

III



ORDER
AND
HISTORY

*Plato
and
Aristotle*

Voegelin

Arendt
CB
19
.V58
1956
v.3

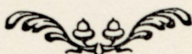
ATE
RESS

ERIC VOEGELIN

ORDER AND HISTORY

VOLUME THREE

Plato and Aristotle



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	ix
Part One: Plato	I
<i>Chapter 1: Plato and Socrates</i>	3
<i>Chapter 2: The Gorgias</i>	24
<i>Chapter 3: The Republic</i>	46
<i>Chapter 4: Phaedrus and Statesman</i>	135
<i>Chapter 5: Timaeus and Critias</i>	170
<i>Chapter 6: The Laws</i>	215
Part Two: Aristotle	269
<i>Chapter 7: Aristotle and Plato</i>	271
<i>Chapter 8: Science and Contemplation</i>	293
<i>Chapter 9: The Science of the Polis</i>	315
<i>Chapter 10: On Types of Character and Skepticism</i>	358
Indexes	373
<i>Greek Terms</i>	373
<i>Modern Authors</i>	377
<i>Subjects and Names</i>	378

it alone enabled one to discern what is right in the polis, as well as in the life of the individual. And the races of man would have no cessation from evils until either the race of the right and truly philosophizing gained political rule, or the race of rulers in the poleis, by some divine dispensation, began to philosophize truly. "With this conviction I came to Italy and Sicily, when I went there for the first time."

The autobiographical passage reports an evolution in the life of Plato that began when he was about twenty-three years old and reached its climax when he was about thirty-eight. Something like a crisis must have occurred around 390 B.C., for into this time falls the violent outburst of the *Gorgias*, perhaps in response to the attack of Polycrates on Socrates, with its transfer of authority from the statesmen of Athens to the new statesman Plato. Then followed the extended voyage to Italy and Sicily of 389/8 and, soon after the return, perhaps around 385, the foundation of the Academy. He had understood that participation in the politics of Athens was senseless if the purpose of politics was the establishment of just order; he had, furthermore, seen that the situation in the other Hellenic poleis was just as bad as in Athens, if not worse; and above all he had understood (what modern political reformers and revolutionaries seem to be unable to understand) that a reform cannot be achieved by a well-intentioned leader who recruits his followers from the very people whose moral confusion is the source of disorder. When he had gained those insights in the course of fifteen years, he did not fall, however, into despair or sullen resignation, but resolved on that "effort of an almost miraculous kind" to renew the order of Hellenic civilization out of the resources of his own love of wisdom, fortified by the paradigmatic life and death of the most just man, Socrates.

The autobiographical declaration will be our guide in the study of the "almost miraculous effort." We are not concerned with a "Platonic philosophy" or "doctrine" but with Plato's resistance to the disorder of the surrounding society and his effort to restore the order of Hellenic civilization through love of wisdom. His effort was a failure in so far as his dream of an Hellenic empire, in the form of a federation under an hegemonic polis, infused by the spirit of the Academy, could not be realized. The unification of Hellas came through the power of Macedonia. Nevertheless, it was a success, probably beyond any expectations entertained by Plato at the time when he founded the Academy, in as much as in his dialogues he created the symbols of the new order of wisdom,

risks his life, is accused of impiety by the very men whose disbelief in things divine is the reason for decay.

The atmosphere must have been tense. More than once Socrates had to admonish the large court not to break out in noisy demonstrations that would disturb his defense. One can imagine how incensed a considerable number among the Five Hundred must have been by the conduct of Socrates and his assurance that he would go on with his god-ordained task, even if they let him off lightly. Still, there were others who must have sensed the fatal hour, for the court divided almost evenly: only 281 of the 500 found him guilty.

The first speech had been technically the defense, in due legal form, against the accusation. After the verdict the trial of Athens overshadowed the trial of Socrates. The manifestation of the Delphian god in Socrates had been revealed, as well as his mission for the polis. Now the people had judged Socrates, and the gods had condemned the people.

With the second speech begins the separation of Socrates from the polis. According to procedural law the plaintiff had to propose a punishment, and the defendant, when found guilty, had to make a counter-proposal. The accuser had demanded the death penalty. On the level of the spiritual drama, however, the savior had been rejected and the man Socrates was now free. Hence, the second speech is a play of the free soul in the moment of suspense between the decision of fate and its fulfillment. He reconsiders his service to the city. What would be the proper reward for the man who is the benefactor of the polis and needs all his time to pursue his god-willed mission? It would seem most appropriate that he should be compensated with the highest honor granted to an Athenian citizen, a place at the public table in the Prytaneion. That honor would be much more fitting for him than for the victors at Olympia. His language is almost to the word that of Xenophanes a century earlier. Nevertheless, the situation has changed from the first insight into the order of wisdom and a reproach by the mystic-philosopher, to the inexorable call to duty by the savior who, facing death, acts as the instrument of God. The demand, however, is not blunt. The charm of Socrates, as always, lies in his superiority to the situation. His soul is quiet; and in his reflections he is the ironic onlooker while forces divine and human have chosen his earthly person as the field for their clash. His demand for a place in the Prytaneion is serious, for he should receive

it as the man of the highest rank in the spiritual order of the polis; and it is not serious, for he knows that he will not receive it in the actual order of Athens. It serves as an ironical starting point for a reflection on practical alternatives. Socrates refuses to make a serious counterproposal, for that would be an admission of guilt. Fear of death would not induce him to make it, for death is not an evil while the other course would be an evil. And what should he suggest? Jail? But what should he do in jail? Or exile? That would only continue his troubles, for how could strangers be expected to tolerate him when even his fellow citizens could not stand his action? Hence, in obedience to the law, which requires him to make a proposition, he proposes an insignificant fine. After this proposal the court sentenced him to death.

The third speech is addressed to the judges, those who condemned him and those who acquitted him. First he reminds the judges who had voted for his death of the sad fame that is now theirs, to be the men who have killed Socrates. And he warns them that they will not escape the fate which they tried to avert by putting him to death, for others will arise and demand the account of their lives which they refused to him. Then he addresses himself to the judges who found him not guilty and reveals to them the secret order that had governed the proceedings of the day: At no point of the whole procedure had his Daimonion warned him; hence, the course taken by him was approved by the gods.

The *Apology* concludes with the great theme that will run through the work of Plato: "And now it is time for us to go, I to die, and you to live." The philosopher's life toward death and the judgment in eternity separates from the life of the dead souls. And then the pathos of the moment is relieved by the last irony of Socratic ignorance: "Who of us takes the better way, is hidden to all, except to the God."

2. *Drama and Myth of the Socratic Soul*

The drama of Socrates is a symbolic form created by Plato as the means for communicating, and expanding, the order of wisdom founded by its hero. We have to touch, therefore, the thorny question why the dialogue should have become the symbolic form of the new order. No final answer, however, can be intended with regard to a question of such infinite complexity. We shall do no more than modestly list a number of points which under all circumstances must be taken into consideration.³

³ The most penetrating study of the question is the chapter "Dialog" in Friedlaender's *Platon I*.

Plato was strongly influenced by Aeschylus. We are familiar with the Aeschylean problem of Peitho, the persuasive imposition of right order on unruly passion. In the *Prometheus* the personified forces of the soul were engaged in the struggle for the order of Dike, with the solution, suggested towards the end, of redemption through the representative suffering of Heracles. The drama of the soul proved, furthermore, to be the substance of the process of history in the *Oresteia*, as well as of constitutional procedure in the *Suppliants*. Tragedy in the Aeschylean sense was a liturgy of Dike, and in particular it was a cult of the political Dike. Tragedy as a political cult, however, will lose its meaning when the people for whom it is written and performed are no longer able to experience the drama of Dike as paradigmatic for the order in their own souls. The tension of order and passion that had been mastered by the cult of tragedy had broken into the open conflict between Socrates and Athens. The cult had become senseless because from now on tragedy had only one subject matter, the fate of Socrates. In so far as the Platonic dialogue was animated by the tension between Socrates and Athens, it was in the history of Hellenic symbolic forms the successor to Aeschylean tragedy under the new political conditions.

But why should there be tragedy at all, and in its succession the Platonic dialogue? The answer must be sought in the Aeschylean and Platonic understanding of society as an order of the soul, as well as in the understanding of the soul as a social order of forces. The order of the soul as the source of order in society and the parallel construction of the two orders will occupy us at greater length in the analysis of the *Republic*. For the present we shall only stress the conception of order as an Agon of forces that will not give way to a nondramatic conception until the victory for wisdom and justice is achieved. Only when the tension of conflict has subsided and the new order is established can its expression assume the form of a static dogma or a metaphysical proposition. Tendencies in this direction are to be observed in the late work of Plato; and the nondramatic form breaks through in the esoteric work of Aristotle. This victory of the new order has, however, the unsatisfactory consequence that the "bad man" of the dramatic play gets lost. We shall have to deal with that question again in the analysis of the *Republic* with its agonal pairs of concepts.

If the dialogue is understood as the successor to the public cult of tragedy, the question will arise to whom the new symbolic form is ad-

does not end with life. It continues into the beyond; and the speaker of the dialogue in the beyond is an eternal judge who has sanctions at his disposal. The inconclusive situation among the living is made conclusive by the Myth of Judgment in the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*. Moreover, the myth of the judgment developed as a content of the dialogue affects the substance of the dialogue itself. In the *Apology* we have seen the multiple levels of action. On the political level Socrates is condemned by Athens; on the mythical level, Athens has been condemned by the gods. The dialogue is itself a mythical judgment. The Socrates of the *Apology* leaves his judges in no doubt that others will ask them the questions which they tried to escape by sentencing him to death. The "others" have come. And the dialogue is the continuation of the trial.

The situation is quite different when the dialogue is conducted with success in the circle of Socrates, Plato, and their friends. Then the positive force of the Socratic soul, its Eros, comes into play. To create existential community through developing the other man's true humanity in the image of his own—that is the work of the Socratic Eros. It is a force closely related to Thanatos. To the desire for Death and its catharsis corresponds the erotic *enthousiasmos*. Thanatos orients the soul toward the Good by relieving it from the sickness of appearance; Eros is the positive desire for the Good. Man has to die, and in his desire to make the best in himself a perpetually living force, he tries to rejuvenate himself through procreation. He has received life once through his birth and he wishes to continue it through rebirth in his children. Those in whom the desire is only bodily have physical children. Those in whom it is spiritual rejuvenate themselves through procreation in the souls of young men, that is, through loving, tending, and developing the best in them. That is the force which animates the world of the Platonic dialogue. The older man, Socrates, speaks to the younger man and, through the power of his soul, awakens in him the echoing desire for the Good. The Idea of the Good, evoked in the communion of the dialogue, fills the souls of those who participate in the evocative act. And thus it becomes the sacramental bond between them and creates the nucleus of the new society.

Death and Love are intimately related as orienting forces in the soul of Socrates. In the *Phaedo* philosophy is the practice of dying; in the *Symposion* and *Phaedrus* it is the eroticism of the soul for the Idea which creates the procreative community among men. Eros dominates his life

because it is a life towards death; and his Eros is powerful because existence in the expectation of catharsis through death gives the proper distance to the incidents of earthly life. The nobility of the soul, which manifests itself in the pursuit of the good and the avoidance of the ignoble in personal conduct, endows him with the power over other men who are willing to open their souls to the influence of the noble. Eros, thus, becomes an ordering force in social relations. Only the noble souls are attracted to the erotic, evocative communion; the lesser souls remain indifferent or resist. The erotic attraction and indifference, the power and response in the erotic relation, create the ranks of the spiritual hierarchy. The force of Eros shades off into the force of Dike, as did the force of Thanatos.

§ 2. EROS AND THE WORLD

We have spoken of the crisis in Plato's life that occurred about 390 B.C. If the *Gorgias* be taken as the expression of his mood at the time, the situation in Athens must indeed have seemed unbearable to him. In 389 he embarked on the extended travel that led him to Italy and Sicily. In Syracuse he formed the friendship with Dion, the brother-in-law of Dionysius I. After the death of the tyrant, in 367, Dion thought the time propitious to use his influence with his nephew, Dionysius II, for a reform of government. He appealed to Plato to come to Syracuse and to support the attempt with his presence. Plato, who at the time was sixty years of age, followed the request with many hesitations. This was the beginning of his involvement in Sicilian affairs which outlasted the murder of Dion in 354.⁴

1. *Plato and Sicily*

While in the nineteenth century it has been the habit among scholars to underrate the importance of Plato's intervention in Sicilian politics, and even to doubt the authenticity of Plato's letters, we are faced more recently with the danger of exaggeration in the opposite direction. The mere numbering of the Sicilian travels as the first (389/8), the second (366/5), and the third (361/60), is apt to create the im-

⁴ The most important ancient sources on the Sicilian affairs in which Plato was involved are the essays by Plutarch on *Dion* and *Timoleon*. The best modern treatment is Renate von Scheliha, *Dion. Die Platonische Staatsgründung in Sizilien* (Leipzig, 1934).

The admonitions to the recipients of the *Seventh Letter* reveal in part the nature of the union between Plato and Dion—though no more of it than can enter into a general formulation. Quite possibly, however, we find a clearer reflection of it in the description of the erotic experience in the *Phaedrus* (particularly 252–256). In pre-existence the souls of the lovers follow in the train of a god. When they have fallen to earth each is in search of the beloved companion who carries in his soul the nature of the god whom they had formerly followed. The followers of Zeus desire that the soul of the beloved have the nature of Zeus; and they inquire, therefore, whether he has the nature of a philosopher and ruler. When they have found him and fallen in love with him they do what they can to strengthen this nature in him. They search their own souls; and they find their own divine nature in their fascinated gaze at the nature of the god in the beloved. Thus they become possessed of him and form their own character, as far as that is possible for man, into participation in the god. And since they believe the beloved to be the cause of this transformation, they love him all the more; and what they receive from Zeus, like the Bacchae, that they stream back into him to make him as like to their god as possible.

The erotic union has sacramental character, for the nature of the god becomes incarnate in the community of the erotic souls as in its mystical body. Not all souls, however, have followed the same god in their pre-existence. And only those who have followed Zeus are the chosen instruments for actualizing the god of political order in society. The symbol of the "Sons of Zeus" has its experiential basis in the eroticism of the philosopher-rulers. One can go perhaps even a step further, as Hildebrandt does in his *Platon*, where he suggests that the passage in *Phaedrus* seems deliberately to avoid the nominative *Zeus*; the name of the god appears always in the genitive *Dios*. In particular the construction *Dios dion* in 252e, however, makes it probable that these stylistic peculiarities are meant as a hint that Dion is the partner of the relationship which Plato celebrates in the dithyramb of the *Phaedrus*. The suggestion gains in probability if we consider the epitaph which Plato wrote for his friend, with the closing line: "Dion, thou, who made rage with Eros my heart."

The intimacy of the erotic relationship, though not beyond words, is beyond the written word. The wisdom of the soul which is engen-

dered through Eros cannot and must not be put down on paper as a teachable doctrine. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates-Plato says that it would be simplicity to leave or receive an art (*techne*) in writing, under the belief that the written word would be reliable and clear. Writing is like painting; the creation of the painter has the likeness of life, but when you would ask it a question it would remain silent. Words, when they are written down, will fall into the hands of those who cannot understand them; and when they are abused they cannot defend themselves (275c–e). There is another word, however, the word graven with understanding into the soul of the learner, that can defend itself and knows when to speak and when to be silent. And *Phaedrus* answers: "It is the idea-word that you mean, living and with a soul, of which the written word justly is called no more than an image" (276a). The idea-word (*tou eidotos logos*) is the medium in which the tenderness and strength of the erotic mania express themselves; it is the vehicle of communication by means of which the erotic souls attune one another to the harmony of the cosmos; and it is the fragile vessel in which the god becomes incarnate in community.

The attempt to formulate the intimacy of the erotic community as a doctrine is worse than futile: it is the desecration of a mystery. That is the personal insult which Plato had to suffer at the hands of Dionysius II. We have seen that Plato had his misgivings about the seriousness of the tyrant's desire to become a convert to philosophy. As soon as he arrived in Syracuse and saw that his apprehensions were justified, he submitted therefore the seriousness of the tyrant to the infallible test (*peira*). He mapped out for him the course of study which a man, if he is truly desirous, will follow with zeal in spite of its hardships; while the man who is only tempted by some vanity will soon find the course impossible because it entails a change in his way of life. Dionysius did not pass this test. He was vain enough, however, to consider himself a philosopher and to put down in writing, and to circulate, what he had learned from the discourse with Plato and from secondary sources. That breach of confidence gave Plato the occasion to express himself, in the *Seventh Letter*, more distinctly on the problem of written publication of his doctrine.

Those who publish what they have learned, whether from direct instruction, or through other information, or through their own discovery, certainly have understood nothing. He himself has never written directly on the core of his philosophy, and never will, for it cannot

be put into words like other knowledge. Understanding can come only after the long preparatory period of studies and discipline. And then it will be generated in the soul like a blaze by a leaping spark; and once this fire of understanding is lighted it will never burn down. Besides, if he thought that the doctrine could be written down, he would do it himself. But even if it were possible, it would hardly be advisable. For those who are able to understand, the very few, will surmise the truth anyway and discover it at the merest hint. The others who cannot understand it would despise the revelation and expose it to contempt; while still others, because nothing is touched in them existentially, would be filled with vanity and high hopes as if now they were in the possession of some sacred knowledge (341b-342). Hence no serious man will write of the really serious things for the many. Therefore, "when there comes anything before your eyes, for instance of a legislator on laws, it cannot have been the most serious matter to him, if he is a serious person himself, but that will still lie in the most beautiful and noble place of his mind" (344c). To these explanations should be added the warnings to Dionysius himself, in the *Second Letter*, written perhaps ten years earlier than the *Seventh*. The best safeguard against misunderstandings is to learn by heart and not to write at all. "Therefore I have never written anything on it [*i.e.*, on the essence of philosophy], and that is the reason why there is not and never will be any writings by Plato himself, but those which go by his name, are by Socrates who has become beautiful and young." The warning is followed by the request to read the letter repeatedly and then to burn it (314c). Publication is the unforgivable insult to the "leader and lord" (*hegemon kai kyrios*) in these matters (345c).

The endeavors of the Platonists were no more than a brief episode in the disastrous Sicilian history. The spirit of the Platonic reform was revived in the reorganization of the island by Timoleon, beginning in 344, but the civil war flared up again, in 323, and this formerly most promising area of Hellenic colonization fell in the end to the Carthaginians and to their successors, the Romans.

2. *The Letter to Hermias of Atarneus*

Of a quite different historical importance was the expansion of Platonism in the East. By the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6 the Greek cities in Anatolia had passed under Persian administration. Within this

administration, however, it was possible for a skilful leader to attain a status of semi-autonomy for his territory. One Hermias, a man of lowly origin, was able to achieve control over some mountain places in the Troad. He could extend his domain over the coastal cities, at least down to Assos; he received public recognition from the Persian satrap and was allowed the title of prince. The capital of his realm was Atarneus.

In the expansion of Hermias, two Platonists, Erastus and Coriscus of Scepsis, were of decisive influence. Having completed their course in the Academy, they had returned to Scepsis. They seem to have advised Hermias to temper somewhat the form of his tyranny, with the result that the coastal cities joined voluntarily the dominion of Hermias. What Plato had planned for Sicily, that is, a reform of the government in Syracuse that would induce the other cities to enter into a hegemonic federation, succeeded on a smaller scale in Anatolia. The organization of the government under Hermias and the Platonists is not known in detail. We only know that Hermias allotted to Erastus and Coriscus the city of Assos as their special domain and that a treaty with the city of Erythrae was concluded in the name of "Hermias and the companions." Around Erastus and Coriscus there existed quite probably a Platonic circle, for in 347, when Aristotle and Xenocrates left the Academy, they went to Assos; during the next few years something like a daughter Academy developed in the city. Among the pupils of Aristotle at this time was Callisthenes, his nephew, the later campaign historiographer in the suite of Alexander. For the close relationship among the members of the ruling group of Platonists there is further evidence in the fact that Aristotle married the niece of Hermias.

The rule of Hermias came to an unfortunate end as a consequence of his Hellenic policy. He considered his realm a bridgehead for the impending war of Macedonia against Persia. His negotiations with Philip were betrayed to the Persians; and the satrap who conducted the subsequent campaign against Atarneus got hold of the person of Hermias. Under torture he did not betray the plans of Philip and, finally, he was crucified. When he was asked for the last grace that he requested, he answered: "Tell my friends and companions that I have done nothing unworthy of philosophy or weak." The message was delivered to Aristotle and the friends at Assos. In his commemorative hymn to the dead friend, Aristotle praised Arete for whom to die is

an envied fate in Hellas: Hermias went to Hades for her sake like Achilles.

The motif of Achilles, the protagonist of the Hellenes against Asia, is more than a poetic ornament. Hermias died in 341. The military alliance with Philip in preparation for the Persian war has to be dated probably in 342. This is the year in which Aristotle went to Pella to become the educator of Alexander. The romantic picture of the King of Macedonia searching Hellas for the greatest philosopher (who at that time was not the distinguished public figure) for his great son (who at that time was not the Great), must be somewhat tempered by the reality of the political link between Atarneus and Macedonia and the probability that Aristotle's mission in Pella was in part diplomatic. The tutor of Alexander was not only the great philosopher, he was also the son-in-law of Hermias, engaged in political negotiations that would lead to the Hellenic conquest of Asia. This was the atmosphere in which Alexander grew up and was formed. And we see, indeed, the motif of Achilles reappear in the early years of Alexander's campaigns, which were conducted in the *imitatio Achillis*.⁵

The chain of human relations, which ends with the second Achilles setting out for the conquest of Asia, begins with Plato's *Sixth Letter*, the founding document of the union between the three men who organized the realm of Atarneus. It has to be dated somewhere in the last years of Plato's life, that is, between 350 and 347. The *Letter* is addressed to the three men in common, that is, to "Hermias and Erastus and Coriscus." It has the character of a sacred constitution. A god seemed to have good fortune in store for them when he brought them together; for their company will be to each other of mutual benefit. Nothing could add more to the strength of Hermias than the acquisition of loyal and uncorrupt friends; and nothing is more necessary for Erastus and Coriscus than to add the worldly wisdom of an experienced ruler to their wisdom of the Idea. "What then have I to say?" To Hermias, that he can assure him of the trustworthiness of the two Platonists, and advise him to cling to their friendship by all means. To Coriscus and Erastus, that they should cling to Hermias and be bound with him in the one bond of *philia*. Such a bond, however well knit, may become strained. In this case they should submit their diffi-

⁵ For a more circumstantial account and for the sources cf. Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle*, trans. by Richard Robinson (2d ed., Oxford, 1948) Chap. 5, "Aristotle in Assos and Macedonia."

culty to Plato; his counsel, rendered with justice and reverent restraint, will heal the friendship and community surer than any charm. Having thus recommended the friends to each other, and having made himself the partner in their community as its guardian and arbiter, Plato reflects on the *Letter* itself: "This *Letter* all three of you must read; the best would be all three together, otherwise at least two; as much in communion [*koinê*] as possible, and as often as possible. You must recognize it as a contract and binding law, as it is just. And you must swear to it with a not a-music seriousness as well as with the playfulness that is the brother of earnestness. You must swear to it by the God who is the guide in all things, present and future; and by the lordly father of the guide and author; whom we shall see in his clearness, if we are truly philosophers, as far as it is possible to men who are blessed."

The document is so clear that it hardly requires interpretation. The philosophers and the king have, indeed, entered into the existential communion of *philia*. Their bond is the faith that was kindled by Plato. In his name they should cling to each other; and to his healing power they should refer any strains on their bond. We see emerging in outline the conception of an Hellenic theocratic empire of federated communities of Platonists with its center in the Academy. The sacred symbol of the union between the companions is the *Letter*, to be read and re-read in communion. The rite of reading it and swearing to it should be celebrated in that mood of suspense between seriousness and play which is the appropriate mood toward a myth. And they should swear by the guiding god as well as by the father of the guide and author—a theological symbolism which at this period of Plato's life probably signifies the divine forces of the *Timaeus*, that is, nous-in-psyche and the Demiurge.

and supply mass-connivance in the rise of the tyrant. Moreover, Polus furnishes the subtle reason for political paralysis in the advanced stage of social decomposition. His sneer at Socrates implies that his personal vileness is the measure of humanity. He is firm in the conviction that every man will indulge in vile acts if he has a chance to get away with it. His outburst against Socrates is motivated by honest indignation against a man who breaks the camaraderie of the canaille and pretends to be superior. And he cannot be brushed off; he insists. He gives a thumbnail sketch of Archelaus, an unsavory individual who recently had gained the rulership of Macedonia by an impressive series of crimes. According to Socrates the successful tyrant would have to be unhappy. The absurdity is glaring. Polus taunts Socrates, saying that he is not going to tell him he would rather be any other Macedonian than Archelaus (471a-d). And he can be persistent because he knows that all the best people are on his side. He still breaks away from the argument because he sincerely disbelieves that anybody can in good faith maintain propositions as absurd as the Socratic. With something like despair he charges that Socrates maliciously does not want to agree with him, "for surely you must think as I do" (471e). The battle lines are now drawn more clearly. Socrates assures Polus that he will, indeed, find the majority siding with him, and offers a list of names from the best Athenian families, including that of Pericles, who will all agree with Polus. Socrates will stand alone; but he will refuse to be deprived by false witnesses of his patrimony, which is the truth (472a-b).

Nevertheless, we have not yet reached the point of murder. This is a discussion, and Polus has accepted the conditions of Socrates. His attempt to break out and to beat Socrates down by the appeal to what everybody thinks has failed. The two great clubs used by vulgarity for silencing the spirit, the "Holier Than Thou" argument and the "That's What You Think," have proved ineffective. Now Socrates forces Polus on to the admission that doing injustice is worse than suffering injustice, and that doing injustice without suffering punishment is the worst of all, and hence that the notorious Archelaus is more miserable than his victims and still more miserable because he escapes the due punishment for his misdeeds (479d-e). Once this is admitted the value of rhetoric has become doubtful. What purpose can it serve

demos of Athens.¹ When Callicles speaks he does not dare to contradict his love; he is a politician of the type "Them are my sentiments, and if you don't like them I can change them" (481d-e). In a few sentences, rich in implications, Plato has predetermined the inevitable course of the debate. In the two Eroses of Socrates and Callicles is implied the later development of the *Republic* with its distinction of the good and the evil Eros. Here, in the *Gorgias*, the situation is revealed in which the conception of a metamorphosis of Eros originates. The issue at stake is that of communication and intelligibility in a decadent society. Are the existential differences between Socrates and Callicles so profound that the bridge of a common humanity between them has broken down? In the *Theaetetus*, where Plato comes close to characterizing the enemies as beasts, he nevertheless restores community by observing that in private conversation it is possible at least to scratch the thick crust of the vulgarian and to touch in him a spark of his renounced humanity. The bridge, thus, is not broken; but where are its points of support on both sides? They cannot be found on the level of principles of conduct, for this is precisely the level on which the protagonists meet in "war and battle." On the level of politics no compromise is possible; the political form of the *città corrotta* is the civil war. The case of Polus has shown that intellectual agreement is not followed of necessity by existential understanding. The level of communication, if there is one to be found at all, lies deeper. And to this deeper level Plato must now appeal, for otherwise the debate with Callicles would be only a repetition of the existentially inconclusive bout with Polus. This deeper level Plato designates by the term *pathos* (481c).

Pathos is what men have in common, however variable it may be in its aspects and intensities. Pathos designates a passive experience, not an action; it is what happens to man, what he suffers, what befalls him fatefully and what touches him in his existential core—as for instance the experiences of Eros (481c-d). In their exposure to pathos all men are equal, though they may differ widely in the manner in which they come to grips with it and build the experience into their lives. There is the Aeschylean touch even in this early work of Plato, with its hint that the *pathema* experienced by all may result in a *mathema* different for each man. The community of pathos is the basis of communication.

¹ A more detailed account of this scene would have to go into the homo-erotic implications; Socrates refers to *philosophia* as *ta ema paidika* (482a).

Behind the hardened, intellectually supported attitudes which separate men, lie the *pathemata* which bind them together. However false and grotesque the intellectual position may be, the pathos at the core has the truth of an immediate experience. If one can penetrate to this core and reawaken in a man the awareness of his *conditio humana*, communication in the existential sense becomes possible.

The possibility of communication on the level of pathos is the condition under which the debate in the *Gorgias* makes sense. The reminder is necessary at this juncture, as we have said, because otherwise the following argument with Callicles would be senseless. The possibility, at least, of breaking through to the pathos must be open. This does not mean, however, that the operation will actually be successful. Callicles no more than Polus will be won over. On the level of politics the tragedy will run its course to the murder of Socrates. But when the appeal remains ineffective, what meaning can the potential community of the pathos have? We have to realize the seriousness of the impasse, if we want to understand the conclusion of the *Gorgias*. The impasse means that historically and politically the bond of humanity is broken; the Polus and Callicles are outside the pale of human comity. Does it mean, as the inevitable consequence seems to be, that they should be killed on sight as dangerous animals? The answer of the *Gorgias* is a definite No. In the *Apology* Socrates had warned his judges that others would come after him and with renewed insistence ask the questions for which he had to die. The prediction is fulfilled; now it is Plato who asks the questions and who is in danger, as we shall see, of suffering the fate of Socrates. But the repetition would be a senseless sacrifice; and is there an alternative to the organization of a revolt with the purpose of exterminating the Athenian rabble? The conclusion of the *Gorgias* formulates the conditions under which the community of mankind can be maintained even when on the level of concrete society it has broken down. The condition is the faith in the transcendental community of man. The incrustation of the evildoer that remains impenetrable to the human appeal will fall off in death and leave the soul naked before the eternal judge. The order that has been broken in life will be restored in afterlife. In the *logique du coeur* the Judgment of the Dead is the answer to the failure of communication in life. We shall come back to this point later. For the moment we have to be aware that Plato reminds us of the community of pathos at the beginning of

find the same theoretical situation recurring in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries A.D.

The position of Callicles has a fundamental weakness, characteristic of this type of existentialism. Callicles does not seriously deny the relative rank of virtues. He is not prepared to deny that courage ranks higher than cowardice, or wisdom higher than folly. When he identifies the good with the strong, he acts on the inarticulate premise that there exists a pre-established harmony between the lustiness represented by himself and the social success of virtues which he does not discern too clearly but to which he gives conventional assent. Socrates, in his argument, uses the technique of pointing to facts which disprove the pre-established harmony and involves Callicles in contradictions between his valuations and the consequences of his existentialism.

The first and most obvious attack is directed against the harmony between strength and goodness. Callicles had maintained that the rule of the strongest is justice. Now Socrates raises the question whether inferior people, if they are numerous enough, cannot be stronger than the better ones. And if so, would then the more numerous weak who impose the despised conventions not be the stronger ones; and would, as a consequence, the argument for justice by nature against justice by convention not break down? Callicles is incensed at the idea that a rabble of slaves should lay down the law for him because they happen to be physically stronger. He withdraws immediately and insists that when he said "the stronger" he had meant of course "the more excellent." Thus the first defense of the principle that the survival of the fittest entails the survival of the best has broken down.

The "excellent" are finally defined by Callicles as the men who are most wise and courageous in affairs of state. They ought to be the rulers, and it would be fair if they had more than their subjects (491d-e). Socrates counters with the question: Should they have more than themselves? This question brings a new outburst from Callicles. A man should not rule himself. On the contrary, goodness and justice consist in the satisfaction of desires. "Luxury, license and freedom" (*tryphē, akolasia, eleutheria*), if provided with means, are virtue and happiness (*arete, eudaimonia*); whatever is said to the contrary is the ornamental talk of worthless men (492c). It is not difficult for Socrates to suggest desires of such baseness that even Callicles squirms. But he has become stubborn and insists on the identification of happiness with

it is worse to commit injustice; (3) it is worst to remain in the disorder of the soul which is created by doing injustice and not to experience the restoration of order through punishment. The sneer of Callicles—that the philosopher is exposed to ignominious treatment—can now be met on the level of the philosophy of order. Callicles had taken the stand that it was of supreme importance to protect oneself effectively against suffering injustice. Socrates maintains that the price of safety against injustice may be too high. The suffering of injustice can be averted most effectively if a man acquires a position of power, or if he is the companion of the powers that be. The tyrant is in the ideal position of safety against injustice. About the nature of the tyrant there are no doubts, and the companion of the tyrant will be acceptable to him only if he is of a similar nature, that is, if he connives in the injustice of the ruling power. The companion of tyranny may escape the suffering of injustice but his corruption will inevitably involve him in the doing of injustice. Callicles agrees enthusiastically and again reminds Socrates that the companion of the tyrant will plunder and kill the man who does not imitate the tyrant. The argument is nearing its climax. The sneers of Callicles can be effective only against men of his own ilk. They fall flat before a man who is ready to die. Do you think, is the answer of Socrates, that all cares should be directed towards the prolongation of life? (511b-c). The "true man" is not so fond of life, and there may be situations in which he no longer cares to live (512e). The argument is not yet directed personally against Callicles, but we feel the tension increasing towards the point where Callicles is co-responsible, through his conniving conduct, for the murder of Socrates and perhaps of Plato himself. The social conventions, which Callicles despises, are wearing thin; and the advocate of nature is brought to realize that he is a murderer face to face with his victim. The situation is fascinating for those among us who find ourselves in the Platonic position and who recognize in the men with whom we associate today the intellectual pimps for power who will connive in our murder tomorrow.

It would be too much of an honor, however, to burden Callicles personally with the guilt of murder. The whole society is corrupt, and the process of corruption did not start yesterday. Callicles is no more than one of a kind; and he may even get caught himself in the morass which he deepens. Socrates raises the question of the good statesman

on principle. Goodness and badness are now defined in terms of advancing or decomposing the order of existence. A statesman is good if under his rule the citizens become better; he is bad if under his rule the citizens become worse, in terms of existential order. Socrates reviews the men who are the pride of Athenian history: Themistocles, Pericles, Cimon, Miltiades; and applying his criterion he finds that they were bad statesmen. They have bloated the city with docks and harbors and walls and revenues, and they have left no room for justice and temperance. The conclusive proof for the evil character of their rule is the ferocious injustice committed against them by the very citizens whom it would have been their task to improve. The present generation is the heir to the evil that has accumulated through the successive rules of such "great" statesmen. And men like Callicles and Alcibiades who cater to the evil passions of the masses might well become their victims. So, what does Callicles want with his admonitions to conform to the habits of politics and to become a flatterer of the demos? Does Callicles seriously suggest that Socrates should join the ranks of those who corrupt society still further? Is it not, rather, his task to pronounce the truth which would restore some order? But Callicles cannot break out of the circle of his evil. He can only repeat that the consequences for Socrates will be unpleasant.

The Socratic answer fixes the position of Plato: No doubt, the consequences may be unpleasant; who does not know that in Athens any man may suffer anything; nor would it be a surprise if he were put to death; on the contrary, he rather expects a fate of this kind. And why does he anticipate his death? Because he is one of the few Athenians who cares about the true art of politics and the only one in his time who acts like a statesman (521d).

This last formulation, by which Plato claims for himself the true statesmanship of his time, is important in several respects. In the construction of the *Gorgias*, this claim destroys the authority of Callicles to give advice to anybody with regard to public conduct. The man who stands convicted as the accomplice of tyrannical murderers and as the corruptor of his country, does not represent spiritual order, and nobody is obliged to show respect to his word. The authority of public order lies with Socrates. With regard to the relation of Plato to Athens the claim stigmatizes the politicians who are obsessed by the "love of the people" (*demon Eros*, 513c) as the "adversaries" (*antistasiotes*,

513c) of the existential order represented by Socrates-Plato; the authoritative order is transferred from the people of Athens and its leaders to the one man Plato. Surprising as this move may seem to many, Plato's claim has proved historically quite sound. The order represented by Callicles has gone down in ignominy; the order represented by Plato has survived Athens and is still one of the most important ingredients in the order of the soul of those men who have not renounced the traditions of Western civilization.

5. *The Judgment of the Dead*

The transfer of authority from Athens to Plato is the climax of the *Gorgias*. The meaning of the transfer and the source of the new authority, however, still need some clarification. Let us recall what is at stake. The transfer of authority means that the authority of Athens, as the public organization of a people in history, is invalidated and superseded by a new public authority manifest in the person of Plato. That is revolution. And it is even more than an ordinary revolution in which new political forces enter the struggle for power in competition with the older ones. Plato's revolution is a radical call for spiritual regeneration. The people of Athens has lost its soul. The representative of Athenian democracy, Callicles, is existentially disordered; the great men of Athenian history are the corruptors of their country; the law courts of Athens can kill a man physically but their sentence has no moral authority of punishment. The fundamental *raison d'être* of a people, that it goes its way through history in partnership with God, has disappeared; there is no reason why Athens should exist, considering what she is. The *Gorgias* is the death sentence over Athens.

But what is the nature of the authority that renders judgment? Plato reveals it through the myth of the Judgment of the Dead, at the end of the *Gorgias*. Callicles has reminded Socrates repeatedly of the fate that awaits him at the hands of an Athenian court. In a final answer Socrates says that he would rather die with a just soul, than go into the beyond with a soul full of injustice. For this would be the last and worst of all evils (522e). The reason for his resolution he sets forth in the myth.

From the Age of Cronos there stems a law concerning the destiny of man, which still is in force among the gods: that men who have led just and holy lives will go, after death, to the Islands of the Blessed,

there can again be felt the Aeschylean touch of the wisdom through suffering as the great law of the psyche for gods and men.

The curable soul, thus, is permanently in the state of judgment; to experience itself permanently in the presence of the judgment, we might say, is the criterion of the curable soul; "only the good souls are in hell," as Berdiaev, on occasion, has formulated the problem. This conception, however, would have an unexpected consequence if it were understood not existentially but dogmatically. If the symbol of punishment in afterlife were misunderstood as a dogmatic hypothesis, the not-so-good souls might arrive at the conclusion that they will wait for afterlife and see what is going to happen then; if suffering is the lot of the soul under all circumstances, they can wait for their share of suffering (which is no more than a dogmatic assertion) in postexistence and meanwhile enjoy some pleasurable criminality. It is a problem in the psychology of dogmatic derailment similar to that which has arisen in some instances in Calvinism: if the fate of the soul is predestined, some may arrive at the conclusion that it does not matter what they do. This psychological derailment, through the dogmatic misunderstanding of the existential truth of the myth, Plato forestalls by the threat of eternal condemnation for the incurable souls. In the symbolism of the myth eternal condemnation is the correlate to the refusal of communication on the level of the myth of the soul; eternal condemnation means, in existential terms, self-excommunication. The revelation of the divinity in history moves on; the authority rests with the men who live in friendship with God; the criminal can achieve nothing but the perdition of his soul.

rectional ambivalence of the symbols. From the depth of the psyche wells up life and order when historically, in the surrounding society, the souls have sunk into the depth of death and disorder. From the depth comes the force that drags the philosopher's soul up to the light, so that it is difficult to say whether the upper There is the source of his truth, or the nether There that forced him up. And the philosopher descending from the mouth of the Cave brings the same message as Er ascending from Hades: The apparently hopeless situation of the soul at the point of its death—that it has the freedom of Arete but not the wisdom to use it—is not hopeless; forces of life are there to help. But the source of the help is hidden; we can only say it is There.

There is more to be said about the Platonic experience of the psyche. But that much will be sufficient at the present stage of the analysis. And it will be sufficient, in particular, to warn us to read into Plato neither a mystical union with God, nor any other neo-Platonic or Christian developments. Plato's philosophizing remains bound by the compactness of the Dionysiac soul.

§ 3. THE RESISTANCE TO CORRUPT SOCIETY

In the depth the soul experiences its death; from the depth it will rise to life again, with the help of God and his messenger. The depth of existence, the anxiety of the fall from being, is the Hades where the soul must turn toward life or death. It is a terrible hour of decision, for in the night where life and death are confronted they are difficult to distinguish. Arete is free, but wisdom is weak. In its freedom the soul resists death. But the forces of existence, past and present, are strong as well as deceptive; persuasively they pull the soul to accept their death as life. In its freedom the soul is willing to follow the helper. But in order to follow his guidance, it must recognize him as the guide toward life; and life looks strangely like death when it drags the soul up to die to the depth in which it lives. Nevertheless, the struggle itself becomes a source of knowledge. In suffering and resisting the soul discerns the directions from which the pulls come. The darkness engenders the light in which it can distinguish between life and death, between the helper and the enemy. And the growing light of wisdom illuminates the way for the soul to travel.

Plato was supremely conscious of the struggle and its polarity. Philosophy is not a doctrine of right order, but the light of wisdom that falls

on the struggle; and help is not a piece of information about truth, but the arduous effort to locate the forces of evil and identify their nature. For half the battle is won when the soul can recognize the shape of the enemy and, consequently, knows that the way it must follow leads in the opposite direction. Plato operates in the *Republic*, therefore, with pairs of concepts which point the way by casting their light on both good and evil. His philosopher does not exist in a social vacuum, but in opposition to the sophist. Justice is not defined in the abstract but in opposition to the concrete forms which injustice assumes. The right order of the polis is not presented as an "ideal state," but the elements of right order are developed in concrete opposition to the elements of disorder in the surrounding society. And the shape, the Eidos, of Arete in the soul grows in opposition to the many *eide* of disorder in the soul.

In developing such pairs of concepts, which illuminate truth by opposing it to untruth, Plato continues the tradition of the mystic-philosophers, as well as the poets back to Hesiod, who experienced truth in their resistance to the conventions of society. His continuation, however, must be to a certain extent a restoration under the new aggravated conditions. For between the age of Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Heraclitus and the age of Plato lies the century of sophistic destruction. His pairs of concepts carry, therefore, the burden of a complicated historical situation. In Plato's immediate environment the sophist is the enemy and the philosopher rises in opposition to him; in the wider range of Hellenic history, the philosopher comes first and the sophist follows him as the destroyer of his work through immanentization of the symbols of transcendence. The Platonic pairs of concepts, therefore, hearken back to the mystic-philosophers, and at the same have a new weight and precision in order to match the weight and precision that untruth has gained through the sophists. The component of resistance in Plato's work, as well as its expression by the pairs of concepts, thus, is somewhat complex. In order to present its various aspects adequately, we shall analyze first the principal pairs, with due regard to their historical affinities; then, Plato's description of the sophistic idea of justice, that is, of the enemy from which the further dialogue must move away.

1. *The Pairs of Concepts*

A first pair of concepts is concerned with the nature of justice and injustice.

Justice and injustice are in the soul what health and disease are in the

body (444c). Health is defined as the establishment of an order by nature among the parts of the body; disease as a disturbance of the natural order of rule and subordination among the parts (444d). The establishment of an order by nature in the soul in such a manner that, of the various parts of the soul, each fulfills its own function and does not interfere with the function of the other parts, is called justice (*dikaiosyne*) (444d). And more generally: "Arete is health, beauty, and well-being of the soul; vice [*kakia*] its disease, ugliness, and infirmity" (444d-e).

Since the concept of justice is developed for the purpose of criticizing the sophistic disorder, its meaning must be understood in relation to its opposite. For the designation of sophistic disorder Plato uses the term *polypragmosyne*, the readiness to engage in multifarious activities which are not a man's proper business; and on occasion he uses the terms *metabole* (change or shift of occupation) and *allogotripragmosyne* (meddlesomeness, officious interference) (434b-c; 444b). "One man cannot practice with success many arts" (374a)—that is the principle on which the participants of the dialogue have agreed. *Polypragmosyne* covers the various violations of the principle, such as the attempts to practice more than the one craft for which a man is specifically gifted, as well as the desire of the unskilled to rule the polis to its detriment. When applied to the soul it refers to the inclination of appetites and desires to direct the course of human action and to claim the rulership of the soul which properly belongs to wisdom. *Dikaiosyne*, on the other hand, covers right order on all levels in opposition to *polypragmosyne*—with the qualification, however, that Plato is inclined to narrow the meaning of justice to the right order of the soul and the polis, while the division of labor on the level of crafts is only a figuration of justice proper, a "shadow of justice" (*eidolon tes dikaiosynes*) (443c-d).

If we survey the range of meaning of the two concepts, as well as their experiential motivation, we can recognize their affinity to the Heraclitian opposition of *polymathie* and true understanding. The "much-knowing" of Heraclitus has become the "much-doing" of Plato. The disorder that manifested itself in the generation of Heraclitus in the obfuscation of wisdom through far-flung superficial knowledge has now reached the level of action through dilettantish meddlesomeness. Moreover, we can now catch the full flavor of the previously discussed Hippias anecdote as the symbolization of the sophist who both knows and does too much, whose polypragmatic omniversality expresses the sink-

ing of a society into disorder and injustice. And, finally, in this context we must mention the Democritus Fragment B 80: "Shameful it is to meddle [*polypragmoneonta*] with others' business, and not to know one's own [*oikeia*]." The *oikeopragia* (minding one's own affairs) of 434c, as well as other passages of the *Republic*, especially 433e, strongly recall the Democritian dictum.

The analysis of the first pair of concepts reveals a peculiar obstacle to the adequate interpretation of Plato's intention in English, or in any other modern language. The difficulty will not only recur in the analysis of further pairs, but is of general interest for the history of philosophical language in Western civilization. Plato created his pairs in his resistance to the corrupt society that surrounded him. Both members of the pair acquired technical meaning in the course of the dialogue. From the concrete struggle against the surrounding corruption, however, Plato emerged as the victor with world-historic effectiveness. As a consequence, the positive half of his pairs has become the "philosophical language" of Western civilization, while the negative half has lost its status as technical vocabulary. We can translate Plato's *dikaiosyne* as justice, but we have no technical term to translate his *polypragmosyne* as the opposite of justice. The loss of the negative half of the pair has deprived the positive half of its flavor of resistance and opposition, and left it with a quality of abstractness which is utterly alien to the concreteness of Plato's thought. We cannot recapture that militant concreteness of *dikaiosyne* which made it possible for Plato to use *oikeopragia* (another untranslatable term) as a synonym. The negative members of the pairs generally are lost; the only one that has survived is the term "sophist" itself.

The loss makes itself felt in the most embarrassing manner in the second pair that we now have to consider, *philosophos* and *philodoxos*. We have philosophers in English, but no philodoxers. The loss is in this instance peculiarly embarrassing, because we have an abundance of philodoxers in reality; and since the Platonic term for their designation is lost, we refer to them as philosophers. In modern usage, thus, we call philosophers precisely the persons to whom Plato as a philosopher was in opposition. And an understanding of Plato's positive half of the pair is today practically impossible, except by a few experts, because we think of philodoxers when we speak of philosophers. The Platonic conception

"ignorance of the soul" (382a-b). With regard to the content of "true" theology Plato singles out two rules as the most important ones: (1) God is not the author of all things but only of the good ones (380c), and (2) the gods do not deceive men in word or deed (383a). The rules of the true type are critically pointed against a complex of falsehood that is promulgated not only by Homer and Hesiod (the targets of Xenophanes), but also by the tragic poets and the sophists. We remember that in the *Protagoras* Plato made the great sophist insist on the poets, hierophants, and prophets as the precursors of his art. The poets are pooled with the sophists as the source of disorder in the soul and society. If order is to be restored, the restoration must begin at the strategic point of the "ignorance of the soul" by setting aright the relation between man and God. This is the problem which dominates the *Republic* as a whole, and it dominates in particular the social critique. The attack on the corrupt society is not directed against this or that political abuse but against a disease of the soul. In so far as the presentation of the gods by the poets disturbs the right order of the soul, the poets must be condemned along with the sophists. The restoration requires a turning-around (*periagoge*) of "the whole soul" (518d-e): from ignorance to the truth of God, from opinion about uncertainly wavering things to knowledge of being, and from multifarious activity to the justice of tending to one's proper sphere of action.

We have arranged the pairs of concepts on a line that leads from the praxeological periphery of minding one's business, through the philosopher's ability to discern being "itself" in the manifold of appearance, to the center of the soul where its truth originates in the truth of God. The pairs must be understood in their aggregate as the expression of a man's resistance to a social corruption which goes so deep that it affects the truth of existence under God. Philosophy, thus, has its origin in the resistance of the soul to its destruction by society. Philosophy in this sense, as an act of resistance illuminated by conceptual understanding, has two functions for Plato. It is first, and most importantly, an act of salvation for himself and others, in that the evocation of right order and its reconstitution in his own soul becomes the substantive center of a new community which, by its existence, relieves the pressure of the surrounding corrupt society. Under this aspect Plato

is the founder of the community of philosophers that lives through the ages. Philosophy is, second, an act of judgment—we remember the messenger to mankind sent from Hades by the Judges. Since the order of the soul is recaptured through resistance to the surrounding disorder, the pairs of concepts which illuminate the act of resistance develop into the criteria (in the pregnant sense of instruments or standards of judgment) of social order and disorder. Under this second aspect Plato is the founder of political science.

The various functions, as well as the problems which they imply, are held together by Plato at the point of their origin in the experience of resistance through a comprehensive pair of concepts, the pair of "philosopher" and "sophist." The philosopher is compactly the man who resists the sophist; the man who attempts to develop right order in his soul through resistance to the diseased soul of the sophist; the man who can evoke a paradigm of right social order in the image of his well-ordered soul, in opposition to the disorder of society which reflects the disorder of the sophist's soul; the man who develops the conceptual instruments for the diagnosis of health and disease in the soul; the man who develops the criteria of right order, relying on the divine measure to which his soul is attuned; the man who, as a consequence, becomes the philosopher in the narrower sense of the thinker who advances propositions concerning right order in the soul and society, claiming for them the objectivity of *episteme*, of science—a claim that is bitterly disputed by the sophist whose soul is attuned to the opinion of society.

The meaning of the term "philosopher" in its compact sense, at the point of its emergence from the act of resistance, must be well understood if one wants to understand Plato's science of order. For in the resistance of the philosopher to a society which destroys his soul originates the insight that the substance of society is psyche. Society can destroy a man's soul because the disorder of society is a disease in the psyche of its members. The troubles which the philosopher experiences in his own soul are the troubles in the psyche of the surrounding society which press on him. And the diagnosis of health and disease in the soul is, therefore, at the same time a diagnosis of order and disorder in society. On the level of conceptual symbols, Plato expresses his insight through the principle that society is man written in larger letters (368d-e). Justice is sometimes spoken of as the virtue of a single man,

And it is not too venturesome to suggest that in the persons of his two brothers Plato represented himself as the young man who found the much-needed help of Socrates. By virtue of their role as the victims who resist the pressure of evil, the scene of the two young men furnishes the dramatic link between the old society of Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus, which the younger men are willing to leave, and the new order, evoked by Socrates in Part I of the *Republic*, which they are willing to enter with their helper. Moreover, the opinions, the *doxai* about justice, which the young men are going to present, will be followed by the Socratic *episteme* of justice. The dramatic sequence of *doxa* and *episteme* in the act of resistance, thus, prepares the later technical discussion of the "philosophical terms."

The opinions, the *doxai*, concerning justice and injustice can be classified either according to their content or according to their source. In the presentation of *doxai* by Glaukon and Adeimantus the two principles of classification interpenetrate, but they must be distinguished because in the construction of the dialogue as a drama they have different functions:

(1) According to their content three principal opinions can be distinguished, which Glaukon proposes to present: (a) The common view concerning nature and origin of justice; (b) the opinion that men who practice justice do so reluctantly, and by necessity, not because justice is a good; and (c) the opinion that the life of the unjust is happier than the life of the just man (358c). The three opinions are understood as *doxai* in the later developed technical sense, in so far as they do not penetrate to the essence of justice as the greatest good and of injustice as the greatest evil (366c). That the *doxa* leaves them in the dark about the essence of justice is the grievance of the young men; they implore Socrates to show them why justice is a good in itself and not only a good in relation to reputation, honors, and other worldly advantages (367e). In the construction of the drama the exposition of the *doxa* by content, thus, prepares the exposition of the Socratic *episteme*. For Socrates, the savior of the souls, must respond to the appeal of the young souls in danger and confusion.

(2) The sources of *doxa* can be distinguished as: (a) Panegyrists of injustice in general, and sophists in particular; (b) parents; (c) poets and prose writers; and (d) mendicants, prophets of Orphic, and other mysteries. The question is, What shall a youth believe and do

when all authorities of the society in which he lives conspire to confuse him and to prevent his true knowledge of justice through daily insinuation of *Doxa*? (366b-367a). In the construction of the dialogue this object lesson of the victims of a corrupt society points to the reflections on the concrete society as "the greatest of all sophists" in *Republic VI*.

Glaukon opens his survey, as he has proposed, with the first *doxa*, the common view concerning the question "what is and whence comes justice" (358e).

"Originally" (*pephykenai*), men say, to do injustice was good, while to suffer injustice was bad. Then it turned out that the evil was greater than the good; when men had tasted of both and found themselves unable to flee the one and do the other, they were ready to agree on laws and mutual covenants; and they called just and lawful what was ordained by the laws. This is the origin and nature (*ousia*) of justice, as a mean between the best (to do injustice without punishment) and the worst (to suffer injustice without power of retaliation). Justice, therefore, is not loved as a good in itself, but honored because of a man's infirmity to act unjustly. The strong, the real man would never enter into such an agreement; he would be demented if he did. This is the commonly received view of origin and nature (*physis*) of justice (358-359b).

The passage requires a word of commentary because it is exposed to misinterpretation in more than one respect. In the *doxa* justice is explained genetically as the result of weighing the advantages and disadvantages of unregulated action; after due consideration justice will be pragmatically honored as the more profitable course. In order to indulge in the utilitarian calculus, however, one must already "know" what justice is, in the sense that the word "justice" occurs in the environment of the calculating opiner and is accepted by him in a conventional sense. The explanation of a calculated decision for just conduct is not an inquiry into the nature of justice. Hence, one cannot find in the passage a theory of either the nature of law or the law of nature. In particular, one must beware to render the word *pephykenai* as "by nature," as is sometimes done, for it means in the context no more than "originally," in the sense of "genetically first." The term *physis* (nature) occurs in the whole passage only once, with the meaning of "essence"

agrees that indeed that would be a great achievement, to be corrected by Socrates: "Yes; but not the greatest, since fortune has denied him the politeia to which he belongs; in that politeia he would grow to his fullness, and save not only his private but also the public weal" (497e). The passage leaves no doubt about the philosopher's withdrawal from politics and its reasons. The justice of the soul is more precious than participation in politics; and it must be purchased, if the circumstances are unfortunate, at the price of a diminution of human stature. The withdrawal from politics is heavy with resignation, for the fullness of growth, the maximal augmentation (497a) of man, can be achieved only through participation in the public life of the polis.

The posture of the statesman-philosopher has led to the paradox that the human stature will decrease when the justice of the soul increases. Plato was keenly aware of it; and toward the end of the inquiry he returned to the problems of statesmanship and realization of the paradigm in order to relieve, and perhaps even to dissolve, the paradox. For that purpose he resumed the initial request of Glaukon and Adeimantus to receive the help from Socrates that will enable them to become the "best guardians" of their Arete. The request is now recognized as the correct formula for the right order of the soul. Children should be educated in such a manner that there "will be established within them, as in a polis, a politeia" in which the best element will be the guardian and ruler (590e-591a). The establishment of the "politeia within oneself" is the aim of education in general, as well as of the inquiry that now is drawing to its end in particular. A man thus formed, "a wise man" (591c), will keep his eye fixed on that politeia within himself (591e), and do what he can to preserve its order intact by steering a middle course between extremes of wealth and poverty, public honors and insignificance (591e-592a). At this point of the dialogue the phrase of the "politeia within oneself," which hitherto appeared as no more than a metaphor, is suddenly given a new existential meaning. For to Glaukon's suggestion that such a man would not willingly take part in politics Socrates surprisingly answers: "By the dog, indeed he will; in his own polis he certainly will, though not in the city of his birth, unless a divine fortune lets that come to pass" (592a). Glaukon understands: "You mean in the polis that we have now gone through as founders, and set up in our discourse [*en logois*], for I think that it exists nowhere on earth" (592a-b). And Socrates concludes: "Well,

there is perhaps a paradigm of it set up in heaven [*en ourano*] for him who desires to behold and beholding to settle in it. It makes no difference whether it exists concretely [*pou*] now or ever; that polis and none other is the one with which he is concerned" (592b). The brief exchange is an artistic miracle. Without change of terminology, through a slight switch from metaphor to reality, the inquiry into the paradigm of a good polis is revealed as an inquiry into man's existence in a community that lies, not only beyond the polis, but beyond any political order in history. The leap in being, toward the transcendent source of order, is real in Plato; and later ages have recognized rightly in the passage a prefiguration of St. Augustine's conception of the *civitas Dei*.

Nevertheless, a prefiguration is not the figuration itself. Plato is not a Christian; and the surprising development occurs at the end of an inquiry that started from the luminous depth of the Dionysiac soul. We must now consider the implications of the answer to the earlier paradox.

To be sure, the paradox is dissolved. The statesman in the philosopher, who feels his stature diminished when the proper field of action is denied to him, has disappeared. Sliding through the metaphor to reality, participation in politics now means concern with the transpolitical politeia that is set up in heaven and will be realized in the soul of the beholder. The soul is a one-man polis and man is the "statesman" who watches over its constitution. The dissolution through the ultimate shift to the soul and its transcendent order, however, does not cancel the validity of the whole preceding inquiry into the paradigm of the good polis. For Plato was an artist and when he wrote the earlier parts of the inquiry he knew, of course, where he would end. The dissolution of the paradox must, therefore, not be understood as an intellectual solution of a puzzle, but as the spiritual "augmentation" of existence produced through the process of the *zetema*. The paradox remains intact at its own stage of the inquiry. To live in an age of social corruption and to be denied one's proper field of action in public is really a misfortune; and the honoring of Arete is no substitute for the inevitable diminution of stature. Yet, the price must be paid, because in the hierarchy of goods political life ranks lower than eternal life. The *techne metretike*, the art of measurement under the aspect of death, leaves no doubt on the point. The paradox, thus, remains as unsolved intellectually as it was, but the bitterness of renunciation is spiritually overcome through the growth of the soul into the tran-

terion for the "nature" of order in the polis. On the contrary, he uses the only empirical knowledge that we have. The polis will be in a eudaimonic state only if its order is traced "by painters who use the divine paradigm [*theion paradeigma*]" (500e). And that "painter" is the lover of wisdom (*philosophos*) who through his association with divine order (*theios kosmios*) has himself become orderly and divine (*kosmios te kai theios*) in the measure allowed to man (500c-d).

While the introduction of the divine paradigm, as it lives in the philosopher's soul, does not transcend the limits of empirical observation, it introduces a formidable further problem in so far as it makes the existence of an order by nature depend on the philosopher's historical existence. There was an order of society, expressed through the symbolic form of the myth, before there were philosophers. The discovery of the psyche, in its turn, with its *zetesis* and *epanodos*, its erotic reaching out toward the *kalon* and its vision of the *agathon*, its understanding of death and immortality, supersedes with its new authority the older authority of the myth. And the philosopher's authority, in its turn, will be superseded by the revelation of spiritual order through Christ. The order "by nature," thus, is a stage in the history of order; and a theory of order in the Platonic sense requires for its systematic completion a philosophy of history. That problem was present, as we have seen, even in the *Gorgias*; and it will occupy Plato with growing intensity in the later dialogues, the *Statesman*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Laws*.

4. *The Poleogony*

The cognitive inquiry itself is not conducted in direct attention to its object but by means of a further symbolic form, closely resembling the Hesiodian theogony. Since no term exists to designate such a form when the polis, not the gods, is its subject, we shall coin the term "poleogony." The series of forms within forms, thus, is continued—we never reach the resting point of direct speech—and since all of them have a bearing on the construction of the *eidōs*, we shall recapitulate them:

(1) There is first the dialogue of the *Republic* as the comprehensive symbolic form;

(2) within the dialogue is conducted the *zetema*, the inquiry that leads from the darkness of the depth to height and light;

(3) within the *zetema* is enacted the play of founding the good polis, with Socrates in the role of the *oikistes*;

are at the game of the shadows. They scoff at him because he has lost his sight in the ascent; they think it better not to ascend at all, than to return in such a condition. And if he tries to loosen others from their shackles they lay hands on the offender if they can, and put him to death (516-517).

The meaning of the Parable in general is clear and needs no elaboration. It is an allegory of the philosopher's education, as well as of his fate in the corrupt society, with a concluding allusion to the death of Socrates. We can turn, therefore, to the special purposes for which Plato introduced it at this point of the dialogue.

The Parable, first of all, prepares a clarification of Paideia. A man's education to the full understanding of reality is incomplete as long as he has not undergone the turning around of the soul, the *periagoge* in the Parable. The *periagoge*, however, poses a problem to education different from the problems of Paideia developed in the earlier Socratic purification of traditions. For all the virtues of the soul, previously described in the models, have something in common with excellences of the body, in so far as they can be created by habituation (*ethesi*) and training (*askesin*) where they do not already exist (518d). To that limited extent, therefore, one can say that virtue can be taught. In so far as the "professions" of the sophists (for instance of Protagoras in the dialogue bearing his name) go beyond that point, however, and assert that true knowledge, *episteme*, can be put into the soul, they are in error (518b-c). For the kind of vision (*opsis*) that enables a man to see the Agathon must exist in a soul, as a man must have eyes to see (518c). The educator can do no more than turn this organ of vision, if it exists in the soul of a man, around from the realm of becoming toward being and the brightest region of being—"and that, we say, is the Agathon" (518c). Hence, Paideia (518b) is "the art of turning around [*periagoge*]" (518d).

Paideia, *Periagoge*, and Agathon, thus, are intimately connected; and that connection, established by Plato himself, must be kept in mind if one wishes to avoid the extravagant interpretations which so easily suggest themselves, because in Christianity the *periagoge* has become conversion in the religious sense. To be sure, the Platonic *periagoge* has the overtones of conversion; but no more than the overtones. The experience remains essentially within the boundaries of the Dionysiac soul, as the various formulations in the context of the Parable make it

unit as a cosmic empire which in its universality was an analogue of universal Heaven. Moreover, we have seen conceptions similar to the Chinese prevalent in the ancient Near East. The general causes of the Hellenic peculiarity have been discussed previously. In the present context the peculiarity must be accepted as a fact. In the civilization in which Plato lived Form was experienced as the Measure of finite, visible, clearly delimited objects in the world. Hence, the "body" had supreme importance as the medium in which the Measure was visibly realized.

The conception of Form was completely articulated only in the *Laws*. In his last dialogue, Plato indeed constructed the polis as a mathematical crystal which in its proportions reflected the numerical relations of the cosmos. Nevertheless, the problem is present in the *Republic* even though in Book V, in the section on the community of women and children, the problem of the Measure does not yet appear quite clearly. To be sure, we find provisions for keeping the population figure stable; but the further provisions for maintaining and continuing the "body" of the polis remind us more of a digression into animal husbandry than of a metaphysical discussion of the cosmic Measure. As a consequence, this section with its emphasis on genetics and eugenics has frequently been criticized as something like a race theory. That the meaning of the provisions is not "biological" in the modern sense, but cosmological, appears only in the opening pages of Book VIII, where the discussion of their cosmological meaning is the starting point for the theory of the sequence of bad political forms.

2. *The Mythical Failure of Incarnation*

Socrates raises the question how the good polis can ever begin to dissolve and start on the path from the original monarchy or aristocracy to the first of the bad forms, that is, to timocracy (545c). The question is crucial because the earlier discussion in Book V had assumed that the establishment of the "single family" would result in complete peace among the members of the ruling class. And peace in the well-ordered ruling class is the guarantee of stability, since no dissension of the lower classes is to be feared as long as the rulers do not quarrel among themselves (465b). The discussion in Book VIII takes up this argument. If any change in the good polis occurred it would have to originate in an internal dissension of the ruling class. As long as the ruling class is of one mind (*homonoia*), it cannot be upset, however small it may

it is beyond the powers of man to overcome the transitoriness of the flux and to create eternal Being. The eternal Form in Becoming is a fleeting moment between creation and dissolution. To realize that Plato holds this position even in the *Republic* is of importance for the continuity of his thought. *Phaedrus*, *Theaetetus*, *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias* vastly enlarge the horizon of problems; but the philosophy of history which Plato gradually unfolds in the later dialogues does not imply a break with the *Republic*.

3. *The Sequence of Political Forms*

Timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny are the stages through which the good polis passes on its way of decline to the "ultimate malady of the polis" (544c). Since the sequence has its origin, not in an historical event, but in the mythical failure of the incarnation of Form in Becoming, questions concerning the precise nature of the sequence will inevitably arise. Plato himself has given a few indications concerning the meaning of the sequence through his definition of criteria for (1) the selection of the four forms (*idea*, *eidos*), and (2) the order in which they follow each other. The four types are selected because they have distinct names in common usage and are clearly distinguishable species (*eidos*); and their order is determined by the valuation put on them by popular consensus (544c).

At this stage of the argument, Plato does not claim that every historical polity is bound to pass through the sequence of forms. On the contrary, the selection of examples, as well as the surrounding remarks, seem to exclude the notion. As examples of timocracy are mentioned the constitutions of Crete and Sparta; but there is no suggestion that either of them has fallen off from a previous more perfect form, nor that they will have to develop into oligarchies, democracies, and tyrannies. For the latter three types, Plato gives no example at all, presumably because a sufficient number of instances would occur to every Greek reader. Moreover, other types, as hereditary monarchy or a form of government in which the highest office can be bought, are mentioned though excluded from consideration because they are "intermediate" between the distinct species. But again no claim is made that in transition from one clear type to the next a concrete polis has to pass through the intermediate phases (544c-d).

The taxonomic nature of the sequence is further accentuated through

makes remarks to the son that his father is not much of a man, that he takes things too easy, and so forth. The servants talk in a similar vein out of loyalty to the family interest; they urge the son not to emulate his father but to stand up for his rights when he is grown up. Outside the house the young man observes that a man who minds his own business is not much respected, while people admire a busybody who has his fingers in every pie. His views of life inevitably will be affected by such influence, and the father who wishes to cultivate his son's mind cannot outweigh them. The result will be a compromise between the *logistikon* and the *epithymetikon* in the character of the young man; he will be dominated by the *philonikon*; and that means that he will become arrogant and ambitious (549c-550b).

From the analysis emerges the principle by which Plato constructs the several political forms and corresponding characters, as well as the principle of transition from one to the other. The characters and their political forms are determined by the predominance of one or the other of the three forces of the soul. The polis is good when the *logistikon* predominates in the souls of the rulers; it is a timocracy when the *philonikon* predominates; an oligarchy when the passions of the *epithymetikon* and *philochrematon* predominate. In order to derive the further forms of democracy and tyranny, Plato subdivides the passions (*epithymia*) into the necessary and wholesome, the unnecessary and luxurious, and the criminal ones (558c-559d). In the oligarchy, the necessary desires which induce a restrictive, parsimonious, miserly life predominate. In the democracy the unnecessary passions which lead to insolence, anarchy, waste, and impudence are let loose. In the despotic soul this pluralistic field of passions is dominated by a champion lust of a criminal nature which induces men to translate into reality the desires which they experience in dreams.

Plato uses the anthropological principle in order to make the transitions intelligible. Characters and forms do not simply correspond to each other but the various social forces (father, mother, servants, friends, acquaintances, and so on) struggle in the soul of the individual; and they can struggle within the individual soul because they are psychic forces. The psyche is a society of forces, and society is the differentiated manifold of psychic elements. The forms can follow each other intelligibly in time because their sequence as a whole is a process within a soul, that is, the process of gradual corrosion in which

the elements of the psyche are one after the other loosened from their "just" position in the integrated, well-ordered soul, until the passions without a higher ordering principle range freely without restraint.

The passions in the soul, however, do not range quite freely even in the last stage of moral confusion. The order of the soul through predominance of the higher forces is gone, but a new order of evil has taken its place. The analysis of the transition from the democratic to the despotic soul may well be considered the masterpiece of Platonic psychology. In the democratic state of the soul all appetites are on the same footing and compete with one another for satisfaction. The state may even have certain advantages not realized in the oligarchic state, in that the soul is at least not warped by the singleness of the acquisitive desire, but freely indulges in pleasures and luxuries with a degree of sophistication. This state of an amiable, and perhaps aesthetic, rottenness, however, exhausts itself, and now the last abyss of depravation opens. For beyond the ordinary luxuriance of desires lie the ultimate lusts which "stir in a soul in its dreams" but ordinarily are kept down in waking life by the controls of wisdom and law. In dreams the beast goes on its rampage of murder, incest, and perversions. The wise man knows about these possibilities and their source. He will not go to sleep before he has awakened the *logistikon* in his soul and fed it on noble thoughts in collected meditation. He will have seen to it that during the day his desires were neither starved nor surfeited, so that neither their delights nor griefs will disturb his contemplation; he will now soothe his passion in order not to fall asleep with his anger aroused against anyone. Thus, having put to rest the two lower forces of his soul and having awakened the highest one, his sleep will not be disturbed by bad dreams (571d-572a). The procedure of the despotic man is the very opposite of that of the wise man. Far from attempting a catharsis of his soul, he will, on the contrary, go beyond the confusion of conflicting desires and give the mob of rival appetites a master by letting the lust of his dreams enter his waking life.

Plato's term for this deepest lust which casts a glow of evil over the life of passions, is Eros. That Eros he sees under the image of a Great Winged Drone, surrounded by the buzzing swarm of pleasures of a dissolute life until the sting of desire has grown in the Drone into a craving that cannot be satisfied. Then, at last, when the master-passion

has acquired its full *mania* it breaks out in frenzy; it purges the soul of its last remnants of shame and temperance, and subordinates all actions to the satisfaction of its insatiable craving (572d-573b). The *Eros tyrannos* (573b; d) is the satanic double of the Socratic Eros. The *enthusiasmos* of the Socratic Eros is the positive force which carries the soul beyond itself toward the Agathon. The *Eros tyrannos* is winged like the good Eros but parasitical (the Drone); he has no productive *enthusiasmos* but a sting (*kentron*) which insatiably drives to waste the substance. Nevertheless, both Eroses are modes of *mania*. The desire which turns the soul toward the Good and the desire which succumbs to the fascination of Evil are intimately related; the *mania* of the soul can be its good as well as its evil daemon. Even in the *Republic*, where the Agathon holds the center, the problem of cosmic dualism cannot be quite suppressed. We can go even further and say that in the dualism of Eros the dualism of Good and Evil is reduced to its experiential basis. For the good and the bad Eros lie close together in the soul as its potentiality either to gain itself by transcendence, or to lose itself by closure and reliance on its own resources. The dualism of the Eroses, closely related to the Christian dualism of *amor Dei* and *amor sui*, receives its specific color from the experience of transition from one mode to the other. Even the tyrannical Eros with its *mania* is an ordering principle; and while the substance has changed, the style of order is retained. The decomposition of the well-ordered soul leads, not to disorder or confusion, but to a perverted order. It seems that Plato was acutely aware of the spirituality of evil and of the fascination emanating from a tyrannical order. The *Eros tyrannos* is dangerous and evil, but it is not contemptible—just as the order of Atlantis, in the *Critias*, has its qualities of luciferic splendor. In this conception of tyranny, as related to the foundation of the perfect polis through a metamorphosis of Eros, we touch perhaps upon the most intimate danger of the Platonic soul, the danger of straying from the difficult path of the spirit and of falling into the abyss of pride.

The analysis has come to its end; and we are still faced by the question whether the theory of the successive political forms has any bearing on the interpretation of political history. While nothing was expressly said on the point in the *Republic*, one could sense that the problem of historical sequence was somehow involved in the theory.

tern—as for instance the peculiarities of the Roman civilizational process have colored the construction of Vico's *storia eterna ideale*. Nevertheless, while the extraneous factors vary and blur the pattern considerably, they do not blot it out completely. The historical process of a civilization seems, indeed, to have for its nucleus a process of psychic decomposition. Again, the Platonic theory points the way to a treatment of this problem. The process of decomposition, if and so far as it exists, presupposes an initial order of the soul. The empirical investigation of a civilization and its political phases must, therefore, clarify this initial order of the soul, its growth and ramifications, and then study the phases of its decomposition. The approach to the problem will rest on the assumption that a political society, in so far as its course in history is intelligible, has for its substance the growth and decline of an order of the soul. The problem of the political cycle, we conclude, cannot be solved through generalization of institutional phenomena, but requires for its solution a theory of the ordering myth of a society.

§ 6. THE EPILOGUE

The Epilogue of the *Republic* is a carefully constructed work of the Art of Measurement, the *techne metretike*, that measures life in the perspective of death (602c–603a). It consists of four sections:

(1) The good order of the soul, its politeia, must be established and continuously preserved through right Paideia (608a–b). If the soul is regularly nourished by influences that play on its passions, the strength of the rational element, the *logistikon*, will be dissolved (605b) and with it the faculty of measuring rightly (603a); instead of the good a vicious (*kake*) politeia will be set up in the soul (605b). In the surrounding society, the principal source of the vitiating Paideia is mimetic poetry, represented by Homer and Hesiod, by tragedy and comedy. The attack on Homer, for the reasons indicated, forms the first section (595a–608b).

(2) "Great is the struggle" that determines whether a man will become good or bad; "justice and all Arete" must be continuously guarded against the lure of honor, wealth, office, and even poetry; that is an end in itself (608b). While justice must be achieved in life for its own sake, the end receives a literally infinite dimension of importance

CHAPTER 4

Phaedrus *and* Statesman

§ 1. THE PHAEDRUS

In the event that true philosophers should come to power in a polis, Socrates suggests in the *Republic*, the whole population over ten years of age should be sent out of the polis to the countryside. Then the philosophers should take over the children under ten years of age and raise them after their own manner or character, and in their own institutions (*nomoi*). This would be the surest and quickest way to establish the politeia among a people (541a). The program is ingenious and eminently practical. We see it followed almost to the letter in our own time when bands of sectarians gain power in a country and begin to reconstruct the people according to their own manners and character by eliminating the older generation from public life and by bringing up the children in the new creed. The program has only one flaw: it cannot be executed by true philosophers. For any attempt to realize the order of the idea by violent means would defeat itself. The authority of the spirit is an authority only if, and when, it is accepted in freedom.

Hence, the passage in question is not a Platonic program for political action in the historical environment. Plato is not the speaker; he presents to the reader a report, made by Socrates to an undetermined audience, of a dialogue in the course of which Socrates had made this remark to his partners in the conversation. This threefold mediation is the most important element in the meaning of the passage. After the sacrificial death of the historical Socrates, no attempt at direct action will be made. The Socrates-Plato of the dialogue evokes the idea of the right order; those who have ears may listen. The passage has no other function than to show that technically it is not impossible to translate the idea into reality, and to forestall the facile assumption that the Socratic politeia is an impractical daydream. The idea *can* be

psyche, a further position of the *Republic* has to be revised. The hierarchy of the wise, the spirited, and the appetitive souls, which determined the social stratification of the Socratic polis, does not render adequately the ranks of the new realm. Hence in the *Phaedrus*, Plato presents a new hierarchy of the souls, classified in nine groups and ranked in the following manner (248d-e):

- (1) The philosopher, the *philokalos*, the music and erotic soul
- (2) The law-observing king, the soul of the war leader and the ruler
- (3) Statesmen, economic administrators, traders
- (4) The trainers of the body and the physicians
- (5) The seer and the priest
- (6) The poets and other mimetic artists
- (7) The artisan and peasant
- (8) The Sophists and demagogues
- (9) The tyrannical soul

Plato does not add any commentaries to the list. Nevertheless some of its implications are fairly obvious. Above all, the philosopher-king has disappeared. The highest rank is now held by the philosopher, *i.e.*, the music and erotic soul, while the king who rules according to the law, the ruling soul, has moved to the second place. This redistribution of ranks reflects the new position of Plato. The embodiment of the Idea in the polis is no longer the absorbing interest; the Idea will be embodied wherever such embodiment is possible; and it is embodied most intensely in the souls who are possessed by the erotic mania. That all other souls have to rank lower is clear. The actual classification and ranking, however, is somewhat puzzling at first sight. Still, we can discover the principle of the hierarchy if we reflect on what has happened to the poets.

We find the poets relegated to the sixth place, together with other mimetic artists. That in itself is no more than we might expect after the attack in the *Republic*. We find also, however, that not all poets are relegated to this low rank, for in the first group there appears, side by side with the *philosophos*, a new figure, the *philokalos*, the Lover of Beauty; and we find this new figure characterized, together with the *philosophos*, as a soul which is inspired by the Muses and by Eros. This *philokalos* is the new poet, truly possessed by the *mania*. If any proof were required, the classification shows definitely that the conflict in the

Republic is not a quarrel between "philosophy and poetry" in the modern meaning of the words, but the conflict between the poets of the decaying Hellenic society and the true poet of the newly discovered realm of the soul, who is a twin brother of the philosopher, if not identical with him.

Once we recognize the double appearance of the poet, as the old and the new type, we can understand the structure of the hierarchy, for the poet is not the only figure who appears twice. We further recognize the pairs of philosopher and sophist, of king and tyrant, of statesman and demagogue. The conflict between the idea of the polis and the declining historical polis that animated the *Republic* is translated in this list of the *Phaedrus* into the hierarchy of souls in the realm of psyche. The first rank of the manic soul is followed by three ranks of souls which participate in the idea in a supporting mode. The law-observing king, the administrators, and the trainers of the body are a group that could be the nucleus of the well-ordered polis, if it ever should be realized. The next three ranks—the seers and priests, the mimetic poets, the artisans and peasants—are the souls which constitute the decaying Hellenic society. The last two ranks—the sophists, demagogues and tyrants—are the active element in the decaying society, the carriers of the corruption, the enemies of the manic soul and its supporters.¹

In the history of Athens the *Phaedrus* is the manifesto which announces the emigration of the spirit from the polis. The historical Socrates had attempted to save the polis through direct action on the individual citizens, in obedience to the command of the gods. The Plato of the *Republic* issued the appeal of the Idea, and was still bound to the polis through his hope for a response. The Plato of the *Phaedrus* is resigned to the fact that the polis has rejected his appeal. The resignation, far from being a private affair of Plato's, has as its consequence a restructuration of Athenian society. For Plato, while not ceasing to be an Athenian, is now an Athenian who, in full consciousness, goes through the hard experience that the public order of his country is so rotten that it can no longer absorb and use the substance of its best men. Athens, as a political order in history, has ceased to be representative of the idea of man which has grown in Athens as a civilizational

¹ The interpretation follows Kurt Hildebrandt, *Platon*, 294f.

order. The polis is rapidly losing its "style" in the sense of a perfect interpenetration of substance and form. The form continues to exist but it has become a worn-out garment, hanging badly around the human substance of the community. In this phase, a civilizational order undergoes a profound change. The public order which formerly was fully representative becomes now, together with the social forces which support it, one element in an open civilizational field in which grow other forces with a rival, and superior, claim to be representative. The co-existence of a public order and of civilizational forces which it does not represent is what may be technically called the state of disintegration.

Whether the situation is accepted by the philosopher, as the bearer of the unrepresented forces, with bitterness, or with resignation, or with indifference—in any case he is compelled to reinterpret the problem of politics. The dissociation of Athenian society into an unrepresentative public order and an unrepresented spiritual substance is expressed, in the *Phaedrus*, in the new hierarchy of souls. The "model of the polis" in the *Republic* evoked the idea of the integrated, representative polis; the list of the *Phaedrus* surveys the field of actual disintegration. This attempt at an empirical description, however, raises the serious epistemological problem of a critical foundation for the categories used in the description. We may assume that the Athenian politicians and average citizens did not acknowledge the validity of the description, any more than our politicians and average citizens will accept the proposition that the movement of the spirit is not to be found in the gigantomachia of rivalling world powers; they probably saw in Plato just another speech-making sophist over whom the course of history would pass on—an opinion which they must have voiced freely if we interpret correctly *Phaedrus* 257d. Such conflicts of interpretations are inevitable in an age of disintegration; and the critical foundation of the theoretical position outside the decaying order becomes, therefore, an urgent necessity. Plato solved the problem—as it must be solved, and as it was solved again in Christianity—through a new ontology. He removed reality from the hands of the politicians by denying the status of ultimate reality to the collective body politic on principle. The Idea when it leaves the polis, does not leave man. It goes on to live, in individuals and small groups, in the mania of the erotic soul. Both situation and solution resemble the Augustinian; but the withdrawal of reality from a declining world cannot issue in the symbol of a *civitas*

Dei; on the level of the myth of nature, the result has to be a *civitas naturae*. The Idea is reborn, and the position of the philosopher is authenticated, through the communion with a nature that is *psyche*. That is the ontological foundation for Plato's late political theory; and the communion is the source of the "truth" of the mythical poems in which the late Plato symbolizes the life of the Idea.

Nature still is *empsychos* and the hierarchy of souls, extending from the human sphere into the cosmic, permits a gradual transition from human to divine nature. An imaginative realization of the pre-Christian life of the soul in nature, and of nature in the soul, is necessary if we want to understand the process of divinization which becomes increasingly marked in the late work of Plato. The dissociation of society into the *città corrotta* and the erotic souls engenders a tension of such sharpness that the common bond of humanity between the lost souls and the manic souls is almost broken. The difference between the souls tends to become a generic difference between a lower type of human beings, close to animals, and a higher type of semi-divine rank. This divinization, which seems absurd in the realm of Christian experience, is inherent in the logic of the myth of nature. If the particle of substance which animates a particular human individual happens to be of high quality, there is no objection to recognizing its semi-divine character. The obstacle to such recognition which in the Christian orbit stems from the experience of creaturely equality before a transcendent God, does not exist in the Platonic experience.

This survey of the principal features which characterize the new position of Plato after the *Republic* will enable us now to deal with the problems of the *Statesman*.

§ 2. THE STATESMAN

Through the *Phaedrus* Plato had acknowledged the state of disintegration as irreparable. In the following dialogues, in the trilogy of *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*, he formulated the problem of politics from the new position.

1. The Trilogy of Dialogues

The *Theaetetus* opens on a scene in Megara, in front of the house of Euclid the philosopher. Euclid comes home and finds a friend who is

is added. In the series *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman* the mediating form is of particular importance because the dialogues communicate sentiments of an intenseness that would burst the form if they were expressed directly. And even if their direct expression had been technically possible without destroying the situation of the dialogue itself, it would have senselessly drawn on the head of Plato the fate of Socrates.

The dialogues are characterized by a strong undercurrent of violence. The hope for a regeneration of the polis through the spirit is gone, and the gulf between the condemned public order and the representatives of the spirit has become unbridgeable. In the dialogues themselves this new rigidity of the conflict leads, on the one side, to the heroization of the semi-divine, manic souls, while, on the other side, the lost souls of the polis appear ominously under the symbol of the beast (*thremma*). Nevertheless, the parties in the conflict are chained together by the historical fate of being Athenians. Plato never surrenders the *imitatio Socratis*; neither for himself nor for the members of the Academy does he reject the duty to die in obedience to the law of Athens. The dialogues are placed at the very time when Socrates is occupied with the preliminaries of the trial that will lead to his murder; and his partner in the first dialogue is Theaetetus, one of the hopes of the younger generation, who now is returning to Athens, dying from the wounds received in battle for a polis which rejects his soul but uses his body in defense like a piece of inorganic matter. We have to realize this situation in order to understand the cold rage of Plato who is compelled to live in obedience to a government of the beast which makes the best die by the beast and for the beast.

2. *The Diversion of the Theaetetus*

The rejection of, is not an escape from, the polis. Plato neither develops his position into a philosophy of apolitism like the Cynic school, nor will he engage in conspiracies with foreign powers, nor show any disloyalty to the constitutional authorities. The disorder of the polis cannot be repaired by descending to the level of disorder, by adding a new faction to the existing ones. The tyranny of the rabble cannot be transformed into freedom by countering it with a tyranny of the spirit.²

² Today we live in a situation similar to Plato's. The response of a contemporary philosopher to the problem will further clarify the Platonic position. In Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1931), we find the following reflections on the conflict of mass and nobility: "We are faced today by the last campaign against nobility. The campaign is con-

In spite of these precautions the situation is clear. The philosopher and the Athenian *homo politicus* are contrasted as freeman and slave. Since the philosopher is not permitted to be present in the polis with his soul, he is not quite sure whether his neighbor is "man or animal." With great circumspection Plato stigmatizes the various types who are "big shots" for the rabble, that is, the rulers of men, the rich, and the socialites; while the people at large is the flock—through its intractability and invidiousness worse than animals—that is fleeced by its shepherds. The anecdote of Thales and the Thracian handmaid, finally, suggests, as clearly as Plato could dare, that the Hellenic Athenians have become barbarians. Further implications could be clarified through a comparison of the Diversion with its great counterpart in modern political literature, that is, with the *Vorrede* to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Sometimes the formulations are almost identical, as for instance in the reaction of the *homo politicus* to the exhortation of the philosopher. Plato's man of affairs listens, firm in his superior cunning, and knows that he is listening to a madman; it is the same reaction as that of Nietzsche's Last Man: "Formerly all the world was demented—say the most cunning and squint."

The enlargement of the field of investigation compels a theoretical revision. The categories of order developed in the *Republic* cannot be used in an analysis of disorder. Moreover, the myth of the Socratic soul can no longer be used as the only source of theory when it comes to the theoretization of the un-Socratic souls of the *ochlos*. In the Diversion, therefore, appears the "power of Evil" as the counterforce to the Agathon; and the paradigm of true order that is laid up in heaven is paralleled by the paradigm of "godless wretchedness." The nature of this second paradigm is not sufficiently clarified by Plato. Certainly, the "evils" are not simply the burden of earthiness; they hover around mortal *physis*, but they are not *physis* itself. The evils are psychic entities like the psyche which, after many a rebirth, will finally gain immortal status. Since psyche and idea are interchangeable in this phase of Plato's work, the question arises whether Plato, perhaps under Persian influences, wanted to develop a metaphysics of two hostile psychic forces in the cosmos. The question can hardly be settled on the basis of the scant references to the problem in Plato's work. There is, of course, the passage in *Laws* 896e, where Plato, speaking of the world-soul, questions whether

one soul can be responsible for both good and evil and assumes the existence of at least two souls. Nevertheless, the conclusion, already drawn from this passage by Plutarch, that Plato had assumed two conflicting world-souls, is not compelling.⁵ If we read the passages from the Diversion and from the *Laws* in the light of the theory of psyche developed in the *Phaedrus*, Plato seems rather to have assumed a pluralistic structure of the psyche in the universe, and perhaps even a pluralistic structure of the human soul. This latter assumption seems to be indicated by the concluding sentences of the Diversion, where Plato presents the philosopher in intimate conversation with the man of affairs. With the tenderness of a Pascalian *directeur de l'âme*, Plato describes the strange disquiet which befalls the wordly souls when *in camera* they are shaken out of their cunning and complacency. The abyss of nothingness, in the Pascalian sense, opens for a moment, from which the order of the psyche, which is present even in the "beast," may break forth. Nevertheless, we should not talk away the focussing of the forces of good and evil in the two paradigms. The tendency toward a dualistic conception of the psyche-idea is definitely present; and if the recognition of evil has not issued in a clear metaphysical construction, at least the new dimension of reality is henceforth noticeable in the Platonic philosophy of order.

3. *The Obscuring Devices of the Statesman*

The Diversion has established a field of politics in which the reality of the idea and the reality that is not ordered by the idea coexist. The apparently static character of the situation is broken in the *Statesman* through a philosophy of history which reduces the conflict to a transitory moment in the cyclical history of the cosmos. A perspective of future development is opened.

Perhaps Plato was afraid an exoteric reader would misunderstand the opening of a perspective as a plan for revolutionary action. Whether this was the reason or whether other motives have played a rôle, at any rate the *Statesman* is one of the most obscure of the Platonic dialogues, not because of its subject matter, but because it is made obscure, with great skill and labor, by various devices of indirection. We shall briefly indicate the obscuring devices, and then proceed to the analysis of the core of meaning itself.

Sophist and *Statesman* are twin dialogues. On the day after the

⁵ *The Laws of Plato*, trans. by A. E. Taylor (London, 1934), 289, n.1.

Theaetetus the partners of the earlier dialogue meet again, and the company is enlarged by the Younger Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger. This larger company discusses the topics of the sophist and the statesman in succession, and it plans to discuss the philosopher as the third topic. As a first device of indirection Socrates, the main speaker of the *Theaetetus*, lapses into silence, and the Eleatic Stranger becomes the dominant figure. The topic is the Statesman, that is, the philosopher-king of the *Republic* faced by a reality that is not ordered by the idea. We remember the identification in the *Republic* of the speaker with the philosophic ruler of the polis: If Socrates-Plato were himself the speaker in the *Statesman*, the situation would acquire an atmosphere of direct, political action; with the Eleatic Stranger as the speaker this danger is averted. The philosopher-statesman is now transformed into an innocuous object of logical inquiry: We know already what a philosopher-king is; we do not have to *explore* his nature and function; we are engaged in an exercise in logical classification with the purpose of *defining* the concept of the statesman as one specimen of the genus "shepherds of flocks." The long-drawn exercise, with its amusing incidents, serves as a screen which makes us almost forget that the object of the discussion is silently present.

This obscuring effect of the logical inquiry is intensified, furthermore, by the device of letting the company project a third debate, the dialogue on the Philosopher. The reader is induced to believe that the discussion of the problems is incomplete, and that only the remaining debate on the Philosopher will fully reveal Plato's position. As a matter of fact, the problems are completely rounded out; the Statesman is the Philosopher himself, and the Philosopher is present. No third dialogue is to be expected. Hence, the title of *Statesman* which Plato has given to the dialogue should perhaps be taken more seriously than is usually done. If the project of the third dialogue is no more than an obscuring device, there is no distinction to be drawn between the Statesman and the Philosopher. The Statesman corresponds to the philosopher-king of the *Republic*, but while in the *Republic* the royal philosopher is envisaged as the ruler in the polis of the idea, he is now, under the name of the Statesman, envisaged as the representative of the idea, as a savior with the sword, who will restore order to society in its time of troubles.

The mythical character of this figure, finally, is revealed, and again obscured, by Plato's device of interrupting the logical exercise at the decisive point through one of his mythical poems. As the process of

mordial malady of disorder gained the upper hand and in the final phase broke out openly. The danger of complete destruction approached.

At this juncture, God resumes the control of the Cosmos so that it will not fall again into the abyss of incommensurability. He reverses the tendencies towards sickness and dissolution and restores the order of the Cosmos to immortality and lasting youth (*ageros*).

One of these reversals of motion occurred at the beginning of the present period. The Cosmos was left to itself. Deprived of the care of the spirits man became weak and defenseless, exposed to the wild beasts and destitute of resources; he was in the direst straits until, under the stress of necessity, he learned to provide for himself. This situation is the origin of the legendary gifts of the gods—of Prometheus, Hephaestus, and other benefactors. As a matter of fact, all the civilizational inventions and achievements were the work of man himself who now had to live by his own efforts and to keep over himself the watch that had been abandoned by the gods, exactly as the Cosmos as a whole which we imitate and follow in its changes.

A myth of Plato becomes a trap for the interpreter—as the Egyptian myth has become a trap for the explorers of Atlantis—if he takes it literally. The propositions of the myth have to be established with precision because they are the basis for the meaning which is to be derived by interpretation; but they do not themselves contain a “philosophy” of Plato. In the case of the myth of the cosmic cycles we must beware in particular of mistaking it as an overt philosophy of nature and history, and assuming that Plato was waiting for another reversal of cosmic motion that would bring back a Golden Age of Cronos. In order to arrive at the meaning we have to reduce the myth to its experiential basis; and we can find this basis if we reflect on the hierarchy of gods in the myth. The lowest level, occupied by the symbols of the people’s myth, that is, by Cronos, Prometheus, Hephaestus, and a host of good daemons, we have to discard for the moment as irrelevant for the principal meaning. The next higher level is occupied by the One God who imposes order on chaos, maintains and restores it. In reflecting on the ordering work of this God, Plato sheds some light on the problem of the two paradigms in the Diversion. There is only one God but he is not omnipotent; he is opposed by the primordial force of chaotic matter; and even when order is imposed on matter, there still remains the Innate Desire which, if it follows its own tendency, will revert to chaos. The rejection

of a second God seems to suggest rather that in his *analogia entis* Plato was willing to ascribe personality to the force of order but not to the forces of disorder. The position is comparable to the Christian with its construction of evil as nothing. This interpretation is confirmed by the assumption of a highest divinity, on a third level of the hierarchy, who governs the rhythm of order and disorder in time, *i.e.*, of Heimarmene. The static order of the cosmos is supplemented by a time order which determines its rhythm in such a manner that, on the one hand, the divine order of the idea does not last undisturbed forever but that, on the other hand, on the brink of destruction through the forces of chaos, the cosmos will regain the youth of its order. The trinity of the right order of God, of the Innate Desire, and of Heimarmene marks the border beyond which lies the mystery of iniquity.

Around this center of theodicy are arranged the other parts of the myth.

Plato is not yearning for the return of a Golden Age. Between the descriptions of the ages of Cronos and Zeus a reflection on their relative values (272b-d) is interjected. If we assume that the men of the Saturnian age, with their boundless leisure and their power to hold intercourse not only with men but also with brute creation, had used these advantages for the purpose of philosophizing and of increasing wisdom, then we would have to say that the age was happier than ours. Until we have found, however, satisfactory witnesses of the love of that age for wisdom and discourse, we had better drop the matter. The paradisiac myth of the Golden Age is thus dismissed as part of that old myth which has become untrue for the philosopher who has grown to his full spiritual stature. The idyll of unproblematic happiness is unworthy of man. This rejection, however, destroys the overt meaning of the myth, for: What purpose does the myth of the cycles serve if we are not interested in the alternative to the present cycle? What sense have the complaints about the misery of the present age if we prefer it to the Golden Age? The construction of the myth does not seem to make sense.

This impasse can be broken by the method of translating the overt symbols of the myth into processes of the soul. The myth of the cycles will render a philosophy of history if the several levels in the hierarchy of the gods are treated as symbols for the evolution of the soul. The rejected Age of Cronos and the accepted Age of Zeus symbolize stages

In the course of the dialogue, the Eleatic Stranger develops a classification of the forms of government (*politeia*). Governments can be divided into those of the one, of the few, and of the many; and the three types can be further bisected according to the rulers' obedience or disobedience to true law and custom. From the divisions results the famous classification of the forms of government:

<i>Lawful</i>	<i>Lawless</i>
Monarchy	Tyranny
Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Polity	Democracy

The six types, moreover, are ranked according to their values. Lawfulness or lawlessness will be realized most thoroughly if the government is in the hands of a single ruler; it will be realized least thoroughly if the government is in the hands of the many. Thus monarchy becomes the best form of government, tyranny the worst; aristocracy the second best, oligarchy the second worst; in the case of democracy the lawful type will not be realized too well because of the conflicting interests and opinions of the many, while lawlessness will be handicapped by the same conflict of the many. This classification and evaluation seems to cause great satisfaction to some modern interpreters, for at last Plato admits, not only that a government of laws is better than a government of men, but that democracy is a better form than oligarchy.

Regrettably, we cannot join in the rejoicing. In the first place, Plato would have "admitted" these points even at the time of the *Republic*, if he had cared to express himself on the subject matter. The *Statesman* does not revise an earlier opinion, but deals with a new subject matter, that is, with historical reality and the nature of its resistance to penetration by the idea. Second, the classification of the forms of government has nothing to do with our current "descriptive institutionalism." For in the very middle of the *Statesman* Plato has placed a disquisition on the art of measurement (*metretike*). There are two ways of measuring things. By the one method we measure them according to number, length, breadth, depth, and velocity; by the other method we measure them according to a standard of fitness, appropriateness, and right timing (*pros to metrion kai to prepon kai ton kairon kai to deon*), in brief, by a standard of the mean (*meson*) that is removed from the extremes (284e). In politics we classify the types of reality by reference to a stand-

(*to schema to tou theiou nomeos*) is the highest political form, higher even than the rule of the lawful king, while the statesmen whom we find now in power resemble rather their flock in habits and breeding (*paideia*) (275c). Royal power in the strict sense, as distinguished from political power in the declining historical polis, is the existential state of a wisdom both judicious and authoritative (*kritikos, epistatikos*) (296b). Hence, the distinguishing character of true rule cannot be found in the institutions of aristocracy or democracy, of consent of the people or compulsory obedience, of wealth or riches of the ruler, but must have something to do with science (*episteme*) (292c). Such science, however, is the privilege of one or two, or, at any rate, of a very few men; and—pointing to the silently present ruler—the few who possess the *logos basilikos* are the rulers whether they rule in fact or not (292e).

The possession of the *logos basilikos* characterizes the ruler existentially. The nature of true rule, thus, has been disengaged from the problem of institutional forms as well as from that of actual rule. The true political form can, therefore, now be defined as the form in which the ruler really possesses, and does not only pretend to possess, the royal science. Whether he rules according to law or without law, whether the subjects consent voluntarily or submit to compulsion, and whether the ruler is rich or poor, does not matter (293c-d). The guiding principle of the ruler's action is the good of the polis. For this purpose he may kill some of the citizens and exile others; he may reduce the size of the city by sending out colonies; or he may increase its size by settlements of strangers. As long as he acts according to wisdom and justice, the city over which he rules will have to be called the only "true" (*orthos*) polis. All other types of rule are not truly good and, while some of them are better than others, even the better ones are only imitations of the good one (293d-e).

The sketch envisages the royal ruler as a savior with the sword who will restore external order to a polis by a violent, short operation, preliminary to the establishment of a more permanent order. We have to understand the sketch against the background of contemporary events in Sicily where measures of this kind had become the routine of politics. In the most opulent region of the Hellenic polis world the disintegration had reached a point of physical destruction and depopulation, where only the most violent measures of deportation and resettlement could break up the party strife and restore a semblance of order. With the

Sicilian events before his eyes and the fear of their imminent spread to Athens, Plato envisaged the royal ruler as the alternative to the Sicilian tyrants and military adventurers. There is little of the "academic" in the atmosphere of the Academy; the scholastic exercises in classification are subordinated to the main purposes of penetrating a historical situation and of demonstrating the practical problems to which it gives rise. In the concrete situation the rule of law is an institution, not to be clarified and stored away as a permanent item in the knowledge of students, but to be questioned both as a source of disorder and as an obstacle to the restoration of order. When the spiritual and moral disintegration of a polity has reached the phase of imminent destruction, the time has come for emergency measures that will supersede all constitutional forms. Plato understood that the nature and acuteness of the crisis required an extra-constitutional government of men; this insight makes him a philosopher of politics and history superior to Aristotle, who, with a sometimes inconceivable complacency, could describe the nature and order of the Hellenic polis and give shrewd recipes for dealing with revolutionary disturbances at a time when the polis world came crashing down all around him and Alexander was inaugurating the age of empire.

The contemporaries of a crisis, however, are reluctant to recognize the magnitude of the problems. The sketch of the emergency powers accorded to the royal restorer is followed by the remark of the Younger Socrates that, on the whole, he agrees, but that a rule without law has a harsh sound (293e). The remark is the opening for a discussion of the problem of law. On principle, there is no merit in law as an order of human action. For law is a general rule while human action is personal and concrete. The discrepancy between the general and the personal makes it impossible to lay down a rule that will apply with justice to a class of cases at all times; for this reason a legal rule always has the character of an obstinate and ignorant tyrant who does not allow questioning of his orders. A simple rule cannot cover what is the reverse of simple. The best thing of all is that a man should rule, not the law, provided that the man is endowed with royal wisdom (294a-c). Nevertheless, law is an inevitable appurtenance of social order, because it is beyond the powers of even a perfect ruler to exhaust the vicissitudes of human life by individual decisions. Law is a technical expedient as a rough approach to a majority of cases; and the wise legislator will lay down such rules of expediency. Some of them will be newly written, some will enact the

the worst sort of ignorance, that is, by men who know nothing about politics and nevertheless believe they have mastered the political art to perfection (302a-b).

The diatribe against the government of law is followed by the classification and evaluation of the six political forms. Plato stresses that the classification is not pertinent to the main topic but that it has rather the character of a *parergon*. Nevertheless, he admits it into the discussion for it has a bearing on the whole scheme of our actions (302b). He does not elaborate the phrase, but it obviously refers to the bearing which the actual state of politics has on the life of the philosophers, both passively and actively. It has a bearing passively in so far as a state of politics which kills such men as Socrates and Theaetetus can make life unbearable and drive men to suicide; it has a bearing actively in so far as it determines the philosophers' withdrawal from public life, the organization of the Academy, and the attempt to counteract the horror of the age by the evocation of the royal ruler, whose rule is among governments what God is among men (303b).

The characterization of the royal ruler has not progressed hitherto beyond the first sketch of the savior with the sword who will restore external order to a community in an emergency. But as the emergency measures of the Statesman are not in themselves a guarantee of lasting order, the rapid, cathartic act of the ruler will have to be followed by the more arduous work of weaving the permanent fabric of the polity. Hence, the remaining part of the dialogue is devoted to the isolation and description of the royal art proper.

The isolation of the royal art is undertaken under the simile of refining gold. First, the workmen sift away earth and stones; then, a mass of valuable elements akin to gold is left (such as silver, copper, and other precious metals) which must be separated by fire. The preceding part of the dialogue has removed all alien matter from political science; now the metals of a kindred nature have to be distinguished from the pure gold. These substances kindred to royalty are the arts of generalship, the administration of justice, and rhetoric. All of them are necessary in support of the royal art, but they are not the art itself because they lack autonomy. They are ministerial and can function only under the direction of the Statesman. "For the royal art should not act itself but direct those who are able to act" (305d). The science

gressiveness will raise up foreign enemies; the ultimate result will be ruin and misery (306a-308b).

The virtues in themselves, without orientation and discipline, will not amalgamate into a stable order. Before Plato enters into this problem, however, he considers a further variant of characters which has to be faced by the Statesman who wants to create order out of a disintegrated multitude. He has to consider the men who do not possess any virtue at all and hence are unusable as the raw material for a political order. The art of politics will not attempt to weave into an order good as well as bad materials. The Statesman will have to begin his work by testing human nature in play; only those who are found fit will be entrusted to teachers for further education. Those who do not possess courage and temperance or other inclinations to virtue (*arete*), those who by an evil nature are carried away to godlessness, pride (*bybris*), and injustice, the Statesman will have to eliminate by death or exile, or by punishment with the greatest disgrace; and those who find their happiness in ignorance and baseness he will relegate to a state of slavery (308b-309a).

Only when the uneducable men are eliminated can the weaving of the political fabric begin (309b). The Statesman will have to bind with the cords of unity the two elements in men, that is, the element which is born from eternity (*aeigenes*) and the element which is born biologically (*zoogenes*). The first element, which is divine in nature, he will have to bind with the divine cord of truth; the second element he will have to bind with the human cord of appropriate marriages (309c; 310a-b). The divine cord is the "true notion" (*alethes doxa*) of the beautiful, the just, the good, and their opposites. When the true notion is implanted, the soul will experience a rebirth in the divine (309c). Only the Statesman who is inspired by the royal Muse can work the transformation; and he can do it only in the noble souls (*eugenes*) who are rightly educated (309d). In this process the courageous man will become tempered and civilized so that he will not derail into brutality; while the temperate man will gain strength and wisdom so that he will not derail into silliness (309e). Still, the complete fabric will have to balance carefully the two types, as each left to itself would cause the polis to degenerate into one-sidedness. And the divine rebirth will have to be supported by the matching of the two types in marriage, so that inbreeding of each type will not divide the

with the best constitution of which tradition tells. This former Athens was founded 1,000 years before Sais, and the registers of Sais go back for 8,000 years. Moreover, the institutions of Sais even today reflect in many respects the constitution of the former Athens which the founders of Sais imitated. The Athens of 9,000 years ago had a class of priests separate from all other classes; it had separate classes of artisans, shepherds, hunters, and husbandmen; and the class of warriors again was distinct from all others. The laws of the city were ordered by wisdom (*phronesis*) as are the laws of Egypt to this day. The history of the Athens of old was as distinguished as its order; and the most brilliant of its feats was the victory in the war against Atlantis. For at that time there existed in the west, beyond the pillars of Heracles, the island of Atlantis. It was a huge island, as large as Libya and Asia together, and on it had developed a mighty power which prepared to conquer Europe and Asia. In the great defense against the Atlantian invasion the Mediterranean peoples remained ultimately victorious because Athens held out, after all the allies had succumbed, and won the last battle. The peoples within the pillars owe their freedom to Athenian valor. Some time after this war, violent earthquakes and floods occurred, and when the deluge had subsided, the island of Atlantis had disappeared in the sea (21-25).

Thus far goes the account of Solon's story in the *Timaeus*.

The motive that drives beyond the *Republic* into the problems of the *Timaeus* is the concern about the status of the idea. In the *Republic* the idea of the good polis had, ontologically, its status, first, as the paradigm laid up in heaven and, second, as the politeia of the well-ordered soul. Its status on the third ontological level, as the order of an actual polis in history, was never satisfactorily clarified. The elaboration of the good polis in the poleogony would perhaps best be designated as a "projection" of the well-ordered soul, if a modern term be allowed. The uneasiness about the status of the idea becomes articulate in the *Timaeus*.

In the *Republic* we heard one of the participants refer to the good polis as existing only *en logois*; in the *Timaeus* we find, correspondingly, the polis in the *Republic* characterized as given *en mythô* (26c), as a story, or fable, or fiction. This *mythos* is in need of transposition into a state which can be characterized as *alethes*, as true, or genuine, or real (26d). How can that transposition of the story into truth be achieved? In the *Republic* the question could remain in suspense if the dialogue

principle. The order of the cosmos has become consubstantial with the order of the polis and of man.

While the extension of the order of the psyche to the cosmos is important for the systematic perfection of Platonic metaphysics, it contributes little to the crucial problem of the embodiment of the idea in historical reality. The projection of the psyche into the order of the polis was the point of doubtful legitimacy in the *Republic*, and it does not become less doubtful by a projection of the psyche on a still larger scale. For the cosmos is not a datum of immanent experience; the philosopher, as a consequence, cannot advance verifiable propositions concerning the psychic nature of its order. That is the difficulty which Plato solves by means of the myth. The analysis of the Egyptian myth has shown that the "truth" of the myth will arise from the unconscious, stratified in depth into the collective unconscious of the people, the generic unconscious of mankind, and the deepest level where it is in communication with the primordial forces of the cosmos. On this conception of a cosmic *omphalos* of the soul in the depth of the unconscious rests Plato's acceptance of the myth as a medium of symbolic expression, endowed with an authority of its own, independent of, and prior to, the universe of empirical knowledge constituted by consciousness in attention to its objects.

The *omphalos*, through which the cosmic forces stream into the soul, has a twofold function in the formation of the myth. It is first the source of the forces, of the sentiments, anxieties, apprehensions, yearnings, which surge up from the depth and roam in the unconscious, urging toward assuaging expression in the imaginative order of mythical symbols. The fact of this openness toward the cosmos in the depth of the soul is, second, the "subject matter" of the myth, broken by the finiteness of human existence into the spectrum of birth and death, of return to the origins and rebirth, of individualization and depersonalization, of union or re-union with transcendent reality (in nature, erotic relations, the group, the spirit), of suffering through temporal existence in separation from the ground and of redemption through return into eternal communion with the ground. The myth itself authenticates its truth because the forces which animate its imagery are at the same time its subject matter. A myth can never be "untrue" because it would not exist unless it had its experiential basis in the movements of the soul which it symbolizes.

The new dimension of conscious play is the characteristic of Plato's mythical creation. Such play is possible only under certain conditions which are present neither at all times nor in all men; and we have to be clear about these conditions if we wish to understand the function of the myth in Plato's late work. First of all, the nature of the myth must be understood by the creator or poet as the upwelling, from the unconscious, of psychic forces which blossom out into assuaging expression. An awareness of this nature of the myth is probably always present in mythical creation, even on the most archaic level; for without this assumption it would be difficult to account for the range of imaginative play which is considerable even on the ritual level, and it would be quite impossible to account for the bewildering richness of the play on the level of the mythical tale. What is new on the level of Plato is not the element of play itself but rather the inner freedom of the play, engendered by the growth and differentiation of the personal psyche from the sixth century onward. While the inner distance from the myth inevitably destroys the naïveté of the play, and the myth consequently becomes for Plato a work of art, it must not destroy the "truth" of the myth. This is the second condition of the conscious play. Plato knows that one myth can and must supersede the other, but he also knows that no other human function, for instance "reason" or "science," can supersede the myth itself. The myth remains the legitimate expression of the fundamental movements of the soul. Only in the shelter of the myth can the sectors of the personality that are closer to the waking consciousness unfold their potentiality; and without the ordering of the whole personality by the truth of the myth the secondary intellectual and moral powers would lose their direction. It is, on principle, the insight that has found its classic expression in the Anselmian *credo ut intelligam*.

If the inner freedom toward the myth degenerates into the postulate of a freedom from the myth, serious consequences for the stability both of personality and society will ensue. If the meaning of history is seen in the overcoming of the myth through "positive science," as it is

Aeschylus cf. Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus, The Creator of Tragedy* (Oxford, 1940). The consciousness of imaginative play in the creation of a myth is an intricate problem which recently has received elucidation through Jan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens. Versuch einer Bestimmung des Spielelements der Kultur* (Basel, 1944). Huizinga traces the consciousness of play back to the most archaic levels of mythical creation and would even assume "play" as a substratum, reaching down into the animal world, on the basis of which the differentiated human creations like rites, myth, law, speculation, etc., have to grow.

for instance in Comte's philosophy of history, the problem of mythical truth changes its aspect completely. If empirical science is made the model of true knowledge the myth obviously does not conform to it; it will appear as a "primitive" or "anthropomorphic" type of knowledge, perhaps not entirely without value in its time, but certainly imperfect and irrational in character if compared with the equations of mathematical physics.

The model of positive science destroys the understanding of the myth for the past as well as for the present. With regard to the myth of the past the symbols and dogmas that have grown historically will be misunderstood as concepts and verifiable propositions and will inevitably be found of doubtful value. The symbols of the myth are cut off, through this attitude, from their basis in the unconscious and are required to legitimate themselves as if they were propositions concerning objects. The myth is erroneously supposed to be meant "literally" instead of symbolically, and consequently appears as naïve or superstitious. With regard to the myth of the present the result is equally destructive. The myth has a fundamental function in human existence and myths will be created no matter what anybody thinks about them. We cannot overcome the myth, we can only misunderstand it. With regard to the contemporary myth, of the eighteenth century and after, the positivist misunderstanding has the consequence that the mythical symbols are claimed to be what the symbols of the past are charged not to be, that is, "science" or "theory." Such symbols as "reason," "mankind," "proletariat," "race," "communist society," "world-peace," and so forth, are supposed to be different in nature from pagan or Christian symbols because their mythical truth is covered and obscured by the superimposition of the additional myth of science.

Since the myth does not cease to be myth because somebody believes it to be science, the telescoping of myth and science has a peculiar warping effect on the personality of the believers. As long as the movements of the unconscious are allowed to express themselves in myth in free recognition of their nature, the soul of man preserves its openness towards its cosmic ground. The terror of an infinitely overpowering, as well as the assurance of an infinitely embracing, beyond as the matrix of separate, individual existence, endow the soul with its more-than-human dimension; and through the acceptance of the truth of this dimension (that is, through faith) the separateness of human existence

visional" character of propositions in the empirical sciences.⁹ The epistemological argument, however, is interwoven with the evocation of the myth. The cosmos, to be sure, belongs to the realm of becoming; yet it participates in the realm of eternal being because the Demiurge has fashioned it as an image (*eikon*) after an eternal model (*paradeigma*) (28a-b; 29a). Plato takes particular care to clarify the relation *eikon-paradeigma*. He raises the question whether the Demiurge has really fashioned the cosmos, after an eternal, not after a generated, model. And he decides on the first assumption, because the cosmos is the most beautiful of all things that have become and the Demiurge is good; the contrary supposition would be blasphemous (29a). We are beyond empirical knowledge of sense or belief; the appeal goes to the spiritual sensitiveness, *i.e.*, to the assent of the unconscious.

The account of the cosmos has ceased to be a problem for objective cognition; as a consequence of the assent it has shifted to the plane of mythical symbolization. If the cosmos were fashioned after a generated model, then, and only then, would it really belong to the realm of becoming; but since it is fashioned after an eternal model, it is an *eikon* of that which is comprehensible by intellect and insight (*logos*; *phronesis*) and which exists in permanent sameness (29a). Being and Becoming have subtly changed their meanings. They no longer signify classes of objects which are accessible, respectively, to intellect and belief, but components of an entity which is neither quite Being nor Becoming. The *paradeigma* cannot be seen by the *logos* of man in its eternal being but only as embodied in the cosmos. And the cosmos, since it is an image of eternal being, is more than a perishable thing in the flux of becoming. The *eikon* is being-in-becoming. Hence, the cosmos is itself a symbol, emerging into the world of objects, but transparent toward its eternal ground. Moreover, we have advanced one step further toward clarifying the problem of intelligibility. The cosmos is intelligible, and we can give an account of it, because the being which manifests itself in becoming is of the kind that can be known by intellect—though it is fully known only by the *logos* of the Demiurge, not by the *logos* of man. The creative ground of the cosmos, while

⁹ That has happened even to an authority of the rank of A. E. Taylor. See his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* under 27d5-29d3 (pp. 59-61).

surpassing the consciousness of man, is kindred to the finite mind and hence can be understood by it.

We must be aware of this change of meanings when we interpret the concluding remarks of this section. An account, says Timaeus, is kindred (*syngenes*) to the things which it sets forth (29b). If the thing is abiding and discoverable by *logos*, then the account itself will be abiding and conclusive; if the thing is a likeness (*eikon*), then the account itself will only be likely (*eikos*). For as reality is to becoming, so is truth (*aletheia*) to trust (*pistis*) (29c). We seem to have returned to the epistemological distinction—unless Plato wished to indicate by the change of terminology from *doxa* to *pistis* that the problem had been modified. The return, however, is only apparent, for we must not forget that in the context of the argument the *aletheia* is God's and the *pistis* is man's. We are not faced by the alternatives of true and likely accounts; the alternative lies between the truth that is visible to God and the likeliness of the account that is the share of man, precisely because there is the truth of God in the cosmos. The account of "gods and the generation of the universe" will be no more than likely because the speaker and his listeners are no more than "human in nature" (29c-d). Nevertheless, the conclusion that we have to accept the *eikos mythos*, the likely story, seems to imply a lesser degree of "truth" than the earlier assurance that we are going to hear an *alethinos logos*, a true story.

The apparent conflict is solved in the following pages when Timaeus begins the account of creation itself. The Demiurge is good and desires all things to become as nearly like himself as possible (29e). Since order is better than disorder, the god took over discordantly moving primordial matter and brought it from disorder (*ataxia*) to order (*taxis*) (30a). He, furthermore, considered it better to have intelligence (*nous*) than to be without it, and that intelligence cannot be present anywhere apart from soul (*psyche*). Hence he fashioned *nous* within *psyche*, and *psyche* within *soma* (body), so that the cosmos would reflect as closely as possible the supreme goodness of its creator (30b). Thus, "according to the likely story," the cosmos is "in very truth" a living creature endowed with soul and intelligence (*zoon empsychon ennoun*) (30b-c).

In the present context we cannot deal with the passage exhaustively,

but must confine ourselves to the points that have a direct bearing on the theory of the myth:

(1) First of all, the problem of *eikon-paradeigma* has undergone a modification. The Demiurge creates the cosmos after a model (reaffirmed in 31 and *passim*). But now he himself has become the model, at least for certain general elements, of cosmic order. He creates the cosmos in his own image with regard to *taxis* and *nous*, and, since *nous* cannot exist apart from *psyche*, probably also with regard to *psyche*. These elements are not the forms of the cosmos in its physical aspect; we might characterize them as the purposive and dynamic elements of cosmic order, providing its goodness and intelligibility. Hence we may say that Plato, in the symbol of the Demiurge, has concentrated the elements of "ordering force" which bridge the gulf between the eternal being of paradigmatic forms and the reality in which they have to be embodied. The Demiurge is the symbol of Incarnation, understood not as the result of the process but as the process itself, as the permanent tension in reality between the *taxis* of form or idea and the *ataxia* of formlessness.

(2) Second, the principle that binds form to the discordant movement of matter is named as intelligence-in-soul. Psyche, as we know from other contexts, is "the mover that moves itself"; movement or process is psychic in substance; and psyche is not blind but made luminous by the *nous* that is fashioned into it. Form (*idea*) has its being in eternal sameness; it is drawn, through intelligence-in-soul, into the process of embodiment in nature, man, and society. Psyche, in a sense, is the intermediate realm between disembodied form and the shapeless movement of matter; but then again we might say it is the only reality in a dynamic sense, for disembodied form and shapeless matter would never coalesce into a "world" without the cosmically creative force of psyche. Moreover, the psyche is the pervasive substance of the cosmos. It animates not only the cosmos itself into a *zoon empsychon* but is the creatively ordering substance in all its subdivisions down to man; for the Demiurge fashioned the cosmos as a living creature with all things in it "kindred to it with regard to their substance" (30d-31a).

(3) This argument brings us, finally, to the concluding sentence of Timaeus: that "according to the likely story" the cosmos is "in very truth" a living creature. The likely story, the *eikos mythos*, renders something more than mere likeliness; it renders the very truth

(*aletheia*). The passage corresponds to the earlier one in the Egyptian myth where the invented story became all of a sudden an *alethinos logos*. After the prolonged teasing with the epistemological distinctions of *logos* and *doxa*, we can see in this sudden reversal hardly anything else but a pointed irony that the humble instrument of "unscientific" myth is the source of the only truth that matters. In this irony, however, there is no confusion. The *aletheia* of the myth is not the *aletheia* of the *logos*. The paradigm still dwells in its eternal sameness, inaccessible to the *logos* of man; we still have no other knowledge of it than "likeness." What the myth can disclose "in very truth" is the psychic nature of the cosmos as a whole and in its parts. The myth does not render the truth of the idea; it renders the truth of its Incarnation.

We can now summarize the general theory of the myth as it emerges from the *Timaeus*. The substance of the cosmos, including man and society, is psyche illuminated by intelligence. Psyche is the force which transforms the disorder of matter into order by imposing on it the paradigmatic form. The paradigm of the cosmos itself is inaccessible to the intellect of man; we see it only in the image created by the Demiurge. Nevertheless we can give a likely account of the likeness because our psyche is part of the cosmic psyche, and in the medium of our individual psyche we respond with the *eikos mythos* to the cosmic *eikon*. And how do we know that all this is true and not perhaps an unfounded construction? Because the symbols used in the account originate in our psyche. We receive the myth from the unconscious, that is, from the cosmic depth of our soul that reverberates into the field of consciousness and intelligible communication. The *eikos mythos* carries its own *aletheia* because in it we symbolize the truly experienced relation of our separate conscious existence to the cosmic ground of the soul. The theory of the myth is itself a myth; its truth is not the truth of the intellect but the self-authenticating truth of the psyche.

The systematic place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's philosophy of politics has become clear. The order of the soul, in the *Republic*, was authenticated well enough through the ascent from the Cave to the intelligible realm of the Idea. The *Republic* had not, however, authenticated the paradigm of the good polis as the form of society in history. That

second step required the insight into the consubstantiality of soul and society, and ultimately of the cosmos. The myth of the soul can be the myth of the polis only if both individual soul and the polis in history can be embraced in the psyche of the cosmos. The Statesman who imposes the *taxis* of the idea on the *ataxia* of recalcitrant historical matter derives his authority from the Demiurge who imposes the paradigmatic order on the discordant movement of cosmic matter.

5. *The Myth of the Incarnation in the Timaeus*

The main body of the *Timaeus* elaborates the myth of the cosmos that has been justified in the introductory part. Its ramifications into the details of a philosophy of nature are not our concern. We shall restrict our analysis to the central symbols which support the incarnation of the idea in history.

In order to penetrate to the meaning of the symbols we must again reflect on the relation between the overt story of the creation which the *Timaeus* narrates and the drama of the soul which it symbolizes. For there is conducted a serious debate among commentators on the *Timaeus* on the question whether Plato actually intended to advance a "doctrine" of creation in time, or whether he assumed the existence of the cosmos from eternity. Considering the superb clearness of the dialogue we can hardly admit that such a question may be raised. The symbol of "creation in time," of a "beginning" of the cosmos, is necessitated by the literary form of the mythical "tale." Whatever Plato's "doctrine" of creation would have been, if he had ever thought of having one, in the story the creation inevitably must occur as an event in the inner time of the tale. For the rest, there is no doubt concerning Plato's position, as he has set it forth explicitly in *Timaeus* 37d. According to this passage, time is the *eikon* of eternity. The paradigm is eternal (*aionios*); since the Demiurge could not simply transfer this quality of the model to the image, he created in the cosmos a moving likeness of eternity; this likeness is time. Time is the everlasting (*aionios*) likeness of eternity, "moving according to number." Time, thus, is a quality in the *eikon*; and creation, therefore, cannot be a process in time; and the formula of a "creation in time" is senseless. This solution is, in substance, the same which St. Augustine offers for the problem of time and eternity: "If before heaven and earth there was no time,

likeness of the god becomes a work of the Nous.¹¹ The total cosmos, however, is not a work of the Nous alone; for Plato's Demiurge is not the omnipotent Christian creator of matter. The Demiurge can build an ordered cosmos, but he has to impose his order on a pre-existent material. The pre-existent substratum of the cosmos follows its own movements, and the critical work of creation consists in bending the substratum to the order of Nous.

The substratum is difficult to describe because it is not given to the cognitive faculties of man. Not even *pistis* will assure us of it; such knowledge as we have of its existence we achieve through a kind of "bastard reasoning" (*logismo notho*) (52b). Plato circumscribes it through a considerable array of mythical symbols and similes which touch on the various aspects of the substratum in the process of creation. In so far as the substratum limits the creative power of the Nous by its own character, it is called Ananke (47e-48a). In so far as it has to enter into the form imposed by the Demiurge, it is likened to a plastic material which can assume any shape without losing its specific nature (50a-c). In so far as it receives the form from the Demiurge, Plato speaks of it as the "nurse of Becoming" (*geneseos titbene*) (49a). Moreover, he symbolizes the creative process as a begetting of the offspring, *i.e.*, of the cosmos, through form as the father and the substratum as the mother (50c-d).¹² The substratum has no qualities of its own, but is of such a nature that the qualities of form can be bestowed upon it. Thus it is neither earth nor air nor fire nor water, nor any other formed element; yet it partakes of their nature; for otherwise the elemental forms could not be imposed on it (48b-d; 50d-51b). Finally, Plato gives a name to the substratum: he calls it Space (*chora*), "everlasting and not admitting of destruction" (52a-b).

The drama of creation is enacted in an uncreated realm which precedes creation—though not in time. The Demiurge operates under the conditions which are prescribed by eternally being Form, by Space, and by Genesis. The triad of Being, Space, and Genesis existed before the cosmos was created (52a). Creation itself, that is, the imposition of Form on Space and Genesis, becomes possible through an interaction or

¹¹ It is better to retain the Greek term. Any rendering by a modern term (such as intelligence, reason, *Geist*, spirit) would fragmentize the compact meaning of Nous.

¹² Quite possibly this symbolization leans on an interpretation of the Pythagorean Tetraktys.

agreement (*systasis*) between the ordering will of the Nous and the Ananke of Space. "Since Nous prevailed upon Ananke, persuading her to lead most things in becoming toward the best, the universe originated through Ananke's submission to reasonable persuasion [*peitho*]" (48a).

It is not difficult to discern in this symbolism a further development of the myth of the *Statesman*. The Demiurge corresponds to the Royal Ruler; he has to impose the order of Nous on a recalcitrant material, as the Statesman has to impose the order of the idea on a recalcitrant historical reality. Again we are faced with the dichotomy of good and evil. This time, however, Plato has endeavored valiantly to clarify the problem which formerly he symbolized by the two paradigms. For the force of resistance is now located in the substratum of Space with its movements of elements which are no elements but nevertheless have their qualities to the degree that elemental form can be imposed on them. The recipient of form, furthermore, has become a female principle, *chora*, which is everlasting like form. Its everlastingness, finally, is that of a material movement, of a chaos before form, and Plato uses the term *genesis* in order to distinguish its eternity of movement and change from the eternity of changeless Being.¹³

The new dichotomy represents a considerable advance over the *Republic*. The resistance to the idea has now become as eternal as the idea itself; and to overcome this resistance in creation is the permanent task of the Nous. In the Parable of the Cave the emphasis was on the ascent of the soul from the Cave to the intellection of the Idea; the emphasis has now shifted to the descent and the imposition of the Idea on formless reality. The problem of the ascent to the Idea, however, has not disappeared completely; for, in discussing the difference of belief and intelligence, Plato remarks (51e) that true belief is shared by all men, but the Nous only "by the gods and a small number of men." The descent of creation is feasible only because there exist the gods and the "small number of men" who are able to see the Idea itself in its eternal Being. Nevertheless, the descent has now become the crucial problem, and Plato for the first time gives full attention to the force of the soul which carries the Idea from Being into Becoming. In the *Statesman* this force had been suggested incidentally; now, in

¹³ We have retained the Greek term *genesis* on this occasion and have not translated it as Becoming in order to avoid confusion with the Becoming of the cosmos after creation. The *genesis* of the triad (*on*, *chora*, *genesis*) is a Becoming which precedes the Becoming of the cosmos. The Becoming of the cosmos can be apprehended through belief and sensation; the precosmic *genesis* is apprehended *logismo notbo*.

the *Timaeus*, it becomes the great central symbol under the name of Peitho, of Persuasion, which induces the Ananke of the chaos to submit to the Nous.¹⁴

In the *Statesman* Persuasion appeared in the discussion of the mimetic polis. The law of the polis should imitate the "true" law, and the question was how such imitation could ever be achieved in practice. Plato's answer was that, short of violence, the injection of truth into the polis could be achieved only by persuasion. In the *Statesman* these remarks are embedded in the extended discussion of the lawful polis, and their incidental character is probably the reason why this key problem of the embodiment of the Idea is usually overlooked. In the *Timaeus* Persuasion is placed in the systematic center so that no doubt can remain about its importance as the force of the soul which embodies the work of the Nous in reality. Moreover, the problem of Persuasion receives a new sharpness through the change in the symbol of Necessity. In the *Statesman* Necessity appeared as Heimarmene, the goddess who determines the periods of the cosmos; in the *Timaeus* Necessity has become Ananke, the limitative force of *chora* which yields to Persuasion. The Nous of the Demiurge overrules Ananke through Peitho, and the cosmos is created as the permanent structure of Becoming.

In the cosmos, at least, Nous has prevailed over Ananke and imposed the order of the idea. The task of the Statesman can now be conceived as the creation, in politics, of an order analogous to the order of the cosmos. This last step, the evocation of the polis as a cosmic analogue, Plato has taken in the *Laws*.

Through the force of Eros the soul rises to the intellection of the Agathon; through the force of Peitho the soul incarnates the Agathon in reality. Eros and Peitho are the forces of the ascent and descent, and, under this aspect, the *Timaeus* is the counterpart to the *Symposium*. Considering the parallel rank of the two forces, it is perhaps curious

¹⁴ The passage concerning the Nous, shared by "the gods and a small number of men" who can see the Idea itself, reintroduces the "epistemological strain" into the argument. There seems to be possible, after all, a direct knowledge of the Idea, unbroken by the myth. Precisely the occasion, however, on which this epistemological strain reappears, should warn against extracting an epistemology in the modern sense from the work of Plato. Plato's "man" is not a modern *Subjekt der Erkenntnis* which has absorbed the Christian tradition of creaturely finiteness. Plato's "man" is a psyche; and we have seen in the *Phaedrus* that the psyche in man has a range from ordinary humanity to semi-divinity. The epistemology of Plato presupposes a myth of man which differs fundamentally from the Christian idea.

that Plato should have so little to say about Peitho as compared with the great hymn to Eros. The quotation that we have given practically exhausts what we find in the *Timaeus* on the process of Peitho. Whatever else the reasons for such briefness may have been, one reason certainly was that every Greek knew what was meant by Peitho, while Eros was the new daemon of the Platonic circle.

When Plato introduces the force of Peitho he recalls a theme of the other great spiritual thinker of Hellas, of Aeschylus. The theme of the *Oresteia* is the yoke of Ananke and its breaking through the wisdom that has come by suffering. The generations of the gods follow one another, each doing penance for the violence of its rule by falling a victim to the successor, until Zeus breaks the chain through his personal rise to a just rule of constraint and wisdom. Likewise the mortals, as Agamemnon, bow to Ananke and commit misdeeds, to be followed by avenging misdeeds in horrible succession until the chain of vengeance is broken, in the *Eumenides*, by Athena who persuades the Erinyes to accept the acquittal of their victim and to change their own nature from vengeance to beneficence. The closing scene of the *Eumenides* brings the clash between the two generations of gods, representing stages of development in wisdom. Athena represents the new wisdom and justice of Zeus; the Erinyes represent the old order of justice through vengeance. The Erinyes do not yield easily, for the old order has its reason and justification; and Athena insists that she does not wish to show disrespect to her older sisters. She holds the thunder of Zeus in reserve to beat down resistance, but she does not want to use violence. She appeals to the Erinyes to respect "the majesty of Peitho" (885); and she rejoices when the *Zeus agoraios* has triumphed and the victory of the *agathon* is secured (973ff.). The parallels between Plato and Aeschylus are so close that they hardly can be accidental. The *Zeus agoraios*, the Zeus of persuasion over the assembly of the people, is next of kin to the Demiurge and the Royal Ruler. The victory of Nous over Ananke in the *Timaeus* must be seen against the Aeschylean background of the victory of the new wisdom over the older mythical forces. If such support were needed, this relation between the *Timaeus* and the *Oresteia* would further confirm the systematic place of the *Timaeus* in Plato's philosophy of history and politics.¹⁵

¹⁵ On the *Oresteia* see Murray, *Aeschylus*; on the relation to the *Timaeus* see Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, 361ff.

of the polis. The chaos has become co-eternal with the idea, and only through the *systasis* of Nous and Ananke can the cosmos gain form. Even an advancement beyond the *Statesman* is noticeable. In the trilogy of *Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman*, the recalcitrant historical reality was treated as the force of evil, as the *thremma*, the beast. In spite of the attention to the problem of Persuasion, the atmosphere of the earlier trilogy was fraught with violence. The *Timaeus* shows a new respect for the other half of the elements which go into the making of a cosmos. Punishment is still provided for the bad souls; but, on the whole, invective ceases when Nous is faced by the a-noetic, primordial substratum. The same change of tone can be observed in the *Critias*. While Atlantis is the counter-polis to the Athenian polis of the idea, characterized as wealthy and powerful, as barbarian and perhaps as sinister, her order is willed by the god and is by no means contemptible.

Since the myth of the great struggle is strongly touched by the memory of the Persian Wars, it is quite possible that the new atmosphere of respect in the *Critias* reflects an Aeschylean influence as does the symbol of Peitho in the *Timaeus*. The *Persae* of Aeschylus is the unique instance of a war play which celebrates the victory of a people by dramatizing the tragedy of the defeated enemy. Less than a decade after Salamis and the destruction of the city, there could be written in Athens and performed the drama which describes the defeat of the Persians, without hatred or triumph, as the tragic fall of a great nation through pride and *hubris*. The defeat is caused, not by a superiority of Hellenes over barbarians, but by the fall of the Persians from their right order. The gods resolved on their defeat. The fate of the transgressor is the lesson held up to the Athenians. In the *Critias* it is Atlantis that experiences the Persian fall and defeat. "When the divine element in them began to diminish . . . they became unable to bear their prosperity and behaved unseemly. To those who had eyes to see, they appeared ugly for they were losing the most precious of their gifts. But to those who had no eyes to discern the life of true *eudaimonia*, they appeared most beautiful and happy at this time when they were full of unjust will to power [*pleonexia*]" (121b). Zeus, who rules according to law, perceived the miserable condition of a once excellent people and resolved on their defeat in order to chastise them and bring them back to moderation (121b):

The parallel again is so close that it can hardly be considered an accident. It seems permissible to assume for the *Critias*, as for the *Timaus*, an Aeschylean influence in the new and deeper understanding of the fall from the right order. This influence does not express itself, however, in the mere repetition of an Aeschylean dramatic situation, for the war between Athens and Atlantis is not a transposition, into another historical time, of the conflict with Persia. Atlantis is the component of Becoming in historical order, so that the fall of Atlantis is the fall of Athens from true Being. The *hubris* of the Persians and their subsequent defeat could be held up to Athens, by Aeschylus, as a tragedy that might befall any people. In the *Critias* the fall from the right order has become the fate of Athens herself and the physical disaster (as symbolized by the presence of Hermocrates) has become imminent. In the rich symbolization of the *Critias* at least three motifs are intertwined: (1) the internal fall from the right order, (2) the external disaster which may be the consequence of the fall, and (3) the hope of regeneration. The internal decline and regeneration of a polity and the external rise and fall of historical powers are of the same substance and are interrelated in their meaning. Plato has come, through his myth, as close to a philosophy of world history as a Hellenic thinker within the firm horizon of the polis could come.

In the *Timaus* and *Critias*, the world of Plato has increased in content over the *Republic*. To the realm of the idea has been added the co-eternal realm of Becoming. Plato has recognized that there is more than one principle on which a political order in history can be built. The order of the idea remains the highest, but other orders of no mean quality can be in conflict with it. Beyond Hellas in space lies the world of Persia; beyond Hellas in time lies the world of Crete; and beyond the realm of the idea lie realms of social organization which draw their inspiration from other sources. Considerable importance is attached, therefore, to the principles on which the rival orders of Athens and Atlantis are constructed in the *Critias*. In particular the order of Atlantis has its fascination because Plato here actually does what he is so frequently and erroneously suspected of doing in the *Republic*—he is constructing a "Utopia." The procedure is engrossing because, in this case, a political thinker of the first rank constructs a Utopia, not with the intention of evoking the image of an ideal state, but with the pur-

pose of evoking a rival order to the good polis. Moreover, he does not solve the problem by simply heaping evils on the rival order. The Atlantis of Plato could, indeed, pass as a Utopia written with the intention of evoking an ideal, prosperous, happy community, under the rule of benevolent despots whose principal concern is the welfare of the people. The Atlantis is the unique instance of a Utopia written "in bad faith" by a master of political psychology. In his construction Plato uses the materials which a Utopian writer might have used "in good faith"; and he does it so skillfully that the account of Atlantis does not degenerate into a satire on dreamers of ideals. For the dream of Utopia, that is, the dream of achieving the perfect society through organizing men according to a blueprint instead of forming them in an educational process, is a serious affair; it is something like the black magic of politics. Most appropriately, therefore, the dream of Atlantis rises in luciferic splendor.

The description of Athens precedes that of Atlantis. The two accounts belong together and elucidate each other.

The region of Athens, as we have seen, fell to the lot of Athena and Hephaestus. Their natures of brother and sister are united by the common love of wisdom and the arts (*philosophia*, *philotechnia*); that is why they received a region which is naturally adapted to *arete* and *phronesis*. In this country they implanted children of the soil, of good nature, and created the order of the polis according to their insight (109c-d). On the institutions Plato is brief because, on the whole, they correspond to the polis of the idea as described in the *Republic* (110d). Topographically, Attica had not yet suffered the consequences of erosion through the great floods. The hill of the Acropolis was much larger than it is today; its plateau was sufficiently extended to serve as the residence of the guardians. The country was still fertile, rich in woods, sources, and rivers (110d-112d). The guardians of Athens were at the same time the freely accepted leaders (*hegemones*) of Hellas; and they ruled their polis, as well as the other Hellenes, everlastingly with the same justice (112d-e).

To the lot of Poseidon fell an island in the western ocean. It was peopled by men born from the earth. One of the families lived on a mountain that rose in a plain located at the middle of the length of the island and open toward the sea. Poseidon took pleasure in a daugh-

and people. The rule of the dynasty has to be maintained by bodyguards and the mutual support which the kings give to each other. The order of Atlantis has its origin in divine lust, the order of Athens in divine wisdom. In this opposition of the lower to the higher mysteries we probably touch the core of the symbol of Atlantis.

The lust of existence is as ultimately divine as its overcoming through the ascent to the intelligible realm. Yet the lust of the god cannot create more than the appearance of form. His order is vitiated from the beginning by its compromise with mortality and in the end it will return to formless flux. We have seen the fall from order through the gradual admixture of mortal elements. The *Critias* concludes with the intervention of Zeus.

The god of gods perceived the impending disaster and wanted to restore moderation through chastisement. "For this purpose he assembled all the gods in their most noble habitation, which is situated at the center of the cosmos and overlooks from on high all that participates in Becoming, and having them assembled he said. . . ." At this point the *Critias* breaks off. We have noted previously, however, that assembly and address of the *Critias* correspond to the assembly of the gods and the address of the Demiurge in the *Timaeus* (41a-d). When the Demiurge has completed his work to the point where man and the lower natures remain to be created, he assembles the gods and tells them that mortal creatures of three kinds have not yet been brought into being. Without them the cosmos would be imperfect. "But if I myself give them birth and life they would be equal to gods." He will, therefore, create only the immortal part of man while the gods who themselves are created will have to weave the immortal element into the mortal ones and to create of this fabric man and the lower creatures. "Bring them into existence, feed them and cause them to grow; and when they perish, receive them back again." The souls created in this manner would each be put on a star as in a chariot, shown the nature of the cosmos, and taught the laws of Heimarmene. Then each soul would be incarnated in a body, with the freedom of conducting its life in such a manner that after death it would either return to its star and to eternal happiness or sink down to lower incarnations (41e-42d). The address of the *Timaeus* and the subsequent arrangements thus account for the birth of the human soul and for its free-

highly doubtful that any such evolution took place at all. The assumption of an evolution of Plato's thought with regard to this particular point seems to have no other basis than the further gratuitous assumption that between two ideas must lie an evolution in time if the dates of their publication are a good number of years apart. In the case of Plato we possess biographical indications that the time at which an idea is expressed in an exoteric work does not of necessity correspond to the time of its conception. We are informed, for instance, through the *Seventh Letter*, that the idea of the philosopher-king has to be dated at a time which precedes the completion of the *Republic* by perhaps more than twenty years. In the same manner, we learn from the *Seventh Letter* that the idea of the philosopher-king must have been interwoven with the idea of the "rule of law" at least as early as the time of Dion's appeal to Plato to come to Syracuse; and quite probably the interweaving of the two ideas did not take place on this particular occasion, in 367, but was preceded by a period of gestation the length of which we cannot surmise. In the *Seventh Letter*, at any rate, Dion is designated as the man who could have united in his person "philosophy and power" (335d); and the rule of the philosopher-king is characterized as the establishment of an order in which man attains happiness through the conduct of his life in the light of justice "whether he possesses this justice himself or whether the guidance of holy men has nurtured and formed his habits to the way of righteousness" (335d). And how can the philosopher-king establish this order? By using "all means to bring the citizens under the discipline of the best and appropriate laws" (336a). These laws will not consist merely of a code containing legal rules and sanctions. The legal provisions themselves will be preceded by discourses, the prooemia, which set forth at length theological and ethical foundations of the rule. The laws will become, by means of the prooemia, the instrument of education for the citizenry. The idea of the prooemia, of the literary form of the *Laws* in which Plato expresses his thought in long systematic digressions, thus, had already been conceived at the time of his occupation with the Sicilian problems. In the *Third Letter*, addressed to Dionysius and to be dated c. 356, Plato reminds the tyrant specifically of their preparatory work on the prooemia for the laws of Syracuse in 367 (316a). And, as we suggested earlier, it is hardly probable that Plato should not have conceived the idea before this date.

From the beginning, therefore, the idea of the philosopher-king must

These passages should suffice for the elucidation of the problem. The order of the best polis presupposes that it is given for a community of *philoï*, that is, of persons who are bound together by the existential bond of *philia*. Only under this condition can the true *koinon* be realized, that is, the *koinon* not of women, children, and possessions only, but a *koinon* of ethos and pathos. The men, however, who are capable of being true *philoï* are rare; so rare, indeed, that Plato speaks of them as "gods, or sons of gods." Only when, by some miracle, such semidivine beings should live in a polis could its life be ordered by the *nomoi* (739d) which the *Republic* has evoked. Ordinarily we have to assume a human raw material of a somewhat less perfect nature (*genesis*). In ordering the social life of such more common human beings we must be satisfied with the *nomoi* that are classified as second best. The second-best order, however, is closely related to the first best in so far as the idea of existential community which is expressed in the *nomoi* of the first order should also be expressed in the *nomoi* of the second one. The difference will be one of intenseness only; the second order will embody as much of the substance of the first as the weaker human vessel can bear.

2. *The Platonic Theocracy*

The evolution of Plato's conception of order toward the position of the *Laws* must be understood in the context of Hellenic politics. The poleis had never found their way toward unification on a national, territorial scale, even though the threat of the Persian great power was clear to everybody. The need for a more comprehensive organization must have been so obvious at the time, that Plato's vision of an Hellenic empire had nothing extraordinary on principle. It was so close indeed to the trend of pragmatic politics that it barely anticipated the solution which the problem found, in the generation after his death, in the imperial foundations of Alexander and the Diadochi. And his evocation of the philosopher-king is, under one of its aspects, no more than the expression of the search for an Hellenic figure that would correspond to the savior-kings and pharaohs of the Near Eastern empires. The vision is so unextraordinary that it is even difficult to imagine how a political thinker in this situation could demand less than Plato does. For what he envisaged was in fact no more than a federation of Hellenic poleis under the leadership of an hegemonic polis; what was realized institutionally in the various hegemonic leagues, like the Spartan or Athenian,

he wanted to extend to the whole of the polis world. The Platonic problem is not the end but the means. For the failure of the leagues, and the cause of the failure in the insuperable parochialism (some call it love of freedom) of the gentilitian poleis, was all too clear. A plain demand for an all-embracing Hellenic federation might as well be left unspoken in view of the situation. A solution had to come through force, or through the spirit, or through both.

The solution through force alone, setting aside the doubts about its desirability, was hardly practical. If Athens and Sparta were not strong enough to impose a federation, no other polis was in a position to undertake the task. On the level of power politics the problem resembled that of German kingship in the high Middle Ages: none of the old duchies was strong enough to impose effective order on the others; the attempt could be made only from a new and larger territory (such as Upper Italy, Sicily, Bohemia, Austria, Brandenburg) as the basis of operations. In the Hellenic case, the unification was undertaken from Macedonia and ultimately from Rome. Observing the political events of his time, Plato must have considered the Macedonian solution as a possibility, but in his work, if we except the doubtful *Fifth Letter* to Perdiccas III, the idea of a unification by force alone is never touched. Plato preferred a combination of force and spiritual reform.

In the *Seventh Letter* he fairly clearly set forth his ideas concerning the strategy of unification. The process should begin in Syracuse with the conquest of the city by the party of Dion. The victory should be followed by the imposition of a constitution, guided by the principle of *isonomia*. In the context of the *Seventh* and the *Eighth Letter* *isonomia* means an "equitable" constitution that would establish something like a condominium of the former parties in the civil war. The content of the new legislation should be determined by a constitutional assembly drawn from other Hellenic cities in which members of the Academy would play a decisive role. The blessings of this constitution Plato expected to be so great that a federation of the Sicilian poleis would soon follow the establishment of order in Syracuse. And the success of the federation, finally, would exert an appeal of such strength that a pan-Hellenic federation might be formed.

This peculiar combination of power politics with spiritual reform causes the difficulties which unsettle Plato's earlier position and urge him on toward the position of the *Laws*.

The formulation of the difficulties will be best prepared by stressing the ineluctability of the position. The alternative of imposing a cosmological order of the Near Eastern type on Hellas could not be envisaged by Plato. In the first place, the idea was impractical. When Alexander displayed tendencies in this direction, his Macedonians simply did not follow suit. And even after the unification had become a fact on the level of power politics, the moderately successful Orientalization of Mediterranean rulership, the so-called pseudomorphosis, was accomplished only when the Roman Empire was already deep in the shadow of the threat by the Great Migration. And second, a debouchment into the Near Eastern imperial order could not be Plato's intention, because his myth of the soul, while it was bound by the myth of the cosmos, had absorbed the differentiation of the autonomous psyche which had occurred in the world of the polis since the sixth century. For Plato there was no way back to the collective salvation of a people through a mediator-king, halfway between God and mankind. The problem of regeneration had become personal. The other alternative, the course followed by Machiavelli in a comparable situation, could not be considered by Plato either. The Italian thinker was also faced by the problem of unifying a world of city-states on the higher national level so that it could hold its own against the national states of France and Spain; and he also knew that a true order was impossible without a spiritual reform. Since he found the spiritual resources neither in himself nor in anybody else, he confined himself to the evocation of the Prince who would achieve unification through tactical means in power politics. This component of the Prince, to be sure, is present in Plato, but it never becomes dominant. For the tyrannical alternative would have meant, as it did for Machiavelli, the renunciation of the spirit and the fall into demonism.

This last observation will allow us to distinguish more clearly the various aspects of the Platonic difficulties. Power and spirit can indeed not be separated. The violent, tyrannical solution, which at first sight might appear as a solution by power alone, involves in fact the corruption of the spirit, for the soul of the tyrant would have to close itself demonically against the law of the spirit that doing evil is worse than suffering evil. A Plato will be tempted, but he will not fall. The radical alternative would be the withdrawal from the sphere of power, if not into solitude, at least into the restricted community of those who are respon-

sive to the appeal of the spirit. This tendency, which is also present in Plato along with the temptation of tyranny, has expressed itself in the foundation of the Academy. But then, again, the Academy is conceived as the institutional instrument by which the spirit can wedge its way back into the political arena and influence the course of history. The ambiguousness of the position becomes manifest, especially in the *Statesman*, in the admixture of a heavy dose of violence to the Persuasion of the royal ruler. Plato is not a Christian saint. To be sure, he wants to persuade, but he also wants to embody the Idea in the community of a polis. And in order to give the visible form of institutions to the invisible flow of the spirit, in order to enlarge the erotic community of the true *philoi* into an organized society in politics, he is willing to temper persuasion with a certain amount of compulsion on the less responsive and to cast out the obstreperous by force. He could not know that he struggled with a problem that had to be solved through the Church. The theocracy, therefore, remained the limit of his conception of order.

Within the boundaries drawn by the myth of the cosmos, the position of Plato evolves from the *Republic* to the *Laws* in a manner that can be best elucidated by comparison with the evolution from the Sermon on the Mount to the function of the institutionalized Church. The counsels of the Sermon originate in the spirit of eschatological heroism. If they were followed by the Christian layman to the letter among men as they are, they would be suicidal. The Sermon is addressed to the disciples of the Son of God, to his *mathetai*, much as the *Republic* appeals to the disciples of the son of god Plato. While the counsels of the Sermon cannot become rules of social conduct in the world as it is, they are nevertheless the substance of Christian doctrine. If they and their guidance were removed from Christianity, the power center that makes it an effective historical reality would be destroyed. Since the Sermon is unbearable in its purity, the Church infuses as much of its substance as men are capable of absorbing while living in the world; the mediation of the stark reality of Jesus to the level of human expediency, with a minimum loss of substance, is one of the functions of the Church. Likewise, in the *Republic* Plato speaks with divine authority when he calls up his disciples for the radical conversion, the *periagoge*, a call which presupposes that man is capable of following it. This conviction that the appeal can find response is waning in his later years. An evolution takes place which parallels in Christianity the transition from Jesus to St. Paul; in the *Laws*

Plato has arrived at the Pauline, ecclesiastic compromise with the frailty of man. In the heroic appeal of the *Republic* Plato himself appeared as the leader of his people; his own divine reality was to guide them toward their regeneration. Now Plato has proved too great. The people cannot stand the naked reality; their existential potency is so low that they can look at it only through the veil of his prooemia. In the *Laws* Plato appears as the ecclesiastic statesman. He has withdrawn the direct existential appeal; his own person is blotted out; an "Athenian Stranger," a man "who has knowledge of these things," develops a plan and the motivations for theocratic institutions that will be bearable to men as they are. All that is left of the *Republic* is its spirit; the divine sermon recedes into the place of the heroic counsel; and of the spirit there will live in the institutions no more than is possible.

Plato's position evolves from heroic appeal to ecclesiastic statesmanship, as we have said, within the boundaries drawn by the myth of the cosmos. The Idea waxes and wanes in the rhythms of incarnation and disembodiment; and the form of the polis is the reality of embodiment. The theocracy is the limit of Plato's conception of order, because he does not advance to the distinction of spiritual and temporal order. Plato's experience of the life of the spirit as an attunement of the soul with the divine Measure is essentially universal; and in the *Laws* we sense the idea of a universal community of mankind in the spirit lying just beyond the horizon; but the last step is never taken—and was not to be taken by man without revelation. For Plato the spirit must manifest itself in the visible, finite form of an organized society; and from this tension between the universality of the spirit and the finiteness of its embodiment follow, as the characteristics of Plato's politics, the supplementary use of violence as well as the Puritanic touch of a community of the elect. The tendency is toward ecclesiastic universalism; the result remains theocratic sectarianism.

We have reached the limits of the Platonic conception of order—but the limits of the symbolism are not the limits of Plato. As previously suggested, the *Laws* is not a political *livre de circonstance*. The genesis of the *Laws*, it is true, is intimately connected with Plato's participation in Sicilian affairs. If we compare the *Letters* on this subject with the content of the *Laws*, there can be no doubt with regard to the parallelism of institutional projects. It would be rash, however, to conclude that the work is no more than a code of laws that could serve as the model con-

of the year, the day of the solstice (683). The theme of the beginning and the end is continued with this introduction of the sun as a motif. The beginning and the end may be the distant points between which a course extends; and they may be the point of coincidence at which one epoch ends and a new one begins. The solstice is the symbol of the turning point in the rhythm of the cycles. The choice of the symbol is not arbitrary; the sun symbolism of the *Laws* continues that of the *Republic*. In the earlier dialogue the Idea was the sun of the intelligible realm; now we are in the visible realm of institutions which embody the Idea; of this realm the visible sun is the ruler. Its revolutions determine the sacred rhythm of the polis; the solstice marks the end of a year; on the day following the solstice the calendar of the sacred festivals begins anew; and on this day the highest judicial magistrate is chosen for the polis (767). The symbolism, however, is carried further into the structure of the dialogue itself. The three wanderers are old men. They have set themselves the task of creating the laws for a new colony; but their work would be incomplete and futile if it provided only for the structure of a polis and did not provide for the education of men who can keep the laws intact and renew them. The spirit must be transmitted from the old men "whose day is setting" to the younger men who will have to continue their work (770a). The *Laws* is an ending at which the wisdom of age is transmitted to the future generations. The principal instruments for this transmission are the great prooemia, the main body of the *Laws* itself. And indeed, "a divine *afflatus*" seems to have guided the wanderers and their conversation on this longest day (811c). The discourse had begun "at dawn," and now, in the middle of the way (the passage is to be found actually at approximately the physical center of the *Laws*), the Athenian Stranger becomes aware that, under the divine guidance, "this compact discourse of his composition" has become "rather like a poem," that he has created a form of spiritual poetry that most suitably will furnish the model for the sacred art of the new polis, the art in which the spirit will be kept alive (811). The distention of the way between the beginning and the end in God thus becomes focussed in the center of a divinely inspired poem, created at the solstice when Plato's life declines, marking an end and a beginning in the spirit's process.

The three wanderers themselves are symbolic figures.¹ The Cretan

¹ One aspect of this symbolism has been discussed in an earlier context. Cf. *Order and History* II, Ch. 1, 2, 4.

institutions were reputed to be the oldest in Hellas, and the constitution of Lacedaemon was closely related to them. In the three persons of the Cretan, the Lacedaemonian, and the Athenian there is reflected the course of Hellenic history. Crete is the omphalos at which the Hellenic world is bound to its Aegean prehistory; the return to Crete is the return to the youth of Hellas. Now, at the end of Hellenic history, we return to its beginning. The symbolism of a return to the youth of the cycle that we have encountered in the *Statesman* and the *Timaeus* is resumed and focussed, as in the instance of the solstice, in a symbolic presence through the simultaneity of the three wanderers who mark the end and the beginning.

The distention of the discourse is bound up in the integral form of the poem; the revolution of the sun is focussed in the solstice; and the extension of Hellenic history is brought, through the three wanderers, into the presence of a conversation. This contraction of extended time into a symbol of timelessness is not a mere artistic device; it is Plato's new technique of symbolization. A movement of the soul that formerly had been expressed in myths of cosmic cycles and in the "time of the tale" has now come to its rest in the art of the timeless poem. The suspension of time in the eternal presence of the work of art has become a conscious principle in Plato's last creation. We can observe this process of suspension best in the great symbol of the god who plays with men as with his puppets, for in this symbol Hesiod's myth of the Metal Ages, the myth which stands at the beginning of Hellenic speculation on the cycle in politics and history, comes to its end.

In the Hesiodian form of the myth the ages follow each other down to the present and last age of the world, the iron age that is pregnant with the expectation of a catastrophic end and a new beginning. In Plato's work the myth undergoes a contraction of its time dimension through a series of steps from the *Republic* to the *Laws*. In the *Republic* the myth symbolizes the simultaneity of social stratification in the good polis. The three classes are bound together in their order by the myth that a god has mixed gold in the souls of the rulers, silver in the souls of the warriors, and brass and iron in the souls of the lower class. The principle of contraction is already at work. The golden age of the past is drawn into the present of the polis through the evocation of the philosopher-king; and the inferiority of the lower element is restrained by

its subordination to the rule of the higher. In the logic of a myth of the soul, however, the contraction is not yet perfect. While the hierarchy of virtues that was projected by Hesiod into the sequence of ages is drawn back to its origin in the psyche, the virtues are still distributed over the individuals and classes of the good polis. The elements, which in principle are the elements of every psyche, are arranged as an externalized pattern so that only the polis as a whole represents the tensions of the soul. While the time sequence is contracted into the simultaneousness of a social structure, this structure itself is still an externalizing projection. In the *Statesman*, then, the metals are used to symbolize the royal art proper (gold) and the supporting arts of the true polis (other precious metals). But it is doubtful whether this further transformation is a serious advance beyond the *Republic*. A hint of the impending contraction is to be found only in the subsequent description of the royal art as the art of weaving together the elements of the soul and of binding them by the divine cord of truth. In the *Laws*, finally, we reach the stage where the elements, symbolized by the metals, are contracted in the individual soul and their interplay becomes the truly human problem.

The perfectly contracted symbol appears in the *Laws* in the context of the anthropology which characterizes the late work of Plato. A human being is considered to be one whole person. This person, however, is divided within itself by two conflicting foolish counsellors, joy and sorrow (or pleasure and pain: *hedone*, *lype*). Besides these fundamental feelings there are to be found in the soul furthermore their corresponding apprehensions (*elphs*). The apprehension of sorrow is a movement of shrinking back in fear or aversion (*phobos*); the apprehension of joy is a movement of audacious and confident reaching out (*tharros*). And beyond the feelings and their apprehensions, finally, lies the reflective insight and judgment (*logismos*) concerning the better or the worse of the basic movements. The description of this organization of the soul is then connected with the problems of order in society in that a reflective insight regarding the better or the worse, if sedimented in a decree of the polis, is called a *nomos* (614c-d).

This is the structure of the soul which Plato symbolizes through the myth of God as the player of the human puppet. Let us imagine, the Athenian Stranger says, that we living creatures are puppets of the gods, perhaps created as their playthings, perhaps created for some more serious purpose—we do not know which. But certain it is that all these senti-

ments or apprehensions are the cords or strings by which we are worked. Their tensions pull us in opposite directions and therein lies the division of vice and virtue. One of these cords is made of gold and is sacred; it is the cord of reflective insight or of the communal *nomos* of the polis. The other cords are made of iron and various lesser materials. The pull of the golden cord is soft and gentle; in order to become effective, it needs the support of man. The pull of the other cords is hard and violent, and man has to resist it or he will be drawn away by it. The man who has understood the truth of this *logos* will understand the game of self-rule and self-defeat and will live in obedience to the pull of the golden cord; and the city that has understood it will incorporate it into a law and will live by it in domestic relations as well as in relations with other poleis (644d-645b).

The myth unfolds its full meaning approximately midway in the *Laws*, in Book VII. The Athenian Stranger is about to discourse on the subject of instrumentalities and methods of education. He apologizes for elaborating the problems in so much tedious detail; and he pleads that the keels must be laid carefully for the vessels that will carry us through the voyage of life (803a-b). Then he goes on to say that human affairs certainly should not be taken too seriously, but that unfortunately we cannot help taking them in earnest, considering that the ways of man have become corrupt in our time. True seriousness should be reserved for matters which are truly serious; and by nature, God alone would be the worthy object of our most serious endeavors. In these our days, however, men have forgotten that they are the playthings of God and that this quality is the best in them. All of us, men and women, should fall in with this rôle and spend our lives "in playing the noblest of plays." The current sentiments among the people, however, go rather in the opposite direction; hence we have to take seriously the affairs of this otherwise insignificant plaything (803b-c). The problem thus, arises through the popular inversion of the order of relevance with regard to human affairs. According to the prevalent misconception the serious work must be attended to for the sake of the play; thus people think that war is serious work that ought to be well discharged in order to secure peace. As a matter of fact, however, there is nothing serious about war at all because in war we find neither play (*paidia*) nor formation (*paideia*), and these two have to be counted the most serious for us human beings (803d). Hence we should spend our lives in the pursuits of peace, and

that means in "playing the plays [or games]" of sacrifice, song, and dance so that we may gain the grace of the gods and shall be able to vanquish our enemies (803e). Thus we shall live our lives as what we really are, "as puppets for the most part, though having a little bit of reality [*aletheia*], too" (804b).

The dimensions of meaning in the symbol begin to become clear. First of all we have to note the advance in the analysis of the psyche beyond the *Republic* and the *Statesman*. The rigidity of characterizing the types of souls through the virtues has disappeared. Plato penetrates now beyond the virtues into the movements of the soul, into the realm of *pathe*, and into the consciousness of values, the *logismos*. Virtues and vices are no longer elemental characteristics; they have become the resultants of the interplay between the forces in the deeper stratum of the soul. Plato has found the common denominator of traits which formerly seemed ultimate. With the rigidity of characterization, furthermore, the rigidity of the characters themselves has disappeared. The inequality of the basic human types has dissolved into a gamut of variants, resulting from the play of forces in a psychic constellation which is basically the same for all men. This change in the anthropological conception from inequality to equality corresponds to the lowering of the existential level in the transition from the *Republic* to the *Laws*. The philosopher-kings of the *Republic* differed existentially from the rest of mankind in that in their souls the divine order itself could be realized; the *nomos* could enter their souls so that they would become a *nomos empsychos*. The men of the *Laws* are equal because the *nomos* is equally beyond them all. What they have in their souls is the *logismos*, the ability to discern values, but whether they will follow the pull of this golden cord or, rather, the pull of another one, is uncertain. One of the several meanings of *nomos* emerges now more clearly: the meaning of the *nomos* as the presence of the divine spirit. This spirit is not present in the souls of the equal men; it has solidified into a decree (*dogma*) of the polis; and this *dogma*, while it may be renewed and expanded by the citizens of the polis, is not created by them; they find themselves equipped with it, at the foundation of the polis, through the lawgivers. We can see now that the development of the symbol of the player and the puppets lies in the logic of the development of Plato's philosophy of existence. The gentle pulling of the golden cord which man should follow has replaced the ascent from the cave to the immediate vision of the Idea; the full stature

of the man whose soul is ordered by the vision of the Agathon has diminished to that of a plaything (*paigion*) of conflicting forces; the sons of god have become the puppets of the gods.

And what has become of the philosopher-kings? Gone is the hope that their numbers could unite in the erotic community of the *philo*i and be the ruling society of a polis. Their number is sadly diminished; the formulation suggests repeatedly that there is only one "who has knowledge of these things," that is, Plato himself. And because of the lack of companions, this one cannot form a community; he has become anonymous, the "Stranger." All he can do is to provide the *nomoi* that will exert the divine pull on the lesser souls who in this, their lower rank, are all equal.² The "one" is withdrawing from the community of men because the community of equals has failed to be his equal; and he is withdrawing toward the divinity, into the neighborhood of the God who pulls the strings. The symbol gains its intensity because it is drawn, not from the experience of the puppet only, but of the player too. No doubt, there is a touch of contempt for man in the symbol. His partners in the discourse are quick to catch this tone: "You give us a very low opinion of the race of men, O Stranger" (804b). The Stranger begs forgiveness and pleads: "Toward the God was looking and feeling when speaking, who just spoke"; and then he adds soothingly (for those who do not look and feel in this direction with the same intenseness): "Let us grant, if so it pleases you, that our race is not so bad, but worth some consideration [*spoude*]" (804b). It sounds as if the Stranger, in his transport, had for a moment forgotten that even his fellow wanderers are not quite his equals and that one must speak to them with a little caution.

² The experiences which determine the conception of human equality in the great spiritualists merit closer investigation. In the case of Plato, as in the case of St. Thomas, the original sentiment seems to be the generosity of the aristocratic soul that is ready to accept everybody as its equal. A considerable amount of sad experience is required before a man of higher quality realizes with finality that men, on the whole, are not his equals, and before he is ready to draw the consequences, as did for instance Nicolaus Cusanus when he surrendered his optimistic faith in the possibility of parliamentary self-government for the Church and became a "monarcho-optant." A last phase may bring the return to the sentiment of equality when the inequalities become insignificant in view of the equidistance of all men from God. The Myth of Nature, however, offers an alternative to the Christian final equality. The idea of an hierarchically differentiated psyche, with gradual transitions from humanity to divinity, allows for divinization in this last phase. And this has been the solution of Plato in the *Laws*. The current interpretations, which want to see in Plato a development from a more autocratic to a more populist or democratic position, miss this decisive point. The atmosphere of the *Republic* is still that of an appeal to the equals of Plato; in the *Laws*, on the contrary, Plato has accepted the distance which separates him from other men; he now speaks as the divine lawgiver to men who are equal because they are equidistant from him.

Throughout the passages which deal with this symbol runs the word pattern of *paidia* and *spoude*. We must consider the shades of meaning of these terms. The field of the play is the soul of man, in which feelings, apprehensions, and *logismos* pull in different directions. The play is played by the gods in whose hands man is the *paigion*. Man, however, is not an automaton; he himself, in so far as he "is one," has a part in the play; he has to play the rôle which is assigned to him of supporting the pull of the golden cord and resisting the drawings of the lesser cords. Then the field is enlarged to the polis. The *nomos* becomes the pull of the golden cord; the play becomes the ritual "sacrifice, song and dance" of the citizenry; and, correspondingly, the conversation in which the *nomoi* are created becomes, in the words of the Stranger, "a grave [*emphron*] play of the old men played well up to this point" (769a). This play, then, is serious because it is ultimately directed by God, "the most serious." Man's part in it is equally serious because in this serious play he attunes himself to the divine direction. No other preoccupation of man's life, not even war, can be as serious as the ritual play in which he plays out his life. Men, however, in their spiritual confusion, lose sight of what is "most serious." Hence human affairs, which otherwise would not be so important, have to be taken seriously by the wanderers, and the play of creating the *nomoi* becomes itself a serious play. Nevertheless, sometimes the contempt for this childish race of men, who do not know what is serious and what is not, breaks through; then the Stranger pulls himself up and admits that man, after all, has to be accorded some seriousness, for, in spite of his fall, he is destined to play the serious play.

The serious play is enacted by every man in his personal life by supporting the pull of the golden cord; it is enacted by man in community by celebrating the rites of the polis in conformity with the *nomoi*. Nevertheless, man, in enacting the play, exhausts it neither in his personal nor in his social life. Man can only act the part that is assigned to him by God. Ultimately the cosmic play is in the hands of God, and only He knows its full meaning. The lawgivers must use persuasion on the young agnostics in order to convince them that the gods are not unconcerned about human affairs. In the face of the frequent wordly success of the wicked and the equally frequent external misfortunes of the good, in the face moreover of the rabble's praise of action which destroy the true *eudaimonia*, the young may fall into moral confusion and believe that all this can happen only because no god is watching over the events in

the human sphere. Against this error the lawgivers have to insist that the cosmic process is penetrated by divine ministration to the smallest and most insignificant particle, such as man. For the cosmos is psyche throughout, and the life of man is part of this animated nature (*empsychos physis*); all living creatures, however, like the cosmos as a whole, are the treasure (or: possession, *ktemata*) of the gods (902b). The lawgivers must persuade the young men that the god who has created the cosmos has disposed all things for the weal and virtue of the whole. Action and passion of the smallest particle are governed by divine powers to the minutest detail for the best. The annoyance of the young has its cause in the fact that all the parts are ordered toward the whole and that the whole does not exist for the sake of one of its parts; this order of the whole is in the mind of God, it is not intelligible in its details to man; hence the grumbling at events which make sense only in the economy of the cosmic psyche, but seem to lack meaning in the perspective of the finite human psyche.

This argument is climaxed by the vision of the creator-god as the player at the board who shifts the pieces according to the rules. When he observes a soul, now in conjunction with one body and then with another, undergoing changes through its own actions as well as through the actions of other souls, there is nothing left for the mover of the pieces but to shift the character (*ethos*) that has improved to the better place and the one that has worsened to the worse place, thus assigning to each the lot that is due its fate (903b-d).

The Mover of the Pieces (*pettentes*) is the last and most awesomely intimate revelation of the Platonic God. The Player of the Puppets is a symbol whose meaning is easily understandable through the experience of the pulls in every soul. The Mover of the Pieces—this vision of the God who broods over the board of the cosmos and moves the particles of the Great Soul according to their relative merit, distinguished from the puppets by His perfect will of fulfillment under Fate—is drawn from the cosmic depth in the soul of Plato.

The *Laws* opens with the sentence: "God or some man, O strangers, —who is supposed to have originated the institution of your laws?" This sentence opens more than the immediately following conversation on the origin of Cretan institutions in the oracles of the Zeus, to whose cave the wanderers are ascending. The sentence opens and gov-

erns the organization of the whole dialogue. The symbol of God as the author of institutions dominates the first three books. The first and second books deal with the orientation of man and his communal institutions toward God. The third book surveys the course of political institutions in history, their defects and failures, and draws the historical lesson. This survey is also under the sign of God, for the course of history is the cycle that begins after the god-sent catastrophes which have destroyed the previous civilization. Moreover, this course is ending now in a twilight of decline because men have fallen from the divine order through their self-willed factionism. History shows the destruction that is worked when the parts want to govern the whole; and the lesson is the insight that a stable order can be restored only if the self-willed particularism is overcome and the parts fall again into their proper places through their orientation toward God. The purpose of the three books has been to learn "how a polis is administered best and how the individual man may best conduct his personal life" (702a). This purpose has been achieved and the exposition of the subject matter has come to its end.

The dialogue is set moving again through the consideration that hitherto only principles have been developed; a real result could be achieved only if the principles were put to a test (*elegchos*) (702b). But what form could such a "test" assume? At this point the Cretan intervenes and reveals that he is a member of a committee of ten, entrusted by the city of Cnossus with the foundation of a new colony. His charge extends to the material organization (choice of site, assembling the settlers, and so forth) as well as to the drafting of a code of laws. He suggests that the wanderers serve the purpose of the Stranger's test as well as of his own foundation by elaborately constructing the order of a polis based on the principles that have been developed. Now it is man who has to show his skill in lawgiving, not God. This construction of the polis by man begins with Book IV and fills the rest of the *Laws* through Book XII. The incision after Book III, as we have said, is the only external division of the *Laws*; and it is governed by the opening formula.

The construction is now in the hands of man; but that does not mean that God has no part in it. The Stranger embarks on a reflection which leads to the question whether man can really legislate at all. Circumstance and chance are such pressing factors in politics that one

might almost say laws are never made by man but rather result from the determinants in a situation (709a-b). Nevertheless, while God is all and while, under God, *tyche* and *kairos* govern our lives, there is still an important rôle left for human skill if it knows how to co-operate with *kairos* (709b-c). In particular the skilled artist in every field, and so the lawgiver, will know for which conditions to pray, that he may exert his art most successfully.

What then are the conditions which God should provide so that the work of lawgiving may succeed? The first condition would be the existence of a polis under a tyrant, preferably young, with a good memory and readiness to learn, courageous and magnificent, and equipped with temperance; for under an autocratic government any reform can be achieved more easily than under conditions where a greater number has to be consulted (709e-710). The tyrant alone, however, would not achieve much of a reform. God must provide for the coincidence that among his contemporaries there is a lawgiver of distinction and that chance has brought the two into contact (710c-d). Even the two together, however, will not yet achieve the great work. The greatest difficulty is the third condition which has been fulfilled rarely in the whole course of history: the awakening of the "divine Eros" for temperance and justice in the occupants of places of great power. Of such instances we hear in Trojan times, but nothing of that sort has happened in our times (711d-e). The enumeration of the conditions concludes with the oracular formula: When wisdom and temperance are combined with the greatest power in a man, then the best of constitutions and of laws will be born (712a). The wanderers will assume that God has provided the *kairos* of these coincidences; and under this assumption they will embark on the description of their constitution.

What kind of constitution will it be? A democracy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or a monarchy? The Athenian Stranger rejects these possibilities suggested by the Cretan, for none of them is a "real" constitution. All of these types are settlements enslaved to the despotic rule of one of their parts and they take their names from these despotic parts. If, however, a polis must take its name from its ruling part, then it should properly be called by the name of the god who rules over wise men, that is, over men who possess the *Nous* (712e-713a).

This somewhat enigmatic demand is clarified, by the Stranger, by

means of a myth. There is a tradition that in the blissful Age of Cronos all things were spontaneous and abundant, for Cronos, who knew that no human being could be entrusted with control over all mankind, had set divine spirits to tend the human flock. They gave peace, order, and justice, and kept the tribes of man in concord and happiness. This *logos*, "which flows from truth," is still valid today; it tells us that a polis which is ruled not by God but by a mortal has no escape from evil. Hence we should do our utmost to imitate the Age of Cronos and to order our private and public life in accordance with the immortality (*athanasia*) within us. And, therefore, we should call by the name of *nomos* the order of *nous* (713c-714a).

The symbol is constructed under the previously discussed principle of contraction. The elements which in an earlier myth were distributed over the time sequence of a tale, are now contracted into a mythical present. We recall the myth of the cosmic cycles, of the ages of Cronos and Zeus, from the *Statesman*. And we furthermore recall that the Age of Zeus was not to be followed again by an Age of Cronos, for in the Age of Zeus there had arisen a new factor, *i.e.* the autonomous personality of the philosopher, which made the return to the Golden Age both impossible and undesirable; the redemption from the evils of the Age of Zeus would have to come from a human agency that would take the place of the shepherd-god, that is, from the Royal Ruler. Now, in the *Laws*, the ages of Cronos and Zeus both belong to the past; Book III of the *Laws* has given the historical survey which closes the Age of Zeus and shows the necessity of a new start. And at this end, as in the other symbols of the dialogue, we return to the beginning; the new life beyond the Age of Zeus will imitate the Age of Cronos in so far as it will reabsorb into its human institutions the guidance of the god. This god, however, no longer is Cronos; he is the new god of the Platonic *kosmos empsychos*, the creative and persuasive *Nous*. The constitutional order, which the wanderers are about to create, will have to be called by the name of *nomoi* because this name is associated with *nous*.³ The *nomoi* themselves thus become one of the new contracted symbols; in the *nomoi* the movement of the cycles has come to its end.

³It should be noted that the end of the sentence in which Plato associates *nomos* with *nous* is a pun: "... *ten tou nou dianomen eponomazontas nomon*" (714a).

years of the Trojan wars various domestic revolutions occurred in the Greek poleis. When the war bands returned they found a younger generation in power and they were not welcome in their homes. The exiles organized under the leadership of a certain Dorieus, reconquered their hometowns, and proceeded to organize a powerful federation among the Peloponnesian poleis of Lacedaemon, Argos, and Messene. The members of this federation were under the rule of the Heraclidian royal house. This fourth type of organization Plato calls an *ethnos*, a nation (682d-683b). The new people called themselves the Dorians, and their national federation was powerful enough to afford adequate protection not for the Peloponnesians alone but for the Hellenes at large against provocations of the type which they had suffered from Troy. The Trojans would not have dared their outrage unless they had reckoned with the support of Assyria, a power which at that time was as great and as feared as the Persians in Plato's time. The new nation was a match for the Asiatic power of the time (685b-e). The power, in fact, was so great that, had it succeeded, it could have dominated mankind at will, Hellenes as well as barbarians (687a-b).

With the development of a national federation the growth of political form nears its climax. In this series of steps we can again sense Plato's dream of an Hellenic empire that would be a match for the Asiatic empires, and perhaps even more than a match. This potentiality of the Doric federation, however, was not actualized. We have reached the turning point of the cycle, the point where the decline will set in. In the construction of the dialogue this turning point is marked by a conversational reference to the fact that the wanderer's discussion is taking place at the time of the summer solstice (683c).

The Doric federation seemed to its founders an excellent political organization. Three kings and their peoples entered into a covenant to uphold and respect their positions as circumscribed by the law; they would, furthermore, come to each other's aid if any of the kings should encroach on the rights of his people, or if any of the peoples should encroach on the privileges of its king. Why did this admirable construction fail? It failed because in two of the three member polities of the federation the lawgivers had committed "The Greatest Folly" (*megiste amathia*) (689a), that is, they had not taken the precaution of providing either a well-balanced man for the royal function, or constitutional balances that would offset the foolishness of an autocratic

ruler. The meaning of foolishness is defined in terms of the new psychology previously discussed. If a man hates what his insight recognizes as noble and good, and if he loves what his insight recognizes as ignoble and wicked, there exists in his soul a discord (*diaphonia*) between the feelings and the *logismos*; this discord is foolishness. A government must never be entrusted to a man who is foolish in this sense even if otherwise he should be highly informed, clever, and an expert; on the other hand, the government may safely be entrusted to a sane man even if he should be deficient in other qualities (689a-e). If no precautions of this kind are taken the chances are that the constitutional order will come to grief. This inclination toward foolishness is present in every man, and in absolute rulers it is fostered by the temptations of their position—so much so that it may be called the specific “disease of kings” (691a). The kings of Argos and Messene were no exceptions to this rule; their reckless foolishness caused wars in the federation and its destruction.

Lacedaemon survived the disaster and subjugated the ruinous confederates because, by divine providence, its constitution contained the balances which made for stable order. The first of these balancing devices was the double kingship; the second was the Council of Elders which had equal voice with the kings in affairs of importance; the third was the democratic ephorate, an office that was practically filled by lot (691d-692a). In the hour of the national danger, however, in the Persian Wars, the conduct of the Peloponnesian poleis was anything but glorious. Even in the best case, the Lacedaemonian, the development of political form had ended in stagnation (692d-693a).

From the national failure and the Lacedaemonian success a lesson can be drawn: governments will be stable only if they are organized as balances of certain elemental factors. All variants of constitutions are derived from two “mother forms” (*matres*). The first can be seen in its pure form in the Persian, the second in the Athenian constitution. All other constitutions are woven from these strands in various patterns. The existentially stabilizing core of government, which consists in the combination of freedom (*eleutheria*) and friendship (*philia*) with wisdom (*phronesis*), can be secured only by means of these two institutional forms (693d-e). Neither in the Persian nor in the Athenian case do we find this mixture; as a consequence, decomposition has been their lot. While the Spartan case could serve as the example of stag-

nation, the Persian and Athenian pure cases of governmental form will appropriately serve as examples for the dissolution of political form in the declining branch of the cycle.

For the historical details of Persian and Athenian decline the reader should refer to the *Laws* itself. What is relevant for us is primarily the criterion of decay, for it implies the standard of right order that is to be realized in the polis of the *nomoi*. The analysis of the Persian case provides occasion for establishing the standard by which honors should be awarded in a society and men be elevated to high rank. Goods can be ordered hierarchically in the following manner: The highest place in the hierarchy is held by the goods of the soul, in particular by the virtue of temperance; the second place is held by the goods of the body; the third place by substance and wealth. If a legislator gives first rank to wealth, or in any way promotes to the higher place what belongs to the lower, he does something which violates the principles of religion as well as of statemanship. In the Persian case this rule was violated, with the result that the perverse autocrats have no regard for the rights and welfare of the people, but inflict every kind of harm on them if they can reap an immediate material advantage for themselves; and with the further result that the people hate the government and are disloyal to the point that mercenary armies have to be employed in case of war (697a-698a). In the Athenian instance the decomposition is due to the increasing and excessive liberty of the people. The origin of dissolution can be traced to the disregard for the old musical order of the polis. The judgment of performances was in the older period the privilege of the educated ruling class; children and rabble had to refrain from applause until the officials had given their decision. This state of things was gradually superseded by the theatocracy in which the people at large arrogated to itself the right to applaud what pleased and to criticize what displeased without regard to quality. From this assumption of judgment according to pleasure without insight results the general impudence of disregard for the judgment of one's betters. The further steps on this path are unwillingness to submit to the magistrates, resistance to paternal authority, and disobedience to the law. At the end comes disregard for oaths and pledges and contempt of the gods. This, in a sense, is also a return to the beginning, for the old Titanic nature breaks through, and the Titanic fate of a life of endless evil is re-enacted (700a-701c).

ances of the Lacedaemonian constitution, has left no doubt about the stagnation of a polis which is organized for war but not for the serious play of the spirit in peace. The idea that the blueprint for a constitution without regard for the spirit that lives in the community could be Plato's solution for spiritual disorder is quite as wildly erroneous as the idea that Plato could ever have advocated a constitutional government under the law, with consent of the people, without regard for the spirit that lives in the law and in the people.

The institutional order of a community is not its spirit; it is the vessel in which the spirit lives. Neither must we search for the spirit in the mere pattern of institutions, nor must we accept such a pattern as a spiritual solution. Nevertheless, the institutions are instrumental in the actualization of the spirit, and some institutions are better instruments for this purpose than others. The mixed form of government has its importance for Plato because he considers it the more adequate instrument for the embodiment of the spirit. We remember from the *Statesman* Plato's distinction between the one "true constitution" and the several untrue ones. The distinction is still valid in the *Laws*, though now with certain qualifications which accentuate the instrumental character of institutions. In 712d-e Megillus finds it difficult to characterize adequately the Lacedaemonian constitution because the various elements are mixed in it. The Stranger gives the reason: it is a "real polity" (*politeia*) and not one of these so-called polities which in fact are no more than settlements enslaved to the domination of one of their component parts (713a). A few pages later (715a-b) the Stranger again insists that such communities should not be called polities at all, for they have no "true laws." And in a later context he calls democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny "these no-constitutions" (*tas ou politeias*) (832b). The members of such settlements should be called partisans rather than citizens (*stasiotes*, *polites*) (715b).

The solution, *i.e.*, the mixed form of government as the only true form, is carefully prepared in the description of the cycle. The period of growth lets us ascend to the promise of an Hellenic empire, to the failure of the federation and the stagnation in the balanced Lacedaemon; in the period of decline the fundamental ingredients of the true constitution are shown in their separate decomposition. At the apex between the ascending and descending branches of the cycle occurs the symbolic reference to the solstice—we are "near the point where the God turns

from summer to winter." At this apex, furthermore, Plato introduces the theory of the two *materes* of all constitutions, the monarchic and democratic factors. From the solstitial apex of the cycle arises the institutional solution of the *Laws*, the idea of a constitution that will carry the polis beyond the spiritual stagnation of Sparta while preventing, by its balance, the decomposition of Persia and Athens. The cycle will be overcome by the timeless symbol of its apex. The problem of governmental form, thus, is drawn into the symbolic play of the *Laws*. Like the other symbols of the dialogue, the mixed form of government is a contraction of elements which formerly were distended in time. We may speak of a solstitial form.

The contraction of elements is the first characteristic of the institutions which are the appropriate vessel of the spirit. In the discussion of elections for the Council of the polis, the Stranger indicates that the method of election which he has devised will strike a mean between monarchy and democracy, "as a constitution always should do." Only by striking the mean (*meson*) can the lawgiver achieve the cohesion of the polis in true *philia*. There never can be *philia* between the slave and the master, between the base and the noble, if the two receive equal honors in the community, for to unequals equality becomes inequality unless a measure (*metron*) is preserved. Equality and inequality are the two rich sources of discord in a polis. The old saying that equality begets friendship is true, if the meaning of equality is properly understood. This meaning, however, is ambiguous. We have to distinguish between two types of equality: the mechanical and the proportional. The mechanical equality, that of "number, weight, and measure," can be realized easily in any society by simply distributing distinctions and offices by lot. The other equality springs from "the judgment of Zeus"; it is not so easily realized, but wherever it penetrates public or private affairs the results are blissful. This proportional equality metes out the greater awards to those who are distinguished by virtue and breeding, and the lesser awards to men of the opposite nature. A just order can never be established by catering to a few tyrants or to the populace, but only by meting out this true equality to the unequals.

While no order can be just without the realization of proportional equality, the lawgiver nevertheless has to take care of the need for mechanical equality, too. The principle of proportional equality cannot

be applied in a political community without some qualifications because the strict application would arouse the resentment of the masses to such a degree that rebellion would be inevitable. Equity and indulgence certainly are infractions of the strict order of perfect justice—but that is precisely the reason why they must be injected into the order. The masses, who cannot arrive at a place of honor by their personal qualifications, must have a way of arriving at it by other means in order to keep them satisfied. Election by lot must supplement the aristocratic election according to personal distinction as a safety valve for the resentment of the masses. Such a concession, of course, is fraught with dangers, but all the statesman can do is "invoke God and fortune" that they may direct the lot in such a way that the least damage is done to the right order (756e–758a).

The purpose of the construction is the creation of *philia* as the bond of cohesion in the community. By this purpose the Platonic conception of the mixed form is distinguished from a mere institutional device which looks for stability to a balance of power between the component parts of the system. The conception of a balance of power would rest on the assumption that the members of the community are fundamentally bent upon dominating each other and are prevented from realizing their desire only by the check of the opposing power. The Platonic conception, however, does not strike a balance between rulers and subjects; it rather strikes the balance between the noble and the vile. Plato goes behind class structures and the balance of interests in a society into the deeper problem of balancing the sentiments of a social group in such a manner that the inflexibility of the spiritual postulate shall not lead to an explosion of the lower instincts of the mass, while at the same time the inevitable concession to the mass shall not destroy the spiritual substance of the community. By assuaging the lower instincts through concessions, which, however, must not go so far that they become an insult to men of quality, a bond of *philia* will be created between heterogeneous elements.

In this construction the symbol of the mixed form closely follows the symbol of the puppet. In the *Republic* the lower elements in the community were kept in their place by the myth of the rigid distribution of the metals among the three social strata. In the symbol of the puppet the elements of the psyche were contracted into the tensions of feelings, apprehensions, and reflective insight within each individual

cilmen the number elected in the first phase stands in the relation 2:1 to the number finally chosen by lot. If we consider that the relations of the first integers, that is, the relations 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, are also the mathematical relations which determine the octave, the fifth, and the fourth, it seems to have been Plato's intention to create the form of the polis as a musical symbol and thus to relate it to the cosmic harmony.

5. *Revelation at Noon*

The political form is designed to serve the actualization of the spirit in the life of the community. The spirit lives in the laws. Hence the highest magistracy is devised as the board of the Guardians of the Law. At this point of the construction several motifs are interwoven. Through the guardianship of the laws, the true form of government is distinguished from the untrue forms. In the no-constitutions one of several conflicting claims to rulership is satisfied by making the people, or the wealthy, or the strongest, or the oldest, the rulers of the polis. In the true constitution the highest office is held by the men who are most obedient to the laws. The fulfillment of this condition alone, however, would not suffice to make the constitution a true one. To guard the laws would be of little avail if the laws themselves were bad. The guardianship of the laws acquires its full meaning through the earlier discussed association between *nomos* and *nous*. Only when the divine spirit of the *nous* lives in the *nomoi* will obedience to the laws result in the *eudaimonia* of man and the community. Office in the polis of the *nomoi* thus becomes a "service to the gods" (*ton theon hyperesia*), and the high magistrates are servants of the gods in so far as they are servants of the laws (*hyperetai tois nomois*) (715a-d).

But how can such *nomoi* which contain the spirit ever be instituted in a polis? Obviously they cannot originate in the people; for, if the people were able to give itself such laws and live by them no problem of civilizational decomposition would arise and there would be no need for a lawgiver. In searching for a solution the Stranger envisages the situation of the colony in process of foundation. When the future citizens are assembled one should address them on the purpose of life and on the nature of that conduct (*praxis*) that is dear to God and a following of Him (716c). This suggestion is then followed by the great address on this subject, divided into two parts: 715e-718b and 726d-734e. To the principles developed in the address we have referred

frequently in various contexts of the present study. It will be sufficient to recall them briefly:

(1) In the first part Plato formulates the word that separates him from the Age of the Sophists, the word that marks the beginning of a science of order: "God is for us the measure of all things, of a truth; more truly so than, as they say, man" (716c). This is the conscious counterposition to the Protagorean *homo-mensura*. Plato clarifies the opposition between the two principles carefully. He appeals to an old saying that God holds in his hands the beginning and the end of all that is; He moves towards the accomplishment of his purpose on a straight course, as his his nature; and ever by his side is Dike, ready to punish those who disobey the divine ordinance. Those who want to live harmoniously will follow closely and humbly in the train of Dike; but those who are puffed with pride—of riches, or rank, or comeliness—believe that they do not need a guide; they rather will want to be guides for others. The proud are abandoned by God; in their state of abandonment they will collect a company of others around them who are equally abandoned; they will embark on a frantic career and work general confusion. To the mass a man of this kind will seem to be a great man; but in a short while he will have to pay his debt to Dike through the ruin which he brings upon himself, his family, and his country. What line of conduct (*praxis*), then, could be called dear to God and a following of Him (*phile kai akolouthos Theo*)? It is a conduct that tries to be in harmony with Him. "Like is dear to its like, and measure to measure." Things that have no measure do not agree with each other, nor with things that have a just measure (*emmetros*). In order to be loved by a divine being man would have to strive with all his might to become like it. Thus the man who is temperate and ordered (*sophron*) will be loved by God, for his measure is attuned to God's measure; while the disordered (*me sophron*) man is unlike God.

(2) The second part deals with the psyche of man. The psyche is the most divine part in man, and the insight into the superiority of its rank over goods of the body and material goods is the first condition for the conduct in which man "likens" himself to God. Man must establish the true order of temperance and justice in his soul; he must then apply these principles to the order of his personal life, to the domestic order of the community, and to the relations both with strangers in the polis and with foreign poleis.

The two parts of the address are separated by an interlude. The Stranger renders the text of the address to his companions while the wanderers are resting in the shadow of one of the groves of cypresses. The conversation has begun at daybreak; by now it is noon. When the Stranger has finished the first part (on God and the conduct that is dear to Him) he is struck by a thought. Is it not, on principle, one of the doubtful aspects of a law that it is terse in its provision? That even a man who is most willing to obey is left in doubt as to what precisely is its intention and how it should be understood in a concrete case? The law deals with the citizen like a physician with an ignorant slave: he tells the slave what to do but he does not discuss with him the nature of his disease, nor does he give him the reasons for the treatment. Like such a physician, the lawgivers have hitherto relied simply on command and sanction. The address, however, of which the first part was now delivered, suggests another means that the lawgiver could employ to secure obedience. He could appeal to the intelligence and good will of the citizens by explaining to them his motives in formulating a law. He could, as the Stranger has just begun to do in his imaginary address, awaken their understanding for the spirit of the laws by informing them of the nature of God and of the friendship between God and man. In brief, he could use persuasion supplementary to coercion. We recall the appearance of *peitho*, Persuasion, in the *Statesman* and in the *Timaeus*. The Demiurge cannot impose form on the formlessness of Becoming by force; he has to use Persuasion to bend Ananke to Nous. Now Persuasion reappears as the means of bending man, the "material," to the *nomoi* of the *nous* and thus imposing on him the form of the polis. This thought is placed symbolically into an interlude between the two parts of the address of which the first part deals with God and the second with the human material that has to be persuaded. The gap between God and man has to be filled by Persuasion; in the organization of the dialogue the gap between the two parts on God and man is filled by the interlude on Persuasion.

Persuasion holds the middle between God and man. The question arises: How can this Persuasion be actualized in a polity so that it will become a permanently effective force, mediating in a constant flow the *nous* of the *nomoi* to the souls of the citizens? In devising this instrument for mediating Persuasion Plato makes one further move in his symbolic play. The god who governs the play is the God of its end and

its beginning as well as of its middle. We have followed the play with the symbol of the solstice, with the acme of the cycle, and with the middle of the discourse which has brought the revelation that the *Laws* is a religious poem. In the present interlude on Persuasion, the decisive speech of the Stranger is introduced by the reminder that we have arrived at the middle of this longest day. The conversation has taken such a course "under the guidance of God," from daybreak to noon, that now at the height of the day the means is revealed to the wanderers by which they can achieve the constant persuasion of *nous* in their polis (722c). The Stranger begins his reflections by saying that in this long conversation about the laws the wanderers have hardly begun to talk about the laws themselves; all they have talked about were preludes or preambles to the law (*prooimia nomon*) (722d). "Now why did I say this?" It is because discourses and vocal utterances of any kind quite generally have preludes which serve as an introduction to the main theme itself. Curiously enough, such preluding is to be found in music rather than in the important matter of legislation. Wonderfully elaborate preludes, prooemia, are prefixed to the *nomoi* for the kithara, and quite generally to the *nomoi* of musical compositions; only in the case of what we consider the real *nomoi*, that is, the *nomoi* of a polis, it seems to be taken for granted that they cannot have prooemia. Nevertheless, what the wanderers have done since daybreak has been precisely such a preluding to laws. They have developed in fact a "persuasive" (*peistikon*) for the citizens, like the physician who explains and gives reasons for his treatment to the freeman. Laws should consist in principle of two parts: a coercive part, the "dictatorial prescription," and a persuasive part, the expository prooemium. The citizen should be prepared to receive the legislator's enactment in a spirit of friendliness and graciousness, and that can be achieved by prefixing a prooemium in the tone of persuasion. The listeners agree with the Stranger and resolve that their legislation as a whole, as well as its major subdivisions, shall be equipped with prooemia, and that the great address which the Stranger has begun and now, after the interlude, is to continue, is the most fitting prooemium on the spirit of the laws, and shall be prefixed to the codification as a whole (722-724). The literary form of the Prooemium, thus, becomes the mediator of the *nous* for the polis of the *nomoi*; and the expansion of the meaning of *nomoi* to embrace the musical form associates the preluding work

culture is strongly influenced by Plato's theory and in its turn adds greatly to the understanding of this element in Plato's thought and work. Huizinga finds that the function of play is fundamental in man in the sense that it cannot be reduced to another factor. Neither must play be interpreted in a utilitarian manner as serving a purpose, nor must its meaning be derived from the content which it presents; either attempt would destroy the independent meaning of play. Moreover, play is not a function specific to man; it is to be found fully developed already in the animal world; and it is precisely its appearance on the animal level of Being that gives a clue to its interpretation. "In play we recognize the spirit. For play is not matter—whatever its essence may be. Even in the animal world it breaks through the limits of mere physical existence. If we consider it in the perspective of a world determined by forces and their effects, it is a *superabundans* in the full meaning of the word, something that is superfluous. Only through the influx of the spirit, which abolishes absolute determination, does the phenomenon of play become possible, thinkable, and intelligible. The existence of play confirms again and again the superlogical character of our situation in the cosmos. Animals can play, hence they are more than mechanical things. We play and know that we play, hence we are more than merely reasonable beings, for play is unreasonable.⁶

In this interpretation, play is an "overflow" beyond the "normal" level of existence, a source for the creation of new worlds of meaning beyond the everyday world. By virtue of this quality of transcendence play could become the vehicle of cultural growth through the creation of spiritual worlds in religions, legal institutions, languages, philosophy, and art. The history of culture shows indeed that the spiritual worlds of the high civilizations grow out of archaic forms in which the origin in forms of play is still clearly discernible. In particular, play is the vehicle of religious expression from archaic rites to the subtleties of the liturgical drama and the symbolism of the dogma. The seriousness of play, which is mixed with its playfulness even in such exoteric forms as sports and entertainments, and expresses itself in the observation of the rules of the game or in the preservation of the illusion in a performance, is heightened to the sacredness of play when its content is a religious experience. Conversely, however, even in the serious play the element of playfulness is not quite atrophied—whether its

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5f.

presence expresses itself in Plato's freedom toward the myth or in the free acceptance of constitutional provisions for serious observance.

Our analysis of the *Laws* up to this point has shown already that play is the all-pervasive category of the dialogue: God plays with men as his puppets or as pieces on a board; man conducts his life as a serious play in following the pull of the golden cord; and the dialogue itself is an elaborate play with various symbols. The consistency of Plato in weaving this motif through all the levels of the work is especially remarkable because the Greek language offers a not inconsiderable obstacle to the enterprise. In Greek, as in several other languages (but not in the modern Western languages), the word for play, *paidia*, is associated etymologically with the sphere of the child (*pais*). The meaning of the word, as we see in the *Laws*, can be extended beyond this sphere to embrace the sacred play, but the nuance of a game for children remains conscious even in Plato's own play, that is, in the creation of the *nomoi*; for in 712b the Stranger exhorts his companions to evoke the *nomoi* in their discourse "like old men acting like boys" (*kathaper paides presbytai*). Various types of adult competitive games and occupations for leisure time apparently developed into definite forms so early in Hellenic civilization that a comprehensive category for play or game could no longer absorb them all. This is true in particular of the fundamental phenomenon of Hellenic civilization, the *agon*, which has acquired a connotation of seriousness to such a degree that its character as a play is all but lost. It is also true, however, for the occupations of adult leisure at large. The terms for leisure, *scholē*, and the occupation of leisure time, *diagoge*, lead to difficulties in various respects. On the one hand, leisure means freedom from work, and to that extent its occupation is not serious. On the other hand, it is not seemly for a freeman to waste his time; he is supposed to show himself worthy of his freedom by employing his leisure in dignified occupation. From the serious, formative study and occupation which fills leisure time, the *scholē*, our meaning of *school* is derived. But then again, the association of nonseriousness with leisure is so strong that occupations which fill the leisure time, as for instance in Hellas the very important occupation with music, are in danger of acquiring a touch of this nonseriousness. Hence we find, for instance, Aristotle endeavoring to show that music is something more than mere *paidia*, with the association of

childishness; that it is a serious occupation worthy of filling the *scholē* of a freeman because it contributes to his *paideia*, his formation.⁷

In spite of such difficulties of meaning, Plato attacks the problem of play at its roots and lets the culture, the *paideia*, of his polis grow out of the play of children, the *paidia*. In the analysis of the child and his education, he employs the theory of the soul which appeared in the context of the Player and the Puppets. The sentiments, the apprehensions, and the *logismos* in their co-existence characterize the structure of the adult soul; in the soul of the child the first experiences are those of pleasure and pain, and in the medium of these sentiments the child has to acquire its first notions of virtue and vice; wisdom and true belief can be developed only in later life and their acquisition marks the growth of the soul to its adult stature. Between these two states extends *paideia*, formation or education. "By *paideia* I mean virtue [*arete*] in the form in which it is acquired by a child" (653b). If pleasures and preferences, if pains and dislikes are formed in children in such a manner that they will find them in harmony with insight once they have reached the age of insight, then we may call this harmony *virtue*; while the factor of training itself should be called *paideia*. Education or formation (in the sense of a right discipline of likes and dislikes) of pleasures and pains, however, is easily relaxed and diverted under the burdens of a human life. The gods, therefore, had compassion for the hardships of men and punctuated their lives with the rhythm of festivals; and as companions in their festivals they gave them the Muses, Apollo, and Dionysus, so that through the divine companions in the community the order of things might be restored (653c-d). After these preparatory remarks, the Stranger comes to the point: The festivals with their songs and dances can have the effect of restoring a *paideia* which is suffering from the hardships of life because these rituals are grafted on *paidia*, that is, on the play of the children. We know that the young of all creatures cannot be quiet in body or voice; they leap and skip, they frolic with abandon and utter cries of delight. With regard to these elementary movements and noises of play, however, there is a difference between animals and men in so far as animals have no perception of order and disorder in such playful actions, while to men the gods have given the perceptions of rhythm and melody. By divine guidance the elementary play, which is found also with animals,

⁷ See on these problems *ibid.*, 47-50 and 256-61.

is led to choric form in the play of man. Hence *paideia* has to start from *paidia*, and it will do so most appropriately through the spirit of the Muses and Apollo (653e-654a).

The foregoing formulations concerning the relation between *paidia* and *paideia* contain the fundamental principle of Plato's philosophy of education. This problem of education had been discussed already in the *Philebus*, but now it is sharpened into its final form—i.e., the potential discrepancy between the feelings of joy and sorrow (or: pleasure and pain) and the objective good. Likes and dislikes are no guidance to quality. We may take pleasure in what is bad; we may feel an aversion toward what is good. This conflict is of fundamental importance for the growth of culture because, on the one hand, what is bad in the arts, thought, and conduct seems to give more pleasure to the uneducated than what is good; while, on the other hand, it requires a long course of arduous training before a man can feel sincere and reliable pleasure in a work of art or thought that is good. Bad taste comes easy, good taste requires discipline and training. The cultural decay of Athens found its most revolting expression, as ours does, in the previously discussed "theatrocracy" (in our time we call it "commercialism"), that is, in the tyrannical imposition of the tastes of the illiterate rabble as the standard by which success or failure on the public scene is decided. This does not mean that the work of quality disappears—the very figure of Plato in the middle of the Athenian breakdown is proof to the contrary; it means that the tastes of the rabble dominate socially and that the consequent mass recognition given to trash makes the work of quality socially ineffective. The contemporary attempts at totalitarian control of the cultural sphere are no more than the systematic perfection of the ochlocratic tyranny which develops in the "free" societies in their late phase of disintegration.

Plato's insight into the nature and source of cultural disintegration has determined his concept of education. Children must be trained to associate pleasure with what is good. Such training, however, is impossible if the social environment stimulates children to associate pleasure with what is bad. Hence the environment must be institutionalized in such a manner that the "bad pleasures" will be repressed and the "good pleasures" will be favored in their development. Moreover, such institutionalization presupposes standards, as well as their cultivation and preservation. Hence the polis of the *nomoi* provides for public

supervision of education from the earliest choric training for children; it provides, furthermore, for the cultivation of standards through the critical function which is accorded to the Dionysian spirit of the older men; and it provides, finally, for a ministry of education as the highest office in the polity. Education thus becomes "a drawing and leading of children" toward the standards which have been pronounced right by the voice of the law. The child's soul must never learn to feel pleasure contrary to the law; it must learn to take pleasure and pain in the same things as the old men who set the standards. The choric *paideia* of the polis has the purpose of forming the souls of the children so thoroughly that they become incapable of experiencing pleasure in what is bad. The songs of the community, the *odai*, thus become charms, *epodai*, for the souls (*epodai tais psychais*), producing the harmony of pleasure and the agathon. They are indeed spells of the soul, fitting it most seriously for the ritual play of life; but since children cannot bear too much seriousness, they must be spoken of as "plays" (*paidiai*) and practiced as such (659c-e).

From the play of children *paideia* leads us to the serious play of the adults, and further on to the play of the community under the *nomoi*. The pathos of the communal play breaks through magnificently on the occasion of the Stranger's reflections on theatrical performances in the polis. The presentation of burlesque and comic plays must be left entirely to aliens and slaves; no freeman of the polis must demean himself by appearing in a ludicrous performance in public. The problem lies differently with regard to serious plays, that is, with regard to tragedy. When tragedians approach the polis with requests for permission to perform and for a chorus of citizens, the magistrates who have to render the decision should answer in the following manner: "Respected strangers! We are ourselves the poets of a tragedy—and it is the best and noblest of all. In fact, our whole polity has been devised as the symbolic presentation [*mimesis*] of the best and noblest life, and we hold it to be indeed the truest of all tragedies. Thus you and we are both poets of the same style, rival artists and rival actors in the noblest of dramas which only a true *nomos* can achieve—or thus at least is our sentiment. So do not expect us easily to permit you to erect your stage on our public square and to let the melodious voices of your actors rise above our own in harangues to our women and children and to the

people at large on the same issues as ours and mostly to the contrary effect. For we would be raving mad, and so would be the whole polis, if this request were granted to you before the magistrates have decided whether your compositions are fit to be recited in public or not. Go then, you sons and scions of the softer Muses, and show your songs to the magistrates for comparison with our own; and if they are as good as ours or better then we shall grant you a chorus; but if not, friends, then we cannot" (817b-d).

7. The Creed

The play of the polis is serious because its measure is God. In the polis of the *nomoi*, however, men are not the sons of God; they are his puppets. On the lower existential level, which is presupposed for the citizenry, the divine measure cannot be the living order of the soul; God and man have drawn apart and the distance must now be bridged by the symbols of a dogma. From the vision of the Agathon man has fallen to the acceptance of a creed. Plato the savior has withdrawn; his polis cannot be penetrated by the presence of his divine reality; Plato the founder of a religion is faced by the problem of how the substance of his mystical communication with God can be translated into a dogma with obligatory force.

Plato was the first but not the last political philosopher to be faced by this problem. The modern system which comes nearest to his treatment of it is the *Tractatus Politicus* of Spinoza. If we consider the position of the Maranic Jew who had broken with the orthodoxy, who tried to regenerate a religious creed out of his personal mysticism, who associated with the leaders of the Dutch aristocracy, who was interested in the construction of a politico-religious government that would secure internal peace for Holland, we find a number of elements assembled which make his position resemble in many respects the Platonic. Of particular interest is his attempt to formulate a creed for the people. He tried to solve his problem through the creation of a minimum set of dogmas that would leave the utmost liberty to individuals who might wish to embellish the bare structure with details of their own, while it would be sufficient as a religious bond for the political community. Moreover, Spinoza the mystic needed the dogma for himself no more than Plato, but created it deliberately, as did Plato, for the mass of men whose

spiritual strength is weak and who can absorb the spirit only in the form of dogmatic symbols.

Spinoza's solution, which we may briefly call the "minimum dogma," was also that of Plato. The Platonic minimum comprises three dogmas: (1) the belief that gods exist; (2) the belief that they take care of man; and (3) the belief that they cannot be appeased, or "bribed," by sacrifice and prayer (885b). The institutionalization of this minimum dogma will take the form of a *nomos*, consisting properly of the provision for the punishment of impiety itself (confinement or death) and of the prooemium. The provision for enforcement is no more than a sentence (907d-e); the prooemium fills the major part of Book X.

Since we have already dealt with the principal content of this prooemium in various contexts, we need do no more now than direct attention to the particularly marked "persuasive" character of this poem. Here, where the ultimate destiny of the soul is at stake, Plato attacks the agnosticism and the spiritual aberrations of the age for the last time and with bitterness in broad casuistry. Once more he surveys the decay of the old myth and the skepticism of the younger generation, the types of the *esprit fort*, the devastations that are worked in the minds of the semi-educated by the progress of natural science, the organization of sectarian communities and of private, esoteric creeds, and the extravagancies of hysterical women. It is a survey that could have been written today. His particular wrath is aroused by the type which combines agnosticism with rascality. The ordinary agnostic who holds forth against religious prejudices may otherwise be a respectable character and view with revulsion the possibility of committing a wrongful act. Much more dangerous is the agnostic who is at the same time possessed by incontinent ambition, by a taste for luxuries, who is subtle, intelligent, and persuasive; for this is the class of men who furnish the prophets and fanatics, the men who are half sincere and half insincere, the dictators, demagogues, and ambitious generals, the founders of new associations of initiates and scheming sophists (908d-e). In order to designate these evils of the age appropriately and comprehensively, Plato now uses the category of *nosos*, a disease of the soul (888b). The *nosos* of spiritual disorientation occurs at all times in individual cases; and most men are liable to be afflicted by it. Against the possibility of this affliction the epodic character of the prooemium, its character as a charm for the soul, should be the great preventive.

The polis of the *nomoi* cannot rely on persuasion alone for the preservation of its spiritual substance. When the disease breaks out in spite of all precautions, coercive measures have to be taken against the afflicted individual. The enforcement of the law against impiety is entrusted to a special magistracy, the Nocturnal Council. This Council consists of the ten oldest Guardians of the Laws, of distinguished priests, of the minister of education, of men who have been sent abroad in order to study foreign institutions, and of a number of younger members. These junior members, who are selected by the elders, serve chiefly as informants on the life and problems of the polis. The Nocturnal Council meets daily between dawn and sunrise, the time when the mind is least preoccupied with the affairs of the day. Its most important function is that of a spiritual court which passes judgment on offenses against the creed. Disbelievers in the gods will be confined for five years in a reformatory. In this seclusion they will receive visits only from members of the Nocturnal Council who will attempt to influence them and to awaken their spiritual insight. If the educational effort throughout five years has remained without effect, they will be sentenced to death.

The spiritual court completes the construction of the polis as a theocratic community. This institution and its function has aroused the serious misgivings of historians in the liberal era. We have touched on both aspects of this problem, that is, on the secularist prejudices of the liberals as well as on the theocratic limitations of Plato, in the earlier sections of our analysis of the *Laws*. We may, however, add the remark that in the light of contemporary experiences our insight into Plato's reasons for his construction has been sharpened. As long as one could believe in good faith that the alternative to spiritual control and enforcement of a creed should be the freedom of the spirit, the Nocturnal Council looked sinister indeed. Plato, however, could not consider this alternative, for the horizon of his experience was filled with the tyranny of the rabble and the murder of Socrates. Today our horizon is filled with similar experiences. We have good reasons to doubt that a project of the Platonic type would solve the problems of the age on the pragmatic level of history; but we have lost our illusion that "freedom" will lead without fail to a state of society that would deserve the name of order.

The code of the *nomoi* is substantially completed. But an enterprise has not reached its end with the mere performance of a task. We have not

wisdom. They will also have to understand in what respect these many virtues are one. This oneness toward which the manifold of the four virtues converges is the *nous* which governs them all. The full understanding of the *nous hegemon* is the first requirement for the guardians (963a; 964b). The relation between *nous* and *nomos* is again subtly suggested by the hint that this requirement is ineluctable for the guardians of a *theia politeia*, of a divine constitution (965c). The same kind of critical understanding will have to extend to the other problems of the soul and its order, as for instance to the understanding of the *kalon* and the *agathon* (966a). Pre-eminently, however, what is required is an understanding of the things divine. For the ordinary citizen, conformity to tradition will be sufficient; to the office of a guardian, however, no man should be admitted who is not inspired and who has not labored at these problems (966c-d). The training in divinity will have to extend, in particular, to the understanding of two fundamental doctrines. The first is the doctrine that the soul is the oldest of all created things, that it is more ancient and divine than anything which derives its motion from a previous cause. The second is the doctrine that the order in the movements of the stars reveals the *nous* as their governing principle (966e). No mortal man can achieve true fear of God (*theosebeia*) who has not grasped these two doctrines of the soul as the deathless ruler of all bodies, and of the *nous* that is revealed in the stars (967d-e). In order to support their grasp of these doctrines the guardians must, finally, be well trained in the preparatory sciences; they must see the connection between the understanding of the cosmos and the problems of music; and they must be able to express themselves coherently on the connection between these various problems. A man who has not acquired critical understanding in addition to the ordinary virtues is not fit to be the ruler of a community; he will rather have his rôle as a subject (967e-968a).

This will be the last *nomos* to be added to the codification: The Nocturnal Council, consisting of members who are educated in this manner, shall function as the guardian of the polis for the purpose of its *soteria* (968a-b).

The wanderers have resolved upon the last *nomos*. But now the critical question arises: Who will educate the educators? At this point the conversation returns from the imaginative play to the reality of the situation. No statutory elaboration of this last *nomos* is possible. The foundation of the colony must take its origin in the existential communi-

Philosophy as a mode of life in the Platonic-Socratic sense had formed the soul of Aristotle; and the imprint was indelible. The notion that a great break separates Aristotelian from Platonic philosophy has various sources. With some of them we have to deal later in more detail. For the present let us only mention that our picture of Aristotelian philosophy, since the early work is almost completely lost, was mainly determined by the esoteric schoolwork of the later years.³ On the other side of the imaginary gulf between the two thinkers, we were equally handicapped until recently because we had no clear understanding of the great development of the late Plato. If one compares the Platonic *Republic* and the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, ignoring the road which leads from the one to the other, the two works seem indeed to represent two entirely different approaches to the problem of philosophy—especially if one overlooks such sections as *Metaphysics* XII where the transitions can still be sensed by the more imaginative reader. And, finally, in his esoteric work Aristotle was very explicit in his criticism of Platonic theories, and much less explicit in his recognition of what he took over and developed. In *Politics* II, for instance, the reader will find a well reasoned rejection of certain parts of the *Republic*; in the rest of the work he will hardly be aware to what extent Aristotle uses the *Statesman*, the *Philebus*, and the *Laws* in the development of his own political theory unless he has the Platonic dialogues well in mind.

What actually happened is not so difficult to understand if we remember the critical date of Aristotle's entrance into the Academy. He did not enter only into the way of life of the philosopher; he also entered into the debate on its results. The way of life had produced doctrinal symbols for its expression, such as the immortality of the soul, the right order of the soul, the true being of the Idea, and the order of reality through *methexis*, through participation in the Idea. An interpretation of God, man, and the world had been developed; and the terms of this interpretation could be submitted to critical inquiry under several aspects. One could examine the method which had led to the construction of the terms, one could examine their systematic consistency, one could test their value as instruments of empirical science, and one could examine them in the light of new discoveries in mathematics and astronomy and the increasing knowledge of Babylonian cosmology. The Academy was not an institution for the transmission of textbook knowledge; at its

³ The reconstruction of Aristotle's development is the work of Werner Jaeger.

of being—that is, for immanent as well as transcendental being—he has not much choice. In one form or another, he must do what Aristotle accuses Plato of doing, that is, he must “duplicate” being. Hence, the Aristotelian criticism of the Idea is pointless as far as the question of duplication is concerned. It is not pointless, however, where it attacks the speculative use which Plato made of transcendental being in his interpretation of immanent being. The relation between transcendental and immanent being, as we just indicated, can be symbolized only analogically. Neither Plato nor Aristotle quite penetrated this problem of metaphysical speculation; and an approximately satisfactory formula was only found in the Thomistic *analogia entis*. Plato, indeed, hypostatized transcendental being into a datum as if it were given in world-immanent experience; and he treated absolute being as a genus of which the varieties of immanent being are species. Aristotle rightly criticized this part of Platonic speculation; and in eliminating this confusion he penetrated to the clearness of his own ontology. For this magnificent achievement, however, he paid the great price of eliminating the problem of transcendental form along with its speculative misuse.

Aristotle rejected the ideas as separate existences, but neither did he repudiate the experiences in which the notion of a realm of ideas originated nor did he abandon the order of being that had become visible through the experiences of the philosophers ever since Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Xenophanes. The consequence is a curious transformation of the experience of transcendence which can perhaps be described as an intellectual thinning-out. The fullness of experience which Plato expressed in the richness of his myth is in Aristotle reduced to the conception of God as the prime mover, as the *noesis noeseos*, the “thinking on thinking.” The Eros toward the Agathon correspondingly is reduced to the *agapesis*, the delight in cognitive action for its own sake. Moreover, no longer is the soul as a whole immortal but only that part in it which Aristotle calls active intellect; the passive intellect, including memory, perishes. And, finally, the mystical *via negativa* by which the soul ascends to the vision of the Idea in the *Symposium* is thinned out to the rise toward the dianoetic virtues and the *bios theoretikos*.⁵

I have kept the analysis of the issue as close as possible to the form

⁵ For the conception of the prime mover as the *noesis noeseos* see *Metaphysics* XII, 9, 1074b; for the *agapesis* see *Metaphysics* I, 980a; for the conception of the soul and its imperishable part see *De Anima* III, 5; for the *bios theoretikos* see *Politics* VII, 2, 1324a.

structure of the fallacy is simple indeed; one can only say to a presumptive philosopher: Don't do it! If the error is committed nevertheless, even by an Aristotle, one will look for its source not in a failing of the intellect but in a passionate will to focus attention so thoroughly on a particular problem that the wider range of the order of being is lost from sight. The philosopher of history, when he encounters a derailment of this type, will therefore be less interested in the fascinating problems in which the respective thinker gets himself involved (for on the level of philosophy they are no problems) than in the passionate experiences which motivated the mistake. Since problems of this nature will occupy us at length in the subsequent volumes of this study, it will be sufficient for the present to adumbrate some of the world-historic conflicts which are transacted in the form of pseudo-philosophical debates. On one of them we have touched in the Aristotelian misgivings about the Platonic separate ideas. According to the philosopher's attention to the transcendent source of order, or to the order in immanent being, or to the order as reflected in science, the essences can be found in separate existence, or embedded in reality, or in the concepts of science. Correspondingly one can develop "philosophies" which place the essence *ante rem*, *in re*, or *post rem*; and the respective idealists, realists, and nominalists can criticize one another's "position" to shreds *ad infinitum*. A rich source of conflicts then opened with the introduction of philosophical categories into Christian theology. When the categories of nature and person were applied to the mystery of Incarnation, the Christological debate raged through centuries before an adequate philosophical formulation could be found in the definition of Chalcedon in 451. When the categories of form and substance were applied to the mystery of the Eucharist, the new problem of transcendental chemistry exploded in the struggle about transubstantiation between Catholics and Protestants. When the *scientia Dei*, which includes God's foreknowledge of man's eternal destiny, was immanentized into man's foreknowledge of his destiny, the foundation was laid for separate churches of the elect down to the contemporary degeneration into civic clubs for socially compatible families. When the Christian idea of supernatural perfection through Grace in death was immanentized to become the idea of perfection of mankind in history through individual and collective human action, the foundation was laid for the mass creeds of modern Gnosis.

Though conflicts of this type can occur only after philosophy as a

cannot always ascribe the other *logoi* with certainty to an earlier period. The intensification of concern about immanent form is an *addition* to the Aristotelian range; it does not *supersede* the earlier philosophical motivation. We must always be aware of the possibility that a *logos* which by the nature of its problems belongs to the earlier class—and probably in its conception goes back to the early period—has been reworked in later years without showing traces of the shift of interest. Aristotle, as we indicated, was not interested in systematic unification of his written thought; he was interested in the completeness of his problems. When his various inquiries led to conflicting results, he simply let the results clash; and the conflicting views were peaceably recorded side by side. The most famous instance of such a clash occurs in *Metaphysics* XII where the discourse developing the monotheistic conception of God as the prime mover and the *noeseos noesis* is interrupted by another discourse, the present Chapter VIII. In this later discourse, differing in style and elaboration from the rest of the book, Aristotle developed the conception of forty-seven divine prime movers, each governing one of the irreducible motions according to the new astronomy of Eudoxus. On the doctrinal level we thus find in the same book an earlier monotheistic and a later polytheistic theology; and Aristotle shows no intention either of abandoning the earlier view for the later one, or of subordinating both views to a higher systematic construction.

Aristotle is not a systematic thinker in the sense that he attempted to build a philosophical edifice free of contradictions. In fact, the word *systema* does not occur in his works as a technical term. The absence of systematic consciousness is probably the principal reason why the esoteric writings of Aristotle had such little influence even in his own school in the centuries following his death; when his living word had ceased to animate his lecture notes, apparently they became a dead letter. The effectiveness of the esoteric Aristotle does not begin before the publication of his work by the eleventh scholarch of the Peripatetics, Andronicus, in the first century B.C. With the publication begins the commentatorial work in the school, culminating in the commentaries by Alexander of Aphrodisias, toward the end of the second century of our era. From Alexander onward, the study of Aristotle became the basis of systematic philosophising in all schools, and the tradition went in continuity through the Arabs into Western scholasticism. The conception of the systematic Aristotle grew in the commentatorial tradition, and it

the Hellenistic period. In the dialogue *On Philosophy*, written shortly after Plato's death, Aristotle mentions that Zoroaster lived six thousand years before the death of Plato. The figure does not intend to give historically exact information; it, rather, wants to establish a relation between Zoroaster and Plato as symbolic figures in the cosmic drama. According to the Iranian myth of the great cycle, Ormuzd and Ahriman each rule the world for three thousand years; their alternative rules are followed by aeons of struggle between the two forces of good and evil, ending in the victory of the good principle; the whole cycle has a duration of nine thousand, or, in another variant of the myth, of twelve thousand years. The fragmentary sources do not reveal what precise function Aristotle would have assigned to Zoroaster or Plato in the world drama; all we know is that obviously he considered them important figures in the struggle for the victory of the Good in the world and that he accepted the Iranian idea of epochs in this struggle, spaced by multiples of three thousand years.⁶

While we have no precise knowledge of the rôle assigned to Plato in the cosmic drama, the literary environment furnishes at least some indications. A precious document for Aristotle's view of Plato as a spiritual guide is his *Altar Elegy* in which he speaks of his master as

The man whom it is not lawful for bad men even to praise.
Who alone or first of mortals clearly revealed
By his own life and by the methods of his words,
How a man becomes good and happy at the same time.
Now no one can ever attain to these things again.

The terse lines define the identity of goodness and happiness as the core of the Platonic gospel; and the last line expresses Aristotle's feeling of the difference of rank between Plato and ordinary men.⁷ Moreover, we know that the circle of the Academy was aware of an inner affinity between the Platonic dualistic metaphysics and Iranian eschatology even in Plato's lifetime. And it is quite possible that Plato himself was inclined, in his later years, to approach his own theology to Iranian symbols. In the *Laws* (896e) we find the famous passage:

Ath. And as the soul orders and inhabits all things that move,
however moving, must we not say that she also orders the
heavens?

⁶ On the ascription of the fragments and their meaning cf. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, 131ff.

⁷ For ascription and translation of the *Altar Elegy* cf. *ibid.*, 106ff.

characters in great numbers into ruling positions make the political environment unlivable for well-bred men with some self-respect.

Beyond such bitterness of civilizational agony lies the ineluctable schism of a society. The mood of thinking will change profoundly when the schism is accepted as a fact beyond anybody's range of action. In Plato's work we feel the somber tension that stems from his theocratic will to achieve the impossible and to restore the bond between spirit and power. In Aristotle we feel a coolness and serenity which stems from the fact, if we may express it drastically, that he has "given up." He can accept the polis as the adequate form of Hellenic civilizational existence; he can dispassionately survey the varieties in his vast collection of 158 studies of constitutions; he can formulate standards and give therapeutical advice for treating unhealthy cases; he has no dreams of a spiritually reformed, national Hellenic empire; such unification as Hellas is undergoing results from the Macedonian conquest which is enacted over his head and apparently does not interest him very much; only the Asiatic conquests of Alexander cause some worry because he disapproves of his former pupil's inclination to treat Asiatics like Hellenes and to foster an amalgamation of the two civilizations. His life is no longer centered in politics, but in his stellar religion and in the *bios theoretikos*; his soul is fascinated by the grandeur of the new life of the spirit and intellect; and his work, ranging over the realms of being, brings them into the grip of his imperial mind. For such a man the accents of the crisis will no longer lie on the misery of Athens; they will lie on the new life that begins with Plato. An epoch is marked but it has the character of a new climax of the intellect, of the *nous*.

We can now better understand the meaning which a *rapprochement* of Plato and Zoroaster must have had for Aristotle. The human species has cycles with a definite structure; but not of necessity do we have to look for the law of this structure in the political growth and decline of a specific civilization. The structure of the cycle may have a larger span so that one climax may lie in Iran while another may lie in Hellas. And the epochs will be marked by events in the spiritual history of mankind, not by events in the political sphere—though the politics may have their sub-cycles of growth and decline. We shall not be surprised, therefore, that on the five or six occasions where Aristotle specifically refers to problems of the cycle, he refers to discoveries and rediscoveries of scientific or philosophical insights. In the *Meteorologica* (I, 3), for instance,

pass on to the subject matters hitherto neglected (1329b31-35). In this case Aristotle deals with insights inspired not by the gods but by necessity. Insights into necessities of social order need rediscovery, too. As the inspired insights will be lost through an overgrowth of political expediency, so the necessities may become obscured in the history of a political civilization through the overgrowth of refinements and luxuries. Moreover, we sense in these reflections an undercurrent of criticism directed against Plato. The implication seems to be that the rediscovery of the necessities of order in the *Republic* is highly meritorious, but it would perhaps have been simpler in this case not to rediscover but to use the insight lying ready at hand in Egypt, to use the knowledge already in our possession as a starting point and to advance to the study of less well-explored problems—as Aristotle does himself. These undertones are confirmed by *Politics* II, 5 (1264a1-5), where the argument is used in reverse. In this section Aristotle criticizes as impractical the Platonic suggestion of a community of women and property in the upper class of the *Republic*. One of the motives for rejecting the idea is its novelty. We should not disregard the experience of mankind; if such projects were any good they would not have remained undiscovered through the ages. "For, almost everything has been discovered already; though not all that has been discovered has been properly collected and inventoried, and not all that is known has been put into practice."

The theory of the cycle is an essential part of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge. The history of the species moves in cycles, and the repetition of the cycles from infinity has created something like an authoritative memory of the species. All great insights, whether they be religious or whether they belong in the class of necessities of order, have been gained. The rediscovery can be aided by an inventory of myths (in which the relics of former discoveries are preserved) and by the study of long-geval civilizations (in which previous discoveries are still embodied in the institutions). The complete absence of any traces of a former discovery, on the other hand, will be a strong argument against the value of a newly advanced idea. In this function of the cycle in the theory of knowledge we recognize again the peculiar style of an intellectual thinning-out, as compared with the Platonic fullness of experience. Plato had authenticated his insights, drawn from the unconscious, through the myth of the cycle; the descent to the cosmic omphalos of the soul assured us of the truth of the myth. For Aristotle the myth of the cycle

2. *The Bios Theoretikos*

The conception of politics as a general science of human action, as we have seen, was animated by the Platonic, theocratic impulses. In the contemplative attitude, however, the program could not be carried out because political reality in fact was not formed by the Platonic idea. What remained of the initial impulse was the sketch of a philosophical anthropology in the opening sections of *Ethics* and the conversion of the idea into standards in the closing sections of *Politics*. In between, before the contemplative gaze, reality fell apart into the society of the mature men and into the political organization that would provide a suitable environment for inculcating the practice of ethical virtues as well as for repressing the ineducable. Correspondingly the science of human action dissociated into a science of the excellences and a nomothetic science.

Even with these adjustments to reality the whole field of problems was not yet covered. The further complications of a science of politics were given with the classification of opinions concerning the nature of eudaimonia. According to the variety of opinion three types of life could lead to happiness: the apolaustic life (that is, the life of hedonistic indulgence), the political life, and the theoretic life (*N.E.*, 1095b14ff). This classification implied a specific correlation between politics and the practice of ethical virtues; the man of character will lead his life of action in the field of politics (1095b30). A political science, if narrowed down in this manner, would exclude the theoretic life from its scope. In the Platonic politeia the philosopher-kings were the rulers; in the empirical polis of Aristotle the philosophers are on the verge of removing themselves altogether from politics. Such a tendency must have been strong, indeed, in the Academy in the late years of Plato; for, in *Politics* VII, 2, Aristotle explicitly considers the question which mode of life is the most eligible: the participation as a citizen in the community of the polis, or the life of an alien who detaches himself from the political community (1324a13ff). In the Parable of the Cave Plato had weighed the reasons for the philosopher's return to the polis; in historical reality, in the practice of the Academy, the detachment was tending to become a mode of life. "It was this circle of students that gave birth to Aristotle's ideal of 'the theoretic life'—not, that is to say, the animated gymnasium of the *Lysis* or the *Charmides*, but the cabin [*kalybe*] in the secluded garden of the Academy. Its quietude is the real original of the isles of the

zen). With the expansion into the polis the elementary community has reached its end (*telos*); and the end which a thing reaches when it has fully developed we call its nature (1252a24-1253a2). From this analysis depend the corollary formulations: "The polis exists by nature"; and "Man is by nature a political living being" (*politikon zoon*). Moreover, the man who is apolitic, not by biographical accident but by nature, is either low in the scale of humanity, approaching an unsocial, beastly state, or above it, an outcast and adventurous lover of war (1253a2-7).

In the actual delivery of a lecture these terse opening notes of *Politics* were probably no more than the text for a lengthy sermon. In fact, they touch on most of the fundamental issues of Aristotelian politics. First of all, we find the categories of nature, of potentiality and of actualization applied to the study of the polis. The experiential models for such categorization are phenomena of the organic world where indeed we can observe evolutions from the potentiality of a seed to the actualization of its nature in a full-grown tree. The legitimacy of this transfer is not at all certain because (and this is the second issue, making its inevitable appearance) the polis is not an organism but a composite being owing part of its existence to the will of the composing human beings. The growth of the polis is not an inevitable biological process; men are not forced into the polis by an urge or instinct. Man is not a gregarious animal (*agelaion zoon*); he is a *politikon zoon* and that means that the end, the *telos*, of the community lies in the realm of conscious, deliberate recognition of good and evil, of right and wrong. For, "it is the characteristic of man, as distinguished from other living beings, that he alone has a sense of good and bad and right and wrong." And precisely in the community of moral insights lies the community of a household or a polis (1253a7-18). The nature of man, while finding its fulfillment in the polis, does not produce the polis automatically. The impulse (*horme*) toward political community is present in all men by nature; but it required a founder to create the polis; and the man who first brought others together in political community was the "author of the greatest good" (1253a3off).

The introduction of the "author" (*aitios*) of the polis shifts evolution from the organic realm to history. The briefness of the notes makes it hazardous to pry into Aristotle's intentions. We can only say that the sequence of household, village, and polis roughly reproduces the historical sequence of social forms in Plato's *Laws*. For Plato, the sequence from

simple to more complex forms of social organization marked the phases in the ascending branch of the historical cycle. For Aristotle, they also mark such phases; but Plato's looser empirical description is now subordinated to the actualization of a "nature"; the historical phases have become "parts" of the polis. The tightening of the construction has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. It may be considered an advantage that the "meaning of history" comes into sharper focus. The phases do not simply follow each other by degrees of increasing social complexity; they are a meaningful sequence up to the fulfillment in the autarky of a community in which the *bios theoretikos* can be realized. Various forms of social organization do not have to be classified like botanic specimens; they can be arranged in the order of an intelligible process. We have seen already that this method permits Aristotle to interpret kingship as a form that belongs to a past phase of the historical cycle and need not be taken into consideration in the analysis of the polis proper. Moreover, Aristotle approaches the problem that has been elaborated with care by Vico, that is, the problem of the substance which undergoes the evolutionary changes in the course of a cycle. A growth and decay must be the growth and decay of something. Vico dealt with that something under the title of the *mente eroica*; Plato identified it, at least for the period of decay, as the order of the psyche; Aristotle identified it, at least for the period of growth, as the political *physis* of man. Through the transfer of the categories of nature and actualization from the biological model to the polis, Aristotle, thus, has incidentally raised the theoretical issue that must be faced by every thinker who is in search of finite lines of meaning in the stream of history. These advantages, however, are due to a rigidity of construction which, in other respects, defeats its purpose. The Platonic phases of the growth of political form were much richer in empirical detail, and Plato could continue his description beyond the polis to the federation of the nation, the *ethnos*. This elasticity of empirical description is lost in Aristotle's speculation on the *physis* of the polis. Curious as it may sound at first hearing, Plato is the better empiricist; Aristotle, who wants to find form in reality at all cost, can find it only at the price of losing such parts of reality as do not fit the pattern of his evolving form. The polis is a premature generalization from insufficient materials. Form, if it is to be found in the historical stream of political existence, will prove to be considerably more complicated than Aristotle envisaged.

Considering the serious simplification of the problem of form, we shall not be surprised to see that Aristotle explores other approaches to the question independent of the first attempt. In the analysis of *Politics* I, 1-2 it was perhaps unexpected to find historical phases as the composing parts of the polis. We should, rather, have expected an analysis of the static structure into its composing elements. Such an analysis we find, indeed, in the section on the household. Again, Aristotle announces his postulate of analyzing a thing into its first and fewest elements (*meros*) and recognizes as such elements, in the household, the three relationships of master and servant, man and wife, parents and children (1253b1-12). This enumeration of elements is the remnant of a more comprehensive enumeration given by Plato in *Laws* 690 a-c. Plato wanted to establish the "axioms" (*axiomata*) of rulership. The term "axiom" originally has the meaning of a "claim to own or possess," but is changing already in the late work of Plato toward the meaning of a first assumption which does not need proof.¹ Plato assumes seven such "axioms" of rulership, equally valid "for the great poleis and the small households." They are:

- (1) Parents must rule children
- (2) The wellborn must rule the vulgar
- (3) The old must rule the young
- (4) Masters must rule slaves
- (5) The better must rule the worse
- (6) The thinking (or knowing, wise) must rule the ignorant
- (7) The man chosen by lot must rule the man who is not so chosen

Aristotle's three component relations of the household correspond to the Platonic axioms (1) and (4). In *Politics* I, 3 the analysis applies to the household only; but in *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, 10 the three elements are used for the theoretization of forms of government in a polis, in conformity with the Platonic assumption that the axioms are equally valid for poleis and households. Aristotle speaks of the three types of constitutions (*politeia*) i.e. monarchy, aristocracy, and timocracy, and their corresponding perversions (*parekbasis*) i.e. tyranny, oligarchy, democracy (1160a30-1160b23). And then he continues that the paradigms of these constitutions are to be found in the household. Monarchy

¹ On the shift from the juristic to the theoretic meaning of the word "axiom" in this passage of the *Laws* see Jaeger, *Paideia*, III, 235.

If we try to unify it beyond a certain point it will cease to be a polis and achieve the unity of a family, and ultimately of an individual. Maximal unification destroys the polis, for the *raison d'être* of the polis lies precisely in its being an association of diversified human types; a group of like people is not a polis. The unification which by some is considered the greatest good of the polis, is in reality its destruction, "for the good of each thing is what preserves it" (1261b9). Autarky requires diversification; if autarky is to be desired, then a lesser is preferable to a higher degree of unification (1261b10-15). The community of women and children would produce an undesirable degree of unification, and, therefore, should be barred—setting aside the earlier discussed argument that novelties of this kind should be distrusted on principle.

Such intense community is undesirable for a further reason. The living force of all society is *philia*, a term which in Latin can be rendered by *amicitia*, but which in English must be rendered, according to context, by love or friendship. *Philia* is the ultimate substance of all human relations, the bond of feeling, varying in color, intensity, and stability according to the things which are felt to create the community in the concrete case. *Philia* will be incidental, not touching the whole being of man, if it is based on utility or pleasure; it will affect the whole being if it is based on virtue or excellence. On the level of perfect friendship between persons who are not related by family bonds, we would have to characterize a friend as a man who wishes and does what is good for the sake of his friend, who wishes his friend to live and exist for his own sake, and who grieves and rejoices with his friend (E. N. 1166a1ff). These characteristics of friendship, however, are derived from the regard which a good man has for himself. For the good man also is in agreement with himself, desires the same things with undivided soul, does his actions for his own sake (that is, for the sake of the noetic self in him), and desires his own life and security, and in particular the safety of his noetic self. "For it is good for the *spoudaios* to be"; and it is good for him to be as he is, and he does not want to possess any goods under the condition of being anyone but himself; he wants to remain what he is in the sense of preserving the identity of his real self which is the *nous* in him (1166a-19-29). Perfect friendship, thus, must be based on love for one's self in the sense just described; self-love in this sense, of the life in harmony with the orienting *nous* in one's soul, is the source of order in human relations in so far as perfect community will be achieved between men who

creteness of personal relations will disappear and the very substance of community life will evaporate. Such communal organization, Aristotle suggests, should rather be imposed on the lower classes in order to keep them weak and uninterested in their mode of existence than on the upper class, as Plato wishes to do. "For there are two things that make men care for and love each other: that it is your own and that it is your precious possession—and neither can exist in a society thus organized" (1262b23–25).

The same argument is advanced in criticism of a community of property, as suggested by Plato, or of an equalization of property, as suggested by Phaleas of Chalcedon. The love of self in the previously described sense is implanted "by nature"; and from the real self as its center it radiates into the whole area of possession down to property (1263a40–1263b1ff). Aristotle recognizes that the regulation of property is a fundamental problem, and that in the opinion of some thinkers it is even the question on which all revolutions (*stasis*) turn (1266a37ff). Nevertheless, the evils accompanying the property order cannot be solved ultimately through legislation. Property, as a general rule, should be private, in order to secure for everybody his personal range of action and to enable him to attend to his own business (1263a26ff); legislative measures should not go to the extreme of a futile equalization but rather stop short at limiting the amount of property (1266b27ff). The root of evil is not property itself but the desire of man. Again and again, Aristotle returns to this point. The evils attending the property order are not due to private property "but to the wickedness [*mochteria*] of man" (1263b23). "The polis properly is a diversified multitude, and it should be made into a unified community through education [*paideia*]"—and it is strange that the philosopher who wanted to make the polis virtuous through education should have suggested the improvement of his citizens by regulations instead of habituation and philosophy (1263b36ff). "The baseness of man is insatiable. . . . It is the nature of appetite to be unlimited, and most people live for its satisfaction. In such matters the proper beginning is therefore to be sought less in levelling property than in training the more decent natures so that they will not desire more, and in preventing the base ones from getting more—and that can be achieved if they are kept down but not maltreated" (1267b1–9).

The various criticisms are of theoretical importance because they

convey a closer insight into the specifically Aristotelian realism with regard to human nature. In laying down standards for the perfect state we are not free to make any assumptions that strike our fancy. "We may assume what we wish, but we should avoid the impossible" (1265a18f and 1325b39f). The nature of the polis is the nature of man in fully developed social existence; and this nature becomes the limiting factor in the speculation on institutional standards. Plato's anthropological principle as the basis of political science is defended by Aristotle against Plato himself. The modern reader should especially be interested in the direction of the Aristotelian attack against certain features of Platonic politics which have a touch of the Utopian. Aristotle recognizes the "impossible" element in Plato's speculation not in his assumptions concerning the nature of man and the proper system of education (where probably the modern reader would look for it), but in the lack of consistent reliance on the educative process and in his short circuit into institutional remedies (which the modern reader would probably consider the realistic approach, for instance, to the abolition of the evils of private property). Moreover, we should note that an excess of institutional regulation and unification of society is not considered an improvement of undeniable evils, but rather an additional evil through the destruction of the full range of human actualization. The nature of man can neither be changed, nor can inherent wickedness be counterbalanced by regulations; political realism must operate through the *paideia* of man; and it must secure social predominance for the *spoudaios*.

2. *The Order of the Polis*

A polis is perfect when the nature of the polis is fully actualized. If the polis were an organic growth no problem of a perfect polis could arise in a science of action. In this case the contemplator could do no more than describe the existing poleis and note whether the nature is indeed fully actualized, or whether the growth has been stunted or warped for one reason or another. Perfection becomes a problem in action because, as we have seen, the historical intervention of the "author" or the lawgiver is a factor in actualization. As a consequence, perfection must be understood in relation to the range of action of a lawgiver. There is no sense in projects of order beyond anybody's range of action. A lawgiver is limited by the means at his disposition; he must operate with materials given to him by circumstance, that is, by the aggregate of

that has just been advanced would be appropriate to a democracy but less fitting for oligarchies which have no recognized body of citizens (*demos*) meeting in assembly. In such types of order only the persons who participate in judicial and deliberative functions would be citizens. And again the problem of the polis in concrete existence intrudes; for in the concluding sentence of this section Aristotle returns to the assurance that a polis is a multitude of citizens numerous enough for self-sufficiency (1275b20). Does this sentence mean that the persons participating in office in an oligarchy must be numerous enough for this end? Or, would Aristotle deprive a tyranny (in which an insignificant number of persons share in offices) of the name of polis? Or, does it mean that a polis is self-sufficient if it has enough citizens by right of birth even if not all of them are citizens by office?

The questions must remain in suspense for the moment because at this juncture Aristotle introduces a further complicating factor. He raises the question whether the excellence (*arete*) of the good man and the good citizen is the same or not. And in order to answer this question one must have a notion of the excellence of a citizen. The citizens have a common object, that is, the weal (*soteria*) of their community. "And this community is the constitution [*politeia*]." The excellence of the citizen, therefore, will be relative to the constitution, and as there are many forms (*eidos*) of constitutions the excellence of the citizen cannot be the same in all cases. When we speak of a good man, however, we have in mind the one and only goodness. Hence, it is possible to be a good citizen without being a good man (1276b16-36). And this will hold true even for the best form of government. For the polis is composed of dissimilar elements, all of which have to contribute their specific share to the existence of the whole—some in ruling positions, some as subjects—and consequently, while all of them must be good citizens contributing their specific share to the whole, they will occupy varying ranks in the scale of human excellence. This, however, does not mean that the two excellences can never coincide in the same person. The good ruler or statesman, for instance, must also be a wise and mature (*spoudaios*) man. But for the plain citizen wisdom is not necessary and it is quite sufficient if he has the "true opinion" (*doxa alethes*) that will enable him to submit to authority. And then we must consider the "political rule" (*politike arche*) in the specific sense which is rule over equals of one's own race and freemen. In that case the art of rulership can be acquired

only by passing through the art of obedience. The good citizen under "political rule" must be equally capable of ruling and obeying, and the good man in the society of freemen and equals will also possess the excellence of the good citizen.

After this digression Aristotle returns to the task of defining the citizen. Is it indeed justified to define the citizen as a person who shares in certain offices, or should not the artisan classes be included in the term? But if we include them we cannot maintain the definition of the good citizen who is capable both of ruling and obeying; and if we exclude them, how should they be classified since they are neither slaves nor aliens? Aristotle decides that not all people who are necessary to the existence of a state can be considered citizens. If the artisans should not be slaves or aliens anyway as they were in ancient times, then we must decide that not all freemen can be considered citizens but only those who are freed from menial work. Those who are engaged in necessary work will be excluded from citizenship "by the best polis." In fact, however, we see artisans admitted to citizenship in many poleis. As a consequence, we must assume several kinds of citizens; and the citizen in the fullest sense will be the man who shares in the honors of the polis.

From this tortuous argument nothing can be concluded with absolute clarity—especially since in a decisive point the manuscript has a lacuna of indeterminate size. Nevertheless, at least a drift of problems can be discerned. Aristotle is concerned with the tension between the one nature of the polis and the many varieties of actualization. From the speculation on this tension emerges the possibility that the form (*eidos*) of order can be brought to coincide maximally with the nature (*physis*) of the polis. We, thus, arrive at the notion of the best polis as the polis whose order (*politeia*) will be an organization of the free and equal men, that is, of the society of mature men as described in *Nicomachean Ethics*. While such maximal coincidence is desirable, the political scientist must recognize that the historical poleis fall far short of such perfection; in fact, Aristotle admits on occasion that none of the 158 constitutions examined by him live up to his standards. Such deficiency, however, is no reason to deny to them the name of polis. The problem of politics is not exhausted by an exploration of the nature of the polis; the metaphysical inquiry must be supplemented by what we may call a sociology of politics. Men, indeed, associate in the polis for the purpose of the good life, and the striving for this end is the nature of the polis; but that does

spoudaios who cultivates the *bios theoretikos*, and that (2) the full unfolding of human nature is possible only in a society of the polis type. Neither of the two assumptions can be admitted as true after Christ, to be sure—but the relation to the more differentiated Christian anthropology is of interest at the moment only in that it allows us to circumscribe the Aristotelian analysis of essence as a search for perfection, within the more compact experience of *physis*, of nature, which in Christianity is conducted under the assumption that perfection lies in the beyond. The order of society in history is theoretically irrelevant to Aristotle because he is convinced that perfect order can be realized within history; the order of history itself becomes of absorbing interest only when perfection is recognized as a symbol of eschatological fulfillment beyond history. If however the perfect order is considered realizable in history, the empirical structure of order, though theoretically irrelevant, acquires pragmatic relevance as the condition under which the perfect order is to be realized. While the philosopher, who is in search of the paradigm of perfection, has no theoretical interest in the historical expanse of nonessential reality (nonessential, if essence is *physis*), the lawgiver needs the thorough, empirical knowledge of this reality as it is the medium in which he wants to build the perfect polis. The inquiry into the essential structure of society and its order had to be cut short with the lawgiver's constitutional *eidos*, because the limit of relevance was set by the philosopher's *physis*. The rise and fall of society, though empirically observed, remains within the fatality of cosmic order; and above this fatality into the realm of essence rise only the theoretic life of the *spoudaios* and the perfect society which expresses the order of his soul. Despite the empirical discovery of the historical course of Hellenic society, and despite the consciousness of the spiritual epoch marked by Socrates and Plato, history has not yet meaning. The philosophers' leap in being has set free the paradigmatic *physis* of man and society, but it has not disengaged, as has the Mosaic and prophetic leap in being, the order of history from the myth of the cosmos.⁴

3. Types of Order

There is more than one type of constitutional order (*politeia*). The next task is the determination of the various types and of the differences

⁴For further elaboration of this problem see Chapter 10.

poor? Not necessarily; and in some freakish instance the many actually are the rich and the few the poor. As a rule, however, the rich in fact are few and the poor in fact are the many. This correlation cannot be found by theoretical speculation and logical classification. It is a matter of empirical observation; and the fact of this correlation must be introduced as a constant into the analysis of politics. Aristotle proposes, indeed, something like a primitive formulation of the Pareto curve concerning the distribution of incomes in any society. In practice, therefore, the political struggle is fought among the rich, the poor, and the virtuous who may be either rich or poor. The practical problems of politics arise from the fact that the three types coexist in a polis and that each type raises its specific claim in the name of justice to be the ruling part. The rich claim a ruling position because of their stake in the community; the poor in the name of their freedom; and the virtuous in the name of their excellence. Hence, the discussion of the types of order must proceed in terms of the claims raised by the various social types enumerated.

The analysis concentrates, first, on the respective claims of the rich and the poor. The claims are raised in the name of justice; but they are partial claims, not exhausting the whole of the idea of justice. Justice can be found, for instance, in equality; and equality is indeed part of justice, but only for equals. And then again, justice may be found in inequality of rights and treatment; and inequality also is part of justice, but only for unequals. When the principles of equality and inequality are taken in the abstract, without regard to the concrete qualities of persons, they will lead to erroneous judgments. Those who are unequal in some respect, as for instance wealth, are inclined to consider themselves unequal from others in every respect. Those who feel themselves equal in some respect, as for instance freedom of birth, are inclined to consider themselves everybody's equal in every respect (1280a7-25). If we should give way to these respective claims we would arrive at the construction of governments as oligarchies or democracies without qualifications. Since, however, "those who are equal in one thing only should not have equality in all things, and those who are unequal with regard to one thing should not have an unequal share in all things, it necessarily follows that constitutions based on these claims are perversions" (1283a26-29).

In political practice the conflict of claims cannot be solved by de-

ciding in favor of one or the other party, nor can it be settled as if it were a conflict of claims arising from a contract in civil law. A polis is not merely a group of persons settling in a territory; nor could one speak of a polis if a number of households would enter into a sort of alliance for defense against evildoers but otherwise remain the same individual units as before. A polis is more than an organization for the prevention of crime and the exchange of goods. It is the community of clans and villages for a happy and honorable life, based on the *philia*, the friendship, between men; and *philia* is rooted in the realization of the true self. The polis exists for the sake of noble actions, and those who contribute most to this end through their political virtue have a greater share in it than those who excel through wealth or those who are no more than their equals through free birth (1280b24-1281a8). The solution to the problem of just order, thus, cannot lie in the harmonization of claims between rich and poor; the justice of the polis derives from *philia* and the actualization of human excellence. The problem of justice can be solved in political practice only if the third social type, the virtuous, is brought into play.

All these reflections still leave the question how a government should be organized in order to secure a maximum of justice. Aristotle does not express himself explicitly on this point in the context of Book III, but his analyses imply that he is falling back on the considerations and solutions given by Plato in the *Laws*. None of the conflicting claims is acceptable as the organizing principle of government. The rich would oppress the poor; and the poor would plunder the rich. Besides, the groups excluded from government would be so many public enemies causing permanent revolutionary instability. The partial claims would result in what Plato called the "no-constitutions." Aristotle goes beyond Plato in also ruling out a government by the virtuous because such a government would only be an even more restricted "oligarchy," dishonoring an even greater number of citizens by excluding them from the honors of office.⁶ The solution must be sought in a compromise that will reserve the offices of influence to the rich, well-bred, and responsible citizens, while opening to the mass of the poor freemen an access to government through participation in elections and supervising commissions. This seems to be a somewhat thin answer to the

⁶ In this suggestion that the rule of the virtuous is one more "perversion" we may see one of the many subtle attacks on the Platonic *Republic*.

because they are neither so poor that they envy the rich, nor so rich that the poor plot for their plunder. Hence a lawgiver will act wisely when he relies strongly on the middle class in framing a constitution. If he frames an oligarchic constitution he will see to it that the laws favor also the middle class for, in that case, the despotic tendencies of the very rich will find a counterweight in the middle group; and he will do the same when framing a democracy, for again the middle class will be a counterweight to the tendencies of the poor to plunder. Such wisdom, however, will not be of much use to the lawgiver in the cases where there is no middle class, or only a very small one. Only larger cities are apt to have an appreciable middle class; and that fact explains the turbulent course of politics in the smaller poleis and their tendency of degenerating alternately into radical oligarchies or democracies. Generally speaking "the middle class is usually small"; and since establishing their own party in power is considered the prize of victory in civil wars by both democrats and oligarchs, the middle form "comes never at all into existence, or very rarely and in a very few places." The best polis that is based on the *mesotes* of wealth seems to share the fate of impracticality with the aristocracies. Sadly Aristotle must confess: "Two types of constitution come principally into existence: democracy and oligarchy; for good birth and excellence are found in few men, while wealth and numbers are common. Nowhere are there a hundred men wellborn and good; but rich men we find in many places" (1301b39-1302a3).

It is difficult to select a representative example from Book V on the causes of revolutions and the means of preserving the constitutions. The value of the study lies in the wealth of detail, in the rich casuistry of the turbulent life of the Hellenic poleis. It should be read as a whole. The principles employed in the discussion bring nothing new. "Everywhere inequality causes revolution [*stasis*]. . . . always those who desire equality rise in factional strife" (1301b27ff). The partial justice, discussed in an earlier context, when made the principle of a constitution will cause the resentment of those whose dignity and sense of justice is violated. In a situation that is fraught with explosive tension a series of typical events and motives will furnish the more immediate causes and occasions for revolutionary outbreaks. These typical motives and events are insolence, fear, excessive predominance, contempt shown by the ruling class, or contempt engendered by it, disproportionate growth of power in one section of society at the expense of others, election in-

pations do not allow for the leisure that is necessary for the development of the excellences. The citizens thus are confined to the occupations of warriors, officials, and priests; and they should participate in all of these functions in the course of their lifetime. The military and governing functions correspond to the two primes of life marked by strength and wisdom; and the priests should be chosen from the old men of the warriors and officials, and on no account from the lower classes, "for it is seemly that the Gods should receive honor from the citizens only." Moreover, the ruling class should have most of the property, for they are the citizens in the strict sense, while the lower classes, "who are not producers of excellence," do not participate in the excellence of the polis. And in as much as the property should be in the hands of the ruling association, the tillers of the soil should be slaves or serfs of an alien race. The formulations are critically pointed against *Republic* 419f. where Plato excludes the warriors from participation in the rule of the polis and even of full happiness; this would be the constitutional arrangement which Aristotle characterizes as an "oligarchy of the virtuous" and, in consequence, as a defective type of order. One cannot make the whole polis happy, Aristotle argues against Plato, without making happy the self-sufficient group of citizens that constitutes the ruling association (*Politics*, 1264b8-25). The best polis, thus, requires a ruling association in which office can be held in turn by all members. The association must include the warrior class, and in view of the size of the class allowance must be made for a certain amplitude in the individual actualization of excellence. Otherwise, however, Aristotle agrees with Plato on the desirability of a caste system and refers to Egypt as a country in which such a system has been maintained since times immemorial.

Since we are living in an age in which public discussion of political matters suffers from ideological confusion, it will not be superfluous to stress that Aristotle's exploration of the best constitution has nothing to do with "fascism." The construction of the best constitution is a theoretical problem of which the solution is determined by axiomatic assumptions. Assuming that it is the function of the constitution to provide an organizational framework for the maximal actualization of human excellence at least for those men who can actualize it at all, what is the best constitution? The resolution of the problem presupposes the existence of a sufficiently large social group that can justly be considered to actualize excellence in the Aristotelian sense. With regard to

the existence of such a group Aristotle has expressed his opinions explicitly: Where could one find a hundred men of excellence that would be sufficient to be the ruling association of even one little polis? The answer is: Nowhere in the concrete historical situation. Aristotle agrees with Plato that in the historical situation an "elite," capable of actualizing the best polis, does not exist. By no stretch of imagination can the construction of the best constitution be interpreted as an invitation to a *coup d'état* by a self-appointed elite. Aristotle, as we have seen, even doubted that a middle-class polity, tempering somewhat the radical democracy, was feasible under the circumstances. The age is democratic, and Aristotle is resigned to the prospect that only democratic constitutions can be established with any chance of stability. Such resignation, however, does not imply the abandoning of critical standards; while the urban democracy of his time may be historically and politically inevitable, it still is what it is. Aristotle is a philosopher; he is not an intellectual flunkey for the historically inevitable.

With Book VII, 13 (1331b24) begin the reflections on education. They continue to the end in Book VIII where they break off, as we have said, with musical education. The extant fragment gives no clues concerning the plan of the whole discussion. All that we can extract with safety are a few declarations concerning principles.

The section on education opens with a restatement of the problem of the best polis. At its center is the ruling association of the men of excellence. The existence of such a polis is in part conditioned by the indispensable "materials" over which the lawgiver has no control; in part it is conditioned by an educational process to be institutionalized by laws. The proper framing of these laws presupposes a clear understanding of the aim of education; and since the aim of education in the best polis is the formation of freemen, distinguished by their ethical and dianoetic excellences, Aristotle briefly restates his principles of ethics (1331b24-1332b11). From the restatement emerges as the central problem the division of life into business (*ascholia*) and leisure (*schole*).¹¹ Business

¹¹ It is practically impossible to render the terms *ascholia* and *schole* adequately in English. In Greek (as in the Latin *otium* and *negotium*) leisure, *schole*, has the positive connotation, while business (*ascholia*) negatively denotes the absence of *schole*. The etymological connection with *schein* (from *echo*) suggests a stopping from activity, a rest, resulting in a "having of oneself" or holding of oneself, as the basic meaning; while *ascholia* would correspondingly suggest a losing of oneself in peripheral activity.

tween the two framing blocks Aristotle's unsystematic concern about completeness of problems revealed the range of a political science which, if systematically organized, would reach a considerably more impressive stature than the paradigm of the best constitution. We only need recapitulate the most important theoretical complexes:

- (1) The foundation of ethics as a science of the mature character.
- (2) The constancy of human knowledge through the vicissitudes of history and the importance of the myth as a source of knowledge that has become obscured through pragmatic incrustations.
- (3) The cycle of political forms and the understanding of the variety of forms as phases of political order.
- (4) The inevitability of social tensions through the coexistence of permanent, empirical, human types, such as (a) the mature and the immature, and (b) the rich and the poor; the tentative ramification of this knowledge into a phenomenology of virtue, differentiated according to the various human types.
- (5) The recognition of the historical manifold of political forms; the limitation of the art of the lawgiver; and, more generally, the recognition of the very narrow limits of political action in the given historical situation.
- (6) The foundation of justice on *philia*, and of *philia* on the actualization of the true self in community; as a corollary, the foundation of society on the *homonoia* of its members, on their participation in the divine *nous*; and, as a consequence, the function of the ruling association in the order of a society.

This catalogue assembles the topics of a systematic political science, ranging from a philosophical anthropology and an ethics founded on ontology, through a theory of the community substance and its institutionalization, to a philosophy of history and a theory of civilizational crisis. A theory of political dynamics unfolds, ranging from the beneficial authors of the polis to the anarchy of the mob bent on plunder, and from the actualization of dianoetic excellence to the management of urban masses through greed and fear. This range of political science has never been cultivated in continuity; the discontinuous revivals in St. Thomas, Machiavelli, Bodin, Rousseau, or Whiggist constitutionalism extend to no more than parts of this vast body of theory. Only in our own time does the range of Aristotle's political science come into full view again because, under the stress of our own crisis, we are regaining the experiential understanding of the issues involved.

On Types of Character and Skepticism

In his philosophical anthropology Aristotle developed the theory of a human nature common to all, but in his nomothetic science of politics he recognized that the actualization of human nature was the privilege of the few. In his recognition he went so far as to contemplate a differentiation of the theory of excellences according to the variety of human types; the program was outlined but not executed. The problem requires some elaboration beyond the scope of Aristotelian politics in the strict sense.

The problem originates in the situation of the philosopher who is in possession of the Truth. Aristotle knows what the nature of man really is; he knows that eudaimonia consists in the practice of the *bios theoretikos*; and he knows it not only as a proposition in science, but experientially through the habituation of his soul and the practice of his life. This last point is crucial. Prudential science is not a body of knowledge of which the truth is evident to everybody, but requires inclination and habituation for its full understanding. It cannot be transmitted as information, but must be acquired as possession through formation of the soul. The truth of the philosopher is not a recipe for transforming mankind at large, but creates a new type of man among others. The very study of the nature of man reveals it as something which man does not flatly have, but as a potentiality which requires actualization in the process of life. And if such actualization is not too successful, the carrier of human potentiality is still man. The fulfillment of human nature emerges against the background of the mystery of its failure.

The tension between potential and actual man is only one of the sources of Aristotle's concern about the variety of human types that threatens to break the idea of common humanity. A second source becomes apparent in his attitude toward the manifold of political reality.

Measured by the standard of the best polis the contemporary types of order appeared as perversions of various degrees. Politics as a nomo-

ical subject matter, as well as on its adaptation to the character of the audience. Hence, the effective speaker must be able to reason logically, he must understand the varieties of human character (*ethos*) and excellence (*arete*), and he must understand the emotions (*pathos*). Rhetoric, thus, is an offshoot of dialectics and that branch of ethics which properly may be called political (*Rhetoric* 1356a). In brief, we may say, the statesman is supposed to possess a knowledge of Aristotelian dialectics, ethics, and politics which he cannot possess unless his character is formed by the *bios theoretikos*.

The knowledge of the best polis, thus, enters the practice of politics not as a program of reform, but existentially through the statesman whose character has been formed by Aristotelian prudential science. The statesman as one type of character faces the people and its polis as a character of a different type. In the speech the two types are related with each other in so far as the appropriate treatment of the people's character depends on the adequate formation of the statesman's character. The *Rhetoric*, therefore, resumes the topics of *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* but slanted as it were toward the character of the prospective audience. The topic of eudaimonia, for instance, appears as the central theme of deliberative rhetoric. In the *Rhetoric*, however, Aristotle does not disentangle the eudaimonia of the theoretic life from the current ideas about happiness. On the contrary, he leaves the variety of opinion in a state of uncritical factualness. Happiness may be prosperity combined with excellence, or self-sufficient existence, or the secure enjoyment of hedonistic life, and so forth. And "pretty well everybody agrees that happiness is one or more of these things." He then enumerates the "parts" of happiness as good birth, friends, children, wealth, a happy old age, physical advantages, fame, honor, and good luck (I, 5). The only item that is missing in this enumeration is excellence (*arete*). Excellence is not among the aims which a speaker should present to his audience for achievement. In the *Rhetoric* the excellences are transferred to the section on epideictic, or eulogizing, rhetoric, because excellence is a matter for praise and blame rather than for counselling.

While the speaker must not molest the people with a theoretical disquisition on the excellences themselves, his speech should convey the impression of a character that is formed by their possession (1366a23ff). The speaker, while using his theoretical knowledge, must operate with the categories of what we might call the people's morality. In political

culties of Aristotelian metaphysics. We have studied the religious aspects of the conception of the *bios theoretikos*. In his philosophical anthropology Aristotle, following Plato, penetrated into the region of the *nous* in the religious sense. He arrived at the idea of a "true self" of man and at the idea of *homonoia*, that is, of the parallel formation of the souls of man through *nous*, as the bond of society. Actually, Aristotle penetrated so far into this region that his very terminology could be used by St. Paul in making *homonoia* the central concept in the theory of a Christian community. Nevertheless, there remained in Aristotle the fundamental hesitation which distinguished the Hellenic from the Christian idea of man, that is, the hesitation to recognize the formation of the human soul through grace; there was missing the experience of faith, the *fides caritate formata* in the Thomistic sense. In the case of Aristotle, the most poignant symptom of this hesitation is his insistence that friendship (*philia*) between God and man is impossible. Equality is for him an essential element of friendship; *philia* between unequals is difficult, if not impossible; and it becomes quite impossible if one partner to the friendship is as remote from the other as God through his pre-eminence of qualities is from man (N. E. 1158b35ff). This is the Hellenic position, in contrast with the Christian experience of the *amicitia* between God and man. The Aristotelian position does not allow for a *forma supranaturalis*, for the heightening of the immanent nature of man through the supernaturally forming love of God. It is true, the Aristotelian gods also love man (N. E. 1179a23ff), but their love does not reach into the soul and form it towards its destiny. The Aristotelian nature of man remains an immanent essence like the form of an organic being; its actualization is a problem within the world. Although the noetic self is the *theiotaton* in man, and although its actualization is conceived as an immortalization, human nature finds its fulfillment immanently. Transcendence does not transform the soul in such a manner that it will find fulfillment in transfiguration through Grace in death.

The metaphysical construction of human nature as an immanent form is technically inadequate because it is supposed to cover structures of the soul that are formed by transcendence. From the conflict between the reality of experiences and metaphysical construction stem the aporias of Aristotelian philosophizing which occupy us at present. The experience of transcendence, on the one hand, is differentiated to the point where the supranatural fulfillment of human potentiality has come into clear