

Plato on Education and Art

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1. Introduction

Concern with education animates Plato's works: in the Apology, Socrates describes his life's mission of practising philosophy as aimed at getting the Athenians to care for virtue (29d-e, 31b); in the Gorgias, he claims that happiness depends entirely on education and justice (470e); in the Protagoras and Meno he puzzles about whether virtue is teachable or how else it might be acquired; in the Phaedrus he explains that teaching and persuading require knowledge of the soul and its powers, which requires knowledge of what objects the soul may act upon and be acted upon by, which in turn requires knowledge of the whole of nature (277b-c, 270d); in the Laws the Athenian Stranger says that education is the most important activity (803d), and that the office of director of state education is the most important office of the state (765d-e). Each of Plato's two longest works, the Laws and Republic, tirelessly details a utopian educational programme. And Plato's outlook on the arts (poetry, theatre, music, painting) is dominated by considerations of whether they help or hinder correct education.¹

To bring Plato's vast and multifaceted concern with education into focus it will be helpful to begin by looking through the lens of his differences with those he styles Socrates' educational rivals: sophists like Protagoras, teachers of rhetoric like Gorgias, and ultimately poets like Homer. Plato sees the differences between these educators and Socrates not only as a difference over what subject-matter is worth learning, but also as a difference over the nature of would-be learners' powers to learn. By understanding these differences we will gain insight into the motivation for Plato's positive educational

proposals in the Republic and Laws.² For Plato's educational proposals go hand-in-hand with his psychology:³ his distinctive account of human capacities to learn specifies the good human condition at which his educational proposals aim.

2. Socrates and the rival educators

The 5th and 4th centuries were a period of great intellectual and cultural productivity in Athens, but at the same time, élite Athenians came to see a need for an education beyond the traditional immersion in culture and military training. We find ample evidence of this in the writings of Isocrates in the 4th century, but also in the phenomenon, well-documented by Plato, of itinerant teachers in a variety of subjects, most importantly in persuasive speaking, flocking to Athens during Socrates' lifetime. A number of factors can explain this new interest in education beyond the traditional. Athenian political life had changed radically through the 5th century, with reforms in democratic institutions making possible greater popular participation (for example, jury duty and assembly attendance were now compensated for by a day's wage), at the same time as Athens' imperial pursuits greatly complicated its political affairs. Would-be political leaders now had to communicate effectively with a wider cast of people than previously, and on a wider range of affairs. Now successful political leadership called for expertise in public speaking; expertise in military strategy, once a prerequisite for leadership, became dispensable (cf. Aristotle, Politics 1305a11-15).

2.1 The teachers

The teachers who came to Athens to meet this new demand promised tomorrow's politicians the means to personal and political success. According to Plato, Protagoras claimed to teach 'sound deliberation, both in domestic matters—how best to manage

one's household, and in public affairs—how to realize one's maximum potential for success in political debate and action' (Protagoras 318e-19a), and Gorgias claimed to teach 'oratory' (Gorgias 449a), that is, 'the ability to persuade by speeches judges in a law court, councillors in a council meeting, and assemblymen in an assembly or in any other political gathering that might take place' (452e).⁴ An expertise in public speaking could involve a great many subordinate subjects: in the Phaedrus, Socrates attributes to figures such as Protagoras and Gorgias the identification of many different elements of a successful speech, such as correct diction, indirect praise and censure, preambles and recapitulations, claims to plausibility, and so on (267d-69c). We can also plausibly take as subordinate to an expertise in persuasive speaking Protagoras' expertise in literary criticism, grammar and diction (Plato, Protagoras 339a; Aristotle, Rhetoric 1407b6-9, Sophistical Refutations 165b20-21, Poetics 1456b8-18), the production of arguments for contradictory conclusions, (Diogenes Laertius IX.52, 55, cf. Plato Sophist 232d) and epistemology--he is still famous for the doctrine, 'man is the measure of all things' (Theaetetus 151e).⁵

Plato's take on the market in higher education in the Athens of Socrates' day⁶ is clear from the beginning of the Protagoras: the merchandise is potentially dangerous, and the eager buyers but poor judges of the value of what they are getting. Protagoras' prospective student Hippocrates tells Socrates of his desire to study with Protagoras to receive 'a gentleman's education' (rather than to become a professional sophist himself), in response to which Socrates warns, when you go to a teacher, you hand your soul over to him. But while when you buy food in the marketplace you can take it away and test it before eating it,

you cannot carry teachings away in a separate container. You put down your money and take the teaching away in your soul by having learned it, and off you go, either helped or injured. (314b)

It is dangerous to study with a sophist not just because you might be throwing away your money, but because you might end up with a damaged soul.

But how could studying with a sophist damage your soul? One might think that it is because the sophists corrupt their students by teaching them such things as that what goes by the name ‘justice’ is a convention established by the weak to control the strong (Gorgias 483b-84a), or by the strong to control the weak (Republic I. 338c-39a).⁷ Yet when Plato discusses these supposedly corrupting views, he does not put them in the mouths of the teachers who are the targets of his criticisms, such as Gorgias and Protagoras.⁸ Instead, he puts the charge that the sophists corrupt the young in the mouth of Anytus (Meno 91c-92e) and shows that it is, like Anytus’ charge that Socrates in particular corrupts the young (Apology 24c-25c), based on ignorance and unconcern for the truth. In the Republic Socrates generalizes the point and says that those who charge the sophists with corrupting the young are themselves the real corrupters (indeed, they are ‘the greatest sophists’), when they sit together in assemblies, courts, theatres, and other public gatherings, collectively praising some and blaming others (492a-c). As a result,

Not one of those paid private teachers, whom the people call sophists and consider to be their rivals in craft, teaches anything other than the convictions that the majority express when they are gathered together. . . what the sophists call wisdom [is] learning the moods and appetites of a huge, strong beast. . . how to approach and handle it, when it is most difficult to deal with or most gentle and

what makes it so, what sounds it utters in either condition, and what sounds soothe or anger it. . . . [The sophist] calls this knack wisdom, gathers his information together as if it were a craft, and starts to teach it. In truth, he knows nothing about which of these convictions is fine or shameful, good or bad, just or unjust, but he applies all these names in accordance with how the beast reacts—calling what it enjoys good and what angers it bad. He has no other account to give of these terms. (493a-c).

Let us grant, then, that the sophists are not the source of corruption but merely reflectors of popular opinion, and that the real source of corruption is the opinion of the crowd. Our question can be sharpened: if all the sophists teach is popular opinion, how does studying with them make one worse off than not studying with anyone at all?

The Republic passage quoted above faults the sophists on two counts: first, they do not know whether the popular convictions they reflect are fine or shameful, good or bad, just or unjust (cf. Gorgias 454e, 461b), and second, they call the ability they teach—to tell which are the convictions of the majority and presumably to use these convictions to persuade the audience of some particular course of action--‘wisdom’. The sophists do not differ from the average Athenian in holding ignorant opinions about the fine, good, and just, but it is the sophists who make ignorant opinion intellectually respectable instead of acknowledging that it is a shortcoming. So, for example, Protagoras argues that what appears to be true to each subject is true for that subject (Theaetetus 152a,160c). And Gorgias brags that rhetoric enables one to persuade an audience on any subject whatsoever even more effectively than the expert on that subject could—and without having to bother to learn the subject oneself (Gorgias 456b-c, 459e).⁹ So the

sophists combine skill in persuasive speaking with the elevation of mere opinion. In the Phaedo, Socrates suggests that when unskilled people experience arguments that are sometimes true and sometimes false, especially in the study of contradiction (of which Protagoras' work On Conflicting Arguments and Gorgias' On Non-Being would be star examples¹⁰), they acquire the beliefs that they are wise, and that reason is not to be trusted. They come to believe that 'there is no soundness or reliability in any object or in any argument' and as a result become closed off to true, reliable and understandable arguments (90b-d). This is the harm of studying with sophists.

If a sophist only reflects popular opinion, then perhaps the cross-examination by which Socrates exposes Protagoras' ignorance about the virtue he claims to teach is also an examination of traditional Athenian education in values. Protagoras himself insists that his sophist's profession is continuous with what the familiar and celebrated poets, prophets, artists of various kinds, and even athletes of Greece practice (316d-17a). To the extent that Protagoras is the mouthpiece of Athenian values, contradictions within Protagoras' assertions about the relationship of the virtues to one another and to virtue as a whole (brought out by Socrates at 329b-333e, 349e-60e) also reveal the inadequacy of Athenian ideas about the virtue Athens claims to teach. This hypothesis would explain at least three puzzling moments in the Protagoras: first, when Socrates expresses his doubts as to whether the virtue Protagoras claims to teach can in fact be taught, he gives as reasons what the *Athenians* must believe about virtue's teachability, which he infers from Athenian practices¹¹--but the Athenians' beliefs give Socrates reason to doubt that virtue is teachable only because he here (incredibly) counts the Athenians as wise (319b). So Protagoras is constrained to show that the belief in the teachability of virtue is implicit in

Athenian practice because of the way Socrates first framed the issue.¹² But why would Socrates do this? A second puzzle: when Protagoras says that he would be ashamed to say that the person acting unjustly is temperate even though many people say it, Socrates proceeds to examine the view of the many on the grounds that he is primarily interested in testing the argument and regards the testing of Protagoras and himself as a possible by-product (333c). But just a couple of pages earlier, Socrates has said he is not interested in examining arguments premised on an unendorsed assumption, for ‘it’s you and me I want to put on the line’ (331c). So why the reversal? Third, when Socrates introduces, into the examination of whether knowledge can be overpowered by anything else, the opinion of most people that one can know what is best and yet fail to do it because one is overcome by pleasure (352b-53a), Protagoras asks, ‘Socrates, why is it necessary for us to investigate the opinion of ordinary people. . . ?’ (353a). Why indeed? All three moments fall into place when we recognize that Protagoras is Socrates’ target not qua individual to be improved by cross-examination, but qua sophist and reflector of popular opinion.

Protagoras (who tellingly has more to say about traditional Athenian education than about his own educational programme) mentions three elements in traditional education: children are educated by living examples (their parents or nurses teach them, ‘this is just, that is unjust’, ‘this is fine, that is shameful,’ etc.), by the traditional aristocratic curriculum of poetry, music, and gymnastics, and finally by the laws, which constitute patterns for behaviour (Protagoras 325c-26d). This account gives substance to the idea, mooted by Protagoras and popular within the democracy, that every Athenian teaches virtue (328a), and suggests that education is ongoing and pervasive, not restricted

to the period and methods of formal schooling.¹³ It will be a short step to the outlook of the Republic and Laws that every feature of the environment—stories, works of art, fellow-citizens—is a vector in the education of citizens. Plato’s account of ‘musical’¹⁴ education in these two works suggests that Plato agrees with Protagoras that the actual praise and blame of parents and teachers, and the projected praise and blame of culture heroes and the law, teach people what to value and how to behave; he differs from Protagoras because he questions whether it is *virtue* that the Athenians teach.

Plato’s positive proposals for an educational curriculum in the Republic discuss the content of poetry at length, so we may defer discussion of poetry’s content to section 3. For the moment, however, it is worth noting that Plato criticises the poets on grounds quite similar to those on which he bases his criticism of the sophists and orators: first, all three are indifferent to the truth, and poetry (like rhetoric and sophistry) aims at giving pleasure to a crowd without any regard to what is in fact good (Gorgias 501d-502e, cf. 465b-c). This judgment of poetry is in some tension with Socrates saying in the Apology (22b-c), Ion (533e-35a) and Phaedrus (245a) that works of poetry are produced by divine inspiration. The tension could be eased if Plato meant to criticise poets but not poetry, or if he meant to exclude great works from criticism. Second, Socrates criticises poets on the grounds that they cannot critically assess poetry, for although the critical assessment of poetry is part of the rhapsode’s art and of a traditional aristocratic education (Ion, Protagoras 339a), it takes knowledge or at least dialectic to do it. For example, Socrates is able to resolve an apparent contradiction within Simonides’ poem using the distinction between becoming and being (Protagoras 340b-d). In the Ion, Socrates argues that for Ion to be in a position to judge Homer’s poetry as good, Ion must show the poetry to give

us the truth about what it represents and this, if Ion were to attempt it, would require Ion to know the truth about what it represents (531e-32a).¹⁵ Indeed, in the Republic Socrates relegates all the critic's concerns with rhythm, mode, diction, and so on (Protagoras' 'correct speech' [*orthoepia*]) to second place by saying that these must follow what is said, and what is said must conform to the character who supposedly says it (400d)—and presumably knowledge of good and bad character (which the poets do not have) should determine what characters appear in a poem.

For his own part, Socrates denies that he is any kind of teacher (Apology 33a-b). He does not charge fees as do the sophists,¹⁶ but there is also a deeper reason: lacking knowledge of virtue,¹⁷ he *cannot* teach others, not even if his own beliefs (e.g. 28b-d, 29b) are true—which they might be as a result of luck or divinity, or of extensive elenctic self-examination.¹⁸ Of course he has, or tries to have, an effect on his interlocutors in discussion, at the very least showing them that their beliefs are inconsistent and as a consequence that they have intellectual work to do. This is not teaching, however, for teaching he glosses as 'producing conviction with knowledge', which he contrasts not only with rhetoric ('producing conviction without knowledge') but also with inquiry, his own practice of refutation aimed at clarifying the subject at hand and rooting out false beliefs (Gorgias 454c-55a, 458a).

Now as long as elenchus produces only puzzlement, it can be contrasted with both teaching and rhetoric, since it produces no conviction (save that one is ignorant), but once elenchus identifies certain beliefs as false, it seems to be producing a conviction, namely, that such-and-such beliefs are false. This characterization of elenchus' results raises a famous problem about how showing that someone's beliefs are inconsistent with one

another can help to eliminate their false beliefs (which of the inconsistent beliefs are they to reject?) and how consistency among beliefs attests to their truth (why couldn't a set of false beliefs be internally consistent?)¹⁹

In the Gorgias Socrates also attributes to interlocutors beliefs that they do not say they have, even beliefs they expressly deny having (466d-e, 474b-c, 495e, 516d). One possible explanation for this is that Socrates attributes these beliefs to interlocutors on the grounds that they are entailed by beliefs the interlocutors hold explicitly. In this case, we might expect that he would attribute false as well as true beliefs to his interlocutors, because surely some false beliefs are entailed by the beliefs his interlocutors hold explicitly. In fact, however, it is in particular true beliefs that Socrates attributes to them—which may call for the more extravagant hypothesis that he attributes true beliefs to interlocutors on the grounds of a doctrine that these truths are innate, perhaps to be recollected. This brings us to our next topic, the students.

2.2 The students

Gorgias' Encomium of Helen purports to demonstrate the power of persuasion by exculpating the universally blamed Helen of Troy; internal to the speech too are claims about the force or magic by which speech sways its audience (8-15): words

become bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain; for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of incantation beguiles it and persuades it and alters it by witchcraft. Of witchcraft and magic twin arts have been discovered, which are errors of the soul and deceptions of opinion. (10)

According to Gorgias, our poor epistemic condition makes us dependent on opinion, and opinion is vulnerable to persuasion, which 'when added to speech can impress the soul as

it wishes'; we can see this in the way in which meteorologists, skilled speechwriters, and philosophers influence their audiences' opinions (13). Indeed, he says, although 'the mode of persuasion is in no way like that of necessity,' 'its power is the same,' (12), for 'the effect of speech upon the structure of soul is as the structure of drugs over the nature of bodies' (14).²⁰

That Plato thinks that there may be something to Gorgias' account of the soul as epistemically deprived and so as impressionable by persuasion is suggested by Socrates' report of a wise man saying that 'the part of the soul in which our appetites reside is actually the sort of thing to be open to persuasion and to shift back and forth' (Gorgias 493a). In the Republic, Plato seems to accept that Gorgias' characterization of the soul as a whole does accurately characterize the non-rational parts of the soul.²¹ So Socrates describes musical and gymnastic education's effects on the soul using images from metallurgy (410d-11b) and dyeing wool (429c-30b), and says that pre-rational souls are 'most malleable and take on any pattern one wishes to impress' on them (Republic 377a-b, cf. Laws 664a).²² We will consider the non-rational parts of the soul at greater length in section 3; for the moment, however, we should note that the characterization of the non-rational elements in the soul as easily persuaded (malleable, able to be dyed any colour) is highly cognitive, attributing to them the capacity for something like belief or appearance.

Plato's real difference with Gorgias lies in his conception of reason. Whereas Gorgias boasts that persuasion 'can impress the soul as it wishes' by means of a force akin to that of witchcraft (13), Plato describes education as a process in which the natural capacities of the soul—and especially of reason—are awakened and developed. Thus, in

the passage immediately following the famous cave allegory of the Republic, Socrates says,

. . . the power to learn is present in everyone's soul and . . . the instrument with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole body. . . . education is the craft concerned with . . . turning around [the whole soul until it is able to study . . . the good] . . . It isn't the craft of putting sight into the soul. Education takes for granted that sight is there but that it isn't turned the right way or looking where it ought to look, and it tries to redirect it appropriately. (518c-d)

Reason's powers are not content-neutral, as Gorgias imagines. Rather, just as sight is a power to grasp visible contents, reason is a power to grasp intelligible ones—which is why it needs only to be directed appropriately in order to learn. By contrast with the 'so-called virtues of the soul', which 'really aren't there beforehand but are added later by habit and practice',

the virtue of reason seems to belong above all to something more divine, which never loses its power but is always useful and beneficial or useless and harmful, depending on the way it is turned (Republic 518d-19a).

Just how this power to learn works varies across dialogues. In the Republic, reason has a desire—to know the truth—that is fulfilled by knowledge (581b). Elsewhere, Socrates suggests that the immortal soul, having acquired knowledge in its disincarnate state, can recollect this knowledge when incarnated, for example, when we are asked the right sorts of questions, or when we judge that sensible particulars are deficient in the possession of

some property, or when an experience of beauty reminds us of the form of Beauty (Meno 81b-86b, cf. Phaedo 72e-76d, Phaedrus 246d-50e).²³

While the Republic's idea of the mind as a power requiring appropriate direction differs in detail from Plato's doctrine(s) of recollection, according to which when we learn we are reminding ourselves of truths latent in our minds, the two have in common the rejection of Gorgias' implicit conception of the soul and consequently the rejection of his conception of education. Whatever its exact nature, reason's power to grasp the truth is such that it needs not a teacher to pour doctrines into it, but instead some stimulus to inquiry, whether a questioner like Socrates or conflicting experiences that summon the understanding (Republic 523c-24d).

Plato's difference with Protagoras is subtler. According to Protagoras, Zeus gave all humans justice and a sense of shame (Protagoras 322c-d); however, those who live in cities are much more virtuous than those who do not (327c-d), because cities educate their citizens by the processes discussed above (section 2.1). Now Protagoras does conceive of human beings as having a capacity for virtue rather than as being purely blank and impressionable. However, he characterises this capacity as purely receptive: we learn what is fine and base, good and bad, from living and literary examples and from the example of the laws. How do we determine whether a new case is similar to or different from the cases we have learned? Do we generalise? Do we somehow pick up underlying principles? While Protagoras is silent about these vital questions, Plato attempts to answer them by describing the powers, objects and activity of reason.

3. Utopian Education

As much as Plato's Republic is a defense of justice against Glaucon's challenge to show how justice, and not only its consequences, is in our interest, it is equally a work on education, and to see this, we only need follow Socrates' interlocutor Adeimantus through the dialogue. Adeimantus remarks about Glaucon's challenge, 'The most important thing to say hasn't been said yet' (362d), and goes on to explain: the things conventionally said in *praise* of justice in fact undermine its claim to intrinsic value because they praise the good consequences of appearing to be just, such as high reputation and all that derives from this, and favour from the gods (362e-63e); further, poets and ordinary people alike say that justice is hard and injustice sweet, and they willingly honour unjust people and declare them happy; finally, they say that the gods can be bribed so as not to punish unjust deeds (363e-64c). Adeimantus raises a general concern about the effects of cultural environment on values, and—by contrast with Glaucon's immoralist challenge, which may be written off as purely theoretical²⁴--the effects of culture and education on values are real effects. The commonsense 'sayings' of an actual culture—the culture of Socrates and his interlocutors—are, Adeimantus suggests, a breeding ground for a casual attitude towards the concerns of justice which shades easily into immoralism. While Socrates' description of the ideal constitution is likely a response to Thrasymachus' observation that all existing constitutions serve the interests of their rulers (338d-e), his long treatment of the education that produces just citizens (376c-415d) and just individuals (including the perfectly just philosopher-rulers, 514a-40c) is a response to Adeimantus' concern--indeed, it is at Adeimantus' urging that Socrates describes the education of the guardians at all (376c-d).

Before we turn to the details of Plato’s educational proposals, it may be helpful to have a synoptic view of the whole educational programme of the Republic, and to that end, here is a table.

STAGE	EDUCATION
First, when the soul is most malleable (377b)	Poetry and music: false stories containing something of the truth (377a &FF); heard, perhaps enacted (395c)
After poetry and music (403c), for 2-3 years (537b)	Physical training (403c)
In childhood, in play (536d-e) but not during physical training (537b).	Mathematics: arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, harmonics (525a-31d).
From the age of 20 on	Synthesis of earlier studies into a unified vision of their kinship with one another and with the nature of what is (537c)
30-35, after the mathematical ‘prelude’	Dialectic (532a-39e)
35-50	Practical experience (539e-40a)
50	The Good itself (540a)

Musical and physical education, which are designed for the whole guardian class (future philosopher-rulers and their helpers, the military and police force), aim to produce habituated political virtue in the soul (430a-c, 522a.)²⁵ I will say nothing further about

physical education but it is interesting to note that its object is also to train the soul rather than (as one might expect) only the body (410b). The higher education in mathematics and dialectic is designed for future philosopher-rulers. Mathematical education turns the soul around to the realm of the things that are (521d-25b). Dialectic results in knowledge of the forms, including the forms of the virtues, culminating in a grasp of the Good itself.

As we have seen, in the Protagoras Socrates distinguishes between education as mere cultural reproduction and education as cultivating genuine virtue by requiring knowledge for the latter. In the Republic, at the end of his account of musical education, Socrates once again cautions,

. . . neither we nor the guardians we are raising will be educated in music and poetry until we know the different forms of moderation, courage, frankness, high-mindedness, and all their kindred, and their opposites too, . . . and see them in the things in which they are, both themselves and their images . . . (402c)

Consequently, when Socrates acknowledges that what he has to say about the soul and the virtues is only adequate to the standards of their present discussion (504a-b, cf. 435d), we might reasonably conclude that his account of education too is subject to revision on the basis of knowledge of the forms of the virtues. Since Socrates does not give (and may well not have) accounts of these forms it is worth approaching his educational proposals with the question: where do his educational goals and standards come from?

3.1 Musical Education

Education begins, Socrates says in the Republic, with stories told to young, impressionable children. The education is designed for guardian-children, and it is unclear whether the producing class will receive any part of this education, but it would

seem difficult (and pointless) to exclude them: to know their place in society they would need to hear the Noble Lie (414b-15d); some of them might turn out to be guardian material (415a-c); in any case, if the goal of the city is, as Socrates says repeatedly, to make the city as a whole as happy as possible, and if education is the route to happiness, it would make no sense to deprive them of any education they are capable of benefiting from. He argues that women in the ideal city ought to be educated in the same way as men also on the grounds that this makes them as good as possible.²⁶

Socrates says the stories told to the young are ‘false on the whole, though they have some truth in them.’ (377a) This requirement that stories have ‘some truth’ is vague. Socrates says that children should not hear stories that would cause them to take into their souls beliefs which are ‘opposite to the ones they should hold when they are grown up’ (377b) and proceeds to censor the verses of Homer, Hesiod and others on the basis of the vicious behaviour these verses attribute to the gods and hence license for humans. In any case, Socrates lacks knowledge about the virtues. As a result, it may seem that musical education is only concerned with mind- and behaviour- control and not at all with truth.

Yet the truth is the foremost concern in musical education. The first grounds for rejecting stories is if they ‘give. . . a bad image of what the gods and heroes are like, the way a painter does whose picture is not at all like the things he’s trying to paint.’ (377de). So a bad image is not merely one that leads to undesirable consequences like anti-social behaviour; it is inaccurate. But if the stories as a whole are false, as Socrates says at the outset, what is the objectionable inaccuracy that justifies throwing out verses?

Socrates says that we are all ignorant of ancient events involving the gods (382c-d), yet these stories are all about such events, so the stories must be (blamelessly) false in this sense: they are inventions, fictions. In what sense, or about what, then, may they not be false? Socrates says, somewhat vaguely, that all gods and humans hate ‘true falsehoods’, that is, falsehoods ‘about the most important things’ and ‘the things that are’ (382a-b). This suggests that what the stories must be accurate about is how we should live, so about happiness and what does and doesn’t conduce to it. Stories that convey moral untruths are objectionably inaccurate and must be thrown out.

For example, Socrates’ criteria for judging stories about the gods are (1) what is pious (which presumably requires accuracy about the gods), (2) what is advantageous to us (which may, since the god is good, be a proxy for truth), and (3) what is consistent (380b-c). Socrates seems to assume that these criteria, which could in principle conflict, converge.²⁷ His ‘patterns for . . . stories about the gods’ (379a) follow from the hypothesis of god’s goodness: first, since nothing good is harmful, and nothing that is not harmful can do harm, and nothing that does no harm can do or be the cause of anything bad, it follows that a god is not the cause of bad things; on the other hand, since good things are beneficial or the cause of doing well, a god is the cause of good things (379b-c). Again, since the best things are most resistant to change, the gods would not want to change, for that would be to make themselves worse (380e-81c). Finally, being perfectly good, the gods have no need of falsehoods, no need to change or deceive anyone; instead, they hate falsehoods (382d-3a).²⁸

In this discussion Plato focusses not on the truth of statements but rather on the truth or falsehood of the beliefs that people form on the basis of statements, for it is

beliefs that influence actions and form characters, virtuous or vicious. Thus Socrates dismisses the observation that the stories he is banning come out true if read allegorically: ‘the young can’t distinguish what is allegorical from what isn’t, and the opinions they absorb at that age are hard to erase and apt to become unalterable.’ (378d) To know how to read a poem allegorically one would need to have an independent grasp of the truths that one hopes to find in the poem; these poems, however, are people’s first teachers.

Hearing stories and taking them to be true is the most obvious of mechanisms by which opinions are impressed in the soul. The human being to be educated is a desirer after happiness, and he looks to the gods and heroes for both excusing precedents (391e) and positive ideas about how to seek happiness. Listening to traditional stories about Zeus a listener might reason, Zeus is good and lives the most blessed life, so it cannot be contrary to happiness to be led by one’s lusts or to harm one’s father and so it cannot harm me to do these things—I am just doing as Zeus does. Or he might reason, satisfying one’s lusts and acting on one’s anger are part of what living a happy life involves—look at Zeus! Although the focus of the discussion is on eliminating passages that might lead people astray, Socrates sometimes retains a verse to prescribe behaviour. For example, to model the virtue of self-control, he includes the passage about Odysseus ‘exhibiting endurance in the face of everything’ when he controls his angry impulse to slaughter his maids as they carouse with Penelope’s suitors (390d).

Imitation *may* be a separate mechanism by which people acquire opinions. As a prelude to his prohibition on guardians taking on the roles of vicious or weak characters (leaving it open whether they will play any parts at all²⁹), and ultimately on all craftsmen representing vicious characters (401b), Socrates says that ‘imitations practiced from

youth on become part of nature and settle into habits of gesture, voice and thought' (395c). He is talking here about the effects of playing the part of a character in a play or poem, in theatrical performance or perhaps just in reading aloud. He has just distinguished two kinds of narration (*diêgesis*): narration in the voice of the poet, and imitation (*mimêsis*), which is narration in the voice of a character (392d-94b). Socrates defines imitation (of a person) as 'making oneself like someone else in voice or appearance' (394b-c).³⁰ The evidence is not conclusive whether Plato thinks that we have a basic propensity to imitate (seen perhaps in the way babies mimic facial expressions) which is not (at least initially) hooked up to our happiness-seeking behaviour, or whether he just thinks that we imitate those we regard as happy. Socrates says that one can't help but imitate the things we associate with and admire (500c), but this makes admiration a precondition of imitation, and Plato may well think that we admire those whom we think are happy.

The mechanisms by which poetry can affect the soul are also illuminated by Socrates' account of the divided soul in Republic X. He contrasts an inferior part of the soul, which persists in believing appearances despite the witness of measurement, with the part of the soul that 'puts its trust in measurement and calculation' (602e-603a), obeys the law, and commands us to deal with our misfortunes by fixing them as best we can rather than grieving over them (604b-c).³¹ If we are decent, we are ordinarily able to keep in check the desires of the inferior part of our soul for 'the satisfaction of weeping and wailing', desires it has 'by nature'.³² Yet when we watch a tragic performance, for example one in which a supposedly great man grieves excessively for the loss of his son, we think that we may relax rational control over the inferior part, on the grounds that

there is no shame involved in praising and pitying the grieving character (after all, it is not ourselves but another person we are praising and pitying), and because doing so gives us pleasure.³³ The effect of this, however, is to make it difficult to control our desire to grieve when we ourselves suffer (606a-b).

We might wonder why pitying a character in a play should affect our real-life attitudes, but Plato suggests that the attitude we have to the character in the play is also a real-life attitude. The reason we allow ourselves to pity him, i.e., to share in his lamentation is not that we say to ourselves, ‘no harm done; it’s only a play’, but rather, ‘it’s not me and mine I’m lamenting, so there’s no shame attached.’ So we already believe ‘the loss of a son is a terrible thing’, and, inconsistently, ‘it’s shameful to lament the loss of my own son’—and because the theater presents us with the loss of a son not our own, we deem our shame-response irrelevant and indulge our desire to grieve.

Socrates attributes the desire to grieve to the inferior part of the soul, the beliefs of which follow appearances and are unresponsive to reasoning, calculation, and measurement.³⁴ The indifference of the non-rational part(s) of the soul to truth suggests that the musical education’s concern with the truth of beliefs about value is really a forward-looking concern for when the soul’s rational powers develop; the truth of beliefs about value does not engage any power or propensity of the non-rational part(s). Further, the non-rational part(s) may not respond to considerations such as that grieving on behalf of a tragic character brought pleasure but no shame whereas grieving on one’s own behalf brings shame and interferes with future-directed deliberation.³⁵

Plato’s remarks on painting and poetry in the first thirteen pages of Republic X, which I have so far been mining for what they tell us about belief-formation, have

attracted much scholarly and popular attention. Does Plato finally banish the artists from his ideal city?³⁶ How can Plato reconcile the banishment of dramatization from ideal education with his own practice of dramatization in the dialogues? Does Plato reserve his criticisms for imitators of appearances, leaving the door open to artists who imitate forms?³⁷

Although he begins his criticisms of ‘imitative’ (595a) poetry by arguing that painters produce imitations of appearances which are ‘third from the . . . truth’ (597e),³⁸ Plato does not ban painting—even though, for example, a painter who knows nothing about carpentry can paint a representation of a carpenter that children and fools mistake for a real carpenter when it is distant enough (598b-c).³⁹ It is true that paintings are like poems in being imitations, and that imitations are inferior to the things they imitate. But Socrates uses this point not to banish all imitations but to argue, against those who think that the poets ‘know all crafts, all human affairs concerned with virtue and vice, and all about the gods’ (598d-e), that producers of imitations cannot be teachers. For if they could produce virtuous deeds they would not devote themselves to producing imitations of them in poetry (599a-b); and as it happens, they have no good laws, successful wars, inventions in the crafts or sciences, ways of life, or virtuous individuals to their credit (599d-600c).⁴⁰

It is a much-debated question how the banning of imitative poetry in Republic X (595a) compares to the restrictions on poetry in Republic III (to which Republic X refers). Clearly the ban on representations of vicious behaviour (Republic X) is more extensive than the ban on guardians’ playing the parts of vicious characters (Republic III, 395c), but the representation of vice—in *all* the arts, not just in poetry—was already

banned in Republic III (401b). Finally, the only poetry admitted into the city is ‘hymns to the gods and eulogies to good people’ (607a). This, it seems, is the poetry Plato thinks could be informed by the knowledge of forms that Socrates says must underwrite and be the goal of a proper education. This is the same type of poetry that the Phaedrus describes as divinely inspired by a madness that comes as a gift from the gods, one of its powers being to awaken the soul to a ‘Bacchic frenzy of songs and poetry that glorifies the achievements of the past and teaches them to future generations’ (244a-45a).

Many have challenged Plato: even if the poets have no knowledge of the truth, and can only reflect back to their audience the uninformed opinions that circulate in society (602a-b), surely poets can also raise critical questions about these opinions? The problem with this is that poetry provides no resources to answer these questions other than opinion all over again. What help can poetry give to a reader of Sophocles’ Antigone who wonders, ‘What is justice, after all? My former answers, obedience to the law or the king, and upholding the traditional customs, conflict!’ Plato can offer at least a way ahead, dialectic.

3.2 Mathematical and Dialectical Education

While the goal of musical education is that citizens acquire true beliefs about how to live well, about such things as what actions are courageous and what institutions just, this is clearly inadequate if our souls have the capacity to know what courage or justice is. Indeed, it is inadequate even if our souls only have the power to *ask* what courage or justice is. The Republic discussion of dialectic describes the corrosive effect of such questions on even a person committed to the convictions with which he has been brought up. The dialogues in which Socrates pursues ‘what is. . .?’ questions about courage,

justice, and so on amply illustrate the shortcomings of true beliefs. Since a person who has only true beliefs is limited in his comprehension of courage or justice to identifying instances of courage or justice,⁴¹ e.g. endurance in battle or returning what is owed, when he offers these as accounts of courage or justice, he will find that they turn out to be courageous or just in some cases, but cowardly or unjust in others. As a result of being repeatedly refuted, Socrates says in the Republic, he will start to believe that ‘the fine is no more fine than shameful, and the same with the just, the good, and the things he honored most’; he will lose his former commitments; and even philosophy will lose its standing in his eyes (Republic 538c-39a, 539c).

Avoiding asking ‘what is . . .?’ questions is not an option. If it is a natural power of the soul to ask such questions, then an education that thwarts or even ignores it will not be a good education. Further, Socrates says that there are certain experiences in which our conflicting judgments ‘summon the understanding’—make us ask, in other words, about the qualities we ascribe to things, what they are. If the same object appears great or small depending on what it is seen next to, the soul is puzzled—how can the same thing be great and small, these being opposite qualities? The soul then summons the understanding to inquire: are the great and the small distinct? What is the great? What is the small? (523b-24d).⁴²

Number is such a summoner: from the point of view of sense-experience, each thing is both one and many, but, since one and many are opposite qualities, this puzzles the soul. This is why the study of arithmetic and calculation reliably summon the understanding, turning our attention away from counting particulars given to us in experience and towards number itself, which can be grasped only in thought. So the

study of mathematics, apart from influencing the orderly ranks warriors must observe, turns potential philosophers from becoming to being (525b-c). Likewise, geometry, plane and solid, astronomy that seeks out the true motions approximated by the observable heavenly bodies (529c-30c), and harmonics pursued by way of ‘problems’ (531b-c), all ‘purify’ and ‘rekindle’ the soul’s most valuable instrument (527d-e), making it easier to see the form of the good (526e). Finally, the different mathematical studies must be integrated and consolidated to ‘bring out their association and relationship with one another’ (531c-d). These mathematical studies are preparatory for dialectic, but they are also intrinsically good for the soul.⁴³

Properly practiced, dialectic uses reason alone to find the being of each thing and continues until the understanding grasps the good itself (532a-b); it enables the student to give an irrefutable account of the being of each thing, including of the good (534b); it produces an understanding of how all the subjects formerly studied fit together into a unified whole (537c); finally, unlike the mathematical disciplines, it achieves unhypothetical knowledge (533c-d). Socrates describes the good grasped at the culmination of dialectic as the cause of both our power to know and of the truth of what is knowable. (508d-e) Many scholars see the grasp of the good as a kind of direct acquaintance with a self-certifying or self-evident first principle from which all the forms may be derived. But it can also be seen as a synoptic understanding of a coherent teleological structure of which the forms are parts.⁴⁴ In either case, prior to grasping the good which is the condition of unhypothetical knowledge, students have their dialectical studies interrupted by a fifteen-year practical experience requirement, the point of which seems to be to ensure that future rulers are at least the equals of their fellow-citizens in

experience and that they remain steadfast in their values (539e-40a). Unlike the other studies, the practical experience requirement does not seem to contribute to knowledge of the form of the good, but rather only to competence in political rule.

At the level of the individual soul, knowledge of the good is a perfection of reason and, Socrates says, in addition to providing reason its characteristic pleasure of knowing the truth, allows the non-rational parts of the soul ‘the truest pleasures possible for them’ (586d-e). But Socrates says that even the truest pleasures of the non-rational parts are inferior in truth—they fill us up with ‘what is never the same, and mortal’—and purity—they follow or are followed by pain (585b-d). Their presence in a virtuous life seems to be more a matter of making the best of bodily and psychological necessity than of realizing any perfectible powers of the non-rational parts.

4. Plato’s Last Thoughts

Aristotle reports in the Politics that the Republic and Laws set out the same programme of education (II.6.1265a6-8). This is a surprising claim, in view of the prominence in the Laws of striking educational institutions absent from the Republic, such as the use of the Laws itself as a teaching text (811c-e), drinking parties to test and reinforce the education of old men in self-control and modesty (645d-49d, 665c-66d, 671b-e), and persuasive preambles to the laws (719e-23c)⁴⁵. But Aristotle may not regard the last as part of an educational programme, and he may regard the former two as minor innovations. Certainly the Athenian’s initial description of education echoes Socrates’ description of musical education in the Republic: education channels a young child’s pleasures and pains towards the right things before he can understand the reason

why, so that when he later comes to understand, his reason and his emotions agree, virtue being a harmony between reason and emotion (Laws 653b, cf. Republic 401c-2a).

We may approach the question of how similar or different the Laws' educational proposals are to the Republic's by considering again how these educational proposals reflect, and are guided by, a conception of the soul that is to be educated. We may inquire whether or not any institutional differences we find reflect a difference in Plato's conception of the soul's powers to learn, and also whether or not institutionally identical educational proposals are described in terms that indicate a new conception of how they work on the soul to produce virtue. We cannot do all this here, but we can make a preliminary exploration.

A second table, on the educational curriculum prescribed in the Laws, will allow us to consider at a glance a rather long-winded discussion:

STAGE	EDUCATION
Prenatal-3 years	Movement (788d-93e)
3-6	Play, wrestling, dancing (814e-16e), music
?-until they are old enough for the Chorus of Apollo?	Choral singing and dancing (in the chorus of the Muses)
?from the time they are 'tiny tots' at play	Arithmetic, to be followed by geometry and astronomy (819b-22c)
? - ongoing	Fighting, including with weapons (813d-e)
10-13	Reading and writing (809e-10b), the text of the <u>Laws</u> (811c-e)

13-16	Lyre-playing (809e-10a), to be in unison with singing (812d-e)
18/20-30	Choral singing and dancing (in the chorus of Apollo) (664c)
30-60?	Choral singing and dancing (in the chorus of Dionysius) (653d, 665a, 666b, 670b, 812b-c)
?	‘Advanced education’ for guardians (965b-68c): a grasp of the one over many, and a rational account; theology, the priority of soul and the power of reason

An immediately striking difference in this account of citizens’ education is the importance of certain kinds of movement, certainly in the first six years, but presumably continuing throughout life in the form of choral dancing. The Athenian says that the souls (and bodies) of the young are always in motion (653d, 664e, 787d), are internally agitated (791a), and are wild due to the presence of unchanneled reason (808d-e), and it is all this unruly internal movement that calls for external movement (e.g. being carried about, dancing) to calm down the young soul (790c-d) and make it orderly. But we might note that the source of disorder is not purely ‘internal’: according to the Timaeus, sense-perceptions too cause unruly movements; the real cause of the soul’s disorderly motion is embodiment (43a-c). In any case, the importance given to movement in the Laws

accompanies Plato's new interest in the soul as the source of motion and so as a self-mover (Laws 895a-96a, cf. Phaedrus 245c-e).

Musical education in the Laws is aimed like musical education in the Republic at cultivating citizens' virtue; nevertheless, the Laws' discussion of musical education says little about the belief-content required for this virtue. The Athenian does make the general point that poets and everybody else in the city must affirm that the best life is the most pleasant (662b-64b) and that the criterion of correctness in music—since music involves making likenesses and imitation—is accuracy in representing its model, beauty (667c-68b), which requires knowledge of what has been represented, and how correctly and well the copy represents it (669b). The Athenian also repeats that authors may not compose as they like but must bear in mind the effects of their compositions on virtue and vice (656c), that poets are bound to express the society's notions of virtue (801d), that tragic poets may enter the city only if their doctrine agrees with the city's (817d-e), and that the elder chorus admits only virtuous representations in music to guide the citizens' souls to virtue (812c). But there are few details about correct belief-content comparable to those in Republic II-III. Detailed accounts in the Laws are about things like the kinds of dances representing the movements of graceful people that may be performed (814e-16e).

So far, we have seen a difference in emphasis: although both works insist on the importance of both doctrinal truth and enjoyment of true value, where the Republic discussion emphasised correct belief-content, the Laws' discussion emphasises pleasure: a well-educated person sings and dances well, singing and dancing good songs and dances, and above all, takes pleasure in just these songs and dances (hating the other

kinds)—the last of these being more important than correctness in voice, body or thinking (654b-d).

These two new emphases in the Laws—on the soul’s movements and on pleasure—seem to be related. Although the Athenian describes the young soul as malleable and impressionable (Laws 664a, 666c, 671b-c) as Socrates did in the Republic, he also observes that even very young humans have a sense of order and disorder in movement (653e-54a, 664e-65a); his point seems to be that even though they are disorderly, young souls are already responsive to and appreciative of order.⁴⁶ After all, their motion, erratic and disorderly as it is, is just the soul’s natural, rational, circular motion disrupted. By contrast in the Republic, young guardians have to be habituated to take pleasure in fine things, and the point of such habituation is to prepare the soul for the development of rational appreciation of these things (401c-2a). In the Laws, the pleasure a young child takes in the orderly movements of choral dancing seems to be evidence that his pre-rational soul itself has been put in a good state—for it. If these thoughts are on the right track, then musical education in the Laws is not a matter of impressing pre-rational souls with belief-contents which turn out to be appropriate to them only when their rational powers have developed. Instead, the direction of pleasures and pains is a development of proto-rational powers to perceive goodness.⁴⁷

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¹ See C. Janaway, Images of Excellence: Plato's Critique of the Arts ([Images] Oxford, 1995) on the issue of the educational as opposed to aesthetic value of art.

² There are important contexts for Plato's thoughts about education other than the one I consider here. For example, S. Menn, in 'On Plato's Politeia' (Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, Leiden, 2005), argues that the education described in the Republic is a correction (a 'Socratization') of Laconizing ideal constitutions, of which the best-preserved example is Xenophon's Constitution of the Spartans, in that the Republic's educational system counter-balances gymnastic education (which would otherwise make the spirited element harsh and the guardians not sufficiently gentle to fellow-citizens) with a musical education that begins with love of wisdom and ends with the establishment of wisdom to guide spirited part.

³ For a fuller view of how I see the connections between Plato's psychological accounts and educational projects, see my 'Speaking with the Same Voice as Reason: Personification in Plato's Psychology', Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy XXXI (2006), 167-202.

⁴ All quotations from Plato's text are from the translations in J. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (eds.) The Complete Works of Plato (Indianapolis, 1997)

⁵ Hippias seems to have been a true polymath, expert in astronomy and geometry, diction, ancient history, mnemonics (Hippias Major 285c-d, cf. Protagoras 318e-19a), as well as in the crafts of engraving, cobbling, weaving (Hippias Minor 368b-c). But these figures would have made much of their money as private tutors to young men with political ambitions, so for teaching public speaking, and it is in this capacity that Plato's engagement with them is most extensive and intensive.

⁶ On Plato's rivalry with his own contemporary Isocrates, see the chapter by M. Schofield, 'Plato in his Time and Place,' sec. 5, 000-000.

⁷ See T.H. Irwin, 'Plato's Objections to the Sophists' ['Sophists'] in A. Powell (ed.) The Greek World (London, 1995), 568-90. My discussion above builds on Irwin's thesis that Plato does not fault the sophists for undermining the authority of Athenian moral values but rather for being uncritical of these values; I argue that Plato thinks the sophists dangerous because they make it intellectually respectable to seek nothing surer than opinion, and that he responds to this counsel of despair by developing a psychology to show how knowledge is possible.

⁸ Hippias draws the nature-convention distinction at Protagoras 337d, but to make peace between Protagoras and Socrates, saying that the assembled wise men, since they are alike in being wise, are kinsmen by nature even though not by convention.

⁹ Plato does not call Gorgias a sophist, and indeed in the Gorgias Socrates distinguishes sophistic and rhetoric insisting that although alike and often confused, they are different activities, sophistic making itself out to be the craft of legislation and rhetoric the craft of justice (465c). Yet in virtue of their likenesses—making themselves out to be parts of political expertise while in fact aiming at pleasure rather than the good, and guessing rather than knowing (464c-d)—both sophistic and rhetoric are captured by the description of the so-called sophists in the Republic passage quoted above.

¹⁰ Irwin, ‘Sophists’, 586, suggests that Gorgias’ On Non-Being could have been written to demonstrate that arguments as rigorous as the Eleatics’ could prove conclusions opposite to theirs, the lesson of this being that persuasiveness, the product of rhetoric, should be the ultimate standard of success in speech.

¹¹ So, for example, the Athenians cannot believe that virtue is teachable since they allow any Athenian to advise the assembly about city management even though he cannot point to a teacher who taught him this, whereas in technical matters the assembly listens only to established experts (319d-e). Further supposed evidence of the unteachability of virtue is that good men such as Pericles (whom he calls a gratifier of appetites at Gorgias 517b-c) provide their sons the best possible education and so clearly must value it—and yet fail, themselves and through other teachers, to make these sons good (320b, cf. Meno 93a-94e).

¹² So Protagoras too argues from beliefs implicit in Athenian practice: virtue must be teachable because we are angry at the vicious and punish them to deter them (323d-24a); the practice of punishment for vice requires us to think that virtue is teachable (324a-c); given the high value of virtue, it must be that everyone tries to teach it to everyone, which would explain why the sons of the virtuous aren't especially virtuous (324d-27c).

¹³Cf. Apology 24e-25a, Meno 92d-93a; Pericles' funeral oration describes the city of Athens as a whole as a means for the education of Greece (Thucydides 2.41).

¹⁴ So-called after the Muses, a musical education would include learning to sing, to play an instrument, to recite and interpret poetry.

¹⁵ T. Penner takes Socrates' claim to be: Ion cannot know what Homer is saying (i.e. what Homer means) about medicine if he does not know the relevant truths of medicine. See his 'Socrates on the Impossibility of Belief-Relative Sciences' in Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy 3, ed. J. Cleary (Lanham, M.D., 1987), 263-325. This is not right: Socrates is making a claim about what Ion needs to know in order to judge whether Homer speaks *well*, not about what he needs to know in order to know what Homer is saying. It's true that Socrates begins to question Ion by asking about his ability 'to explain better and more beautifully' Homer's than Hesiod's verses on the same things (531a-b), but the content of this explanation is not 'what does it mean?'; it's rather, 'how is it *well said*?' Socrates' point is that just as one would have to have medical knowledge to judge whether the passages on healing wounds are well-composed, one would have to have ethical knowledge to judge whether the passages on the relations between men, and gods and men, are well-composed. And that is what both Homer and Ion lack.

¹⁶ Apology 19d, 33b

¹⁷ Apology 20c. Elsewhere, knowledge seems to require having an ‘account’ (cf. Meno 97e-98a, Gorgias 465a), which would seem to enable its possessor to teach others.

¹⁸ That Socrates takes some claims to be true on the grounds that they have not been refuted in his elenctic experience is suggested by G. Vlastos, ‘The Socratic Elenchus,’ [‘Elenchus’] in G. Fine (ed.) Plato 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology, (Oxford, 1999), 36-63 at 58.

¹⁹ For discussion, see Vlastos, ‘Elenchus’.

²⁰ Gorgias’ Encomium of Helen, in J. Dillon and T. L. Gergel (eds. and trs.), The Greek Sophists [Greek Sophists], London, 2003).

²¹ In the Republic, Socrates’ language for describing what the rulers must be able to resist in order to retain their educated beliefs seems to echo Gorgias’: ‘neither compulsion nor magic spells’ (*mête goêteumomenoi mête biazomenoi*) should lead them to give these up (412e); ‘“the compelled” . . . [are] those whom pain or suffering causes to change their mind, . . . [and] “victims of magic” . . . are those who change their mind because they are under the spell of pleasure or fear’ (413b-c).

²² That music and physical training target the spirited and wisdom-loving parts of the soul (411e) is consistent with this training being pre-rational (402a).

²³ The doctrine of recollection raises many questions beyond the scope of this chapter: what is the range of things about which we have innate opinions (the Meno speaks of ‘all truths’ and does not mention forms)? do innate opinions play any role in ordinary cognition, and if so, what? what enables us to tell which of our opinions are innate and therefore guaranteed to be true? just what is the relationship between recollection as a

result of repeated question and the account of the reason why that turns true opinions into knowledge (97e-98a)? do we only have innate true opinions or also innate knowledge (cf. 85d)? For discussion of recollection in this volume, see C. C. W. Taylor, 'Plato's Epistemology,' 000-000. Outside this volume, see also D. Scott, Recollection and Experience: Plato's Theory of Learning and its Successors (Cambridge, 1995) and Plato's Meno (Cambridge, 2006); G. Fine 'Inquiry in the Meno', in her Plato on Knowledge and Forms (Oxford, 2003), 44-65.

²⁴ B. Williams writes 'Glaukon claims . . . that someone armed with Gyges' ring act unjustly, as (effectively) an exploitative and self-seeking bandit. An immediate objection to this is that, with regard to many people, it is not very plausible . . . [for] it is likely that, if an ethical system is to work at all, that the motivations of justice will be sufficiently internalized not to evaporate instantaneously if the agent discovers invisibility.

Moreover, it is not clear in any case how much such a thought-experiment tells one about justice in real life.' See 'Plato against the immoralist' in O. Höffe (ed.) Platon, Politeia, 55-67 at 59 (Berlin, 1997). One might reply that such a thought-experiment tells us that in those real-life circumstances in which we can commit injustice without likely punishment, it is rational to commit injustice, and that this is evidence that justice is not preferable to injustice in every way. For an argument along these lines, see T. H. Irwin, 'Republic 2: Questions about Justice', in G. Fine (ed.), Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul [Plato 2] (Oxford, 1999), 164-85, at 170-75. Still, it may be that acceptance of Glaucon's argument could not actually undermine the motive to justice because of the way in which this motive is internalised. Adeimantus, by contrast with Glaucon, focuses on actually-held beliefs that do undermine the motive to justice.

²⁵ In ‘Imperfect Virtue’ (Ancient Philosophy 18 [1998], 315-39), I argue that such education-inculcated political virtue is, while not based on knowledge as is philosophical virtue, nevertheless genuine: its possessors value virtue for its own sake rather than for the sake of its consequences, for as a result of their education they have an internalised standard of conduct which they try to live up to even in the absence of rewards and punishments.

²⁶ I argue for this in ‘Social Justice and Happiness in the Republic: Plato’s Two Principles,’ History of Political Thought vol. 22 (2001), 189-220.

²⁷ Again, one could explain this after Vlastos (‘Elenchus’, 58), as assumed on the basis of his elenctic experience.

²⁸ Socrates delays specifying the stories that may be told about human beings until after he has shown ‘what sort of thing justice is and how by nature it profits the one who has it, whether he is believed to be just or not’, lest his interlocutor find that he has ‘agreed to the very point that is in question in our whole discussion’ (392b-c). However, stories about the gods and heroes help to set the guardians’ standards as to how they may behave, and Socrates seems to rule out certain passages because they represent the gods and heroes behaving unjustly. For example, they may not hear stories about gods warring, fighting, plotting against one another, or hating their families or friends (378b-c; for other stories that seem to be censored because they attribute injustice to the gods and heroes cf. 377e-78a, 390d-e, 391d). Even if these passages are censored for attributing other vices to the gods (enmity, impiety, immoderation, cowardice), if human justice is closely connected to these other virtues, Socrates is in the very danger he warns of at 392 b-c, of prematurely assuming what justice is.

²⁹ Socrates says, ‘*If they do imitate, they must imitate . . . what is appropriate for them*’ (395c, emphasis mine)

³⁰ There is a problem about how to square this account of imitation as impersonation with the account of imitation in Republic X, according to which any artistic representation would seem to count as imitation, for on the Republic X account, what painters as well as poets do is to make imitations of what craftsmen make (597d), or more precisely, make imitations of the appearances of these products of the crafts (598b). Janaway, Images, 126, observes that despite their divergent senses of mimesis (impersonation vs. appearance-making), these two discussions are about the same thing: poetry ‘insofar as it is mimetic’ (595a5) is poetry that involves dramatization and so involves the actor in impersonation.

³¹ This discussion distinguishes only two parts of the soul, whereas in Republic IV, Socrates distinguishes three; some scholars hold that the two parts distinguished in Republic X are two further parts into which rational part of the soul is divided; others hold that the inferior part is the spirited part, and still others that it is the appetitive part. But Plato’s periphrastic characterisations of the lower part(s) of the soul in Republic X seem designed to block any precise mapping to the parts of Republic IV: in Republic X, he characterises the lower part in two ways; first, by what it does in the very situation under consideration, as the lamenting element (606b1), the pitying element (606b7-8), the element forcibly restrained by the reasoning (606a3), the thing in the soul which judges contrary to measurement and reasoning (603a7), the element which grieves and impedes deliberation (604c3-5), the thing that is insatiable for recalling and lamenting our sufferings (604d8-9), and so on. A second way is by contrast with the best part of the

soul, as ‘base’ or ‘inferior’ (603a, 603b: *phaulon, elatton*; 604d: irrational, idle, a friend of cowardice, cf. 605c). Often, he refers to it/them simply by ‘*toiouton*’, of this sort.

This elusiveness suggests that what is important to Plato in this discussion is not the details of the soul-divisions of Books IV.436b-441c and IX.580cd-581b (how many parts, the internal logic of each part, the part’s characteristic object of desire), but rather the opposition between the reasoning part and the other(s), and the inferiority of the other(s) to the reasoning part.

³² It is unclear why the inferior part desires to grieve. Perhaps we enjoy strong feelings (and in the theatre can enjoy them without suffering the real misfortunes that ordinarily cause them). T. Gould suggests there is a particular pleasure in the spectacle of the innocent victim and explores this in The Ancient Quarrel Between Poetry and Philosophy (Princeton, 1990).

³³ It may indicate our lack of education that shame and pleasure are our only considerations, cf. 606a.

³⁴ D. Scott has argued that that the Gorgias and Republic I depict Socrates’ failures in education and attribute these failures to intransigent beliefs supported somehow by the interlocutors’ good-independent appetitive desires. Scott argues that the Republic suggests two sources of intransigent (false) beliefs: they may have been imprinted on the very young soul (377ab), thereby becoming indelible (378de), or they may be caused or sustained by (bad) appetitive desires (412b, 429c-30a, 560cd, 494d, 605b). See ‘Platonic Pessimism and Moral Education,’ in Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy vol. VII (1999) 15-36.

³⁵ Or more precisely, it may be that the evaluative powers of the appetitive part do not extend to considerations of honour or what is all-things-considered best, but are restricted to what brings pleasure by satisfying a preference.

³⁶ As is suggested by I. Murdoch's title, The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists (Oxford, 1977). Murdoch's book is concerned rather with Plato's hostility to artists.

³⁷ On Platonism in art, see the introduction in S. Halliwell, Republic Book 10 (Warminster, 1988)

³⁸ J. Annas points out that the analogy between poetry and painting in Republic X supports a criticism of poetry as unimportant which is distinct from and in some tension with the criticism of poetry as dangerous ('Plato on the Triviality of Literature' in J. Moravcsik and P. Temko, eds., Plato on Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts [Beauty], Totowa, N.J., 1982; 1-28). But perhaps Plato's two criticisms can be reconciled as follows: (1) poetry is of little value even if it represents the truth as accurately as possible because it can only represent the truth dimly, and as a result poetry can contribute far less to making people virtuous than can legislation or teaching, and (2) poetry is of great disvalue, even danger, when it does not represent the truth accurately.

³⁹ E. C. Keuls, Plato and Greek Painting (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition vol. V; Leiden, 1978); A. Nehamas. 'Plato on Imitation and Poetry in Republic X', in Moravcsik and Temko, Beauty.

⁴⁰ Socrates makes a similar point without the machinery of imitation in the Phaedrus, when he says that the dialectician, who can improve souls through conversation, won't regard his writings as his serious work (276c-77a).

⁴¹ By ‘instances’, I do not mean particulars. A. Nehamas shows that the problem with the candidate definitions given by Socrates’ interlocutors is not that they supply particulars where Socrates asks for universals, but that the universals they supply are incorrect. See A. Nehamas, ‘Confusing Universals and Particulars in Plato’s Early Dialogues’ in his Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates (Princeton, 1999), 159-75.

⁴²That this is an activity of the rational part of the soul is indicated by Socrates’ remark that the irrational part ‘cannot distinguish the greater and the smaller but believes that the same things are great at one time and small at another’—for example that the once-great hero is now small, reduced by misfortune (605b-c). I diverge from the Grube-Reeve translation in this passage to substitute ‘great’ for their ‘large’, because the moral context seems to require it. I also translate ‘greater’ and ‘smaller’ (for *meizô* and *ellatô*) at 605c1, as does C.D.C. Reeve in his translation of the Republic (Indianapolis, 2004).

⁴³See, in this volume, D. Scott, ‘The Republic’ (000-000), and C.C.W. Taylor, ‘Plato’s Epistemology’ (000-000). See also M. F. Burnyeat, ‘Plato on Why Mathematics is Good for the Soul’, in T. Smiley (ed.) Mathematics and Necessity: Essays in the History of Philosophy (Oxford, 2000), 1-81, argues that mathematics in the Republic does not have the purely ‘instrumental’ value of sharpening the mind (as Isocrates and others seem to have thought) but rather is constitutive of ethical understanding, since it provides a (low-level) articulation of objective value. Concord, for example, can be understood both mathematically (in harmonics) and ethically. A more minimal view would be that while Plato insists that mathematics ought not to be valued only as a tool for solving practical (e.g. agricultural or navigational) problems, the intrinsic value he accords to mathematics seems to *be* that it rekindles and purifies the soul and orients it towards being. This is not

valuing mathematics in a content-indifferent way as a tool for sharpening the mind so that it can be exercised on other (intrinsically valuable) subjects, but rather thinking of intrinsic value as that which the soul is in a better condition—which is what mathematics does.

⁴⁴ This is the view of C.C.W. Taylor in this volume, 000-000 and of G. Fine, ‘Knowledge and Belief in Republic V-VII,’ in Plato on Knowledge and Forms (Oxford, 2003), 85-116 at 109-116.

⁴⁵ On the way in which these preambles persuade rationally, as befits a free citizen, see C. Bobonich, ‘Persuasion, Compulsion, and Freedom in Plato’s Laws,’ in G. Fine (ed.) Plato 2, 373-403.

⁴⁶ This is argued in C. Bobonich, Plato’s Utopia Recast (Oxford, 2002). However, Bobonich relates this judgment to (what he argues is) Plato’s late rejection of the Republic view of the soul as composed of three independently-motivating parts. According to Bobonich, Plato’s late writings instead depict reason as contributing conceptual content to even non-rational psychic movements like sensory pleasures. Thus, for example, the Timaeus and Philebus treat sensory pleasures as involving appreciation of fineness or good order and as perfections of our power of perception rather than as restricted to fulfilling the bodily ends of the appetitive part of the soul (350-73). H. Lorenz, The Brute Within (Oxford, 2006), differs from Bobonich in allowing the non-rational parts of Plato’s late dialogues independent motivating power; according to Lorenz, the non-rational parts here are capable of representational content but not belief (95-110). The contrast between the Republic and Laws sketched above is compatible

with, but does not require, the rejection of independently-motivating parts in a divided soul.

⁴⁷ Thanks to Gail Fine and Rachel Singpurwalla for their comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.