

# Socrates, Xenophon, and Plato

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In the fifth century BC the [Pythagorean](#) school continued, and Parmenides in Elea contributed to metaphysics. Zeno also of Elea let his mind trap himself into thinking one could never get somewhere, because by going half-way there each time one would get closer but never arrive. Of course if one continually goes halfway, one will never get there; to get there one must go all the way. However, Antisthenes credited Zeno with courageously challenging a tyrant by informing on the tyrant's friends. When interrogated by the tyrant, the only one he would implicate was the cursed tyrant himself. Zeno accused the bystanders of cowardice for not enduring what he was suffering. Finally he bit off his tongue and spit it at the tyrant before he was beaten to death in a mortar. This affected the citizens so strongly that they later stoned the tyrant to death. Melissus of Samos as a general defeated Athenians led by Pericles in a naval battle in 441 BC; but his transcendental logic brilliantly pointed out that the infinite must be one, because if it were two, the two would limit each other and not be infinite.

Empedocles of Acragas wrote two poems, *On Nature* and *Purifications*, about the middle of the fifth century BC. He saw the universe as shifting between Love and Strife and composed of the elements of fire, air, water, and earth. With Love comes concord and joy; Aristotle interpreted Love as the cause of good and Strife as the cause of bad. Aristotle also said that he had been a champion of freedom and was averse to all rules. Others said that Empedocles declined the kingship offered to him, because he preferred to live frugally. When a tyrant insisted that all the guests drink wine or have it poured over their heads, Empedocles the next day accused the host and master of revels which led to their condemnation and execution. This began his political career, and it was argued that he must have been both wealthy and democratic, because he broke up the assembly of a thousand three years after it was set up. Late in his life the descendants of his enemies opposed his return to Agrigentum; so he went to the Peloponnesus, where he died.

As Pindar, in one of his many poems praising athletes, his second Olympian ode, saw a return to a heavenly kingdom so too did Empedocles describe the soul that realizes its divinity. Empedocles gained renown for reviving a woman who had been unconscious for thirty days. Empedocles asked humanity, "Won't you stop ill-sounding bloodshed? Don't you see that you are destroying each other in careless folly?"<sup>1</sup> He saw foolish fathers sacrificing their sons and children their parents. He wished he had died before he began eating flesh. Poetically he described how by an oracle of Necessity, anciently decreed by the eternal gods, a demi-god with long life, who has defiled his hands with bloodshed and strife or a false oath, must wander for thousands of seasons far from the blessed, being born through time in many mortal forms in one deadly life after another, pushed on by all the elements. Such a fugitive from the gods who had trusted strife did Empedocles claim himself to be. After many different lives such souls eventually come to earth as prophets, poets, healers, and princes to share with other immortals. Empedocles wrote that after much wandering he now went among the people as an immortal god honored and revered for his wisdom and healing powers.

Leucippus founded the atom theory of natural philosophy refined by Democritus, who also taught that the cheerful person eager for justice and right actions is strong and free of care, while those who do not care about justice and right find everything joyless and in memory are afraid

and reproach themselves. Happiness, said Democritus, is not found in gold or cattle but in the soul. For Democritus the goal of action is tranquillity, which is not the same as pleasure but a state of well-being in which the soul is calm, strong and undisturbed by fear, superstition, and other feelings.

Protagoras, the greatest of the sophists, studied with Democritus and lived 481-411 BC. He is famous for the statement, "The person is the measure of all things."<sup>2</sup> He was the first to charge a fee for his lessons and the first to define the tenses and moods of verbs. He instituted debates and taught the art of arguing, including verbal quibbling. In one of his books he stated that he did not know whether the gods existed or not; for this he was expelled from Athens, and his books were burned in the marketplace.

## Socrates

Socrates was born 469 BC in Athens and was the son of a stone-mason and a midwife. It was said that he did stone-work on the draped figures of the Graces on the Acropolis that was commissioned by Pericles. One account says that Crito took him out of a workshop to educate him because of the beauty of his soul. Socrates admired the theory of Anaxagoras that the mind is infinite, self-ruled, and unmixed with anything but itself, controlling and causing all things. However, when he studied with Anaxagoras, he found that he introduced many physical causes into his explanations of nature. Such ideas challenged prevailing religious beliefs in Athens, and Anaxagoras was condemned to death; but his friend Pericles got him out of prison. Socrates then became a student of Archelaus, who was said to have begun the speculation on ethical questions of law, justice, and goodness; Socrates improved on this so much that he was considered by Greeks the inventor of ethics. Some said that Socrates helped [Euripides](#) write his plays.

Socrates fought as a hoplite at Potidaea in 432 BC and handed over his prize for valor to Alcibiades. He later served again at Amphipolis and at Delium. He invested his money and lived very simply, though he had three children, having taken a second wife to help Athens increase its population. He never asked a fee from anyone, and when observing the products in the marketplace he would observe that he had no need for so many things. He said that most people live to eat but that he ate to live. Charmides offered to give him some slaves for income, but he declined the offer. He refused to accept gifts from tyrants in Macedon, Cranon, and Larissa, and did not visit their courts. He had a supernatural sign which would warn him what not to do. His questioning often perturbed people so much that they would attack him with their fists; but he would refuse to fight or bring legal charges, saying it takes two to make a quarrel or that he would not sue a donkey for kicking him either. His wife Xanthippe was known for being a shrew; but he argued that just as by mastering spirited horses a trainer could handle others easily, so he could learn how to adapt to anyone.

Socrates was satirized by [Aristophanes](#) in the comedy *The Clouds* in 423 BC; but he did not object, because if his faults were shown it would do him good, and if not it would not affect him. However, two dozen years later at his trial he was still being accused of making the worse argument appear better and investigating things under the earth, partly because of that play. When eight Athenian generals were illegally tried by the assembly for not picking up the lost sailors at Arginusae, Socrates refused to preside over the illegality. When the vicious oligarchy

of Thirty ordered him to arrest the wealthy Leon of Salamis, Socrates did not obey even though he might have died for it. This oppressive government also forbade teaching the art of words because of him.

Finally in 399 BC the resentful Anytus, Lycon, and Meletus charged Socrates with corrupting the youth and with refusing to recognize the gods of the state while introducing new divinities. Lysias wrote a speech of defense for him, but Socrates rejected it as unsuited to him, just as fine clothes would be. The vote to condemn him was 281-220. Then as a penalty he offered to pay a small fine, though he believed that the state should provide free meals for him. This alienated even more jurors, and he was condemned to death by a majority of eighty more votes. Believing in the laws of the state, he refused to escape from prison. After his execution by hemlock poison, it was said that Athens felt such regret that they put Meletus to death and banished the other two accusers. Socrates was said to be the first philosopher (in Greece) to discourse on the conduct of life and was the first to be executed.

### **Xenophon's Socrates**

Although Socrates himself left behind no writings for us, his disciples Aeschines, Antisthenes, Aristippus, Cebes, Crito, Euclides, Phaedo, Simmias, Xenophon, and Plato wrote Socratic dialogues portraying his teaching in literary form. Of these only the extensive works of Xenophon and Plato remain intact. The relationship between these writings and the real Socrates is controversial; but in this work that examines the ethics implied in literature as well as history and biography, we can simply look at how Socrates is portrayed in these various dialogs, and then readers can draw their own conclusions. Both Xenophon and Plato were born in Athens about 428 BC and thus had the opportunity to observe Socrates in his later years. It seems to me that they each brought out different aspects of a very complex man.

When Socrates was tried and executed, Xenophon was on the Persian military expedition made famous in his *Anabasis*. When he did write about his teacher a few years later, his main motive appears to have been to defend Socrates from the charges that led to his execution. His short work called the *Defense of Socrates* gives Socrates' view of his trial as reported by Hermogenes. Socrates believed that his whole life had been a preparation for his defense, because he had consistently done no wrong, and his "little divinity" (*daimonion*) warned him twice not to consider preparing it. Socrates also felt that dying then would prevent him from suffering the decline of old age. In answering the charge of introducing new deities, he said his *daimonion* was like the divine signs other prophets and priestesses experience. This spirit also helped him to advise friends and was never found wrong. This statement caused an uproar at the trial, as many did not believe him, while others resented the implication that he was closer to the gods.

Socrates told how Chaerephon asked the Delphic oracle about him, and Apollo declared that he was the most free, upright, and prudent of all. Socrates then asked the jury if they knew anyone who was less a slave of his desires or more free, since he did not accept payment from anyone. Socrates asked if any youth had developed bad habits because of him, and Meletus charged that he had persuaded the young to listen to him instead of their parents, which Socrates admitted in regard to questions of education that he had studied. Socrates was not upset by the result of the trial and compared himself to Palamedes, who had been unjustly accused by Odysseus. When

Apollodorus found it difficult to bear seeing Socrates being put to death so unjustly, Socrates asked if he would prefer to see him executed justly.

Xenophon continued to defend Socrates in the first part of his *Memoirs of Socrates*. Apparently Polycrates had published a pamphlet condemning Socrates, and Xenophon wanted to answer these accusations too. Xenophon's Socrates said that the gods gave us intelligence to use when we could, but that what was concealed from humans could be discovered from the gods by divination. Xenophon found Socrates doing the opposite of corrupting youth by his example and his teaching, inspiring them to desire goodness. He disapproved of over-eating but approved of doing enough exercise to work off the food the mind accepts with pleasure. He did not seek money-lovers but charged no fee, and he rid his listeners of all desires except to be in his company.

Xenophon answered the charge that Critias and Alcibiades, who had been in the circle of Socrates, did great harm to Athens by saying that they were the most ambitious of men and were determined to have as much control over the state as they could; but while they were with Socrates, they were self-disciplined. Critias had been banished to Thessaly, where he practiced law-breaking, and Alcibiades was courted by powerful women and men because of his good looks and prestige. Socrates should not be blamed for their actions any more than a father should for what his son does. Socrates had criticized Critias for seducing Euthydemus, which caused Critias to hate him and with Charicles later to outlaw teaching the art of debate. Socrates also criticized the Thirty for making the people worse the way a herder did by reducing his herd. Xenophon wrote they stopped associating with Socrates because he annoyed them by exposing their mistakes. Socrates believed that it was an error to imprison the ignorant when they could be taught, though the insane may need to be confined.

Then Xenophon proceeded to show how Socrates by practical example and by his conversations benefited his associates. Socrates only prayed for what is good, assuming that the gods knew that better than he. He thought praying for gold or power or anything else specific was like throwing dice or a battle, because they are unpredictable. He believed his small offerings to the gods would be as well received, for surely the gods would not prefer the large offerings of the wicked. Socrates did not eat or drink beyond satisfaction and advised others to avoid anything that impelled them to eat or drink when they were not hungry or thirsty.

Socrates explained to little Aristodemus how well the universe was designed by God and encouraged him to recognize that just as his mind controls his body according to its will, so too does the intelligence in the universe operate. The omniscience of God is infinitely beyond the limited sensory powers and mental faculties of humans. Thus he made his associates refrain from wrong actions, not only in public but also when they were alone, because they would all be known to the gods. Socrates encouraged self-discipline as making one more trustworthy than the moral weakling, for the slave of appetites cannot escape degradation of both body and mind.

Socrates refuted the luxury and extravagance of the sophist Antiphon by arguing that those who need as little as possible are closer to the divine and thus what is best. To the criticism that Socrates' advice must have no value because he charged nothing for it, Socrates answered that as selling the favors of love for money is prostitution, so those who sell their wisdom are called

sophists. When asked by Antiphon why he did not participate in politics, Socrates asked if he could not be more effective by making as many people as possible more capable in politics. Socrates pointed out that having a reputation for something without having the actual ability can turn out to be disastrous, and thus he discouraged his associates from having pretensions.

Socrates practiced and taught self-control of one's appetites and argued to the pleasure-loving Aristippus that the prudent are more fit to govern. Those who devote themselves to managing their estates efficiently, benefiting their friends, and serving their country will surely find more happiness than in momentary pleasures. Socrates recounts Prodicus' parable of Heracles and the two women who came to him as Vice and Virtue. Vice offers easy pleasures, but Virtue explains that worshipping the gods brings their grace, being kind to friends brings their love, helping the state brings its honors, benefiting Greece brings its recognition, working the land brings abundant crops, and training one's body makes it physically efficient.

When his son Lamprocles got angry because of his mother's temper, Socrates taught him to be grateful for all the gifts a mother has given to her child. Also by being good to his neighbors and fellow travelers, they will be good to him. He encouraged Chaerecrates to take the lead in resolving his quarrels with his older brother Chaerephon; for if he has a noble and generous nature, he will respond. Socrates has observed that low types are usually won over by a gift, but the best way to influence good people is by courtesy. If his brother does not respond, Chaerecrates has shown that he is a good and affectionate brother.

To Critobulus Socrates praised friendship, and he felt that a friend was more valuable than any other possession; yet friends are often neglected compared to one's material possessions. Those who cannot control their desires are not usually reliable friends, and those who spend all their time making money have no time for friendship. Trouble-makers should also be avoided. Also one who accepts kindness but never thinks of repaying it does not make a good friend either. Those who have treated their friends well in the past are likely to do so in the future. Then Socrates showed that if we want to have a good friend, the best thing to do is to be a good friend in words and action. Even states that value honorable dealing are often hostile to other states. Socrates noted that tendencies toward friendship must compete with hostile tendencies toward fighting, rivalry, ambition, and envy. Friendship can unite the fine and good though by moderating possessions, ambitions, and desires in sharing and by controlling passions. Having good friends can be beneficial in public life. The best way to be thought good at anything is to become good at it.

After the [Peloponnesian War](#) when Athenians were suffering poverty and a civil war, the aristocratic family of Aristarchus was starving in Piraeus until Socrates advised him to invest in wool and get the women and men of his house working, which would make them friendlier and pleased with themselves. Another older man named Eutherus, who lost his property in the war and was working as a manual laborer, he advised to go into managing property as more suitable to his age and experience. Crito, who was continually settling out of court to prevent lawsuits, he advised to get a friend to defend his cases by prosecuting these exploiters. They found that cultivating the friendship of honest people by returning kindness, which made bad people their enemies worked better than making good people enemies by wronging them in collaboration with bad people.

Xenophon gives several conversations in which Socrates gave military advice. Since Xenophon was a general and Socrates was not, it is likely these reflect more the ideas of Xenophon than of Socrates. Xenophon points out the similarities of estate management and business administration to military administration as well as many of the complexities of command. Socrates asked the ambitious Glaucon how he was going to benefit their country, but his questions revealed that the young man did not know about their country's revenues nor its expenditures nor its armed forces nor how much grain it needed. If he can't even persuade his uncle how to manage his household, how would he ever convince the whole city of Athens? However, Socrates encouraged Charmides to go into public affairs, because he thought he was too modest.

Socrates avoided the verbal traps of Aristippus by saying what things were good for specifically; then he generalized that everything is good for the purpose for which it is well adapted. Socrates believed that courage varied considerably but that everyone could develop their fortitude by instruction and application. Those who put into practice what is fine and good and guard against what is shameful are wise. The opposite of wisdom is madness, which results from thinking one understands when one is ignorant. By explaining the methods she used and how he could make her better, Socrates got the courtesan Theodote eager to visit him. Socrates also recommended physical training to Epigenes for the health of the body.

To young Euthydemus Socrates showed the value of self-knowledge and the misfortunes of self-deception. Those who know themselves know what they can do and are successful while they refrain from doing what they don't understand and so avoid mistakes. They also know how to assess others and can benefit from them, while those who don't know themselves don't know what they want from others. Those who know themselves and are successful are sought out by others, but those who fail through lack of knowledge suffer losses and damage their reputations. States that go to war against stronger states through not knowing their own abilities either lose territory or become enslaved. Finally Euthydemus realizes that he is ignorant and had better keep quiet. Many people in this plight left Socrates in dejection and did not come back, but Euthydemus decided that by associating with Socrates he could improve himself.

Socrates began by teaching his associates responsibility, because to develop their abilities without that would make them more capable of doing wrong. To Hippias Socrates argued that doing what is lawful is right and that there are unwritten laws of the gods such as honoring parents and repaying benefits. In valuing freedom he taught that those who are governed by the body's pleasures cannot act best or be free. Self-indulgence prevents people doing what is best and wise. By giving in to every immediate pleasure one does not even experience the maximum pleasure that comes from holding out until one is hungry, thirsty, or tired and ready for sleep. Only the self-disciplined can make the wisest choices and be most happy.

Socrates also made his associates better through philosophical discussions that helped them to understand things better, while those who do not understand make mistakes. The courageous, for example, understand perils and dangers and yet are brave. Socrates contrasted the sovereign authority that acted with the consent of the people from the despotism that acted without their consent. A good diplomat makes friends instead of enemies, and success in politics stops civil strife and creates a spirit of unity. Socrates concluded that the best life comes from taking the best care to make oneself as good as possible, and the happiest people are those who are most



conscious they are getting better. Socrates believed that his associates loved him, because they believed that by associating with him they would improve themselves and that he offered them the greatest help in cultivating virtue.

In Xenophon's *Symposium* the wealthy Callias invites Socrates and his friends to a dinner party celebrating young Autolycus' victory in the Pancration. When Callias offers the guests perfumes, Socrates suggests that it's better if they smell of goodness. When asked where they could find that perfume, Socrates quotes the poet Theognis that good company is edifying but bad company the opposite. After a display of dancing, Socrates says he prefers this form of exercise because it can develop the arms as well as the legs. Socrates also urges the host to be sparing with the wine so that their mood will remain more playful and gentle instead of being forced into intoxication.

Socrates then suggests they spend their time improving and amusing themselves by saying what each thinks is his most valuable area of expertise. Like the sophists Callias claims that he makes people better, but instead of by taking their money, by giving them money. Niceratus thinks his knowledge of Homer is helpful. The ascetic Antisthenes, who has no money, says that it is his wealth, because the thrifty are more moral than the extravagant and because he has much free time to spend with Socrates; while Charmides, who was wealthy before the war made his assets unavailable, is proud of his poverty, because now no one bothers him and the state supports him. Socrates claims his skill as a pimp, and the jokester Philippus his humor. Lycon is most proud of his son Autolycus, and Autolycus in turn honors his father. Hermogenes delights in the goodness of his friends. Critobulus is proud of his good looks; although Socrates argues that his bulging eyes and snub nose are better for seeing and smelling and his thick lips better for kissing. Critobulus wins the beauty contest between them. The Syracusan is proud of his boy; but he is afraid other men will want to sleep with him although he sleeps with him every night. Socrates then uses a series of questions to show that his pimping makes his protégés as pleasing as possible to his clients.

Having seen [The Clouds](#), the Syracusan asks Socrates if he is called the "thinker." Socrates replies that it is better than being called thoughtless. He then asks Socrates if he knows about celestial things, and Socrates interprets this as knowing about the gods. The Syracusan wants to put on an erotic display, but Socrates takes up the subject of erotic love and shows that the celestial side of Aphrodite is better than the common. Its pleasure is greater because the mind is better than the body; mental affection lasts longer than physical and is less bound by satiety. Being loved for one's character is never negative, but shameless physical intercourse has led to many atrocious crimes. The favorite who relies on physical beauty is not likely to improve other qualities, but the one who knows that one must be truly good to retain friendship will care more for virtue not only in the beloved but in oneself as well. At the end of this discussion as Lycon is leaving with his son, he calls Socrates a truly good man; after the erotic display all the guests immediately go home to their wives or lovers.

Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* is on estate management. Socrates tells Critobulus how people are slaves when they allow such harsh masters to control them as gluttony, sex, drink, and costly ambitions. Socrates believes that his assets are better than those of Critobulus, although his own property would sell for five minae and Critobulus' for more than a hundred times that, because Socrates is able to live within his income, but Critobulus is not. Critobulus asks for Socrates'

advice in estate management. Socrates points out that everything needs to be arranged in its proper place, not at random. One's wife can be a good partner in the house, because although income usually results from the husband's activities, most of the expenditures come from the wife's housekeeping; so both need to be done well. Socrates praises agriculture and indicates how much everyone depends on it, not just to live but to live pleasantly.

Socrates then tells Critobulus about a long conversation he had with Ischomachus, who was known for being fine and good by everyone. First Ischomachus tells Socrates how he trained his wife, who came to him at age fifteen, by first praying to the gods for what is best and then training her. The traditional relationship of the woman handling things inside the house while the man did the outdoor work is discussed. Ischomachus expresses the hope that his wife will turn out better than himself and make him her servant because she is so valuable and efficient. Xenophon then compares estate management to military administration. Greek dependence on slave labor is assumed and in no way challenged. The female servants are to be locked away from the male servants so that their procreation can be regulated by the master, and it is also implied that the wife must compete with these women who are also used as concubines by her husband.

In addition to the wife being taught how to use rewards and punishments to train the workers, a housekeeper is instilled with justice so that she also can reward right and not wrong. Ischomachus encouraged his wife to exercise in her work to benefit her health and beauty, but he discouraged her from using artificial cosmetics such as lead powder, although it was not known to be poisonous then. Ischomachus also taught his foreman responsibility so that he could supervise everything as well as the master. Rewards include verbal praise, and it is noted that human beings can be made to obey by proving to them by argument that it is in their interest. In the last part of the dialog Ischomachus shows Socrates how much he really already knows about the details of plowing, sowing, planting, and harvesting by artful Socratic questioning, indicating that this theory and method of educating is probably more Socratic than Platonic in origin.

## **Xenophon**

Diogenes Laertius relates the story that Socrates cornered Xenophon in a narrow street and asked him where food was sold. Then he asked him where people become fine and good. When Xenophon could not answer this, Socrates told him to follow him and learn. Xenophon was the first to take notes of Socrates and write about the conversations. A friend named Proxenus, who was a student of Gorgias, wrote Xenophon a letter from Sardis about Cyrus, the prince of Persia. Xenophon showed the letter to Socrates and asked his advice. Socrates suggested that he consult the oracle at Delphi, but he later criticized Xenophon for asking in what way he should serve Cyrus instead of whether he should go to Asia. After Cyrus was killed in the revolt against the great king, which was followed by the murder of the Greek mercenary generals, Xenophon was one of the new generals elected by the soldiers. His account of how they led these 10,000 men back to Greece in the *Anabasis* influenced Greek pride and eventually resulted in Alexander's conquests in Asia.

Xenophon then served the Spartan king and general Agesilaus and even fought against Athenians in 394 BC. This brought about his banishment from Athens, and Xenophon bought an estate at

Scillus near Elis. There he managed slaves and wrote books. According to tradition he made Thucydides famous by publishing his history and then continued it from 411 to 362 BC in his *Hellenica*, the best historical source for the period, though it lacks the brilliance of Thucydides. He pioneered the genre of biography with the encomium *Agesilaus*.

Xenophon's long work on Cyrus II (r. 559-529 BC) of Persia is so romanticized that it is probably more historical novel than biography. *Cyropaedia* means the education of Cyrus; but only the first book of eight is on his education, and that is primarily hunting as a preparation for war-fighting. Xenophon presents Cyrus as an outstanding military leader and ruler. Xenophon's account is also greatly influenced by his admiration for Spartan ways, and the Persian history is mixed with Greek customs. The stages of a man's life follow the Spartan system with its emphasis on military service. Also influenced by Socrates' philosophy, Xenophon declared that the main subject the boys learn in school is justice. Boys are punished for not returning favors, and self-control is also strongly instilled. Young Cyrus visits his grandfather who is king of the Medes, and he gradually matures from a charming but impetuous boy to a discerning and generous young man. Cyrus loves to hunt and distribute the meat to his friends. While hunting near the border, he suggests a military raid against the encroaching Assyrians which is successful. Xenophon's utilitarian philosophy is summarized in a speech by the young Cyrus to his chosen Persian troops.

I think that no virtue is practiced by people except with the aim that the good, by being such, may have something more than the bad; and I believe that those who abstain from present pleasures do this not that they may never enjoy themselves, but by this self-restraint they prepare themselves to have many times greater enjoyment in time to come. And those who are eager to become able speakers study oratory, not that they may never cease from speaking eloquently, but in the hope that by their eloquence they may persuade people and accomplish great good. And those also who practice military science undergo this work, not that they may never cease from fighting, but because they think that by gaining proficiency in the arts of war they will secure great wealth and happiness and honor both for themselves and for their country.<sup>3</sup>

Cyrus also has a religious attitude of friendship toward the gods, although he knows that one must learn and work at something in order to be able to pray for successful results. He believes that those who pray for what is not right would fail with the gods just as those who violate human laws are disappointed by people. He feels it his task to govern people so that they might have all the necessities of life in abundance and all become what they should be. Xenophon's Cyrus does not believe in Oriental self-indulgence but in Greek self-discipline as an example to all. Xenophon then has Cyrus learn from his teachers that the military art involves much more than mere tactics, but administration, physical training and health concerns, and motivational psychology. One must not merely seem wise but actually be wise in order to lead well. To win affection he must be a benefactor by being able to do good, sympathize with ills, help in distress, and prevent setbacks. However, all the virtues can be reversed in working against the enemy.

His father Cambyses gives Cyrus many lessons, concluding that he should learn from history that many states have been persuaded to take up arms and attack others but have been destroyed; many have made others great and then suffered wrongs from them; many who could have treated others as friends and given and received favors have instead treated them like slaves and received their just return; many not satisfied to enjoy their proper share have lost what they had trying to gain more; and many who have gained coveted wealth have been ruined by it.

In organizing his army Cyrus rewards merit and balances training with entertaining the men. In asking for aid from India against the Assyrians, he is willing to allow them to arbitrate the difference, showing he did not believe he was in the wrong. When the Armenians refused to pay their tribute or send troops, Cyrus was able to capture their king and then generously allowed him to contribute to their war effort instead of punishing him. Then with the Armenians on his side he attempts to make peace between them and the Chaldeans and by taking a hill fortress is able to enforce a peace between them.

Most of the *Cyropaedia* is about this war against those Xenophon calls the Assyrians, although their empire had been taken over by the Babylonians a half century before. Cyrus demonstrates his military skills and generosity in forgiving captured enemies and turning them into allies. However, any of these who try to flee from his camp are killed. Cyrus gains the help of the alienated Gobryas and the castrated Gadatas, who now hate the Assyrian king. Cyrus marches his forces to Babylon but then passes by it to take other forts in the area. Cyrus and his uncle, the Mede king Cyaxares, meet with their allies and decide on war. Cyrus sends various spies, including envoys from India who learn that Croesus has been chosen field marshal of the enemy alliance.

In the great battle Cyrus outmaneuvers Croesus and wins over the Egyptians to his alliance to capture Sardis and Croesus, but the city is spared the usual pillaging. Cyrus then directs the siege of Babylon, and by diverting the river his troops are able to enter the city. Cyrus moves into the palace and selects his bodyguards. Later he establishes his court in Persia, encouraging attendance there with his personal rewards. He invests in physicians, surgeons, and medical supplies. To answer the criticism of Croesus that he is not collecting enough wealth for himself he sends around a request for funds, which shows that he has many times more available to him than Croesus expected. Cyaxares gives Cyrus his daughter in marriage with all of Media as a dowry. Xenophon gave Cyrus credit for adding [Egypt](#) to the [Persian](#) empire, but it was his son who accomplished that after his death. Xenophon skipped quickly from the setting up of the satraps to describe a peaceful death for Cyrus many years later when in fact he was killed in a war. Someone, afraid that the book was too laudatory of Persia, added a postscript to show how Persian culture had deteriorated morally after the life of Cyrus.

In *Hiero*, a dialog between Hiero, who ruled Syracuse as a despot from 478 to 467 BC, and the poet Simonides, Xenophon showed the negative aspects of tyranny for the tyrant. Since Hiero was not born a king but became one, Simonides asks him to compare private life with that of a despot. Hiero says that he has found fewer pleasures and more pain as a despot and explains that he cannot travel safely to see sights and hears only flattery; knowing his subjects have evil thoughts, they dare not speak. Furthermore the despot is spoiled with every pleasure and material luxury but has little to strive for.

Despots do not experience the great blessing of peace but have the largest share of wars, and even his own citizens are his enemies. In spite of the despot's great wealth, his needs are so great that he rarely has enough to meet all his expenses for guards and an army. He feels cut off from friends and is surrounded by slaves. It is noted that slaves often kill their masters. Hiero complains that he cannot even get rid of his despotism. When Simonides points out that he can lavish gifts on people and be loved by the citizens, Hiero replies that he finds himself far more hated than loved as a result of his transactions. However, in the conclusion Simonides argues that he should do everything to make his state good in competition with other states. If he improves his state, he will be acclaimed as a hero and be loved by all.

In *The Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* Xenophon praised the laws of Lycurgus and the disciplined life of Sparta. Xenophon also wrote *On the Cavalry Commander*, *On the Art of Horsemanship*, and *On Hunting*. Late in his life, probably in 355 BC, Xenophon wrote *Ways and Means* as a proposal to improve the economy of Athens. Xenophon began with his concern that leading Athenian politicians believe that owing to the poverty of the masses they are compelled to treat other cities unjustly. Xenophon believed that Athens was capable of producing enough revenue in a fair way by treating the resident aliens better, maintaining peace, increasing harbor and market taxes, and by the state purchasing more slaves to work the silver mines. He did not seem to be concerned about the injustice of slavery itself, although he thought they would serve in the infantry better if they were treated with consideration. To maintain peace Xenophon suggested a board of peace guardians, who would increase the popularity of the city and attract more visitors.

Xenophon believed the happiest states have the longest period of unbroken peace and that Athens was well suited to peace. Of those who thought war could benefit Athens, he asked whether they had been successful leaders of the league funds by coercing the Greeks or by rendering services. He pointed out that Athens was stripped of her empire, because they had been too harsh in their authority; but then when they refrained from unjust actions, the islanders once again gave her presidency of the fleet. Generosity and not coercion was what gained them alliances with Thebes and the Lacedaemonians. In Athenian history much money came into the treasury during peace, and then all of it was spent in war. After the war was over, revenues were able to rise again. Athens can also deal with their enemies much better if they don't provoke them by wronging them. Xenophon concluded his essay by suggesting that his proposal be presented to the gods at the Delphic oracle so that it could be carried out with their help.

### Plato's Socrates

The most detailed and brilliant portraits of Socrates are by Plato; though it is difficult to deduce how much Plato has added to the original person, the influence of these writings has been immense regardless. Plato presented a young Socrates in his late dialog *Parmenides*; however, this discussion is not about ethics at all but metaphysics.

One of the earliest dialogs that I believe is often neglected is the first [Alcibiades](#). This is a marvelous introduction to Socratic method and ideas on the theme of self-knowledge and is set in 432 BC when Socrates was about 38 and Alcibiades 18. That was the year Socrates saved Alcibiades' life at Potidaea, although that is not mentioned in this work. Alcibiades was known

for being extraordinarily handsome, and Socrates has been waiting until his older lovers have tired of the youthful prize so that he can talk to him about more serious things. The other prominent characteristic of Alcibiades was his tremendous ambition, which concerns Socrates here. Since he knows that his young friend wants to rule not only Athens but the world if he can, Socrates wants to prepare him as best he can for an inevitable political career which Alcibiades is already contemplating. Socrates hopes that with his divine guidance Alcibiades may be able to accomplish his goals in a much better way.

Socrates begins by asking Alcibiades what advice he intends to offer the Athenians that he knows better than they, which turns out to be issues of war and peace and other state affairs. Socrates asks if he intends the Athenians to make war on those acting unjustly or those acting justly. Alcibiades acknowledges that the latter is rarely admitted, because it is not just nor honorable. Socrates helps Alcibiades to understand that such issues are often controversial with little agreement on what is best. By his artful questioning Socrates shows Alcibiades that he does not know what is just and unjust, but thinks that he does because he intends to advise the Athenians. Alcibiades comes to realize that he is confused about the difference between what is just and what is expedient. This confusion of thinking one knows something when one does not tends to lead to the worst mistakes, because one acts thinking one knows but errs because of the ignorance. Such is the dangerous plight of Alcibiades.

After a discourse about the ideal education of [Persian](#) princes, Socrates returns to questioning his young friend, who answers that in a good state there will be friendship, which in turn results from justice. Reminding Alcibiades of his ignorance in this, Socrates attempts to guide him into taking care of himself. To do this one must first fulfill the motto of the Delphic oracle to know oneself. By his questioning method Socrates shows Alcibiades that things and even one's own body are not the self that rules the human being, but the soul is the user of the body and things. Socrates claims he is the one who love Alcibiades' soul, and he will not leave him as long as he is working to improve himself. For Socrates is afraid that Alcibiades will be seduced by the people and warns him that he must study before he goes into politics, or he will be harmed. Thus he must learn to take care of his soul.

How then does the soul know itself? Using the analogy of an eye seeing itself reflected in the pupil of another's eye, Socrates analogizes that the soul must look at itself and especially its own virtue to find the divine part of itself, which will then bring the best knowledge of oneself. But those who do not know themselves cannot know their own affairs, let alone others', and will make mistakes in private and public and so be wretched. Thus it is not wealth and the power of warships and arsenals one needs in order to be happy but prudence and virtue so that one will know how to impart virtue to the citizens. Since one cannot impart what one does not have, first one must be virtuous oneself. By acting justly and prudently one will please God by focusing one's attention on the divine. In this way one can know oneself and what is good and thus be happy. Similarly a state lacking virtue will be overtaken by failure. Alcibiades thus should not strive for despotic power but for virtue, which frees one while shunning the slavishness of vice. This can be done, not by the will of Socrates, but by the will of God. Alcibiades promises to care for justice; Socrates hopes that he will but closes the dialog apprehensive that the state will overcome them both.

Scholars believe that the *Alcibiades II*, which is attributed to Plato, was probably written a century or two later. This work makes the point that one may inadvertently pray for evil if one does not know what is truly best. Many people want things; but when they get them regret it, such as those who are elected generals. Thus Socrates recommends the prayer for what is good, that asks God to avert what is grievous even if one is praying for it. To really benefit the community one must not only know or think one knows but also know how to make it beneficial. This wisdom is valued by the gods and humans, and the gods don't seem to be won over by bribes. So Socrates prays that the mist wrapped around the soul of Alcibiades will be removed so that he will discern good and evil.

In the *Charmides* Plato described a discussion about moderation (*sophrosune*). Socrates talks with Charmides and his cousin Critias, who became the worst leader of the oligarchy of Thirty. Charmides was also involved in that government and died in 403 BC along with Critias when it fell; but his favorable treatment here is probably because he was Plato's uncle. This dialog is set just after the battle of Potidaea in 432 BC. The young Charmides is introduced as a handsome young man who exemplifies the virtue of moderation. Before seeing his body though, Socrates wants to know his soul. Critias suggests to his cousin that Socrates has a cure for his headaches; but Socrates explains that it must be used with a charm because it is better to treat the body in relation to its wholeness and the soul. Socrates believes that it is a common mistake to treat the body as separate from the soul, because in his view all good and evil originates in the soul. The charms, which are fair words, are used to implant moderation in the soul.

Socrates asks Charmides if he has this moderation; but the young man is too modest to admit it and does not want to deny it either. So Socrates decides to inquire about it, and Charmides says that moderation is doing everything orderly and quietly. However, Socrates by questioning shows that quickness of mind is good and thus moderate. Next Charmides says that it is modesty that makes one ashamed, but a quote from Homer indicates that this quality is not good for a needy man. Then Charmides says moderation is doing one's own business, but Socrates points out that most craftsmen are doing business for others.

Since this definition came from Critias, he enters the discussion and then says that moderation is doing what is good. Yet to do good requires wisdom, and so this definition leads to the Delphic mottoes, "Know yourself" and "Nothing in excess." Critias claims that self-knowledge is the science of sciences in knowing what one knows. However, Socrates shows that it is not any of the sciences such as medicine for health, architecture for building, and so on. Socrates is not able to see what good this science of sciences does, since it does not know the other sciences. Finally they come around to the science of discerning good and evil, but this science of advantage is not moderation if it is the science of sciences. So Socrates must admit defeat and confess that he does not know what moderation is either. However, he encourages Charmides to be as wise and moderate as he can, because they are what lead to happiness.

Plato's *Protagoras* is also set when Alcibiades has barely begun to grow a beard. Socrates is wakened before dawn by young Hippocrates, who wants to go see the famous sophist Protagoras during his visit to Athens. Socrates warns Hippocrates of the dangers of learning from sophists, for knowledge, unlike material products, goes straight into his soul. At the home of the wealthy Callias are the sophists Hippias and Prodicus as well as Protagoras and many of his followers.



Protagoras offers to teach the youth and promises that he will get better every day in his personal affairs and in public business. Socrates, noting that special qualifications are not needed to speak about politics, wonders whether this art can be taught. Also he has found that great men like Pericles have often failed to pass on their virtue through education. Socrates hopes Protagoras will show that virtue can be taught.

Protagoras uses the myth of Epimetheus and Prometheus to indicate that only humans were given the arts that can be taught with the use of fire and other tools. Zeus sent Hermes to instill respect for others and justice. Protagoras notes the belief that everyone has a share in virtue and thus is entitled to speak. Punishment is used as a deterrent with the idea that people will learn not to do wrong. At school masters emphasize good behavior as well as letters and music; poetry is studied for its moral lessons, and music develops self-control. The laws of the state are intended to teach by punishing those who infringe them as a correction. Everyone can talk with their neighbors about justice and virtue and so teach each other. Protagoras, famous as the first professional teacher of adults to charge money, allows his students to pay his fee or take an oath and pay what they believe it is worth.

Socrates is pleased with the presentation; but he has one question about the relation of justice, moderation, wisdom, courage, and holiness to virtue. Protagoras explains they are parts of the whole like the parts of a face. Justice and holiness are found to be similar, and folly is the opposite of both wisdom and moderation. Becoming uncomfortable, Protagoras makes a long speech, and since he won't give short answers Socrates is about to leave; but the others persuade him to stay and ask Protagoras to be more brief. Next Protagoras chooses to ask Socrates questions about a poem by Simonides which seems to have a contradiction about whether goodness is hard or not. In a long literary critique Socrates shows how the poet is saying that although it is difficult to become good, being good is easier, as [Hesiod](#) made clear, and he defends the poet's criticism of Pittacus' statement that goodness is hard because this implies it is bad.

Socrates expresses his belief that the wise do not believe anyone does wrong willingly but only unwillingly out of ignorance. This point is made in a discussion after Protagoras contends that courage is different from the other virtues. Using the example of pleasure and pain, Socrates demonstrates how people believe pleasure is good and pain bad; they only get eventual pain after immediate pleasure or fail to endure a little pain for a greater pleasure because they don't have the skill in measuring the two. Similarly only the wise can be truly courageous in knowing when it is best to risk danger; cowards are so only out of ignorance of what is good. Protagoras resists these points but eventually must capitulate; Socrates points out this is ironic because showing that virtue is knowledge indicates it can probably be taught, which is the point Protagoras was trying to make.

Plato's *Laches* is about courage. Two old men, who are the sons of a Thucydides (not the historian) and Aristeides the Just, want to get their sons educated so that they can win renown like their fathers, and they have asked the generals Nicias and Laches for advice in regard to learning fighting in armor. Socrates is also consulted and is asked to decide when the two generals disagree. Socrates suggests that they find someone who knows or has learned from the best teacher. Nicias knows that Socrates tends to take the discussion into self-examination, and



though Laches does not like discussions of virtue when the speaker is not virtuous he has seen the courage of Socrates and is therefore eager to hear his views.

Socrates begins by asking how virtue will improve the sons, and in particular the virtue of courage is most related to this art of fighting in armor. Laches says that courage is not running away from fighting the enemy, but Socrates notes that the Scythians can fight on the run. So Laches suggests that courage might be an endurance, but Socrates asks about foolish endurance. So courage must be a wise endurance, but in actual cases Laches believes that those facing the same danger with less knowledge are showing greater courage. Nicias then brings up a definition he heard from Socrates that the brave are wise, and he suggests the definition that courage is knowledge of fears and confidence in war and other things. However, Socrates finds this too limiting as only having to do with the future. Yet if courage is the knowledge of good and evil in all things, the definition is too broad as taking in all of virtue including moderation, justice, and holiness. Finally Laches suggests that the old men consult with Socrates in regard to the education of their sons, while Socrates recommends they all get themselves better educated.

According to Diogenes Laertius it was said that when Socrates heard Plato reading the *Lysis*, he exclaimed, "By Heracles, so many lies the young man is telling about me!"<sup>4</sup> Plato's Socrates discusses friendship with Lysis and his friend Menexenus at the request of Hippothales, who is in love with Lysis. Socrates makes it clear that Lysis is not free at all in all the areas where others have more knowledge than he even when they are slaves, and for this reason he is still much under the control of his parents. At first it seems that the good will be friends with the good; but if the good are self-sufficient they have no need of friends. To this I would say that the good would be friends not out of need but because friendship is good. They find that friendship is not always between those who are alike nor is it always between opposites. That which is neither good nor evil may be friendly with the good. Things may be loved not for what they are but for the good they can do for someone who is loved. Desire is also a cause of friendship. Yet in conclusion no definition they can find is universally satisfying.

*Menexenus* by Plato has Socrates repeat a patriotic funeral speech composed by Aspasia, whom he also credits with writing the funeral oration of Pericles. Before reciting the speech Socrates notes how these patriotic orations praising the state tend to make one feel superior to others, but the effect wears off after a few days. He sees no challenge in winning applause when praising Athenians in Athens, but to praise Peloponnesians there or Athenians among the Peloponnesians would require good rhetoric. The glorified version of Athenian history goes several years beyond the death of Socrates; so it is more likely that these ideas are more Plato's than Socrates'. The speech calls Athenian government a democratic aristocracy of rule by the best with popular consent and elected kings and officials. Much is made of equality of birth and how none of the citizens were enslaved, as though slavery did not exist there; but it did. The abuses of [Athenian imperialism](#) are not mentioned, and the eventual defeat in the [Peloponnesian War](#) is described as Athens having defeated herself. The civil war to remove the oligarchy of Thirty is described as a "mild disorder." Finally in following the axiom of "nothing in excess" the citizens are urged not to rejoice nor grieve too much nor lament nor fear too much.

The *Lesser Hippias* was attributed to Plato by the time of Aristotle. As a sophist Hippias claims he is wise and after his lecture on Homer, Socrates asks him whether Achilles is better than

Odysseus; Hippias does prefer the brave Achilles to the wily Odysseus. Socrates takes wily to mean false; but he points out how Achilles was also false when he told Agamemnon he was going to sail away. Hippias defends Achilles' false statement as unintentional, while Odysseus voluntarily lies. When asked which is better, Hippias believes that an unintentional error is not as bad

as doing evil or lying voluntarily. However, by a series of questions Socrates points out that it takes more wisdom and ability to err voluntarily than unintentionally as in athletics, music, and the arts and sciences. Although by the logic of the argument they must conclude that the wiser and abler do wrong by their own will and the worse person involuntarily, Hippias cannot agree with this nor can Socrates either. Socrates then doubts whether people should go to those who claim they are wise but are so confused about this.

In the *Greater Hippias*, which scholars doubt is by Plato, the sophist Hippias brags about how often he acts as an ambassador for Elis and about how much money he makes teaching in the cities of Greece, except for Sparta where their laws forbid foreign education. Because he claims to make beautiful compositions, Socrates asks him what beauty is. Hippias first answers a beautiful maiden; but when Socrates asks in comparison to the gods, Hippias must admit a beautiful maiden is ugly. Then he says gold, but Socrates shows that a fig-wood ladle can be more appropriate for a pot of soup. Hippias says that it is most beautiful to be rich, healthy, honored, to reach old age, and after burying one's parents nobly to be buried by one's children; but Achilles was buried before his parents.

In defining the appropriate as beautiful, Socrates asks if the appropriate makes things appear beautiful or be beautiful. Since some things can appear beautiful without being so, it may be the latter, though it may do both. Yet if the appropriate causes things to appear beautiful without being so, it cannot be the beautiful. Socrates suggests that the useful may be beautiful, and to this is added what has the power to make something beautiful. Since power and use for evil cannot be beautiful, they qualify that the power and usefulness must be for good purposes or in a word, beneficial. However, then Socrates uses the difference between the cause and the effect to negate this definition. After more of this logic-chopping they must admit they cannot define beauty. Hippias goes back to his feeling that composing a good speech is beautiful and criticizes such arguing. Socrates argues that he cannot know such a speech is beautiful if he doesn't know what beauty is and concludes with the proverb that all that is beautiful is difficult.

The most absurd demonstration of sophistry occurs in Plato's *Euthydemus*. The dialog has the frame of Socrates recounting the story to his friend Crito. Euthydemus and his brother Dionysodorus claim that they can impart virtue, and Socrates wants young Cleinias and Ctesippus to learn this. He asks the new sophists to convince them that virtue can be learned and that they should pursue wisdom and practice virtue. However, using verbal tricks, such as equivocation between two meanings of the same word, they proceed to refute whichever position Cleinias takes on several propositions. Taking this display as a kind of initiatory game leading to sophistry, Socrates offers to demonstrate how to encourage the youth to practice wisdom and virtue. Socrates begins by showing Cleinias that to do well he needs good things such as wealth, health, power, honor, and virtues like moderation, courage, justice, and wisdom. Then they consider good fortune, but Socrates argues that wisdom is what brings about good fortune in

various cases. Thus one must not only have good things but know how to use them well, which comes from wisdom. Thus we ought to seek wisdom most of all.

Then Socrates asks the brothers to give a similar demonstration or show which knowledge they should seek; but once again they play verbal tricks, one of which implies the doing away of Cleinias and gets Ctesippus angry. Socrates calms him down by pointing out that they want to do away with the ignorant and bad Cleinias in order to make him good and wise. They need to find the art which enables them to use things wisely. Even generals merely hunt people and then turn them over to the politicians, an insight Crito and Socrates think must have come from some higher power. In the ensuing discussion Euthydemus and Dionysodorus try to prove many absurdities such as that they know and can do everything ever since birth. Finally Socrates suggests that they not exhibit their skills in public but in private. Crito mentions how he talked to a man who thought this was all nonsense and worthless. Socrates notes that in between the politicians and philosophers there is another group like this man who think that they are superior to both, though Socrates places these rhetoricians in third place. Socrates asks Crito not to be discouraged from studying philosophy by its worthless practitioners.

Plato's *Ion* is about a reciter and expert on Homer. Socrates explains to him that he must be inspired by Homer and his poetry the way metal rings cling to a magnet, because Ion is not even interested in other poetry.

Plato's *Cratylus* is a detailed study of words and an often fanciful explanation of their origins. The Heraclitean philosophy of Cratylus seems to be influencing the inspiration of Socrates, who often finds the R sound indicating being with the flow in positive words and blocking the flow in negative ones. Socrates also points out that Hades prefers souls liberated from their bodies because the desire for virtue is stronger when one is not flustered and maddened by the body.

Meno asks Socrates whether virtue can be taught in Plato's *Meno*. Socrates admits that he not only does not know whether it can be taught, he does not know what virtue is. Since Meno has studied with Gorgias, he asks Meno, who says that manly virtue is managing the state's affairs, helping friends and injuring foes while not harming oneself, and a woman's virtue is taking care of the household and obeying her husband. Socrates is looking for the quality that makes everyone virtuous; in thinking it is governing justly, the various virtues begin to appear, causing Socrates to quip that they have turned a singular into a plural like when a plate is broken. So Meno suggests it is the desire and ability to acquire good things, but Socrates shows the desire is superfluous to the definition because everyone desires good things. Those who desire evil things only do so because they believe they are good through ignorance; no one wants what they know is evil. Once again they find the acquiring of good things must be combined with the virtues of justice, prudence, holiness, and so on. Meno is now perplexed and says Socrates has numbed him like a stingray, but Socrates admits he is just as numbed himself.

Socrates asks why one would inquire into what one knows or how one could inquire into what one does not know; he suggests that it could be by divine inspiration in the soul, which is believed to be immortal and akin to all nature and thus already has learned everything. The ethical implication is that one ought to live as best one can, and the educational insight is that learning could come from recognition by the soul. To demonstrate this, Socrates questions a

slave boy about how to double the area of a square. At first the boy thinks he knows and says what to do; but when he finds out he is wrong, he is perplexed. Then Socrates helps him to see that the diagonal is the side of the double-square. Thus Socrates strongly believes that we will be better and braver if we look for what we don't know. Since what is learned is knowledge, if virtue is knowledge, it can be taught. Then by questioning Meno he shows that each of the virtues is good because they use knowledge and wisdom. Since this wisdom does not come by nature, it must be learned.

However, Socrates is not able to find any good teachers of virtue nor can Anytus, who later prosecuted Socrates; he is offended by the notion that the sophists could teach virtue. When Socrates shows that better politicians than Anytus have not been able to teach wisdom, Anytus gets angry. Finally Socrates points out to Meno that having a true opinion can be as beneficial as wisdom. This can only be understood as divine guidance and explains why they cannot teach it.

Gorgias of Leontini, who had studied with Empedocles, was the most prominent rhetorician of the 5th century BC. In Plato's *Gorgias* set in 405 BC he is about eighty years old and plays a small role. A master of style often imitated, in his lost work he philosophized that nothing exists; but if something exists, it couldn't be known; and even if it could be known, it couldn't be communicated. In Plato's dialog Chaerephon takes Socrates to hear Gorgias after he has given a demonstration of his rhetorical skill. Socrates asks him what the art of rhetoric is, and he replies words, particularly the ability to persuade judges, senators, and people in the assembly and other gatherings. Socrates points out that teaching also persuades; but since rhetoric aims at belief instead of knowledge, it does not necessarily teach as well as it convinces. The subject of rhetoric is right and wrong, but it can be misused and persuade people to what is wrong; one does not have to know the truth but may merely appear to the ignorant as knowing more. These contradict the notion that the rhetorician knows what is right.

So Polus takes over and asks Socrates what he thinks rhetoric is. Socrates calls it a routine which gratifies and produces pleasure, a kind of flattery or pandering which he compares to cooking, beautification (cosmetics and fashion), and sophistry. The arts of the body's health are gymnastics or exercise and medicine (including nutrition), and the arts of souls' health are legislation and justice. Cooking is the flattery corresponding to medicine, and beautification is the flattery analogous to gymnastics. Likewise sophistry is to legislation what beautification is to gymnastics, and rhetoric is to justice what cooking is to medicine. The body would choose the pleasure of tasty cooking, while the wiser soul chooses good nutrition.

Socrates gets Polus to admit that doing what seems good without knowing is evil; when orators get people to do what seems good but is not, they produce no benefit. After a series of questions they are led to the conclusion that if one's conduct proves harmful, one is not really doing what one wants, since no one wants evil. Socrates shows Polus, who admires powerful tyrants, that to put someone to death unjustly is miserable. Socrates declares that he wishes neither; but if he had to choose, he would prefer to suffer wrong than commit wrong. Socrates would not want to be a tyrant, because he believes the good are happy and the evil wretched.

Next Socrates shows Polus that the wrong-doer who gets away with it is more unhappy than the one who is punished, because justice corrects and rids one of evils. Thus injustice, imprudence,

and other vices of the soul are the worst evils. Just as the body may be corrected by medicine, which is not perceived as pleasant, the soul may be corrected by discipline and learn to be more just. To be doing wrong and not be corrected for it is the worst situation, and so tyrants with money and supporters and powerful rhetoric, who can avoid being punished for their crimes, are the most wretched. Thus the best use of rhetoric would be to persuade oneself of one's own crimes so that one could correct oneself and be rid of evils.

Callicles intervenes believing that this would turn life upside down, and so Socrates invites him to refute his arguments. Callicles believes that the stronger have the right to rule and have more than others, which he calls natural justice. Socrates asks if the many are not more powerful than the one and therefore frame laws to restrain the one. Callicles argues that just as one ought to govern oneself, the stronger have a right to govern the weaker and enjoy luxury and license. Callicles also believes that pleasure and the good are the same, but that knowledge and courage are different from each other and the good. Yet the evils of thirst and hunger occur simultaneously with the pleasures of drinking and eating. Socrates holds that pleasure and good are not the same, or else the evil person becomes as good as the good person. So Callicles changes his position by saying that some pleasures are better than others. Socrates gets him to agree that the pleasant is done for the sake of the good and not the reverse. To choose the better pleasures one needs wisdom. To be concerned only about pleasure and not the good is to engage in one of the flatteries. Thus orators aim only to please their listeners and their personal interests, not to make them better or seek the common good.

Socrates asks Callicles which politicians have improved the people, and he cites Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades, and Pericles; but instead of making the people more orderly, each of these men ended up being charged with crimes by the people. Socrates says they paid no attention to discipline and justice but promoted harbors and walls and revenues. The good politician should treat the people as a doctor would, not serve their pleasures. With these views Callicles wonders how Socrates can avoid being brought into court himself, and Socrates expects that an evil person might prosecute him some day in a trial that would resemble a doctor being prosecuted by a cook before a jury of children. He would be helped though by not having done wrong in his life and therefore would not fear death, since he fears only doing wrong.

If death is a separation of the soul from the body, the condition of the soul should be one's primary concern. In the next world the tyrants are often depicted as suffering the greatest evils because of the license they had to commit such great crimes on earth. Socrates can cite only Aristeides as one who practiced justice in politics. Thus Socrates aims to be as good as he can and exhorts others to do the same, guarding against doing wrong while studying not just to seem good but to be good, seeking correction when wrong, and avoiding every form of flattery but using rhetoric to attain justice.

In Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates gets his friend Phaedrus to read him a speech by Lysias on why the beloved should give in to the non-lover rather than the lover, since the lover is going to be selfish and vain. When Socrates claims he could make a better speech, Phaedrus insists on hearing it; but Socrates in embarrassment covers his head and afterward is prevented by his divine sign from leaving before correcting such a shameful speech. Socrates believes they have blasphemed Eros, the god of love, and so he gives another speech showing that the madness inspired by Eros

can be a blessing just as can madness inspired by Apollo's prophecy, the mystic Dionysus, and the arts of the Muses. Socrates uses symbols to explain how the gods affect the soul before it is born into a body. As a self-moving principle, the soul can have no beginning and is immortal. Only souls that have seen the truth enter into human form. Those souls who live well and justly get better incarnations than those who are unjust. Lovers are inspired from having experienced divine beauty. Control of the lower drives is described by the figure of a charioteer, who must get a dark horse of desires to cooperate with a bright and prudent horse. When the higher aspects are victorious, one lives philosophically with self-mastery and inner peace.

In discussing rhetoric Socrates asks if a good discourse requires knowledge of the truth, and at first it does not seem necessary because they must only deal with what is plausible for persuasion; but then they realize that even that plausibility cannot be attained without knowledge of the subject. So knowing the truth, accurate definition of terms, analyzing the material into its components, and designing the speech for the specific characteristics of the listeners are all helpful to the skillful speaker. Socrates questions the value of writing, because it can weaken memory skill and cannot answer questions as a living speaker can. Finally Socrates offers up a prayer to become fair within, to have such outward things as will not conflict with his inner spirit, that he may value the wise as rich, and have as much gold as a moderate person can bear.

Love is also the topic of Plato's *Symposium* in which Apollodorus in about 400 BC narrates the story of a banquet he learned of from Aristodemus that took place the day after Agathon won the prize for tragedy in 416 BC. Having drunk much the night before the guests decide to drink only moderately, dismiss the flute-girls, and take turns praising Eros, the god of love, the physician Eryximachus having warned that excessive drinking is detrimental. Phaedrus presides over the discussion and says that Love is great because his birth according to Hesiod showed he was the first of all the gods. Love is the best guide to a good life; the best blessing one can have is a lover, and the best for the lover to have is a young beloved. Phaedrus cites the case of Achilles and Patroclus to point out that the gods most admire the beloved who devotes oneself to the lover.

Next Pausanias distinguishes the heavenly Aphrodite from the earthly one; the higher love is for the soul more than the body and is the intellectual love between men. He notes that lovers though often forswear their promises, and yet even the gods forgive this. Pausanias commends pleasing a virtuous lover, but believes it is base to gratify a bad lover. Thus the Athenian custom is not to yield too soon to a lover and not for financial or political considerations, which are considered immoral. Yet devoting oneself to serving another in order to increase one's wisdom or virtue is considered blameless.

The comedian [Aristophanes](#) has the hiccups, and so Eryximachus tells him how to cure them by holding his breath or sneezing while he claims that medical practice can replace harmful desires with beneficial ones. Thus this art as well as gymnastics, agriculture, and music are under the direction of the god of love, which produces harmony and concord. Then [Aristophanes](#) tells a bizarre story explaining how homosexual and heterosexual love resulted from creatures who were either all male, all female, or hermaphroditic before they were split in half to seek their lost halves.

Agathon praises Love as the youngest and loveliest of the gods who uses no violence at all but lives in peace and concord. Love is tender and supple, dwelling in the softest place in people's hearts and more in those whose hearts are soft. Agathon says that Love controls lusts and pleasures and is moderation itself; also it is as powerful as courage and an inspiration for poetry. All things come from the creative power of love, and he concludes by praising Love for cultivating courtesy and kindness while weeding out brutality; it is affable and gracious, a wonder to the wise and admired by the gods, producing delicacy, daintiness, grace, and elegance, in desire caring for the good in every situation.

Socrates marvels at the eulogies of Love but wonders whether they are true. Instead of flattering love he prefers to say what love actually is. Questions of Agathon make clear that Love is the love of something and therefore lacks what it desires; so as it loves what is beautiful and goodness, it lacks beauty itself and also goodness. Then Socrates relates a conversation he had about this with Diotima, who showed him that Love is not bad and ugly either but something in between knowledge and ignorance, a spirit that links the gods and the humans. Love goes up to heaven in prayers and descends as answers and guidance. Diotima says that Need and Resource are the parents of Love; thus Love is always needing but is resourceful. The lover seeks to make the good his own which results in happiness.

Diotima explains to Socrates that Love brings forth the beautiful in body and soul. Its wisdom is concerned with ordering society by justice and moderation, and it motivates one to undertake the education of one's favorite in living virtuously. Initiates in love must learn to move from the love of one person's beauty to love the beauty in every body and then move from the beauty of the body to that of the soul, the spiritual loveliness that never fades. Climbing this heavenly ladder will eventually lead to beautiful institutions to learning and finally to beauty itself. Discerning beauty itself will awaken true virtue and make one a friend of God and immortal. Thus convinced, Socrates tries to bring others to this understanding, and he worships the god of love and cultivates the qualities of Love himself.

The last part of the *Symposium* describes how the drunken Alcibiades comes in and, after he and Socrates express their mutual jealousy over Agathon, gets them drinking as he praises Socrates.

Plato's portrayal of Socrates' trial and imprisonment is masterful. In the *Euthyphro* Socrates on his way to the courtroom encounters a man who is prosecuting his father for murder, because a slave he caught for murder died in chains while he was sending to an oracle for advice. Euthyphro is surprised to see Socrates and asks him why he is there. Socrates explains that he is being prosecuted for corrupting the young and for making new gods and not believing in the old ones. Euthyphro claims that he is an expert on piety and that he is not being unholy in prosecuting his father. Socrates asks Euthyphro's advice so that he can better face the charges of Meletus.

Euthyphro says that what he is doing is holy, but Socrates wants to know his definition of holiness. So Euthyphro says that what is pleasing to the gods is holy. Socrates points out that even the gods may disagree on questions of right and wrong, and so Euthyphro's prosecution of his father may be pleasing to some gods but not to others; he asks what proof Euthyphro has that all the gods agree with him. This is difficult; so Socrates asks if the holy is holy because the gods

approve it, or do they approve something because it is holy. By analogy he shows that things are loved because someone loves them not the reverse; but Euthyphro is arguing that things are loved by the gods because they are holy. These are contradictory, and even this is just an attribute of holiness.

Socrates asks him if all that is holy is just, and Euthyphro agrees; but as reverence is only a part of fear, so holiness is only a part of justice. Euthyphro says it is the part concerned with serving the gods, but Socrates asks how the gods benefit from this service, which Euthyphro realizes is absurd. Euthyphro then says that holiness is the science of sacrifice and prayer which gives to the gods in exchange for benefits; but Socrates' questions reduce this also to the absurdity of commerce with the gods, and once again the gods do not really benefit. When Euthyphro falls back on his original definition, they realize they have come full circle without understanding what holiness really is.

In the *Defense of Socrates* Plato records his version of Socrates' trial in 399 BC. Socrates begins by saying that his accusers have not told the truth and though he is not a good speaker, he will tell the truth. Before discussing the formal charges Socrates believes he must answer the complaints that have been made against him for years that he has theories about the heavens, has investigated below the earth, and can make the weaker argument defeat the stronger. These were made 24 years before in *The Clouds* by *Aristophanes* and were commonly ascribed to sophists and philosophers of this time. To explain how he became so unpopular Socrates tells how Chaerephon asked the Delphic oracle if anyone was wiser than Socrates and received a negative answer. Socrates decided to find someone wiser; but each time he found that the claims of wisdom could not be verified, and he concluded that he was better off realizing that he was not wise. Socrates questioned politicians, poets, and artisans in this way and thus made many enemies. This search for wisdom and his efforts to help others become better people became the mission of Socrates that occupied most of his time.

The first formal charge of corrupting the youth thus seemed especially ironic to Socrates. He asks Meletus who helps the youth, and he replies all the other citizens of Athens. Yet Socrates shows how horses are benefited by the few trained to do so, not the many. He asks why anyone would want to harm others, since this would result in one's own harm too; yet Meletus contends that Socrates did this intentionally. If he did it unintentionally, he could be easily corrected by communication rather than by prosecution. In the second charge although Meletus accused him of inventing new gods, he now contends that Socrates does not believe in gods at all. Socrates is more concerned about doing what is right than he is about dying, which may be good or bad. Socrates believes he must obey God by practicing philosophy and exhorting people to a virtuous life. He must examine people to see if they are making progress toward goodness, and he believes no one serves the city better than he. He urges them to care more about their souls than their bodies. Thus he believes he is pleading more for their benefit than his own, because God has sent him like a fly to pester them into a better life.

Socrates notes that his guiding spirit, which Meletus ridiculed in the indictment, has warned him often in the past of what not to do, but it has not appeared to indicate he is doing anything wrong now. Socrates explains how it kept him out of politics as too dangerous for an honest person, and he mentions his refusal to try the naval commanders illegally when he was elected to the council



and also how he disobeyed the order of the oligarchy of Thirty to arrest the innocent Leon of Salamis even though it might have cost him his life. Socrates points out several men in the courtroom whose sons spent time with him, and none of them complained he had corrupted their sons. Socrates refuses to make the usual emotional plea by his family for his life, because it is irrelevant to the justice of the case and should be ignored by the jurors who swear to be just.

Socrates was condemned by a vote of 280-221. The prosecutors asked for the death penalty, but in suggesting an alternative Socrates at first asks to receive meals at public expense for his services, which as a reward more than a punishment clearly alienates more jurors. Finally he offers to pay a small fine, which is increased to thirty minas by the support of Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus. A larger majority voted for the death penalty. Socrates philosophizes that it is more important to escape doing wrong than death, and he warns those who condemned him wrongly, predicting that his followers will be even more critical than he was. Socrates reflects that death is either like a dreamless sleep or a journey to the next world, neither of which is to be feared. In conclusion he asks the Athenians to encourage his children to seek goodness and to reprimand them if they think they are worth more than they are.

Plato's [\*Crito\*](#) takes place two days before the execution of Socrates. His friend and neighbor Crito visits Socrates in prison early in the morning. At the age of seventy Socrates does not resent having to die. Crito urges Socrates to escape and offers to make all the arrangements for him, assuring him that he is willing to contribute the money and run the risks of punishment. Crito also has found several friends who are willing to help Socrates run away. However, Socrates believes that he must first determine whether it would be right for him to get away without an official release. Certainly one should never willingly do wrong, and they agree that even after being wronged or injured it is still not right to do wrong or injure in return. Socrates asks if escaping will injure the laws of the state. The state has provided much for him, and he believes he should never do violence to his country. He could have chosen banishment as a legal punishment at his trial; so why should he change his mind now against the sanction of the state? Socrates would also be endangering his friends, who would be breaking the law in helping him to escape, and he questions the quality of life he would have as a fugitive. Finally Socrates decides to reject returning wrong for wrong and the breaking of agreements and covenants, and he refuses to injure his country and his friends.

Plato's [\*Phaedo\*](#) describes the last day of Socrates' life. Several of his friends gather and are admitted into the prison in the morning as the guard is taking the chains off Socrates' legs. Noting the odd sensation of pleasure after the pain, Socrates comments that pleasure and pain often follow after each other. Having had many dreams urging him to cultivate the arts, Socrates has recently been putting some of [\*Aesop's Fables\*](#) into verse. Socrates believes that philosophers welcome death and even seek to purify the soul from the body. However, suicide is not considered proper, because it is as though they have been given a duty by the gods and must not leave their post until they are released by some other agency. Since God is their keeper, it is good to stay alive; but Cebes asks if the sensible person grieves leaving such a master, fools then might rejoice. Socrates answers that the good go to even better divine masters after death. Crito interrupts to convey the concern of the guard that if Socrates talks too much he may have to administer extra doses of the poison; but Socrates tells him to be prepared to do that if necessary.

Socrates wants to explain that it is natural for those who have devoted their lives to philosophy to be cheerful in facing death in expectation of the greatest blessing in the next world. True philosophers are preparing themselves for dying and death. Socrates asks if death is not the separation of the body from the soul. The true philosopher directs more attention to the soul than to the body and is freer of physical pleasures in searching for reality. Socrates explains that the body and its desires block the pursuit of philosophy and can lead to wars.

For the body constantly keeps us busy by the need for food;  
and if diseases fall upon it, they hinder our search of reality.  
And it fills us with many of the passions and desires  
and fears and fantasies of all kinds and nonsense  
so that it is said in truthful reality  
because of it being inborn in us one can never think at all.  
For wars and factions and battles are caused  
by nothing other than the body and its desires.  
For all wars occur because of the gaining of money,  
and we need to gain money because of the body,  
slaving in its service; and out of this  
we bring no leisure to philosophy because of all these things.<sup>5</sup>

To know anything clearly one must be released from the body and observe the actualities with the soul by itself. So the greatest knowledge is more likely after death, and those who live clearest of the body and its follies are more likely to perceive the truth. Thus would it not be ridiculous for one who has trained oneself to be in a state most like death to be distressed when death approaches? Thus true philosophers make dying their profession and find it less alarming than others. To be distressed by death is proof that one does not love wisdom but the body and its wealth and reputation. Thus philosophers have greater self-control and courage than others who practice courage out of fear of something worse. Others practice moderation so that they can indulge in pleasures with less pain. Only truth cleanses moderation, courage, justice, and wisdom.

Socrates refers to the legend that souls do exist in another world after leaving here and return again to this world, being born again from the dead just as the waking come from the sleeping. If the living did not come from the dead, eventually everyone would die. Socrates also uses the learning theory of recognition to show that souls must have known things before they were in human form. Comparing the soul to the body, Socrates says the soul is more like the invisible, divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, constant in itself, invariable, and governing while the body is more visible, human, mortal, unintelligible, multiform, dissoluble, not constant in itself, variable, and servile. Philosophy endeavors to free the soul from the body by gentle persuasion.

Simmias and Cebes still have doubts about the immortality of the soul. Simmias asks about the [Pythagorean](#) theory that the soul is a harmony, and Cebes wonders whether the soul may not eventually die after having inhabited many bodies in succession the way a man wears out many coats but dies in the end. The harmony theory is easily refuted, because it lacks many of the obvious characteristics of the soul such as intelligence, governing, and it is clearly just the effect of the musical instrument not its life essence. To answer Cebes Socrates tells how he got the idea from Anaxagoras that the mind is the cause of all things, but in exploring the ideas of

Anaxagoras further he was disappointed that he brought in other physical causes instead. If mind is the cause, then everything should be designed for a purpose, as things are arranged for what is best. Socrates notes the absurdity of thinking that he is sitting there because of his muscles and bones and other physical causes instead of because of the spiritual causes that the Athenians decided he should be imprisoned and die and because Socrates believes it is best for him to remain there and submit to their penalty. If his body were deciding what is best, his legs would have taken him to Megara.

Socrates then explains the doctrine of ideas - that there are such realities as absolute beauty, goodness, magnitude and so on. The soul is defined as that which brings life to the body. As the principle of life the soul cannot admit its opposite any more than beauty could be ugly, snow not be cold, or fire not be hot. Thus the soul must be immortal. Like God as the essence of reality it must be everlasting and imperishable. Thus when death comes to the body, the soul as the immortal part retires and escapes unharmed and indestructible. Then Socrates draws the ethical implications of this theory.

If the soul is immortal,  
 then it is necessary to take care of her  
 not only for this time which we call life, but for all time,  
 and the danger now also seems to be terrible  
 if one does not take care of her.  
 For if death were a release from everything,  
 it would be a god-send for the evil  
 who in dying would be released from the body  
 and at the same time from their evils with the soul;  
 but now since it appears to be immortal,  
 no one can escape from evils nor be saved in any other way  
 except by becoming as good and wise as possible.  
 For the soul goes into Hades having nothing else  
 except her education and nurture,  
 which it is said greatly helps or harms the dead  
 in the very beginning of the journey there.<sup>6</sup>

Socrates describes how souls go to their proper level guided by angels until it is time for them to return to earth again. Those more attached to the body are dragged there by force and in pain. Those having done unjust murders are shunned by others and wander in confusion, while those who lived moderately and purely are guided to marvelous places. Socrates describes the next world not in exact terms but by analogies. Souls undergo purifications for their sins and are rewarded for their good deeds. Unjust murderers are hurled into Tartarus from which they cannot escape. Those who repent eventually are thrown back out. Those who have lived holy lives dwell in pure and beautiful regions that are indescribable. Those who have been most serious about learning prudence, justice, courage, freedom, and truth are best fitted for the journey in the next world. Thus Socrates encourages his companions to take good care of themselves.

When Crito asks how Socrates wants to be buried, Socrates laughs and says he'll have to catch him first. Then he explains to him it is only his body that they will bury. Finally Socrates drinks the cup of hemlock. When Apollodorus and the others break down crying, he reprimands them for the disturbance, saying it is best to make one's end in a peaceful consciousness. He asks them

to calm down and be brave. Socrates dies, and Phaedo concludes the dialog calling him the best, most prudent, and most just.

### **Plato's *Republic***

The first book of Plato's *Republic* is Socratic like the earlier dialogs, but the rest of the *Republic* seems to be more the ideas of Plato than of Socrates. Socrates narrates the long work which begins with a discussion of old age in which they note [Sophocles'](#) comment how he felt he had escaped from a raging beast when asked about his service of Aphrodite. When the passions and desires relax, Cephalus believes we are freed of many mad masters. The happiness of old age depends primarily on prudence and cheerfulness. Cephalus also finds that he thinks more about the tales of the afterlife and how wrong-doers may pay the penalty there so that he examines his life more. By living justice in piety he has hope that this is in reality the greatest wealth.

In considering whether justice is paying back what is due Socrates thinks that it would not be good to give weapons back to someone when he is not in his right mind even if they were his. Then Cephalus suggests the idea of Simonides that justice is giving each his due, which means doing good to friends and evil to enemies. This is modified by questioning to benefiting the just and harming the unjust. However, if one has friends who are unjust or enemies who are just, one may end up harming the just and helping the unjust. The good person will not harm anyone at all. Those who are harmed become more unjust, and the just would never make anyone unjust. Only the unjust make people more unjust.

This conclusion bothers Thrasymachus, who demands Socrates give him a definition of justice without saying it is beneficial, profitable, or advantageous. This is impossible, but Thrasymachus defines justice as the advantage of the stronger, as each form of government enacts laws to its own advantage whether it is democratic or tyrannical. Socrates asks whether sometimes they err and make laws that are not to their advantage which would result in bad for themselves. Socrates asks if each art does not serve its clients rather than the practitioner, who is usually compensated by pay. Thrasymachus uses the example of the shepherd who fattens the flock for his own use, and he points out that the unjust person always gains the advantage over the just. He believes people are not afraid of doing injustice but only of suffering it; if injustice is done on a large enough scale, it can be masterful and advantageous.

Socrates disagrees that injustice is more profitable than justice. As each art is for the advantage of the clients, so government is also for the advantage of the governed, which is why governors are paid in money, honor, or should have a penalty for refusing to govern. The latter is the greatest inducement for the good person, as the penalty is to be governed by someone less capable. Although Thrasymachus claims that injustice is a virtue, Socrates is able to argue that the just person is wise and good, while the unjust is bad and ignorant. Those who are unjust will wrong each other and be incapable of cooperation so long as they are unjust, as injustice brings conflicts and hatred. Thus the unjust are enemies to each other as well as to the just and ultimately even to the gods. The unjust cannot accomplish anything except insofar as they act with some justice and cooperation.

Although Thrasymachus gives in to Socrates' arguments based on justice as a virtue, in the second book of the *Republic* Glaucon and his brother Adeimantus are not satisfied that it was adequately proven even though they do not agree with Thrasymachus but with Socrates, who believes that justice is good not only for its results but for its own sake. They argue that justice was invented because people fear being wronged more than they gain by wronging; thus people make a compact and laws for everyone. Glaucon tells the story of Gyges, who found a ring that could make him invisible and used it to seduce the queen, kill the king, and take over the kingdom of Lydia. Since people believe there is profit in injustice, Glaucon wants to separate complete injustice from the purely just. Since it is unjust for one to have the reputation for justice along with the power and advantages of injustice, this must be compared to a just person who is treated as the worst criminal. This contrast could not but have reminded Plato's readers of their miserable politicians and how the most just Socrates was executed. Socrates proposes to answer this dilemma by looking at the larger picture of the state to see if they can find out what justice is.

They begin by speculating about the origin of a city with the division of labor necessary for their basic needs. They start with a farmer, builder, weaver, and shoemaker and soon expand it to carpenters, smiths, craftsmen, herders for draft animals, then to merchants, traders, shipbuilders, shopkeepers, and wage-earners. Socrates describes a simple life with a mostly vegetarian diet with some cheese, wine, and moderate relishes. However, Glaucon asks if this is not a life for pigs. He wants couches, tables, and meat. Socrates replies that then he does not want to create a just city but a luxurious one. Socrates suspects that this will lead to the origin of justice and injustice. The healthy state has already been described, but now they are going to create a feverish state. Now a much greater multitude of workers are needed, including many more doctors because of a less healthy diet of meat.

This greater population will require more territory, which must be taken from their neighbors. If they do not limit their desires but abandon themselves to the unlimited acquisition of wealth, then they must go to war. Thus a large army will be needed to march out and fight in defense of all the wealth and luxuries. To have a successful military they must be professional and well trained. These guardians must be able to distinguish their friends from their foes and thus need a good education. This takes the discussion straight into what is the proper education. For me, this section is the turning point from the quest for true justice that Socrates followed to the justification of an unhealthy state that Plato now wants to explore after the Spartan model. Suddenly Socrates is no longer questioning the most basic assumptions but blithely going along even though it is clear that this is *not* the best state at all. Having just proven that it is not just to harm anyone, now they have accepted an unnecessary army to harm enemies for the sake of luxurious and unneeded wealth.

Next they make various pronouncements about education involving censorship and the perpetration of falsehoods without really questioning whether those policies are good except from one limited point of view. They start the discussion of education with the traditional gymnastics and music, which includes all the cultural arts. Imperiously they are to decide which stories are to be rejected and proceed to recommend censoring the poets and playwrights for portraying the gods as imperfect in virtue. How do they expect to do away with these famous writings? Why don't they teach people to think and question them instead of trying to cover them

up and hide them? If the gods are good and truthful, can they not teach that rationally and show the limitations of the poems and stories? Tragically Plato seems to have fallen into an authoritarian approach to justifying the materialistic imperialism of western civilization, which the world has been suffering from that day to this.

The rulers will lie, but it is considered a sin for others to do so. The multitude is expected to obey their rulers just as they practice self-control over their appetites. Music is to be limited to martial tunes that encourage bravery and gentle harmonies that are peaceful. Not only the poets but all the artisans must be carefully controlled. Everyone must do their own work, and the sick should not be coddled by doctors that merely prolong their illnesses. The guardians are to be trained to be good judges by discerning injustice in others but not experiencing it themselves. They are to be gentle, orderly, prudent, and brave. Those who are cowardly and rude and fail to pass the tests of toils and pains are to be rejected. A false myth is to be told of the guardians that they were molded within the earth to rule with golden qualities, while their helpers, the military, are to be considered silver, and the artisans and workers brass and iron. Individuals found to have the wrong qualities should be transferred to another class. They should say an oracle predicted that the state would be overthrown when a man of iron or brass becomes its guardian. The army should make sure that the workers do not become the masters.

The guardians are to live an austere life without any private property, sharing things in common and not using luxuries like gold and silver. While the guardians rule and the army defends the city, all the productive work is to be done by the artisans and workers. This system is supposed in this discussion to be for the greatest happiness of the whole city, but the analogy with an individual unfortunately treats the individuals in this city as parts not wholes themselves in their quest to achieve unity in the state. Even wives and children are to be held in common. The guardians are to be wise, the military brave, and everyone moderate and just. Although self-control can bring an individual freedom, when one class controls another, the result is more like slavery. The guardians are to judge all lawsuits, which are expected to be few because there is no private property; but unfortunately that is no guarantee of equal sharing without disagreements.

Socrates describes the three parts of the psyche that relate to the three classes as the part that learns, what feels anger and emotions, and the appetites of the body. The emotion of anger can support the reason in its struggle with lower desires just as the two highest classes must control the larger third class of workers. They conclude that this city exemplifies justice, though I seriously doubt it. The opposite state of injustice they believe is when these three principles interfere with each other and revolt.

Adeimantus questions the policy of having the women and children in common, since it is such a radical idea. Socrates argues quite rationally that except for the fact that women are weaker and men stronger, there are no differences that should prevent women from getting the same education and performing the same functions as the men. A woman is just as likely to have the mind of a physician as a man, and they have the same capacity for administration. Thus women ought to be guardians and cohabit with those men. Socrates prophetically notes that it is the current practices of sexual discrimination that are actually more unnatural than his utopian scheme. Women can also be soldiers although they should be assigned lighter duties.

However, the plan to have the women and children in common is clearly more problematic, especially when eugenics controlled by the guardians is introduced. To enable the best specimens to have more children the rulers are to deceive them by awarding prizes that seem random but are not. Those considered inferior are to have less chance to procreate. Although by grouping the children by age, the parents can know which group contains their children, brothers and sisters of different ages will surely be unknown. Thus they ask for a dispensation from the Delphic oracle regarding brothers and sisters cohabiting. Socrates argues that they will be more likely to respect their elders not knowing which are their parents, but it could also be argued that the respect in practice would be far less.

By getting rid of the concepts of "mine" and "not mine" they hope to have more unity, but without close family feelings there could be even more chaos and alienation. In most Greek cities of this time the workers would be considered slaves. The hope that there will be no quarrels over property since it is all held in common is naive. Socrates does argue that they ought to treat other Greek cities better than has been the practice in their time by not burning their houses or enslaving their peoples in wars; such treatment is to be reserved for the barbarians who speak other languages. With the exception of equal treatment for the women this does not seem like a just nor a wise society.

Socrates suggests that there will be no cessation of such troubles until philosophers become the rulers or the rulers pursue philosophy seriously. The guardians must be the wisest. Ironically they cite truthfulness as a most essential quality for the rulers after recommending the guardians tell various lies. They must also be prudent, brave, liberal, just, and intelligent with a good memory. To describe the current situation Socrates uses the metaphor of a ship in which the skilled pilot is ignored by the sailors as impractical, because they are able to get the shipmaster to do what they want. Thus the one with the finest spirit and the greatest knowledge of navigation is thought a useless stargazer.

Philosophers are also ignored, because many who call themselves such constantly quarrel and pretend to knowledge they don't have. Socrates criticizes the professional sophists who teach for pay but inculcate the beliefs of the multitudes and confuse the good with what pleases. These people can not distinguish beauty itself from the many beautiful things. Thus youths of great ability are led astray and filled with ambitious hopes without doing the hard studying necessary, and so such prospects are discouraged from taking up true philosophy. In the current political climate a true philosopher would be destroyed like a man among wild beasts without accomplishing any benefit. The true philosopher is focused on the eternal ideas and does not have the time to engage in the petty strife of envy and hate.

Socrates argues that pleasure cannot be the good, because some pleasures are bad. He tries to describe the offspring of the good as like the light that helps us see. He delineates four ways of perceiving things. Perceiving objects in the visible world gives belief, while their likenesses involve conjecture; in the intelligible world the ideas are known, while the hypotheses about them involved understanding. Socrates uses the allegory of a cave in which people are chained so that they can only see the shadows on the wall made from the fire behind them. If someone were to get free of the chains and turn his head to see those using objects to make the shadows and the light of the fire itself, the others would not likely believe him. Eventually the liberated person

goes outside the cave and adjusts his eyes to the sunlight. He pities the prisoners; but when he goes back into the cave, his eyes are full of darkness, and he cannot compete well in perceiving the shadows. Socrates asks if one tries to free them from their chains and lead them to the light whether they would not be likely to put him to death. Thus is described the ascent of the soul beyond the physical world with the sun representing the good.

Socrates notes that contention for office and power causes strife and results in destruction. Next they discuss the education of the guardians, recommending mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and finally the dialectic of discussing ideas. Socrates explains the relationships between the four levels of consciousness, saying that intellection deals with essence and opinion with generation. As intellection is to opinion, so science is to belief, and understanding is to image making. In contrast to the authoritarian methods already implied, Socrates suggests that the education of the guardians should not be by constraint, because learning by compulsion is ineffective. He recommends that children learn by playing so that their natural capacities can be discerned. The comprehensive and practical education of the guardians is not complete until they reach the age of fifty.

The 8th book of the *Republic* is a brilliant discussion of the four kinds of government that are inferior to aristocracy in which the best rule by virtue. The first of these is like the constitution of Crete and Sparta and is called timocracy. This tends to degenerate into plutocratic oligarchy, then democracy, and finally tyranny. The forms of government reflect the psychology and values of the citizens. The aristocracy deteriorates into timocracy when honor replaces virtue, as the youths become less cultured and educated. They begin to strive for position which causes conflicts and wars. The ambitious and aggressive in attempting to gain more power and wealth tend to enslave the population around and do not care as much about the good of their subjects. Wanting wealth but not being allowed to possess it openly they become stingy but prodigal with the wealth of others in order to enjoy pleasures unobtrusively. No longer educated to be virtuous they become contentious and covetous of honors in war and government. While young they love athletics, hunting, and war preparations, but as they get older they long for more wealth. The timocratic person develops because his mother and others, dissatisfied with the scant rewards of his father's virtue, encourage the son to be more ambitious.

In the oligarchy called plutocracy wealth becomes dominant, and citizenship depends on holding property; the rich hold office, while the poor are excluded. They find ways to pervert the laws to increase their wealth. The values of virtue, honor, and victory succumb to wealth. This state becomes divided in two between the rich and the poor. Wars are not as successful, because they fear arming the people and are reluctant to spend money. Many of the poor must either beg or become thieves. The son of the timocratic man sees his father's possessions declining in his pursuit of honors and war. So he turns to earning money by hard work and thrift, and he admires the rich and the attainment of wealth. He seeks to satisfy his own desires but is careful not to spend money on attaining honors or helping others. Property becomes greatly esteemed. They encourage prodigals to spend their money by loaning to them so that they can take over their property and become even richer. In this way many who were noble become reduced to poverty. These discontented and impoverished nobles become leaders of revolution, as the rich become idle and soft. Factions arise, and the parties bring in allies from other states until a war results.



When the poor attain victory, they institute a democracy and grant equal citizenship and eliminate property qualifications for offices, many of which are assigned by lot. Freedom becomes the greatest value, and everyone can say what they like and do what they please. Diversity increases; varieties of entertainment abound; and just about everything is tolerated even crime. Those who say they love the people are elected. Everyone is treated as equal whether they are equal or not. Liberty and license lead to self-indulgence and the pursuit of pleasures. The desires have overcome the discipline used for money-making. The children of the wealthy indulge themselves, and the poor long for liberty. Such prodigality and the shameless quest for freedom at any cost bring about the democratic revolution.

All values and pleasures are considered equal, as people indulge themselves in whatever suits their fancy - some drinking, others dieting or exercising, sometimes idle and neglectful, other times diligently occupied with philosophy or any other pursuit; they rush from one thing to another. Those who do not govern liberally are accused of being oligarchs, while those who obey are called slaves. In this anarchic mood the rulers resemble the subjects, as the subjects become the rulers. Parents try to be like their children, and the children have no respect for their parents. Even the animals are allowed liberty. Teachers fawn on their students, and students think they need no teachers. The young compete with their elders, and the older people imitate the young. Sex roles become confused, and people chafe at any kind of servitude.

Eventually the people find a leader who promises them everything as their champion and protector. In gaining control of the people he may shed some blood while hinting at abolishing debts and land reform. Such a powerful figure may be slain by his enemies or become the leader of the faction fighting the property owners. In danger of being assassinated, he requests a bodyguard to make the state safe for this "friend of democracy." This protector then gradually becomes a tyrant. His leadership is strengthened by stirring up wars he must lead. This gives him an excuse to destroy his enemies and thwart his rivals. Those who criticize him must be silenced, resulting in a negative purge in which the best instead of the worst elements are eliminated. This tyranny is then the most unjust and worst form of government.

The tyrant is like the person who has been enslaved by one desire; everything is spent for that one addiction. Then the tyrant must take from others by deceit or violence. If one has the power, the tyrant refrains from no atrocity in this lawless quest, robbing even one's parents or the fatherland. They associate with flatterers and have no real friends, everyone being either a master or a slave. Thus the tyrannical person is enslaved in suffering the disease of unfulfilled desire, full of alarms and terror, always in anguish and insecure, envious, faithless, unjust, friendless, impious, and a vessel of every vice. Thus they conclude that the unjust are the most unhappy, while the just are happy.

Socrates explains that the faculty of reason is best able to judge the pleasures, and so the lover of wisdom will do better than the lover of gain. Many confuse pleasure with the cessation of bodily needs and pains, as gray seems whiter than black even though it is not white. The purest and most lasting pleasures relate to the truth and immortal qualities. The philosophers seek the purest pleasures, while the tyrants and those most enslaved desire the grossest. Socrates likens the reason to a person, the emotional part to a lion, and the appetites to a many-headed monster. The rational human part is most divine and should rule for the best results. To accept gold unjustly,

for example, ignores the reason and enslaves one to the worst part. The lion should be controlled by the reason, as also should the effeminate part that might engender cowardice and luxury. If the beast desiring wealth with unbridled lust rules, one becomes more like an ape.

So it is best for the intelligence to rule the individual and for the wisest to rule in the state. Escaping the penalty for wrongdoing is likely to make one worse, while those who are chastened become more moderate and just with wisdom, because the soul is far more precious than the body. Thus the body must be fine tuned by the soul. The wise will work to better themselves and will not allow their reason to be overthrown even though the ideal state may only exist as a model in heaven.

Once again Socrates criticizes poetry and fine art for being imitations of things which imitate the true realities. He complains that tragedies and comedies stir up the passions and emotions, and he finds no value in this vicarious experience, although he does leave the argument open for a rebuttal to show that they can benefit people in an orderly society. He then argues for the immortality of the soul based on the idea that its disease, vice, does not kill the soul the way diseases of other things kill or destroy them. Neither does any other evil kill the soul; therefore it must be immortal. The soul in its love of wisdom is most akin to the divine. Now Socrates asks to reinstate the rewards of justice that were taken away in order to prove that justice was good for its own sake even without its rewards. He says that the gods love and help the just, but dislike the unjust. If good things do not come to one just, it is because of sins in a previous life. He notes how the just by the end of a competition will win the prize. Yet the rewards on earth are very limited compared to those that come after death.

Socrates recounts the tale of Er who revived on a pile of corpses after he was thought dead for several days. This near-death experience describes in elaborate detail what happens to souls after leaving the body and when preparing to come into other ones. Souls who have died go into upper and lower worlds, and souls come from both these regions to be born again. Often those coming from above do not make wise choices, while those having suffered below choose more carefully, so that good and evil often alternate. According to Er, the penalties of wrongdoing are experienced tenfold in the next world, and the worst tyrants may have to suffer even more than a thousand years for their crimes. Thus Socrates points out the importance of studying to learn how to make wise choices regarding good and evil in choosing what to experience in life. Before being born again the souls had to drink from the River of Forgetfulness, but Er was prevented from drinking and so brought back the memory of the other world.

Finally Socrates exhorts his listeners to keep their souls unspotted and follow the upward way in pursuing justice with wisdom always so that they will be dear to the gods in this life and the next.

### **Plato's Later Work**

Plato was born in a noble Athenian family about 428 BC. His mother Perictione was the sister of Charmides and the niece of Critias, leaders of the vicious oligarchy of Thirty, which ruled Athens briefly after the empire was destroyed by the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC. These two men associated with Socrates for many years, and so Plato probably knew the philosopher well as a youth. In the *Seventh Letter* Plato wrote how he wanted to go into politics, and he was

invited to join the oligarchy; but he believed they made the previous government look like a golden age. He was particularly ashamed at their ordering Socrates to arrest a man for execution, which he refused to do. Observing their oppressive government in action, Plato withdrew in disgust, and the oligarchy was soon overthrown. After Socrates was executed in 399 BC Plato went with other disciples of Socrates to visit Euclides in Megara. Plato studied with the Heraclitean Cratylus and was said to have visited the mathematician Theodorus at Cyrene, the Pythagoreans Philolaus and Eurytus in Italy, and priests in Egypt.

When he was about 40 Plato visited [Dionysius I](#) in Sicily, but he was disgusted by self-indulgent Syracusan life. He became friends with [Dion](#), brother-in-law of [Dionysius I](#), and he found that [Dion](#) took to his instruction more than anyone. Plato criticized the tyrant, which may have caused his being sold into slavery briefly before he was bought and freed at Aegina for 20 or 30 minae by Anniceris. When Plato's friends paid the money back to Anniceris, he refused to keep it but bought the garden near Athens called the Academy, where Plato founded his school in 387 BC. There Plato taught philosophy, mathematics, jurisprudence, and promoted scientific research. According to one report, Plato was invited to legislate for Megalopolis when it was founded by the Arcadians and Thebans, but Plato declined when they would not accept his idea of sharing possessions equally.

When [Dionysius I](#) died in 367 BC, Plato's friends [Dion](#) and Archytus of Tarentum urged him to tutor the successor [Dionysius II](#), who promised him lands and settlers for the realization of his republic. Not wanting to be merely a man of words, Plato guided by reason and justice went to Sicily again. In the *Seventh Letter* Plato explained how he gave advice to those who consulted him and whose lives were well regulated but not to those who did not ask advice. Similarly he suggested criticizing the state if it will not be useless or lead to death, though he did not believe in violent revolution. If one cannot reform the state without killing, it is better to refrain from action and pray for the best. He pointed out how [Dionysius I](#) brought together all Sicily, but in trusting no one he eventually met with disaster. Plato and [Dion](#) suggested that Dionysius II first educate himself and second win friends through moral harmony. Once his character was established, he could recolonize the deserted cities and unite the people under just laws. However, [Dionysius II](#) suspected Plato of plotting to take over Sicily with [Dion](#), whom he exiled. Though the tyrant gave him gifts, Plato could not agree with the expulsion of [Dion](#).

In the *Seventh Letter* Plato argued that subjection to laws is better than subjection to human masters. Self-control ought to be exercised in drawing up laws so that they do not favor them over the defeated party; then everyone can have equal rights. [Dionysius II](#) let Plato go; but a few years later after a peace was made, Dionysius asked him to return, though he put off ending Dion's exile. Plato refused; but after several requests and promises, Plato reluctantly went back in the hope of teaching [Dionysius II](#) philosophy. Plato explained how many steps and hard work can eventually lead to a sudden illumination in the soul that can then be self-sustaining. However, [Dionysius II](#) went back on his promises regarding the property of [Dion](#), and Plato wanted to leave but could not do so. The philosopher decided to test Dionysius' latest promises for another year. After a disturbance over the pay of the mercenaries, [Dionysius](#) went back on an agreement Plato had personally witnessed. In danger and a prisoner, Plato was rescued by an embassy from Archytus, who in a letter reminded the tyrant that he had promised the philosopher safety.

Plato met [Dion](#) at the Olympic games of 360 BC. [Dion](#) asked Plato and his friends to support his revolution; Plato refused to make war but offered to mediate as a common friend to accomplish some good. If [Dion](#) was bent on evil, he must invite others. Helped by some of Plato's students, [Dion](#) captured Syracuse in 357 BC, but he was murdered four years later. In the *Eighth Letter* Plato once again argued for rule by law rather than by the arbitrary power of men, and for Sicily he suggested a kingship of three men responsible to the laws. Plato must have had slaves, because he refused to punish them when he was angry, apparently not wanting his emotion to affect his judgment.

Plato's *Timaeus* is set the day after the discussion recorded in the *Republic*. In hearing about the ideal republic Critias was reminded of the tale passed on to him by his grandfather from Solon, who heard from Egyptian priests that Atlantis existed nine thousand years before. Critias is going to tell how the Athenians won a war against the lost continent of Atlantis, but this is put off so that Timaeus can first explain the origin of the universe and all life. Timaeus expresses the Platonic view that the creator is good and that everything is designed for the best. The intelligence of the whole was put into the invisible soul, and the soul into the body. Everything is created by the providence of God. When the soul is implanted in the body, it is given the faculties of sensation and love in which pleasure and pain are mingled with various feelings. Those governing their feelings live justly, those overcome by them unjustly. Timaeus calls the ability to inquire into the nature of the universe the source of philosophy and the greatest good given to humans by the gods.

Plato's *Critias* describes the large island of Atlantis that existed in the great ocean outside the Pillars of Heracles (western gate of the Mediterranean Sea) nine thousand years before when there were many more trees, which kept the rain from running off the barren land. The culture on Atlantis was very advanced, and laws did not allow them to carry arms against each other. If anyone tried to overthrow the government, they all helped put down the revolt. They followed their laws and loved the divine, to which they believed they were akin. However, eventually coveting and pride for power caused a deterioration, and Zeus is about to lay a judgment upon them and speak when the dialog is abruptly cut off unfinished.

In Plato's *Theaetetus* Socrates acting as an intellectual midwife tries to discover what knowledge is by questioning the young Theaetetus and the geometrician Theodorus. The idea that knowledge is perception leads to the famous statement of the sophist Protagoras that "the person is the measure of all things," but it becomes clear that one person can be wiser than another and that knowledge resides in the reflection on impression not in the mere impressions themselves. Next Theaetetus suggests that knowledge could be true judgment, but they discover that knowledge cannot be belief even if the belief is true nor can it be a belief accompanied by an explanation since some knowledge requires no explanation and the explanation may be erroneous.

In a digression Socrates compares the petty legal minds of rhetoricians to the deep and seemingly impractical concerns of the philosophers, who attempt to find justice and ways of good government that can lead to happiness instead of misery. Theodorus comments that if Socrates could persuade everyone, there would be more peace and fewer evils in the world. Socrates notes that there will always be evils in this world, and therefore one should seek to become just with

the help of wisdom so that one can fly to a better world after death, for in the divine there is no injustice at all. The unjust suffer the penalty of their crimes in this world.

In the *Sophist* and the *Politician* Plato has an Eleatic Stranger lead the discussions attempting to define the sophist, politician, and the philosopher, though Socrates is still present. They divide things into various categories and define the sophist as one who hunts rich young men, trades in learning, is skilled in arguing, and who claims to instruct people in virtue. Efforts to define them as pretending to wisdom they do not have had often been refuted with sophistical arguments that falseness does not really exist. Discussion shows what is not true can be understood as different from being true without being dismissed as not existing at all. The philosopher distinguishes differences by division and focuses on the divine nature of reality, which is difficult to see for the vulgar. The discussion does not allow the sophist to hide by denying that falsity exists, but they hunt him down and call the sophistic art an insincere mimicry and contradiction-making using the shadow play of words.

In the *Politician* they define seven forms of government. The ideal state, which is more for gods than mortals, has no laws, because the rulers govern with wisdom for the benefit of all and can thus handle every situation according to its individual needs. Laws are made for average subjects as general guidelines, and they can never be as flexible as direct treatment by a virtuous expert. Usually government is by one ruler, a few, or many, and each of these can be law-abiding or not. The best of these is constitutional monarchy in which the laws are good and well administered, and the aristocracy ruled well by a few comes next. Democracy is in the middle in that it is the worst of the well governed states but the least bad of the badly governed ones, followed by oligarchy, and tyranny as the worst. The Eleatic stranger subordinates the arts of administering justice, oratory, and generalship to the art of governing. Students are to be educated to be brave, moderate, and just, and those who are not are to be severely punished; those who cannot rise above ignorance are to serve the community as slaves. Noting that the brave may be too aggressive and the prudent too weak, he recommends weaving their assertive and gentle qualities together in the government and in the population by marrying the opposite types to each other.

In the *Philebus* Plato has Socrates lead the discussion to determine whether pleasure or knowledge is the good. Philebus has claimed that pleasure is the good everyone ought to seek, but Socrates suggests the good is different than the pleasant and is found better through intelligence. In separating the two from each other Socrates and Protarchus find neither satisfactory. In composing a mixture pleasure accepts all forms of knowledge, but intelligence agrees only to consort with the pleasures that are healthy and moderate, rejecting those that are foolish and bad. They find measure and proportion essential to making a good mix and then value beauty and truth next, followed by the sciences and arts, and finally the pure pleasures that are accompanied by less pain than the grosser ones. This Socrates proclaims philosophically even though all the animals in the world may disagree.

*Laws* is probably the last work of Plato before he died about 347 BC at the age of eighty. An Athenian expresses his ideas of laws for a new state to a Cretan and a Spartan as they walk from Knossos to the cave of Zeus on the summer solstice. Cleinias, the Cretan, notes the internal warfare and the importance of winning a victory over self and the ruinous discredit of losing such a contest. The Athenian suggests it is better to reconcile people and let the good rule while

bringing the worse into voluntary submission than to exterminate the bad. Thus peace and good will are better than conflict and faction. Legislation for war as a means to peace is better than the reverse which is the mistake of Lacedaemonian institutions. The Athenian's views are not challenged and rarely questioned in this long dialog. The Athenian values the virtues of wisdom, moderation, justice, and valor first, then the health and beauty of the body, and third wealth and property. The spiritual goods are to be the basis for the laws to attain the latter human goods.

Play is again suggested as a good way for children to learn self-control and gain knowledge. Once again Plato is very careful about what music and poetry are to be learned, and judges are set up to decide. The unjust life is more dishonorable and unpleasant than a just one. The Athenian reviews Persian history to show the failure of Cyrus and Darius to educate their sons, resulting in an autocratic government with little freedom for the people, but the extremes of democratic freedom have also been failures. Thus they recommend a blend of autocracy and liberty. God, not a human, is more truly the measure of all things. The virtuous, who are more like God, ought to rule. After God one ought to honor one's own soul. To honor anything like the beauty of the body or wealth above the soul is a mistake. People need to respect not only friends but aliens as well, because they have a greater need for divine and human pity. Truth and justice should be the highest values, and violent attachment to self is a constant problem. One who wishes to be great must not care for oneself and one's own belongings more than for justice. Moderation, wisdom, courage, and health are to be valued over folly, cowardice, profligacy, and disease.

The Athenian holds that the best state is that in which all possessions, women, and children are shared in common, and the private life of the individual does not exist; but whether this is even possible is questionable. So the Athenian proceeds to describe the laws for the second best state by distributing property and houses equally. The state is to issue its own currency in place of gold and silver, and dowries and loaning of money at interest are to be forbidden. The assembly is open to all, but the top two propertied classes are to be fined if they do not attend. No one is allowed to be poorer than a certain amount, nor is anyone allowed to have more than four times that. Expenditures on weddings and funerals are limited. The ruling guardians once again are to be fifty years old and no more than seventy. The highest officer is the minister of education. The Athenian refers to the evils of slavery in the recent uprisings in Messenia, but the two remedies he suggests are to make sure that they do not all speak the same language or to treat them better without using violence. Plato thought it wrong to take advantage of a superior position, but apparently he was not bothered by the inequality and lack of freedom.

The Athenian notes the two extremes of human sacrifice and the Orphic insistence on vegetarianism. The Athenian then goes into how the three appetites for food, drink, and sex need to be controlled by fear, law, and reason. The Athenian warns against the two extremes of spoiling children which makes them fretful, peevish, and easily upset by trifles, or severe tyranny that makes them spiritless, servile, sullen, and unfit for domestic and civil life. There is a middle way between the pursuit of pleasure and the unqualified avoidance of pain which is gentle and good. Education is to be compulsory for all with the girls getting the same training as the boys. Leery about allowing all the poetry, the Athenian suggests his work be read, and only those plays agreeing with these ideas are to be performed. Yet men and women are to be trained in the various arts of warfare. The Athenian fears any kind of innovation as threatening to lead to

revolution, and he admires the conformity of Egyptian musical training. Those hunting for fish are not allowed to put poison in the waters. Anyone polluting the waters is to be fined and must clean them up.

Cleinias regrets that the life-long quest for money usually does not allow time to practice the arts of war, and the Athenian agrees that most states are dominated by parties and do not have willing subjects; he too would increase military education. He also criticizes homosexuality in which one man plays the role of the female. The Athenian wishes to teach people to conquer their lusts, and he promises that those who do will attain bliss. No man is allowed to touch any woman except his wife, and homosexuality is prohibited. The Athenian seems to believe that no one does wrong intentionally, and the purpose of the many fines and penalties are to correct and cure. Thus intention is very important in judging acts. However, under the justification that the disease is often past cure, the death penalty is often invoked in these laws. There follows detailed discussion of numerous laws, beginning with homicide.

Before making religious laws they ask the Athenian to prove to the people that the gods exist and care about humans. The order in the universe is the first argument. The Athenian also argues that the soul is more primal than the body, and so intelligence, wisdom, art, and law precede all physical things. The soul as the only source of its own movement must be the first-born of all things, and it is the supremely good soul that conceived the universe and guides its path. These good souls are the gods who direct the universe whether they inhabit bodies or not, thus demonstrating that all things are full of gods. The gods perceive and can know all things, are immortal, good, and therefore would not neglect human concerns. Those who make themselves better make their way to the better souls through a series of lives, as like attracts like. With this preamble they decide that even minor impiety deserves five years imprisonment and a second offense death, while major impiety is punished by execution, and the body is cast out without burial. I find it ironic and sad that Plato could recommend such laws a half century after having witnessed his teacher Socrates being condemned on such a charge. People are not even allowed to worship at private shrines in their own homes, so oppressive is the state religion to be.

Likewise everyone in this city must have the same friends and enemies as the state. The death penalty is given to any person or group making peace independently as well as for making war independently of the state. Travel is restricted to specific purposes. The supreme curators of the state, who are the ten oldest guardians of the law, meet before dawn, and perfect virtue is ever to be the goal of all their endeavors. Like in the *Republic* Plato has designed another militaristic state with a virtuous objective; although his primary method of attaining this is through universal compulsory education, his plan is also quite legalistic and autocratic with more emphasis on the good of the state than of the individuals. Plato was about 80 when he died in 347 BC.

## Notes

1. Fr. 136, Sextus *adv. math.* ix, 129.
2. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. D. Hicks, 9:51.
3. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, tr. Walter Miller, 1:5:9.
4. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. D. Hicks, 3:35.

5. Plato, *Phaedo* tr. Sanderson Beck, 11.
6. *Ibid.*, 107.