

# 10 Ἄμαρτία, *Verfall*, Pain: Plato's and Heidegger's Philosophies of Politics (and Beyond)

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Two seemingly opposing philosophies, Plato's and Heidegger's, are brought together by reading the philosophy of politics in the *Republic* through the existential-analytic lenses of *Being and Time* and also by using the former in order to explore the philosophico-political potential of the latter. Plato's thematic of errancy (ἄμαρτία) is shown to interlock harmoniously with Heidegger's thematic of the fall (*Verfall*). This provides a single, penetrating interpretation of how philosophy thinks humans are supposed to respond to the predicament of their original condition (painfulness connected with injustice, meaninglessness, etc.). It turns out that in these otherwise antipodean versions of philosophizing, the view emerges, according to which the original difficulty can be fully overcome. The question whether the aforementioned predicament can be actually fully overcome (or rather not) however, would form the basis for a novel phenomenology of the political.

**Keywords:** errancy; *hamartia* (ἄμαρτία); fall (*Verfall*); *agathon* (ἀγαθόν); justice; pain; emotions; political.

τὸ γὰρ ὀρθοῦσθαι γνώμην ὀδυνᾷ,  
τὸ δὲ μαινόμενον κακόν, ἀλλὰ κρατεῖ  
μὴ γιγνώσκοντ' ἀπολέσθαι.

—Euripides, *Hippolytus*<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Introduction

In the *Republic*,<sup>3</sup> Plato develops his first mature and “systematic” thoughts on the most primordial and ancient problem in our experience of living and acting: the problem of *justice* (δίκη, δικαιοσύνη) in the city (πόλις). This justice (i.e., the necessary organization of human life which can safeguard a good life for all) is the central concern of the *Republic*—as its probably subsequent subtitle also testifies (ἢ Περί δικαίου). It may also be said that this remained the single most important problem that Plato tried to solve throughout the course of his thought and life. In the *Republic*, Plato argues that the possibility of justice depends on the possibility of our achieving knowledge of the peculiar super idea of *the good* (τὸ ἀγαθόν).

With reference to Plato's *Republic*, until now phenomenology and phenomenologists have basically focused on Plato's theory of *truth* (ἀλήθεια) and the ideas, and on the affinity between the good and Being as such.<sup>4</sup> On this count, phenomenology, and specifically its Heideggerian branch, has attempted to elucidate these fundamental pillars of

Western thought. On the basis of this elucidation, it has been thought that we would acquire a firm basis for the necessary historical understanding of the current ontological situation of humanity and, possibly, of its future fate. For the purposes of the present paper, the possibility and the truth-character of our logos-relatedness with the good, as well as the affinity of the good with Being, are of course not irrelevant dimensions. On the contrary, they form the presupposed background for the discussion to follow.

Here, nevertheless, I would like to draw attention to another vital but still relatively ignored thematic. In the *Republic*, we also find the first systematic examination of two crucial phenomena: *errancy* (ἄμαρτία)<sup>5</sup> and *revolt* (στάσις). Justice, the good, truth, errancy, and revolt seem to constitute the primordial and intermingled phenomena that constitute the political in Plato.

In what follows, in §3, I will engage in a basic analysis of these fundamental concepts and of their mutual co-functionality.<sup>6</sup> I will do this by focusing mostly on *errancy* (ἄμαρτία) as it was first thematized by Plato. After this, in §4, I will try to develop an initial re-reading of the key structural points of this Platonic thematic, specifically in the terms provided by Heidegger's analyses of *attunement* (*Befindlichkeit*), *thrownness* (*Geworfenheit*), and, above all, *fall* (*Verfall*), as they appear, for the most part, in the Existential Analytic of his *Being and Time*.<sup>7</sup> As we shall see, Plato's errancy and Heidegger's fall interlock such that the two thematics enlighten each other. This, however, is not attempted just for the sake of bringing to the fore an intriguing oddity. Thus, before anything else, I will first try to offer, in §2, the outline of what is expected by this parallel—or rather criss-cross—reading of Plato and Heidegger. I will also prepare the ground for this reading by making explicit the way pain is presupposed and thematized in its context. Finally, in the closing §5, I will offer a brief recapitulation and the delineation of some further prospects.

## 2 Expectations and Preparation

“Errancy,” to be sure, is not among the standard translations of the original Greek term ἄμαρτία.<sup>8</sup> I am using this translation, however, because I think it more aptly captures the meaning of this term, and also because this establishes a critical connection with Heidegger's thematic of *Irre* in his “Vom Wesen der Wahrheit” (1930). The latter, however, remains basically marginal in Heidegger, even though he is in fact tacitly presupposing it throughout his work on Being. Accordingly, in the *Republic* we find an analogously marginal notion of fall (ἐκπίπτειν; *Rep.* 497b5–6), which nonetheless crystallizes the core of the problem which bothers Plato.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of this situation, then, we can combine Plato's developed notion of ἄμαρτία (errancy) and Heidegger's developed notion of *Verfall* (fall) into a—not unholy, and certainly powerful—hybrid terminological couple. This will help us see unforeseen interconnections between these two philosophers who, accordingly, open and close the fate of philosophy's history. It will also help us see philosophy's essential character, especially as regards the way in which it is expected to engage with the aforementioned “political.”

On the one hand, Heidegger's ontologically advanced analyses regarding existential fall will help us to read Plato's philosophical account of political errancy with novel emphases, making it available to us for further phenomenological reflection. Some of Plato's seemingly unimportant remarks on political errancy and its prospected cure will now appear crucial for a phenomenological elucidation of the way he and philosophy see the “political.” On the other hand, the connection of existential fall with errancy will naturally help us unfetter a novel dimension of the possible inspiration that Heidegger seems to have drawn from Plato. It will, however, also help us to discern a deeply rooted affinity between the perspectives of these two seemingly opposing philosophers, who by definition determine the antipodes of

philosophy as we know it. The aforementioned possible inspiration and affinity, as well as the amazing mutual adoptability of Heidegger's thematics in *BT* and Plato's political analyses in the *Republic*, can finally help us see how philosophy thinks of political problems. It is as if Heidegger were working on a transcription of Plato's thought regarding the praxially significant mundane condition of humanity, and the role that the philosopher should play in the latter's prospective redemption. In the present paper, however, this latter connection will be only hinted at, leaving a more fully developed treatment for the future.

The development of the discussion will bring to the fore the concealed fact that *pain* (as well as fear of pain) has a central role in the Platonic philosophy of praxis and politics. Most crucially, though, the results of our criss-cross analysis and of the interlocking of ἄμαρτία and fall will make us aware of the fact that pain is also a crucial dimension of Heidegger's understanding of humanity's condition, and of its redemption. This finding will thus complement my reading of how philosophy conceives of itself, *qua* possible remedy for the evils of humanity's social existence.

A final elucidatory remark is necessary at this point, however. It was just noted that pain seems to have been a central worry both in Plato's practical philosophy and in Heidegger's existential perspective. This can, in fact, be detected on two different levels. Talk of pain, nonetheless, must be split into two different levels. It seems to me that from phenomenology's point of view, we can say that there is what we can call "first pain," the pain we feel in our straightforward confrontation with other human and non-human beings that affect us, and what we can call "second pain," the pain connected with our existio-praxial response to first pain. Seen otherwise, there is centripetal or directly suffered, incoming pain, meaning pain connected with the evils we experience from natural catastrophes, assaults, or injustice, which threaten the possibility and prospect of life as it should be lived. And there is also centrifugal or expended, outgoing pain, meaning pain connected with the cost of our efforts to attain or the stances we take in order to justifiably expect, safeguard, and retain such a life.<sup>10</sup>

### 3 Justice, Political Errancy, and Recovery in Plato's *Republic*

#### 3.1 *The General Problem Situation*

Let us begin with the widest possible articulation of the problem that Plato deals with in his *Republic*. Quite early in the work under discussion, he introduces the notions of work (ἔργον) and virtue (ἀρετή). For example, the work of the eye is vision, and its virtue is its healthy and proper organization of its inner parts, so as to guarantee the accomplishment of its work. The virtuous eye works properly, and enables its bearer to move around as it should (in terms of sensory vision).

The human being, however, does not move around in the world only in terms of vision, or only in terms of sensory capacities. It does not just visually or sensorially *find its way around the world*. It also acts over against its fellow human beings, either isolatedly or in the context of a city (πόλις). Now, what is the way in which human beings should act or *praxially* move around the world? It seems that there is the widest possible agreement that human beings should live in a way that guarantees their *well-being* (εὐδαιμονία), both individually and collectively. But what might "well-being" mean? The well-being of human beings can only be defined in accordance with what they inalienably, deeply, and really are. As far as this human nature remains intact, as far as it remains virtuous and functions virtuously, its bearer lives and acts as it should live and act, as it is naturally (φύσει) "destined" to live, and enjoys eudemonia.

What is this nature, nonetheless? It is at this point that we are in need of a philosophical anthropology, or of a metaphysics of humanness. Plato thus introduces his philosophical anthropology precisely at this juncture. As we are guided to understand, the nature of human beings, what human beings deeply and really are, is their *soul*; their soul is what makes them be and be what they are. Hence, the well-being of humans is definable according to the work of the soul in its virtuous (proper) state. Well-being is the kind of life that is realized when the virtuous human soul accomplishes its normal work.

What becomes crucial, then, is to arrive at a true account of what the human soul is, what it means for it to be virtuous, and what the normal work that it accomplishes is.

### 3.2 Plato's Response: His Theory of the Soul and the Good

Plato first suggests that the human soul is a tripartite composition comprising the *rational and reasoning* or—why not?—*calculative* (λογιστικόν), the *spirited* or *emotive* (θυμοειδής), and the *desiring* or *appetitive* (ἐπιθυμητικόν) parts, each having its own corresponding virtue: *wisdom*, *bravery*, and *self-restraint* (*Rep.* 427e10–11, 433b3–4, d4–5). The hard core of the nature or essence of human beings, however, he continues, is the *immortal* reasoning or calculative part of the soul, and its work is wisdom, connected with “management, rule, deliberation, and the like” (*Rep.* 353d5). Nevertheless, Plato also says that the virtue of the overall soul in us, the virtue that guarantees the accomplishment of its par excellence work here on Earth, is *justice* (*Rep.* 353d11). More specifically, justice gives birth to and integrates the aforementioned corresponding virtues of the three parts of the whole soul. In constituting and regulating the partial virtues, justice secures the possibility of the sought-for well-being of the citizen and, by extension, of the city. This, of course, is in need of further elucidation.

The virtuous person lives justly (i.e., he lives in a way that relies on the proper, harmonious functioning of all the parts of the soul). And the proper functioning of the soul in its entirety consists in the following order. The reasoning part of the soul must be functioning wisely (i.e., it must have knowledge and must not be characterized by ignorance). The spirited part must be functioning bravely (i.e., it must have the courage to confront all difficulties or obstacles, to fight against them, and must not be characterized by cowardice). The desiring part must be functioning with self-restraint (i.e., it must allow itself to be attracted only by the necessary pleasures, and must not be characterized by looseness and uncontrollability). Moreover, these parts must be interrelated in the following way: the wise reasoning part is the science (knowledge) that guides our correct action (*Rep.* 443e5–7), while the spirited part must assist the work of the reasoning part by supporting it, when it blocks unnecessary and dangerous desires.

According to Plato, however, all this is possible only when the reasoning part has knowledge of the most valuable cognitive content of all: *the good* (ἀγαθόν). It is the good, then, that guarantees the attainment and the preservation of justice in the soul. Otherwise put, the good is the condition for the possibility of the soul's virtuousness, which enables it to act as it should act, in order for it to attain well-being. Moreover, a whole city will be living justly if all its citizens (i.e., their individual souls) are just or, at least, if its citizens live in a collectively harmonious arrangement, according to each one's specific, personal, and characteristic capacities.

But, it so happens that in everyday, mundane life the parts of the soul are *not* organized according to the rule of justice dictated by the good. Unjust persons appear in the city, or injustice appears in the city itself, because its inhabitants enter into arrangements

that are neither balanced nor harmonious. Plato's understanding of the Socratic view is that unjust persons and injustice in the city are the result of *ignorance* of the good. And this lack of knowledge of the good results in all sorts of evils that destroy the sought-for well-being, both individually and collectively. At the level of the city in particular, the most inclusive way to refer to this evil is precisely in terms of unrest and revolt. The forms of government that are ignorant of the good allow the appearance of unrest and revolt, and are incapable of effectively resolving political turmoil and securing justice and well-being in the city.

### 3.3 The Phenomenon of Political Errancy

For Plato, there are as many basic forms of problematic government as there are possible characters of the soul. And, since there is only one virtuous character, there will be only one correct form of government that can bring justice to the polis. The virtuous (just) soul is the one in which its three parts live in the harmony prescribed by the knowledge of the good. Thus, the correct form of government is one in which the reasoning part of the soul, with its knowledge of the good, prevails, controlling the desires with the help of the spirited part, that the reasoning part has, meanwhile, tamed and trained. This means that only the perfect knower or scientist (ἐπιστήμων) of the good can be perfectly virtuous, and only such a person can guarantee the correct organization of common life in the city. This person knows the truth (ἀλήθεια) of the good in the sense that it has achieved a direct, absolutely evident, and constant mental gazing (θεωρεῖν) of the good. The mental gaze of this person (i.e., the reasoning part of its soul) lives in perfect mental view (θεωρία) of the good in its truth, *without ever missing its mark* and never failing to remain theoretically correlated with its target, the appearing good. The soul becomes evil when it lacks this capacity and either cannot enjoy or ceases to enjoy the truth of the good, the evidently appearing good. If this happens, the mental gaze has then been misdirected and has *turned away* or *deviated* from the spectacle of the good: it has *missed the mark* or it is *miss-targeting* it or it is simply *erring* (ἀμαρτάνει). In this case, our mental gaze has failed to be or to remain correlated with the truly appearing good.<sup>11</sup>

Political errancy (ἀμαρτία), then, is the exercise of government by a reason that is blind with respect to the good. But what causes this errancy and blindness?

According to the basics of Plato's metaphysics of the soul and his epistemology, what happens is this: before our birth and after our death, our soul exists in an extramundane realm, which is the realm of reality in the pregnant sense of the term. Its life there is characterized by the bliss of the most direct vision of all that really is (ὄντως ὄν): of the Ideas, and even of the good itself, which makes all them appear in their being and in their being what they are. In having this unimpeded and unfiltered access to all that is really real, the soul entertains complete knowledge by mentally gazing or theorizing (θεωρεῖν) every bit and part of that extramundane, heavenly and supraheavenly reality.

At our birth, however, the immortal soul gets connected with the mortal body, and we start our lives in this mundane reality, the *Cave*. Everything that the soul knew is almost totally forgotten. It is now forced to see only through bodily eyes and senses, and thus only the unstable, elusive, and multifarious empirical "reality" of the many beings and of the many "goods" (τά ἀγαθά) is now given to the senses. Luckily, though, all these mundane beings and goods happen to be faint *copies* of the real realities (Ideas) in the suprasensory extramundane realm, but our weak memories of that realm suffice only for the—more or less vague—recognition of the basics in this sensory world. Our everyday

cognitive and praxial life is thus at best clumsily organized, according to the incomplete memories of the soul's life in the realm of Ideas. Being incomplete, these memories can only help us in the barely tolerable management of and coping with the theoretical and paraxial problems we face, here on Earth.

Yet our problematic knowledge of what is, on the mundane level, caused by the virulent mediation of our material senses in pure reason's theoretical targeting of the heavenly and supraheavenly Ideas, is not the only problem created at our birth, and is not the only reason for the described situation in our cities on Earth. From the very start, the body is the seat of the spirited and the appetitive parts of soul (i.e., of our emotions, our moods, and our desires). When uncontrolled—and we start our lives with uncontrolled emotions and desires, since *logos* makes its appearance only after our adolescence (Rep. 441a–b)—both contribute to and enhance confusion and disorientation. We are not only exposed to relative ignorance of what this or that mundane thing is or should be, but our already “inhibited” *logos* faces difficulties in providing practical guidance, by means of recognizing what the proper *worth* of this or that particular “good” (or, better, *chréma* [χρῆμα]; e.g., tools, houses, garments, foods, etc.) is or should be.

Everyone, then, thinks that he or she knows what a knife, a plough, or even a human being is or is not. And everyone thinks that he or she knows how to deal with this or that under such and such praxial circumstances. Everyone claims that she has the right to own these or those *chrémata* and in this or that quantity. Everyone pronounces himself or herself ruler in the name, we could say, of his or her lineage, or in the name of God, or in the name of the “objective” laws of history, or in the name of the people, etc. Living in this condition, human beings wander helplessly among *chrémata* or tasks, shifting among practical principles or purposes for action. To varying degrees, everyone is perplexed and in trouble, but does not want to stop and think about what is going on, or upon what the “human condition” is, what “the human being's locus in the cosmos,” as it were, is. Hence, it comes as no surprise that unrest and revolt have ensued, and reign on Earth.

### 3.4 The Erring Forms of Government

Having only unclear and imperfect knowledge of the prior grasp of the ideas and being praxially distracted by the emotions and the desires born within the body, we have failed to take the “owed” course in our personal life and in our life in the city—the course opened up by our lost capacity to truly estimate what is and what is not as well as what is good and what is evil.

Within this situation, we establish cities and organize our lives in them according to the forms of government conceived from the point of view of correspondingly mundane and failed human morals. For, as Plato clearly notes, the forms of government take their shape by the various kinds of morals held by the people in the polis (ἐκ τῶν ἠθῶν τῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν; Rep. 544c1–e2), and it is a fact that these governments and the resulting forms of city-life are plagued by all the evils that have made human beings suffer throughout the millennia. Greed for honor, greed for material goods and pleasures, greed for freedom, greed for power, etc., all of which boil down to nothing other than *injustice*, shape the situation that incessantly stokes the fires of unrest and revolt. More specifically, when the sight of *the* good has been distorted or lost (i.e., when pure reason mistargets the good), four forms of flawed or erring government result, as possible solutions to the quest for justice: timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. In all four cases, ignorance of the condition for the true possibility of justice, i.e., ignorance of the good, has

taken hold of the citizens' souls, and thus of the reins of the entire city. In our mortal, bodily, finite existence on Earth, the epistemological ἄμαρτία leads to its political mirror image: the erring forms of government that *cannot* cure injustice in the city.

Is there, however, any possibility for a real correction to this predicament? If there is such a possibility, how and who will ever realize it? Plato claims that since injustice is the consequence of the calculative soul's entrapment in our mundane bodies, and of its resulting *forgetfulness* (λήθη) of its a priori cognitive load, i.e., of the content of the good in its truth, the only way of making justice prevail is by bringing back this a priori under the light of truth.

### 3.5 Plato's Philosophical Solution of the Political Problem

First of all, Plato claims that a fully educated reasoning soul can form the paradigmatic case (λόγῳ ἐμποιούμενον παράδειγμα; *Rep.* 472d9–e1; also 369c9)<sup>12</sup> of the just city we would expect to be formed under the guidance of that a priori, the good, in its evident truth. According to Plato, however, only the true philosopher (or, at best, a philosophical directorate) can accomplish such a true vision of the supraheavenly good and apply it to our empirical reality. That is, only the true philosopher can enjoy the experience of the a priori called “the good” and then project it back in our mundane reality in order to restore the just city here.<sup>13</sup>

This real possibility, however, is a matter of the appropriate and *extremely grueling* systematic education (παιδεία) that only appropriate citizens can endure. This education would enable those humans who have the “most excellent” natures (εὐφρόστεροι) to enhance and to secure the theoretical connection with the good, and to organize the duties of the “less excellent” citizens in a harmonious way, according to their limited capacities for performance in the city. For Plato in the *Republic*, philosophical knowledge has a specific ultimate content, the good. Its possession enables a citizen to become the ideal politician, who can program and arrange all the affairs in the mundane city in the most suitable and harmonious way. In the *Republic*, it becomes sufficiently clear that the fundamental model for the having and the handling<sup>14</sup> of this supposed knowledge, as well as for its application to the mundane city, is *Geometry* (together with Astronomy and music). The ideal politician, the philosopher-king who can bring about justice in the city, is the *geometrician of the political situation and action, the scientist of politics*. In order for someone to possess and control this a priori knowledge of the good, he or she needs only to prepare him- or herself, voluntarily and deliberately, by means of a suitable and programmable education. This education is based on learning methods of exact measurement and (re)-reaching the laws that supposedly secure the harmonious organization of the city's constituents (be they other persons, institutional roles, or just plain *chrémata*, like food, shelter, clothes, weapons, tools, houses, etc.). Supposedly, this is the organization of the city that ultimately brings about the long-sought-after effect: perfect justice.

From within the mundane perspective, this education makes the experience of the specific political a priori of the good possible once again. From our viewpoint, on the basis of Plato's analysis regarding the necessary lessons that the dialectician philosopher has to learn, we can also say that this good is a mathematically textured and functioning *algorithm of justice*.<sup>15</sup> And the full acquisition of this ultimate knowledge appears, after all, to be a matter of the absolute strengthening of the powers of the reasoning soul, and the complete subjugation of the emotions and desires to its supposed controlling power.

Yet, if this is the whole story, why has humanity *not* yet experienced a form of government like the one suggested by Plato?

#### 4 An Existential-Analytical Reading of Political Errancy in the *Republic*

In this section, I will first try to offer an explicit phenomenological reading of Plato's "political errancy" (πολιτική ἀμαρτία) in connection with attunement (*Befindlichkeit*), thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), and, above all, fall (*Verfall*).

With all this in mind, we may now turn and see how existential fall refers back to Plato's errancy, and how we can cross-fertilize these two thematics, using pain as a catalyst.

##### 4.1 *Feelings, Emotions, and Moods Tie Us with the Mundane World; Thrownness and Fall*

Plato's philosophical anthropology teaches us that human beings, as beings within mundane reality, are clusters of an immortal reasoning or calculating soul, connected to a mortal body. It is, moreover, this connection which seems to give birth to a secondary mortal soul, characterized by the familiar phenomena of emotion and desire. That is, we can read Plato as claiming that it is in our feeling and desiring (i.e., in our emotive capacity) that we first realize that *we are* in this mundane world, that we are in fact *thrown* here (for him, from the heavenly sphere above). Despite the variations in Plato's continuous puzzlement, especially regarding the specific status of the emotive and desiring soul,<sup>16</sup> this appears to be the basic factor behind the emergence of our realization that we exist within this mundane reality.

One of Heidegger's most emblematic theses in *BT* is his suggestion that it is in our thymotic attunement (i.e., in our emotive make up), that we first realize that we are thrown (*geworfen*) in this world, within which we are in the mode of existing. For Heidegger, it is indeed not in our reflecting, "I think, therefore I am," but in our thorough lived-through experience of the phenomenological fact, "I feel, therefore I am," that we first realize our existence in the world.

##### 4.2 *In our Mundane Being, Theoria of the Good Errs; in our Thrownness, Authentic Experience of Being Has Fallen*

According to Plato, the philosopher or the scientifically minded politician is, supposedly, the only "noble" nature that can establish a constant theoretical view of the a priori of justice (i.e., of the good *qua* a priori of the true goods in the city) and apply it within the political reality of the mundane republic. However, in our earthly world, a series of obstacles keep candidate philosophers away from their potential achievement. They also keep laymen away from an understanding of the lessons that the philosopher could teach them. Thus, justice and well-being in the city are perpetually postponed, and the city itself is led from timocracy to oligarchy, then to democracy, and finally to tyranny.

From the point of view of Heidegger's Existential Analytic, human beings in their authentic *Dasein* can have a primordial experience of the meaning of Being, *qua* a priori of whatever really is, within the everyday horizon of praxial coping of all sorts (and, mediate, also in that of theoretical knowledge). In the common, inauthentic life of the many (*das Man*), however, the motility (*Bewegtheit*) of fall (*Verfall*) has always already occurred, leading in one way or another to inauthentic Being-in-the-world, or to the historically recorded lack of ontological understanding and to failures of all kinds, including those of a communicative and political kind. For Heidegger, too, the locus where this dynamic most characteristically happens is the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*), the open space of the city (i.e., the agora, the place where the political activity of the many takes place).



### 4.3 Good and Being Are Painful Heavy Burdens on the Face of which We Flee, Err, and Fall

In the *Republic*, all human beings feel that the work of the philosopher, and that which the real philosopher is to “handle” or indeed “handles,” has the character of a *heavy burden*, the undertaking of which is *painful* and which demands pain expenditure. The many (οἱ πολλοί) are among those who tend to conceive as a “heavy burden” that which is necessary in order to see the ideal realm, as well as what is needed to keep this seeing safely fixed on its target, since this demands the formation of character and mind (σχηματισμόν φρονήματος μετά νοῦ ἐπιμπλάμενον; *Rep.* 494d1–2). This cannot be acquired without hard and *painful* work (νοῦς ... δέ οὐ κτητόν μὴ δουλεύσαντι τῇ κτήσει αὐτοῦ; *Rep.* 494d5–6): “[A]ll great things are precarious and, as the proverb truly says, ‘fine things are hard’” (τὰ γὰρ δὴ μεγάλα πάντα ἐπισφαλῆ, καὶ τὸ λεγόμενον τὰ καλὰ τῷ ὄντι χαλεπά; *Rep.* 497d) or, as we read elsewhere, “the saying is true that ‘fine things are difficult’” (ἄληθές, ὅτι χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά; *Rep.* 435c). Plato is explicit that the whole process of education necessary for reaching the good is *painful*, and that it contains both bodily and psychic pain (*Rep.* 535a–c, 536c–537a). In particular, Dialectics is identified as the hardest part of philosophical training (*Rep.* 498a), and this is why not everyone is suitable for this lesson (*Rep.* 535a9–11). Plato claims that difficult lessons are even harder than the hardest bodily exercises, because in such lessons the soul is left alone, and feels the whole pain caused by the effort without having the possibility of sharing it with the body. In these lessons, pain finds direct access to the soul, and strikes it without having first been filtered and dampened by its passage through the body (*Rep.* 535b5–9).<sup>17</sup> This is why the student of the highest lessons of the philosophical education must be a pain-lover (φιλόπονος; *Rep.* 535c) and not a pain-fleeer (φυγόπονος). The student must not seek to avoid the encumbrance of these efforts, because encumbrance, or fear of encumbrance, makes us *flee* also from what is good (λύπας, ἀγαθῶν φυγὰς; *Timaeus* 69b). Conversely, allowing ourselves to be content in the experience of pleasure is tantamount to swallowing evil’s most attractive lure or enticement (ἡδονήν, μέγιστον κακοῦ δέλεαρ; *Timaeus* 69b).

In the Existential Analytic, the very fact that we happen to be capable of feelings, emotivity, and moods lets us unfold our intentional possibilities within our overall everyday dealings with others and with the beings in this world. It is only in extreme fundamental moods, like anxiety (*Ansgt*),<sup>18</sup> however, that we can have the experience of the meaning of Being *qua* a priori that constitutes our historical milieu, within which we unfold our particular intentional possibilities in each epoch. In our average everyday life, for the most part, we tend to avoid such fundamental experiences. We tend to *flee* from our own selves as *Daseins* that are capable of these *painful* experiences. Phenomenology discovers that the possibility of letting ourselves be suddenly conquered by a mood like anxiety is anticipatorily experienced by us as a *heavy burden* (*Last*). The very Being of *Dasein*, and Being itself, are also characterized in *BT* as heavy burdens, the undertaking and the carrying of which demand pain expenditure.<sup>19</sup>

This experience, though, seems necessary for us to be in a position to intuit and to understand the very condition for the possibility of our intentional being in the praxial situation, within which we happen to be each time and in general. Of course, the prospect of a painful confrontation with the burdensome undertaking of a fundamental mood like anxiety inspires *fear*; and fear, as Heidegger remarked, has a *disorientating* effect on *Dasein*. At the limit, fear of pain (ἀλγοφοβία) makes *Dasein* flee in the face of Being. Thus, the most “exploratory” fallen natures among us probably satisfy themselves

not with the unattainable—for them—bravery of the ontological moods, but with the habit (ἔξις) of some ontic bravery and the search for honor (τιμαί), as is the case with the first erratic/fallen state corresponding to the timocrat.

#### 4.4 Reacting against the Leaping-in Committed by the Person in Control of the Political a Priori

At this point Plato provides us with more details. The less noble among the rulers and guardians, those who are about to establish timocracy, appear to be doing two things. First, as we saw, they tend to avoid the pains connected with the work of the philosopher *qua* scientist of the good (i.e., of the a priori of political justice). But, second, they might also discover that the role of the philosopher is paternalistic and, in the end, authoritative to a degree that makes it appear threatening to them. The philosopher, as a supposed perfect knower, appears to have *leaped-in* (εἰσπηδήσει) to the political position of every citizen, to have taken care of all the citizens *before* the latter have taken care of themselves. From this double point of view, then, the philosopher inspires *fear* in the timocratic characters. Reaching the view of the agathon, making it intelligible to oneself, and applying it within the affairs of the city, is a painful, heavy burden and he who seems to be trying to copy with it inspires fear. Thus, the timocrats “feel afraid of admitting the wise person to power” (φοβεῖσθαι τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχάς ἄγειν; *Rep.* 547e1). In them, the spirited part and the simplicity of mind that leads them away from knowledge have prevailed (*Rep.* 547d2–4). The timocrat wants daring and honor to be the prevailing values in the city. Having fled in the face of the painful good, and being in a state of fear, the timocrat turns his hypertrophied attitude of daring towards particular human and non-human beings. His aim is to arrange them in a way that could bring *him* to the position of the city’s ruler; but without his having the proper knowledge and disposition to bring justice in the city. For Plato, this signals the beginning of political disaster. That is why, in the *Timaeus*, we read that “daring and fear are foolish advisors” (θάρρος καὶ φόβον, ἄφρονες συμβούλω; *Timaeus* 69c–d). Analogous things hold for the ethos of the oligarch, the democrat, and the tyrant.

In Heidegger’s analyses, being usually “unavailable” to the painful fundamental moods, citizens are-with-others (*mit-Sein*). In the distanciality (*Abständigkeit*) characterizing this structural moment of our Being-in-the-world, each one “measures” or compares him- or herself with everyone else. The citizen who abstains from the various existential responsibilities leaves, as it were, open or unoccupied his existential locus in the world. Since the inauthentic stance toward these possibilities goes together with the burden-like experience of them (of their a priori), the inauthentic citizen is prone to let this burden be carried over by some other co-citizen. Many co-citizens conceive of themselves as most prepared to carry this burden. When such an agent undertakes the burden in the name of someone else, then we have the case of a special existential move called, by Heidegger, “leaping-in” (*Einsprung*). The fallen *Dasein*, being undiagnosedly away from the conditions of existential possibilities (of the Being that settles the sense of mundane co-existence or of the good as the a priori of justice), has let its gaze be turned toward the multifarious multiplicity of the *chrémata* or of other human beings. The fallen, then, may engage in a controversy with one another (read: unrest and revolt) motivated by threat and fear or by desire for power and mere boldness. Fear and boldness then become the foolish advisors (ἄφρονες σύμβουλοι) of political endeavors.

None of the everyday, competing, candidate governors, then, is well equipped for the difficult and demanding role of the leader of the city or state. Only exceptional figures are, for both Plato and Heidegger, appropriate for a role like this. But demanding seldom do such figures appear in history the opportunity to be given the role.

#### 4.5 In the Public Sphere where Errancy and Fall Prevail, Human Beings Are Attracted by the Ease of the Simplest “Square” Interpretation of the City’s Problems

The above pattern can be detected as the implicit dynamic that also characterizes the motility of the next degenerating steps of political errancy in the *Republic* (i.e., the political errancy that brings us from timocracy to oligarchy, to democracy, and finally to tyranny). For present purposes, we shall focus on the change from oligarchy to democracy. The citizens who do not possess the noble nature of the philosopher and have, this time, felt the corresponding, threatening leaping-in of the timocrat and the oligarch, collectively demand freedom, and establish it in its most direct and transparent form. The threat and the desire for freedom, however, represent just another phase in the dynamics or motility of errancy. Freedom, for the most autonomous undertaking of the painful burden, i.e., for the personal acquaintance with the a priori of political justice, now gets basically understood as the freedom to strive after all sorts of endeavors, and to explore and satisfy the appetites. Freedom is thus very soon understood by the citizens as the unlimited possibility of desire and choice concerning the ample variety of material goods.

Living within the open public sphere of the city, human beings then become a mob with no orientation: the “big animal” (*Rep.* 493a, 493c). In their understanding of freedom, *qua* limitless appetite, the mob leans at one time toward this and at another toward that desirable thing or role. The philosopher does not even dare question the mob, much less teach them his doctrines. What these ignoble citizens want to hear are things that are seemingly easy to do, or that promise to be soothing and painkilling; flattering words that justify their understanding of freedom, and encourage the necessity for its dissemination to all people (even to those who do not want it). According to Plato, this is the work of the sophists, who are presented as sheer demagogue rhetors. They sell to the mob what it wants to buy, big words or “the ‘doctrines’ or opinions of the many” (τά τῶν πολλῶν δόγματα; *Rep.* 493a6–8). That which the mob likes they call “wisdom,” that which is regarded as a heavy burden, that is, painful to bear, they call “evil” (οἷς μὲν χαίροι ἐκείνο ἀγαθὰ καλῶν, οἷς δὲ ἄχθοιτο κακά; *Rep.* 493c2–3).

Even young people with noble natures may become enthusiastic and *fall* (ἐκπίπτει; *Rep.* 497b5–6) to the easy ways of the mob and the sophists. In this way, they too lose the possibility and hope of seeking and seeing the true being, the ideas and the good. Their eyes are trapped in the attraction of multiplicity of the many false “goods” (the mere *chrémata* in conditions of injustice) and not of the one true good (*Rep.* 493e3–494a1), the knowledge of which can also make us recognize how the *chrémata* can become true goods here on Earth. But the latter cannot mean that we are excused to forget that between the one truest being—the agathon *qua* possibility of the truly good *chrémata*, which itself lies beyond them (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας; *Rep.* 509b2–10)—and the many *chrémata* an enormous *difference* yawns (*Rep.* 493e3–494a1).

And if the philosopher, exhausted by his self-preparation and by elevated *experiences*, returns to the cave and tries to share his teachings and methods for seeing the agathon, he will be ridiculed and hated. His fellow beings in the cave may even try to kill him (*Rep.* 516e8–517a6). Moreover, since in a democracy every person may claim to be an

authority, any person may try to leap-in to the existential locus of any other. Everyone begins to inspire fear in everyone else, for anyone could be either a governor (*ἄρχων*) or in the company of a governor, or the friend of someone close to the company of the governor, and so on. No one trusts anyone any more. The background fear of the pain under discussion here has led to a state of generalized fear.

In the Existential Analytic, this time, we read that in the average everyday life, for most of the time the fallen *Dasein* in its being-with-others finds itself in a public sphere (*Offentlichkeit*), in which the many are attracted by ontic circumstances that guarantee a feeling of *easiness* and *lightness*. The many tend to lighten the heavy burden of *Dasein's* Being and of Being itself.<sup>20</sup> Each one finds security and safety, in the choices sanctified by the “many” (*das Man*) and through their usual ways and preferences. This means that the many tend to flow naturally within the great stream of the well-worn, fallen, self-evident frameworks of meaningfulness. The fact that the many find themselves in the unquestioned presuppositions that ground their fallen ontic behaviors and choices offers them security and confidence, at first. Thus, within the open public sphere, the self-understandable, the supposedly *well-known interpretative frameworks* (*Ausgelegtheit*), the surest known “orthogonal” ways and schemes prevail, providing everyday life with its pace.

On the other hand, though, as we read in the relevant sections of *BT*, in such a state each one regards his or her own unexamined life as an authority on and the ultimate judge of everything. To this extent, every one tends to interfere with the lives of the others. Thus, the threat of generalized leaping-in makes its presence felt more and more. Then, we are led to the dissemination of distantiality and of its inherent comparability (connected with our being-with-others). A latent enmity, thus, progressively starts undermining the communality of the city-collectivity. Hence, we may expect unrest and revolt to burst out sooner or later.

#### 4.6 From the Ideal Governance to the Tyrannic Regime

According to the *Republic*, in the falling dynamics of democracy, the conditions for the appearance of the tyrant have matured. In a state of fear, and in the resulting confusion and loss of orientation, citizens tend to get hold of the most simplistic currently available interpretation of the situation (the one that most naively offers again an orientation as to who is a friend and who is an enemy). Yet, the simplest interpretation is also usually the one introduced by a simple-minded but, as a rule, lethally ambitious and dangerous tyrant who, in his infinite “wisdom”—or sheer insanity—has a “final solution” for every inner or outer threat against the city (state).

In the state of generalized fear and enmity, on the other hand, the inauthentic many still tend to avoid the burden of the authentic relatedness with the a priori of their existential possibilities. They are still caught in the charm and easiness of seeming self-evidence and lightness. The alternative toward which they tend to orientate themselves is again inauthentic, within the trajectory of the fall; they are attracted by just another self-understandable interpretation.

The Heideggerian reading of the continuation of this state, however, must somehow be added from the outside. Heidegger should have known earlier that what appears as a blissful harbinger of a “subline” saving order must first be checked and re-checked for the possibility of harboring banality, evil, or both. He somehow realized it later. We could project here the content of this realization in the following charitable terms. The atmosphere of generalized fear and enmity described above corresponds to the degenerative

phase of democracy. This route of political errancy is based on the self-understandable interpretations arising along the inauthentic motility, away from the painfulness of the burdensome a priori and toward the seeming quiescence and lightness arising from the satisfaction of curiosity and desire with the many things. Its last step is chaos. And, as history has shown (e.g., in the political history of ancient Athens, or in the dynamics of the fall of the Weimar Republic), and as it probably once more happens in our globalized, crisis times, the simplistic way out from this enigmatic death spiral makes its appearance in the form of tyranny (at first usually disguised as “one-way” politics).<sup>21</sup> In the beginning, though, all tyrants preach an obvious safe and easy salvatory recipe based on the simplistic projection of a clear-cut distinction between light and darkness, truth and error, good and evil (substances, dimensions, realities, citizens, races, states, etc.). Only exceptional, chosen human beings who cannot and need not explain their visionary decisions are then said to be capable of decisively seeing the only clear truth, the total cure for everything and for all. And Heidegger, being much less experienced than Plato in the affairs of politics, and much more prone to the jargon of prophetic apocalypse, would only later discover that he should have been much more cautious about such preachings.

Having said this, I do not mean to suggest that only Heidegger's view suffered from mistaking the potential tyrant with the just governor, and that Plato managed to correctly identify the tyrant and save the philosopher-king from the charge of being a tyrant. For, unfortunately, the latter's biography is not clear of analogous infelicities, to say the least. Generally speaking, it is still a question whether and how can one make the right diagnosis in time.

## 5 Recapitulation and Further Prospects

We saw that by combining Plato's account of political erring in the *Republic* with some of the fundamental themes of Heidegger's *Being and Time* along the lines delineated above we achieve a deeper understanding of both the existential dynamics of political life in the first, and the hidden political potential and significance of the second. It appears that Plato's quest for justice is the primordial response of the human being to the various suffered and incoming pains which, in the *Republic*, are especially connected with life in the city. And it is thought to be achievable by way of undertaking burdens or making painful efforts. In Heidegger, too, our latently unsatisfactory and meaningless life with others and by the beings asks for the discovery of a meaningfulness that settles all things. And this may happen by a decisive letting-ourselves-submerge in a burdensome authentic understanding and feeling (as it were) of what gives meaning, of the source of meaningfulness as such. Generally speaking, the originally painful condition of being human can be absolutely fixed, by means of accepting a painful response that secures perfect salvation for all and from everything. Pain expended for pain suffered is meant as humanity's self-sacrifice, with the guarantee of absolute personal and social salvation. This can be called the “thinking of perfect-salvation”: sacrifice for solution. From beginning to end, philosophy is after an all-round immaculate economy of everything; no waste, no vanity.

*Mutatis mutandis*, this scheme can be recognized as the central concern of all philosophies, especially after Christianity's establishment. These include, first, the prevailing Platonist world-view that surprisingly underpins the theoretical, logical, and intellectualist politics of both the rational right and left statist or anti-statist ideologies and, second, what may be recognized as the praxial, hermeneutic, emotivist politics of the anti-rational or irrational traditionalist, religious, and even racial statisms or ecumenical anti-statisms.

The philosopher king—the leader or the “daddy of the people”—and the libertarian anarcho-capitalist entrepreneur of nowadays are both proposed as perfect solutions to humanity’s discontent from its condition.

What we realized above is that errancy and revolt—together with their more abstract presuppositions or envisioned cures (i.e., truth, good, and justice)—comprise, when mediated through the experience of pain in its double sense, the rich ground upon which a future phenomenological philosophy of politics should be built. With regard to this, I only hasten to say that in this prospective possibility, neither Plato’s nor Heidegger’s views will comprise part of a solution to the problem of justice. The phenomenology of the political “things themselves” may even prove to be intolerant to such talk of “solutions” as the history of philosophy is so prone to offering. It may turn out that the very idea that there is something like a “solution” to the political—so proudly entertained by philosophy as reflecting its very constitutive essence—still forms part of this problem and its annoying persistence.

Be that as it may for the moment, I suggest that the stepping-stone for the prospective phenomenological account of the political should be Plato’s remark that the forms of government follow the various kinds of mundanely formed morals of the people (ἐκ τῶν ἠθῶν τῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν; *Rep.* 544c1–e2), not the opaque wills of the gods or some objective “laws” of the evolution of the objective spirit, of objective history, society, or economy. In the phenomenological context, this means that the forms of government follow the habitual formation of emotive intentionality, together with the laws guiding the phenomena of intra-personal emotive transmission in our being-with-others. However, much more will have to be said on how these Husserlian, Schelerian, and Heideggerian thematics can, respectively, be brought together into a new project in political thinking along the lines of what could be called “Normalized Phenomenology.”<sup>22</sup> In this projected research, Aristotle’s and Arendt’s political thought will offer valuable insights and elucidations. In a first step, this approach retains the meaning of a still philosophical phenomenology of the political. What is to be analyzed is the way humans theoretically *think* how they can get intentionally correlated with the praxial world they experience. In its second step, however, it unavoidably acquires the meaning of a *post*-philosophical phenomenology of the political; a kind of analysis that comes closer to the so-called tragic condition. Here, the analysis should take into consideration the way humans actually *find* themselves correlated with the praxial world in its uncircumventable, recalcitrant facticity.

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## Notes

- 1 Panos Theodorou is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Crete (Greece). He is author of the books *Perception and Theory as Practices: Phenomenological Exercises on the Constitution of Objectivities* (Kritiki, 2006; in Greek) and *Reductions, Primordially, and the Categorical* (Springer, forthcoming). He has translated into Greek and commented on the corpus of the texts written by Husserl and Heidegger for the ‘*Britannica Artikel*’ project (Kritiki, 2005) and Husserl’s *Crisis of the European Sciences (Parts I and II)* (Nissos, 2012). Articles of his on

- phenomenology, philosophy of science, and philosophy of emotions and values have appeared in international journals and volumes.
- 2 “Maintaining a clear understanding of how things in life are gives grievous pain. / Abolishing it by a losing of one’s mind is of course a bad thing; / it gives, however, the ignorant courage in his course towards death.” Euripides, *Hippolytus*, ll. 247–9 (my translation).
  - 3 Henceforth cited as *Rep.* All works of Plato referred to in this chapter are contained in *Plato in Twelve Volumes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1969).
  - 4 See Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus* (lecture course at the University of Marburg, WS 1931–2), trans. Ted Sadler (London: Athlone Press, 2002); and, e.g., Adriaant Peperzak, “Heidegger and Plato’s Idea of the Good,” in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 258–85; John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues*, 3rd edn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Mark Wrathal, “Heidegger on Plato, Truth, and Unconcealment: The 1931–32 Lecture on the Essence of Truth,” *Inquiry* 47 (2004), 443–63. See, however, also Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) and, especially, Robert Bernasconi, “Justice and the Twilight Zone of Morality,” in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 80–94 (§6). From the side of the Husserlian phenomenologists, see also Burt Hopkins, *The Philosophy of Husserl* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), especially ch. 1.
  - 5 See note 8 below.
  - 6 Especially with reference to the importance of the concept of revolt for understanding ancient Greek political philosophies, see Georges Contogeorgis, *La Théorie des révolutions chez Aristote* (Paris: Librairie générale de droit et de jurisprudence R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias, 1978); Kostas Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity and Disease: An Inquiry into Stasis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
  - 7 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). Henceforth cited as *BT*.
  - 8 Plato’s original term is constantly being translated rather as “failure,” “flaw,” “corruption,” “deviation,” “vice,” etc. (mostly as part of the translations used for the expression “ἡμαρτημένα πολιτεύματα”). The interesting and very eloquent understanding of the original Greek term in the context of Christian soteriology (as “sin,” “*Sünde*”)—and especially with the meaning it acquires in the different interpretations of the latter (the orthodox, the catholic, the protestant, the chiliastic, etc.)—cannot, of course, be treated here. It plays, however, a decisive role in the shaping of the history of Western humanity even after the Enlightenment era, and in the rise and shaping of the political utopias and their totalitarian counterparts of the twentieth century.
  - 9 Discussing the question of which may be the best of the known and tested forms of political government, within which a genuine philosopher could thrive and guarantee the salvation of all (αὐτός τε μᾶλλον ἀξίησεται καὶ ... τὰ κοινὰ σώσει), Plato writes that none of them can actually serve this possibility, and that this is the reason why, until now, the nature of the genuine philosopher falls into an ethos alien to its original essence (τοῦτο τὸ γένος νῦν μὲν οὐκ ἴσχει τὴν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν, ἀλλ’ εἰς ἀλλότριον ἦθος ἐκπίπτει).
  - 10 See, e.g., *Protagoras* 322a–c, where one finds a characteristic discussion concerning the threats and evils that humans are exposed to on Earth, and the need for special efforts and stances that should be undertaken in order to avoid them.
  - 11 Thus, it seems at least strange that Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), who analyzes this fact at length in Plato’s *Republic* and within the context of the “fragility of goodness,” tries to make sense of Plato’s preference for the philosopher’s life without direct reference to the question of the good and its connection with justice. On the contrary, she engages in a detailed analysis of the goods of the soul and of the body, in an attempt to make sense of Plato’s preference on the basis of their differences (purity, stability, truth). But she does this without an immediate consideration of the centrality of the knowledge of the good and the supposed destructive role of the body’s goods vis-à-vis this crucial knowledge (see Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 147–8).
  - 12 Of course, for Plato, this exemplar is not only something about which we can only merely *think* in our reasoning soul. It is also something that we can *intuit* with our mind (νοῦς) (see the

transition from 510c3–d2, 533b1–c3, 511b4–5 to 510d5–e3, 511a3–6, 511c5–d5). That is, it is not merely conceivable, but also possible. See also next note.

- 13 See 473c11–d1, 450c6–d2 and especially 540d1–3. See also 415a–b, 547a. The issue of the prospect and possibility of the just city in Plato’s political thinking seems to have caused puzzlement in the philosophical literature for a long time. I have in mind, for instance, the Popper–Strauss controversy over the issue of whether Plato meant his ideal exemplar of the city as the blueprint for a real regime reform, as the first suggested, or as a merely abstract conception of the nature of a city, as claimed by the second. For recent cartography on this broader issue see Francesco Fronterotta, “Plato’s *Republic* in the Recent Debate,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48 (2010), 125–51, here §1. Of course, in Plato’s *geometric* metaphysics (see a few lines below and §5), the mundane realization of justice according to the heavenly order of the good can only mean something analogous to the possibility of experiencing the ideal triangle in this mundane reality (see 473a1–2, 473a7–8). Even a sophisticated mundane triangle is an imperfect being on the face of which, however, the knower recognizes or suitably experiences the ideal prototype “being at work behind or within it,” “ruling” it, giving it its identity and “being,” etc. The mundane triangle may be imperfect, but the geometrician can live and act with it as if it were the ideal triangle; he or she forms a way of life that oversees mundane imperfection in accordance with the guidance offered by the knowledge of the ideal triangle. Analogously, by the political-philosophical *thought-experiment* that Plato forms in his reasoning part of the soul, he thinks he reaches the ideal exemplar of the just city, in accordance with which we can form a way of practical life that oversees the imperfections of this mundane reality. To this extent, the ideal city is *not* an unrealizable utopia, but an ideal form according to which we can live our lives on Earth. Plato is neither speaking, as a sophist, about mere conceivabilities that lack ideal reality, nor as a mere theorist of the afterworld, disregarding real possibility.
- 14 With this, we have of course not said everything on the issue of *how* one—the citizen with the ‘perfect’ nature—is supposed to discover or re-establish the cognitive content of the good. Plato connects this possibility with the complex education he calls *dialectics*. We will see more on this in §3.2. For present purposes, more important are the moments of having, handling, and applying the knowledge of the good, rather than those of discovering or recovering it.
- 15 Notorious for its poverty is Plato’s evidence in the *Republic* and elsewhere on what the form of good is the form of. See, for instance, the recent chapter by Christopher Rowe, “The Form of the Good and the Good in Plato’s *Republic*,” in *Pursuing the Good: Ethics and Metaphysics in Plato’s Republic*, ed. Douglas Cairns, Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, and Terry Penner (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 124–53, here 125. Although the intimate relation between justice and the good is most obvious, their specific connection is far from self-understandable. The literature on the subject, restrictively focused as it standardly is on the concept—if not on the term—of the good, that is, in abstraction from Plato’s deeply political concerns, is exhausted in semantic and philological routes missing the real core of his epochal, breakthrough suggestion regarding the relation between theory and praxis. Especially on the latter, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic–Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986) is a notable exception, although he does not want to see any essential difference between Plato’s and Aristotle’s views on the matter (on this, see below, §5). The general received view is that once we know the form of the good (goodness) we will understand why justice is good, or that the form of the good is that which makes justice or phronesis good. For the most recent production, see, e.g., Nicolas White, “Plato’s Concept of Goodness,” in *A Companion to Plato*, ed. Hugh H. Benson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 356–72, here 357; Rowe, “The Form of the Good and the Good in Plato’s *Republic*,” 145, 147; especially for a summation of the internal differentiations under this view, see Rowe, “The Form of the Good and the Good in Plato’s *Republic*,” 125–7, 151. The different reading, just proposed above in the main text, will inform the remainder of the present paper. Let no one raise the objection that Plato did not have knowledge of the term “algorithm.” He certainly did not have the term, but he probably had the meaning. The suggestion that Plato thinks of the ἀγαθόν as the algorithm of justice, i.e., as a formula containing basically mathematical terms that prescribe the correct way in which citizens and *chrémata* should “interact” in the city can, of course, be underpinned by the known story regarding Plato’s attempted public lecture “On the Good” (Περὶ τἀγαθοῦ). As we learn from Aristoxenus, Aristotle told the story that the public went there anxious to learn about “wealth, good health,



physical strength, and altogether a kind of wonderful happiness. But when the mathematical demonstrations came, including numbers, geometrical figures and astronomy, and finally the statement Good is One ... seemed to them, I imagine, utterly unexpected and strange; hence some belittled the matter, while others rejected it." Cited in Konrad Gaiser, "Plato's Enigmatic Lecture 'On the Good,'" *Phronesis* 25 (1980), 5–37, here 5.

- 16 Cf., e.g., *Timaeus* 36e–37a and *Phaedrus*, 246a–b.
- 17 The idea of a pain felt by the purely calculative soul, in the sense of a pain poking the purely immortal part of the soul, appears to be inconsistent with Plato's philosophical psychology and anthropology. The rational soul is introduced as an ethereal "substance" that does not present any kind of inner or outer "friction" or "resistance," as it were, during its essential and, for him, immaterial function of thinking and reasoning. No pain receptor, as it were, appears in it. The only pain that can have a place in Plato's theory of education may be the one arising from the pressure that our *body* feels when the supposed immortal soul forms representations that are utterly hostile to the body (regarding our mundane life orientations), thus suppressing the potentialities of our bodily nature and even attempting its virtual (if not physical) death and extinction.
- 18 Or, in the ancient Greek fundamental mood of *wonder* (θαυμάζειν), etc., which, in any case, could always be accompanied by latent anxiety (since wonder, *qua* mood of the theoretical attitude—as it is usually supposed—cannot be proved to be a mood commensurable to the *non-theoretical* character of the happening of the Being). Moreover, since in Plato fear is first recognized as the timocrat's emotive reaction to the philosopher's threatening authority (see §4.4 below), if fear is to be read as a fallen modification of an ontological mood, and if anxiety is the ontological departure of the fallen fear, then it does not seem too far-fetched to claim that even Plato's wondering philosopher is under the—latent and unrecognized, perhaps—spell of anxiety. Nonetheless, *awe* (δέος) would be an interesting alternative for the role of an ontological mood in ancient Greek mentality; on δέος and αἰδώς see *Euthyphro*, 12c–d; *Protagoras*, 322b–c; and cf. Heidegger's original *Schrecken* and *Scheu* rendered as "horror" and "awe" in Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 243. The timocrat, the oligarch, the democrat, and the tyrant would then have fallen, each in a distinct way, from the original mood of awe before the difficulty of ascending, viewing, and handling the good *qua* a priori of justice. For instance, the timocrat would have fallen from that awe in the emotion of *fear* on the face of the philosopher, etc. (see also §4.4).
- 19 See *BT* §§27, 29, 54, 58, 68.
- 20 "Thus the particular Dasein in its everydayness is *disburdened* by the 'they' [read: the 'many']". Not only that; by thus disburdening it of its Being, the 'they' [the 'many'] accommodates Dasein [*kommt ... dem Dasein entgegen*] if Dasein has any tendency to take things easily and make them easy. And because the 'they' ['many'] constantly accommodates the particular Dasein by disburdening it of its Being, the 'they' ['many'] retains and enhances its stubborn dominion" (*BT*, 165).
- 21 From this point of view, Klaus Held's sincere and sober effort to make Heidegger compatible with a view that sees an extension of awe into love and political mutual recognition as possible in the context of democracy seems too optimistic. It also becomes unconvincing, as soon as authenticity is not secured universally (a hope which seems totally futile). See Klaus Held, "Fundamental Moods and Heidegger's Critique of Contemporary Culture," trans. Anthony J. Steinbock, in *Commemorations: Reading Heidegger from the Start*, ed. J. Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Klaus Held, "The Ethos of Democracy from a Phenomenological Point of View," in *Self-Awareness, Temporality, and Alterity: Central Topics in Phenomenology*, ed. D. Zahavi (Dordrecht: Kluwer Publishers, 1998), 193–205.
- 22 A version of phenomenology that brings together on the same axis some basic, suitably reconstructed teachings of the major phenomenologists, without at the same time fully complying with the total package of any of them, e.g., loosely speaking, Husserl's faith in reason as the sole means for overcoming crisis, or Heidegger's hope for a "deity" that could "save us" through the apocalypse of its word to a new prophet, or Scheler's belief in a *material*, objective hierarchy of values, etc.