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Inside and outside the "Republic"

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Source: *Phronesis*, 1992, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1992), pp. 184-215

Published by: Brill

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4182410>

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# *Inside and Outside The Republic*

JONATHAN LEAR

## *1. Introduction*

An engaged reader of the *Republic* must at some point wonder how – or if – it all fits together. There seems to be jumbled within that text a challenge to conventional justice, a political theory, a psychology, a metaphysics, a theory of education and a critique of art, music and poetry. A brilliant work; but is it an integrated whole? A just republic, for Plato, turns out to be a harmonious, though differentiated, unity; and so the question can be rephrased: is the *Republic* a just *Republic*? Most of the illuminating discussions of the *Republic* can be seen as attempts to answer this question. I would like to suggest that this problem of unity arises in a particularly acute form for modern readers, because we are disposed to see the *Republic* as existing in bits. For we tend to conceive of psychology as the psychology of the individual. Since Plato, in the *Republic*, is concerned with the constitution of the individual psyche, it is easy for us to assume that his psychology is revealed in that account.<sup>1</sup> But this omits what, I believe, is the most distinctive aspect of Plato's psychology: a dynamic account of the psychological transactions between inside and outside a person's psyche, between a person's inner life and his cultural environment, between *intrapsychic* and *interpsychic* relations?<sup>2</sup> If we ignore these dynamic transactions, we cannot

<sup>1</sup> There is even linguistic pressure on us to make that assumption. For although "psychology" is an English word, it comes almost directly from Greek; and while the English word carries the broad connotation of the science of mental activity, its Greek counterpart would be an account or *logos* of the psyche.

<sup>2</sup> In the parlance of contemporary psychoanalysis, it leaves out Plato's object-relations theory. Indeed, it leaves out the possibility of object-relations theory being an element of Plato's psychology. Freud, of course, understood that a person's ego and superego were formed around internalizations of parental figures. In the analytic situation, he concentrated on the intrapsychic configurations of the analysand, but he recognized that these configurations were due in part to interpsychic relations. See e.g. Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia", *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London:

understand even individual psychology. We miss what, for Plato, holds a person together – and also what holds Plato together. For if one assumes that psychology is individual psychology, the *Republic* will then look like it is composed of various bits – among them, a psychology and a political theory – and there will inevitably be a question of how they fit together. In Plato's psychology, as I understand it, this question should not arise. For *psyche*-analysis and *polis*-analysis are, for Plato, two aspects of a single discipline, psychology, which has at its core the relation between inside and outside. What holds the *Republic* together is Plato's understanding of what holds people and polis together.

In this paper I shall concentrate on two topics that lie at the heart of the *Republic*. First, there is the analogy between city and psyche. Plato thought that there were important structural isomorphisms between city or polis and psyche, and thus that he could use discoveries about one to prove results about the other. It is now widely accepted that Plato uses this analogy to fudge his arguments. Plato, so the charge goes, uses a vague analogy fallaciously, and he is thereby able to hide a fundamental tension which underlies his ideal polis. That is, he disguises the repressive relation between the ruling class and the ruled by an illegitimate comparison with the structure of the psyche. I shall argue that these criticisms look valid because Plato's psychology is not well understood.

Second, Plato's critique of the poets has inspired a wealth of deep and imaginative discussion,<sup>3</sup> but all of it has tended to concentrate on two questions: what is the effect of poetry on us?; and what is the moral value of art? Plato's argument is intriguing because, roughly speaking, we tend to think that art is good for us, while Plato argues that it is bad. Modern

Hogarth Press, 1957-81) XIV: 249-250; *The Ego and the Id*, XIX:29-31.; and my *Love and Its Place in Nature* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990; London: Faber and Faber, 1992) chapter 6. For an introduction to post-Freudian object-relations theory, see e.g. Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation*, and *Envy and Gratitude* (London: Hogarth Press, 1981, 1984) D.W. Winnicott, *Through Paediatrics to Psycho-Analysis* and *The Maturational Process and the Facilitating Environment* (London: Hogarth Press, 1975, 1982); W.R.D. Fairbairn, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984); Margaret Mahler, *On Human Symbiosis and the Vicissitudes of Individuation* (New York: International Universities Press, 1967); Otto Kernberg, *Internal World and External Reality*, (New York: Aronson, 1980).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g. Iris Murdoch, *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); G.R.F. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry", *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, volume 1 (ed. G. Kennedy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); D. Halliwell, *Plato: Republic 10* (Wiltshire: Aris & Philips, 1988); Alexander Nehamas, "Plato on Imitation and Poetry in Republic 10", in *Plato on Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts* (ed. J. Moravcsik and P. Temko, pp. 47-78).

psychoanalysts and psychologists often think that art offers a kind of psychic salvation; while Plato treats acquaintance with Homer and the great Greek tragedians as a psychological catastrophe. And so we are led, like bees to nectar, to find a flaw in Plato's argument or, less often, to reevaluate our own aesthetics. Perhaps it is this fascination which has blinded us to the fact that we have been living on a restricted diet of questions. There are other questions, central to Plato's psychology, which as far as I know have not been asked, let alone answered. For example: who, psychologically speaking, are the poets? What, from a psychological point of view, are the poets doing in making poetry? And what is Plato doing, psychologically speaking, in banishing the poets? These are questions which, I think, tend to be obscured by assuming psychology to be the study of the individual psyche, but they come to the fore when psychology is taken to span across the boundary of an individual's psyche. For we will then see poetry as coming from some psyches and entering others, and the question naturally arises: what, from a psychological perspective, is going on?

My hope is that the discussions of the polis-psyche relation and of poetry will illuminate the approach to Plato's psychology that I am advocating, and help to confirm it. As a byproduct, I hope we shall also see the *Republic* as more unified than it is often taken to be.

## 2. Internalization

At the beginning of Book II, Socrates takes up the challenge, which will occupy the rest of the *Republic*, to describe justice and injustice as an "inherent condition inside the psyche" (τίνα ἔχει δύναμιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ἐνὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ...).<sup>4</sup> Although he proposes to look first at justice writ large in the polis,<sup>5</sup> in fact Socrates turns almost immediately to the psyche. For he begins his construction of the ideal polis with a discussion of the education of young children. And he justifies this by saying that "the beginning of any project is most important, especially for anything young and tender. For it is then that *it takes shape and any mold one may want can be impressed upon it*" (...πλάττεται καὶ ἐνδύεται τύπος, ὃν ἂν τις βούληται ἐνσημῖνασθαι ἐκάστω ...).<sup>6</sup> If we carelessly allow children to hear any old stories, he says, they may "*take into their psyches*" (λαμβάνειν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς) beliefs that are contrary to those they should hold

<sup>4</sup> II.358B, cp. 366E.

<sup>5</sup> II.368D-E; IV.434D.

<sup>6</sup> II.377A-B: my emphasis.

as adults.<sup>7</sup> Nursemaids and mothers must be allowed only to tell certain stories to their children and so “*shape their psyches*” (πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς). Children should not be allowed to hear the classic tales of warring gods because the young cannot distinguish what is allegorical from what is not, and the opinions they form at that age tend to be unalterable.<sup>8</sup> For Plato, humans enter the world with a capacity to absorb cultural influences. The young human psyche is like a resin, able to receive the impress of cultural influences before it sets into a definite shape. And it is clear that, for Plato, the stakes are high. The goal of achieving a well-governed polis depends on their being no one in the polis either asserting or hearing any tales which suggest that God is the cause of anything bad.<sup>9</sup> Plato believes these tales will shape the character of the future citizens.<sup>10</sup> Mothers must not be allowed to terrify their children with bad tales about gods sneaking about in disguise, “for at the same time as they blaspheme the gods, they make their children cowardly”.<sup>11</sup>

If, for example, one is an honor-loving person, one should be brought up on stories of brave men doing brave deeds so as to fear slavery more than death;<sup>12</sup> one should be allowed to play at and later imitate only the deeds appropriate to a guardian “lest from imitation they take (ἀπολαύω) the reality”;<sup>13</sup> one should be brought up in a rigorous program of music and gymnastics that reinforce the honor-loving part of one’s psyche;<sup>14</sup> and taken out even as a youth to observe battles;<sup>15</sup> so that when one is grown, it is through the activities of guardianship that one achieves happiness.<sup>16</sup> If this program of education and culture is successful, the qualities appropriate to guardianship should “*settle into one’s character and into one’s nature*” (...εἰς ἔθῃ τε καὶ φύσιν καθίστανται...).<sup>17</sup> Plato seems to be saying that through proper imitations from youth, one actually constitutes oneself as a certain type of person. Whether one develops into a noble and brave person, at one extreme, or a base coward, at the other, depends significant-

<sup>7</sup> II.377B.

<sup>8</sup> II.378D-E. Cp. V.449D where Plato says that the constitution of the community of women and children makes all the difference to the constitution of the state.

<sup>9</sup> II.380B-C.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. III.386A, IV.424E.

<sup>11</sup> II.381E.

<sup>12</sup> III.387.

<sup>13</sup> III.395C.

<sup>14</sup> III.411E-412A; IV.424C-D.

<sup>15</sup> V.466E-467A.

<sup>16</sup> IV.420D-422D; cp. 430A-C; 441E-442C; V.465D-466D.

<sup>17</sup> II.395D.

ly on the myths one has heard from youth, the education one has received, the models one has been given to imitate. Leaving divine inspiration aside, Plato thinks that were it not for this training, one would not develop the character or nature of a guardian.<sup>18</sup>

The *Republic* is a study in the health and pathologies of cities and psyches. And the conditions of city and psyche are interdependent. The variety of pathologies of the psyche, for example, depends on the person taking in pathological structures from the culture. Culture penetrates so deeply, that a fractured polis will produce a fractured psyche. For Plato, it is only the ideal polis that can properly be called a polis or a city.<sup>19</sup> Other actual cities or poleis are only apparently such. In fact, each lacks sufficient internal unity to count as a polis: each is, in truth, many poleis or, more properly, polisparts.<sup>20</sup> But, Plato argues, for every pathological polis there is a corresponding pathology of the psyche.<sup>21</sup> The conclusion of the syllogism is that a pathological psyche is not, in fact, a psyche, but various psychic parts. So, for example, just as an oligarchy is not a polis, but two parts, a rich part and a poor part,<sup>22</sup> so an 'oligarchical psyche' is in fact two psychic parts: a ruling part and a ruled.<sup>23</sup> For Plato, there is not sufficient integration in the functioning of the parts for them to count as a genuine unity, a psyche. Indeed, even among the oligarchical person's appetites there will be division and faction.<sup>24</sup> Being thrifty and acquisitive, the oligarchical person will satisfy only his necessary appetites and "enslave" his other appetites.<sup>25</sup> Because of his "lack of culture", his unruly and unnecessary appetites spring up in him, but they are "forcibly restrained" (βίᾳ κατέχει) by the better part.<sup>26</sup> The oligarchical person is, says Plato, διπλοῦς τις, someone double.<sup>27</sup> For Plato, being double is a way of not being

<sup>18</sup> Cp. II.366C-D; IV.424E; VI. 492A-493A; 495A-B; 496C; 499B-C.

<sup>19</sup> IV.422E.

<sup>20</sup> IV.422E-423D.

<sup>21</sup> See Books VIII-IX.

<sup>22</sup> VIII.551D.

<sup>23</sup> VIII.553C-554E.

<sup>24</sup> VIII.553C-D; cp. IX.581C.

<sup>25</sup> VIII.554A.

<sup>26</sup> VIII.554C-D. I do not believe that Plato's conception of "forcible restraint" should be equated with Freud's concept of repression, though there are of course similarities. For Freud, repression is itself unconscious, it is dynamically motivated, and the repressed is unconscious but continues to exercise influence in hidden ways. Plato does not suggest that the "forcibly restrained" is thereby rendered unconscious, or that these intrapsychic struggles must, by nature of the process, occur unconsciously.

<sup>27</sup> VIII.554D.

an integrated person: it is a divided and conflicted existence.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the pathologies of psyche Plato examines turn out, strictly speaking, to be studies in the failures to become a psyche.<sup>29</sup>

By now it should be clear that, for Plato, satisfying the human need for culture is a process of taking cultural influences into the psyche. Let us call this process, whatever it is precisely, *internalization*. Although Plato did not have an articulated theory, he did think that imitation (*mimesis*) was a paradigmatic means of internalization. It is youthful imitations which settle the shape of one's character and nature.<sup>30</sup> That is why musical education is preeminent: "because rhythm and harmony *permeate the inner part of the psyche* (...καταδύεται εἰς τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς...), bring graciousness to it, and make the strongest impression, making a man gracious if he has the right kind of upbringing; if not, the opposite is true."<sup>31</sup> And it is clear that Plato thought that internalization was a largely unconscious process. Guardians should not be brought up among images of evil lest they "little by little collect all unawares a great evil in their own psyche" (...κατὰ σμικρὸν ...λανθάνωσι κακὸν μέγα ἐν τῇ αὐτῶν ψυχῇ).<sup>32</sup> One cannot change the modes of music, Plato says, without upsetting fundamental constitutional laws;<sup>33</sup> and it is clear that the causal route of this destabilization proceeds via internalization. For lawlessness, Plato says, easily creeps into music without our noticing and, "having little by little settled in there it *flows into the characters and pursuits*" of people (...κατὰ σμικρὸν εἰσοικισαμένη ἡρέμα ὑπορρεῖ πρὸς τὰ ἥθη τε καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα).<sup>34</sup> And so, in our

<sup>28</sup> Similarly, just as the democratic polis lets a hundred flowers bloom (VIII.557B-C), so democratic man is 'manifold' (παντοδαπός:561E). The timocratic man is a compromise formation: an attempted solution to the conflicting demands of reason and appetite (550A-B). However, that the compromise fails is testified to by the emergence of oligarchic man in the next generation. The tyrant is just a mess. (I shall discuss the democrat and tyrant below). For Plato, a human being, looked at from the outside, is only apparently a unity (IX.588C-E); whether each forms a genuine unity depends on the integration of the (potentially) disparate bits of the psyche.

<sup>29</sup> Plato says (IV.433D) that in the just polis each person, in performing the task which suits their nature, will be not a multiplicity, but a unity. (See also IV.443E) This suggests that a healthy polis encourages the development of healthy psyches: people who achieve the degree of psychic unity of which their character-types are capable. Injustice, by contrast, is a kind of civil war both in polis and psyche (IV.444A-B).

<sup>30</sup> III.395C-D.

<sup>31</sup> III.401D-E.

<sup>32</sup> III.401B-C. By contrast, cp. 401C-D.

<sup>33</sup> IV.424C.

<sup>34</sup> IV.424D.

education and rule of children, one should not let them be free until “a constitution is set up inside them just as in the polis” (...ἐν αὐτοῖς ὥσπερ ἐν πόλει πολιτείαν καταστήσωμεν).<sup>35</sup>

For Plato, we are culture-vultures: we ‘feed’ our psyches by internalizing cultural influences. That is the psychological point of culture; and it is why education and upbringing, on the one hand, and the shaping of culture, on the other, play such a predominant role in the *Republic*. It would seem, then, that *internalization is a fundamental psychological activity*.<sup>36</sup> The fact that we are so dependent on internalization for our psychological constitution, makes us susceptible to cultural luck. Our ultimate dependency is manifest in the fact that we internalize these influences before we can understand their significance. We are dependent on culture for the constitution of our psyches, but on what does culture depend? How is culture itself shaped and formed?

### 3. Externalization

Plato suggests that culture is formed by an inverse process of psychological activity, moving outwards from psyche to polis. For example, Plato says, “there must be as many types of character among men as there are forms of government. Or do you suppose that constitutions spring from the proverbial oak or rock and not from the characters of the citizens (ἐκ τῶν ἡθῶν τῶν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν), which as it were, by their momentum and weight in the scales draw other things after them.”<sup>37</sup> And character, Plato says elsewhere, is inherent in the psyche.<sup>38</sup> The same forms, he says, will be found in the polis *and in the individual psyche* (τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα εἶδη ἐν τῇ

<sup>35</sup> IX.590E.

<sup>36</sup> I should stress that I here stipulate “internalization” to mean the process, whatever it is, that Plato thought grounded cultural influence. For an introduction to the concept of internalization as it occurs in the modern psychoanalytic tradition, see e.g. Roy Schafer, *Aspects of Internalization* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1990); Hans Loewald, “On Internalization” and “Internalization, Separation, Mourning and the Superego”, in *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); J. LaPlanche and J-B Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1983) pp. 205-208, 211-212, 226-227, 229-231; B. Moore and B. Fine eds, *Psychoanalytic Terms and Concepts* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 102-103, 109-110; R.D. Hinshelwood, *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* (London: Free Association, 1991) pp. 68-83, 319-321, 330-334; Arnold Modell, *Object Love and Reality* (Madison CT: IUP, 1985).

<sup>37</sup> VIII.544D-E. See also IV.435E, quoted below.

<sup>38</sup> III.402D. Cp. VI.535B; III.401A; IX.577A.



ψυχῇ ἔχοντα),<sup>39</sup> and the shape of the polis has to be understood as deriving from the shape of the psyche:

“... we are surely compelled to agree that the same forms and character-types are in each of us just as in the polis (τὰ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἔνεστιν ἡμῶν εἶδη τε καὶ ἦθη ἅπερ ἐν τῇ πόλει). They could not get there from any other source. It would be ridiculous if someone supposed that spiritedness has not come to be in polis from individuals who are reputed to have this quality ... or that the same is not true of the love of learning ... or the love of money.”<sup>40</sup>

It would seem, then, that for a significant range of psychopolitical predicates F,

(EK) If a polis is F, there must be some citizens whose psyches are F who (with others) have helped to shape the polis.

This is easiest to see in the case of the just polis.<sup>41</sup> It will be shaped by the philosopher-king, whose thoughts are directed towards realities.<sup>42</sup> And though he will try to shape the city according to a divine paradigm,<sup>43</sup> he does so by first imitating these eternal realities fashioning himself as far as possible in their likeness (...ταῦτα μιμεῖσθαι τε καὶ ὃ τι μάλιστα ἀφομοιοῦσθαι).<sup>44</sup> It is by associating with the divine order that the philosopher himself becomes ordered and divine, insofar as that is possible for humans.<sup>45</sup> The philosopher, Plato suggests, has a paradigm of the internal realities inside his psyche (...ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔχοντες παράδειγμα).<sup>46</sup> Although there is no existing ideal polis on earth – and thus no ideal cultural template to internalize – there is a paradigm of it in heaven, and a person studying it can constitute himself (ἑαυτὸν κατοικίξειν) its citizen.<sup>47</sup> Only after the

<sup>39</sup> IV.435C.

<sup>40</sup> IV.435E-436A; see also 441C.

<sup>41</sup> I shall discuss pathological forms of polis in section 4.

<sup>42</sup> VI.500B-C.

<sup>43</sup> VI.500E.

<sup>44</sup> VI.500C. Cp. 484C: They have a paradigm of the reality of things in their psyche. (See also 490B). This is the step which Charles Taylor omits from his account of Plato in *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) pp. 121-126.

<sup>45</sup> VI.500C-D.

<sup>46</sup> VI.484C, 490B. Some such internalization is necessary, Plato thinks, for a person with a philosophical nature to achieve excellence. (VI.492A) This may be through a proper education, but with poor upbringing even a philosophical nature is destroyed and corrupted. (VI.495A-B) Such a person is then capable of the greatest evils, and his only hope is divine inspiration. That is why a person of philosophical nature ought to shun political life in a pathological polis: he must take care of the “constitution inside himself” (τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ πολιτείαν) and not allow cultural influences to “undo the state of his psyche”.

<sup>47</sup> IX.592B.

philosopher has shaped his own psyche by internalizing divine order is he then able to shape the polis according to what has now become the order in his psyche.<sup>48</sup>

Let us call *externalization* the process, whatever it is, by which Plato thought a person fashions something in the external world according to a likeness in his psyche. Then, for Plato, the polis is formed by a process of externalization of structures within the psyches of those who shape it. And, more generally, *externalization is a basic psychological activity*. For Plato suggests that cultural products in general are externalizations. Good rhythm, harmony, and diction, for example, should follow and fit good speech (εὐλογία); and speech, in turn, follows and fits the character of the psyche (ὁ λόγος ... τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ἥθει ἔπεται).<sup>49</sup> In painting and all artistic works, weaving, embroidery, architecture, the making of furniture, harmony and grace are closely related to and an imitation of good character (...ἀγαθοῦ ἡθους, ἀδελφά τε καὶ μιμήματα).<sup>50</sup> And character, as we have seen, is inherent in psyche.

Notoriously, Plato believes that education must begin by telling young children false tales.<sup>51</sup> These myths are distinguished from unacceptable myths and legitimated, first, because there is truth in them,<sup>52</sup> but, secondly, because that truth is a reflection of a truth in the poet's psyche. A falsehood which is merely a falsehood in words (τό γε ἐν τοῖς λόγοις [ψεῦδος]) "is an imitation of something in the psyche, a later reflection", (μίμημά τι τοῦ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἐστὶ παθήματος καὶ ὕστερον γεγονὸς εἰδωλόν) which is therefore not completely untrue.<sup>53</sup> It is precisely because this merely verbal falsehood is an externalization of something true within the poet's psyche, that it can be used, with caution, as a medicine.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, falsehood in the psyche, falsehood taken as truth (ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεῦδος), is

<sup>48</sup> Socrates argues that education is not, as the sophists think, a matter of putting knowledge into a psyche, but rather more like turning the eye from the dark (world of becoming) to the light (world of realities). (VII.518B-E) This metaphor may have impeded understanding of Plato's psychology. For Plato is not here saying that internalization does not take place in education, he is rather explaining how internalization comes about. It is more, he thinks, than learning a few sophistical speeches. The point of turning one's gaze towards reality is not just to gawp at it like a bewildered tourist; it is to take reality in, be educated by it.

<sup>49</sup> III.400D-E.

<sup>50</sup> III.400E-401A.

<sup>51</sup> II.376E-377A.

<sup>52</sup> II.377A.

<sup>53</sup> II.382B-C.

<sup>54</sup> II.382C-D.

what people hate most of all.<sup>55</sup> This is ignorance in the psyche (ἡ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἄγνοια). Though Plato does not say so explicitly in this paragraph, the implication is that unacceptable myths and poems are externalizations of this real falsehood (τὸ τῷ ὄντι ψεῦδος).

And so it seems that in the ideal polis, after we internalize our cultural roles by a process of education, we then externalize them in our social roles. It is by a process of internalization and externalization that we are able to conform to the rule of each performing his own task. Incoherence is avoided because Plato's is a developmental psychology. Internalization is primarily going on in unformed youths, externalization is going on primarily in adults who have already formed themselves through prior cultural internalizations. Psyche and polis are mutually constituted by a series of internalizations and externalizations, with transformations occurring on both sides of the border.<sup>56</sup> We tend to think of the economic model in psychology as concerned with the distribution of a fixed quantity of energy – and, indeed Plato lends support to this model since he believes that when a person's desires incline strongly towards something, they are correspondingly weakened for other things.<sup>57</sup> However, if we consider Plato's psychology as a whole, it would seem that a more promising economic model would be of trade across a border. Plato's psychology is basically one of interpsychic and intra-psychic trade. What is being traded across a boundary is not unformed energy, but psychological products. They are crafted both outside and inside an individual's psyche and they are traded back and forth across the boundary of the psyche. Once inside, they become citizens of a more or less federated republic and are subject to the vicissitudes of intrapsychic conflict, before being externalized again across the border.

Plato decides first to look for justice writ large in the polis because, he says, he will then be able to read the small print of the individual psyche.<sup>58</sup> By now it should be clear that he is not relying on a mere analogy of polis and psyche, but on an isomorphism which must hold due to the way we function psychologically. Psyche and polis, inner world and outer world, are jointly constituted by reciprocal internalizations and externalizations; and the analogy is a byproduct of this psychological dynamic.

<sup>55</sup> II.382B.

<sup>56</sup> I shall discuss the intra- and interpsychic transformations in the following sections.

<sup>57</sup> VI.485D. (For the economic model in psychoanalysis, see e.g. Freud, "The Unconscious" XIV.181; *Studies on Hysteria*, II.17, 86, 166-67; "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense", III. 48-49).

<sup>58</sup> II.368D-369A.

#### 4. *The Analogy of Psyche and Polis*

One way to see the virtue of an interpretation is to see how the *Republic* looks without it. In his classic essay, "The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's *Republic*", Bernard Williams offers the most penetrating critique we have of Plato's analogy.<sup>59</sup> According to Williams, Plato's argument is incoherent, and the analogy disguises a fundamental tension in his account of psyche and polis. If Williams is right, the *Republic* is a brilliant mess. In this section, I would like to try to rescue the analogy from Williams' critique by attending to the psychological principles which underlie it.

The analogy, for Williams, is founded on two principles. First, there is the *whole-part rule*:<sup>60</sup>

- (a) A city is F if and only if its men are F.

Second, there is the *analogy of meaning*:<sup>61</sup>

- (b) The explanation of a city's being F is the same as that of a man's being F (the same *eidos* of F-ness applies to both).

Although it appears that these two principles support each other, Williams argues that is not so: the whole-part rule in fact "defeats" the analogy of meaning:

"For if we say that "F" is applied to the city just because it is applied to the men, we have already explained how the term can be applied to both cities and men, and to go on from there to look for a similar explanation of how "F" applies to men is at least pointless, since the phenomenon which set off the search for the analogy in the first place, viz. the fact that "F" applies to both cities and men has already been explained. If, moreover, the rule applying "F" to cities is taken as itself the common *logos* that we were looking for, then we have not just pointlessness but absurdity, since the common *logos* will have to be something like "x is F if and only if x has constituent parts which are F", which leads to a regress."<sup>62</sup>

However, Plato does not in fact think that F is applied to a polis "just because" it is applied to its citizens. Even if he were committed to principle (a) (or some variant),<sup>63</sup> the principle cannot fully capture Plato's intentions.

<sup>59</sup> In E.N. Lee, A.P.D. Mourelatos and R.M. Rorty eds., *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, *Phronesis*: Supplementary Volume I, 1973. This essay has influenced a generation of philosophers, myself included. I turn to it here because I have come to believe, first, that the argument is unsuccessful; second, that in coming to understand why it is unsuccessful we will better understand our own tendency to misread Plato's psychology.

<sup>60</sup> Williams derives this from 435E. See "Analogy" p. 196-7.

<sup>61</sup> Derived from 435A-B.

<sup>62</sup> "Analogy", p. 197.

<sup>63</sup> See below.

For the principle describes a formal relation between polis and citizens, whereas Plato believes the formal relation holds in virtue of causal-psychological transactions. Plato's point (at 435E) is not that a spirited polis, say, is spirited simply in virtue of having spirited citizens, but in having spirited citizens who are successful in shaping the polis in their image. And so, one has not "already explained" how spiritedness can be applied to both polis and psyche. Plato has not yet given us the explanation: he is showing us where to look for one. He is saying that there is an externalizing psychological relation from citizen to polis. The explanation of what it is that makes either polis or man spirited lies in the future. So far Plato has only given us the methodology of a research project, one based on his psychology. If this is a general point which holds for significant psychopolitical predicates, it is not pointless to move from an explanation of, say, justice in the polis to an explanation of justice in the psyche. If a just polis is an externalization of just citizens who shape it, it would be reasonable to work one's way backwards down this externalization to learn about the psyches of these citizens. This reasoning can occur before one has any idea what the structure of justice is.

To be sure, Socrates does say that a just person and a just polis will be alike in respect of the form of justice; and he defends this claim by appeal to a semantic principle: "things called by the same name are alike in respect to which the name applies".<sup>64</sup> This is the basis for William's principle (b). Yet even if Socrates accepts this semantic principle, there remain questions about it: e.g. why should such a semantic principle hold?; why does it hold in the realm of psychopolitical predicates?; given that it does hold, how could it be legitimate to call a certain sort of person and a certain sort of polis just? Again, the semantic principle is the beginning not the end of a research project. Only a few sentences after he introduces it, Socrates explains that a wide range of political characterizations of the polis are to be understood as externalizations of the same qualities from within the psyches of the historically significant citizens.<sup>65</sup> I read this not simply as making a psychological-causal point about the relation of the polis to its citizens, but also as providing a psychological grounding of the semantic principle, at least within the range of psychopolitical predicates. The semantic principle is introduced in the course of a dialectical inquiry, and it therefore remains open to further explication and defense. It also remains vulnerable to future emendation and revision. It should not be treated as an obvious axiom

<sup>64</sup> IV.435A-B.

<sup>65</sup> IV.435E.

forever beyond criticism or inquiry. The psychological principles of internalization and externalization help us to understand why the semantic principle might hold in spite of the fact that there are a range of predicates which apply both to polis and to psyche.

Principles (a) and (b) do not, therefore, give us Plato's reason for thinking there to be an isomorphism between polis and psyche. The isomorphism depends on psychological relations Plato believed to hold between inside and outside. If justice, for example, can be found outside (in the polis) it must have come from inside (i.e. it must be a causal outcome of just men shaping the polis according to their conception of justice). Given the psychologically dynamic relations between inside and outside, a weak version of a whole-part rule will follow as a corollary.<sup>66</sup> And so, there is neither regress nor absurdity in Plato's argument, for there is no reason to think that he has thus far given us the common *logos*. It is often thought that Plato uses his analogy to derive his psychology: that by simply claiming the analogy and looking at the structure of the polis, he derives his psychology. But once we see that psychology is not just individual psychology, we can see that the situation is pretty much the reverse: his psychology is used to legitimate belief in isomorphism.

Williams thinks that there is a "contradiction . . . powerfully at work under the surface of the *Republic*."<sup>67</sup> The contradiction lies in the fact that if we apply principle (a) to the case of a just polis we get that

(a') a polis is just if and only if its men are

but a just polis will have a majority of appetitive (epithymetic) persons, who, by the analysis of justice ought to be doing their proper jobs. But an appetitive person is not a just one; and that must contradict (a'). By now it should be clear that Williams is not entitled to attribute (a) to Plato, but at most

(a'') If a polis is F, then some of its men are F<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Terence Irwin argues that the whole-part rule does not play a role in the argument of Book IV, and focuses instead on Macrocosm-Microcosm rule (MM): the structure of the state is analogous to the structure of the psyche. (*Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 331 n. 29). The MM is true, but it does not give us the psychological principles which ensure its truth. John Cooper also provides criticism of the whole-part rule in "The Psychology of Justice in Plato", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14, 1977; n. 7).

<sup>67</sup> "Analogy", p. 198, cp. "the ineliminable tension" on p. 200ff.

<sup>68</sup> This is the strongest version of the whole-part rule we are legitimately entitled to attribute to Plato.

and so he is entitled to derive not (a') but

(a'') If a polis is just, then some of its men are just;

and this generates no contradiction.<sup>69</sup>

But it is clear that Williams thinks there is a contradiction here which goes beyond the validity or invalidity of this formal argument. For, he reasons, the appetitive (epithymetic) class must exercise some reason (*logistikon*) of its own, even if it is only in the service of obeying its rulers, sticking to its tasks, etc.

“But now if the epithymetic [appetitive] class has in this way to exercise some *logistikon*, and this helps it stick to its tasks, recognize the rulers and so forth, and if we read this result back through the analogy to the individual soul, we shall reach the absurd result that the *epithymetikon* [appetitive part] in a just soul harkens to the *logistikon* in that soul through itself having an extra little *logistikon* of its own. Recoiling from this absurdity, we recognize that in the individual soul, the *epithymetikon* cannot really harken; rather, through training, the desires are weakened and kept in their place by *logistikon*, if not through the agency, at least with the co-operation of *thumoeides* [the spirited part]. If with this fact in our hand we come back once more across the bridge of the analogy to the city, we shall find not a *dikaioi* [just] and logistically co-operative working class, but rather a totally logistic ruling class holding down with the help of a totally thumoeidic military class, a weakened and repressed epithymetic class; a less attractive picture. The use of the analogy, it begins to seem, is to help Plato to have it both ways.”<sup>70</sup>

Plato's commitment to the analogy, according to Williams, forces him into absurdities both within the realm of politics and of psychology. That is the way it will look if one takes the analogy to be *merely* an analogy. If, by contrast, we view the isomorphism as a manifestation of internalization and externalization, it seems we can use the ‘analogy’ to form a clearer idea of how Plato understood psychological structure. This is important because Plato identifies the distinct parts of the psyche via each part's ability to enter into fundamental conflictual relations with the other parts.

Psychological structure is delineated most obviously in intrapsychic conflict. The question then is: how are we to understand psychological structure in the absence of conflict? Instead of assuming we know what psychic parts are and using the analogy to derive absurdities, let us use Plato's principles of internalization and externalization to try to find out more about what it is to be a psychic part. In the just polis, the appetitive class does have to exercise some reason of its own, to stick to its tasks, recognize

<sup>69</sup> Williams comes close to accepting this when he later adopts the “predominant section rule” which I shall discuss below.

<sup>70</sup> “Analogy”, p. 199.

its rulers and so forth. What intrapsychic condition (of a member of the appetitive class) might have this socially harmonious behavior as an externalization?<sup>71</sup>

Plato believes this requires a certain type of intrapsychic harmony appropriate to an appetitive person. This requires that the appetitive part of his psyche harken to reason in that psyche. The question is how one might avoid the absurdity of the appetitive part needing to have a little extra *logistikon* of its own. Not surprisingly, we need to understand the psychic part as having been formed by previous internalizations. Plato, as is well known, divides appetites into necessary and unnecessary.<sup>72</sup> The necessary appetites are either unavoidable (e.g. for basic nourishment) or they are for things which do us some good. Unnecessary appetites, by contrast, are both avoidable by proper training from youth and they lead to no good (or even to bad). In an ideal polis, then, an appetitive person will be brought up so as not to have unnecessary appetites. That is why, in contrast to his pathological cousin, the oligarchic man, he does not need to hold them down by force.<sup>73</sup> Due to his education, there is nothing in him which requires forcible restraint. Such a person will only have appetites for the bare necessities of life and for things which genuinely do him good. In the well-ordered polis, Plato says, each class will enjoy the happiness that suits its nature.<sup>74</sup> Assuming that the things that do a person good are the things that give him the happiness that suits his nature, in Plato's vision<sup>75</sup> the appetitive person in a well-ordered polis should have just those appetites which the polis gives him the opportunity to satisfy.

The appetitive part has thus been shaped to be responsive to reason in the psyche. The idea that appetite needs extra reason of its own derives from the thought that appetite "cannot really harken"; and this thought in turn flows from taking the conditions in which the psychic parts are isolated to be the essential conditions in which they must operate. We identify the appetitive part by seeing it functioning in opposition to reason. If this is the way it must operate then, of course, appetite cannot harken to reason. And one can be tempted to make this inference by the thought that this is the way

<sup>71</sup> Since we have substituted (a'') for (a'), there is no longer reason to believe that everyone in a just polis is just. We therefore look at the psyche of an appetitive-type person.

<sup>72</sup> VIII.558D-559C.

<sup>73</sup> VIII.554B-E.

<sup>74</sup> IV.421C.

<sup>75</sup> Cp. IX.576C-D.



appetites must be.<sup>76</sup> On this picture all domination by reason would ultimately have to be repression, and Plato's alleged distinction between the oligarchical person and the appetitive person in the just polis will look like propaganda.

Moreover, if a psychic part must be the way it is when it is originally isolated, it is natural to identify appetitive persons with the appetitive parts of their psyches. For since, on this assumption, the appetitive part can have no real commerce with the other psychic parts, there seems to be no other option for appetitive persons than to be driven by their appetites. This conflicts with the claim Plato makes about the difference between the oligarchical psyche and that of the appetitive person in the just polis; but again this will look as if it is Plato's problem. However, once we recognize internalization and externalization as basic psychological activities, we can see that the psychic parts can be shaped, and thus that the conditions under which we first identify them need not be the conditions under which they operate. This allows us to see that an appetitive person need not simply be someone driven by the appetitive part. And once we see that psychic parts need not always be functioning in the conflictual ways in which they are first identified, we can then grant culture a greater role in psychic formation than would otherwise be thought possible.

Consider, for example, the appetitive person or money-lover: how did his appetites ever come to love *money*? Money is the paradigm cultural artefact: it has no existence *hors de culture*. So if the appetites can be directed onto money, it would seem that culture can permeate and inform the lower elements of the psyche.<sup>77</sup> The appetitive personality will organize his personality around his appetites; and a paradigm, for Plato, is the money lover who devotes himself to the pursuit of wealth: reason will be directed instrumentally toward figuring out ways of satisfying this desire, he will feel honor in achieving wealth-related goals, and there is a peculiar

<sup>76</sup> Essentially the same problem occurs in Freud's discussion of the id. Freud often describes the id as not listening to reason. But he is so describing it in the context of trying to make clear the dynamic structure of neurotic pathology. There is another conception of the id, manifest in his dictum "Where it was there I shall become", which allows the possibility of the appetites harkening to reason. See my *Love and Its Place in Nature*, chapter 6.

<sup>77</sup> Of course, there is truth in the claim that money is a means to satisfy bodily appetites (IX.580E-581A), but that is not the whole truth. The oligarchic man, for example, is not using money just as a means to satisfy his bodily appetites: indeed, he keeps these appetites under control precisely because he has developed an appetite for money and property (VIII.553C-554C).

pleasure in achieving them.<sup>78</sup> The pursuit of wealth, then, is setting the overall agenda for this person's projects, and honor and reason are disciplined to serve this outlook. But within this schema there is room for the oligarchical personality, the democrat, the tyrant and (as I shall argue) the poet, all of whom are appetitive types. 'Appetitive' is thus a genus of personality organization and the variety of species is due to the fact that internalization can inform the appetitive part of the psyche.<sup>79</sup>

It might at first seem paradoxical that, on the one hand, the appetitive part is the ruling principle of an appetitive person,<sup>80</sup> while, on the other, the appetitive person should believe along with everyone else that reason should rule.<sup>81</sup> Plato is trying to have it both ways, but, within the framework of his psychology, he can get away with it. The appetitive person thinks that the peculiar pleasures available to his way of life are the best,<sup>82</sup> and, since the appetitive part rules in his psyche, his reason will be directed towards figuring out ways to secure those pleasures. But given that this appetitive person has been brought up to have just the appetites which the well-ordered polis can satisfy, his reason ought to be telling him that the best way to satisfy his appetites is to harken to the reason manifest in the laws of the philosopher-king.

In the temperate polis, Plato says, the same belief about who should rule will be inside both the rulers and the ruled (ἡ αὐτὴ δόξα ἔνεστι τοῖς τε ἄρχουσι καὶ ἀρχομένοις...).<sup>83</sup> This belief helps to constitute the reason of the appetitive person in the just polis. Ironically, it is because the reason in his psyche is subservient to the appetitive part that the appetitive person submits himself to the rule of reason in the polis. Just as the appetitive person will abjure junk food for healthy bread and relishes, so he will abjure junk bonds for municipal bonds. And all the while he will be telling himself, correctly, that this is the really good investment for himself and his

<sup>78</sup> IX.580D-581E; cp. VIII.553C-554E.

<sup>79</sup> In fact the variation can be much more fine-grained than I have indicated. See the explication by C.D.C. Reeve in *Philosopher Kings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 5-9, 135-153), a book which I found inspiring and to which I am indebted. I am here both trying to use that account and to show how much it depends on internalization as a basic psychological activity. See also John Cooper in "Plato's Theory of Human Motivation", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1, 1984; and Richard Kraut's account of normative rule in "Reason and Justice in Plato's Republic", *Exegesis and Argument*, op.cit.

<sup>80</sup> IX.581.

<sup>81</sup> IV.431D-E.

<sup>82</sup> IX.581C-D.

<sup>83</sup> IV.431D-E, 433C-D.

family. This is how the appetitive person's role in a well-ordered polis looks from an appetitive perspective. On the one hand, his reason is focused on securing gain; on the other he concludes that the best way to do this is by following the rule of reason in the polis. This would not have been possible if he had not been brought up in such a way as to internalize appropriate cultural influences and get rid of unnecessary appetites. Yet for all that he remains basically an appetitive type: organizing his life, values and thoughts around production and acquisition. For him, justice is basically a matter of doing and getting one's own.<sup>84</sup> Temperance in the polis is like "a certain harmony" which "spreads throughout the whole".<sup>85</sup> But if temperance spreads throughout the whole, it must spread through the whole of the whole. That is, there would not be genuine harmony in the polis if the psyche of an appetitive citizen were at war with itself. Plato does not believe the appetitive person has the *virtue* of temperance, but in a well-ordered polis, due to well-crafted internalizations, such a person will be well disposed to temperance, both inside and outside himself.

So too for the honor-loving members of society: Each will commend the distinctive pleasures of the honor-achieving life as the best,<sup>86</sup> and will try to organize his life and character around this pursuit. In a just polis, honor-lovers will be educated to hold fast to the laws, and to fear only those things which the lawgivers think are fearful.<sup>87</sup> These people will be brought up to be soldiers: they will be educated so as to be free of unnecessary appetites and to have their other appetites disciplined to the pursuit of honor. Their reason too will be directed towards honor, but they will have been educated so as to understand that the way to achieve true honor is to defend and safeguard the law (laid down by the philosopher-rulers).<sup>88</sup> Therefore, although honor is the fundamental principle of this person's life, on that very account he will, when brought up in a just polis, believe that reason should rule. Whatever one thinks about Plato's prescription for attaining health, one must, I think, acknowledge that his conception of a healthy, harmonious psyche is not just a dodge to cover up an irresolvable tension, but a natural consequence of his psychology.

The analogy between polis and psyche is a manifestation of the fact that there are important structural similarities between interpsychic relations and intrapsychic relations. But, for Plato, these structural similarities are

<sup>84</sup> IV.433E-434A. See Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings* (pp.246-247).

<sup>85</sup> IV.431E-432A.

<sup>86</sup> IX.581C-D.

<sup>87</sup> IV.429B-430A.

<sup>88</sup> IV.429C.

themselves a manifestation of important psychological transactions, back and forth, between interpsychic and intrapsychic. This is true in sickness as in health. If we examine Plato's tale of political decline, we see that the degeneration occurs through a dialectic of internalization of pathological cultural influences in individuals which provokes a degeneration in character-structure (as compared to the previous generation) which is in turn imposed on the polis, which thus acquires and provokes deeper pathology.<sup>89</sup> Plato does not merely want to show that the same neurotic structure can exist in both psyche and polis, but that the pathology in each helps to bring about pathology in the other. This has not been easy to see, I suspect, because Plato's conception of pathology is not well understood.

It is, for example, easy to read his accounts of the rise of the democratic polis and the emergence of democratic man as two parallel accounts which have only a structural analogy in common. In fact, Plato traces a sophisticated interaction between polis and psyche that helps to account for both. Consider, for example, Plato's account of the rise of democratic man.<sup>90</sup> He emerges from an oligarchic family, the values and goals of that family being set by the father who is himself a manifestation of an oligarchic personality. The oligarchic father is thrifty and frugal; he has organized himself around the pursuit of wealth, and tries to instill this same structure in his family.<sup>91</sup> He has been able to keep his unnecessary appetites in check, but because he has not had a proper upbringing, because he has not experienced or internalized true culture, these appetites must be held in place by the only means available to him: brute force. This is a man whose personality is held together by forcibly holding down an inner world of unruly appetites. He presents a good face to the world, but in fact exists in two bits.<sup>92</sup> The emergence of the democratic man is, roughly speaking, the return of the repressed in the next generation.<sup>93</sup> The oligarchic father creates in his family and immediate social environment a micro-culture, a template for in-

<sup>89</sup> Plato, as we have seen, believes a change in musical modes will ultimately upset constitutional laws: it is precisely because lawlessness is internalized with the music that it is subsequently externalized in attacks on established business relations, on the laws and the constitution (IV.424C-E). I shall discuss this further in section 4.

<sup>90</sup> VIII.558-562.

<sup>91</sup> VIII.554B-555B.

<sup>92</sup> VIII.554D.

<sup>93</sup> Roughly speaking because, as we have seen, Plato's conception of forcible restraint is not identical to Freud's conception of repression. Yet Plato believes of forcible restraint, as Freud believed of repression, that it is an ultimately unsuccessful means of warding off unwanted desires.

ternalization, which embodies contradictory demands. On the one hand, there is the demand *inside* his family for frugality so as to accumulate wealth. There is some suggestion that this demand on its own is self-contradictory. For to pursue wealth is to organize the family around the appetites; and Plato does say there is a tendency to spoil the children.<sup>94</sup> Yet to insist on frugality is to hold those appetites in check. The appetites are thus simultaneously encouraged and forcibly restrained. The only way the father knows how to instill frugality is by force. Having failed to internalize a more harmonious psychic structure, forcible restraint is the only means at his disposal: and he imposes it on his family as well as on himself. Thus the child is brought up in a miserly fashion without real education.<sup>95</sup> But, on the other hand, the oligarchical father encourages prodigality *outside* his family.<sup>96</sup> By lending others money and encouraging wastefulness, he hopes eventually to acquire their property. These people, made poor, will eventually revolt and usher in democracy.<sup>97</sup>

Here we see how the oligarchic father, by pursuing his own ends, recreates on the interpsychic stage of his family and immediate social environment a model of his own intrapsychic relations. His son, having his appetites both encouraged and held down, becomes an interpsychic correlate of the appetites within the father. However, as a member of the outer world, the son is open to other polis influences. The oligarchical father encouraged prodigality outside the family, but Plato's point is that this prodigality cannot, finally, be kept outside. The prodigal youths, encouraged by the oligarch, are an externalization and interpsychic correlate to the unnecessary appetites within the oligarch's psyche. Because the son's appetites have been both encouraged and held back, he is susceptible to appetitive influences around him. "Just as the city changed when one faction received help from like-minded people outside, so the young man changes when help comes from the same type of appetites outside to one of the factions within himself."<sup>98</sup> But these appetites outside are also offspring of the father. It is these appetites – whose pedigree goes back to the father – which are reinternalized in the intrapsychic battle within the son. For a while, a struggle rages both inside and outside his psyche. The father lends his influence to aid the internalized repressing forces, the young thugs on

<sup>94</sup> VIII.556B-C.

<sup>95</sup> VIII.559D.

<sup>96</sup> VIII.555C-E.

<sup>97</sup> VIII.557A.

<sup>98</sup> VIII.559E.

the block egg the appetites on.<sup>99</sup> But this is a struggle which the appetites have to win, because this youth never had the opportunity to internalize good cultural structures. When the appetites come knocking on the door of his psyche, they find no one is at home.<sup>100</sup> The psyche is easily reshaped, and a “democratic man” is born.

There is a problem, though, about the relation of the democratic polis and the democratic man. The democratic polis is one which contains every sort of character, like a garment of many colors.<sup>101</sup> However, as Williams points out, the democratic man is described as always shifting, following the appetite of the moment, without any expertise.<sup>102</sup> And here Williams tightens the noose:

“A democracy is a state in which the many rule, and if it gets its character from that of its rulers, then the majority must have a “democratic” character. This, on the face of it, sorts none too well with the claim that the democratic state will particularly tend to contain all sorts of character – the “democratic” character seems in fact to be a special sort of character. Moving between the social and the individual level once more, Plato seems disposed to confound two very different things: a state in which there are various characters among the people, and a state in which most of the people have a various character, that is to say, a very shifting and unsteady character.”<sup>103</sup>

Surely a society of many colors does not require that each of its members be a patchwork quilt. Have we finally reached the true absurdity of Plato’s analogy? I don’t think so. That a polis allows and even prides itself on the fact that it has various sorts of character<sup>104</sup> is, for Plato, a manifestation of the fact that it does not have a firmly established sense of better and worse. There can be no agreed or enforced set of values, beyond tolerance: thus the political possibility of various types. It is as though citizens are allowed to decide for themselves what will constitute their own goods. However, for Plato, this is not a serious psychological possibility: humans need a socially

<sup>99</sup> VIII.560. Plato’s account of faction vs. counterfaction struggling within the psyche bears some similarity to Freud’s account of cathexis and counterathesis in a neurotic struggle – although there is no evidence that Plato thought this intrapsychic and interpsychic struggle was unconscious. (Cp. e.g. “Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defense”, III:169-170).

<sup>100</sup> VIII.560B-C.

<sup>101</sup> VIII.557Cff. Quoted by Williams, “Analogy”, p. 201.

<sup>102</sup> VIII.561Dff.

<sup>103</sup> “Analogy”, p. 201. Note that by now Williams has put in place of the whole-part rule, another which he calls the *predominant section rule*: A city is F if and only if the leading, most influential or predominant citizens are F.

<sup>104</sup> VIII.557B-558A.

grounded culture to internalize.<sup>105</sup> A person may decide, say, to be a politician, but such a decision is superficial and eminently shakeable by external events. By historical luck the person may succeed at the appearance of state-craft, but Plato's point is that this is thin stuff. And so, even in democracy's finest hour, when it appears a many-colored fabric, full of different individuals each performing their own tasks, Plato's point is that this cannot be more than appearance. For although at that moment the citizens will not all be shifting their characters, they will all have characters which are *shiftable*. Thus their characters are unsteady, however firm they may appear.

Williams concludes:

"There have been those who thought that the working classes were naturally of powerful and disorderly desires, and had to be kept in their place. There have been those who thought that they were goodhearted and loyal fellows of no great gifts who could recognize their natural superiors and, unless stirred up, keep themselves in their place. There can have been few who have thought both; Plato in the *Republic* comes close to being such a one . . ."<sup>106</sup>

This thought is amusing, but not absurd. Indeed, if one takes the role of internalization seriously, it would seem to follow that in one political environment the working class will be a disorderly mob that has to be kept in its place, while in another it will consist in good-hearted fellows who recognize their superiors. Again and again, what presents itself as an absurdity dissolves once one takes seriously the idea that humans are dependent on internalization for acquiring psychological structure.

The initial appearance of absurdity depends once more on assuming that psychic parts are invulnerable to cultural influence. If the appetitive part must be in the conflictual relation with reason in which it is originally identified, then the working class will have to be a direct manifestation of contentious appetite. If intrapsychic conflict is unavoidable, then, given the analogy, so is political conflict. It will then look, just as it does to Williams, that when the obfuscating mask is pulled away we will see that Plato's just polis has the same repressive structure that Plato himself diagnoses in oligarchy. And, I think, it is tempting to go along with William's argument in part because Plato's ideal polis does look to us as though it has repressive features.<sup>107</sup> But the point of the present argument is not to rescue Plato's

<sup>105</sup> Plato does make an exception for those who have been divinely inspired: e.g. VI.492A, 496C-497A, 499B-C.

<sup>106</sup> "Analogy", p. 204.

<sup>107</sup> I suspect that Williams' formal objections to the analogy are fueled by a democrat's suspicion of Plato's conservative political theory: in particular by what he takes to be an



polis, it is to understand the psychological basis of the isomorphism. Once one sees that the isomorphism is not a mere analogy, but is grounded in internalization and externalization, one sees that there is room to influence the shape and content of the psychic parts, and this allows room to influence the specific type of say, appetitive person, which in turn allows room to influence the specific type of appetitive class in the polis. This is hard to see in part because Plato concentrates so much on pathology, and pathological structures are inherently conflictual. Plato's psychology, like Freud's, is "wisdom won from illness".<sup>108</sup> Plato finds himself in a pathological social situation,<sup>109</sup> and, given his psychological principles, he deduces that this pathology is both cause and manifestation of pathology within the psyche. And it is his task to work his way back from the conceptualization of this pathology towards a conception of health.<sup>110</sup> His strategy was to assume a dynamic psychological relation between psyche and polis, and to construct an idealized genealogy of illness.<sup>111</sup>

ultimately repressive relation between ruling class and ruled. From a democratic perspective the means and organization of society ought to be transparent to all, while Plato advocates feeding the appetitive class a diet of noble falsehoods. It is, of course, beyond the scope of this paper to respond to this type of objection. But I would like to note in passing: (1) Such an objection does not itself constitute an objection to the idea of an isomorphism between polis and psyche. (2) Plato himself issues a challenge to the idea of transparency. One of the motivations for the 'noble falsehood' is that one cannot just assume that, say, the freedom of information act guarantees freedom of information: one has to take into account what the subjective meaning of this (external) information will be. And once one does so, Plato thinks, one can only get this information across if one presents it in certain mythic forms which, strictly speaking, are not true. Each side will think the other is restricting information, one because of the alteration in form, the other because the idea of subjective understanding is being ignored.

<sup>108</sup> The phrase is from Thomas Mann's description of psychoanalysis. See, "Freud and the Future", *Freud, Goethe, Wagner* (New York: Knopf, 1937).

<sup>109</sup> See e.g. VI.497A-B, 496C-D, 488A-489B, 499B-C.

<sup>110</sup> Virtue or excellence, Plato says, is a certain sort of health (IV.444D).

<sup>111</sup> In a sense Plato has again to recapitulate the poet, only at a philosophical level. Socrates must tell a tale in which the just man is stripped of all the outer trappings and the glittering prizes – which from a conventional perspective are all the rewards there are – are given to the unjust man (II.360E-361D). This, in effect, is what the poets have already done (362E-366A). They have shaped a culture which values only the appearance of justice. By showing that it is nevertheless better to be just, Plato is doing more than showing that justice will triumph even in the worst possible dialectical circumstances. He is trying to show that it will triumph in (what he took to be) the actual situation. From Plato's perspective, his argument has to take this shape if it is to be persuasive, for the worst-case scenario is the way things are. Plato thus starts out with poetic appearance in order to work through to a (non-poetical) conclusion which penetrates beyond surface appearances.



For Plato, the hallmark of pathology is a lack of harmonious relations between inside and outside. That is one reason why the principles of internalization and externalization have been difficult to recognize. For it is a sign of oligarchy being a pathological structure that it cannot simply be internalized and externalized without further ado. The oligarchical father does externalize the structure of his psyche. And it is such externalizations which shape the oligarchical polis: by encouraging one class to accumulate wealth, the other class to forfeit it. The son, for his part, does internalize the polis influences. But because oligarchy is a pathological configuration, the internalization cannot stably reproduce the psychic structure of the previous generation. The instability is manifest in the inability of inside and outside to maintain a mirroring relation – and in the ensuing failure of the son to grow up in the image of the father. All this in spite of the fact that internalization and externalization are basic psychological activities.<sup>112</sup>

The point of Plato's argument is to show that there is only one relatively stable equilibrium position between inside and outside.<sup>113</sup> Only the just polis and its citizens are so structured that the various internalizations and externalizations will maintain harmony in each; and harmony between them. Justice, for Plato, is a certain harmony within the psyche; it is also a certain harmony within the polis.<sup>114</sup> But now we can see that each of these harmonies is possible only if there is a larger harmony – between inside and outside – which encompasses and explains them.<sup>115</sup> Justice when properly

<sup>112</sup> So for any pathological structure  $F^*$ , one should not expect that an  $F^*$  polis is an immediate and simple externalization of  $F^*$  citizens. Nor should one think that  $F^*$  citizens are shaped by a simple internalization of the structure of the  $F^*$  polis. The whole point of  $F^*$  being pathological is that no such simple mirroring relation can occur. So, for example, the democratic polis is shaped not only by the degenerate son of oligarchy, but also by the rebellious poor (556C-557A). However, the rebellious poor also had their psyches shaped via internalizations of previous externalizations of the oligarchical rulers. And both they and democratic man – the metaphorical and literal sons of oligarchy – help to shape the democratic polis via externalization of structures in their psyches.

<sup>113</sup> And this is built up by what Plato calls a “circle of growth”, which seems to be the opposite of the tale of degeneration: a sound nurture and education if kept up creates good natures in the state, and sound natures in turn receiving an education of this sort develop into better persons than their predecessors . . .” IV.424A-B. Although, of course, Plato thinks that even the ideal polis is subject to eventual decay: VIII.546A-547A.

<sup>114</sup> IV.441D-E. See e.g. V.462C-D, 463E, 464A.

<sup>115</sup> And thus I think the psychological principles of internalization and externalization can help us to address a long-standing interpretive problem: why did Plato think there was a relation between justice as a condition of the psyche – psychic justice – and conventionally recognized justice? (See e.g. Gregory Vlastos, “Justice and Happiness in

understood is each part, inside and outside, doing its own task. That is why it is ultimately misleading to think of there being merely an analogy between polis and psyche.<sup>116</sup> That is how it might look at the beginning of inquiry, but not how it should look at the end. When it is first introduced, the isomorphism may appear to be little more than an argumentative device. But then we, at that stage, are deep in the cave, confronted by what appear to be contradictory arguments about whether justice is good or bad.<sup>117</sup> The remainder of the *Republic* works through these contradictions, and what we come to see is that, roughly speaking, psyche is internalized polis and polis is externalized psyche. What initially appeared as two things which stood in a merely analogous relation come to appear as the internal and external workings of a psychological universe which may exist in various states of harmony or disharmony.

### 5. *Poetic Justice*

Internalization and externalization also explain why, for Plato, poetry corrupts our psyches. Given our psychology, there are two features of poetry which make it an especially potent drug. First, the music and rhythms with which poetry is expressed pour directly into our psyches.<sup>118</sup> Second, poetry tends to be expressed in imitative style: the characters speak as though from their own first-personal perspectives.<sup>119</sup> In this way, poetry can preserve the first-personal perspective throughout its transmissions.<sup>120</sup> Whether we are poet, performer or audience, we imaginatively take up the perspective of the characters: even the best of us abandon ourselves and imaginatively take up their feelings.<sup>121</sup> It is as though imitation blurs the boundary between inside and outside. Through imitation we get outside

Plato's *Republic*", *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); David Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*", *Philosophical Review* 72, 1963; Terence Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory*, (op.cit., pp. 205-206, 331). I address this problem in "Plato's Politics of Narcissism", which I presented at the memorial conference for Gregory Vlastos in May, 1992 and which will appear in a volume dedicated to his memory.

<sup>116</sup> In fact, Plato never uses the word "analogy" (ἀναλογία) to describe the relation between polis and psyche, though he is sometimes translated as though he did. See e.g. Paul Shorey's translation of II.368E in the Loeb edition of *The Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>117</sup> The contradictory arguments of Book I bear a significant resemblance to the problems which Plato says are provocative of thought (VII.523-4).

<sup>118</sup> III.411; cp. e.g. 395C-D, 401B-D, 413C.

<sup>119</sup> III.393B-D.

<sup>120</sup> See e.g. Ferrari, "Plato and Poetry", esp. §§1.4.

<sup>121</sup> X.605.

ourselves imaginatively, but psychologically we take the outside in. By pretending to be these characters, we unconsciously shape our characters around them.<sup>122</sup> The mimetic poet, says Plato, sets up a bad constitution in the psyche of each person (...τὸν μιμητικὸν ποιητὴν φήσομεν κακὴν πολιτείαν ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστου τῇ ψυχῇ ἐμποιεῖν...),<sup>123</sup>

Poetry feeds our psychological hunger to take things in, but it feeds us a diet of fantasy.<sup>124</sup> Its ability to draw us into a world of illusion indicates that it is appealing to a primitive level of mental functioning: Plato calls it “a vulgar part” (τῶν φαύλων τι) of the psyche.<sup>125</sup> For Plato, poetry has a hotline to the appetites.<sup>126</sup> It is able to bypass reason, the faculty which corrects for false appearance,<sup>127</sup> and go straight to the psychic gut. So while reason may tell us to be moderate in our grief, poetry encourages lamentation, excess and loss of control.<sup>128</sup> Poetry thus sets us up for intrapsychic conflict.<sup>129</sup> For poetry encourages “the irrational part” (τὸ ἀλόγιστον) of us to hold on to fantasy in spite of reason’s corrections. It establishes a split off part of the psyche to which reason is not accessible. And that is why poetry cannot, for Plato, be just a stage in the developmental cave we work our way through. Other images may generate conflicts that lead us towards reality,<sup>130</sup> but poetic imitations keep us imprisoned at that level. So, on the one hand, poetry promotes intrapsychic conflict; on the other, it keeps us unconscious of that conflict, for the irrational part of our psyche cannot hear reason’s corrections. That is why poetry, with its throbbing rhythms and beating of breasts, appeals equally to the nondescript mob in the theatre and to the best among us.<sup>131</sup>

But if poetry goes straight to the lower part of the psyche, that is where it must come from. First, imitation by its very nature encourages poet, actor and audience to go through the same motions. Although imitation is only

<sup>122</sup> III.395C-396E, 378D, 398A-B, 401B-402A; X.605-606.

<sup>123</sup> X.605B-C.

<sup>124</sup> X.598B: *phantasma*, cp. 599A. In fact, Plato says that imitation gives us a fantasy of a fantasy – a second-order fantasy, but this depends on his metaphysical conception of ordinary empirical objects themselves being removed from reality. There are, obviously, important metaphysical objections to tragic poetry and art, but in this paper I am restricting my focus to the primarily psychological objections.

<sup>125</sup> X.603A, 605A-B.

<sup>126</sup> X.603A-B; cp. 605A-B.

<sup>127</sup> X.601B, 602D-603B.

<sup>128</sup> X.604-605.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. X.604B; cp. 603D.

<sup>130</sup> See e.g. VII.523.

<sup>131</sup> X.604E-605D.

play,<sup>132</sup> it is in this play that we unconsciously shape our psyches.<sup>133</sup> If poetic imitation sets our appetites in motion, it is reasonable to infer similar motions within the poet. Second, when a part of our psyche is strengthened from outside, it tends to be by an interpsychic manifestation of that very same part of the psyche. So, for example, the budding democrat's appetites are reinforced by the appetitive thugs on the block.<sup>134</sup> The fact that poetry deals in fantasy and the throbbing lamentations of the irrational part of the psyche testifies to its lineage. Third, when Plato in his thought experiment wants to move from a minimal polis to a fevered one, he adds imitators (οἱ μιμηταί): poets, actors, rhapsodes, chorus dancers, theatrical managers.<sup>135</sup> He takes himself to be introducing a pathogen into a healthy organism. And the disease the polis contracts is *pleonexia*: the polis gives itself over to the unlimited acquisition of wealth.<sup>136</sup> Only after the polis is rid of poets who tell tales of gods eating, fighting and deceiving each other, does Plato conclude that he has purged the fevered polis.<sup>137</sup> Introduce the poets and the polis becomes pleonectic, banish them and you cure it. Finally, as we have seen, *logos* follows and fits the character of the psyche.<sup>138</sup> If poetry is an appetitive falsehood, it must come from an appetitive affection in the psyche. And so it seems that just as law in a good society is an externalization of reason (of the philosopher king (who has already internalized the eternal realities)), so poetry seems to be an externalization of the irrational part (of the poet (who may already have internalized appetitive-poetic elements of culture)).<sup>139</sup>

We can see these appetites in the gods. The gods of the poets spend their time castrating and devouring each other, they are constantly at war, and tend to engage in single-minded pursuit of satisfaction.<sup>140</sup> In short, these gods behave like lawless, unnecessary appetites;<sup>141</sup> and, given Plato's psy-

<sup>132</sup> X.602B.

<sup>133</sup> X.606B.

<sup>134</sup> VII.559E-560. See above, p. 203-4.

<sup>135</sup> II.373B.

<sup>136</sup> II.373D-E.

<sup>137</sup> III.399E. The purgation is supposed to have occurred as an unconscious byproduct of banishing the poets.

<sup>138</sup> III.400D-E.

<sup>139</sup> X.604D, 605B, 605E-606B.

<sup>140</sup> II.377E-378D (Should the reader also be interested in the work of Melanie Klein, and wonder what she meant by "part objects", the Homeric gods of which Plato complains are, I think, paradigms.)

<sup>141</sup> IX.571B-D.

chology, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that this is just what they are: appetites externalized in Olympus. A moment's reflection will show that there is no where else for them to go. Plato calls the lawless appetites "something wild and terrible" (δεινόν τι καὶ ἄγριον) within us.<sup>142</sup> He speaks of Eros as a "tyrant within" (τύραννος ἔνδον) the psyche.<sup>143</sup> Undisciplined appetites are all powerful within, so when they are externalized it makes sense that they should be represented as tremendously powerful. They need a virtually transcendent arena in which to struggle.<sup>144</sup> And so externalization from inside the poet's psyche turns out also to be an inversion: from bottom of the psyche to top of the world. These poetic myths provide a cultural template for youths to internalize, thus inverting their own psyches and, inevitably, the societies in which they live. Children, says Plato, will come to think there is nothing wrong in punishing their father to the limit, in fighting with their family and fellow citizens, if they think they are only following in the gods' footsteps.<sup>145</sup> And it is precisely by those acts, Plato thinks, that the tyrant is born.<sup>146</sup> According to legend, a person who eats human entrails is turned into a wolf; just so, the person who sheds the blood of the tribe by unjust accusations against fellow citizens, who banishes and slays them, has "tasted kindred blood", and is transformed into a tyrant. The tyrant is formed by transgressing the basic norms of human relations. In fact, the tyrant is behaving towards other humans as the Homeric gods behave towards each other. Plato criticizes Euripides for praising tyranny as "godlike" (ἰσόθεον); but he is objecting not so much to the description, as to the fact that it is being used as a form of praise.<sup>147</sup> Tyranny is an imitation of the Homeric divine: but there is nothing praiseworthy about that.

This brings us to the most serious charge against the poets: they provide not only an externalization of the appetites, they also provide a *legitimation* of them. That is why the poetic myths are the "greatest lie about the greatest things", "an ugly falsehood".<sup>148</sup> The poets externalize their appetites, but their poetry sends them upwards as well as outwards. When the

<sup>142</sup> IX.572B.

<sup>143</sup> IX.573D; cp. 573B.

<sup>144</sup> Compare Freud on the omnipotence of archaic mind: e.g. *Totem and Taboo*, XIII:83-91, 186, 188; "The Uncanny", XVII:240-244.

<sup>145</sup> II.378B-C.

<sup>146</sup> IX.565D-566B.

<sup>147</sup> VIII.568A-B.

<sup>148</sup> II.377E.

appetitive gods are re-internalized, it is now with a normative tinge.<sup>149</sup> Since the young are not able to distinguish myth from reality,<sup>150</sup> the tales they hear at their mother's knee provide the means by which the appetites can travel up and infect the norms and values of the developing person. In youth, we begin taking in psychological content and structure, before we know how to distinguish truth from falsity. At a later stage of development, we attempt to take in true beliefs and expel falsehoods.<sup>151</sup> However, if we already have a falsehood inside our psyches, even in mythic form, we will end up taking in more and more falsehood (as though it were true) and getting rid of more and more truth (as though it were false). Introduce this initial virus, and our intake-expulsion machine will start pumping in the wrong direction.<sup>152</sup> That is why having falsehood inside the psyche is what humans loathe most of all.<sup>153</sup> And that, for Plato, is what mimetic poetry introduces: a falsehood taken as truth (ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεῦδος).<sup>154</sup>

Plato is charting the interpsychic and intrapsychic vicissitudes of the appetites. He is following the fate of the poetic trajectory: and what he finds is that the externalized appetites will tend to return, strengthened and legitimated. Poetry thus provides both a legitimation of the appetites, and a cultural template for tyranny. One can see this in Plato's account of the rise of the tyrant. The tyrant is a child of democracy: the son of democratic man.<sup>155</sup> The democratic father is himself a compromise formation, shaped by a thrifty, oligarchical father, who encouraged only the acquisitive appetites, and a 'sophisticated' element which encouraged the unnecessary appetites. The pathology of this solution is again revealed by the instability between inside and outside. The son is brought up in the ways of the father, but is thereby susceptible to lawless influence from outside. It is the "dread magicians" (οἱ δεινοὶ μάγοι) who both whet his lawless appetites and

<sup>149</sup> Freud noticed that the superego often speaks with an iddish accent: it tends to take on a harsh, vindictive tone that testifies to some sort of commerce with the id. (See e.g. *The Ego and the Id*, XIX: 36, 48-49, 52; "Neurosis and Psychosis", XIX:151-152; *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, XX:115-116.) This was puzzling both because the superego's function is to help keep the id in place and because it is unclear how this commerce takes place. Plato in fact provides a satisfying explanation of how commerce between id and superego can occur via commerce between inside and outside. This is superior to simply saying that the superego becomes fused with aggression, because it explains how this fusion comes about.

<sup>150</sup> II.378D-E.

<sup>151</sup> III.412E-413B; II.382.

<sup>152</sup> II.382.

<sup>153</sup> II.382A-B.

<sup>154</sup> E.g. II.382B: Often translated as "veritable lie" or "truthful lie".

<sup>155</sup> IX.572C-573C.

encourage him to expel from his psyche any remnants of shame which would keep the appetites in check. That the intake-expulsion machine is pumping in the wrong direction is testimony to there being a falsehood taken as truth within. And just as, *Intrapsychically*, the lawless appetites overtook the original, better ones in his psyche, so, *interpsychically*, the tyrant comes to feel *justified* (ἰσχύω) in taking over his parent's estate; and then going on to rob, punish and enslave family, friends and fellow citizens.<sup>156</sup> In fact, the tyrant re-enacts on the interpsychic stage of the polis the situation that exists inside his psyche: he must expel or get rid of the brave, wise and wealthy, treating them as his enemy.<sup>157</sup> "A fine purgation," Plato says, "and just the opposite of what a physician does with our bodies: for while they remove the worst and leave the best, the tyrant does the opposite."<sup>158</sup> He recreates the polis in the image of his psyche.

And the poet gives him the cultural vehicle by which he can, at least to his own satisfaction, legitimize his acts. Hearing tales about the warring gods, Plato says, children will be encouraged to think this type of behavior appropriate.<sup>159</sup> The gods of the poets are the lawless appetites externalized in Olympus: the tyrant brings this lawlessness back to the polis – sometimes literally. The tyrant is often someone who, because of previous attacks on society, has been banished from the polis.<sup>160</sup> There he remains poised for a triumphant return in the name of democracy; which for Plato is nothing more than a lawless society of appetites. Plato's point is that if you really want to get rid of the tyrant, you also have to get rid of the cultural vehicles that make him look attractive: you must also banish his poetical counterpart. For it is the poets who "draw the constitutions towards tyrannies and democracies".<sup>161</sup>

One might say that the tyrant acts out what the poet only dreams; but, for Plato, both the poet and the tyrant are dreamers, though in slightly different ways. To understand the tyrant, Plato says, we must not settle for his outward appearance, the external pomp and circumstance – we must even strip him of the garb in which tragedy clothes him<sup>162</sup> – and must, in thought, enter into his character.<sup>163</sup> What we find inside is a tyranny of lawless

<sup>156</sup> IX.574A-C; VIII.569B.

<sup>157</sup> VIII.567B-C.

<sup>158</sup> VIII.567C.

<sup>159</sup> II.378B-C.

<sup>160</sup> VIII.566A-B.

<sup>161</sup> VIII.568B.

<sup>162</sup> VIII.557B.

<sup>163</sup> IX.577A.

desires.<sup>164</sup> These are the desires we encounter in our dreams, when the rational part of our psyche sleeps, and the wild and animal part wakes up. “There is nothing it will not dare to do at that time, free of any control by shame or prudence. It does not hesitate to attempt sexual intercourse with a mother or anyone else – man, god, or beast; it will commit any foul murder and does not refrain from any kind of food. In a word it will not fall short of any folly or shameless deed.”<sup>165</sup> These, of course, are the very deeds with which the gods of the poets occupy themselves. Indeed, the tyrant is a parricide;<sup>166</sup> and parricide is the founding act of Homeric heaven. It is this dream-world that the poets have externalized in Olympus, and which the tyrant has re-internalized. The dreams of the poets enable the tyrant to turn his waking life into a bad dream: a daymare.

Poet and tyrant are essentially dreaming the same dream; indeed, they are bedfellows. From Plato’s perspective, poet and tyrant are the same type of person: a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of the appetites. Both have organized themselves around their appetites, though they have different strategies for dealing with them. The tyrant keeps his appetites inside: because of them he outwardly enslaves the polis and inwardly is enslaved by them. The poet externalizes his appetites: but there they form a cultural template which, when reinternalized, enslaves us all. Poet and tyrant ultimately enslave us, but while the tyrant enforces external compliance, poetic enslavement reaches inside the psyche and reorganizes it so that we remain unconscious of our slavery.

That is why the poets must be banished from the polis. One might say that Plato is recapitulating the poet’s activity, only at a philosophical level. The poets, after all, have externalized their appetites, setting them up outside the polis in a heavenly beyond. What Plato sees is that the ‘poetic solution’ to the problem of the appetites in fact provokes a psycho-social disaster. The Platonic solution is inspired by his psychological principles. Plato knows that every externalization is fodder for internalization; and his ‘final solution’ is designed to put an end to this cycle. The important thing for Plato is not to get the poets out of the polis, so much as to get the appetites out of culture. This, he thinks, can be accomplished only by banishing the poets.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>164</sup> IX.577C-E;575A.

<sup>165</sup> IX.571C.

<sup>166</sup> VIII.569B.

<sup>167</sup> IX.577-579.

<sup>168</sup> This, I think, provides one of the deeper reasons why Book X comes where it does. It is not just that it has to follow the entire psychology and metaphysics of the *Republic* but that it has to follow Book IX.



Of course, there is plenty of room to doubt whether Plato's solution is called for or whether it would be successful. Does poetry not serve a healthy function? Is poetry not more (or other) than mimesis? Would the banished not find another way to return, if not from poetic heaven, then from beyond the philosophical pale? Is Plato's prescription so removed from anything we have ever experienced that we have no idea what is being prescribed? Rather than try to answer these questions, I shall close by explaining why we have only recently become ready to evaluate Plato's argument from a psychological perspective. Most recent discussions of the psychological value of art rely on an early psychoanalytic conception of the mind. The mind, on this conception, is divided along the lines of repression. The point of therapy was to loosen repression so that the unconscious could express itself, if only in words. In this context the creation and enjoyment of art appeared as another socially acceptable way of expressing unconscious forces. Thus artistic creation and appreciation came to be seen as therapeutic. As psychoanalytic theory developed, it became less concerned with the unconscious per se, and more concerned with the structure of the psyche. The psychoanalytic valuation of art has not kept pace with the development of theory.<sup>169</sup> In fact, Plato's remains one of the few discussion of the psychological value of art within the context of a structural theory of the psyche. Plato's point is that it is not enough to assume that the release of the repressed is a good thing. If one wants to justify art from a psychological perspective, one must understand its role within the context of a structured psyche. And that may require an account of the psychological transactions inside and outside the psyche. This is a challenge which, it seems to me, we are only now ready to take up once again.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Nor has the theory of technique. See e.g. Paul Gray, "'Developmental Lag' in the Evolution of Technique of Psychoanalysis of Neurotic Conflict", *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association*, 1982.

<sup>170</sup> Drafts of portions of this paper have been given at philosophy colloquia at The University of California, Berkeley; Cornell University, Holy Cross, The University of Colorado, Boulder, and the Legal Theory Workshop at the Yale Law School. I should like to thank the participants for their searching comments. I would also like to thank to Rudiger Bittner, Myles Burnyeat, John Dunn, Christopher Dustin, Cynthia Farrar, John Ferrari, Gail Fine, Raymond Geuss, Terence Irwin, Malcolm Schofield, David Sedley, Timothy Smiley, all of whom read drafts of this paper and offered astute and helpful comments. I am indebted to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a stipend which facilitated the research for and preparation of this paper.