern and motivation behind citizenship education must be with creating 'a modern, cohesive British society,'[51] and, as Ajegbo argues,

'if children and young people are to develop a notion of citizenship as inclusive, it is crucial that issues of identity and diversity are addressed explicitly.'[52]

The link between education for diversity and Citizenship education is clear: whilst we need to understand and celebrate the diverse cultures and backgrounds of the UK's population, we also need to acknowledge what brings us together as active citizens and agents of change[53]

'Education for diversity is crucial, not just for the future wellbeing of our children and young people but also for the survival of our society';[54] therefore, what is called for is a fourth stand in citizenship education, *Identity and Diversity: Living Together in the UK*,[55] which includes not only 'critical thinking' about ethnicity, religion and race, and how these feed into the political climate and debate, but also 'the use of contemporary history in teachers' pedagogy to illuminate thinking about contemporary issues relating to citizenship.' As the Commons Education and Skills Committee states:

Such coverage should rightly touch on what is distinctive in the inheritance and experience of contemporary Britain and the values of our society today. But it should not be taken to imply an endorsement of any single explanation of British values or history. Indeed, it should emphasise the way in which those values connect to universal human rights, and recognise that critical and divergent perspectives, as well as the potential to have alternative and different layers, are a central part of what contemporary Britishness is[56]

If citizenship education must include a particular view about morality, it must be one that is confined to what it means to be an active citizen who participates in the democratic processes, locally and nationally, of the United Kingdom.[57] As Haydon says, it should be possible 'for citizens in a plural and democratic society to agree on one way of seeing morality which can be shared on the level of public discourse, while not having to give up their perhaps favoured and more deeply held understandings of morality which may stem from cultural tradition or personal reflection.'[58]

In a sense citizenship education attempts to resolve the tension between public and private morality by introducing a notion of moral and social responsibility which is common to all British citizens, regardless of their ethnicity and religion, and regardless of whatever moral positions that they or their communities hold. *A good person becomes, in effect, a good citizen.*[59]

Citizenship education can only promote a notion of morality that is primarily civic (this is not a criticism it is just a reality); it has nothing substantial to say about virtue or good character, and it cannot recommend a way of life; all it can do is to teach the young what is expected of them as citizens *not what is expected of them as human beings*.

Moral Education in the UK

Citizenship Education is not the only provision made for moral education in the national curriculum. Both RE (statutory) and PSHE: Personal Wellbeing and PSHE: Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability, both of which are non-statutory, cater for the moral development of pupils. PSHE: Personal Wellbeing has an even more general approach to 'morality' than CE. The 'ethical' scope of PSHE can be gleaned from the following:

As they explore similarities and differences between people and discuss social and moral dilemmas, they learn to deal with challenges and accommodate diversity in all its forms. The world is full complex and sometimes conflicting values. Personal wellbeing helps students explore this complexity and reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes. They identify and articulate feelings and emotions, learn to manage new or difficult situations positively and form and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of people. Personal wellbeing makes a major contribution to the promotion of personal development.[60]

Accordingly: 'Personal wellbeing makes a significant contribution to young people's personal development and character.'[61] PSHE covers issues such as sex, drug abuse, racism, healthy living, and 'values.' Some of these aspects of PSHE, such as drug awareness, are doubtfully useful, the problem, as ever, is with the lack of any strong moral content.

Under its explanatory note 'values', we are told: 'exploring topical and real-life social and moral dilemmas provides the context for exploring complex and conflicting values. Reflecting on how this impacts on personal values and re-evaluating them is important at this stage [key stage 4].' The important phrase here is 'conflicting values.'

PSHE: Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability has a different although complimentary remit to PSHE: Personal Wellbeing:

Education for economic wellbeing and financial capability aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make the most of changing opportunities in learning and work. Through their learning and experiences inside and outside school, students begin to understand the nature of the world of work, the diversity and function of business, and its contribution to national prosperity. They develop as questioning and informed consumers and learn to manage their money and finances effectively.[62]

Its key concepts are 'career,' business enterprise, risk management, and 'economic understanding'; its true interest, however, as the explanatory notes indicate, is with 'employability.'

Taken together, it is a central function of both forms of PSHE to prepare pupils to be able to deal with life in a morally diverse and consumerist society.

In Scotland and Wales, where Citizenship Education is not part of the school syllabus, moral education appears to be more expansive. According to the *Personal and Social Education Framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales*:

The school ethos, enshrined in democratically agreed rules, can provide a stable and ordered environment in which values such as respect, honesty, fairness and responsibility can be promoted. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on their personal beliefs and values and apply them to their own experiences. They can also be inspired to express their inner feelings using imagination and creativity. This can be evoked by a sense of awe and wonder at the natural world, by the mysteries of life and death, by the limitations of human understanding or by a response to a divine being.[63]

In addition to the promotion of values, the importance of cultural heritage is also stressed:

Learners aged 7-14 should be given opportunities to develop and apply knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales[64]

The actual aims of PSE, however, are somewhat more general (and a good deal less interesting):

1. Develop learners' self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility

2. Promote self-respect, respect for others and celebrate diversity

3. Equip learners to live safe, healthy lives

4. Prepare learners for the choices and opportunities of lifelong learning

5. Empower learners to participate in their schools and communities as active responsible citizens locally, nationally and globally

6. Foster positive attitudes and behaviour towards the principles of sustainable development and global citizenship

7. Prepare learners for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life

Indeed, PSE does not differ substantially from CE and PSHE – it too stresses the importance of social responsibility and political literacy – and it is very much orientated towards 'active' citizenship and the demands of modern, global, and to a lesser extent, consumer living.[65]

In its guidelines for the teaching of Religious and Moral Education in Scotland, and specifically to its contribution to the wider curriculum, we learn:

Values such as justice, wisdom, compassion and integrity are constantly being enacted through all aspects of the life of the school as a community. They can be further developed through exploration and discussion in religious and moral education[66]

There is also, as in Wales, a strong stress on 'cultural heritage and identity':

The experience and outcomes [of Religious and Moral Education] draw on rich and diverse context of Scotland's' cultural heritage through the use of Scottish stories, images, music and poems. As Teachers make use of the

experiences and outcomes they will draw on the resources of the school's community and context to inform their planning. Within practices and traditions, this can be made explicit through visits to local places of worship as well as through festivals and celebrations[67]

The wording here is careful, and concerning the history of sectarianism in Scotland, this is perhaps wise.[68] The context of Scotland's cultural heritage is 'diverse', but still recognisably 'Scottish'. This may be, as it is in the case of Wales, because there is less reticence in countries that are less multicultural (and less multiracial) to celebrate and even promote strong and distinctive cultural ideals.

Why is the word 'value' preferred to the word 'virtue' in modern mainstream education? To answer this fully we would have to examine why the language of values has become so prevalent in our society; I cannot undertake such an examination here. I will, however, say a few words about why modern moral education favours the language of values.

Values are held; virtues are possessed. A person can value courage without *being* courageous; they could admire the courage of others and wish to be so themselves (and, of course, a courageous person can be said to value courage).

It is just easier to get people to value courage than it is to teach them to be courageous. In a sense, Sokratic protreptic attempts to get people to 'value' qualities like courage; but the ultimate aim of education is seen as the possession of this 'quality' (although for Plato being courageous does also mean 'knowing' what courage is – but still, courage is a 'quality' of a person's character; it is a virtue, and excellence of the soul).

Certain virtues, as I discussed in Chapter Three, are created through imitation and habit. The modern school system – and indeed modern society – does not look kindly on such explicit methods for training character. Modern society is fearful of socialisation and indoctrination.

Character education, however, need not be indoctrination, although it must, to some extent, include socialisation. I suppose a lot depends upon one's notion of society.

However, even from our brief look at moral education in the UK, it is clear that it does seek to both socialise and indoctrinate – it seeks to create individuals who can cope with diversity and values pluralism, individuals who are naturally suspicious of terms like 'virtue' and phrases such as 'goodness of character.' In this sense, moral education in the UK is a great success.

Before concluding, I wish to consider religious education more generally and the role it plays in moral education in England. Religious education (or 'religious instruction' as it was initially) was made compulsory in British schools in 1944, mainly due to concerns about the rise of dangerous continental ideologies, such as Nazism and Communism. Religious education was seen, not only as a way of teaching the Christian faith, but also as a way of supporting democratic values.[69]

But should RE be used as a vehicle for moral education in a society that is largely secular? I shall return to this in a moment. First I would like to look into the 'moral' component of religious education as it is outlined in the National Curriculum.

One of the curriculum opportunities will be to provide pupils with the chance to 'discuss, question and evaluate important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate and ethical issues.'[70] What is an ethical issue? We are told that ethical issues are those which 'could include the difference between right and wrong; the application of principles to issues in crime and punishment, war and peace, family life, relationship, use of money and property, entertainment, employment or technology; and religious and cultural toleration.' This list is fairly impressive, providing of course that these issues are regularly discussed in schools (which they need not

be since the content of RE is solely down to the discretion of individual schools, and in faith schools we might expect a somewhat less objective consideration of many of these issues).

Religious education in many non-faith schools is taught to pupils with an increasingly secular background, and so the purpose of religious education can no longer be about teaching a Christian about Christianity or to solidify religious belief (of whatever variety). Besides, in a society that is diverse in its religions, RE has a greater obligation to compare religious beliefs and foster tolerance and understanding rather than inculcate a specific religious creed. As with CE and PSHE, RE deals with issues such as diversity and identity, and also encourages community belonging and civic responsibility. In a sense RE has adapted itself quite well to the changing needs of pupils and of modern society.

However, and returning to our earlier question: should religious education be used as a vehicle for moral education? According to John White, to use religious education as a vehicle for moral education is to invite confusion, and therefore he argues that moral education is better catered for by other curriculum subjects:

A central obligation on schools is to help children to move away from confusion in their thinking towards clarity and well-groundedness. If we want them to think clearly about ethical matters it would make better sense

to rely on vehicles like school ethos, PSHE and citizenship rather than on religious education with its multiple potentialities for sowing confusion. If religious education continues to have its traditional moral remit, there is further danger of confusion, not now from within religious education itself, but as a result of conflicting messages reaching them from different parts of the curriculum – the suggestion of a linkage between morality and religion in one area, the absence of this in another. Intellectual confusion can, of course, be challenging and lead to intellectual growth. Often, though, it simply breeds distress[71]

For children brought up outside faith communities the coupling of religion and morality, argues White, is unhelpful and even damaging. White thinks that CE and PSHE are in a much stronger position to be the main focus for moral education in schools since 'these vehicles do not face the particular problem which confronts religious education. That is that religion has traditionally been seen, and is still seen in some quarters, as a *backing* for morality, as the foundation on which our moral beliefs and conduct rest.'[72]

This certainly could be a danger.[73] However, I think that White is quite wrong in respect to this idea that there is no similar danger in using CE as a vehicle for moral education, because it could be the case that the moral or ethical aspects of CE might lead pupils into believing that morality is somehow dependent upon citizenship, and this will only be reinforced if RE loses its moral dimension. Indeed, I would suggest that this is the most valuable part of RE: its scope for the discussion of ethics and morality in *both* religious and secular terms.

Jacqueline Watson, in the first study undertaken on the relationship between CE and RE in state schools, argues that religious education could play a vital role in supporting the teaching of citizenship.[74]

Yet religious education is about more than just the problem of pluralism – religious education has a spiritual dimension which engages with the meaning and purpose of our lives – and an emphasis on religious conflict resolution may end by endorsing and reinforcing the popular view of religion as essentially about conflict. If religious education makes closer ties with citizenship education, it needs to be careful to keep sight of its broader interests, alongside continuing to question the foundations of morality within the context of a global and complex conceptualisation of what it means to be a citizen[75]

However, in addition to this 'explicit' moral education, there are other subjects in which morality and ethics can be discussed. In recent years history has been singled out as perhaps being the most appropriate subject within which to explore ethical questions and our moral identity in particular. What history offers is *narrative*. And it also offers the benefit of hindsight. Looking back at how our society has developed and the mistakes that have been made is very useful when one is seeking to impress on the young the importance of moral and social responsibility and the role that we can have in shaping our lives and the lives of others for the better.

The idea that history could be used as a vehicle for the teaching of citizenship was endorsed by the previous government. In speeches by the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and the then Home

Secretary Jack Straw, they argued that there ought to be a stronger emphasis in schools on the teaching of British history, 'we should not recoil from our national history – rather we should make it central to our education. I propose that British history should be given much more prominence in our curriculum – not just dates, places and names, nor just a set of unconnected facts, but a narrative that encompasses our history' (Brown 2006). As such, according to Gordon Brown, citizenship education should be more closely aligned to the teaching of history. The thinking is that an historical approach will help to shape and give meaning to the values that citizenship education seeks to communicate to pupils. As Jack Straw says:

> You cannot transmit these ideas ['core democratic values' such as freedom, fairness and tolerance and plurality] without stories. We must…bring out the freedom that lies at the heart of the story. That means freedom through the narrative of the Magna Carta, the civil war, the Bill of Rights, through Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment, the fight for votes, for the emancipation of Catholics and nonconformists, of women and the black community, the second world war, the fight for rights for minority groups, the fight now against unbridled terror.[76]

This 'British story' has its villains as well as its heroes, and no one is suggesting that an historical approach to citizenship education is not without its difficulties. Some have expressed concern that to put such a distinctive British framework to citizenship could alienate some pupils, notably those who do not consider themselves to be primarily British. However, it has long been acknowledged that history, and

narrative in particular, plays an important role in how people situate themselves within a *tradition*.

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§3

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Narrative, Pluralism, and Dialogue

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For some scholars, notably Alasdair McIntyre, narratives are fundamental to any moral culture and to the moral life of any community. I will not look at MacIntyre's arguments here, instead, and following William A. Barbieri Jr's informative paper, I will consider 'Narrativist ethics' more broadly.[77]

The central thesis of a narrativist ethics, broadly stated, is that morality is, at root, constituted by stories – that our judgments about right and wrong and good and evil, and our resulting actions, are dependent on the stories we tell and are shaped by[78]

The Narrativist thesis, claims Barbieri, represents a response to a number of shortcomings that arise in more 'traditional' ethical theories, especially those which are influenced by Kantian models, and ones, moreover, which are indebted to the 'ideal' of a conception of morality that is objective and scientific.[79] Barbieri states:

We must realize that all moral theories – including moral concepts themselves – develop over time and are shaped by the communities and

institutions that provide them with their settings. Ethical systems depend on some contextualizing human tradition for their coherence, and this is a circumstance that ethicists need to recognize if they are to theorize effectively about the complicated moral landscape of the contemporary world.[80]

The challenge is not just to the study of ethics but also to the teaching of it, and narrative may just be an effective means for meeting this challenge. A Narrativist, argues Barbieri,

describes the way in which we create or use coherent linguistic forms to interpret, evaluate, and represent the situations in which we find ourselves. Such an understanding of narrative is, at first blush, so broad as to risk being unwieldy, unenlightening, or both. Yet it seems to me useful to the extent that it captures the central insight of the various thinkers [Hauerwas, Murdoch, Nussbaum, and MacIntyre] who have latched onto the moral significance of the realm of storytelling. For this use of "narrative" points out that the locus of meaning and value lies not so much in words themselves, nor in what they signify, as in the dynamic between words and the people who employ them in ordering and reflecting on the world in which they act.[81]

According to Barbieri, the Narrativist thesis includes three main claims: (1) 'that stories are prior to rules in the moral life. People tend to act, in this view, not so much according to rules and obligations as in accordance with their own narratively formed character' – 'that every principle, law, rule, obligation, or other such rational construct relies on some narrative context, however broadly conceived, in order to make sense'; (2) that narratives, through their shaping of morality, forms us: 'the stories we are brought up with are responsible for the manner in which we conceptualize moral phenomena throughout our

lives'; (3) that 'ethics is appropriately, and in a variety of ways, a narrative pursuit.'[82]

Barbieri identifies three potential problems with the Narrativist thesis, none of which, however, are difficult to counter.[83] Granting that narratives could be central to morality and to how human beings think of themselves as moral beings, then it would obviously be of immense importance not only to ethical theory but also to moral education, and to a limited extent this is recognised by contemporary educational policy in the teaching of history; but I must emphasise, only to a limited extent.

'A system of education,' claims Jerome Bruner, 'must help those growing up in a culture find identity within that culture. Without it, they stumble in their effort after meaning. It is only in the narrative mode that one can construct an identity and find a place in one's culture. Schools must cultivate it, nurture it, cease taking it for granted.'[84] As he states earlier:

It has been the convention of most schools to treat the art of narrative – song, drama, fiction, theatre, whatever – as more "decoration" than necessity, something with which to grace leisure, sometimes even as something morally exemplary. Despite that, we frame the accounts of our cultural origins and our most cherished beliefs in story form, and it is not just the "content" of these stories that grip us, but their narrative artifice. Our immediate experience, what happened yesterday or the day before, is framed in the same storied way. Even more striking, we represent our lives (to ourselves as well as to others) in the form of narrative.[85]

However, in a diverse society there is more cultural *choice*, and many narratives (often conflicting); and there is not even, in any straightforward sense, a single tradition, and certainly not a single moral tradition. The impact of pluralism on morality is explored by Roger Trigg in his *Morality Matters*:

Morality is just about people and their attitudes and choices. This has led in politics to the idea that all a democracy has to do is to take account of the differing views of its members, without adjudicating between them. All that matters is that people may have strong beliefs, and that they have to be reconciled if we are all to live together. Such an idea is encouraged by, and helps to encourage, a strong view of ethical pluralism. This does not just accept that people disagree, but holds that there is no way in principle of resolving differences over morality[86]

And again:

Pluralism, however, may begin by noting the fact of difference, but it quickly comes to accept that it is actually desirable. It follows that no one particular conception of the good should be given precedence. An ethically neutral position soon becomes an ethically charged one. The aim is a pluralist, preferably multicultural, society, where freedom in moral matters is to be regarded as the highest good, subject only to the constraints of our being able to live together. Respect for difference becomes an ethical principle, instead of being regarded as an obstacle on the way to moral agreement. Anyone who wishes to impose their view on others, or even dares to suggest that their view is the right one, must be seen as challenging the very fabric of society. A shared morality, instead of being the glue that holds a community together, comes to be seen as a challenge to its very existence[87]

And finally:

The problem is that a liberal picture of society is one where morality is a private matter, and public reason may not appeal to private, individual moral beliefs. Yet at the same time it depends on tacit, or actual, agreement and promises to live by certain public procedures, and to follow them in good faith. It is all very individualist, in that it starts from a number of individuals, regarding them as a collection of atoms. They are unrelated to each other in any way, yet are liable to collide. There is no wider vision of

society, or of morality, as its basis. The 'public square' may be one where individuals congregate, and establish ways of living together, but their own private attitudes remain, and are not moulded or harnessed to the common good. The stability of the whole may depend on the character and principles of the participants, but liberal doctrine wants to remain neutral as to what those should be[88]

Given this, and recalling James Hunter's thesis in the Introduction, moral education in state schools must reflect this agenda: it must be sensitive to the demands created by multiculturalism, it must pursue moral pluralism; how could it do otherwise?

Plato's dialogues give us a picture not of a morally diverse society (not at least according to how we might understand it) but of a society that was becoming more diverse in its moral opinions.

In particular, the dialogues are set against the backdrop of a transitional period in the ethical life of a community, the transition from a traditional and increasingly untenable view of virtue (within an Athenian context) to a more pragmatic and progressive view. Plato's ethical theory is neither traditionalist nor progressive: his is the first attempt – and in light of the problem – to give a coherent and consistent account of the virtues; and to provide an alternative to both traditional and progressive ethics, and Plato does this through narrative.[89]

Many of the most enjoyable narratives, and I am thinking here primarily of the narratives contained within the novel and stories (often semi-mythical, although typically of legend, such as Robin Hood, Dick Turpin, King Arthur, my Grandfather's tales of his exploits during the Second World War) are, in part, morally ambiguous, either in respect to the author, authors or story-teller's own views or intentions and or in respect to the presentation of the motivation and actions of their protagonists. Plato's worry with all 'great' art (that is, what we now consider to be great art, the *Iliad*, the plays of Euripides, Pindar's Odes etc.) is that they very often fail to depict 'moral' harmony (the castration of Kronos, Zeus' rough treatment of his spouse etc.), and as such they are unsuitable material for moral education.

I think with some of the Greek myths, Plato may have a point. But if Plato was so against depicting moral ambiguity or disharmony, then why did he write the dialogues and populate them with characters such as Kallikles, Thrasymakhos, and Alkibiades, to name but three? And why present a diversity of opinion, ways of living, attitudes and beliefs on the most important subjects: why give evil a voice?

Well, we might say, one can only silence a person if one gives them the chance to speak. However, the dialogues are not simply ways for Plato to rebuff bogus ideas and alternative life styles; for the most

part, although Sokrates is able to silence his interlocutors, he is unable to posit an adequate theory of his own. We must, of course, understand Sokrates' reticence as being partly the result of irony and partly the result of Plato's own caution and also due to his belief in the limitations of the written word, in whatever form.

The dialogue form is not only the best medium for written philosophy it is also, given the opportunities it can afford the good writer, an ideal medium, via its narrative structure, on which to build an effective propaedeutic moral education.

Is Plato a Narrativist, that is, does he hold the view that 'morality' is in some important sense bound to stories – and, if he is, could we understand some of the dialogues as examples of ethical narrative? Given Plato's insistence that it is dialectic and not myth that leads to moral knowledge, it seems implausible that he could be a Narrativist, at least according to how Barbieri understands the term. This, however, does not necessarily mean that some of the dialogues could not be examples of ethical narrative – it is a logical possibility that a person might not hold a Narrativist view of ethics but still, through a medium such as the dialogue, create a narrative which is 'ethical.' Of course, a narrative that is ethical would not have to be what the Narrativist means by an ethical narrative. For instance, it is not clear whether the Narrativist would think that it is possible (or even

desirable) for an ethical narrative to be purposely created (as, for example, appears to have been the case in Soviet Russia, and today in North Korea). Indeed, 'genuine' ethical narratives seem to be largely authorless (or authorship is hard to determine), and grow organically, and often in spite of what the author(s) or originator may have intended. Moreover, in terms of those narratives that often inform our lives and the way in which we understand ourselves and the world we live in, they need not be either explicit or even be known. For the Narrativist, ethical narratives are essentially long established community narratives; they are narratives that a person grows into, often in a quite unconscious sense.

However, all narratives, ethical or otherwise, have a beginning, even if it is impossible to clearly understand the nature of their origins (and in particular the relationship between narratives), and there is no prima facie reason why we could not consciously create an ethical narrative in the Narrativist's sense (although whether the narrative will be taken up by a community is another question). We would probably have to understand the processes of the assimilation of a narrative throughout a culture as being a long one.

Narratives are not myths (although a myth may be described as a narrative in a mundane sense), but they are sometimes fictions, but

they can also be historical. In the case of Plato's dialogues, they can contain myth, history and, crucially, reasoned accounts on the nature of virtue, character, and the good life.

The dialogues are not ethical narratives as a Narrativist might understand them, but they are narratives that are largely ethical. The pseudo-historical narrative of the dialogues and the techniques that are embedded within them provide the basis on which a person might begin to question their own moral culture; and they provide the all important 'critical distance' which many narratives do not readily offer. Moreover, insofar as Plato undermines some of the narratives of his society, the dialogues must offer alternative narratives. These narratives cannot, in the first instance (in the 4th Century B.C. for example), be true community narratives (except, perhaps, in the ideal polis), because, like myths, the period of dissemination must be great and in a sense form the initial and fundamental moral history of a society. The dialogues as narrative are more drama than myth, but unlike the great tragedians, Plato does not clothe what he understands as key problems in society by exploiting established myths; however he does, by setting the dialogues in the recent past – a past modified where necessary according to Plato's intentions, artistic or philosophical – is create a type of historical drama, one which takes on some of the characteristics of a myth (the Sokratic cycle for instance).

As Alasdair MacIntyre observes: 'morality is always to some degree tied to the socially local and particular' – 'and the aspirations of the morality of modernity to a universality freed from all particularity is an illusion…there is no way to possess the virtues except as part of a tradition in which we inherit them and our understanding of them from a series of predecessors in which series heroic societies hold first place.'[90] Plato, of course, sought to challenge his moral culture along with its heroic past; to create a new educational tradition and narrative. But he did so not because he wished, as Popper would have it, to cast the present in the image of an imaginary past,[91] but in order to create the necessary foundation which would make moral education possible, and it is in respect to this end that the dialogues should, in part, be understood.[92]

Endnotes

[1] James Mill, "Education," *James Mill on Education*, ed. W. H. Burston, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969 (p.41).

[2] J. Ball, *The Education Debate*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2008 (pp.11-12). Cf. Peter McPhail, *Social and Moral Education*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982 (pp.24-25).

[3] Ivana Milojevic, *Educational Futures: Dominant and Contesting Visions*, London: Routledge, 2005 (pp.73-87).

[4] Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1333b10.

[5] For example, one of the major educational targets of the previous government was to try and get at least 50% of young people into higher education, and this understandably had more to do with their desire to provide the more highly skilled workforce that industry demands and less to do with a concern with furthering pupils' moral development.

[6] H. G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come*, ed. Patrick Parrinder, London: Penguin, 2005 (p.265).

[7] Lineage was an obsession for the Greeks; no self-respecting Athenian 'gentleman' would be unable to trace his ancestors back to the great heroes of old.

[8] James Mill, *James Mill on Education*, ed. W. H. Burston, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969 (p.104).

[9] 'MGS [Manchester Grammar School] prepares its pupils for life in its richest sense, so they leave as happy, confident, mature and well balanced young men [MGS is an all boys' school], as well as having achieved the tremendous academic success they deserve.'

'The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils, and also the quality of the school's [St Bede's Preparatory School] provision for their pastoral care and welfare, was also described as outstanding with pupils' personal development identified as one of the many strengths of the Prep school.'

'The school [Hulme Hall School] believes that, regardless of age, every child matters, and they should be treated as an individual: Educating the whole person is what counts.'

'The Grange is about far more than academic achievement. It is a modern, friendly, vibrant and uncomplicated school, offering a genuinely enjoyable all-round education, founded on high expectations, strong relationships and enduring values.'

'King's prides itself on its commitment to developing well-rounded pupils. Parents often say that no other school offers the quality and choice of extra-curricular pursuits, in sport, music and art, drama or the host of interests pursued by pupils with the expert guidance of staff.'

'St Bede's College is not just about academic excellence. Our activities – sporting, artistic and cultural – recognise the whole child's development.'

'St Ambrose believes that its success has been underpinned by its Catholic Christian faith. Our boys develop within a family atmosphere and with a strong moral framework, becoming young men who are ready to make a positive contribution to society.'

'An extensive and varied range of house and extra-curricular activities ensures that every child has the opportunity to discover his or her particular talents, and to develop confidence and self-respect' (North Cestrian Grammar School)

All citations are from the *Messenger and Guardian: Independent Schools in the North West* (September 2008).

[10] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education," *Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. C. M. Beck, B. S. Crittenden, E. V. Sullivan, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971 (p.30).

[11] For some detailed background on the politics of this debate see John Beck's *Meritocracy, Citizenship and Education: New Labour's Legacy*, London: Continuum, 2008.

[12] *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools*, Final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship 22nd September 1998 (section 1.5, pp.7-8).

[13] *Ibid* section 1.4, p.7. As Crick states elsewhere: 'Britain was the last country in Europe to add citizenship to the curriculum. Previously we had thought that we did not need it' (Bernard Crick, "The English Citizenship Order 1999: Context, Content and Presuppositions," in *Education for Democratic Citizenship: Issues of Theory and Practice*, ed. Andrew Lockyer, Bernard Crick, John Annette, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, p.16).

[14] Crick Report, sections 1.1 and 3.1.

[15] *Encouraging Citizenship*, Report of the Commission on Citizenship, London: HMSO, 1990 (p.xv).

[16] Frances Morrell, "The Work of the Speaker's Commission and its Definition of Citizenship," *Citizenship in Schools*, ed. Ken Fogelman, London: David Fulton Publishers, 1991 (p.15).

[17] Crick Report, p.vx.

[18] *Ibid* section 1.5, p.7.

[19] *Ibid* section 3.6, p.15.

[20] According to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee's Report, *Citizenship Education*, published in February 2007, the motivations behind citizenship education were 'the political apathy of young people; society in moral crisis; democratic crisis/low voter turnout; legal changes (e.g. Europe and the Human Rights Act); diversity and immigration issues' (p.6). Also see Ian Davis' "Developing Education for Citizenship," *Education for Democratic Citizenship: Issues of Theory and Practice*, ed. Andrew Lockyer, Bernard Crick, John Annette, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003 (p.162).

[21] Tony Breslin, "Development of Citizenship Education 14-19," *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000 (p.68).

[22] 'We believe that the development of skills and experience of community are equally vital components of such an educational experience' (*Encouraging Citizenship*, p.37).

[23] Writing about the report in the context of the existing provision for the teaching of citizenship in the early 90s: 'However, until recently citizenship in schools was largely synonymous with civics and teaching about the British constitution. Whilst these aspects are not irrelevant, the concept has now broadened, not only to include a much wider body of knowledge, but also issues of attitudes, personal skills and participation' (*Citizenship in Schools*, ed. Ken Fogelman, London: David Fulton Publishers, 1991, p.1).

[24] Jagdish Gundara, "Social Diversity and Inclusiveness," *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000 (p.23).

[25] Crick Report, Section 6.

[26] *Ibid* Section 6.6, p.40.

[27] T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class*, London: Pluto Press, 1992 (p.8).

[28] *Encouraging Citizenship* (p.5).

[29] The Crick Report praises the Commission for its adoption of Marshall's definition (Crick Report, section 2.3, p.10)

[30] 'Responsibility is an essential political as well as moral virtue, for it implies (a) care for others; (b) premeditation and calculation about what effect actions are likely to have on others; (c) understanding and care for the consequences' (*Ibid* section 2.7).

[31] *Ibid* section 12.12.

[32] *Ibid* Section 2.11.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] Eva Gamarnikow and Anthony Green, "Citizenship, Education and Social Capital", *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000 (p.104).

[36] Crick Report, section 1.10, p.9.

[37] Eirini Pasoula, "Moral, Social and Civic Education in Greece", *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000 (p.35).

[38] Crick Report, section 6.8.2. p.41

[39] *Ibid*, for the list of values and dispositions see p.44.

[40] 'Even in the pages of the [Crick] Report, we have seen how they have vanished once an attempt was made to articulate learning outcomes for each key stage' (Janet Harland, "A Curriculum Model", *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000, p.59).

[41] Values and dispositions do feature in the 2006 *Making Sense of Citizenship*, but are still not given the same prominence as one would have thought by looking at the Crick Report.

[42] Crick Report, p.44.

[43] 'When does 'political education' become 'political indoctrination'? 'When the teacher ceases to present the various views held by different people on the controversial issue under discussion and becomes intent on getting his own views on the issue taken as gospel by his students, an intent which will…necessarily involve the overriding of the rationality of the students' (Robin Barrow and Ronald Woods, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Education*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.79, cf. p.80 'Indoctrination, in that it necessarily involves lack of respect for an individual's rationality, is morally unacceptable and hence fails to rate as education. And not only does it fail to rate as education. But to say that it is morally unacceptable is to say that it ought not to be indulged in').

[44] Bernard Crick, "The English Citizenship Order 1999: Context, Content and Presuppositions," in *Education for Democratic Citizenship: Issues of Theory and Practice*, ed. Andrew Lockyer, Bernard Crick, John Annette, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003 (p.20).

[45] 'The fact that our society is a plural one means not only that teachers will be working in a context in which pupils and their parents have different perspectives on questions of values but also that the values of teachers themselves will reflect this plurality' (Graham Haydon, *Teaching About Values: A New Approach*, London: Cassell, 1997, pp.153-154).

[46] Haydon "Aims in Citizenship Education: Responsibility, Identity, Inclusion" (p.84).

[47] Jagdish Gundara, "Social Diversity and Inclusiveness" (p.16).

[48] …a main aim for the whole community should be to find or restore a sense of common citizenship, including a national identity that is secure enough to find a place for the plurality of nations, cultures, ethnic identities and religions long found in the United Kingdom. Citizenship education creates common ground between different ethnic and religious identities (Crick Report, section 3.14 p.17).

[49] *Diversity & Citizenship: A Review*.

[50] House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, *Citizenship Education* (p.11).

[51] *Ibid* (p.12).

[52] *Diversity & Citizenship: A Review* (p.8).

[53] *Ibid* p.21.

[54] *Ibid* p.24.

[55] *Ibid* p.97.

[56] *Citizenship Education* (p.14).

[57] Graham Haydon, "The Moral Agenda of Citizenship Education", *Education for Citizenship*, ed. Denis Lawton, Jo Cairns and Roy Gardner, London: Continuum, 2000 (p.139).

[58] *Ibid* p.141.

[59] Citizenship education is available at primary level for key stages 1 and 2 but it is not statutory, and the same applies to PSHE.

[60] *PSHE* p.256.

[61] *Ibid*.

[62] PSHE: Economic Wellbeing and Financial Capability p.235.

[63] *Personal and Social Education Framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales* (p.13).

[64] *Ibid* p.10.

[65] *Ibid* p.11.

[66] *Curriculum for Excellence: Religious and Moral Education Principles and Practice* (p.4).

[67] *Ibid* p.5.

[68] Scottish Executive, *Religious Discrimination & Sectarianism on Scotland: A Review of Evidence (2002-2004)* 2005.

[69] John White, "Should religious education be a compulsory school subject," *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 26 No. 2, 2004 (pp.151-154).

[70] *National Curriculum: Religious Education* (p.269).

[71] John White, "Should religious education be a compulsory school subject" (p.158).

[72] *Ibid*.

[73] For an additional problem, cf. Peter Jarvis, "Religious Education as a Vehicle for Moral Education," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 2 No. 1, 1972 (pp.69-73). 'As the child grows up and becomes increasingly confused about religion and rejects its authority, what effect does this have upon the morality that has been enshrined within the religious framework?' (p.73).

[74] Jacqueline Watson, "Educating for Citizenship – The emerging relationship between Religious Education and Citizenship Education," *British Journal of Religious Education* Vol. 26, No. 3, 2004.

[75] *Ibid* p.268.

[76] *Sunday Times*, April 29th 2007.

[77] William A, Barbieri, Jr., "Ethics and the Narrated Life," *The Journal of Religion*," Vol. 78, No. 3, 1998.

[78] *Ibid* p.362.

[79] *Ibid* pp.363-365.

[80] *Ibid* p.365.

[81] *Ibid* p.366.

[82] *Ibid* pp.368-369.

[83] *Ibid* pp.370-380.

[84] Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996 (p.42).

[85] *Ibid* p.40.

[86] Roger Trigg, *Morality Matters*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005 (p.83).

[87] *Ibid* p.84.

[88] *Ibid* p.89.

[89] Whether Plato was successful in this is debatable, at least from what we can ascertain from the dialogues, although I will not enter into that debate here).

[90] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, London: Duckworth, 1985 (pp.126-127).

[91] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies, Vol. 1 Plato*, London: Routledge, 1966 (p.45).

[92] Plato, of course, sought to re-write his own heroic history, to create a new, mythical past, and from that basis and on this new foundation he sought to set ethics on a new footing. For Plato, and indeed for Hunter, moral education cannot be institutionalised. What we find Plato doing when he imagines his ideal poleis, therefore, and, indeed, the fictional world of the dialogues, is allowing us to question our culture, to create the necessary distance between it and ourselves which allows for critical reflection.

Conclusion

πάντων δὲ καλλίστη ἐστὶν ἡ σκέψις, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, περὶ τούτων ὧν σὺ δή
μοι ἐπετίμησας, ποῖόν τινα χρὴ εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τί ἐπιτηδεύειν καὶ
μέχρι τοῦ, καὶ πρεσβύτερον καὶ νεώτερον ὄντα[i]

In the preceding chapters I outlined the principles of Platonic
education as well as Plato's methods as an educationalist; I argued that
the dialogues must, in part, be seen as educational works and that
consequently we must approach them in a way that is congruent with
Plato's pedagogical aims.

By taking the dialogues as a *vehicle* for Platonic education, I have
argued that we gain a deeper insight into what Plato thinks is the main
objective of education, as well as helping us to better appreciate his
method as a *writer of educational material*. Platonic education is a written
representation of Sokratic education, and it does not, *other than in the
method of its delivery*, differ essentially from it. Like its Sokratic
counterpart, Platonic education seeks to create an alternative learning
environment and an alternative ethical narrative, where fundamental
issues can be discussed openly, and where all questions are assumed to
be unanswered (or at least subject to further clarification). Platonic

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[i] 'Of all the themes that one could make inquiry, Kallikles, none is finer than
the one you have reproached me with, that is, what one's character should be,
and the kinds of activities one should pursue, and to what degree, throughout
one's life' (*Gorgias* 487e9-488a2, trans. Michael Richard Hart).

education seeks to *turn* the reader away (however briefly) from conventional educational theory and practice and towards the pursuit of wisdom; and Plato attempts to accomplish this through certain techniques embedded within the dialogues, *protreptic rhetoric*, *life-models*, *argumentation*, and *myth*. Also like Sokratic education, Platonic education is, in the first instance, *propaedeutic*, and its effectiveness rests not on the student's attainment of full virtue but merely on the possibility that they will pursue it.

The Greek word from which we get 'propaedeutic' is προπαιδεύω, meaning 'to give preparatory instruction,' and as is often the case with its English cousin, it points to a *further course of study*. Propaedeutic is not 'pre-schooling' (in the sense that we attach to the modern nursery); its focus is more restricted. The dialogues prepare the ground for virtue by making its readers responsive to *further* education. This further education is an education in virtue proper, and it is achieved, taking book 7 of the *Republic* as representative, through rigorous *academic* study. It is a course of study that few could follow, and it remains the reason why, properly speaking, so few people can claim the title of 'philosopher.'

This view, that Plato's theory of education ought not to be seen primarily from the perspective of his ideal *poleis*, may have become more popular in recent years, but it has yet to be given an adequate

treatment, and nor has its relevance for modern moral education and educational theory been fully understood. I hope that I have helped to go some way in rectifying this.

As I discussed earlier, provision is made in England for moral education;[1] nevertheless, the school system is not in the business of explicitly promoting or inculcating specific *virtues* or a specific ethical or moral system. Other than in faith schools or schools with a strong tradition of religious education, Citizenship Education (CE) takes the lead in dealing with ethical issues, broadly understood, in most secondary schools in England. However, CE was not brought in primarily to address the problems arising from pluralism and moral diversity, or because of concerns about 'moral standards' as such. The emphasis of the Crick report, as we saw in Chapter Eight, was with the issue of voter apathy and the feeling of disconnectedness that many young people experienced in respect to government and their own role as citizens in a democratic society. Nevertheless, the initial remit of the Crick Report did include a strong 'moral' component, and, as a statutory subject, CE could therefore play an important and guiding role in the moral education of children in England.[2]

However, and crucially, the primary concern for CE is with *helping* to produce good citizens. But what is a good citizen? A good citizen understands his or her own rights and responsibilities both as a

participator in a liberal democracy and as a member of society as such. Whatever private views or beliefs a citizen may hold (and can be said to be 'moral' in nature), are, as long as they do not impinge on their role as citizens, of no consequence. There is no sense in which the virtue of the good citizen can be the same as the virtue of the good person. Not because public and private cannot coincide, but because the good person in a distinct and recognisable sense does not exist. Many good people do exist, it would be argued, and I would not dispute this. However, the endorsement of a particular model of character and behaviour is not something that a government in a liberal democracy can do. All a government can do is to ensure that moral education is suitably inclusive so that it can encompass the heterogeneity of moral opinion.

The chief difficulty in implementing an effective programme of moral education now stems from the nature of our society, its 'values' (its moral culture), its demographic, and its constitution. The UK is culturally, ethnically, religiously, and morally diverse, and yet at the same time it is a liberal democracy, which, in theory at least, embraces and promotes the values of equality, justice and human rights. A *National* curriculum demands nothing less than that no culture, race, religion, is privileged over another in the teaching of subjects in either content or form (whether this is always born out in practice is, of course, another matter). Therefore, even though modern education

does promote and inculcate certain moral *principles*, such as human rights, fairness, and tolerance, it does not do so from the perspective of a particular designated system because, for the most part, such values are held as universal and not belonging to the UK exclusively. The United Kingdom, as I discussed in the Introduction, does not have a distinct moral culture capable of sustaining an effective program of moral education.

A moral culture as I understand it, and largely following James Davidson Hunter, is that which forms the basis for what the human being thinks or feels that he/she values or ought to value and be according to, and largely directed by, the demands made on him/her by a particular type of community living. This community living includes a history and a number of narratives and a central and overarching moral principle, ideal or concept. Moreover, every moral culture is a complex whole, a whole that includes within it various moral 'sub-cultures,' such as illustrated by the following figures:

5th-4th Century B.C. Athens

Moral Culture: dominated by a principle of Liberty
Moral Sub-Cultures
Sokratic ethics; Homeric ethics; Sophistic ethics; Platonic Education/philosophy; Euripidean ethical realism; Sophoklean ethical idealism, etc.

5th Century B.C. Sparta

Moral Culture: dominated by an ideal of *Andreia*
Moral Sub-Cultures
???

The Kallipolis of the *Republic*

Moral Culture: dominated by a conception of *Eudaimonia*
Moral Sub-Cultures
None

21st Century A.D. United Kingdom

Moral Culture: dominated by the ideal of Inclusivity
Moral Sub-Cultures
Christian ethics; Muslim ethics; citizenship; consumerism, ad nauseam

In terms of the extent to which moral sub-cultures are tolerated depends upon how they are seen to contradict or support the dominant moral culture and its guiding ideal, principle, or concept. It also needs pointing out that an individual sub-culture can be in conflict with one or more rival or competing sub-cultures. Moreover, some sub-cultures are more independent (depending on the level of tension between them) of the dominant moral culture than others, although all moral sub-cultures are to some degree embedded within it. History and narrative give life to and inform the overall shape and texture of moral culture and moral sub-cultures, and they also support their authority. The level of authority that a moral culture (and by authority

I mean the power it has to continue unchanged), depends upon its dominance over its sub-cultures. In a society such as ancient Sparta, deviant moral sub-cultures would be actively suppressed; and this would also be true in respect to Plato's Athens. However, given Athens' cultural breadth, heritage, and pretensions, it could sustain a greater number of moral sub-cultures than most other ancient Greek *poleis* (providing, of course, that they were not seen as obviously dangerous).

In order to improve or change state moral education one must change the dominant moral culture. Indeed, this is what Plato imagines in the *Republic*. In the ideal polis of the *Republic*, there are no moral sub-cultures, only one dominant moral culture. Plato's proposals in the *Republic* are both radical and, even by his own admission, problematic. However, given that it is unlikely that we would be able or willing to instigate the kinds of reforms that Plato would think necessary in order to make the virtuous society possible, what are our alternatives?

One alternative, although by no means the only one, would be to do as Plato did with the dialogues: to embed moral education within some sort of narrative, and to create, if not an ideal culture and society, a new moral sub-culture, and therefore in a sense to exploit the inclusiveness of our moral culture. Whether this is something which could be done within the state school system as such is unclear.

But why would narrative be a suitable medium for moral education? – because, as Jerome Bruner states, 'it is through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members.'[3]

Narratives can offer children numerous life-models; various claims about what it means to be a good human (and what it means to be a bad human); various claims about the nature of human flourishing and about how life should be lived (and how it should not be lived). The problem is not that suitable narratives do not exist (or that too many narratives exist in principle), but rather, we are without the skill, imagination, and most importantly, the will to exploit them for educational ends.

None of us know as much as we should about how to create narrative sensibility. Two commonplaces seem to have stood the rest of time. The first is that a child should "know," have a "feel" for, the myths, histories, folktales, conventional stories of his or her culture (or cultures). They frame and nourish an identity. The second commonplace urges imagination through fiction. Finding a place in the world, for all that it implicates the immediacy of home, mate, job, and friends, is ultimately an act of imagination[4]

As is currently the case, children are heavily informed by narratives, through books, Television, Video, and the Internet, to name but a few. However, the moral education that children receive via these media is in most cases disorganised, unsystematic, and potentially bewildering

and conflicting, and sometimes damaging. Therefore, in addition to narratives moral education requires a method of teaching and, of course, teachers – people who have the skills to utilize the potential of narrative and guide children through the process. I am not suggesting that it is the teacher's role to necessarily choose children's stories for them, to deliberately attempt to mould their aesthetic and moral sensibilities through a rigorous process of discrimination, but rather to help children understand what stories say about how people have lived, are living, and what they suggest about 'who we are' (or indeed 'were'), and 'where we are going.'

The teacher's task, claims Richard Pring, is to help the pupil make sense of his or her tradition by appraising the values that are embedded within it. Hence 'the profession of teaching is the custodian of such traditions – not in a clear or inert sense (as archivists or librarians), but in the sense of critical engagement.'[5] For Pring, therefore, education is a moral practice; it is a special sort of activity 'in which the teacher is sharing in a moral expertise, namely, the initiation of (usually) young people into a worthwhile way of seeing the world, of experiencing it, of relating to others in a more human and understanding way.'[6] Teaching, as Pring observes, is a social activity and hence it is one which 'inevitably reflects the moral divisions within society.' Teaching, therefore, is 'concerned with the learning of those

concepts, ideas, principles, understandings which enable the young

person to make sense of the world.'[7]

The importance of narrative for the cohesion of a culture is great, very likely, as it is in the structuring of an individual life. Take law as an illustration. Without a sense of the common trouble narratives that the law translates into its common law writs, it becomes arid. And those "trouble narratives" appear again in mythic literature and contemporary novels, better contained in that form that in reasoned and logically coherent propositions. It seems evident, then, that skill in narrative construction and narrative understanding is crucial to constructing our lives and a "place" for ourselves in the possible world we will encounter.[8]

I would go further than Bruner and Pring, and insist that, although

narrative ought to form the centre-piece of moral education, and that a

critical engagement with one's tradition is of vital importance to how a

person's moral identity is formed (for good or bad), the main aim of an

effective moral education must be one that might help a person to

become a good human. It does not matter if the question 'what is it to

be a good human being?' cannot be answered definitively; what moral

education must offer, through narratives, at the very least, are possible

ways in which to answer this question. Moral education, broadly

considered, is a means of transmitting this history, and these narratives

and this sense of authority to the individual members of a community.

Moral education, however, and correctly understood, seeks not

transmission but transformation: moral education is an act of

rejuvenation, but more than this, it is an act of creation.

Plato's dialogues contain an ethical narrative, a narrative which forms the basis on which certain questions can be explored in a recognisable, imaginative, and lively context. With the dialogues Plato is not merely engaging with a tradition (and, indeed, criticising it), but creating a moral sub-culture, a distinct and semi-independent moral community; and he does this in order to create the space in which a person can take their first step on the journey towards the attainment of perfect human virtue. Therefore, moral education may begin with narrative (and in a sense always be sustained by it), but it comprises, through actual discourse, an on-going search for truth, wisdom, beauty, and the Good.[9]

Endnotes

[1] With *Personal Social and Economic Education* (PSHE), *Citizenship Education* (CE), and *Religious Education* (RE), and in Scotland, with *Religious and Moral Education*, and in *Wales with Personal and Social Education* (PSE).

[2]   Late in 2010 the DfE (formally the DfES) published the findings of its Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS). The main aim of the study was threefold. First, to 'access the short-term and long-term effects of citizenship education on young people in England,' and second, 'to explore whether different processes – in terms of school, teacher and individual-level variables – can have variable results and produce different outcomes, and lastly, 'to consider what changes could be made to the delivery of citizenship education in order to improve its potential effectiveness.'

The results of the study have shown that up to date the success of CE has been mixed. The study focuses on three research questions. In respect to the first ('how have young people's citizenship practices changed over time?'), political and civic participation was seen to increase with age, at least in the short term. At the same time, however, other non-civic, extra-curricular activities deceased. Interestingly (and not surprisingly), civic and political participation was motivated more by a sense of personal benefit than through a sense of duty. More worrying, perhaps, was the finding that certain attitudes, particularly towards issues of social justice, tended to *harden* with age. Along with this, and perhaps most perplexingly, the sense of community attachment weakened over the years of the study. However, pupils' general awareness of the importance of politics (variables withstanding) remained throughout the study and, in some cases, was significantly strengthened.

The second research question looked at what factors contributed to creating the above 'citizenship outcomes.' Briefly, the study found a correlation between what they call 'received citizenship' (that is, the level to which a pupil thought that they had received an education in citizenship) and positive attitudes towards civic and political participation. It was also discovered that CE was best delivered in discrete, regular slots rather than incorporated within others subjects, PSHE being a prime example, and delivered by teachers specially seconded for the purpose. It was also found that formal examination was also contributed to the effectiveness of CE. The study's final research question ('what would make citizenship education more effective?'), is drawn largely from these findings, but it also stresses the need for additional support to be given to teachers and schools in order for them to better expedite the learning aims of CE.

What I found most interesting about the study was its rather narrow focus. The study looks more at civics than at citizenship, at least in the sense that it is defined in the Crick Report. Little if anything is said about moral or social responsibility, and nor does the Study address the issues of diversity or identity, which since Sir Keith Ajegbo's report (largely endorsed by the House of Common Education and Skills Committee), had come to the forefront of CE. An earlier Home Office report, Children and Citizenship, did examine the issues of social and moral responsibly in some detail, but the emphasis has now appeared to have shifted towards *participation* and *political literacy*. The CELS is particularly interested in the latter, and sees this as the major challenge in the years to come.

[3] Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996 (p.xiv).

[4] *Ibid* p.41.

[5] Richard Pring, "Education as Moral Practice," *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2001 (p.106).

[6] *Ibid* p.106.

[7] *Ibid* p.106.

[8] Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (p.40).

[9] Today we might take the notion of 'perfect human virtue' as nothing more than a fruitless ideal, and even an insidious one. However, as Morris Ginsberg states: 'The notion of an "ideal" is central in moral experience. For in the notion of an ideal there is

a fusion of the conception of something that "would" satisfy us if attained and the conception of something that "should" or ought to satisfy us. In other words in moral experience appeal and constraint, pressure and aspiration are in various degree intermingled. The ideal stands before us as something desirable though not necessarily desired, as something which makes demands on us and which may involve abnegation of desire but which in the end would be not repressive but liberative.' (Morris Ginsberg, *On the Diversity of Morals*, London: Mercury Books, 1962, pp.132-133). 'That no human being will ever act adequately to what the pure idea of virtue contains does not prove in the least that there is something chimerical in this thought. For it is only by means of this idea that any judgement of moral worth or unworth is possible; and so it necessarily lies at the ground of every approach to moral perfection, even though the obstacles in human nature, as yet to be determined as to their degree, may hold us at a distance from it' (*Critique of Pure Reason* (A315/B372).

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