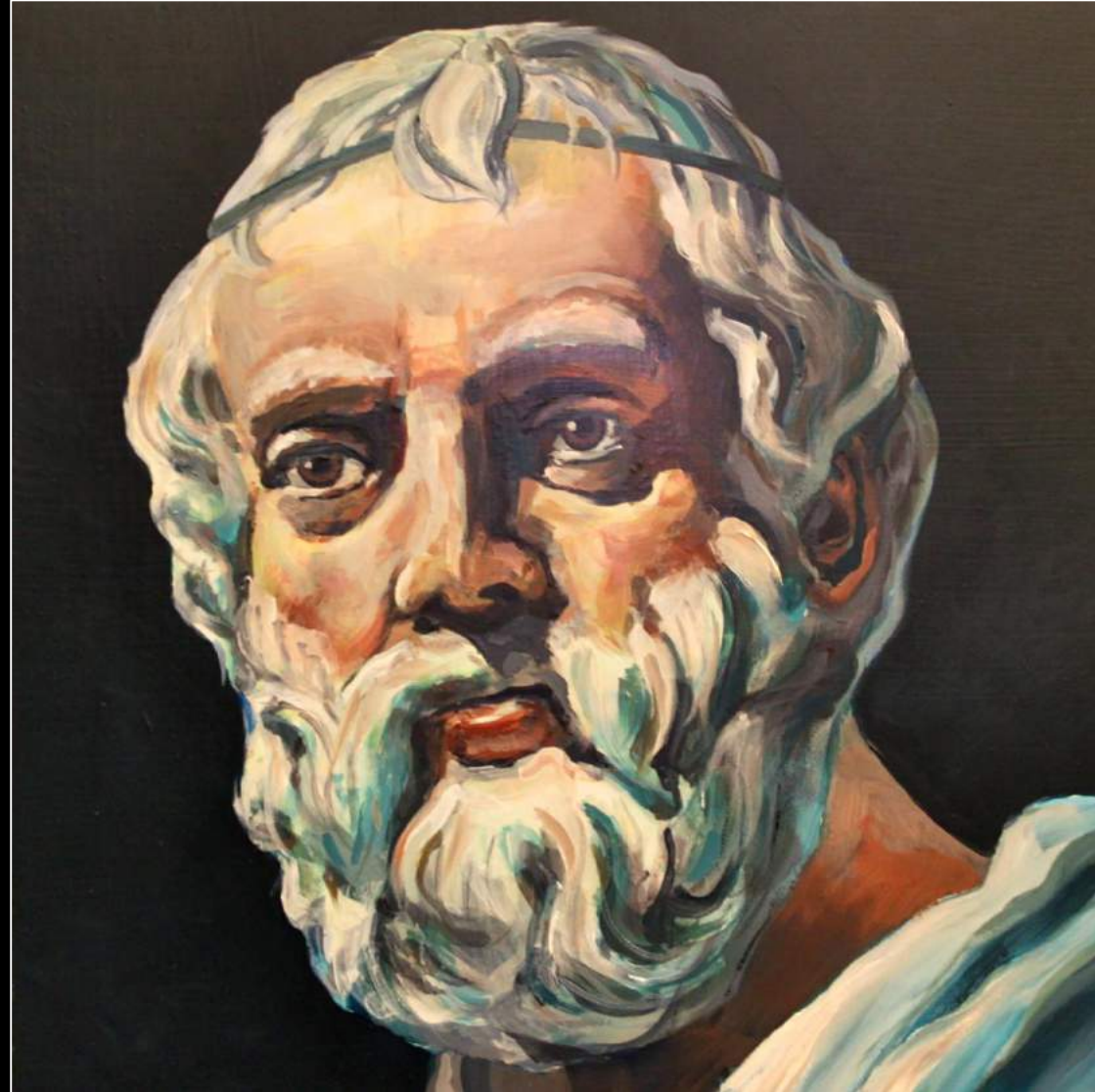


Socrates – and Plato



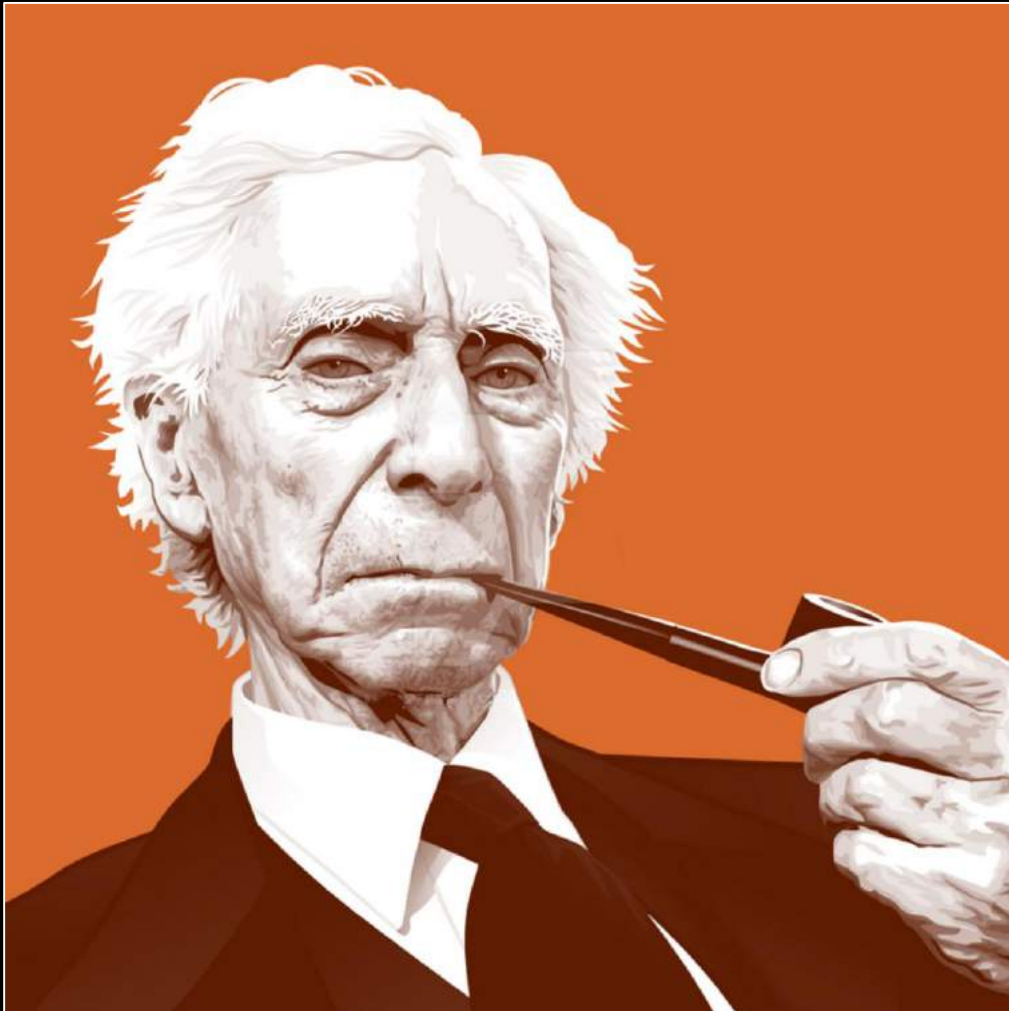
Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947)

“The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.”

Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (1929),
Pt. II, ch. 1, sec. 1



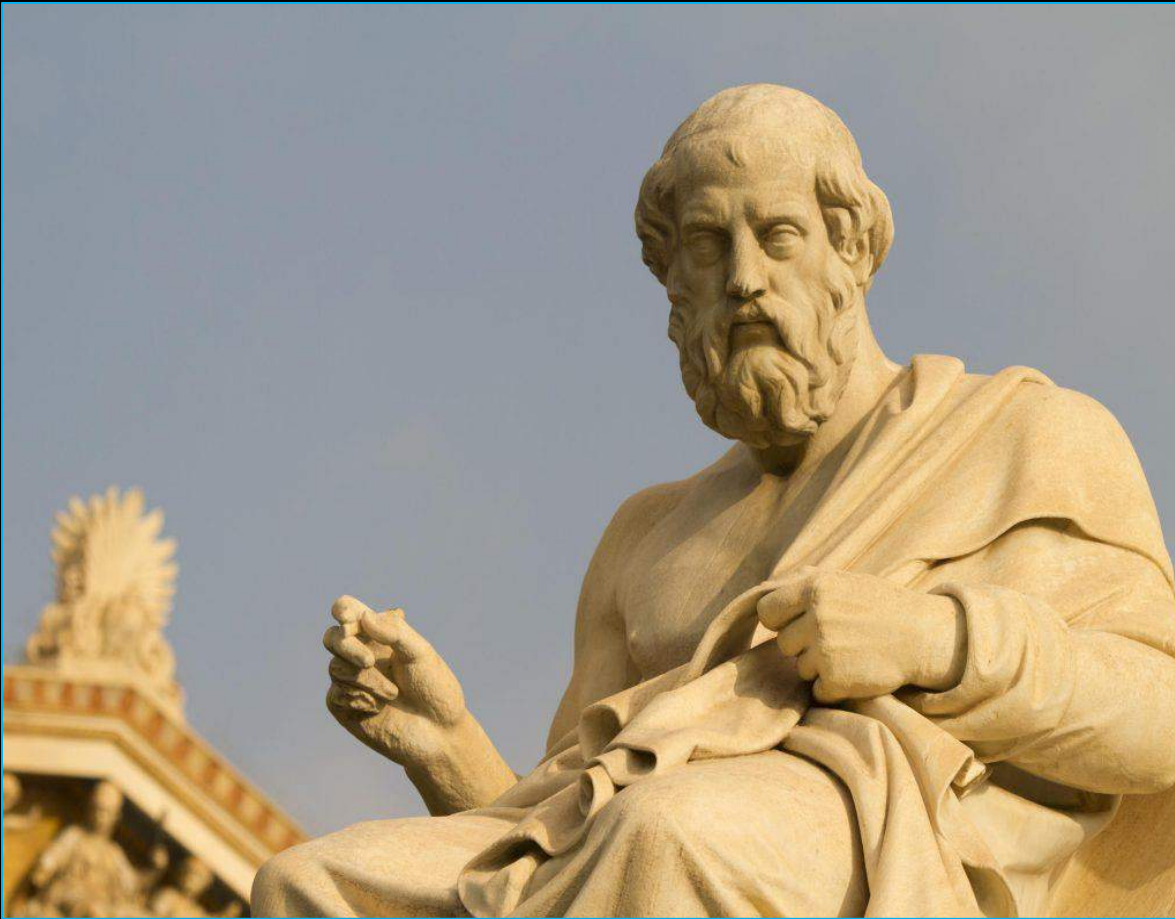
Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)



“It has always been correct to praise Plato, but not to understand him.”

*History of Western Philosophy,
Chapter XIII: The Sources of
Plato's Opinions*

Plato (428-348 BCE)



- Author of numerous dialogues that “star” Socrates
- Examples:
Euthyphro, Critias
Republic,
Symposium,
Phaedrus, Apology,
Crito, Phaedo
- The Academy

The Problem of Representation

“All that is said by any of us can only be imitation and representation.”

Plato, *Critias* 107b

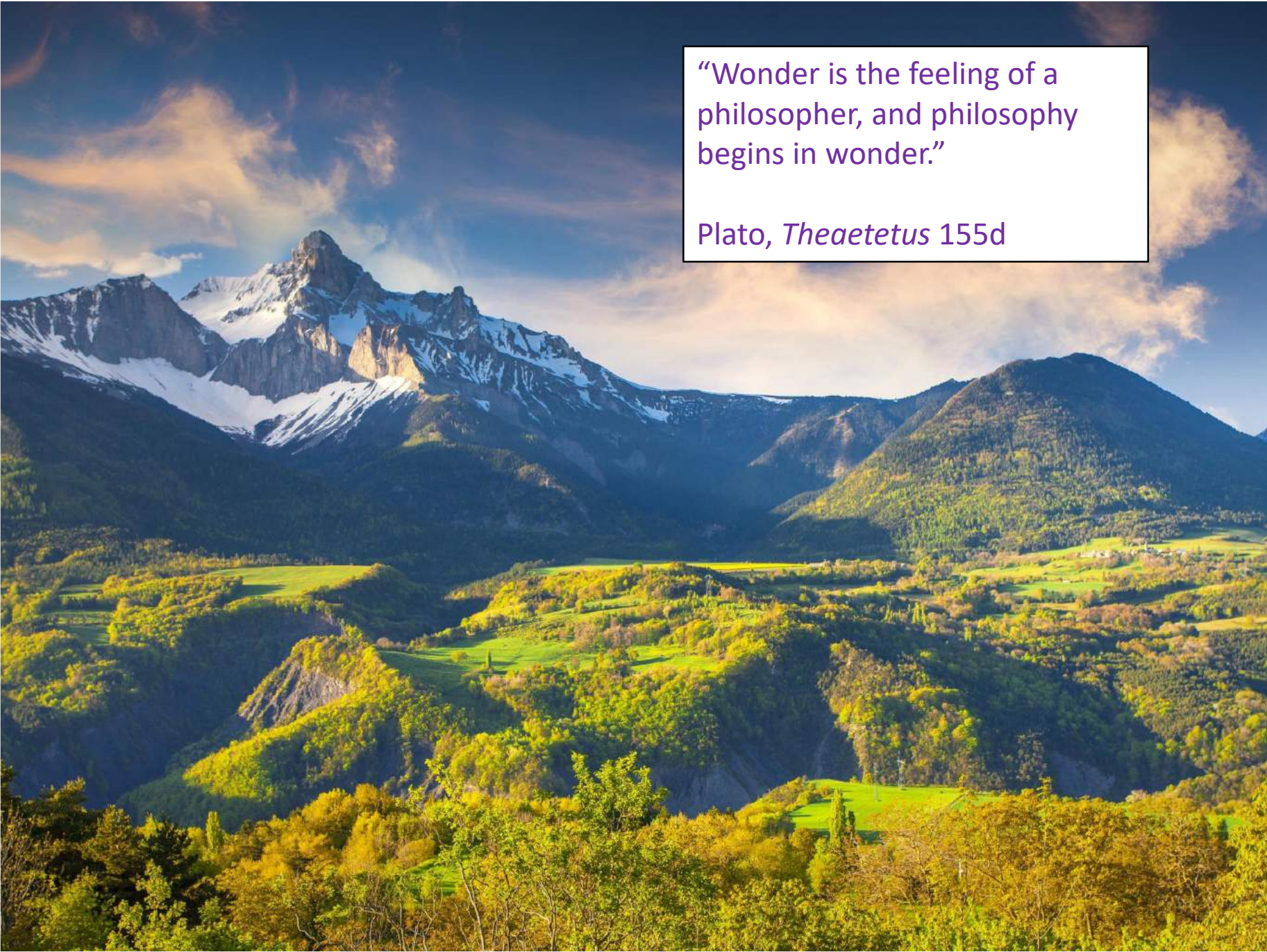
The Meta-Problem: Plato's Representation of Socrates

“Reality”

[Representation in Dialogue]

[[Socrates/Speaking]]

[[[Plato/Writing]]]



“Wonder is the feeling of a
philosopher, and philosophy
begins in wonder.”

Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d

Dialogue (as Banal)

Socrates: “Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Isn’t it still early?”

Crito: “It is indeed.”

Socrates: “About what time?”

Crito: “Just before dawn.”

Socrates: “I’m surprised the prison warden was willing to let you in.”

Crito: “He knows me by now, Socrates.”

Plato, *Crito* 43a

Banality → Profundity (*Euthyphro* 13a-b)

Socrates: “Not everyone knows how to tend to [*therapeuein*] dogs, but dog trainers do.”

Euthyphro: “That’s right.”

Socrates: “Because dog training is expertise in tending to dogs.”

Euthyphro: “Yes.”

Socrates: “And cattle breeding is expertise in tending to cattle.”

Euthyphro: “Of course.”

Socrates: “Well, but piety or holiness is tending to the gods? That’s what you’re saying?”

Euthyphro: “It is.”

(... continued – Euthyphro 13b)

Socrates: “But doesn’t all tending accomplish the same end? I mean something like some good or benefit for what’s being tended to – as you see that horses, tended to by horse trainers, are benefited and made better. Or don’t you agree that they are?”

Euthyphro: “Yes, I do.”

Socrates: “And so dogs, of course, are benefited by dog training and cattle by cattle breeding, and similarly for all others. Or do you think that tending aims to harm what’s being tended?”

Euthyphro: “No, by Zeus, I don’t.”

(... *continued* – *Euthyphro* 13c-d) / *elenchos*

Socrates: “Then if piety is tending to the gods, does it benefit the gods and make the gods better? Would you concede that whenever you do something pious, you’re making some god better?”

Euthyphro: “No, by Zeus, I wouldn’t.”

Socrates: “No, I didn’t think that was what you meant – far from it. But it is why I asked what you did mean by tending to the gods, because I didn’t think you meant that sort of tending.”

Euthyphro: “And you were right, Socrates, since that’s not the sort I meant.”

Socrates: “All right. But then what sort of tending to the gods would the pious tending be?”

The Allegory of the Cave (Republic Bk. 7)



The Allegory of the Cave (*Republic* bk. 7)

Socrates: From the beginning people like this have never managed, whether on their own or with the help by others, to see anything besides the shadows that are projected on the wall opposite them by the glow of the fire.

GLAUCON: How could it be otherwise, since they are forced to keep their heads immobile for their entire lives?

SOCRATES: And what do they see of the things that are being carried along [behind them]? Do they not see simply these [namely, the shadows]?

(Continued)

GLAUCON: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Now if they were able to say something about what they saw and to talk it over, **do you not think that they would regard that which they saw on the wall as true beings?**

GLAUCON: They would have to.
(trans. Sheehan)



The Soul's Ascent to Truth

“The visible realm should be likened to the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire inside to the power of the sun. And if you interpret the upward journey and the study of things above as the upward journey of the soul to the intelligible realm, you’ll grasp what I hope to convey ... In the knowable realm, **the form of the good is the last thing to be seen**, and it is reached only with difficulty ... **It isn’t surprising that the ones who get to this point are unwilling to occupy themselves with human affairs.**” (*Republic* 517a-d, trans. Grube)

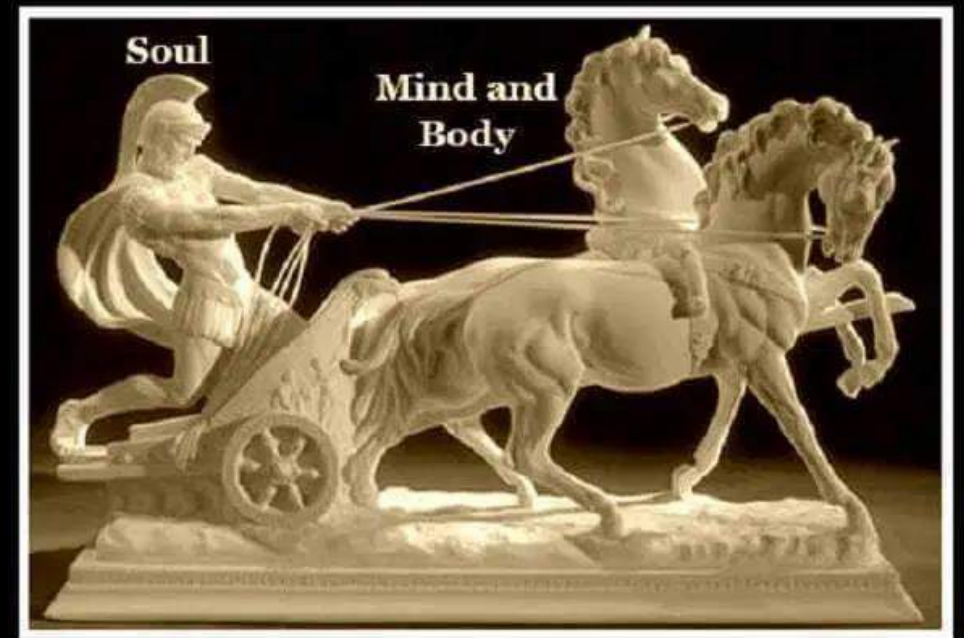
Lovers (of Philosophy) in their Right Minds?

“From the outlandish mix of these two feelings — pain and joy — comes anguish and helpless raving: in its madness the lover’s soul cannot sleep at night or stay put by day; it rushes, yearning, wherever it expects to see the person who has that beauty... It forgets mother and brothers and friends entirely and doesn’t care at all if it loses its wealth through neglect. **And as for proper and decorous behavior, in which it used to take pride, the soul despises the whole business.**”

(Plato, *Phaedrus* 251e-252b, trans. Baro)

The Soul (*Phaedrus* 246a-b)

“We will liken the soul to the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the horses and charioteers of the gods are all good and of good descent, but those of other beings are mixed; **and first the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair, and secondly one of the horses is noble, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character.** Therefore in our case the driving is necessarily difficult and troublesome.”



The Soul Has Wings (*Phaedrus* 246b-c)

“When a soul is perfect and fully winged, it mounts upward and governs the whole world; but the soul which has lost its wings is borne along until it gets hold of something solid, when it settles down, **taking upon itself an earthly body, which seems to be self-moving, because of the power of the soul within it; and the whole, compounded of soul and body, is called a living being, and is further designated as mortal.**”



Written Beauty → The Character of the Writer

“Lack of gracefulness, bad rhythm, and disharmony are related to bad speaking and bad character, but their opposites are related to and copies of the opposite, a temperate and good character.”

- *Republic* 401a5-8 (trans. Kirkland)

Reality and Writing

When anyone reports to us that he has met a person who knows all the crafts and everything else that people severally know, and that there is nothing that he does not know more exactly than anybody else, our tacit rejoinder must be that he is a simple fellow, **who apparently has met some magician or sleight-of-hand man and imitator and has been deceived by him into the belief that he is all-wise**, because of his own inability to put to the proof and distinguish knowledge, ignorance and imitation.

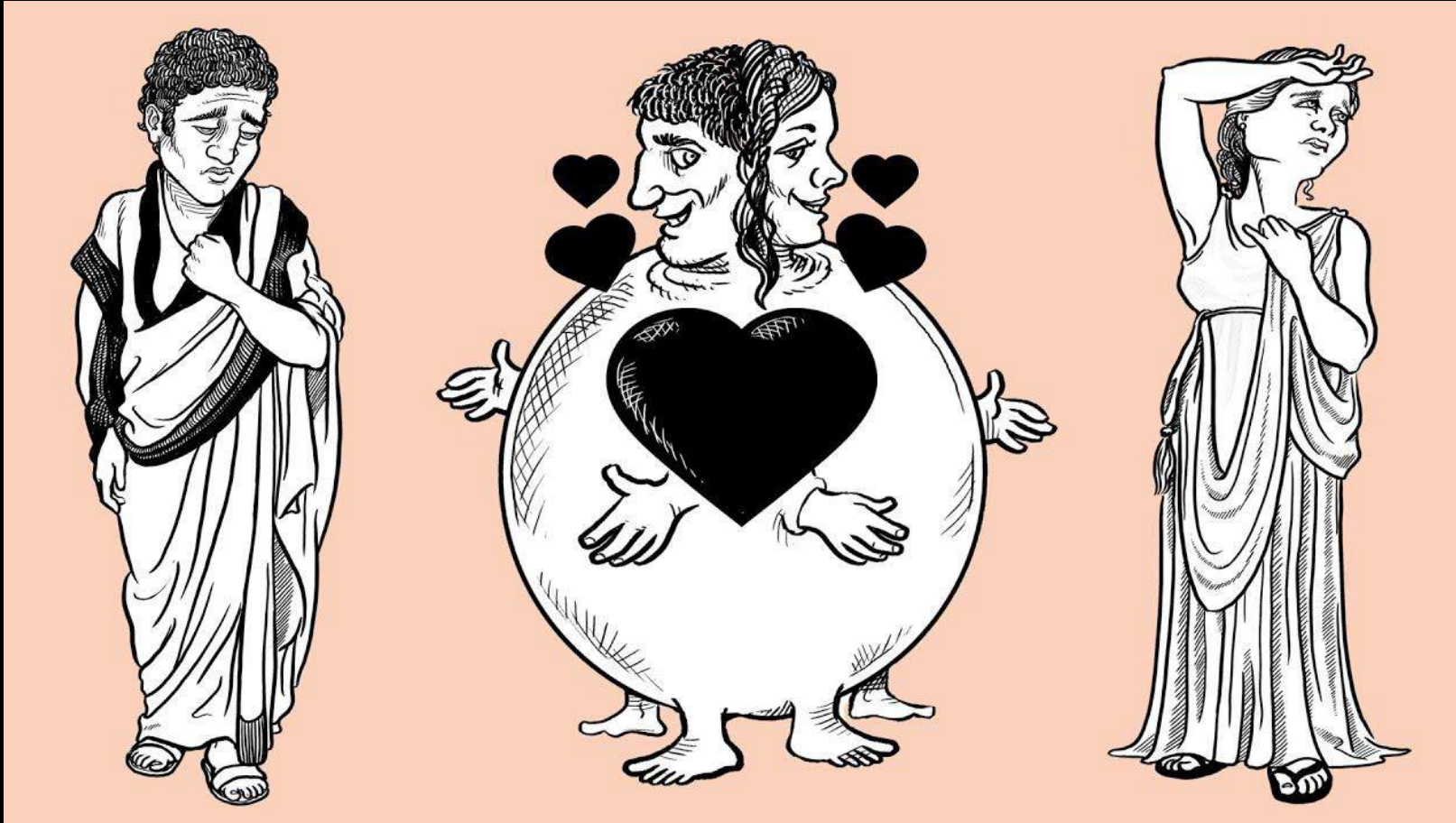
- *Republic* 598d-e

continued ...

Some people tell us that these poets know all the arts and all things human pertaining to virtue and vice, and all things divine. For the good poet, if he is to poetize things rightly, must, they argue, create with knowledge or else be unable to create. **So we must consider whether these critics have not fallen in with such imitators and been deceived by them, so that looking upon their works they cannot perceive that these are three removes from reality, and easy to produce without knowledge of the truth.** For it is phantoms, not realities, that they produce.

- *Republic* 598e-599a (trans. Shorey)

What Is Love?



Diotima's Speech in the *Symposium* (spoken through Socrates)

A person must remark how the beauty attached to this or that body is related to that which is attached to any other ... It is gross folly not to regard as one and the same the beauty belonging to all; **and so, having grasped this truth, he must make himself a lover of all beautiful bodies ...** But his next advance will be to **set a higher value on the beauty of souls than on that of the body ...**

(Plato, *Symposium* 210b)

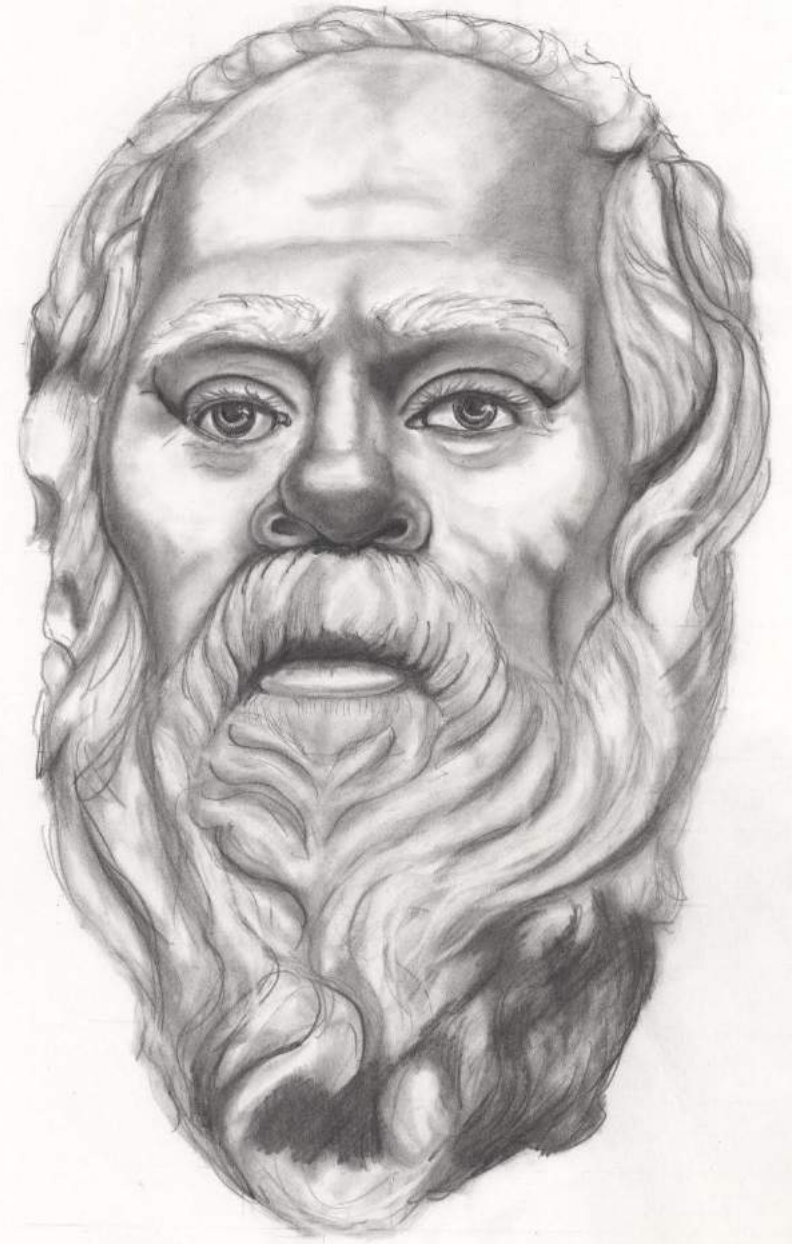
True Beauty (*Symposium* 210d)

Turning rather towards the main ocean of the beautiful he may by contemplation of this bring forth in all their splendor many fair fruits of discourse and meditation in a plenteous crop of philosophy; until with the strength and increase there acquired he sees a certain single knowledge connected with a beauty, which has yet to be told.



Diotima says Love =

“First off, Love’s always poor — hardly tender and beautiful, as the many think that he is. No — he’s hard and rough and barefoot and homeless, always makes his bed uncovered on the ground, sleeping on doorsteps and in the road in the open air, and, true to the nature of his mother, always living in lack. But, like his father, he schemes after what's beautiful and good — courageous, fervent, bold, a wonderful hunter, a constant weaver of plans, desiring understanding and resourceful in the search for it, a lover of wisdom all his life, a wonderful sorcerer, alchemist, wise man.”
(Plato, *Symposium* 203c-e, trans. Baro).



Plato's *Apology* of Socrates

- *Apologia* – “speech in one’s own defense”
- 399 BCE: defense against charges of impiety and corrupting the youth
- Socrates argues that he has wisdom insofar as he knows that he knows nothing (see 23b, 29b).
- The role of the *daimonion*



The Apology: Questions to Consider

- Does Socrates ever truly rebut the charges against him? Consider the role of irony and humor.
- Describe how Socrates shifts the conversation from human particulars to philosophical universals.
- What “wisdom” does Socrates offer in this speech?
- What is the relationship between Socrates’ life and his ideas? In what ways is his life like a Form? “True philosophers make dying their profession.” (*Phaedo* 67e)
- What are the argumentative benefits and disadvantages of the gadfly image?
- How is the image of Socrates here like and unlike that presented by Aristophanes?
- Why do you think the Athenians voted to condemn Socrates?