

Plato – Republic (excerpts)

This text is based on the following book(s):

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Instructor Notes:

These excerpts correspond, more or less, to what is contained in your textbook. I provide this text as an alternative to what is contained in the textbook, as I feel it is a superior translation. However, the corresponding text in your textbook has two illustrations which are helpful, please refer to these when reading the following text.

Numbers following sentences in brackets, e.g. [476b], refer to the traditional paragraph numbers in the Republic, and can be ignored, unless you wish to find the same text in another translation.

The hyperlinked footnotes may not work, but I have copied the corresponding footnotes and placed them at the bottom of the text at the end of each excerpt of each book. Please consult them – although many are for readers of Classical Greek (whose vocabulary has been transliterated into the Latin alphabet) or scholars, others are explanatory in nature, and will perhaps help you understand the text. Remember that there is more required reading after each section of endnotes (Books VI and VII).

Book V

The Dialogue is between Glaucon and Socrates.

The quotation marks indicate the end of one person's remarks and the beginning of the next person's response. Glaucon begins the discussion . . .

. . . . [Galucon asks:] "Whom do you mean, then, by the true philosophers?" [Socrates responds]"Those for whom the truth is the spectacle of which they are enamored,¹⁹⁹" said I. "Right again,²⁰⁰" said he; "but in what sense do you mean it?" "It would be by no means easy to explain it to another," I said, "but I think that you will grant me this." "What?" "That since the fair and honorable is the opposite

of the base and ugly, they are two.” [476a] “Of course.” “And since they are two, each is one.²⁰¹” “That also.” “And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects.” “Right,” he said. “This, then,” said I, “is my division. I set apart and distinguish those of whom you were just speaking, the lovers of spectacles and the arts, [476b] and men of action, and separate from them again those with whom our argument is concerned and who alone deserve the appellation of philosophers or lovers of wisdom.” “What do you mean?” he said. “The lovers of sounds and sights,” I said, “delight in beautiful tones and colors and shapes and in everything that art fashions out of these, but their thought is incapable of apprehending and taking delight in the nature of the beautiful in itself.” “Why, yes,” he said, “that is so.” “And on the other hand, will not those be few²⁰² who would be able to approach beauty itself and contemplate it in and by itself?” [476c] “They would, indeed.” “He, then, who believes in beautiful things, but neither believes in beauty itself nor is able to follow when someone tries to guide him to the knowledge of it--do you think that his life is a dream or a waking²⁰³ ? Just consider. Is not the dream state, whether the man is asleep or awake, just this: the mistaking of resemblance for identity?” “I should certainly call that dreaming,” he said. “Well, then, take the opposite case: the man whose thought recognizes a beauty in itself, [476d] and is able to distinguish that self-beautiful and the things that participate in it, and neither supposes the participants to be it nor it the participants--is his life, in your opinion, a waking or a dream state?” “He is very much awake,” he replied. “Could we not rightly, then, call the mental state of the one as knowing, knowledge, and that of the other as opining, opinion?” “Assuredly.” “Suppose, now, he who we say opines but does not know should be angry and challenge our statement as not true. [476e] Can we find any way of soothing him and gently²⁰⁴ winning him over, without telling him too plainly that he is not in his right mind?” “We must try,” he said. “Come, then, consider what we are to say to him, or would you have us question him in this fashion--premissing that if he knows anything, nobody grudges it him, but we should be very glad to see him knowing something--but tell²⁰⁵ us this: Does he who knows know something or nothing? Do you reply in his behalf.” “I will reply,” he said, “that he knows something.” “Is it something that is or is not²⁰⁶ ?” “That is. How could [477a] that which is not be known?” “We are sufficiently assured of this, then, even if we should examine it from every point of view, that that which entirely²⁰⁷ ‘is’ is entirely knowable, and that which in no way ‘is’ is in every way unknowable.” “Most sufficiently.” “Good. If a thing, then, is so conditioned as both to be and not to be, would it not lie between that which absolutely and unqualifiedly is and that which in no way is?” “Between.” “Then if knowledge pertains to that which is and ignorance of necessity to that which is not, [477b] for that which lies between we must seek for something between nescience and science, if such a thing there be.” “By all means.” “Is there a thing which we call opinion?” “Surely.” “Is it a different faculty from science or the same?” “A different.” “Then opinion is set over one thing and science over another, each by

virtue of its own distinctive power or faculty.” “That is so.” “May we say, then, that science is naturally related to that which is,²⁰⁸ to know that and how that which is is? But rather, before we proceed, I think we must draw the following distinctions.” “What ones?”

[477c] “Shall we say that faculties,²⁰⁹ powers, abilities are a class of entities by virtue of which we and all other things are able to do what we or they are able to do? I mean that sight and hearing, for example, are faculties, if so be that you understand the class or type that I am trying to describe.” “I understand,” he said. “Hear, then, my notion about them. In a faculty I cannot see any color or shape or similar mark such as those on which in many other cases I fix my eyes in discriminating in my thought one thing [477d] from another. But in the case of a faculty I look to one thing only--that to which it is related and what it effects,²¹⁰ and it is in this way that I come to call²¹¹ each one of them a faculty, and that which is related to²¹² the same thing and accomplishes the same thing I call the same faculty, and that to another I call other. How about you, what is your practice?” “The same,” he said. “To return, then, my friend,” said I, “to science or true knowledge, do you say that it is a faculty and a power, [477e] or in what class do you put it?” “Into this,” he said, “the most potent of all²¹³ faculties.” “And opinion--shall we assign it to some other class than faculty.” “By no means,” he said, “for that by which we are able to opine is nothing else than the faculty of opinion.²¹⁴” “But not long ago you agreed that science and opinion are not identical.” “How could any rational man affirm the identity of the infallible with the fallible?” “Excellent,” said I, “and we are plainly agreed [478a] that opinion is a different²¹⁵ thing from scientific knowledge.” “Yes, different.” “Each of them, then, since it has a different power, is related to a different object.” “Of necessity.” “Science, I presume, to that which is, to know the condition of that which is. But opinion, we say, opines.” “Yes.” “Does it opine the same thing that science knows, and will the knowable and the opinable be identical, or is that impossible?” “Impossible by our admissions,²¹⁶” he said. “If different faculties are naturally related to different objects [478b] and both opinion and science are faculties, but each different from the other, as we say--these admissions do not leave place for the identity of the knowable and the opinable.” “Then, if that which is is knowable, something other than that which is would be the opinable.²¹⁷” “Something else.” “Does it opine that which is not,²¹⁸ or is it impossible even to opine that which is not? Reflect: Does not he who opines bring his opinion to bear upon something or shall we reverse ourselves and say that it is possible to opine, yet opine nothing?” “That is impossible.” “Then he who opines opines some one thing.” “Yes.” “But surely that which is not could not be designated as some one thing, but [478c] most rightly as nothing at all. To that which is not we of necessity assigned nescience, and to that which is, knowledge.” “Rightly,” he said. “Then neither that which is nor that which is not is the object of opinion.” “It seems not.” “Then opinion would be neither nescience nor knowledge.” “So it seems.” “Is it then a faculty outside of these, exceeding either knowledge in lucidity or ignorance in obscurity?” “It is neither.” “But do you deem opinion

something darker than knowledge but brighter than ignorance?" "Much so," he said. "And does it lie within the boundaries [478d] of the two?" "Yes." "Then opinion would be between the two." "Most assuredly." "Were we not saying a little while ago²¹⁹ that if anything should turn up²²⁰ such that it both is and is not, that sort of thing would lie between that which purely and absolutely is and that which wholly is not, and that the faculty correlated with it would be neither science or nescience, but that which should appear to hold a place correspondingly between nescience and science." "Right." "And now there has turned up between these two the thing that we call opinion." "There has."

[478e] "It would remain, then, as it seems, for us to discover that which partakes of both, of to be and not to be, and that could not be rightly designated either in its exclusive purity; so that, if it shall be discovered, we may justly pronounce it to be the opinable, thus assigning extremes to extremes and the intermediate to the intermediate. Is not that so?" "It is." "This much premised, let him tell me, [479a] I will say, let him answer me, that good²²¹ fellow who does not think there is a beautiful in itself or any²²² idea of beauty in itself always remaining the same and unchanged, but who does believe in many beautiful things--the lover of spectacles, I mean, who cannot endure to hear anybody say that the beautiful is one and the just one, and so of other things--and this will be our question: My good fellow, is there any one of these many fair-and-honorable things that will not sometimes appear ugly and base²²³ ? And of the just things, that will not seem unjust? And of the pious things, that will not seem impious?" "No, it is inevitable," he said, "that they would appear [479b] to be both beautiful in a way and ugly, and so with all the other things you asked about." "And again, do the many double things²²⁴ appear any the less halves than doubles?" "None the less." "And likewise of the great and the small things, the light and the heavy things--will they admit these predicates any more than their opposites?" "No," he said, "each of them will always hold of, partake of, both." "Then is each of these multiples rather than it is not that which one affirms it to be?" "They are like those jesters who palter with us in a double sense at banquets," he replied, "and resemble the children's riddle²²⁵ [479c] about the eunuch and his hitting of the bat--with what and as it sat on what they signify that he struck it. For these things too equivocate, and it is impossible to conceive firmly²²⁶ any one of them to be or not to be or both or neither." "Do you know what to do with them, then?" said I, "and can you find a better place to put them than that midway between existence or essence and the not-to-be? For we shall surely not discover a darker region than not-being²²⁷ that they should still more not be, [479d] nor brighter than being that they should still more be." "Most true," he said. "We would seem to have found, then, that the many conventions²²⁸ of the many about the fair and honorable and other things are tumbled about in²²⁹ the mid-region between that which is not and that which is in the true and absolute sense." "We have so found it." "But we agreed in advance that, if anything of that sort should be discovered, it must be denominated opinable, not knowable, the wanderer between being caught by the faculty that is betwixt and between." "We did." "We shall affirm, then, that those who view many beautiful things [479e] but do not see the beautiful itself and are

unable to follow another's guidance²³⁰ to it, and many just things, but not justice itself, and so in all cases--we shall say that such men have opinions about all things, but know nothing of the things they opine." "Of necessity." "And, on the other hand, what of those who contemplate the very things themselves in each case, ever remaining the same and unchanged--shall we not say that they know and do not merely opine?" "That, too, necessarily follows." "Shall we not also say that the one welcomes to his thought and loves the things [480a] subject to knowledge and the other those to opinion? Do we not remember that we said that those loved and regarded tones and beautiful colours and the like, but they could not endure the notion of the reality of the beautiful itself?" "We do remember." "Shall we then offend their ears if we call them doxophilists²³¹ rather than philosophers and will they be very angry if we so speak?" "Not if they heed my counsel," he said, "for to be angry with truth is not lawful." "Then to those who in each and every kind welcome the true being, lovers of wisdom and not lovers of opinion²³² is the name we must give." "By all means."

ENDNOTES BOOK V

¹⁹⁹ Cf. [Aristotle](#) *Eth.* 1098 a 32 [theatês gar talêthous](#).

²⁰⁰ Cf. 449 C.

²⁰¹ [Plato](#) is merely restating the theory of Ideas to prepare for his practical distinction between minds that can and minds that cannot apprehend abstractions. He does not here enter into the metaphysics of the subject. But he does distinctly show that he is "already" aware of the difficulties raised in the [Parmenides](#), 131 B ff., and of the misapprehension disposed of in the [Sophist](#) 252 ff. that the metaphysical isolation of the Ideas precludes their combination and intermingling in human thought and speech. For the many attempts to evade [allêlôn koinônia](#) Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought*, n. 244, and add now Wilamowitz, *Platon*, i. p. 567, who, completely missing the point, refers to 505 A, which is also misunderstood. He adds "mit den Problemen des *Sophistes* hat das gar nichts zu tun; sie waren ihm noch nicht aufgestossen," which begs the question.

²⁰² "Le petit nombre des élus" is a common topic in [Plato](#). Cf. on 494 A.

²⁰³ The dream state is a very different thing for [Plato](#) from what it is for some modern sentimental Platonists. Cf. 520 C-D, [Phaedrus](#) 277 D, [Timaeus](#) 52 B, and 71 E, if rightly interpreted.

²⁰⁴ [êrema](#): Cf. *Symposium* 221 B. Plato's humorous use of this word is the source of Emerson's humorous use of "gently."

²⁰⁵ For the humor of the sudden shift to the second person cf. Juvenal, *Satire* i. "profer, [Galla](#), caput."

²⁰⁶ To understand what follows it is necessary (1) to assume that [Plato](#) is not talking nonsense; (2) to make allowance for the necessity that he is under of combating contemporary fallacies and sophisms which may seem trivial to us (Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought*, pp. 50 ff.); (3) to remember the greater richness of the [Greek language](#) in forms of the verb “to be”; and the misunderstandings introduced by the indiscriminate use of the abstract verbal noun “being” in English--a difficulty which I have tried to meet by varying the terms of the translation; (4) to recognize that apart from metaphysics Plato's main purpose is to insist on the ability to think abstractly as a prerequisite of the higher education; (5) to observe the qualifications and turns of phrase which indicate that [Plato](#) himself was not confused by the double meaning of “is not,” but was already aware of the distinctions explicitly explained in the *Sophist*. (Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought*, pp. 53 ff. nn. 389 ff.)

²⁰⁷ [pantelôs](#): cf. [mêdamêi](#) and 478 D [pantôs](#). Not foreseeing modern [philology](#) [Plato](#) did not think it necessary to repeat these qualifying adverbs in 478 B [ê adunaton kai doxasai to mê on](#), which is still sometimes quoted to prove that [Plato](#) was “yet” naively unaware of the distinction between is-not-at-all (does not exist) and is-not-this-or-that.

²⁰⁸ Apart from the metaphysical question of the relativity of all knowledge, the word [epistêmê](#) in [Greek](#) usage connotes certainty, and so [Plato](#) and [Aristotle](#) always take it. But more specifically that which (always) is, for [Plato](#), is the “idea” which is not subject to change and therefore always is what it is, while a particular material thing subject to change and relativity both is and is not any and every predicate that can be applied to it. And since knowledge in the highest sense is for [Plato](#) knowledge of abstract and general ideas, both in his and in our sense of the word idea, knowledge is said to be of that which is. It is uncritical to ignore Plato's terminology and purpose and to talk condescendingly of his confusing subjective with objective certainty in what follows.

²⁰⁹ The history of the word [dunamis](#) has been studied in recent monographs and its various meanings, from potentiality to active power, discriminated. Cf. J. Souilhé, *Etude sur le terme [dunamis](#) dans les Dialogues de Platon*, [Paris](#), 1919, pp. 96, 163 ff. But [Plato](#) makes his simple meaning here quite plain, and it would be irrelevant to bring in modern denunciations of the “old faculty psychology.”

²¹⁰ Cf. my note on Simplic. *De An.* 146. 21, *Class. Phil.* xvii. p. 143.

²¹¹ Cf. *Ion* 537 D [houtô kalô tèn men allên, tèn de allên technên](#).

²¹² [epi](#): Cf. *Parmenides* 147 D-[Ehekaston tôn onomatôn ouk epi tini kaleis](#);

²¹³ Cf. *Protagoras* 352 B, *Aristotle Eth.* 1145 b 24.

²¹⁴ For the various meanings of [doxa](#) Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought*, p. 47 “ the word [doxa](#) may be used in this neutral, psychological sense; it may be taken unfavorably to denote mere opinion as opposed to knowledge, or favorably when true opinions and beliefs are set in antithesis to the appetites and instincts.”

²¹⁵ [Plato](#) reaffirms this strongly [Timaeus](#) 51 E, where, however, [nous](#) is used, not [epistêmê](#). Of course where distinctions are irrelevant [Plato](#) may use many of the terms that denote mental processes as virtual synonyms. Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought* pp. 47-49.

²¹⁶ Cf. *Symposium* 200 B, 201 D.

²¹⁷ Cf. on 447 C.

²¹⁸ [Plato](#) is, of course, aware that this is true only if [mê on](#) be taken in the absolute sense. We cannot suppose that he himself is puzzled by a fallacy which he ironically attributes to the Sophists and to [Protagoras](#) ([Theaetetus](#) 167 A), and ridicules in the [Cratylus](#) 188 D and [Euthydemus](#) 286 C. Cf. *Unity of Platos' Thought*, pp. 53, 54. As [Aristotle](#) explicitly puts it, *De interpr.* 11. 11 [to de mê on hoti doxaston ouk alêthes eipein on ti: doxa gar autou estin, ouch hoti estin all' hoti ouk esti.](#)

²¹⁹ Cf. 477 A.

²²⁰ Cf. 477 A-B. This is almost a standardized method with [Plato](#). Cf. 609 B, [Charmides](#) 168 B, [Gorgias](#) 496 C, 346 B, [Philebus](#) 11 D, 66 E, [Laws](#) 896 C.

²²¹ Ironical. Cf. [Phaedrus](#) 266 E.

²²² [tina](#) does not mean that the theory of Ideas is a novelty here or that the terminology is new and strange. It merely says that the type of mind that is absorbed in the concrete cannot apprehend any general aspect of things. [auto](#) and [kata tauta](#) are the technical designation of the Idea here. Cf. my note on [Philebus](#) 64 A, *Class. Phil.* xx. (1925) p. 347.

²²³ [Plato](#) consciously uses mere logic to lend the emphasis and dignity of absolute metaphysics to his distinction between the two types of mind, which is for all practical purposes his main point here. If you cannot correctly define the beautiful, all your imperfect definitions will be refuted by showing that they sometimes describe what is ugly. Cf. [Hippias Major](#) 289 C and note on *Republic* i. 333 E. The many concrete objects are this and are not that, and so with conscious use of the ambiguity of the copula may be said to tumble about between being and not-being. That this is the consciously intended meaning may be inferred from the fact that in [Timaeus](#) 37 E, where [Plato](#) must have had in mind the conclusions of the *Sophist*, he still avails himself of this ambiguity to

suggest an absolute being behind phenomena. Cf. *Unity of Plato's Thought*, pp. 55, 56, 60, *De Platonis Idearum Doctrina* pp. 48, 49.

²²⁴ Cf. on 524 A, B.

²²⁵ The scholiast ([Hermann](#) vi. 34) quotes the riddle in two forms. It might run in English--"A tale there is, a man not yet a man,/ Seeing, saw not, a bird and not a bird,/ Perching upon a bough and not a bough,/ And hit it--not, with a stone and not a stone." The key words of the answer are eunuch, bat, reed, pumice-stone. Cf. also [Athenaeus](#) 448 E, 452 E, Gifford on [Euthydemus](#) 300 D. It was used in the Stoic schools of logic, and [Epicurus](#) is said to have used it to disprove Plato's statement that either the negative or the affirmative of a proposition must be true or false. Cf. Usener, *Epicurea*, p. 348.

²²⁶ Cf. [Theaetetus](#) 157 A.

²²⁷ Cf. *Sophist* 254 [Aeis tèn tou mê ontos skoteinotêta](#).

²²⁸ A further thought is developed here, suggested in 479 A, B. Just as the many particular horses, trees, or tables shift and change, and are and are not in comparison with the unchanging multitude of each, so the many opinions of the multitude about justice and the good and the beautiful and other moral conceptions change, and both are and are not in comparison with the unalterable ideas of justice and beauty, which the philosopher more nearly apprehends. Thus, for the purposes of this contrast, notions, opinions, and what English usage would call ideas, fall into the same class as material objects. Cf. *Euthyphro* 6 D, *Phaedo* 78 D, [Parmenides](#) 131 D, [Gorgias](#) 488 D [ta tôn pollôn ara nomima](#), *Laws* 715 B [ta toutôn dikaia](#), 860 C [tois men toinun pollois](#) etc., 962 D [ta tôn poleôn](#) (of states) [nomima](#). The practical truth of this distinction is unaffected by our metaphysics. [Plato](#) is speaking of what he elsewhere calls the [eidôla](#) of justice, beauty and the like. Cf. 517 D, 532 D, [Theaetetus](#) 150 B, and "The Idea of Good in Plato's *Republic*," *University of Chicago Studies in Classical Philology*, i. p. 238.

²²⁹ Cf. [Phaedrus](#) 275 E, *Phaedo* 81 C, 82 E. [Isocrates](#) uses [kalindeomai](#) in similar contemptuous connotation, v. 82, xiii. 20, xv. 30.

²³⁰ Cf. [Aristotle](#) *Metaphysics* 989 a 33 [tois epagousin auton](#).

²³¹ [Plato](#) coins a word which means "lovers of opinion."

²³² [Isocrates](#) xv. 271 is conceivably an answer to this.

Book VI

The Dialogue is between Glaucon and Socrates.

Socrates begins the discussion . .

[Socrates ...]“We predicate ‘to be’³¹¹ of many beautiful things and many good things, saying of them severally that they are, and so define them in our speech.” “We do.” “And again, we speak of a self-beautiful and of a good that is only and merely good, and so, in the case of all the things that we then posited as many, we turn about and posit each as a single idea or aspect, assuming it to be a unity and call it that which each really is.³¹² “It is so.” “And the one class of things we say can be seen but not thought, [507c] while the ideas can be thought but not seen.” “By all means.” . . .

[Socrates ...]“You surely apprehend the two types, the visible and the intelligible.” “I do.” “Represent them then, as it were, by a line divided³³⁹ into two unequal³⁴⁰ sections and cut each section again in the same ratio (the section, that is, of the visible and that of the intelligible order), and then as an expression of the ratio of their comparative clearness and obscurity you will have, as one of the sections [509e] of the visible world, images. By images³⁴¹ I mean, [510a] first, shadows, and then reflections in water and on surfaces of dense, smooth and bright texture, and everything of that kind, if you apprehend.” “I do.” “As the second section assume that of which this is a likeness or an image, that is, the animals about us and all plants and the whole class of objects made by man.” “I so assume it,” he said. “Would you be willing to say,” said I, “that the division in respect of reality and truth or the opposite is expressed by the proportion:³⁴² as is the opinable to the knowable so is the likeness to that [510b] of which it is a likeness?” “I certainly would.” “Consider then again the way in which we are to make the division of the intelligible section.” “In what way?” “By the distinction that there is one section of it which the soul is compelled to investigate by treating as images the things imitated in the former division, and by means of assumptions from which it proceeds not up to a first principle but down to a conclusion, while there is another section in which it advances from its assumption to a beginning or principle that transcends assumption,³⁴³ and in which it makes no use of the images employed by the other section, relying on ideas³⁴⁴ only and progressing systematically through ideas.” “I don’t fully understand³⁴⁵ what you mean by this,” he said. “Well, I will try again,” [510c] said I, “for you will better understand after this preamble. For I think you are aware that students of geometry and reckoning and such subjects first postulate the odd and the even and the various figures and three kinds of angles and other things akin to these in each branch of science, regard them as known, and, treating them as absolute assumptions, do not deign to render any further account of them³⁴⁶ to themselves or others, taking it for granted that they are obvious to

everybody. They take their start [510d] from these, and pursuing the inquiry from this point on consistently, conclude with that for the investigation of which they set out." "Certainly," he said, "I know that." "And do you not also know that they further make use of the visible forms and talk about them, though they are not thinking of them but of those things of which they are a likeness, pursuing their inquiry for the sake of the square as such and the diagonal as such, and not for the sake of the image of it which they draw³⁴⁷ ? [510e] And so in all cases. The very things which they mould and draw, which have shadows and images of themselves in water, these things they treat in their turn³⁴⁸ as only images, but what they really seek is to get sight of those realities which can be seen [511a] only by the mind.³⁴⁹ "True," he said.

"This then is the class that I described as intelligible, it is true,³⁵⁰ but with the reservation first that the soul is compelled to employ assumptions in the investigation of it, not proceeding to a first principle because of its inability to extricate itself from and rise above its assumptions, and second, that it uses as images or likenesses the very objects that are themselves copied and adumbrated by the class below them, and that in comparison with these latter³⁵¹ are esteemed as clear and held in honor.³⁵² "I understand," [511b] said he, "that you are speaking of what falls under geometry and the kindred arts." "Understand then," said I, "that by the other section of the intelligible I mean that which the reason³⁵³ itself lays hold of by the power of dialectics,³⁵⁴ treating its assumptions not as absolute beginnings but literally as hypotheses,³⁵⁵ underpinnings, footings,³⁵⁶ and springboards so to speak, to enable it to rise to that which requires no assumption and is the starting-point of all,³⁵⁷ and after attaining to that again taking hold of the first dependencies from it, so to proceed downward to the conclusion, [511c] making no use whatever of any object of sense³⁵⁸ but only of pure ideas moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas.³⁵⁹ "I understand," he said; "not fully, for it is no slight task that you appear to have in mind, but I do understand that you mean to distinguish the aspect of reality and the intelligible, which is contemplated by the power of dialectic, as something truer and more exact than the object of the so-called arts and sciences whose assumptions are arbitrary starting-points. And though it is true that those who contemplate them are compelled to use their understanding³⁶⁰ and not [511d] their senses, yet because they do not go back to the beginning in the study of them but start from assumptions you do not think they possess true intelligence³⁶¹ about them although³⁶² the things themselves are intelligibles when apprehended in conjunction with a first principle. And I think you call the mental habit of geometers and their like mind or understanding³⁶³ and not reason because you regard understanding as something intermediate between opinion and reason." "Your interpretation is quite sufficient," I said; "and now, answering to³⁶⁴ these four sections, assume these four affections occurring in the soul: intellection or reason for the highest, [511e] understanding for the second; assign belief³⁶⁵ to the third, and to the last picture-thinking or conjecture,³⁶⁶ and arrange them in a proportion,³⁶⁷ considering that they participate in clearness and

precision in the same degree as their objects partake of truth and reality.” “I understand,” he said; “I concur and arrange them as you bid.”

ENDNOTES BOOK VI

³¹¹ The modern reader will never understand [Plato](#) from translation that talk about “Being.” Cf. *What [Plato](#) Said*, p. 605.

³¹² [ho estin](#) is technical for the reality of the ideas. Cf. *Phaedo* 75 B, D, 78 D, *Parmen.* 129 B, *Symp.* 211 C, *Rep.* 490 B, 532 A, 597 A.

³²⁹ [agathoeidê](#) occurs only here in classical [Greek literature](#). [Plato](#) quite probably coined it for his purpose.

³³⁰ There is no article in the [Greek](#). [Plato](#) is not scrupulous to distinguish good and the good here. cf. on 505 C, p. 89, note f.

³³¹ [hexis](#) is not yet in [Plato](#) quite the technical Aristotelian “habit.” However *Protag.* 344 C approaches it. Cf. also *Phileb.* 11 D, 41 C, Ritter-Preller, p. 285. [Plato](#) used many words in periphrasis with the genitive, e.g. [hexis](#) *Laws* 625 C, [genesis](#) *Laws* 691 B, *Tim.* 73 B, 76 E, [moira](#) *Phaedr.* 255 B, 274 E, *Menex.* 249 B, [phusis](#) *Phaedo* 109 E, *Symp.* 186 B, *Laws* 729 C, 845 D, 944 D, etc. He may have chosen [hexis](#) here to suggest the ethical aspect of the good as a habit or possession of the soul. The introduction of [hêdonê](#) below supports this view. Some interpreters think it=[to agathon hês echei](#), which is possible but rather pointless.

³³² For [ou gar dêpou](#) Cf. *Apol.* 20 C, *Gorg.* 455 A, *Euthyph.* 13 A.

³³³ i.e. not only do we understand a thing when we know its purpose, but a purpose in some mind is the chief cause of its existence, God's mind for the universe, man's mind for political institutions. this, being the only interpretation that makes sense of the passage, is presumably more or less consciously [Plato's](#) meaning. Cf. *Introd.* pp. xxxv-xxxvi. Quite irrelevant are [Plato's](#) supposed identification of the [agathon](#) with the [hen](#), one, and Aristotle's statement, *Met.* 988 a, that the ideas are the cause of other things and the one is the cause of the ideas. the remainder of the paragraph belongs to transcendental rhetoric. It has been endlessly quoted and plays a great part in [Neoplatonism](#), in all philosophies of the unknowable and in all negative and mystic theologies.

³³⁴ It is an error to oppose [Plato](#) here to the Alexandrians who sometimes said [epekeina tou ontos](#). [Plato's](#) sentence would have made [ontos](#) very inconvenient here. But [einai](#) shows that [ousias](#) is not distinguished from [tou ontos](#) here. [epekeina](#) became technical and a symbol for the transcendental in [Neoplatonism](#)

and all similar philosophies. cf. [Plotinus](#) xvii. 1, [Dionysius](#) Areop. *De divinis nominibus*, ii. 2, Friedländer, *Platon*, i. p. 87.

[335](#) He is amused at [Socrates'](#) emphasis. Fanciful is Wilamowitz' notion (*Platon*, i. p. 209) that the laughable thing is Glaucon's losing control of himself, for which he compares Aristoph. *Birds* 61. Cf. the extraordinary comment of [Proclus](#), p. 265. The dramatic humor of Glaucon's surprise is Plato's way of smiling at himself, as he frequently does in the dialogues. Cf. 536 B, 540 B, [Lysis](#) 223 B, [Protag.](#) 340 E, *Charm.* 175 E, *Cratyl.* 426 B, *Theaet.* 200 B, 197 D, etc. Cf. Friedländer, *Platon*, i. p. 172 on the *Phaedo*.

[336](#) "What a *comble!*" would be nearer the tone of the [Greek](#). There is no good English equivalent for [hyperbolês](#). Cf. Sir Thomas Browne's remark that "nothing can be said hyperbolically of God." The banter here relieves the strain, as is Plato's manner.

[337](#) Cf. 502 A, *Symp.* 222 E, *Meno* 86 E.

[338](#) Cf. the similar etymological pun in *Cratyl.* 396 B-C. Here, as often, the translator must choose between over-translating for some tastes, or not translating at all.

[339](#) The meaning is given in the text. Too many commentators lose the meaning in their study of the imagery. Cf. the notes of Adam, Jowett, Campbell, and Apelt. See *Intro.* p. xxi for my interpretation of the passage.

[340](#) Some modern and ancient critics prefer [an' isa](#). It is a little more plausible to make the sections unequal. But again there is doubt which shall be longer, the higher as the more honorable or the lower as the more multitudinous. Cf. *Plut. Plat. Quest.* 3.

[341](#) Cf. 402 B, *Soph.* 266 B-C.

[342](#) Cf. on 508 C, p. 103. note b.

[343](#) Cf. my *Idea of good in Plato's republic*, pp. 230-234, for the [anupotheton](#). Ultimately, the [anupotheton](#) is the Idea of Good so far as we assume that idea to be attainable either in ethics or in physics. But it is the Idea of Good, not as a transcendental ontological mystery, but in the ethical sense already explained. The ideal dialectician is the man who can, if challenged, run his reasons for any given proposition back, not to some assumed *axioma medium*, but to its relation to ultimate Good, To call the [anupotheton](#) the Unconditioned or Absolute introduces metaphysical associations foreign to the passage. Cf. also *Intro.* pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

³⁴⁴ The practical meaning of this is independent of the disputed metaphysics. Cf. *Intro.* pp. xvi-xviii.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Vol. I. p. 79, note c on 347 A and p. 47, note f on 338 D; *What Plato Said*, p. 503 on *Gorg.* 463 D.

³⁴⁶ Aristot. *top.* 100 b 2-3 [ou dei gar en tais](#) epistêmonikais [archais epizêteisthai to dia ti](#), exactly expresses Plato's thought and the truth, though [Aristotle](#) may have meant it mainly for the principle of non-contradiction and other first principles of logic. Cf. the mediaeval "contra principium negantem non est disputandum." A teacher of geometry will refuse to discuss the psychology of the idea of space, a teacher of chemistry will not permit the class to ask whether matter is "real."

³⁴⁷ Cf. 527 A-B. This explanation of mathematical reasoning does not differ at all from that of [Aristotle](#) and Berkeley and the moderns who praise [Aristotle](#), except that the metaphysical doctrine of ideas is in the background to be asserted if challenged.

³⁴⁸ i.e. a bronze sphere would be the original of its imitative reflection in water, but it is in turn only the imperfect imitation of the mathematical idea of a sphere.

³⁴⁹ Stenzel, *Handbuch*, 118 "das er nur mit dem Verstande([dianoiai](#))sieht" is mistaken. [dianoiai](#) is used not in its special sense ("understanding." See p. 116, note c), but generally for the mind as opposed to the senses. Cf. 511 c.

³⁵⁰ For the concessive [men](#) cf. 546 E, 529 D, *Soph.* 225 C.

³⁵¹ The loosely appended dative [ekeinois](#) is virtually a dative absolute. Cf. *Phaedo* 105 A. Wilamowitz' emendation (*Platon*, ii. p. 384) to [pros ekeina](#), [kai ekeinois](#) rests on a misunderstanding of the passage.

³⁵² The translation of this sentence is correct. But cf. Adam ad loc.

³⁵³ [logos](#) here suggests both the objective personified argument and the subjective faculty.

³⁵⁴ Cf. 533 A. [Phileb.](#) 57 E.

³⁵⁵ [tôi onti](#) emphasized the etymological meaning of the word. Similarly [hôs alêthôs](#) in 551 E, *Phaedo* 80 D, [Phileb.](#) 64 E. For hypotheses cf. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, p. 229, Thompson on *Meno* 86 E. But the thing to note is that the word according to the context may emphasize the arbitrariness of an assumption or the fact that it is the starting-point--apchê--of the inquiry.

³⁵⁶ Cf. *Symp.* 211 [Chôsper](#) epanabasmōis, "like steps of a stair."

³⁵⁷ [pantos archên](#) taken literally leads support to the view that [Plato](#) is thinking of an absolute first principle. But in spite of the metaphysical suggestions for practical purposes the [pantos archê](#) may be the virtual equivalent of the [hikanon](#) of the *Phaedo*. It is the [archê](#) on which all in the particular case depends and is reached by dialectical agreement, not by arbitrary assumption. Cf. on 510 B, p. 110, note a.

³⁵⁸ This is one of the passages that are misused to attribute to [Plato](#) disdain for experience and the perceptions of the senses. Cf. on 530 B, p. 187, note c. The dialectician is able to reason purely in concepts and words without recurring to images. [Plato](#) is not here considering how much or little of his knowledge is ultimately derived from experience.

³⁵⁹ The description undoubtedly applies to a metaphysical philosophy that deduces all things from a transcendent first principle. I have never denied that. The point of my interpretation is that it also describes the method which distinguishes the dialectician as such from the man of science, and that this distinction is for practical and educational purposes the chief result of the discussion, as [Plato](#) virtually says in the next few lines. Cf. *What Plato Said*, pp. 233-234.

³⁶⁰ [dianoiai](#) here as in 511 A is general and not technical.

³⁶¹ [noun ouk ischein](#) is perhaps intentionally ambiguous. Colloquially the phrase means “have not sense.” for its higher meaning Cf. *Meno* 99 C, *Laws* 962 A.

³⁶² Unnecessary difficulties have been raised about [kaitoi](#) and [meta](#) here. Wilamowitz, *Platon*, ii. p. 345 mistakenly resorts to emendation. the meaning is plain. Mathematical ideas are ideas or concepts like other ideas; but the mathematician does not deal with them quiet as the dialectician deals with ideas and therefore does not possess [nous](#) or reason in the highest sense.

³⁶³ Here the word [dianoia](#) is given a technical meaning as a faculty inferior to [nous](#), but, as [Plato](#) says, the terminology does not matter. The question has been much and often idly discussed.

³⁶⁴ For [epi](#) Cf. *Polit.* 280 A, *Gorg.* 463 B.

³⁶⁵ [pistis](#) is of course not “faith” in [Plato](#), but Neoplatonists, Christians, and commentators have confused the two ideas hopelessly.

³⁶⁶ [eikasia](#) undoubtedly had this connotation for [Plato](#).

³⁶⁷ Cf. on 508 C, p. 103, note b.

Book VII

The Dialogue is between Glaucon and Socrates.

Socrates begins the discussion . .

[514a] “Next,” said I, “compare our nature in respect of education and its lack to such an experience as this. Picture men dwelling in a sort of subterranean cavern¹ with a long entrance open² to the light on its entire width. Conceive them as having their legs and necks fettered³ from childhood, so that they remain in the same spot, [514b] able to look forward only, and prevented by the fetters from turning their heads. Picture further the light from a fire burning higher up and at a distance behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners and above them a road along which a low wall has been built, as the exhibitors of puppet-shows⁴ have partitions before the men themselves, above which they show the puppets.” “All that I see,” he said. “See also, then, men carrying⁵ past the wall [514c] implements of all kinds that rise above the wall, and human images [515a] and shapes of animals as well, wrought in stone and wood and every material, some of these bearers presumably speaking and others silent.” “A strange image you speak of,” he said, “and strange prisoners.” “Like to us,” I said; “for, to begin with, tell me do you think that these men would have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the shadows cast from the fire on the wall of the cave that fronted them?” “How could they,” he said, “if they were compelled [515b] to hold their heads unmoved through life?” “And again, would not the same be true of the objects carried past them?” “Surely.” “If then they were able to talk to one another, do you not think that they would suppose that in naming the things that they saw⁶ they were naming the passing objects?” “Necessarily.” “And if their prison had an echo⁷ from the wall opposite them, when one of the passersby uttered a sound, do you think that they would suppose anything else than the passing shadow to be the speaker?” “By [Zeus](#), I do not,” said he. “Then in every way [515c] such prisoners would deem reality to be nothing else than the shadows of the artificial objects.” “Quite inevitably,” he said. “Consider, then, what would be the manner of the release⁸ and healing from these bonds and this folly if in the course of nature⁹ something of this sort should happen to them: When one was freed from his fetters and compelled to stand up suddenly and turn his head around and walk and to lift up his eyes to the light, and in doing all this felt pain and, because of the dazzle and glitter of the light, was unable to discern the objects whose shadows he formerly saw, [515d] what do you suppose would be his answer if someone told him that what he had seen before was all a cheat and an illusion, but that now, being nearer to reality and turned toward more real things, he saw more truly? And if also one should point out to him each of the passing objects and constrain him by questions to say what it is, do you not think that he would be at a loss¹⁰ and that he would regard what he formerly saw as more real than the things now pointed out to him?” “Far more real,” he said.

“And if he were compelled to look at the light itself, [515e] would not that pain his eyes, and would he not turn away and flee to those things which he is able to discern and regard them as in very deed more clear and exact than the objects pointed out?” “It is so,” he said. “And if,” said I, “someone should drag him thence by force up the ascent¹¹ which is rough and steep, and not let him go before he had drawn him out into the light of the sun, do you not think that he would find it painful to be so haled along, and would chafe at it, and when [516a] he came out into the light, that his eyes would be filled with its beams so that he would not be able to see¹² even one of the things that we call real?” “Why, no, not immediately,” he said. “Then there would be need of habituation, I take it, to enable him to see the things higher up. And at first he would most easily discern the shadows and, after that, the likenesses or reflections in water¹³ of men and other things, and later, the things themselves, and from these he would go on to contemplate the appearances in the heavens and heaven itself, more easily by night, looking at the light [516b] of the stars and the moon, than by day the sun and the sun's light.¹⁴” “Of course.” “And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water or phantasms of it in an alien setting,¹⁵ but in and by itself in its own place.” “Necessarily,” he said. “And at this point he would infer and conclude that this it is that provides the seasons and the courses of the year and presides over all things in the visible region, [516c] and is in some sort the cause¹⁶ of all these things that they had seen.” “Obviously,” he said, “that would be the next step.” “Well then, if he recalled to mind his first habitation and what passed for wisdom there, and his fellow-bondsmen, do you not think that he would count himself happy in the change and pity them¹⁷?” “He would indeed.” “And if there had been honors and commendations among them which they bestowed on one another and prizes for the man who is quickest to make out the shadows as they pass and best able to remember their customary precedences, [516d] sequences and co-existences,¹⁸ and so most successful in guessing at what was to come, do you think he would be very keen about such rewards, and that he would envy and emulate those who were honored by these prisoners and lorded it among them, or that he would feel with Homer¹⁹ and ‘greatly prefer while living on earth to be serf of another, a landless man,’ Hom. Od. 11.489 and endure anything rather than opine with them [516e] and live that life?” “Yes,” he said, “I think that he would choose to endure anything rather than such a life.” “And consider this also,” said I, “if such a one should go down again and take his old place would he not get his eyes full²⁰ of darkness, thus suddenly coming out of the sunlight?” “He would indeed.” “Now if he should be required to contend with these perpetual prisoners [517a] in ‘evaluating’ these shadows while his vision was still dim and before his eyes were accustomed to the dark--and this time required for habituation would not be very short--would he not provoke laughter,²¹ and would it not be said of him that he had returned from his journey aloft with his eyes ruined and that it was not worth while even to attempt the ascent? And if it were possible to lay hands on and to kill the man who tried to release them and lead them up, would they not kill him²²?” “They certainly would,” he said.

“This image then, dear [Glaucon](#), we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, [517b] likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison, and the light of the fire in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region,²³ you will not miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear. But God knows²⁴ whether it is true. But, at any rate, my dream as it appears to me is that in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, [517c] and that when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth²⁵ in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely²⁶ in private or public must have caught sight of this.” “I concur,” he said, “so far as I am able.” “Come then,” I said, “and join me in this further thought, and do not be surprised that those who have attained to this height are not willing²⁷ to occupy themselves with the affairs of men, but their souls ever feel the upward urge and [517d] the yearning for that sojourn above. For this, I take it, is likely if in this point too the likeness of our image holds” “Yes, it is likely.” “And again, do you think it at all strange,” said I, “if a man returning from divine contemplations to the petty miseries²⁸ of men cuts a sorry figure²⁹ and appears most ridiculous, if, while still blinking through the gloom, and before he has become sufficiently accustomed to the environing darkness, he is compelled in courtrooms³⁰ or elsewhere to contend about the shadows of justice or the images³¹ that cast the shadows and to wrangle in debate [517e] about the notions of these things in the minds of those who have never seen justice itself?” “It would be by no men strange,” he said. “But a sensible man,” [518a] I said, “would remember that there are two distinct disturbances of the eyes arising from two causes, according as the shift is from light to darkness or from darkness to light,³² and, believing that the same thing happens to the soul too, whenever he saw a soul perturbed and unable to discern something, he would not laugh³³ unthinkingly, but would observe whether coming from a brighter life its vision was obscured by the unfamiliar darkness, or [518b] whether the passage from the deeper dark of ignorance into a more luminous world and the greater brightness had dazzled its vision.³⁴ And so³⁵ he would deem the one happy in its experience and way of life and pity the other, and if it pleased him to laugh at it, his laughter would be less laughable than that at the expense of the soul that had come down from the light above.” “That is a very fair statement,” he said.

“Then, if this is true, our view of these matters must be this, that education is not in reality what some people proclaim it to be in their professions.³⁶ [518c] What they aver is that they can put true knowledge into a soul that does not possess it, as if they were inserting³⁷ vision into blind eyes.” “They do indeed,” he said. “But our present argument indicates,” said I, “that the true analogy for this indwelling power in the soul and the instrument whereby each of us apprehends is that of an eye that could not be converted to the light from the darkness except by turning the whole body. Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting

peract³⁸ in the theater, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being. [518d] And this, we say, is the good,³⁹ do we not?" "Yes." "Of this very thing, then," I said, "there might be an art,⁴⁰ an art of the speediest and most effective shifting or conversion of the soul, not an art of producing vision in it, but on the assumption that it possesses vision but does not rightly direct it and does not look where it should, an art of bringing this about." "Yes, that seems likely," he said. "Then the other so-called virtues⁴¹ of the soul do seem akin to those of the body. [518e] For it is true that where they do not pre-exist, they are afterwards created by habit⁴² and practice. But the excellence of thought,⁴³ it seems, is certainly of a more divine quality, a thing that never loses its potency, but, according to the direction of its conversion, becomes useful and beneficent, [519a] or, again, useless and harmful. Have you never observed in those who are popularly spoken of as bad, but smart men,⁴⁴ how keen is the vision of the little soul,⁴⁵ how quick it is to discern the things that interest it,⁴⁶ a proof that it is not a poor vision which it has, but one forcibly enlisted in the service of evil, so that the sharper its sight the more mischief it accomplishes?" "I certainly have," he said. "Observe then," said I, "that this part of such a soul, if it had been hammered from childhood, and had thus been struck free⁴⁷ of the leaden weights, so to speak, of our birth [519b] and becoming, which attaching themselves to it by food and similar pleasures and gluttonies turn downwards the vision of the soul⁴⁸ --If, I say, freed from these, it had suffered a conversion towards the things that are real and true, that same faculty of the same men would have been most keen in its vision of the higher things, just as it is for the things toward which it is now turned." "It is likely," he said. "Well, then," said I, "is not this also likely⁴⁹ and a necessary consequence of what has been said, that neither could men who are uneducated and inexperienced in truth ever adequately [519c] preside over a state, nor could those who had been permitted to linger on to the end in the pursuit of culture--the one because they have no single aim⁵⁰ and purpose in life to which all their actions, public and private, must be directed, and the others, because they will not voluntarily engage in action, believing that while still living they have been transported to the Islands of the Blest.⁵¹" "True," he said. "It is the duty of us, the founders, then," said I, "to compel the best natures to attain the knowledge which we pronounced the greatest, and to win to the vision of the good, [519d] to scale that ascent, and when they have reached the heights and taken an adequate view, we must not allow what is now permitted." "What is that?" "That they should linger there," I said, "and refuse to go down again⁵² among those bondsmen and share their labors and honors, whether they are of less or of greater worth." "Do you mean to say that we must do them this wrong, and compel them to live an inferior life when the better is in their power?"

ENDNOTES BOOK VII

¹ The image of the cave illustrates by another proportion the contrast between the world of sense-perception and the world of thought. Instead of going above

the plane of ordinary experience for the other two members of the proportion, [Plato](#) here goes below and invents a fire and shadows cast from it on the walls of a cave to correspond to the sun and the “real” objects of sense. In such a proportion our “real” world becomes the symbol of Plato's ideal world. Modern fancy may read what meanings it pleases into the Platonic antithesis of the “real” and the “ideal.” It has even been treated as an anticipation of the fourth dimension. But [Plato](#) never leaves an attentive and critical reader in doubt as to his own intended meaning. there may be at the most a little uncertainty as to which are merely indispensable parts of the picture. The source and first suggestion of Plato's imagery is an interesting speculation, but it is of no significance for the interpretation of the thought. Cf. John Henry Wright, “The Origin of Plato's Cave” in [Harvard Studies in Class. Phil.](#) xvii. (1906) pp. 130-142. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 89-90, thinks the allegory Orphic. Cf. also Wright, loc. cit. pp. 134-135. [Empedocles](#) likens our world to a cave, Diels i.3 269. Cf. Wright, loc. cit. Wright refers it to the Cave of Vari in [Attica](#), pp. 140-142. Others have supposed that [Plato](#) had in mind rather the puppet and marionette shows to which he refers. Cf. Diès in *Bulletin Budé*, No. 14 (1927) pp. 8 f. The suggestiveness of the image has been endless. The most eloquent and frequently quoted passage of Aristotle's early writings is derived from it, Cic. [De nat.deor.](#) ii. 37. It is the source of Bacon's “idols of the den.” Sir Thomas Browne writes in *Urne-Buriall*: “We yet discourse in Plato's den and are but embryo philosophers.” Huxley's allegory of “Jack and the Beanstalk” in *Evolution and Ethics*, pp. 47 ff. is a variation on it. Berkeley recurs to it, [Siris](#), 263. The Freudians would have still more fantastic interpretations. Cf. Jung, *Analytic Psych.* p. 232. Eddington perhaps glances at it when he attributes to the new physics the frank realization that physical science is concerned with a world of shadows

² Cf. *Phaedo* 111 [Canapeptamenous](#)

³ Cf. *Phaedo* 67 E.

⁴ [H. Rackham](#), *Class. Rev.* xxix. pp. 77-78, suggests that the [tois thaumatopoiis](#) should be translated “at the marionettes” and be classed with [kainois tragôidois](#) (*Pseph.ap.Dem.* xviii. 116). For the dative he refers to Kuehner-Gerth, II. i. p. 445.

⁵ The men are merely a part of the necessary machinery of the image. Their shadows are not cast on the wall. The artificial objects correspond to the things of sense and opinion in the divided line, and the shadows to the world of reflections, [eikones](#).

⁶ Cf. *Parmen.* 130 c, *Tim.* 51 B, 52 A, and my *De Platonis Idearum doctrina*, pp. 24-25; also E. Hoffmann in *Wochenschrift f. klass. Phil.* xxxvi. (1919) pp. 196-197. As we use the word tree of the trees we see, though the reality ([auto ho esti](#)) is the idea of a tree, so they would speak of the shadows as the world,

though the real reference unknown to them would be to the objects that cause the shadows, and back of the objects to the things of the “real” world of which they are copies. The general meaning, which is quite certain, is that they would suppose the shadows to be the realities. The text and the precise turn of expression are doubtful. See crit. note. [parionta](#) is intentionally ambiguous in its application to the shadows or to the objects which cast them. They suppose that the names refer to the passing shadows, but (as we know) they really apply to the objects. Ideas and particulars are homonymous. Assuming a slight illogicality we can get somewhat the same meaning from the text [tauta](#). “Do you not think that they would identify the passing objects (which strictly speaking they do not know) with what they saw?” Cf. also P. [Corssen](#), *Philologische Wochenschrift*, 1913, p. 286. He prefers [ouk auta](#) and renders: “Sie würden in dem, was sie sähen, das Vorübergehende selbst zu benennen glauben.”

⁷ The echo and the voices (515 A) merely complete the picture.

⁸ *Phaedo* 67 D [luein](#), and 82 D [lusei te kai katharmôi](#). [luisis](#) became technical in [Neoplatonism](#).

⁹ Lit. “by nature.” [phusis](#) in [Plato](#) often suggests reality and truth.

¹⁰ The entire passage is an obvious allegory of the painful experience of one whose false conceit of knowledge is tested by the Socratic *elenchus*. Cf. *Soph.* 230 B-D, and for [aporein](#) *Meno* 80 A, 84 B-C, *Theaet.* 149 A, *Apol.* 23 D. Cf. also *What Plato Said*, p. 5123 on *Meno* 80 A, Eurip. *Hippol.* 247 [to gar orthousthai gnôman odunai](#), “it is painful to have one's opinions set right,” and 517 A, 494 D.

¹¹ Cf. *Theaet.* 175 B, [Boethius](#), *Cons.* iii. 12 “quicumque in superum diem mentem ducere quaeritis”; 529 A, 521 C, and the Neoplatonists' use of [anagein](#) and their “anagogical” virtue and interpretation. Cf. Leibniz, ed. Gerhardt, vii. 270.

¹² Cf. *Laws* 897 D, *Phaedo* 99 D.

¹³ Cf. *Phaedo* 99 D. Stallbaum says this was imitated by [Themistius](#), *Orat.* iv. p. 51 B.

¹⁴ It is probably a mistake to look for a definite symbolism in all the details of this description. There are more stages of progress than the proportion of four things calls for. All that Plato's thought requires is the general contrast between an unreal and a real world, and the goal of the rise from one to the other in the contemplation of the sun, or the idea of good, Cf. 517 B-C.

¹⁵ i.e. a foreign medium.

¹⁶ Cf. 508 B, and for the idea of good as the cause of all things cf. on 509 B, and *Introd.* pp. xxxv-xxxvi. P. [Corssen](#), *Philol. Wochenschrift*, 1913, pp. 287-299,

unnecessarily proposes to emend [hôn spheis heôrôn](#) to [hôn skias he.](#) or [hôn spheis skias he.](#), “ne sol umbrarum, quas videbant, auctor fuisse dicatur, cum potius earum rerum, quarum umbras videbant, fuerit auctor.”

¹⁷ Cf. on 486 a, p. 10, note a.

¹⁸ Another of Plato's anticipations of modern thought. This is precisely the Humian, Comtian, positivist, pragmatist view of causation. Cf. *Gorg.* 501 A [tribêi kai empeiriai mnêmên monon](#) sôzomenê [tou](#) eithotos [gignesthai](#) “relying on routine and habitude for merely preserving a memory of what is wont to result.” (Loeb tr.)

¹⁹ The quotation is almost as apt as that at the beginning of the *Crito*.

²⁰ On the metaphor of darkness and light cf. also *Soph.* 254 A.

²¹ Like the philosopher in the court-room. Cf. *Theaet.* 172 C, 173 C ff., *Gorg.* 484 D-e. Cf. also on 387 C-D, 515 D, 517 D, *Soph.* 216 D, [Laches](#) 196 B, *Phaedr.* 249 D.

²² An obvious allusion to the fate of [Socrates](#). For other stinging allusions to this Cf. *Gorg.* 486 B, 521 C, *Meno* 100 B-C. Cf. Hamlet's “Wormwood, wormwood” (III. ii. 191). The text is disputed. See crit. note. A. Drachmann, “Zu Platons Staat,” [Hermes](#), 1926, p. 110, thinks that an [oiei](#) or something like it must be understood as having preceded, at least in Plato's thought, and that [apokteinein](#) can be taken as a gloss or variant of [apokteinunai](#) and the correct reading must be [labein](#), [kai apokteinunai an](#). See also Adam ad loc.

²³ Cf. 508 B-C, where Arnou (*Le Désir de dieu dans la philos. de Plotin*, p. 48 and Robin (*La Théorie plat. de l'amour*, pp. 83-84) make [topos noêtos](#) refer to *le ciel astronomique* as opposed to the [huperouranios topos](#) of the *Phaedrus* 247 A-E, 248 B, 248 D-249 A. The phrase [noêtos kosmos](#), often attributed to [Plato](#), does not occur in his writings.

²⁴ [Plato](#) was much less prodigal of affirmation about metaphysical ultimates than interpreters who take his myths literally have supposed. Cf. *What Plato Said*, p. 515, on *Meno* 86 B.

²⁵ Cf. 506 E.

²⁶ This is the main point for the *Republic*. The significance of the idea of good for cosmogony is just glanced at and reserved for the *Timaeus*. Cf. on 508 B, p. 102, note a and p. 505-506. For the practical application Cf. *Meno* 81 D-E. See also *Intro.* pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

²⁷ Cf. 521 A, 345 E, and Vol. I. on 347 D, p. 81, note d.

²⁸ Cf. 346 E.

²⁹ Cf. *Theaet.* 174 C [aschêmosunê](#).

³⁰ For the contrast between the philosophical and the pettifogging soul Cf. *Theaet.* 173 C-175 E. Cf. also on 517 A, p 128, note b.

³¹ For [agalmatôn](#) cf. my *Idea of Good in Plato's Republic*, p. 237, *Soph.* 234 C, *Polit.* 303 C.

³² [Aristotle](#), *De an.* 422 a 20 f. says the over-bright is [aoraton](#) but otherwise than the dark.

³³ Cf. *Theaet.* 175 D-E.

³⁴ Lit. "or whether coming from a deeper ignorance into a more luminous world, it is dazzled by the brilliance of a greater light."

³⁵ i.e. only after that. For [houtô dê](#) in this sense cf. 484 D, 429 D, 443 E, *Charm.* 171 E.

³⁶ [epangellomenoi](#) connotes the boastfulness of their claims. Cf. *Protag.* 319 A, *Gorg.* 447 c, [Laches](#) 186 C, *Euthyd.* 273 E, *Isoc.Soph.* 1, 5, 9, 10, *Antid.* 193, *Xen.Mem.* iii. 1. 1, i. 2. 8, *Aristot.Rhet.* 1402 a 25.

³⁷ Cf. [Theognis](#) 429 ff. Stallbaum compares Eurip.[Hippol.](#) 917 f. Similarly *Anon. Theaet. Comm.*([Berlin](#), 1905), p. 32, 48. 4 [kai dein autêi ouk entheseôs mathêmatôn](#), [alla anamnêseôs](#). Cf. also St. Augustine: "Nolite putare quemquam hominem aliquid discere ab homine. Admonere possumus per strepitum vocis nostrae;" and Emerson's "strictly speaking, it is not instruction but provocation that I can receive from another soul."

³⁸ [periakteon](#) is probably a reference to the [periaktoi](#) or triangular prisms on each side of the stage. They revolved on an axis and had different scenes painted on their three faces. Many scholars are of the opinion that they were not known in the classical period, as they are mentioned only by late writers; but others do not consider this conclusive evidence, as a number of classical plays seem to have required something of the sort. Cf. O. Navarre in *Daremberg-Saglio* s.v. Machine, p. 1469.

³⁹ Hard-headed distaste for the unctious or seeming mysticism of Plato's language should not blind us to the plain meaning. Unlike Schopenhauer, who affirms the moral will to be unchangeable, [Plato](#) says that men may be preached and drilled into ordinary morality, but that the degree of their intelligence is an unalterable endowment of nature. Some teachers will concur.

⁴⁰ [Plato](#) often distinguishes the things that do or do not admit of reduction to an art or science. Cf. on 488 E p. 22, note b. Adam is mistaken in taking it “Education ([hê paideia](#)) would be an art,” etc.

⁴¹ This then is Plato's answer (intended from the first) to the question whether virtue can be taught, debated in the [Protagoras](#) and *Meno*. The intellectual virtues (to use Aristotle's term), broadly speaking, cannot be taught; they are a gift. And the highest moral virtue is inseparable from rightly directed intellectual virtue. Ordinary moral virtue is not rightly taught in democratic [Athens](#), but comes by the grace of God. In a reformed state it could be systematically inculcated and “taught.” Cf. *What Plato Said*, pp. 51-512 on *Meno* 70 A. but we need not infer that [Plato](#) did not believe in mental discipline. cf. Charles Fox, *Educational Psychology*, p. 164 “The conception of mental discipline is at least as old as [Plato](#), as may be seen from the seventh book of the *Republic* . . .”

⁴² Cf. Aristot. *Eth. Nic.* 1103 a 14-17 [hê de êthikê ex ethous](#). [Plato](#) does not explicitly name “ethical” and “intellectual” virtues. Cf. Fox, *op. cit.* p. 104 “[Plato](#) correctly believed . . .”

⁴³ [Plato](#) uses such synonyms as [phronêsis](#), [sophia](#), [nous](#), [dianoia](#), etc., as suits his purpose and context. He makes no attempt to define and discriminate them with impracticable Aristotelian meticulousness.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Theaet.* 176 D, *Laws* 689 C-D, *Cic. De offic.* i. 19, and also *Laws* 819 A.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Theaet.* 195 A, *ibid.* 173 [Asmikroi](#) . . . [tas psuchas](#), [Marcus Aurelius' psucharion ei bastazôn nekron](#), Swinburne's “A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man” (“Hymn to Proserpine,” in fine), Tennyson's “If half the little soul is dirt.”

⁴⁶ Lit. “Toward which it is turned.”

⁴⁷ The meaning is plain, the precise nature of the image that carries it is doubtful. Jowett's “circumcision” was suggested by Stallbaum's “purgata ac circumcisa,” but carries alien associations. The whole may be compared with the incrustation of the soul, 611 C-D, and with *Phaedo* 81 B f.

⁴⁸ Or “eye of the mind.” Cf. 533 D, *Sym.* 219 A, *Soph.* 254 A, Aristot. *Eth.* 1144 a 30, and the parallels and imitations collected by Gomperz, *Apol. der Heilkunst*, 166-167. cf. also *What Plato Said*, p. 534, on *Phaedo* 99 E, Ovid, *Met.* 15.64: “. . . quae natura negabat Visibus humanis, oculis ea pectoris hausit.” Cf. Friedlander, *Platon*, i. pp. 12-13, 15, and perhaps [Odyssey](#), i. 115, Marc. Aurel. iv. 29 [katamuein tôi noerôi ommati](#).

⁴⁹ For likely and necessary cf. on 485 C, p. 6, note c.

⁵⁰ [skopon](#): this is what distinguishes the philosophic statesman from the opportunist politician. Cf. 452 E, *Laws* 962 A-B, D, *Unity of Plato's Thought*, p. 18 n. 102.

⁵¹ Cf. 540 B, *Gorg.* 526 C, 520 D [en tòi katharôi](#) and *Phaedo* 114 C, 109 B. Because they will still suppose that they are “building [Jerusalem](#) in England's green and pleasant land” (Blake).

⁵² Cf. 539 E and *Laws* 803 B-C, and on 520 C, Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 53 “the hero of our story descended the bean-stalk and came back to the common world,” etc.