A Tale of Two Republics: Plato and Michael Polanyi on Science, Faith, and the Study of
Man

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to employ the meditations of Plato, son of Ariston, and the Hungarian polymath Michael Polanyi in an analysis of the essence of science and philosophy, and the causes and conditions of nihilism. As the means to that endeavour, we shall proceed by way of comparative exegeses of key writings by both men, Plato's *Politeia*, *Symposium*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*; and Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, *The Study of Man*, *The Tacit Dimension*, and *Knowing and Being*. Through that process we shall be reflecting upon their philosophic anthropologies and their accounts of the existential character of the open soul versus that of *l'homme revolté*; on the grounds of scientific and philosophic knowledge of reality; and the nature of the free society as the open soul writ large.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are a tricky affair, coming as they do customarily at the beginning of a book, whereas by nature they come to fruition at the end of writing it. As my doctoral supervisor, Tom Darby, might observe, this is another likely manifestation of the juxtaposition between logical and the phenomenal priority. Logically, the influences and the debts may be prior, but phenomenally, they only become manifest in retrospect. I think that this may be doubly the case in as anamnestic an enterprise as this one.

Let me then thank, in some logical order, my parents Ian Henry Cordner and Diane Linda Cordner for their perseverance against the odds and for their ineffable influence, my grandparents Doreen and John Cordner for their stability and steadfastness, my step-father Jeff Collicott for being a one-man Dionysian comedy, my friends, siblings, and cousins for their conviviality, and my fosterling, Fiona Nicole Maynard for being as close to an incarnation of Kallonné as we're likely to be graced by at any time and place.

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Introduction

The purpose of this work may be expressed somewhat succinctly. It is both to analyze the substance and possibilities of politics, and purpose and the practice of political science broadly understood, in times of existential disorder. Its purpose is also, conversely, to analyze the means by which current practices of the science may be put to the measure, by referring to its practitioners' ability to identify and to respond effectively to spiritual crisis - here, for the moment, defined simply as a widespread existential malaise exhibiting as political disorders of one sort or another.

To do so, it will then be necessary to proceed in several stages, as several questions come to bear. It will be necessary to not simply assign a universal definition to science under the assumption that a science of politics must be a modified form of one or more other, idealized practices, such as, for instance, those of atomic physics. Rather, it would be behooving to define a science in terms of that to which its practitioners relate themselves in their practice; in the case of science of politics, this might be said to be human beings and the political orders which they establish. This method arises from the yet undemonstrated assumption that what the knower knows in her practice is informed, not by an ideal and abstract methodology, but by that which is known or which one seeks to know. That is to say that that which is to be known, that aspect of reality to which the questioning practitioner addresses herself for the sake of deeper insight, shall itself place peculiar restrictions and demands upon the scientist, her way of practice, and upon how her quest for such insight must proceed.

It is this informed, practical knowing, which roots itself and bears fruit in our beings in accordance with the known, which one cannot assume can be rendered in terms of an abstract methodology which may then be fully transferable between sciences. Therefore, to render an account of political science as we wish to do cannot simply be a matter of reproducing an account of, say, the explicit methodologies employed by students of Newtonian physics, and then of attaching an appropriate gloss to our account in the optimistic hope that such a thing is effective in practice and justifiable in theory. We shall rather take it as prudent to proceed thinking that reality's many aspects or strata are too vastly different to permit such a leap of faith.

Furthermore, this line of questioning then leads us to recognize that, to advance from this preliminary intimation, it will be necessary to ground it in an account of reality which sheds light upon its apparent stratification. Such an account would, by its nature, also highlight the errors involved in an excessive identification or reduction of the varied strata of reality. By such a differentiation of reality's aspects, one necessarily also challenges the over-identification of the sciences as a universally applicable Science, whose Methods may as readily, easily, and without modification, render the truth of atoms, human beings, poetry, and quasars.

And, since it is not political science at any particular time which is of interest, but the science as practiced in times of spiritual crisis, the range of potential choices of such accounts may be reasonably reduced in scope to two in particular: to that of the Hellenic philosopher Plato, and to the Hungarian physician, chemist, and philosopher of science, Michael Polanyi. Both meet with the stated criteria: both practiced and thought on

matters of political philosophy in times of great political disorder and profound spiritual crisis. Both men critiqued intellectual trends which prolonged or helped to instigate the crisis through an excessive reductionism, which undermined not simply the prevailing political order or ethos, but the ability of men to apperceive the very possibility of a non-arbitrary order of existence, founded in anything other than naked might - even if that might be only the power of the golden tongue or charismatic rhetoric. Both responded to such intellectual trends by highlighting their foundations in inaccurate and inadequate accounts of reality, and responded with demonstrations of the stratified and irreducible complexity of a meaningful and ordered whole, or cosmos, of which and in which human beings play their parts. Both then can be thought of as defending the sciences as practices by which one engages in an exploration of the truth of reality - *theoria* or theory in the original sense - rather than as hybrids of *praxis* and *techne*, by which a great artist, great innovator, or great prince creates or recreates order from an intrinsically disordered chaos of matter and men.

In engaging with these two authors, the task here shall then be to lay-out their respective, and open-ended accounts of the cosmos, of the sciences, and of knowing as an activity, with a particular view to their accounts of the unique difficulties of practice in the sciences of human being, which necessarily deal in the complexities of sentient and sapient existence. This, in turn, shall necessarily amount, at least initially, to an exegesis of their words upon the subjects of the art of being human, of personal knowledge, and of the sciences as practices of gaining comprehension and understanding of the real. The practical, rooted, and inexplicit (or tacit) dimension of knowing shall become thematic. As such, some time will be expended discussing what may appear to be a paradox in the

quest for personal knowledge. On the one hand, one has the irreducibly personal, even individual, nature of knowing and questing for knowledge. On the other hand, one must address the roots of that quest from within a particular tradition, a particular language, and in an irreducible (even if qualified) trust in those whom have walked our paths before us, and those who are walking it with us. The sometimes paradoxical relationship between the individual and the community, as it is explored by these two writers, must be expanded upon without fallaciously collapsing the poles of that tension into one, in an attempt to avoid difficult questions.

In the case of political science, there is also the additional paradox of a practice in which its convivial explorers seek to know, to measure, and to make sense of the practice of politics - if only to the extent of distinguishing the better performances of the practice from the worse, the good from the bad, the just from the unjust. In such a science, one cannot long escape the need to come to an understanding of the good or of what is of value or worth which inform particular practices and performances. Implicitly, however, the question is then begged: what is the measure and bearing of political practice? The Weberian distinction between facts and values, and the call for professional neutrality, comes to the fore for analysis.

I shall therefor attempt to address the expression of this hoary problem, which appears not to be completely unique to modern Western societies, as they have been drawn-out in the works of both Plato and Polanyi. This will be accomplished by analyzing their own particular analyses of the matter in their contemporary eras, and its link to their contemporary political crises. In the first case, we may address ourselves to

the accounts of both personal and societal disorder - often symbolically classified by Plato as a *nosos*, or spiritual disease - as they emerged under the influence of sophistic thought and its effects upon traditional practices. In the second case, we may address ourselves to what Polanyi has termed "moral inversion", arising under the influence of radical skepticism, paired with unlimited moral demands.

In both cases, it seems that a crucial lack of moderation in political practice - something, in fact, also remarked upon by Thucydides in his analysis of the great *kinesis* or fever driving Greece in the Peloponnesian War - stems from a lack of or depreciation of practical wisdom or prudence (Greek: *phronesis*). This lack of wisdom (particularly prudence in political matters), in turn, can be summarily accounted for here as flowing from deliberate or mistaken misapprehensions of reality, such that the distinctions, boundaries, possibilities and limitations which are provided and imposed by reality's differentiated and emergent strata are obscured under a flood of reductionism. Both personal and political, existence, with their specific, higher levels of meaning having been thereby obscured, thereafter tend to be assigned the more limited meaning of the less complex, lower level, and more easily studied strata. With higher-level meanings obscured, men and society are then easily misapprehended in the imagination as existing in a realm of near perfect (though inherently directionless) moral and ethical freedom - or, conversely, perfect freedom from all but whatever perfectly arbitrary ethical or judicial restraint which might be imposed (or need to be imposed) by the power of a prince, tyrant, or Leviathan.

The following, then, would appear to be held by the authors to be the interrelated

symptoms of spiritual crisis and disorder - (i) ontological confusion, (ii) a general lack of wisdom in a society, (iii) a marked increase in the a-political tendencies towards social anomie, on the one hand, and authoritarianism, on the other - sometimes simultaneously, (iv) combined with a failure in the preventative care normally provided by sciences of statecraft and citizenship, such as those supplied by political science and political philosophy.

Chapter Outline

In its structure, this analysis shall proceed in three stages, subdivided into six chapters, alternately reflecting upon works of Plato and Polanyi regarding the general structures of human awareness, human maturation, the differentiation of the processes of reality, as these are illuminated and developed from within the context of a society. The general intent shall be to compare and contrast the writings of the two authors on the issue of these structures, through anamnestic exegesis, or in Polanyi's terms, "indwelling".

Part I, "Paradigms", focuses upon the matter of deriving the philosophic anthropologies of both men. As such, it focuses upon bringing to light their responses to the question of who man is, our initial relations to the community and traditions in which we are born, and through which we initially come to grips with an existence into which we find ourselves thrust unawares, and which immediately tasks us with the trial of acting out a performance upon a stage which is not of our making, amongst actors with whom we might scarcely choose to play with, amidst a larger performance whose scenes to which we have not been privy.

To elucidate the authors' description of the process by which one takes-up a performance and finds one's bearings, in Chapter 1, we shall concentrate on Plato's themes of *mimesis*, *anamnesis*, and the *paradigmata*, in his *Politeia*. This shall be followed, in Chapter 2, by dwelling on Polanyi's description of the "fiduciary framework" of knowing (understood to be based upon trust and apprenticeship), and extrapolating his hierarchy of principle human exemplars, as given primarily in his *Personal Knowledge*. Concretely, these chapters shall involve delving into the elementary basis of one's education upon the emulation of trusted exemplars – that by mimicking the practice of an actor who has been identified as an exemplary performer, one comes to an initial, if gritty and provisional, way of understanding what it means to perform well, and of knowing the meanings of the parts being played by oneself and one's fellows. As I shall show, it is from this basis in assimilating traditional ways of doing things (or "know-how"), habits, and ethos that we find a practical basis for understanding purpose, and thereby of developing practical wisdom or *phronesis* and maturing as human beings. In both cases I shall bear out their cases for the way of being of the *philosophos* (Plato) or post-critical philosopher (Polanyi), as being representative of the most openly human way of life, as well as the overall isomorphism of their anthropologies.

In Part II, "Passion", we will then look to passion's specific place and meaning in human life, it's relation both to ordering our existence, and therefore to our searches and our questing. In Chapter 3, we shall dwell on Plato's *Symposium*, and upon the various accounts of *eros* there depicted. In Chapter 4, we shall turn to Polanyi's account of passion, as he develops it both in *Personal Knowledge* and in such later works as the

collected essays of *Knowing and Being*. In both cases, we shall be placing the focus of our attention on understanding passion as an inherent structure of human existence, but also on its healthy unfolding as a necessary virtue of a good or open society.

In both chapters, we shall thus dwell intently upon the structure of passion, and upon the need for its support, education, and development in both the practical exemplars of a scientific or philosophic tradition, but also within an enfolding tradition's lore, both written, oral, and otherwise. As we shall see quite acutely in Chapter 3, in the figure of Alcibiades, the pathological twisting of *eros* away from its calling through the self-assertive revolt of the *psyche* and the resulting political consequences, arise as a stark possibility with the differentiation of the ground of being and the world, and a failure by a society's institutions to adequately represent and to cultivate a way of life commensurate with the newly emerging understanding of *arete* and *aletheia*. In Chapter 4, we shall elucidate and extrapolate Polanyi's account of passion as what we may call here an open-ended responsibility to modify oneself in reply to a universal moral calling, and his retortion of the modern position that passion is reducible to selfish drives.

In Part III, "A Tale of Two Cities", we will turn to the matter of further enucleating both men's presentations of the grounds for a good society. In Chapter 5, we turn to the two sequels to the *Politeia - Timaeus* and *Critias* - in which Socrates is repaid for his *anamnesis* of the *agathon* and the paradigm of the *Kallipolis* laid-up in heaven, with *anamneses* of the depths of being and of the ancient war with the empire of Atlantis. There, we shall see contrasted the mythical confrontation between a *daimonic polis* tethered by the life of *arete* to the light of the *agathon*, and the abyssal splendours of a

rational, world-striding empire: two societies, representing the rule of two different turns of *eros* - one healthy, one corrupt. In Chapter 6, the investigation will finally turn to filling out Polanyi's vision of the best historically possible regime: a free society conceived as a Society of Explorers. In that chapter, we shall work to derive and extrapolate a cohesive account of the Society from Polanyi's explicit groundwork to that end, in which he gainfully accounts for the nature and traditions of the Republic of Science as a dynamic society of explorers endeavouring and exercising mutual authority in the pursuit of truth.

On The Question of Exegesis

Regarding the question of exegetical procedures, a few comments are perhaps necessary, particularly with regards to the reading of Plato's dialogues. It is, in this day and age, at least sufficiently often pointed-out, and even harped upon in extant literature, that a dialogue cannot be read and interpreted like a treatise on analytical logic or a recipe book. To begin with, there is an elementary fallacy at play whenever a reader blithely identifies a writer with the characters depicted in his or her works, and thence assumes that said characters' explicit statements are a presentation of the author's full thoughts on the matter at issue. While it is frequently pointed-out that these assumptions are no better warranted or justifiable than assuming that Shakespeare fully revealed his systematic political thoughts through the mouthpiece of Shylock, it is worthwhile to unpack what is at issue in unravelling Plato's works.

Both Klein and Strauss do well in highlighting that the foremost problem

confronting every commentator's exegesis of dialogues of the kind is the problem of both Socratic and Platonic irony. In making this observation, they follow in a lineage of scholarship hearkening back from Friedlander in the 20th century to Schleirmacher in the 19th. To summarize the observation, which both Klein and Strauss encapsulate and expand upon quite well: Socrates is an ironic man. He is given to a disposition in conversation that is somehow both playful and serious all at once, and which is somehow recognizable to his Greek contemporaries as being akin to both comedy and tragedy, yet at once being beyond them both and neither. As Klein quotes J.A.K. Thompson, "When his contemporaries called Socrates ironical they did not mean to be complimentary." "The old Irony of the tragic or comic reversal of fortune they appreciated. But this new kind, which had a trick of making you uncomfortable if you took it as a joke and getting you laughed at if you took it seriously? People did not like it, did not know what to make of it. But they were quite sure it was Irony. They called it so, and it is because they so called it that Irony has its modern meaning" ¹

Thus the first hurdle to the exegete is figuring out what mixture of seriousness and play is at work at any point in a conversation, a myth, or a speech uttered by Socrates, or by one mimicking him. To this we would also need to add the charge, frequently repeated in the dialogues, that Socrates' irony also expresses itself as so much dissembling, of exaggerated humility, and of pretending to know or understand less than he lets on (or worse, of earnestly understanding himself to be ignorant, but knowing that he is suspected of knowing something, and so playing with his conversation partners even more outrageously; etcetera). That is to say nothing of his comic exaggeration when he imitates arts or words belonging to others, such as in *Theaetetus*, in which he mimics

¹ Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 5.

Protagoras, or in *Phaedrus*, in which he playfully jibes at Lysias and Gorgias. By projecting an image of Socrates' irony onto the page, Plato reveals himself to be no less a master of irony than his friend and teacher. In fact, he rather compounds the obstacles for the reader. For, if a master of irony is staging the dialogue, then the threads of serious play, playful seriousness, dissembling comedy and tragic imitation must be at least suspected to be woven through the warp and woof of the entire work, right down to its setting, cast, and dramatic action.

A second matter arises in the direction and form which the dialogues and the dialogues within the dialogue tend to take. On the one hand, we have the famous dialogues which seem to leave everyone befuddled, as for instance when, in *Euthyphro*, the title character discusses the nature of piety with Socrates, which (apparently ironically) leaves both of them and the audience with no workable notion of what piety is. This leads to Euthyphro fleeing the scene of the courthouse, for he finds himself no longer so certain that it is pious to prosecute his father for killing a slave. Another common form of dialogue with Socrates brings forth from his companion a tacit notion, thought or judgement into the full light of day, as transpires throughout the conversations in *Politeia*. In this role, Socrates' pointed *elenchus* or cross-examination serves the role of "midwifery", in so far as it helps to ease the birth of a thought, or its role is zetetic, in so far as it aims at hunting-out a quarry which is only known through clues or spoors. We can thus speak of *aporetic*, *maieutic*, and *zetetic* dialogues and dialogues within the dialogues, as well as admixtures. We then would take into additional consideration the task of deciding the function of the many speeches, soliloquies, rants, and myths which enjoin the dialogues proper.

The third element for this exegete to which we should be aware, is the function of dramatic and mimetic action with the dialogue. Asides from the ironic or dramatic meanings of particular happenings, actions, or their contexts (as for instance, when Thrasymachus blushes in Book I of *Politeia*), one needs to be mindful for the fact that particular personalities are being exposed in the dialogues, and that a peculiar interest of Socrates and of Plato lies in *psychogoge* - ministering to the soul. Eric Voegelin is thus correct to point-out, during his commentary on *Gorgias*, that the Sons of Zeus who figure in the Myth of Judgement orated by Socrates to Calicles, symbolize the philosophers who will strip bare the souls of men and women, and question them “naked”.² A not inconsiderable part of the dialogues’ meaning lies precisely in exposing souls. We may also follow Klein’s able subdivision of this sort of symbolization through action, by distinguishing (i) *ethological*, (ii) *doxological*, and (iii) *mythological mimes*. By the first, it is meant that the action in question imitates and exposes the ethos of a character as it arises as an effective expression of their innermost thoughts. By the second class, one understands that the rightness or falseness of a *doxa* is not merely playing out in words, but is being reflected in a character’s acts or way of being. By the last, it is meant that the action of the dialogue itself complements or supplements a myth or myths.³

An important fourth element in the exegesis of Plato’s dialogues lies in the need to parse its exoteric and esoteric meanings. That Plato intentionally wrote in such a way as to weave subtler layers of meaning amidst the gross should be no surprise. It is attested

² Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* v.3, (Columbia, Missouri : University of Missouri Press, 2000), 95-99.

³ Klein. *op cit*, 17-19.

to plainly in both his Second and Seventh Epistles that he never wrote down his doctrines in books, that the reader is only ever confronted with Socrates “made young and beautiful”, that the highest things can only be hinted at with enigmas, and that wise men know that a book written with any seriousness shan’t contain the author’s best thoughts (here again, the paradoxical and playful interweaving of seriousness with humour). Rather than mistaking the written word for wisdom, then, understanding is to be had through guidance, practice, questioning, mysteries, and paradoxes; the written word, at best, only helps to induce the soul to give birth, it cannot fill it with understanding. Within both classical and recent commentaries, the understanding that the dialogues possess both an exoteric (or “outer”) and esoteric (or “inner”) meaning was, and is once again becoming a commonplace, and it will perhaps suffice here to mention the recent scholarship of Strauss, Rosen, Voegelin, Klein, and A.E. Taylor as examples.⁴

But this brings us to the fifth element. It is clear that, by themselves, the first three elements - irony, dialogue as a form (or, really, a form of forms overlapping forms) of communication and engagement, and of dramatic and mimetic symbolism - certainly serve to introduce subtler layers of meaning into the dialogues than could be derived through a surface reading. An additional layer to these is revealed in such symbolism found peppering the dialogues, in which, for instance, a character such as Alcibiades is symbolically associated with Dionysus and Aphrodite, whilst juxtaposed against a Socrates who plays the roles of Marsayias and Silenus.

⁴ See, for instance Klein, *op cit*; Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Symposium*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), introduction; Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press: 1952) and *The City and Man*. (University of Chicago Press : Chicago, 1964); A.E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*. Clarendon Press : Oxford, 1928; and Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, (Notre Dame, Ind. : University of Notre Dame Press, 1978).

At such a point, we find ourselves moving slightly beyond even Klein's astute observation of Plato's use of mythological mimes. Now, we really do bear witness to a scene or exchange moving on two or three levels simultaneously. Moreover, it quickly becomes apparent that one cannot simply set aside an "exoteric" later and focus on the good stuff - the esoteric layer. Excising Alcibiades and Socrates from the scene or pushing them into the background of awareness in order to focus on the symbolic interplay of Dionysus/Aphrodite and Marsayas/Silenus, and their jockeying for position around (the) Agathon, or, conversely, focusing upon the two as flesh-and-blood men, only serves either to abstract or disembody the scene from the concrete pathos depicted, or to reduce the divine symbols of transcendental tensions to the status of immanent forces.

Nor again, must one neglect the anamnestic or psychagogic purpose of the dialogues in enabling the *epanodos* or *periagoge* (the "ascent" or "turning around") of the reader. Any hypostatization of symbols which demonstrably depict a movement or tension towards the ground of their being can only deform the meaning of the text and serve to abstract it and oneself as a reader or commentator from one's own experience of a tension of movement, drawing and shaping one's own knowing and being. It is thus to be kept in mind that the esoteric meaning of one of Plato's dialogues is to be determined by parsing the intelligible structure, suchness, or ground hinted at though the symbol-play of the drama. It is also to be taken seriously that the meaning can not be apprehended "objectively" like a body of propositions, but only personally, through one's own active participation in the anamnesis or psychogogy to the best of one's abilities. This is what Voegelin sees quite clearly when he so frequently warns against hypostatizing the symbols of the tension or metaxy of consciousness (i.e. of the *psyche*) into "objects"

which are intelligible in their meaning, independent from concrete experience and the meditative complex, i.e. *anamnesis*, ascent, illumination, symbolization, reflection, and analysis. It is, moreover, quite consonant with Polanyi's writings on the need both for self-exegesis and for one to indwell in the mind of the teacher for the sake of attending from them to the universal pole of knowing: that the commitment to know is irreducibly personal, and that knowledge or understanding of reality in all of its limitless fecundity cannot be picked-up from focusing on strictly tangible sense-data, at a purportedly objective and uncommitted distance.⁵

A Note on Translation

It will become apparent over the course of this work, that I have deviated from a number of conventions regarding the translation of Plato's Hellenic Age Attic Greek into English, conventions which have become more-or-less standard in the Loeb editions of his works, and in English translations relying on them. While I have highlighted my deviations in footnotes, three in particular deserve some initial mention here.

Episteme, I have usually translated as "understanding", and by "understanding", I always mean *episteme*. This, to me, seems to make the most etymological sense, and aligns translation of *episteme* with the standard manner of translating the verbal form, *epistamai*, the infinitive of which is normally rendered as "to understand". It also adds greater clarity to the distinctions being made between e.g. *episteme*, *gnwsis*, *idenai*, all of

⁵ See Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience" and "What is Political Reality?" in *Anamnesis*, as well as Colin Cordner, "The Diagnosis of Scientism: Eric Voegelin and Michael Polanyi on science and philosophy". *Appraisal, The Journal of the British Personalist Forum*. Volume 9, No. 3 (March, 2013): 3-12. EVMP; as well as chapter 2 of this study.

which have tended to be indiscriminately translated as “knowledge”, thereby obscuring the meaning of the dialogues to English readers, and rendering them more opaque to meditation than strictly necessary. As I shall be substantiating throughout this work, this distinction is also better philosophically grounded, as it disembarasses us of any habitual tendency to tacitly impose upon Socrates, Timaeus, or Plato, Descartes’ obsessions with certainty and “clear and distinct ideas”.

Eidos and *idea*, and their respective declensions, I have generally left untranslated, for I do not think that there is presently an adequate English translation which distinguishes the two without loading one or the other with the baggage of our prevailing intellectual atmosphere. One older convention is to translate both as Form, which loses the differentiation of the *eide* from the *ideai*. Another convention is to translate *ideai* as “ideas”, a word which in English now carries the connotations given to it by Descartes and Locke, and therefore only encourages us to tacitly read by *idea* what in Greek is connoted by *doxa* or *phantasma*; i.e. one’s own private notion, which has been picked-up from the air, derived from sensation, etcetera.

Physis, *wn*, and *ousia* I have generally translated as “nature”, “being”, and “suchness” except where otherwise noted or left untranslated. A notable exception is my preference to translate references to the *physis* of *anthropoi* as “human existence” or “existence”, for the sake of capturing the active character of human participation in being and its ground, and the possibility for an equally active revolt or for passive resistance. Whereas conventions would have us translate both *wn* and *ousia* as “being” or “Being”, this too has the side-effect of conflating what is often being differentiated in the

dialogues. For the sake of retaining the distinction, I have adopted the term “suchness” from Buddhist Mahayana scholarship (Sanskrit: *tathata*), where it is used to denote the grounds behind the meeting of space and form in the process of becoming - a translation which I found quite apropos after my lengthy sojourn with the *Timaeus*.

As a matter of transliteration, I have rendered the Greek epsilon and eta characters as “e”, and have left them unaccented except in whatever rare case as the accent proved necessary to avoid misunderstanding. I have generally dropped all accents except where necessary, and have rendered rough breathing marks at the beginning of a word beginning with a vowel or rho character as an “h”. Finally, I have generally rendered the Greek omega as “w”, for the simple reason of avoiding e.g. transforming active participles (such as “wn”) into more passive-seeming forms, transforming words of one gender into another where the distinction is important, or a radical change to the conjugation or declension of a word which could be misleading. In any event the “w” of all Greek words can be taken to sound like the “o” sound of “omega”.

Last but not least, with regards to Polanyi, I have followed his later confident use of “understanding” where, earlier in his career, previous to *The Study of Man*, he employed the then slightly less contentious term “knowledge”. I have also frequently used the active participle “knowing” as a substitute for “knowledge” which is in keeping with the essence of his arguments. This is a fairly uncontroversial convention, which is often adopted by Polanyians and Polanyi scholars.

Part I: Paradigms, Chapter 1: The Paradigm Laid Up in Heaven

“ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ”

- inscription once found above the Temple of Apollo at the Oracle of Delphi

“Well,” said I, “perhaps there is a paradigm of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to behold it and, so beholding, to establish himself as its citizen. But it makes no difference whether it is now or ever shall be. The affairs of this polis only, and no other, would he ever practice.”

“That seems probable,” he said.

- Socrates recollecting his dialogue with Glaucon, *Politeia*, 592b⁶

“I went down to the Piraeus the other day with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, there to see what sights we may” [327a], so spoke Socrates of Athens, son of Sophroniscus the stonecutter and Phaenarete the midwife, of the clan of Antiochus, to his anonymous speaking companion, thereby inaugurating the recollection of a descent from which arose the *Politeia*. Their dialogue is thus intrinsically structured as an anamnestic exercise – a going up to Memory – on the part of Socrates-Plato, with all of the attendant elements of under-reliability and of super-reliability which that may imply to an audience.

It is unreliable, in so far as no sensible human being could be expected to put blind faith in the author’s ability to produce the facts of a matter long past, as if they could tumble like unspoiled gems from the lips of his friend and teacher to then be embroidered by him upon the unblemished page. To do so would require a tremendous leap of faith and a general suspension of good-sense. Facts are, after all, children of Time – Chronos – and, as one may recall, Time eats his children. It is thus left to the domain of

⁶ Original: “ἀλλ’, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὄραν καὶ ὀρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν. διαφέρει δὲ οὐδὲν εἴτε που ἔστιν εἴτε ἔσται: τὰ γὰρ ταύτης μόνης ἂν πράξειεν, ἄλλης δὲ οὐδεμῆας.”

“εἰκός γ’, ἔφη.”

Clio, and the peculiar necromancy of that Muses' servants to summon the facts to light again through *historia* – a story. But, as Socrates-Plato himself reminds our good-sense, necromancy, poets, and spectres are to be treated to a certain *skepsis*, or critical examination.

However, the tale of the *Politeia* is super-reliable in so far as it bears not upon the facts of time, but the meaning of eternity. The descent into the anamnestic meditation, which culminates with the Saving Tale of Er, which had to be saved from Death, aims, it seems, to recall in the audience something which they themselves have forgotten. It is as if Socrates-Plato's speaking companion-Plato's conversation partner (whose role the reader so easily slides into) has forgotten something very important, and that, by encouraging them to dwell in the meaning of the tale, they might be induced to awaken and remember.⁷

The audience of the dialogue would seem to be purposefully induced to remember something through the recounting. The What, the Whence and Whither, and the Why, however, remain obscure when the dialogue begins, as do two other questions: Who, and Whom? It behooves us then to pursue these questions here, as they bear upon the

⁷ Allan Bloom focuses upon the opening scene between Socrates and Polemarchus, and sees their interaction as representing the fixing of a compromise (i.e. a social contract) establishing a political community. He does not note any special meaning on the parallelism between the descent and ascent of the opening scene to Plato's similar constructions in Bk.VI-VII (e.g. the analogy of the Sun and the Good, and the Myth of the Cave) or the Myth of Er, nor make special note of the anamnestic structure of the dialogue. Jacob Klein, by contrast, sees the alluded to anamnestic structure of the dialogue as self-evident. Eric Voegelin sees the parallelism of ascent and descent as intentional and symbolic, noting also Plato's blending of the mystical symbolism of the exploration of the depths of Heraclitus and Aeschylus with Parmenides' symbolism of ascent from darkness to light. Rosen notes the parallels in the opening of *Politeia* and of *Symposium*. Cf. Bloom's interpretative essay in Plato. *The Republic of Plato* (trans. Allan Bloom), 2nd ed. (New York:Basic Books, c1991), 311-312; Jacob Klein. *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*. (University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 108; Eric Voegelin. *Order and History, Volume III: Plato and Aristotle*. (Columbia, Missouri:University of Missouri Press, 2000), 106-116. See also Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Symposium*. (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1968), 12-14.

question of who man is, whom and what he is meant to be, and the whence and whither of his induction.

Michael Polanyi's *magnum opus*, *Personal Knowledge*, too bears upon our questions, and does so in a not entirely dissimilar fashion. For, as Polanyi himself alludes to, and his commentators sometimes note, his opus itself ultimately bears the form of a reflective confession. And, a *confession* is nothing if not a remembering bearing upon something beyond the simple facts of a matter: it must bear upon their meaning.

As we have said, at least part of the meaning of their meditations bears immediately upon temporal circumstances. For Plato the author, both the dramatic context of the dialogue (the Peloponnesian War) and the dramatic outcome of those events (the trial and execution of Socrates), supply something of a Why. So too does the spectacular bloodletting and murderous fanaticism of the 20th century factor into the writings of Polanyi. What sensible, moral man could remain insensible to the trenches, the gulag, and the concentration camp? The truth of the Why for each, however, cannot be exhausted nor revealed through her immediate appearances. One readily senses in each's work a need to delve deeply into her essence, and it is to these delving which we must presently attend. And, as the essence of every *historia* is a human being, we shall attend closely to the question of the Why by attending also to that question of Who man is. In the process, perhaps something of the What of our forgetfulness may be recovered as well.

Our method, then, shall be presently to delve into the problem of induction, in so far as it plays to the specific issue of the existential ordering and disordering of human

being. By induction, one shall understand by it not the narrow meaning and association with formal logic. Rather, we should understand it in the broader sense in which one may “be induced”, of which inductions in our own knowing, and the explicit operations of formal logic are specific or even special instances. Our reflections upon induction shall find their own purchase by focusing upon the parts played in education of what Plato termed *mimesis* and *paradeigmata*, and Polanyi *indwelling* and *apprenticeship*. These shall then be related to *noesis* or *comprehension* and thereby to *episteme* or *understanding*.⁸ By contrasting the ideal paradigm over and against a most deficient one, we might begin to uncover the authors’ understandings of the essential disorders which made themselves manifest in the total wars of their times.

§1. *Man Writ Large*

The status of the Kallipolis, the Beautiful City, of the *Politeia* as a metaphor for the *psyche* is well attested to, both within the dialogue itself, and in a sufficiently vast scholarly literature that we shall not belabour the point overmuch. We shall instead submit to the authority of the text, its authors, and our teachers who’ve instructed that accepting the *politeiai* as symbols of psychic types is the essential premise of a proper

⁸ It should be noted that the traditional manner of translating *episteme* in the English-speaking world, at least when contending with Plato, has been by default to translate it as “knowledge”, while the verb *epistesthai*, from which it derives, is usually translated as “to understand”. I find this translation of *episteme* highly problematic, given both that it hypostatizes the nominal form from the original experience connoted by the verb, and in so far as it often muddles the fine distinctions which the dialogues are often dwelling upon. There are a number of Greek words which, depending upon the context, one might translate as “knowledge” or “to know”, including *episteme*, *epistesthai*, *gignoskein*, *gnosis*, *oistha*, *isthi*, *gnwmen*, *manthano*, *metis*, *phronen*, and *techne*, to say nothing of the category of *aletheia doxa*. Given that a clear attempt has been made in Plato’s corpus to differentiate *episteme* as a form of cognizing from, for instance, *gnosis*, and that the connotation is thus clearly one distinct from an apprehension of “clear and distinct ideas”, I shall generally translate it as *understanding*, unless otherwise noted.

interpretation of the dialogue.⁹ Indeed, this very necessity of submission as the precursor to interpretation, and, ultimately, to understanding, will come to light as we progress. For now, let us accept the matter upon faith, or, if we need to maintain modern scruples, perhaps accept the *polis-as-psyche* metaphor as a “working hypothesis” for hermeneutic purposes.

Proceeding then *ex hypothesi*, at a glance one finds an apparent total of eight *poleis* with their eight respective *politeiai* explicitly described within the text. These would be:

- 1) The City of Sows [369b-372d]
- 2) The Feverish City [372d-375b]
- 3) The Courageous City [375b-443c]
- 4) The Kallipolis [449a-546a]
- 5) The Timocratic City [546d-550c]
- 6) The Oligarchic City [550c-557a]
- 7) The Democratic City [557a-562a]
- 8) The Tyrannical City/Tyranny [562a-580b]

In fact, as we shall perceive, an even greater number of *politeiai* and *paradeigmati* reveal themselves upon closer inspection. In terms of the action of the dialogue, one finds a gradual “ascent” which peaks at 509a, and a corresponding

⁹ Within the dialogue, the status of the *poleis* and *politeiai* as metaphors for the *psyche* is attested to at 386c-369b, 441c-442c, 443b-444a, 444d, 543c-544b, 580a-581c, 580d-583a, and 591d-592b.

differentiation and deepening of the *psyche*'s complexity as the conversation between Socrates and his young friends proceeds. Starting at 509a, the high-pitch of the soul's crescendo, culminating in the vision of the Agathon, gives way to an account of its gradual descent through four corrupt forms starting at 546a. Finally, at 562a, it will reach the depths of the abyss in the debauched dreamworld of the *tyrannos*.. A commentary upon the ascent and descent in the dialogue shall shed further light upon the issue of the *paradeigmati*.

The ascent itself follows a lively, if not entirely friendly debate betwixt Socrates and the sophist Thrasymachus of Chalcedon. With the conclusion of that difference of opinion, the dramatic personae – or, at least, the son of Sophroniscus - are well set for the matter of feasting in the house of Cephalus (literally “Head”). Whatever such appetites the other may have seen fit to indulge, however, they are quickly interrupted by Glaucon and Adeimantus, the sons of Ariston and brothers of Plato. They have not been so easily satisfied by Socrates' defence of justice (*dikaiosune*), and sharpen weapons to be brought to bear against her, so as to force him to steel himself in her honour. Socrates declares that he cannot, in all piety, abandon *dikaiosune*, though he despairs of protecting her against the brothers' spirited charges.[367e-368b] These can be summarized as follows, either *dikaiosune* is:

- a) Good for what it brings,
- b) Good in itself, or,

- c) Good in itself and good for what it brings. [357b-358a]¹⁰

If (c) as Socrates judges, then he must defend it against the charges of The Great Sophist – the teachers, parents, friends, and fellow-citizens of the *polis*, who teach and assert variations of (a).¹¹ They assert that *dikaiosune* results in one or more of the following:

- a) Being just renders external goods and honours in life,
- b) Being just renders external goods and honours in an afterlife or in posterity,
- c) Being just avoids harm and dishonour in life,
- d) Being just avoids harm and dishonour in an afterlife or in posterity.

[358b-359c, 362e-363e]

However, it is also claimed that:

- a) Being successfully unjust renders potentially greater external goods and honours in life,

10 Ferrari emphasizes that Glaucon's division differs from the more typical classification of types of goodness found in the dialogues, and argues that it is colours the classification with Glaucon's own aristocratic "hauteur" and concern with states of being and achievements. See G.R.F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's Republic*. (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 2005), 16-19.

11 Bloom incorrectly writes that Glaucon wishes to hear that justice is good in itself, and compares Socrates' response to the challenge to that of utilitarianism and in contrast to Kant's stance on ethics. Rosen, on the other hand, writes that the upshot of *Politeia* is that "the principle of justice is one man, one job." If that were the end of the matter, however, it would either stand to reason that the entire dinner party, in the name of justice, should have broken-up immediately, and each and everyone get back to their day jobs (most especially Socrates, whom in Plato's *Apology* freely admitted to neglecting his worldly employment); or that politics and philosophy both are unjust, which would amount to conceding to Thrasymachus. Cf. Bloom, *op. cit.*, 396-7; and Rosen, *op cit.*, 14.

- b) It renders potentially greater external goods and honours in an afterlife or in posterity,
- c) It avoids harms in life,
- d) It avoids harms in the afterlife. [359c-360e, 362a-d, 364a-366b]

The arguments of the enlightened Athenians of the day hinge upon several judgements, and interpretations of traditions received from the poets – chief among them Homer, though with honourable mention paid to Hesiod, Simonides, and others. The first is acceptance of a certain hedonic calculus, to borrow a paraphrase from the *Protagoras*. [357b] That is to say that the goodness or worthiness of a life may be measured according to its weight of pleasures and pains. Being just is held to render one the pleasures of life – food, drink, merriment, the opportunity to dally with boys, women, and flute girls – and to help one avoid the pains and travails of a life of *adikia*. Moreover, it is held to render the goods of honours, a fine reputation, and high-standing amongst both gods and humans, both in life and in death. Not least, of course, amongst these nearly innumerable prizes of *dike* are the long posterity and relative immortality secured in one's family, sheltered within a well-ordered *polis*. [362e-363e]

Conversely, it is also admitted that these prizes of just conduct might also be won through unjust means. In point of fact, it is admitted by both the common man of Athens, as well as his teachers, that even greater pleasures and ampler goods may be won by running the risk of committing the greatest *adikiai*. How much greater the pleasures of the tyrant who overthrows the *politeia*, and how great the honours paid them! As for the

gods, as Glaucon puts it to Socrates, one should know that all the young have been enlightened to hear from their elders and pedagogues that either:

- i) They do not exist
- ii) They do exist, but do not care
- iii) They exist, and do care about our doings, but are easily bribed.

[364b-366b]

Adikia, then, upon all of these premises, must be admitted to be the superior path. *Dike* must be relegated to the status of a social contract meant to strike the mean between the greater rewards of doing *adikia* unto others, and the pains of having *adikia* done unto oneself. *Dike* is definable as conduct conducive and in keeping with the *nomoi*, which moderate the potential pleasures and pains of life, and evenly distributes goods and evils amongst all. *Dike* is thus held to be the moderate goddess of a utilitarian existence, honoured chiefly for being a less risky marriage than her sister, *adikia*.

That being said, it is the appearance of congress in *adikia* which makes the affair dangerous. If one could, as in the story of the Ring of Gyges, make oneself invisible, then the prospects for profit would – many maintain – quickly override the rational calculation of *dike* by undermining the balance of potential pleasures and pains, goods and evils. Moreover, one need not appeal to the device of a magic ring to advance the argument. One can simply imagine, for its sake, a just man appearing in the eyes of all to be unjust, while a thoroughly unjust man appears perfectly just. Won't the former be vexed, tortured, and put to death, while the latter would be lauded and honoured above all others, while profiting from his injustices besides? [360b-362d]

The dialogue, at this point, has sharpened the matter to a vorpal edge. In the distinction between the just man who appears unjust before the authority of the *polis*, and his unjust counterpart, we enter into the Mysteries of the life and death of Socrates. For, whom else that than that a-typical man, that *atopos aner*, whose death Xenophon lamented as that of the most just man he had ever known, best fits the author's image of the just man unjustly vexed? What better case to ponder, or paradox to crash the mind against? Was Socrates a just man, and was his being just good in itself, and good for what it brought?

To widen the chasm of thought further between appearance and being, and therefore between what we might call a routine, formal, or procedural practice of *dike*, and the essence of *being* just (*dikaiosune*), additional distinctions are introduced. *Dikaiosune*, as opposed now to *dike* and the *nomoi*, is accepted by the brothers as being in a certain excellent (*arete*) state of *psyche*. *Dikaiosune* shall be to *dike* what being (*wn*) is to appearing (*phaninwn*).¹² Furthermore, as a single *psyche* is a small thing, difficult to perceive even with young eyes, the young men further agree to inflate its size up to that of a *polis*. [368c-369d]¹³

It is upon this footing that the companions venture forward and commence in founding their *poleis*. Their very first founding quickly finds its strictly necessary (*ananke*) proportions. It is relatively small, self-sufficient, and un-luxurious. Its residents each attend to their own *techne*, trade their respective surpluses amongst one another

12 Conversely, we might conceive of the distinction as that of *being* just, and *doing* right, given that *doing* right does not necessarily entail *being* just, as the Myth of Er shall highlight.

13 In fact, this analogy allows the subject matter to be magnified in scale, but furthermore to ease the induction of the students from the matter of particular manifestations of relative justice as they might appear in particular actions, to the more general and more essential matter of being just. The analogy allows Socrates-Plato to lead the party on an inductive ascent from particular appearances to a more universal, intelligible form or essence.

through a differentiated class of merchants, and import and export as little as possible through traders. [370e-371d] When not labouring or at work, the residents indulge in simple meals, with straightforward desserts and relishes, and sing pious hymns to the gods. The *polis* and its underlying *psyche*-type are characterized as *sophrosune* (temperate), as opposed to *polypragmosune* (over-reaching meddlesomeness), and is for that reason declared to be a likeness of *dikaosune* proper. [371e-372c]¹⁴ It is also promptly declared by Glaucon to be a City of Sows, suggesting the psychic-type to be both compact, old-fashioned, and, in so far as those can be held true, deficient. [372c-e] The moderate, archaic *anthropos* is sensed to be missing something.

What is conceived from Glaucon's immediate and immoderate demands for such unnecessary things (*chremata*) as couches, fancy relishes, and prostitutes, is a Phlegmatic or Feverish City, reflecting a feverish or disordered *psyche* which commits *adikia* and *hubris* in proportion to its abilities, its *pleonexia*, and the calculated safety of the ventures. Its *adikiai*, particularly with regards to its neighbours, are the true and open expression of its *polypragmosune*. It too shows forth as it is. However, the small matter of carrying off its *adikiai* against its neighbours presents itself. The *epithumetikon* (appetitive drives) of the feverish *psyche* lacks *arete*, proportion, and relative *autarkeia* (self-sufficiency), and its fever is the manifestation of its *epithumia* – an objectifying lust which is opposed to true *eros*, and to *philia* – for things beyond its means. [373b-374a] To attain such things requires bold (if immoderate and unreasonable) action, and the cultivation of such boldness required a new organ be added to the *psyche-polis*. The new

¹⁴ Voegelin should be credited for pointing-out that *polypragmosune* gains its specific conceptual meaning within the dialogue as what is opposed to *dikaosune*. Ferrari argues that *polypragmosune* has a separate meaning for those belonging to the nobility (as do Glaucon and Adeimantus), and is opposed with being *apragma*, i.e. being a political quietist. See Voegelin, *op cit*, 118; and Ferrari, *op cit*, 13.

organ is the *thumos* (heart), symbolized by the soldiering *phulakes*. And, in keeping with the earlier, if now highly attenuated, precondition for *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune* of one job to one human being, the *phulakes* take on sole responsibility for cultivating the *arete* proper to their vocation. It just so happens that their *arete* is *andreia* (courage).

The following sections of the *Politeia*, from 375b to 443c, then deal with the question of the *paideia* (education) of the *thumos*, for the sake of achieving its excellence. Already, though, we find the matter at hand made-out to be considerably more obstreperous than that of the *epithumetikon*. The latter seemingly required little more than a training in the productive arts, an informal traditional education in self-sufficiency and respect for one's fellows, and the pleasant affections of a private, family life, with minimal *scholē*. The differentiation of the *thumos*, however, suddenly requires the elaboration of a formative *paideia* which demands massive reform of the archaic traditions. This is all the more striking, for the *phulakes* of the Feverish City resemble nothing so much as the archaic warriors of the Homeric epics.

Much like those heroes of yore, the *phulakes* of the Feverish City are all too likely to express their beast-like love of honour and of victory (*philotimia kai philonikia*) in a cruel and despotic rule of others. Along with the danger of despotism, there is the likelihood that they would corrupt themselves through an inordinate love of wealth and possessions, as these are easily mistaken as prizes of victory or tokens of the recognition which they crave. [390a-391a]¹⁵

15 The theme of corruption of the warriors is taken up again during the exposition of the *psyche* of the *timokratos*. [550c-557a]. Bloom too argues that the immediate point of Book IV is to make the guardians moderate, by tempering their fear of death, their tendency towards self-righteous anger, and "the love of one's own". See Bloom. *op cit.* 364.

The dialogue therefore turns to the issue of the education of the heart (*thumos*), such that it strikes the mean between being overly “soft” and excessively “hard”. Among other things, then, the *paideia* of children and youths must strengthen and toughen them through gymnastics, while encouraging a love of harmoniousness through the practices of *mousike*. [410a-412a] Both parts of the *paideia*, it is suggested, are necessary for the excellence of that *cosmion* (little cosmos or order) which is to be reflected in the *psyche*. Making reference to common-sense exemplars from their own experience, they agree that with too much of one or the other, psycho-somatic discord of one sort or another will tend to arise, and results in a falling-short of *arete*. Perhaps more important to the education of young souls, however, seems to be the *mimesis* of good *paradigmata*, for Socrates broaches the topic, and the sons of Ariston readily agree on their importance. [409a] What then follows is a rapid, hatchet surgery upon the fine arts of Hellas, as the epics, mimetic poetry, tragedies and comedies which make up the air of Athenian cultural life in the Periclean Age are subjected to judgment (*crisis*).

Quickly, much of Homer’s epic tales are found wanting, as is Hediod’s *Theogony*, Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, and numerous other works. The criteria of judgment appears straightforward: gone must go all examples of money-loving among the heroes, all examples of *hubris*, *pleonexia*, and *megalothumia*, depictions of rape and incest (particularly when such acts are ascribed to the gods), all suggestions that it is proper for something better to intentionally become or mimic something lesser or base (as when the gods transform themselves, or poets pretend to be beasts or river), and all depictions of an afterlife which make death to seem a thing of horror. [379b-394b]

The young, in short, should not be encouraged to mimic paradigms which would disorder them. What all of the listed examples hold in common are depictions of a *thumos* lacking *arete*: one man's love of honour leads him to demand prizes and wealth – external goods – as his due. Another's leads him to blasphemy and impiety, and to even assault the gods, in his grandiose expectations of what the cosmos owes him. A god sees rape and incest as a prerogative of station, and heroes shudder at the shadow of death. An unsteady heart is a corruptor of one's *psyche*, and an impediment to *dikaiosune*. Hence, there arises a need for the ordering forces of Eros and Thanatos. The young ones' *philotimia* and *philonikia* must be brought back into balance by educating their love of beauty itself (*ta tou kalou erotika*). [403c] Only then will their love of particular things be put into proper proportion. With regards to Thanatos, they are to be given stories which place the particular deaths of oneself and that which one loves in proper proportion relative to the cosmos as a whole (*cosmos holos*). The *muthoi* of the Courageous City supplement for the *kaka paradeigmata* of the poets, a cosmic perspective.

But a bit of slight of hand has been played, for, in spite of securing Glaucon's agreement that good *phulakes*, like good judges, should not be able to find *kaka paradeigmata* within themselves to emulate (*mimesthai*), no *agatha paradeigmata* have been supplied for them to model themselves after. It has merely been assured that such paradigms are necessary. No less unfortunate is the fact that their education, up until this point in the discussion, has been based in *doxa* without established roots in *episteme*. The lack of *episteme* within the young, correlates to their lack of an *agathon paradeigma*. A remarkable lack of finish remains in the picture of the *psyche* and its education at the hinge of the dialogue. Socrates has helped the two brothers raise a fine pack of noble

dogs to guard a brood of well-behaved pigs, but the city-soul as thus presented would appear to lack the much hinted-at and human feature of a shepherd. It consequently lacks the shepherds art of ruling for the good of those ruled. What the brothers have been given instead of a *polis* is a curiously well-ordered barnyard, which has been founded by long-absent lawgivers (*nomothetoi*). It is an incomplete *psyche*, ordered from without by its submission to, and education by, the *nomoi*. It is not at all clear that the brothers have been give an image of a human *psyche*, let alone of a just one.

We approach a turn in the *Politeia* with the apparently thwarted exit of Socrates from the city in speech, as he attempts to take his leave from the discussion. The middle of the dialogue thus parallels its very beginning, which began with the philosopher's attempt to take his leave of the hurly-burly of the Piraeus. The thwarting of the first attempt is effected when the slave-boy of Polemarchus catches the older man by the cloak, and causes him to turn around (*periagoge*). The second attempt to leave a city miscarries when Polemarchus himself takes Adeimantus by the clock and, turning him, asks, "What shall we do? Shall we let it go?", to which, of course, the older son of Ariston replies, "No, we shall not." [449b]

Not a moment before, Socrates was ready to treat his account of the *dikaiosyne* of the polis, and the soul which it represented, as complete -- a conclusion to which Ariston's younger son, Glaucon, had assented. His older companions, however, smell something afoot, and are not fooled. What was that business with the sharing of women and children?, they demand of the old satyr. Socrates is asked to explain himself, and to explain what this has to do with justice in the supposedly beautiful city (*kallipolis*) from

which he is attempting to abscond. After much hemming and hawing, Socrates relents after securing his friends' assurance that they won't be inspired to prosecute him, or treat him harshly [450c-451c].

As the city of pigs is then set to feverish expansion for the sake of Glaucon's unnecessary appetite for relishes and couches, it quickly becomes apparent that it must prepare itself to make war in defence of its unjust consumption of neighbouring lands. [373d-e] Pigs, however, make poor war-makers, and so, it becomes necessary to introduce into the city a class of dogs - the guardians, with souls primarily composed of silver and gold. [374a] This class, later subdivided into auxiliaries and true guardians, of silver and gold respectively, possess the *thumos* necessary to bring to fruition the *epithumiai* of the feverish city. The *andreia* of the dogs, paired with their *philonikia* and *philotimia* fits them to the task of expanding the unjust polis' holdings and defending its gains.

Of course, Adeimantus and Polemarchus are right to accuse the old Pan of cheating them. In effect, the city cannot account for itself, and has not been accounted for. Where are these beautiful (*kalos*) dogs coming from, and why, quite frankly, shouldn't they eat the pigs? It seems apparent that the city, as presented at the end of Book IV, could not possibly function for long once its auxiliaries should begin questioning the veracity of the Phoenician Tale. [414c-415d]¹⁶ As it stands, they have been told that they

¹⁶ Bloom mistranslates the description of the Tale as a *gennaïos pseudos* as meaning "a noble lie", and interprets that the Tale is a lie meant to accomplish two goals: (a) to attach the citizens to this *particular* city, and (b) to sanction a hierarchy based on virtue and a particular conception of justice when "there is no rational basis to be found for justice". I thus read Bloom as interpreting the dialogue as indicating that all political orders are founded upon convention, and in some level of opposition to "nature". Strauss takes the

should feel the workers, labourers, and farmers of the city to be brothers and sisters, and treat them as such. Should the tale be taken literally, as the companions seem to hope that it would be, with time, then it must eventually become an object of incredulity - for what noble dog ever had a pig for a brother? Far safer that the tale be properly understood (*epistamai*) as a philosopher's myth (*alethes mythos*) of existence, one regarding the common spiritual substance of humankind. But where in the city is there a teacher to reveal the true face of the myth? At 440d, it is indicated that the *thumos* will be reared and formed into nobility and justice, "by the speech within him like a dog by a herdsman" and further that the dogs will be, "obedient to the rulers, who are like shepherds of a city". Thus far, though, it's a mystery as to where such a shepherd and his speech have come from, and how they have won their way into the *psyche* and into the city.

By this turn in the dialogue, it seems that the only shepherds have been Glaucon and Socrates, who as *nomothetai* of the city, have been responsible for constructing the beautiful speeches which are meant to be perpetuated in Kallipolis. They are, however, absentee shepherds. Like Solon and Lycurgus, they have laid down the *nomoi*, and vanished from the scene. In their wake, there is only the hope (*elpis*) that the *nomoi* and the *ethos* (habits and moral disposition) of the people will maintain order (*themis*). The

gennaïos pseudos to be a lie meant to "blur the distinction between nature and art, and nature and convention," and compares the matter to the role of the legislator in Rousseau's *Social Contract* (II.7). By contrast, Voegelin correctly translates the phrase into English vernacular as "a Whopper", i.e. as being so much bull-hockey, without any connotation of nobility. I agree also with Voegelin's interpretation of the passage, which, to paraphrase, is to understand that Socrates is, ironically, presenting a spiritual truth, wrapped-up in a Whopper, so as to make it more palatable to the Enlightened Athenians whom he's conversing with; for the sake of brevity, I've chosen to set-aside extended commentary. See Bloom. *op cit.* 365-68; Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1964), 102-104, 125; and Voegelin. *op cit.* 158-62.

maintenance of Themis and Arete thus hinges upon the true or righteous convictions (*aletheia doxa*) held by the residents, and thus upon their faith (*pistis*) with them. The form of the city is, therefore, a function of *pistis* rather than understanding (*episteme*). The hinge of time is rusty indeed, for the history-making deformation and re-formation of the polis by the initial *epithumia* and *pleonexia* of Glaucon has been stabilized from the outside by the *nomothetes* Socrates. However, the *polis* lacks wisdom (*phronesis*) within itself. The relatively compact and timeless form of the city of sows has given way to a more differentiated, seemingly Spartan-like polis, at the cost of introducing more time, and more history.¹⁷ *Polemos* and *stasis* now sit on the doorstep of the city, and along with them, the drastically increased possibility of meaningful change.

§2. *A Divine Comedy*

The problems which confront the companions at the beginning of Book V can be restated thusly:

- I) The well-ordered barnyard of 443c cannot account for its own order,
- II) As such, it's order is unsustainable, without the timely injection of the *alethes mythos* from the outside, by the *nomothetes*,
- III) Even so, the Themis and Arete of the city rely upon the tender hold of Pistis, an unlikely source of order in an age of sophistic rhetoric, and one which is unlikely to last, even in a better age - as the short history of the Solonic order demonstrated,

¹⁷ Bloom expresses the common interpretation that the *polis* established by the end of Bk. IV is meant to suggest an improved Sparta. See Bloom. *op cit.* 380.

IV) The order of the *psyche*, which is logically prior to the polis, is unsustainable for similar reasons,

V) The differentiation of the *thumos* from the *epithumetikon*, and its *paideia*, has been a formative, timely *pharmakon* for the feverish body, but the hard-won distinction threatens to collapse, or, more likely, permit a new disease to arise in which *thumos* turns upon *epithumetikon* (e.g. the myth of Leontius, Homer's Achilles),

VI) The differentiation, which has given greater dignity to humans qua humans, seems to have only plucked humanity from its congenial, relatively timeless, compact existence, only to thrust it into the tragic history of order ever-ready to explode into disorder and *hubris* (e.g. Homer's *Iliad*, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Sophocles' *Orestia*)

VII) Justice, then, really seems to be nothing more than an order necessitated by the differentiations of history - a rather dubious honour, indeed.

These quandaries, which we may venture are meant to represent the quandary of Hellenic order under Homer and the tragic poets generally, underlie the three waves of resistance which Socrates anticipates in reaction to his corrections to the idealized, tragic regime. It is then perhaps apropos that the correction so resembles a comedy, in which the communalistic farce once staged by Aristophanes is re-staged in dialogue. What proceeds thus seems to be nothing so much as a farce of a farce as Socratic irony and philosophy sets to revealing the comedy of the Homeric constitution. However, whereas the Aristophanic comedy had proceeded to outline the complete deformation of the city into a timeless morass, the Socratic comedy proceeds towards ever more elaborate formation, culminating in a vision of eternal being (*tw wn*). [476e-480b]

Firstly, the companions must finish giving account for the differentiated forms within the *psyche* and polis which have thus far revealed themselves. This leads to the apparent comedy of girls and women, young and old, stripping nude to wrestle with the boys and men in the gymnasium. [452a-453a] This image is enough to elicit a reaction out of Glaucon. The logic, however, seems impeccable: if the city is to have a steady supply of dogs, then they must be bred. And, if they are to be noble and beautiful (*kalos*) in form and spirit, two conditions must be met. On the one hand, the best bodies must be determined from among the male and female, and they should be mated as often as possible. [459d-460c] To this end, one would observe that naked, co-ed gymnastics would provide ample opportunity to separate the good bodies from the bad, and select for desirable traits. On the other hand, and more importantly, the examples of the female sex with which the males are paired must be of similar *psychai*. On the surface, this suggests both simply that thumotic women and men should come together, and that thumotic girls and women must be tamed and formed by the same education as the males. While this is true enough, the “why” of the matter is not fully revealed until 549c: that women with an uneducated and unsatisfied *thumos*, who are deprived of what they perceive to be honour and victory, shall be corruptors of their children, and thereby of the regime.

The comedy in the first wave of opposition, then, lies not simply in the visual imagery which Socrates evokes, but the exasperating difficulty of proving to the men that women’s souls are important, and might be fitted to things other than household affairs (*oikonomia*). The female auxiliaries and guardians, in other words, must be properly reared into history, for, as members of the polis, their *psychai* cannot help but be affected by the differentiation from compact existence. Better that their formation support well-

ordered existence on the new plane than move in passive or active resistance to the new order, and threaten to degrade it into timeless chaos - as with Aristophanes' Praxagora.¹⁸

The education of women is thus a necessary, but insufficient, pre-condition to order and justice in the city. Only when the female guardians strip naked and clothe themselves in Arete does she truly become present in the polis. Only then might every citizen practice what they are fitted for, and only then is the city, potentially, just throughout. The stipulation that women and children should be held in common among the guardians and auxiliaries follows from the same premises. What better way to insure well-formed bodies, and to insure that the spiritedness of those groups is not spent upon fractious defence and advancement of their own particular family members? History, after all, had been made more than once by a thumotic mother seeking to advance her child - as the story of Olympias and Alexander reminds us.¹⁹

Still, no true account of the city -- one which addresses the enumerated points -- has occurred before we approach the third wave, whose arrival is launched by Socrates

¹⁸ In agreement with Bloom, we may thus also say that we are invited to make the comparison with Aristophanes' *Ekkleisiazusae*, particularly the fiery, epithumic character of Praxagora (literally, "market activity"), wife of Blepyros (literally, "I stare at fire"). Praxagora's overweening ambition, lust, and uneducated cleverness are portrayed by Aristophanes as the spark for the revolution which turns his fictional *polis* into a timeless chaos of *epithumia*, culminating in the rape of the young and the beautiful by the old and the ugly.

See also Strauss, *op cit*, 109-110, 122-128. Strauss too directly emphasizes Socrates' opposition of the possibility versus the desirability of Kallipolis, but furthermore interprets the explicit introduction of philosophy into the discussion as indicative of a tacit thesis that philosophy is a means to justice. This latter interpretation varies strongly from that presented here, and hinges on an interpretation of justice which subtly merges *dikaiosune* ("being just") with *dike* ("acting justly"), thereby rendering the meaning of minding one's own business and doing unto others what is fitting.

¹⁹ Bloom also draws attention to the capacity for uneducated women to corrupt their children, though he frequently interprets the dialogue as suggesting that either there is a natural inferiority to women which limits the rulers' ability to educate them, or that they are of a different *physis* from men altogether. See Bloom, *op cit*, 381-85.

hesitant statement, “[That] There is no end to suffering, Glaucon, for our cities, and none, I suspect, for the human race, unless either philosophers become kings in our cities, or the people who are now called kings and rulers become real, true philosophers...” [473d]

§3. *The Ascent and the Agathon*

Up until this point in the dialogue, there has been no way for the city in speech to account for itself without blandly appealing to its faith in the *nomoi* handed-down by its *nomothetai*. Even such an appeal, however, merely pushes back the problem in time. For, what account can the *nomothetes*, Glaucon, give of himself? The quest brings us to the dead point at which the lawgiver’s law must be grounded, or risk being declared the particular fancy of a particular person. To do the latter is to abandon it to sophistic relativism of Thrasymachus’ type, in which justice can, with luciferic vigour, be declared the advantage of the stronger, and nothing else. [338c] The *zetema* into which Socrates has attracted the sons of Ariston points beyond the measureless political relativism of the sophist, towards the paradigmatic measure of the philosopher’s soul. The city, it has been declared, is the man writ large, and the measure of man, and therefore of the city, is now revealed to be the philosopher, who is truly the *cosmos* writ small - a *cosmion*. [410e]²⁰

20 Lest the two sons of Ariston again forget this nature of their quest, Socrates casually reminds them at 472b-d. By way of contrast, Voegelin, argues that Plato truly has manoeuvred himself into a genuine ontological impasse in his attempt to broach the question of whether “the order of the *psyche* can enter political order at all.” Voegelin here raises the concern that Plato tacitly recognizes that the true community is not of this world, ala. Augustine’s division of the *civitas Dei* from the *civitas mundi*, but remains bound to a conception of spiritual authority which remains indelibly political, and to “the compact myth of nature” in which body and soul are still thought to be fundamentally inseparable. My own reading brings me close to Bloom’s, in seeing Bk. V as essentially comedic and ironic. Whereas Bloom, though, sees Socrates as revealing the folly involved in treating a city as one body, my reading emphasizes the folly involved in hypostatizing the city-soul analogy such that the *polis* is imagined to be a single, self-contained *psyche*. Ferrari’s reply to Williams is compelling, in so far as Ferrari points out that the city-soul metaphor [sic] does not require the various virtues of the soul to be divided among the various parts of the city, but only

Now, it is the *psyche* of a Plato-Socrates which becomes the ruler by which existence is measured, while the tragic figure of the poets (especially the Achilles of Homer's epics) is pushed down as an inadequate, misleading, and in need of the philosopher's purification. [386c-387b] Only the philosopher can provide an account of himself. His life is animated by his *eros* and wonder (*thaumazein*), which he directs into the *zetema* and into dialectical pursuits alongside his fellow human beings, and from those pursuits arise the *logos* and the *muthoi* of his *episteme*. His reason (*logistikon*) is active in its pursuit of the Ground of being (*to on*), which allows him to distinguish between understanding (*episteme*), folly (*agnoia*), and conjecture (*doxa*). [477a-479a] His *episteme*, however, is not simply of things (*ta onta*) or numbers (*hoi arithmetoi*) but of *psyche*. Having differentiated his *logistikon* from his *thumos* and *epithumetikon*, and having discovered its ground in being in the *zetema*, the philosopher discovers the eternal measure of specifically *human* being. With his *logistikon* as the *archon* of his *psyche* he establishes within himself a *dikaiosune politeia*, which develops the *arete* of each part of himself, and of the whole entire.²¹ The philosopher-king of the dialogue is the only resident of the Kallipolis who is fitted to rule, for he or she has differentiated him or herself as most fully and deeply human. That distinguishing human characteristic lies in self-conscious participation in being. It is their ability to evoke the symbols and accounts of that very human participation, that in-betweeness, which, through persuasion (*peitho*),

the whole be ruled by a class of guardians whom are, on the whole, wise, and rule the lower orders wisely - thereby inculcating the virtues. This brings Ferrari's reading close to that of Voegelin, in as much as both suspect that, beneath the irony, that Plato may have been quite seriously investigating the question of whether it is possible to institute a transcendently-oriented spiritual order in a *polis*. Contrast Voegelin's reading in Voegelin, *op cit*, 142-3, 172-75; with Ferrari, *op cit*; and Bloom, *op cit*, 386.

21 Rosen contends that 500d and 518d should be read to indicate that Socrates claims that *sophia* is the only *arete* of the *psyche*, and that all others are "demotic virtues", i.e. strictly conventional. My assessment is that this reading takes too much out of context. Cf. Rosen, *op cit*, 70.

turns around the souls of their fellows towards their eternal measure, and thereby points them towards order and justice.

The chief defect of the courageous *psyche*, as well as its likeness in the Courageous City, is thus her reliance upon the *nomoi* as the foundations for *phronesis*. In so far as such a being possesses understanding, it is an *episteme* grounded in unquestioned hypotheses, often presented and grasped solely through the *muthoi*. Such a person's *phronesis* therefore has the characteristics of deductive, dianoetic thought, supported by faith and imagination (*pistis kai eikasia*). This sort of common-sense *phronesis*, though, will shortly after be declared vulnerable before those who practice false dialectics or eristics (chief among them the Sophists), who undermine faith in all hypotheses with their combative argumentation, with no honour paid to *aletheia*.²²

Overcoming this vulnerability in common-sense thinking thus requires tying thought and understanding to the very quest for an *arche* transcending all hypotheses. The process of ascent by which the *psyche* is induced from problems and paradoxes to potential solutions is designated *noesis*, and fills the fourth and final position of the divided-line, next to *dianoesis*, *pistis*, and *eikasia*, and their isomorphic counterparts. Under Socrates instruction, Glaucon draws a line which we may reproduce thusly:

²² Voegelin observes that the particular social problem with which Plato must contend is the immanentization and hypostatization of the symbols of the earlier mystic philosophers (including Anaxagoras, Parmenides, and Heraclitus) by a later generation of epigones. On the one hand, contact with the originating experiences has been lost, and with it, the direct knowledge of participation in a common order (Heraclitus' *xynon*) has descended into a sort of intellectual war of all against all. On the other hand, genuine breakthroughs in precision have been gained in the process, and the older symbols and myths have proven to be individually inadequate to the task of expressing the grounds of *aletheia* and *arete*. Hence the Socratic *zetema*. See Voegelin, *op cit.* 117-119, 131.

eikasia		pistis		dianoesis		noesis
-----+-----+-----+-----+-----						
eikonas		ta onta ²³		hypothesia		ten tou pantous archen
<i>horwmenou</i>				<i>nooumenou</i>		

The result of these further differentiations is the open soul of the *philosophos*, whose *phronesis* takes its bearing from being itself (*to on/twn wn*), the suchness of what truly exists (*ousia, hoi eidoi, hoi ides*), and, finally, the vision of the good beyond being (*to agathon epekeina tes ousias*). [576d-580a] Such a person, who has taken the *agathon* as the ground of their *paradeigma*, would be able freely to form conjectures (*doxazein doxa*) and imagine the suchness of existing things which wander in the light of being (*to planeton*). The philosopher's *psyche* alone can be counted-on to bear rightly upon her course, guided by the *arche*. Her *phronesis* can play freely in the space between here and there – the *metaxy* – and maintain *dikaiosune* in her inner *polis*, for it cannot be swamped by eristic arguments.²⁴

23 This is my own abbreviation; the actual Greek is τὸ τοίνυν ἕτερον τίθει ὥ τοῦτο ἔοικεν, τὰ τε περὶ ἡμᾶς ζῶς καὶ πᾶν τὸ φυτευτὸν καὶ τὸ σκευαστὸν ὅλον γένος, and implies all which comes into being or is brought into being, of which the *eikonas* (icons) are reflections or images.

24 Bloom correctly points-out that the Divided Line and the Cave are analogous, and must be interpreted together, though he strangely omits that they must also be taken in concert with the analogy of the Sun, despite the fact that the symbolism of Sun is directly incorporated into the myth of the Cave. As I see it, Bloom is also inconsistent and disproportionate by then over-politicizing the Myth of the Cave, and mangles his interpretation of both it and the Line by deprecating the place of *pistis* and *eikasia* in supporting *episteme*. Voegelin's comments on the Line proper are quite brief; he seems tacitly to assume its holistic character, but his commentary focuses upon the mystical and political meanings of the Cave, and most especially to analyzing the presentation of the Agathon, an analysis with which I am in agreement. Voegelin too, observes that true *phronesis* is gained through the opening of the *psyche* to the good beyond being through the ascent, but I differ with him in observing that a lesser form of *phronesis* is also said to be in effect in the non-philosophic *polis* of Bk. IV. For his part, Rosen claims that 511b3 states that proper dialectic "involves thinking with the Ideas alone, apart from all sensible and imaginable things." It should be clear that I find this to be an impossible reading of the text, let alone simply impossible. Cf. Bloom, *op cit*, 403-106; Voegelin, *op cit*, 166-171; and Rosen, *op cit*, 270. See also Francis Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1949), 28-30.

To prepare the *psyche* for this rigorous leg of the ascent, Socrates prescribes a *paideia* which includes *arithmetikos*, *logistikos*, *geometrikos*, the as-yet unnamed science of geometric solids, and true *astronomia*. [522b-531c] These will bring the *psyche* to bear upon the plethora of problems and questions which induce a search for answers and understanding which lay beyond immediate perception - beyond the habitual prejudgment of sensation. After many years of study, the student, now quite aged, will be inducted into the formal practice of *dialectikos*. [531d-535a]²⁵ Taken together, these studies represent a *paideia* reflecting *to on* and the *cosmos* in all its known dimensions, but which primarily bears upon the *zetema*, and only incidentally yields any practical or productive results, if ever. Whatever sensible gifts which the newly purified noetic and dianoetic arts may provide can only come as a fortuitous blessing, and Socrates warns his young friend against praising them for their practicality. Practicality, it would appear, is the death of *episteme*. If people wish to find the *paradigm* for this blessed *politeia*, they should look for it laid-up in the heavens, if they can find it nowhere else – certainly the private citizens (*idioi*) should not blame them for its absence. The end is a *psyche* who is *cosmion*. The *dikaiosune psyche* is the *cosmos* writ small. It is *sophrosune*, *andreia*, *phronemos*, and maintains its openness through the erotic, noetic search for the beginning and the beyond (*arche kai epekeina*).

§4. *The Descent into Death*

From there, the companions begin their downward descent. Having found the exemplar of the awakened, healthy, well-formed and excellent human, the process of

²⁵ Socrates also makes a point in referring to young people, who have gotten hold of the tools of dialectics before they've matured, as "puppies" who will delight in pointlessly tearing apart whatever they get between their teeth. See [539a-d].

identifying the unhealthy types and their *politeiai* imposes itself, but proceeds quickly. With future generations, deficiencies in the *paideia*, in parenting, and in the community (*koinonia*) conspire with fate to turn the young in the wrong direction and to drive them downwards. The Great Sophist has its way over the potential philosophers, and a *phronemos*' son, influenced by an immoderate, honour-loving mother and disordered friends becomes *timocratos*, one who is ruled by the demands of public honour and the fear of public shame. [547a-550c] The son of a dispossessed *timocratos* becomes *oligarchos*, who rules his disordered passions through force (*bia*), in response to a fear of poverty. [550c-555a] His son becomes *democratikos*, whose *psyche* is likened to a wonderful, many-coloured coat. [557c] He too, attempts to keep his unnecessary *epithumiai* under control, but with less success; inside his *psyche* one finds a veritable multitude of *paradeigmata* harvested from his environment, and his *politeia* takes on one form, then another, in never-ending succession, as the wind blows him. [561c-e]

Finally, their downwards journey flattens-out with the discovery of the meanest of *psychai*, that of the tyrant. Of all the *psychai*, she alone bears closest resemblance to formlessness. In life, she wanders the wandering daylight world as if in a dream, ruled by a disordered *epithumetikon*, wholly enslaved to its *epithumiai*, and finds herself driven by that multi-headed monster in a futile quest for wholeness through the consumption of all that she can. [571a-572b]

The tyrant's is, consequently, also the most miserable of souls. [579a-580a] Frustrated in her *epithumia* when living as a private citizen (*idios*), she lives in constant fear of death or overthrow when she succeeds in becoming the *despotes* of a *polis*. This stands in contrast to the image of the philosophic *psyche*, whose appetites are small,

necessary, and well-behaved (*sophrosune*). The latter has no particular fear of death, at worst considering it a necessary fate of living, and one of no great consequence from the point of view of the *cosmos* which she mirrors. Finally, she is afforded the overwhelming luxury, the “demonic excess”, which comes from the erotic contemplation of the beauty of the *agathon* itself – a pleasure which deprives nobody. The radical openness of the philosopher’s *psyche* is characterized by the depth of her personal participation (*methexis*) in that universal *arche* of all that is and may come to be. That depth of participation and her great welfare (*eu prattein*) becomes possible consequent upon the harmony of the entangled aspects of *soma* and *psyche*, through gymnastics and *mousike*, and the seating of the *logistikon* upon the throne of virtue as its *archon*. It is through the practices (*askesis*) of the *paideia*, including the *muthoi*, the liberal arts, and the art of dialectics, that *logistikon* comes into its own. It is perhaps an ironic trait of the philosopher that his apparently great self-sufficiency (*autarcheia*) and robustness comes about with the realization of a great openness to the wonder of his truly radical insufficiency. The philosopher is awake to his participation in being through his peculiar practices of wonder, *zetema*, *dialectikos*, and *ennoesis* (contemplation). While he is no more complete in himself than any other human, or any thing else in the *cosmos*, his little internal *politeia* is *cosmion*, by virtue of his noetic grounding of himself in the unreachable Ground itself. In self-conscious light of this, his existence is characteristically one of humour; amused and, self-deprecating irony; and playfulness.

The dialectical journey of the dialogue is then complete. The companions have searched-out and found the best paradigm of human being, along with its *politeia* and *paideia*, and an ascending and descending series of types which are compact, on the one

hand, or corrupt, on the other. Capping-off their quest with one final *muthos*, the old satyr conducts them through one final descent. [614b]

Now the descent is symbolized in the story of the Everyman, Er, who descends into death and who is sent back with the Saving Tale. While drawn to and abiding in “a sacred place” between the lower and higher realms of the underworld and the heavens, Er witnesses many strange things. On the one hand, the divine rewards of those who conducted themselves justly in life ascend through a hole in the sky on a thousand-year journey through the heavens. On the other hand, he sees those condemned of unjust lives descend into the ground through a similar portal for a thousand-year trial in a place of fire and horrors. The very worst of those never is allowed to leave, but are dragged off by frightening figures to Tartarus. When Er follows the procession of *psychai* newly returned from their respective journeys, he and they come to the axis of the *cosmos* – the great Spindle of Necessity – around which pivot the heavenly spheres, the Fates, and the Sirens who keep the cosmic harmony. There, the *prophetes* of Necessity announces to all and sunder that they are to choose the *daimon* who will accompany them through their next life, by selecting from among the *paradeigmata* of a panoply of human lives and beasts’. Before they choose their lot, a final warning is given, for each to think and to choose wisely, for there is no shortage of *paradeigmata* to select from, whether choosing first or last. Both the choice and the responsibility (*aitia*) are the individuals’, the God is blameless. [617a-619b]

And from there, Er is recounted to have seen many more wonderful and strange sights, for many strange and awful choices were made by those assembled. This one, having lived justly out of simple habit without understanding, thoughtlessly chooses the

life of a tyrant, not realizing he will be fated to eat his own children. Having played the fool, he curses the God for his own foolishness. [619b-d] That one, the *psyche* of the poet Orpheus, chooses the life of a voiceless swan out of a hatred for womankind. [620a] Indeed, many of the legendary heroes choose the lives of wild beasts over those of civilized men, while Atalanta gave in to the temptation of living the life of a male athlete, and Epeius, crafter of the Trojan Horse, chooses that of a craftswoman. [620a-c] Last of all, crafty Odysseus approaches, and, taking his time, finds the object of his search: the life of a private man with no business in public affairs whatsoever (*andros idiotou apragmonos*). [620c-d] With that, the *psychai* were sent off through choking smoke to drink at the river of Forgetfulness, excepting Er, and are thrown, like shooting stars, by a thunderbolt and an earthquake, across the heavens and to their selected fates. [620d-621c]

With that, the story concludes with Er awakening upon his pyre, having come there how, he did not know, thus bringing his remembering, and the myth, full-circle and to a close. And Socrates, having closed his Saving Tale, brings the dialogue to its end with the reminder that we all should keep faith (*peithometha*) with the convictions (*doxa*) we've come to, if we are to be dear to ourselves and to the gods, to reap the rewards, and to fare well (*eu prattomen*). [621b-d]²⁶

§5. The Typology of Paradigms

²⁶ Ferrari interprets 611e-612a, with its invocation of *catharsis*, as concluding a build-up in meaning signalled by [357a, 519a, 540b-c]. To paraphrase, he interprets it that the purification of the *psyche* can only take place once it has separated from the body; the *psyche* of the incarnate *psyche* of the *philosophos*, by contrast, is merely *hugies*, “healthy”, and must always occupy herself with the necessary or tiresome task of keeping herself in fitting order. See Ferrari, *op cit*, 31-33.

What we, the audience, are thus left with upon an exoteric exposition of the dialogue is an expanded variation of the table outlined in subsection 1. We might now expand and reformat it so as to display the full range of types, like so:

1. “*Hugies*” (healthy): *Philosophos*, *philomathes*, *philokalos*, *archaios*,²⁷
2. “*Thumoeides*” (great-hearted): *Philonikos*, *philotimos*, *timokratos*,²⁸
3. “*Phlegmainousa*” (feverish, inflamed): *Philokerdes*, *philochrematos*, *oligarchos*,²⁹
4. “*Eridos*” (contentious, combative): *Philodoxos*, *sophistes*,
5. “*Anarchos*” (without head, beginning, or first principles): *Demokratikos*, *tyrannos*.³⁰

27 The *philosophos*, *philomathes*, and *philokalos* (my own shorthand for the *phulakos* whom, by the end of Book IV, has been educated into a love of beauty, and into *homonoia*) are the three types whom are explicitly described as *kosmios*, and are bequeathed the epithet of *kalos ka'gathoi* (“gentlefolk”, literally “beautiful and goodly folk”). The *philosophos* psyche is *kosmios* as a consequence of the erotic ascent culminating in the noetic theophany of the *agathon epekeina tes ousias*. The noetic passion of the *philomathes* is characterized by the pursuit of the *phusis* of all things of *to on*, and is *kosmios* by virtue of this eros which pulls him or her “[to] have at hand and bind to his psyche” such eternal realities of being [490a-c]. The *philokalos* partakes at a greater distance through an erotic appreciation of beauty, and by being *homonoos* (“likeminded”) with the noetic community. The *archaios* of the polis of swine, on the other hand, is described as *sophrosune* and *hugies*, indicating that there is something solid, reliable, but perhaps a bit lacking (not to say boring) about him; he is attuned to the *kosmos* insofar as he is in touch with *anangke*. However, the *kosmos* itself is more than *anangke*, therefore he cannot be truly *cosmion*, for the reason that he reflects a part, rather than the whole. The four are thus respectively grounded in the eros for the *epekeina*, *to on*, *to kalon*, and *anangke*. See 376c, 402a, 425d, 489e, and 569a for mention of the *kaloi ka'gathoi*. See 410e, 443d, 486b, and 500c for relevant mentions of the first three types as *kosmion* (either directly, or implied by their assimilation into a category), and 560d for mention the the *basileus*’ responsibility to *kosmein* the *polis*.

28 Of these three, only the *philonikos* and *philotimos* seem pure of heart. While the *philonikos* is driven to achieve, and the *philotimos* is driven by the pursuit of glory, the *timokratos* - while exhibiting both *philonikia* and *philotimia* - is uniquely animated by a fear of being dishonoured before the dictates of the *nomoi*. There is thus something uniquely defective and corruptible about the timocrat, which ultimately reveals itself in a secret love of money. *Phobos* rather than *eros* plays the decisive part in his life; he fears appearing, rather than being, dishonourable.

29 Of these three “feverish” *psychai*, the oligarch is once again unique for being animated by *phobos*: the fear of destitution. In response to such fears, the oligarch endeavours to rule the *epithumiai* (“appetitive drives”) within, such as to keep them hemmed within the boundaries of necessity. As with the timocrat, the oligarch attempts to rule despotically the immanent drives through *bia* (“force”) under the compulsion of fear; ultimately, the oligarch is likened to “two cities, one divided against itself”, reflecting a war between necessary and unnecessary desires in a fundamentally disordered *psyche*.

30 Traditionally, commentators focus upon the exoteric presentation of the three distinct “classes”.

An additional element is introduced by the figure of the *sophistes*, represented most ably in the character of Thrasymachus, and whom is referred to obliquely throughout much of the dialogue – as, for instance, a controversialist practicing eristics, and an image-maker.³¹ Beside him is then the *philodoxos*, who stands as the sort of man who enjoys being well-informed about a range of matters of which he has no particular experience or understanding, possessing only conjectures and hearsay, and who seeks glory in eristic contentions. [480a] This provides us with two defective intellectual types to array opposite the *philosophos* and the *philomathes*: the lover of learning or learned man.³² We shall return to the issue of defective intellectual types and their relationship to political affairs. May it suffice now to observe again that it is the *sophistes* Thrasymachus who is found quite comfortably ensconced in the house of Cephalus when Socrates' party arrives. [328b] It is also the *sophistai* whom are alluded to as the teachers with who the noble-born sons of Ariston must contend as students.

Voegelin notably detracts from that habit, and distinguishes six distinct models of the soul which are then used in the construction of the corresponding model of the *polis*. His six models of soul are the *philosophon* and *philomathes*, *philonikon* and *philotimon*, *philochrematon* and *philokerdes*, corresponding to those in which *logistikon*, *thumoeides* [sic], or *epithumetikon* rules. My own tabulation owes much to Voegelin's groundwork on this important matter. See Voegelin, *op cit*, 162-3.

31 See (492a-493d, 496a, 509d, 596d) for specific references. However, the entirety of the scene from 336b-354c, in which Thrasymachus attempts to take centre-stage, constitutes the fullest depiction on the *sophistes* as a type. The later references have the character of reflections upon the role of the Sophists in the spiritual and political turmoil of a disordered city like Athens.

32 The *philosophos*, of course, is the subject of the bulk of the dialogue. Specific mentions of the *philomathes*, as a type, occur at 376c, 435e, 475c, 485d, 490a, and 535d. In many ways, having the character of *philomathes* is depicted as a necessary precondition to the possibility of growing into *philosophia*. Absent a love of learning, a youth cannot possibly grow into *philosophia*, and a considerable point is repeatedly made by Socrates that the higher *paideia* should be based in the spirit of play and leisure, rather than practicality and advantage (see 536d-537d). The dividing point between being educated into life as a *philosophos* or remaining a *philomathes*, though, would seem to be as whether a student in question is able to form a synoptic view of all that they have learnt. If they can, they can be safely introduced to dialectics. Those who have been unable to assimilate all of their learning into a comprehensive whole, should not be. See 537c.

Part 1: Paradigms, Chapter 2: Man and the Minotaur

“To say the discovery of objective truth in science consists in the apprehension of a rationality which commands our respect and arouses our contemplative admiration; that such discovery, while using our experience of our senses as clues, transcends this experience by embracing the vision of a reality beyond the impressions of our senses, a vision which speaks for itself in guiding us to an ever deeper understanding of reality - such an account of scientific procedure would be generally shrugged aside as an out-dated Platonism: a piece of mystery-mongering unworthy of an enlightened age. Yet it is precisely on this conception of objectivity that I wish to insist...”
- Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 5-6.

Having uncovered a veritable constellation of essential existential paradigms in the *Politeia* in chapter 1, let us turn to the exposition of the hierarchy of exemplars embedded in Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. For Polanyi's part, and for ours, it seems possible to derive a table comprising several healthy and unhealthy types, reflecting healthy and unhealthy modes of knowing and being. The derivation of these types will be the focal task of this chapter's exegesis. The four types are:

The post-critical philosopher

The scientist

The Nihilist (or pseudo morally inverted intellectual)

The Minotaur (or truly morally inverted individual)

To these we might add an historical dimension, and distinguish, as did Polanyi, between static, dynamic, and totalitarian conditions.³³ I shall call this an historical dimension only in so far as the responsible response to one's calling, as Polanyi puts it, can only be attended to from within a given tradition and convivial framework³⁴. It is therefore not to be taken as implied that time or humanity are subject to necessary, teleological, or axiological processes, but only that Polanyi recognizes the qualitative distinctions between these three social settings, and that dynamic and totalitarian societies can become possibilities only through the relative or absolute breakdown of static traditions. It should also be noted that Polanyi affords scientists a privileged position as one among several different groups of cultural leaders, which, in a free and dynamic society, will also comprise artists, writers, musicians, and theologians, among others, and that this should be borne in mind.³⁵

Be that as it may, we may also note certain structural similarities in the progression of *Personal Knowledge* similar to those of the *Politeia*. Whereas the latter, however, lingers diligently over a broad diorama of different ways of life, Polanyi brings to focus the life of the mind as a common feature of being human. It just so happens that the scientist and the post-critical philosopher provide the most articulate case studies, both of the best and the worst possibilities of human intellect and being. Thus, as we read through *PK*, we witness a focus upon the nature of the scientist, who pursues knowledge and discovery within his own domain of study, shift gradually to a discussion of the self-

33 *PK*, 212-214. We shall explore this further in chapter 6.

34 *PK*, 322-323.

35 See *PK*, 220-224. I shall pick-up on this theme again in chapter 6.

discovery of the post-critical philosopher.³⁶ At that hinge of the book, the exposition comes to bear directly upon the subject of the book's sub-title.

Given Polanyi's own confident and repeated invocation of the academically-dreaded first-person personal pronoun, we might just as confidently affirm that his portrait of the philosopher contains something of a confessional, anamnestic element. Polanyi too, we might recall, was a scientist before turning to philosophy. What his portrait of those two ways of being are then systematically placed in contradistinction to, are two very particular kinds of defective self-understanding among intellectuals. These too are personified in very particular figures - most notably Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre - and are classified as exemplars of pseudo and truly morally inverted types.³⁷

But to interpret this classification schema, we require an understanding of Polanyi's understanding of the post-critical philosopher and the scientist. It is these that are presented as paradigmatic ways of being, rather than as simple academic or industrial vocations, and it is this sort of understanding which the author would seem to wish to induce in his audience. For our part, it is perhaps most expedient to progress to the peak

36 Polanyi's sudden shift of focus from the nature of the scientist to that of the philosopher occurs at *PK*, 300, in the context of the discussion of the structure of commitment.

37 It should be stressed here that, by virtue of the structure of commitment and of personal knowledge, Polanyi is retorting the position that a fundamental distinction can be made between one's intellectual or "rational" life, on the one hand, and one's moral life, on the other. One may certainly fail in the moral responsibility imposed upon one by one's personal understanding of the truth; or one may be totally mistaken about the truth, and thus act in accordance with mistaken beliefs about one's calling and responsibility. These are normal moral failures. Full moral-inversion, however, is being diagnosed as a logical consequence of a fallacious understanding of reality rooted in objectivism, which declares truth to be a fantasy or a human creation. If there is no belief in the truth or reality per se, then it cannot make a moral demand upon one. Pseudo and true moral inversion are therefore consequences of false understanding, expressing itself as one's truncated or corrupted knowing and being. One can only be true or be moral, to the extent that knows, understands, and appreciates. Objectivism, as a conceptual framework, thus necessarily debases one's moral life when it corrupts our powers of comprehension and understanding.

of Polanyi's exposition of the fullest potential of man's greatness, by way of a *via negativa*.

To judge from his writings, Polanyi's personal *bête noires* included the dogmatic practices of critical analysis-qua-objectivism, the crucial components of which he felt were best and most consistently exemplified in the radical skepticism of the Pyrronian skeptics and by Democritean atomism. The wider range of -isms (including scientism, positivism, Machiavellism, Sadism, Fascism, National Socialism, Freudianism, psychologism, and Marxism) which come under analysis through the course of *PK*, are treated as classifiable as particular admixtures or species of objectivism proper. Taken together, the Democritean atomism and Pyrronian skepticism form the basis of objectivism as a habit of being, and so deserve a showing.³⁸

§1. Democritean atomism

In so far as Democritean atomism is a concern, two dimensions are quintessential (i.e. the embedded ontological and epistemological claims of the school) and several others may be termed secondary (i.e. specific methods and methodologies). As the secondary features of one avowed Democritean's practice may differ from that of another operating in a different field of study, we shall attend primarily to the essential features.³⁹

³⁸ Yeager, in his study, provides an exhaustive and eminently useful list of twelve components, features, historical antecedents, and other factors which Polanyi, over the course of his career, wrote of as contributing to the character of the age. He passes quite quickly, though, over these two basic seeds of the critical or objective mind and treats them as one, writing "The rise of Western science was closely tied to a mechanistic conception of the natural world, which yielded a mechanistic conception of the person, and that, in turn, yielded a materialist view of politics and "a naturalistic explanation of . . . moral and social responsibilities." (25). I shall be focusing on enucleating these two basic factors, and drawing-out how Polanyi saw them as giving rise to the other factors which Yeager lists. See D.M. Yeager, "Confronting the Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi's Moral Philosophy," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 29, no. 1 (2003 2002): 22–48.

³⁹ These, in turn, as we shall see in this chapter and chapter 4, themselves turn-out to be isomorphic, albeit

For the Democritean-as-objectivist, reality is held to be reducible to its most basic parts, and the goal of any objective science is held to be to describe entities in terms of those most basic parts. As with Democritus, who posited atomic matter and void to be the *archai* of reality, the objectivist asserts reality to be a complex interplay of physio-chemical interactions, which ought to be explicitly describable as a whole – as well as in its particulars – in terms of sensible qualities.⁴⁰ The dream of the Democritean-objectivist, for Polanyi, is most brilliantly and succinctly expressed by Laplace, who posited that if a demon of unlimited calculative ability were supplied with an atomic map of the universe, comprising the entirety of atomic positions and velocities, then that demon would be able to predict every future event to arise ever in the future. By Polanyi's reckoning, the quintessence of the objectivist view of science is the attempt to attain or at least approach the Laplacean ideal as closely as possible.⁴¹

in a way which might not be explicitly known to such a practitioner, who may, like most of us, most of the time, be only subsidiarily aware of those features when attending to the matters at hand. To say that those features are isomorphic is to say that the structure of our knowing of something will tend to reflect, in terms of the depth of our comprehension or the demands for it, the depth of comprehensiveness of the entity being known. Epistemology is thus treated as the most *personal* dimension of ontology, in a manner not wholly unlike a Socratic rendering of an account. Eric Voegelin, at least in his mid-career, seems to have been of the assessment that Democritus himself was not responsible for the intellectual phenomenon which Polanyi describes, but rather that responsibility lies with the hypostatization of his thoughts by later Sophistic thinkers, though he also observes that Democritus, like Anaxagoras, was engaged in “a topical transformation of Parmenides’ Being”. Cf. *Rep*, 509e-511e; see also Voegelin, *op cit*, 117-9, 237-8, 331.

40 Note that Polanyi foresaw that the debate over the implications of quantum mechanics for mechanistic frameworks of biology would be a red-herring. Quantum indeterminacy does not itself preserve a realm of freedom beyond the reach of the mechanistic determinations, as some would think. Rather, it simply renders both the first link, and also the relationships in the determinists’ causal chains ever more obscure, an obscurity which was already the *de facto* case in the time of Laplace, to say nothing of Democritus, as it is in ours. The debate over the meaning of quantum mechanics for freedom thus necessarily proves to be merely an instance of a reductionist argument within the objectivist framework of thought, which leaves the framework itself unquestioned. See *PK*, 140n.

41 It's worth noting that Polanyi - contra both Francis Bacon, and certain of his own contemporaries - does not believe that “the relief of man's estate” was a primary feature of the new framework of science. Rather, the injunction against “useless” contemplation or scientific investigations was a secondary feature emerging logically from a mechanistic view of reality which obscures the moral demands which the truth makes upon our being, and thereby causes us to construe the highest possible ends of moral life in terms of material utility or, in Thomas Hobbes' turn of phrase, “commodious living”. That is to say that holding consistently to an objectivist view of reality forces us to redirect our moral passions in increasingly crude ways. What

Several assumptions underlie this ideal, which Polanyi subjects to examination. The first is a particular definition of knowledge, in which “known”, “knowing” and “to know” are held to denote clear, immediate, and explicit concepts on the part of the knower of the thing cognized. One is then held to have such knowledge of an entity if one can, at least in principle, model it in terms of a complete atomic map. One can furthermore at least claim relative knowledge of a thing in so far as an entity’s discrete physio-chemical qualities can be sensed and modelled.

This then brings us to the second position of the objectivist framework, which is that sensation and perception are but synonyms. To see is to perceive, and vice versa, and similarly for the other senses. To whatever extent that it is admitted that sense-perception may be skewed by the prejudices of an otherwise passive beholder, it is then asserted that it is necessary to overcome such barriers to knowledge. Thus we are brought to the third feature: methodology, and especially experimental methodology, as the means of limiting and overcoming those prejudices which might otherwise hinder knowing the qualities of an entity.⁴²

What then attends these three positions is a fourth. That is that the proof of knowledge is one’s ability to explicitly describe the modelled entity in terms of how it is known. To truly know something would thus be reflected in an ability to completely describe its physio-chemical parts and their interactions, and to attend explicitly and assiduously to the methodology by which the original sense-data was collected in an

Bacon and Hobbes portray as the new science, and Strauss labels modern science, Polanyi retorts throughout his works as non-science - in fact, a deadly threat to actual science and philosophy. See, for instance, (*PK*, 182), where he writes, "Encircled today between the crude utilitarianism of the philistine and the ideological utilitarianism of the modern revolutionary movement, the love of pure science may falter and die."

⁴² See *PK*, 306-309.

unprejudiced manner. This would mean that one had proceeded methodically from an hypothesis to a result, which hopefully is amenable to a generalization or “theory”. A theory, in this instance, is thus understood to be an explicit linguistic or mathematical generalization from sense-data, which has been gathered and organized according to the strictures of a proper methodology. Similarly, by extension, a thing would be relatively known to the extent to which all of these conditions have been met. Objectivity is a measure of how clearly “knowledge” can be abstracted from the knowing “subject”, and represented in clear language symbols.⁴³

§2. *Pyrrhonian skepticism*

Skepticism, for its part, dovetails with the Democritean position in various ways. First, as a practice and disposition of mind, the skeptic will tend overtly to disintegrate all forms of comprehension through the application of the “universal solvent” of doubt. This loss of comprehension must necessarily follow from any truly consistent and radical applications of the principles of skepticism, by virtue of the breakdown of commitment, confidence, and trust in one’s own knowledge, which stems from a critique of the extent

43 We should note here that two conflationations are being made here by the objectivist thinker: first between what the Socratics distinguished as *episteme* and *gnwsis*, and secondly between sensation and perception. In his conversation with the young Theaetetus, Plato’s Socrates spends considerable time attempting to disentangle the nature of *episteme* from that of *gnwsis*, and to also distinguish it from *aisthesis* (there initially defined, following Protagoras’ *On Truth*, as passive sensation). In the end, the younger man is unable to give a *logos* of what it means for him to *epistesthai*, but he sees that his understanding can neither be *gnwsis* nor a result of passive *aisthesis*. Polanyi as well makes the point that passive sensation, or pure sensation, is of a wholly separate experience from the activity of perception (stressing the latter’s active, rather than passive nature). A similar point is made by the psychologist William James. See *Thea*, 151e-183d for a lengthy exploration of the absurdities which arise from identifying *episteme* with *aisthesis*. See *Thea*. 193d-e, 206b for the subtle differentiation of *gnwsis* (knowledge of a part) from *episteme*, and see also Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, 28-30. Cf. *PK*, 314-315, 342, 361-363, 388; and William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, v.2 (Dover Publications: New York, 1950), 1-43.

of their basis in objective, unassailable “fact”. One cannot, by the very logic of the thing, claim to comprehend anything at all if one refuses on principle to accredit and to express confidence in one’s personal conception or understanding of facts. Like the legendary Pyrrho, the consistently radical skeptic would, through their commitment to non-commitment, reduce themselves to a state of mental-emotional paralysis, as a result of a systematic refusal to comprehend which is entailed by a continual breakdown of the structure of comprehension into its isolated parts.⁴⁴

Much as the Democritean’s approach will be to attempt to break comprehensive entities into what he considers to be its fundamental parts, the skeptic will breakdown the structural whole of comprehension into its isolated elements. In practice, however, these two features of objectivism are not truly compatible. The Democritean’s conception of reality may be thought to be reductive and misleading, but it entails a belief in the existence of brute facts which are accessible to the senses and amenable to rational modelling. Universal doubt as a way of life, on the other hand, could only ever reduce the knower to a “voluntary state of permanent imbecility”.⁴⁵

In reality however, few, if any, avowed skeptics reduce themselves to Pyrrho’s state of paralytic incomprehension. In normal practice, the skepticism of a Laplacean objectivist has tended to be over-ruled or by-passed through an appeal to one or more saving graces.⁴⁶ Chief among those has been the scientific method, which has been

⁴⁴ *PK*, 303.

⁴⁵ *PK*, 294-298.

⁴⁶ A similar point has been made by Eric Voegelin, that positivistic and neo-Kantian thinkers in Germany ultimately found that they had to ground their facts through a reference to some value. Ultimately, they would then find themselves declaring an arbitrary value, or some supposedly “objective” value, such as History or the State. This, he found, had the obvious effect of either declaring the current system or status-quo as an ultimate value, whatever it happened to be, or else surreptitiously project ultimate value onto a political project or movement, whatever its character. The upshot was a far-reaching destruction of

faithfully accepted as the source of the scientific discoveries over the centuries, the guarantor of their objectivity, and itself sufficiently well-proven by its fruits to be generally exempted from critique. This method, in turn, is often complemented, or sometimes supplemented, by such devices as Kant's "working hypotheses" and Hume's appeals to "habits" as a basis for accepting any un-critiqued thought or knowledge into the processes of scientific endeavour, or into life generally.

In Polanyi's analysis, all of these represent devices to sneak a belief in truth in through the back door, while playing to objectivist scruples.⁴⁷ Such pseudo-substitutions for truth as a token of reality and for out intrinsic passion to know it, are, by Polanyi's estimation, examples of intellectually dishonest, but necessary compromises made by objectivist intellectuals who wish to maintain the practice of science and philosophy, while avoiding the nihilism and personal moral-inversion demanded by rigorous objectivism.

By way of such partially inverted individuals, Polanyi provides the examples of Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud, Bentham and Dewey, and of the Athenians depicted by Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian War.⁴⁸ With regards to the modern exemplars, Polanyi assiduously documents the overt moral passions of all four men,

common-sense and political prudence in the academy in advance of the rise of the National Socialists, which rendered the intellectual class inert to the threat, or else vulnerable to being sucked-into the movement themselves. See Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (hereafter *TNSoP*) in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 5: Modernity Without Restraint* (University of Missouri Press: Columbia, Missouri, 2000), 98-108.

⁴⁷ One might, of course, also include the magic of nominal definitions, and of closed metaphysical or speculative systems as alternate examples of such devices, as well as the often intellectually – if not existentially – simpler choice of willful ignorance and self-contradiction, i.e. Plato's *anoia* ("folly"). See *PK*, 304-308; *Rep.* 477a-479a. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *The Eclipse of Reality* in Maurice Natanson, ed., *Phenomenology and Social Reality: Essays in Memory of Alfred Schutz*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 185-194; and *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (hereafter *SP&G*). in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 5: Modernity Without Restraint*.

⁴⁸ *PK*, 233-235.

which blatantly contradict their intellectual frameworks, which in fact explicitly deny the existence of moral standards. Sartre, Stalin, Hitler, and de Sade, on the other hand, are presented as fully self-consistent examples of morally-inverted man; having accepted that science-cum-objectivism has revealed the groundless absurdity of life, and that both truth and morality are but masks for the fundamental pursuit of power and profit, such individuals follow through, existentially, in their actions, with the bare implications of their thoughts.

With Marxism, in particular, the pursuit of power and material profit comes to be pursued un-hypocritically, with both truth and reality openly declared to be a creation of the ruling Party, representing the dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas formerly, said pursuits roots in class-interest had been masked by a superstructure of bourgeois “morality”. The Laplacean mind, when finally turned towards the firmament of man’s convivial life and individual existence, will tend to ascribe greater “reality” to his materiality and appetitive drives than to his aspirations. In his reductivism, he will perceive his drives, for instance, as the end of existence, rather than as the subsidiary and necessary elements of a life which bears upon more meaningful and comprehensive intents.⁴⁹ As Polanyi puts it:

“We have plucked from the Tree a second apple which has for ever imperilled our knowledge of Good and Evil, and we must learn to know these qualities henceforth in the blinding light of our new analytical powers. Humanity has been deprived a second time of its innocence, and driven out of another garden which was, at any rate, a Fool’s Paradise. Innocently, we had trusted that we could be relieved of all personal responsibility for our beliefs by objective criteria of validity - and our own critical powers have shattered this hope. Struck by our sudden nakedness, we may try to brazen it out by flaunting in a profession of nihilism. But modern man’s immorality is unstable. Presently, his moral

49 Compare Polanyi’s psychological critique of our contemporary nihilists to Plato’s depiction of Polus and Callicles in the *Gorgias*.

passions reassert themselves in objectivist disguise and the scientific Minotaur is born.”
- PK, 268

The Minotaur, “man masked as a beast”, thus stands as the symbol of spiritually-diseased humanity, followed closely by the contradictory and divided figure of the nihilist. Ascending to the two identifiable healthy exemplars shall now require us to turn to Polanyi’s reflections upon the structure of commitment as the basis for comprehending and understanding.

§3. The Scientist and the Philosopher

In his reflections upon these matters, Polanyi came to focus at length upon one particular feature of knowing and being which bore both upon the fundamental existential question, but also (quite importantly for us), upon the phenomenon of objectivism. That feature is the structure of commitment as the indispensable feature of knowing, which Polanyi illustrates thusly:

{ personal passion ---> confident utterance ---> accredited facts }

Here then, the arrows “indicate the force of commitment, and the brackets the coherence of the elements involved in the commitment.”⁵⁰

This seeming simple diagram, however, serves us as a shorthand or clue as to what underlies it. To bring that fully to light requires considerable unpacking of the individual elements in order to view better the structure in its depth.

50. PK, 303.

To begin to do that, one must, as did Polanyi, begin with the body - that most intimate part of our persons and our knowing. Far from being a convenient (or, perhaps, inconvenient) transportation device for conveying our minds from place to place, and for performing manipulations upon the material world, we are, for Polanyi, as much our bodies as our minds. It is in attending to the larger world outside of the immediate boundaries of our bodies that we learn to dispose ourselves *subsidiarily*, in a relatively skilled or unskilled manner, such that we come to grips with that which we wish to know and to make sense of. Knowing skilfully, or simply dealing skilfully, requires a proper disposition of our persons with regards to that which we are attending to *focally*.

Polanyi's classic, and oft repeated example of this is of the blind man's use of a cane to build-up an understanding of the world through which he's moving, and to get where he's going. It is by *indwelling* in the cane, which he holds just so, and by allowing it to become an extension of his body - to sink into his *tacit awareness* - that he may experience the sidewalk at the end of the cane as he swings it back it forth. If, however, he fails for a moment to dwell bodily in the cane, if for instance he makes focal the feeling of the pressure of the cane impinging on the palm of his hand as he strikes the ground, then his perception of the world beyond the cane will falter. One could say the same of a piano player who starts to pay too much attention to fingers as she plays: her performance will fall apart and become clumsy as she makes the subsidiary elements of her performance the focus of her attention, e.g. the precise movements of her body in relationship to the piano. This elementary element in the development and exercise of our personal knowledge extends from the pre-linguistic attempts of an infant to coordinate the muscular actions of its head, neck, and eyes for the sake of bringing an object in its

field of sight into focus, all the way up to the most cultured and sophisticated performance of a piano concerto by a great master. In each case, it is only when the subsidiary elements of a comprehensive performance are brought to bear upon that which interests us - be it the playing of a piano, or solving a problem which puzzles us - that we may skilfully focus and dwell in it.

With the invocation of language and culture, however, we come to those additional elements of our personal knowledge which we, as human beings, hold exclusively of all beings known to us - or which at least no other animal has been known to possess to any great extent. With language and culture, those essential forms of learning and intelligence which we do share with other animals - most strikingly with the higher primates to whom we are most closely related - are enhanced and extended to a profundity which no other animal can match.

With the ability to develop and express language comes the ability to extend ourselves, our intellectual control and comprehension, more rapidly and completely than would otherwise prove feasible. In so far as it also allows us to aid others in furthering their intellectual control and comprehension, or, conversely, to be so aided by others, it provides the basis for a certain *conviviality* of culture. Through language and indwelling, we may come not only to understand other human beings in their immediate moods and dispositions, but come to apprehend the world as they see it. Through *apprenticeship* and education, we do so in order to come to embody and reflect the understanding - the very being - of those whom we sense to have deeper insight, and than ourselves. Ultimately, we do so by disposing ourselves in such a way as to become more as they are, and this in

our passionate desire, for instance, for deeper contact with the real, the true, the beautiful, or with justice.

Language, education, culture, and apprenticeship then form the basis for a *conceptual framework* which gives a structure to our personal knowledge and to those intrinsic passions. But, lest Polanyi's meaning of conceptual framework be mistaken for that of others, it should be observed that, for Polanyi, our frameworks are not determinate of knowledge or knowing. Rather, it would appear that they serve us in three ways: i) they give some means of expression, however limited, of what we know, but which we may not otherwise be able meaningfully to express, ii) they provide some basis from which to undertake our future impassioned gropings with reality, iii) they cultivate our intrinsic passions as well as our intrinsic intelligence.⁵¹

The key to Polanyi's conception of our conceptual frameworks, then, would appear to be their very status as frameworks within which we find and give direction to our often tacit, inexpressible knowledge, our intimations, and our heuristic passions, as well as our almost purely subjective desires, i.e. for nourishment or for sexual activity.

⁵¹ Yeager holds that "mental cravings are learned cravings", and continues "What will satisfy the cravings is also learned from others, and what satisfies the craving is not an internal state in the agent, but a "public" achievement that further strengthens the practices, tradition, and interpersonal web which awakened the craving in the first place. The standards of achievement are self-set in two senses. Insofar as this layer of reality is a human construction, the standards of excellence intrinsic to it are in some deep sense a human creation, having no grounding in the cosmos apart from being the achievement of human consciousness which is itself an achievement of the cosmos. The particular agent internalizes these standards by dwelling in the framework provided by the articulate system and by being guided by the preceding generation(s) of practitioners." This is true, but only up unto a point, and only limitedly valid as an interpretation of Polanyi's meaning; in a few words Yeager places too much emphasis on the "from" pole of intentionality, and too little on the "to" or universal pole. His interpretation, were it correct, would moreover only beg the question of how the whole process of mental craving started, if indeed it is not natural, inherent, or of the essence of human existence, i.e. it would beg for the same sort of immanentist historical constructions offered by Rousseau, Hegel, or Heidegger, to name pre-eminent examples. Cf. D.M. Yeager, "Confronting the Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi's Moral Philosophy," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 29, no. 1 (2003 2002): 38.

Our conceptual frameworks, therefore, are not determinant of what we know, but form one element of our personal knowledge in service of our personal passions, which we pursue with universal intent.

Stated differently, it is by bringing together and bringing to bear the *clues* subsisting within and without our bodies, and being driven by our passion to know, guided by both our tacit and explicit knowledge and by our conceptual frameworks that - as beings wanting to know - we act to apprehend and consolidate our pursuit of intimations of a hidden reality, hitherto concealed from view and yet, we sense hinted at. This, not incidentally, is Polanyi's answer to Meno's Paradox. First comes the sensing within ourselves of the open-ended and hitherto unrealised implications of what we know. From this follows our diverting of our heuristic passion towards the realisation of those implications, and bring to bear our personal knowledge, our clues, and our intimations upon the problem which we wish to illuminate. In doing so, we hope to make the *heuristic leap* across the *logical gap* which yet both separates those clues into disparate elements, and separates us from that which we perhaps only dimly perceive on the other side. If successful, we comprehend (i.e. bring together) those clues, such that they cohere as a solution to the problem which has troubled us, the implications of which may then itself come to stir us anew.

Thus, even this abbreviated summary serves to demonstrate the tremendous depth of our commitments, such that we may, I suspect, expand the diagram like so:

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{ personal passion  --->  confident utterance  --->  accredited facts}
  _____/ \_____
  | heuristic passion,                                |
  | intellectual passion,<-----
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commitment allows us to make sense of what we have found or discovered, and to accredit the facts as real. Those accredited facts themselves then becomes part of us, for every *heuristic leap* across a *logical gap* which is supported by the *clues* and *intimations* of our knowing and awareness is the crossing of a Rubicon which cannot be uncrossed, and which changes our very way of being in the crossing - it is, in Polanyi's terms, an effective *conversion* of our beings.⁵³

The implications of the structure of commitment for differentiating science and scientism-*qua*-objectivism, is perhaps made clearer if contrasted with the structure of doubt:

Subjective belief; Declaratory sentence; Alleged facts.

Perhaps the most striking difference about the structure of doubt is its status as a non-structure. Absent is the holistic character of commitment, symbolized by the brackets enclosing its various moments, as well as and by the arrows joining them, are absent. In doubting, our knowing is taken apart - or else falls apart: its constitutive elements are rendered into free-floating parts. As such, we dispose ourselves to them separately and

As will become clearer in chapter 5, I hold that Polanyi only strongly advances a demonstration of the latter sort of teleology; I also believe that Gulick's attempt to save the phenomena by holding apart reality and meaning to be un-necessary, as Polanyi himself distinguished intrinsic and extrinsic meanings, and certainly held throughout his career that we can be deeply in error (or even perverse) in our judgements of meaning. My reading of the issue is in much greater harmony with that of Meek and Mullins, though I am in accord with Gulick's three-fold differentiation. For these debates, see *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999); Phil Mullins, "Polanyi's Participative Realism," *Polanyianna* 6, no. 2, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://chemonet.hu/polanyi/9702/mullins.html>, and Mullins, "Comprehension and the 'Comprehensive Entity': Polanyi's Theory of Tacit Knowing and Its Metaphysical Implications," *TAD* 33, no. 3 (2006): 07. See also chapters 4 and 6.

53 It is worthwhile to note that the English word, "conversion" is derived from the Latin "*conversio*" ("to turn or circle around"); whether in Polanyi's or Christian usage, it is thus the symbolic equivalent of the Socratic symbol *periagoge*. I would also not find it the least bit surprising if the Christian *conversio* is in fact adopted from from the repertoire of Platonic symbols.

from the outside, rather than from the inside and as parts of a whole which gives them meaning⁵⁴. Thus, each element of the committed pursuit of reality becomes the object of skeptical interrogation. Personal passion is analyzed for subjective belief, the confident utterance judged as a declaratory statement in terms of the rules of logic and grammar, and accredited facts are transformed into alleged facts.⁵⁵

In the normal course of our pursuit of knowledge, however banal or rarified, vulgar or precious, doubt serves a purpose of critical analysis - including critical self-analysis. By doubting our conclusions or those of others, we subject what is being accredited as a fact to standards of verification or of validation, according to whether the alleged fact bears upon observation, invention, or else interpretation.⁵⁶ Having submitted ourselves or others to such critique or review (of which scientific peer review is a particular species), we may [a] declare that what we or they purported to know is true indeed, [b] find what we know clarified - perhaps in a manner which was completely unexpected, although implied in what we knew beforehand, or [c] it may be declared mistaken, false, misleading, illusory, or untrue.⁵⁷

54 *PK*, 303-304.

55 Regarding the importance of commitment to Polanyi's later work, Cannon writes, "Some readers may wonder about the weight being placed here on the framework of commitment, on which Polanyi claims to 'reduce' his reliance in the 'Introduction' to TD (x) and which does not explicitly appear in his writing subsequent to PK. It is my conviction that the framework of commitment was never abandoned by Polanyi. It simply was not needed to be brought explicitly into account where he was not forced to discuss fundamental presuppositions as he was in PK. But for an outsider needing to learn what is involved in the transition from a critical to a post-critical perspective, it is essential that it be well understood and appropriated." With this, I am in full agreement, as I am with Mullins, who speaks of consciousness as commitment with universal intent. See Dale Cannon, "Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): fn.1. See also Mullins, "Polanyi's Participative Realism."

56. For the sake of space and scope, we shall set aside the additional problems of authenticating facts bearing upon more or less purely subjective (as opposed to personal) experience. For Polanyi's fine distinction between the personal and subjective, and the concomitant distinction between verification and validation, on the one hand, and authentication, on the other, see *ibid*, 201-202.

57. See *ibid*, 303-304. Cf. *ibid*, 120-121, 125-127, 320-321, 373-374.

Should we ultimately satisfy ourselves that what we know is true, the structure of commitment reasserts itself, and we allow our being to be transformed to a greater or lesser extent. In a sense, we commit ourselves to being transformed. This, Polanyi affirms, constitutes the essence of science, and explicitly affirms the logic of Augustine's maxim: "*Nisi credideritis non intelligitis*."⁵⁸

What is ultimately crucial to the commitment of both the scientist and the philosopher is education of a very specific sort. It is not a training in the maxims of an art which serves as a foundation for free thought, nor the addition of a training in the explicit rules of logical deduction from such premises, nor yet methodical procedure. Rather, the bedrock of our commitments to truth, to knowing and being as a scientist or philosopher, lies in a critical *apprenticeship* under the guidance of some form of master. Education thus begins as an attempt to be as our heroes, teachers and masters are, so as to experience and apprehend reality as broadly and deeply as they do, and better to satisfy our heuristic passion.

What such an education demands of the student, however, is a considerably more active and demanding role in reforming himself than that which is supposedly demanded by training. Training, in and of itself, requires a truly passive submission to rules, and the memorization of those explicit bits of instruction which are to be carried out. To be merely trained is to remain the passive subject of the rules, to rely on the thin crutch of established methods as a means of contending with a largely unknown and un-

58. *Ibid*, 267. Incidentally, it should be noted that Polanyi's picture of science is largely commensurate with the traditional understanding of philosophy of the Platonic or Aristotelian variety. In the preface to *PK*, Polanyi himself alludes to the similarities.

comprehended reality. In so far as a well-trained man comprehends anything, it is more likely to be in spite of his training than thanks to it, for a psychological dependence upon what is explicit and upon established methods will tend to drive him to be certain only in what he can see without having learnt how better to see, and being able to act only when rules exist to guide him down established routes. He will be largely unable to deal with reality on its own terms, and could only be expected to demand of it that it conform to his expectations, and to attempt to make it conform or else to break down utterly in the face of it.

Through education and apprenticeship specifically (as with even basic childhood maturation), we seek to mature our contact with reality by learning, from an authority, how to see it, how to touch it, how to think along with it⁵⁹. This need to learn how to get a handle on reality by example holds true whether we are seeking understanding of some particular part or dimension of reality, or it as a whole. The act of learning itself proceeds through acts of *mimesis* and *indwelling*, as Polanyi himself terms them.

Mimesis, in this instance, refers to the primordial manner in which knowledge is transferred from one generation of intelligent animal life to another. It is itself an imitative, heuristic act by which one learns a trick or an art by sharing in the intelligent efforts of another who is accomplishing something, and by doing as they do. Learning through mimicry thus involves the active, bodily and imaginative participation of one in the efforts of another. It as much underlies an ape's learning of a trick which she has seen

59 To reiterate: it is a fundamental point of Polanyi's, and of Plato's, that perception is the intelligent control of sensation in response to an external reality: a reality which is fundamentally not me, and to which I must struggle to adapt my conceptual framework, body, and sensory organs in order to apprehend it. Without the active and intelligent (and mostly tacit) command of my eyes, visual sensations would be little more than an passively sensed field of colourful, if vivid, splotches. See n.38 above.

invented and performed by a more intelligent and daring colleague, as it underwrites the stumbling attempts of a human child to pick-up language and how to act when she imitates her guardians.⁶⁰ Through her trust and imitation of the authority of her guardians, the child's tacit judgments and continuous practice allow her to build up a repertoire of tacit knowledge.⁶¹

What is entailed in this primordial, convivial imitation is not only know-how and language, but also the stable roots of our emotional life. This is so, for we also learn the fundamentals of how to respond to being nurtured, protected, sheltered and groomed through our mimicry of others so cared for, as well as through being cared for. The entire emotional life of a child, as well as of all higher forms of animals, gains its bearings through the life of a mind dwelling in and through her body. Absent those bearings, either through personal isolation or through some grossly distorted upbringing, and she may very well grow to be cripplingly hampered by neurosis. The upbringing and education of our emotional passions is completely and inextricably interwoven into the strivings of our embodied minds.⁶²

60 *PK*, 204-207.

61 It would certainly be wrong to say that her knowledge is explicit, for a toddler may certainly toddle without having or needing the words for how she knows how to do so. It would be equally absurd to ask her how she knows what a certain word means, when the meaning which she ascribes to the word originates from her imitation of what she assumes to be its meaning when used by her guardians' usage. Her knowledge of a skill or a meaning may be faulty or incorrect, according to the higher standards of a critical authority, but its rightness or wrongness is not a function of her possession or lack thereof of an objective account of what she knows. She might know something very well, while being unable to say how. Cf. Plato's *Gorgias*, and the distinction between *empeiria* and *techne*, [462b-466b, 500b].

62 Polanyi himself recounts several studies taken by experimental psychologists, which demonstrate the extent to which sapient animals rely upon sort of convivial upbringing in order avoid complete pathology, if not simple neurosis. In his chapter on conviviality (*PK*, 204-207) he specifically invokes a study of chicks who had been raised in total isolation, and who then had been introduced into company of other chicks. The result was a complete panic on the part of the formerly isolated individual, who ran about in a furious fright, pecking at its fellows; it was unable to get a grip on the frightening new convivial situation, and suffered a total emotional, neurotic breakdown. Most of us could readily substitute examples of such more or less extreme neurosis from among members of own species who are known to us. Polanyi does not unduly belabour that issue.

Indwelling, on the other hand, emerges as the more comprehensive and general category of mental activity. To become like a particular paradigm or exemplar - our chosen masters or teachers - it is necessary that we attend focally to their minds, which we understand to be the fullest expression and the controlling principle of their knowing and being. To follow the mind of a master requires us to attend from the subsidiary workings of his mind – what he says, what he does, and how he does it – to the very mystery of his mind in itself.⁶³ Moreover, we can only come to understand the master's mind and see the world as he sees it, by committing to placing him over us as an authority, and thus actively to subordinate ourselves as his students. What we do, in effect, is accept our master's mind, his way of knowing and of being, as tokens of a higher or more comprehensive reality which is capable of yet expressing itself in innumerable and unexpected new ways which are intimated to, but un-comprehended by us. That higher reality, I submit, may indeed be the very way of being of the master himself – who, by his example, teaches us to live more fully and deeply – or it may in fact be the more comprehensive whole to which our master himself attends to, and even submits.⁶⁴

In the first instance, we may be said to strive to reform ourselves according to the example set by our master, in order to attain a more satisfactory personal being in ourselves. In the second instance, we might almost be said to be seeking a satisfactory

63 Jha asserts that MP believes that one cannot indwell in the body of another. I know of no place where this is said by Polanyi, and indeed it would have been completely inconsistent with the theory of tacit knowing to do so. Jha, for her part does not sufficiently establish the veracity of her thesis. Why can't I indwell in another's body? By trying to understand their experience, mustn't I at least subsidiarily understand the incarnateness of their perceptions, doings, and experience, as I attend focally to their minds? Cf. Jha, "Polanyi's Problematic 'Man in Thought'", 21.

64 We will set aside, for the moment, the issue of what Polanyi termed logical levels and of whether the master attends to lower, equal, or higher realities than himself, to his own status as a predicate of reality, or to a comprehensive vision of the real.

higher state of heuristic dissatisfaction.⁶⁵ For, in seeking to follow the searching, investigating mind of our teacher for the sake of knowing as he knows and, seeing as he sees, and seeing what he sees, we follow it as a token bearing upon that inexhaustible reality which is the happy dwelling place of his own heuristic passion and exploration. In short, we seek-out our teacher's curious mixture of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, a personal state of permanent existential tension, which is characterized by a lasting need to reform one's person in the search for truth. In both cases, we might be said to be seeking greater contact with reality, but in the second, we may also be said to be actively seeking the inexhaustible whole of the real, either directly, or from a life investigating one of its dimensions, bearing meaningfully upon the whole.

The Augustinian maxim, "*nisi crederitis non intelligitis*", thus bears supremely true in describing the way of life of the scientist and the philosopher, for, without submitting to the mind of our master, and, by indwelling in their person, allowing ourselves to be guided by their authority, we deprive ourselves of the ability to learn, to comprehend, and to understand as they do. And, to lack comprehension is to leave ourselves in a dissatisfactory state of disjunction with reality itself – it means living somehow and somewhat less than truthfully. By this reckoning, in so far as that is the case, a truly scientific or philosophic education is a moral education, which matures our embodiment and conceptions of the true.⁶⁶ In light of the tacit, personal dimension of

⁶⁵ See for instance *PK*, 199.

⁶⁶ Yeager, I believe, is leaning a bit too far in the direction of interpreting Polanyi as holding that morality is an emergent reality which "cannot be conceived apart from obligations defined by a convivial order", which fosters the passions and the emotional life of its generations. This is true, up to a point, but I will hold firmly that this interpretation downplays that Polanyi holds that the principles of moral ordering are real in themselves, put certain demands on the individual and on society, and are merely articulated through human lives and mores - with greater or lesser degrees of truth or error, righteousness or sin. Cf. Yeager, *op cit*, 35-41.

knowing, what we know to be true, also we feel to put certain demands upon our being.

The greater our comprehension of things, the greater our appreciation of its value, and the deeper and more precise is our personal calling and responsibility towards it.⁶⁷

Still, we may indeed, as scientists, philosophers, or mature human beings, choose to ignore, to deflect, or to run from our responsibilities to what we know to be true and from our calling to live truly. This, though, comes at the cost of knowingly living in untruth and under the shadow of critical self-judgement – i.e. the shadow of conscience. To not live-up to what we know to be true is an essentially moral failure. Only the complete fool, in his lack of comprehension, is relatively free of responsibility in the dead of night. But even he is subject to the intrinsic need to understand, and thus the call to mature and to take responsibility.

§4. Separating Them Out

What then separates the post-critical philosopher from the scientist? Moreover, what essentially distinguishes them both from the examples of the nihilist and the Minotaur? Primarily it is the commitment to understanding in the sense adumbrated. Such a commitment on the part of our first two exemplars, as we have seen, amounts to a responsible dedication to knowing the truth, which entails a dedication to at least attempt to be induced into a life – a way of being – which is conducive to that truth.

But what then really separates them from our “nihilist” and “Minotaur”? Do they not live “their truth”, one in which existence as such is held to be intrinsically meaningless, or else in which meaning is the creation of power, the mask of the beast?

⁶⁷ Sanders also makes a point of indicating that indwelling or participating in what we are seeking to know, is present in all of the sciences, with the only difference being one of the degree and profundity demanded. See Sanders, “Science, Religion and Polanyi’s Comprehensive Realism”, 86.

The critical difference, so to speak, lies in the Laplacean mindset. Both the nihilist and the Minotaur represent objectivism as a way of life. Human life is ultimately guided by the mind and its disposition of itself from and through the body, and the dispositioning of oneself demanded by objectivism is fairly clear. On the one hand, what is demanded is the absolutely impersonal representation of knowledge in explicit and external form. Thus knowledge is only recognized as such when it can literally be presented as an object. On the other hand, objectivism also demands the suspicion of anything which is not strictly and immediately sensible, regular, and quantifiable. In theory, this conjoining of Greek skepticism and Democritean physics insists upon doubt as the *sine qua non* of knowing, and thus of being. Doubt as a way of life, however, would not even be absurd, it would be completely impossible, as the legend of Pyrrho points out.

In practice, the demands of objectivism must be resolved into less pure forms, such as that of Sartrean existentialism, for it to be at all liveable; the relentless criticism of the skeptical mind overcomes itself through a resolute stand upon confessedly absurd principles. There is simply no other way out of the dilemma of the critical thinker who resolutely refuses to commit to comprehending and thereby understanding anything which evades objectification. One must simply contradict oneself and commit to something. For Polanyi, Marxism represented a fully self-consistent and self-referential form of objectivism, in which truth was openly declared to be a function of the power of the ruling class – the proletariat – which itself was represented through the Party, and which nakedly engaged in the immoral power politics which bourgeois states hypocritically disavowed. Thus, Marxism couples the demands of radical skepticism with

a dynamic and unformed moral passion into a fanatically immoralist, dynamo-objective cult of power.⁶⁸

Power is therefore the distilled and irreducible truth of both nihilists and Minotaurs. With power thus elevated to status of the *arche* of being, all other things fall to the status of derivative functions of power relations, or of hypocritical phantoms percolated from the sublimated depths of un-illuminated minds. This is a logical deduction from objectivist premises, however extreme or tame individual denominations might be. Power, after all, may be passively sensed, may be spoken of, be quantified, used and applied, without any great depth of comprehension, for it itself is not a comprehensive entity. Moreover, it escapes the reductive skepticism of the critical mind by that very virtue; power cannot be coherently broken down into any more basic parts. It is, in itself, an irreducible, strictly meaningless ground, for an objective, impersonal life, beyond all disbelief. What separates the Minotaur from the nihilist is the former's dynamo-objective coupling of his now shiftless moral passions to what he can acknowledge as a real objective: power.

Our two defective types, then, may be delineated by a propensity to reduce all of reality in its many aspects to deductions of power and profit. It is, as Eric Voegelin put it, a sort of substitution of a second, pseudo-reality for the one given us. Both the nihilist and the Minotaur deduce or construct reality from a hypostatically derived first principle, resulting in elaborate systems of thought, complete with epicyclical revisions, and other such protective constructs.⁶⁹ The distinguishing characteristic of the Minotaur is his

⁶⁸ *PK*, 231.

⁶⁹ Compare Polanyi on circularity, epicyclical elaborations, and nucleation as a means of defending one's conceptual framework in *PK*, to Eric Voegelin's analysis of speculative gnosis in *SP&G*. Polanyi emphasizes that what we know - our personal knowledge, which is expressed in our commitments and

resolute commitment to the ultimate logical consequences of such deductive speculation from the principles of his deformed conceptual framework: a furious life of activity dedicated to recreating reality in the image of an objectivist system. The fact that such a quest can only be doomed to catastrophic failure is almost beside the point, for the objectivist is not immediately cognitively or emotionally equipped to perceive the given, and thus cannot comprehend the very notion of overstep, nor the shadow of Nemesis.

On the other hand, our two healthy exemplars are characterized by what we may term an inductive disposition. They are both induced into a way of being which bears them on an impassioned search for the truth of a reality understood as given, and only awaiting discovery and expression.⁷⁰ Both maintain the holistic structure of commitment to such fundamental principles, and are thus able to plunge ever deeper into the world as

perceptions - lies in a circular relationship with our conceptual framework; it is circular in so far as the tacit dimensions of what we know informs our framework, and are in turn guided by it. When we are fundamentally challenged, we then tend to append "epicycles" to our articulate knowledge, by which we seek to address or else cover-up inconsistencies or problems which might otherwise entirely threaten our commitments. By nucleation, he refers to our remarkable ability to defend the whole of what we know against the whole of a challenge, by breaking down the argument against us into parts and then defeating them in isolation. In so far as our frameworks are eternally stressed by the universal pole of our commitment, I do not believe that Polanyi means to imply that we are closed systems of beliefs, but rather that certain frameworks and ways of being (i.e. of the scientist or philosopher) are more open than others (i.e. of the Azande, or the committed Marxist). Even these, though, will break-down in the face of a sufficiently large intrusion of reality; his remarks as much in "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution" while analyzing the sudden collapse of intellectual support for Marxism in Hungary in immediate advance of the 1968 revolt. He also stresses that every use, even the most consciously orthodox, of a word or a concept is ultimately a novel adaptation of it in the moment and given situation, being brought to bear by us upon some reality with which we're grappling; James Wiser, for his part, compares Polanyi's account of man to Henri Bergson's conception of "the open soul". By speculative gnosis, Voegelin refers specifically to the phenomenon of closed systems of thought, which have been consciously constructed by the speculator for the sake of substituting a pseudo-reality for reality as it is actually given. See *PK*, 208-209, 287-292, and *K&B*, 24-39. See also Voegelin, *SP&G*, and James Wiser, "Michael Polanyi: Personal Knowledge and the Promise of Autonomy," *Political Theory* 2, no. 1 (February 1974): 84.

70 See *PK*, 150-151 for more on our "persuasive passion"; i.e. our passion to persuade others of what we know. This points all the further to the observation that we feel that certain demands are put upon us by the truth of reality, and that we feel a deep responsibility to express it, both in our way of being, but also to others. This is as true of the nihilist as it is of the sage. It is, in fact, an amusing irony that the nihilist is more verbose and ardent in proclaiming and persuading others of "the truth" - that man is a nothing and the universe meaningless and absurd - than the sage, who will remain silent and equanimous when asked to speak of the ineffable ground of meaning in reality.

they pour themselves into it and assimilate it into themselves. Doubt and critical analysis, as dispositions of being and thought, take on supportive rolls to the fundamental call to comprehend and understand. We may come to doubt what we know, and subject ourselves to skeptical analysis, but this can only serve to dispel misleading phantoms of comprehension bearing on non-existent comprehensive entities. That is to say that, by its nature, doubt cannot produce confidence, but only hesitancy and prevarication, therefore critical analysis, as applied doubting, can only break-apart the elements of alleged knowledge, not cohere them. In other words, doubt opposes knowing. Ultimately commitment and understanding must reassert themselves if one is to comprehend and to know. Any faith in doubt as the foundation of knowledge represents an attempt to hang one's hat on a blatant self-contradiction.

Upbringing, education, and apprenticeship form the basis of personal, human understanding. The scientist and the philosopher differ from others in this matter only in as much as their understanding has been cultivated under a very peculiar tension of knowing and being. That form of understanding emerges from a blending of comprehension with supportive practices of critique, animated by a passion for the truth of an inexhaustible and delightful reality, which itself is expected ever to reveal itself in orderly, but unexpected new ways. Both the scientist and the philosopher can thus be said to be passionately open to the overarching authority of truth and reality, with the mind and being of the master serving as a token of the true beloved.⁷¹ Our submission to the authority of our masters, as scientists or philosophers, thus serves as a proxy for that

⁷¹ Wiser, reading Polanyi, also stresses the dichotomy between the open soul characterizing the life of reason which Polanyi describes, versus the closed character of the modern self, which aims at objectivity and autonomy. See James Wiser, "Michael Polanyi: Personal Knowledge and the Promise of Autonomy," 77-87.

greater authority to which even masters submit and attune themselves, when they are being true to their calling. Through them, we learn both how to plunge well and skillfully, along with sufficient humility to recognize that we may very conceivably be wrong. Tradition and education, in such cases, serve as the firmament bearing upon something beyond them. It is a life of active induction from particular roots in particular traditions and authorities, to something both true and universal.⁷²

What separates the philosopher qua philosopher from the scientist (and, incidentally, the older Polanyi from the younger – or the older Socrates from his younger self) is the element of self-reflection and the attendant search for personal consistency with oneself. I believe that this element is, on the whole, firmly represented in *Personal Knowledge* as a work. The scientist may *be* a scientist, even a pre-eminent one, while being unable to give a coherent account of himself or what he knows.⁷³ For his own part, Polanyi takes pains to demonstrate the almost baffling extent to which a majority of scientists of his era contradicted what they knew and expressed in their practices, by paying public homage to Laplacean ideals.⁷⁴

⁷² See, for instance, *PK*, 208-209, 300-301, 312-316, 396, 403-405.

⁷³ Polanyi mentions Ernst Mach's pseudo-substitution of 'mental economy' for truth as the criterion for the validity of a theory as an example of this sort of confusion among otherwise brilliant scientists. See *PK*, 166.

⁷⁴ Polanyi makes a particular point of his fact in his discussion of the study and advancement of the understanding of Natural History by biologists. He points to the examples of Sir Joseph Hooker, and of C.F.A. Pantin, who exercised tremendous connoisseurship in their discovery and classification of new species, through the use of their own senses (Hooker alone was credited with discovering over 7000). It was such connoisseurship, rather than objectivist methodologies and reductivism, which allowed for the identification of species. In spite of lip-service paid to the principles of objectivism, no biologist had ever seriously considered, in practice, employing totally randomized gene-sampling as a means of identification and classification. In fact, the decision to submit a specimen to genetic study can only be used to help settle a question of classification once such a connoisseur has *perceived* that such a question exists. See *PK*, 348-354. See also n.33 above.

It's not too much to suggest, then, that the image of the post-critical philosopher is a reflection of Polanyi, whose mind we are invited to dwell in through the reading of his writings, particularly *Personal Knowledge*. There, we see the courage to commit to what one knows to be true in one's own person, in spite of the necessary hazards of error – for one must always know more than one can tell. That holds true, both at the deepest roots of ourselves – the inherited bodily and cultural apparatuses of our minds – and across the boundary separating the familiar from the unknown. For what we know must necessarily imply, however ethereally, what we do not; it is a clue, the proximal term, the subsidiary element of something awaiting our discovery and comprehension. It is this process of induction, the logical leap from the known to the unknown, which supplies Polanyi's answer to the riddle of Meno's Paradox. Thus, through a simple act of faith or trust, both the scientist and the philosopher overcome doubt and can come to extend themselves beyond their existing conceptual frameworks. The latter, however, does so in full awareness of the fact, and with a certain humility complementing his confidence in his person. It is a purposeful token of this confidence and humility that Polanyi, the philosopher, insists upon the dreaded invocation of the "I" in his writing. Moreover, it is a token of the contemplative and exegetical nature of post-critical philosophy: such a philosopher, in some very meaningful sense, knows himself to be a mystery bearing upon himself the responsibility of a call to a much greater mystery of which he is, and plays, but a part.

It is therefore the exegetical, or reflective, character of Polanyi's philosopher which sets him apart as the most sound and well-rounded example of human being. In his humble acknowledgement of the universal intent of his calling, of his commitment and of

his responsibility, he is nevertheless aware of the personal and tacit dimension of what he knows. He is simply aware that there is something ineffable about existence, that there is no objectivist escape from the hazards of error nor of failure, nor from moral weakness and temptation, but that the burden must be born and the hazards run, if life is to be lived fully, lived well, and lived humanely. Such is what the exegetical enterprise of the philosopher adds to the open, inductive existence, that balancing of comprehending and critiquing which issues in understanding, which he shares with the scientist. He simply understands Who Man Is: a Whence and a Whither in search of a Why.⁷⁵

§5. Philosophy, Induction, and Indwelling

By dwelling in the texts, and treating them as the token expressions of the mind of two great teachers who bear themselves upon the truth, we find ourselves engaged in an exegetical project. We must interpret the master's words with the belief that some sort of understanding of something might come from us as a consequence. We must also believe ourselves capable of comprehending correctly, of validating our comprehension, and, moreover, we must believe that our effort to comprehend the meaning of the words, and the understanding which they express, are actually worth the while. Short of all that, we will scarcely comprehend a thing, and then only in spite of ourselves and our doubts, and a failure to comprehend can only impede any advancement in one's understanding.

⁷⁵ As Polanyi himself put it, " 'I believe that in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings.' This sentence, summarizing my fiduciary programme, conveys an ultimate belief which I find myself holding. Its assertion must therefore prove consistent with its content by practicing what it authorizes. This is indeed true. For in uttering this sentence I both say that I must commit myself by thought and speech, and do so at the same time. Any enquiry into our ultimate beliefs can be consistent only if it presupposes its own conclusion. It must be intentionally circular."; *PK*, 299. Cf. *PK*, 324

“*Nisi credieritis non intelligitis*”. A certain truth of the Augustinian maxim flaunts itself again. Indeed, we are equally well reminded of the place of *pistis* in Socrates’ account of understanding (*episteme*), as given in the *Politeia*, and the structural necessity of commitment for knowledge in Polanyi’s account. Without belief, the elements of knowing fail to cohere, and without coherence of thought, our minds cannot be induced to make leaps in understanding, cannot transcend whatever existing hypotheses, prejudices and judgements (*doxai*) which we currently hold. Far from being the universal solvent of superstition and ignorance, doubting lends itself quite readily to a hidebound disposition – to an inclination to dig one’s heels into the earth and refuse to be turned or led anywhere. While doubting, when practiced with Pyrrho’s rigour could only turn one into an invalid or an imbecile, such a mitigated, hidebound stance transforms a man into an ass. Under such circumstances, the exegetical project would scarcely get off of the ground, if at all.

Indwelling, though, implies more than faith and comprehensive, noetic thought. There is, of course, also a deductive element implied in following through to the consequences of certain premises – be they tacitly or explicitly known. Novel deductions from within a given conceptual framework, affirms Polanyi, constitute a vital and valid road to discoveries implied, but overlooked, in what we know.⁷⁶ But there is also a crucial need for imagination: one must be able to reorganize and to expand one’s own existing

⁷⁶ See for instance the distinction of the originality of a discovery to that of an invention. The first consists in “seeing more deeply than others into the nature of things”, while a novel invention consists in turning known facts to a surprising new advantage. See *PK*, 178. But, more to the point, one may point to the formal reorganization or renaming of known concepts and facts which render clear something hinted at obscurely in what we know. Polanyi lists the examples of the restatements of Newtonian mechanics by d’Alembert, Maupertuis, Lagrange, and Hamilton; the mathematical work of Paul Dirac which reconciled quantum mechanics and relativity; and other examples to press the point that a reformulation of what we know can itself bear considerable fruit, and point the way to new discoveries. See *PK*, 147-150.

conceptual apparatus to be able to articulate a discovery and to grasp it well enough to express it cogently. To coin an imaginative way of speaking in a general fashion of something known personally, provides us with the means to articulate something new and meaningful. This articulation of a more or less general and explicit conception of what we think and know into symbolic representations, provides us with new objects of thought – new concepts – which open up new pathways for our heuristic passions to pour through. To have relatively objective new symbols in mind provides us with further means for conceptual reorganizations, which help to reveal what we know, allow us to critique, and to deduce or comprehend with universal intent.⁷⁷

To that extent, imagination too is a vital contributor to understanding, in Polanyi's estimation. Nor can its place in the Socratic tradition transmitted through Plato be much doubted – the body of Platonic dialogues themselves are nothing if not great works of art, issuing from a tremendous imagination. The dialogue as a form, itself represents a new form of prose, and no easy one. Their contents themselves consist in a narrative imagining of wide-ranging conversation, incorporating striking, pedagogic myths and metaphors, and insights secured in language through novel adaptations of the vernacular.

By dwelling in the mind of our teachers and masters, and by attempting to mimic them, we seek, more or less a-critically, to conform ourselves to an authoritative paradigm which we see represented in them. Conducting an exegesis of ourselves also implies our holding of such an a-critical standard, in light of which we then judge ourselves. It just so happens that, behind that paradigm, there lies an aspect of reality

⁷⁷ For the importance of imagination in general, see *PK*, 84-87. For its place specifically in mathematics, see *PK*, 186-187. See also *PK*, 334, for the allusion to “visual imagination” as one particular way of conceiving rules of rightness regarding this or that.

upon which it all bears. A thorough-going exegesis implies an exegesis of ourselves, and entails coming to a self-understanding of the a-critical knowledge and standards upon which we stand. It also asks of us that we come to a humble acceptance of the fact that we can hardly stand no-where and commit to nothing if we are to know anything and to develop some level of judgement. Maturity is the mark of knowing the limits and possibilities, as well as the depths, of our calling and of our responsibilities. We may be called to evoke the truth with universal intent, but we may do so from a very limited, even dubious, background of education, and we may utterly fail. But, it is the only background which we have to work from, and so we must work from it to the universal truth of the matter, if we are not to fail to be truly human.

Knowing this, I feel confident in affirming that this lesson lies both in the *Politeia* and in *Personal Knowledge*, the latter in which it perhaps made more explicit. In fact, it would be irresponsible not to avow this affirmation, given the facts laid bare by an exegesis of myself. In dwelling in these texts, I, for my own part, do so for the sake of following the minds of their authors and apprehending matters as they do. This then leads to the obvious question of validating my own comprehension and understanding of these two men and therefore that of which they speak. It provokes, for instance, the rather hoary question of the extent to which I might say that the *Politeia* is “Socratic” as opposed to “Platonic”? Is the dialogue a genuine revelation of the mind of the teacher, Socrates, or the pupil, Plato?

I believe that accepting the personal nature of knowledge allows us greatly to attenuate, if not entirely dispel, the force of such lines of doubt, and to step out of a vicious hermeneutic circle. The logic of personal knowledge compels one to admit simply

that Plato is a separate person from Socrates, as we are from Plato. We should therefore abstain from the extreme position of claiming that any dialogue either is the mind of Socrates laid bare, or a work of his mind. If we accept, however, that Plato was indeed a student of Socrates, in the pregnant sense which we've outlined, then we should accept that any work of the mind of Plato is a work of a mind which shaped itself to a standard to which it attended very closely for many years, both in life, and in living memory. It is thus impossible to claim that any of his dialogues is either "Socratic" or "Platonic", unless we are prepared to believe that Plato completely subsumed his individuality for one portion of his life, and then radically recreated himself from first principles later on. But I believe this to be an absurd possibility, requiring us to believe that Plato was not, in fact, exactly human, but rather some sort of demon or god.

Instead, I would suggest that we simply acknowledge Plato as a Socratic philosopher, and his Socrates as truly Socrates-Plato: a representation of the teacher, painstakingly painted from the personal experience and knowledge of him by a close, brilliant, and captivated pupil. By dwelling in the dialogues, thus we dwell in the works of the *psyche* of Plato, who is himself, to some extent, dwelling in the living memory of the *psyche* of Socrates.

Moreover, neither work of our two authors can be understood independent from the reality upon which they bear, and in which they are embedded. In both cases, I have suggested that the most immediate aspect of reality upon which they both dwell is the question of Who Man Is, and of the fullest expression of being human. Proceeding from that intimation, it was then possible to derive a veritable panorama of human "types"

reflecting a range of different ways of being, all arrangeable according to their proximity to the best, most human life, represented by the philosopher.

In so dwelling in and with these texts, I have thus attempted to interpret them and the minds of the authors for the sake of judging myself. Doing so required proceeding from my own roots, while subordinating myself to a standard placed higher than myself, and which I myself have had to uncover and comprehend from those written symbols of their mind, with the aid of such living teachers and colleagues as I could find. Ultimately, however, it is, was, and ever shall be, reality, rather than static, dogmatic authority which grounds such endeavours and gives them reason, and it is the ability to perceive reality more fully and deeply in its infinite possible manifestations which is bare token of the correctness of a path.⁷⁸

In my experience, these two texts do so induce the personal faculty to open-up, to comprehend, and to understand reality on its own terms, and to do so on the terms of accepting only a certain structure of knowing and being – albeit one which most almost certainly be enabled by some very careful pedagogy. Moreover, the sort of pedagogy which supports the life of science and philosophy in the precise senses, strongly presupposes a certain kind of political and social order.⁷⁹ The life of the philosopher embraces the tension of critical and a-critical dispositions of the mind, both tacit and

⁷⁸ Both Mullins and Gulick compare this aspect of Polanyi's exposition on reality (what Esther Meeks dubbed the "IFM Effect") to the Athenian Stranger's discussion, in Plato's *Sophistes*, of the *dynamis* which characterizes that which has real being; Mullins, Sanders, and Cannon also allude to the participatory dimension of all indwelling, which implies parallels with the Platonic and Aristotelian conception of *metalepsis* if not *methexis*. I believe that they all are correct to note the parallels, though I believe that Gulick's comparison is set off-track by a misreading of the meaning of the *ideai* and *eide*. See Phil Mullins, "Polanyi's Participative Realism"; Walter Gulick, "Beyond Epistemology to Realms of Meaning", 29-30; Andy F. Sanders, "Science, Religion and Polanyi's Comprehensive Realism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 86; and Dale Cannon, "Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 51-61.

⁷⁹ We shall pursue this line of enquiry in chapter 6.

explicit knowing, critical analysis and comprehensive understanding in a dynamic, free, open, and self-reflective search for the truth. Yet, for all that, the philosopher is hardly a god. Rather, this is the description of someone who is incredibly human, and vulnerable. The dynamic society which would foster philosophy or the Republic of Science, must share in these quintessential features, at least for the most part, through its traditions and institutions. To this extent then, it is perhaps correct to say that the best political order is the philosopher or the scientist writ large.

Part 2: Passion, Chapter 3: For Love of the Beautiful

“Hang on,” said Socrates. “What are you planning - to give a eulogy that makes fun of me, or what?”

“I’ll tell the truth, will you let me do that?”

“But of course I’ll let you tell the truth; I order you to.”

“Here I go then,” Alcibiades said. “But this is what you can do, if I say anything that isn’t true, interrupt, if you like, and point out what I’m saying is false. I don’t want to say anything that’s false. But if I don’t get things in the right order, don’t be surprised. It isn’t easy for someone in my condition to list all the aspects of your peculiarity in a fluent and orderly sequence.”

- Socrates and Alcibiades, *Symposium* (214e-215a), trans. Christopher Gill.

What pulls us? What is it, this hook which we find embedded in ventricle, tangled in frayed nerves, and pulling, pulling, whither it would? *Paswmen helkomen deuro kai ekei*, “We are all pulled hither and There.” The Greek language bequeathers us with no end of language describing the experience of the pathos of being hooked and drawn - a richness of symbols which Socratic philosophers have poured over in the course of their own *zetemata*, none more-so than Plato of Athens.

Helkesthai, tension, eramai, eros, storge, philein, philia, thumos, epithumén, agapein, agape, erastes, eramenos, agapomenos, pathos, Aphrodite, Aphrodisia... A mere survey of the simple verbs and nouns which the Greek language gives over to this peculiar and personal class of *pathemata* might make the English poets blush from a sense of inadequacy. Nevertheless, we shall persevere, though perhaps restrict ourselves to those symbolizations which are of immediate concern.

As we have perceived in the previous chapter, a clear gradient of symbols, centered on *eros*, emerged from the exegesis of the being of the *philosophos*. This central role of passion in the life of reason and the pursuit of wisdom remained a constant, whether the direct subject of analysis was the *psyche* writ large, or the incarnate life of the mind of the post-critical philosopher portrayed by Polanyi. In the course of that analysis, a clear differentiation also emerged which set apart passion from the drives - *hai epithumiai* in Plato's works. To this we then must add the investigation into the *thumos* and its supportive role to either the *epithumiai* or the, or to the impassioned *zetema* and the particular expressions of that passion in the life of reason which Polanyi distinguished as the heuristic, persuasive, and moral passions. Lastly, we are presented with the question of distinguishing the place and nature of *philia*, and its role in the emergence of *homonoia* and *koinonia* - of likemindedness and conviviality.⁸⁰

All of these questions then, must be addressed in order to circumnavigate our primordial experience of tension: why such a centrality of *eros* in reasoned life? In what manner does the erotic *pathos* differ from the *pathos* of the drives? Cannot the erotic life of the philosopher be construed as simply a complex working-out of sublimated appetitive drives under the pressures of civilization, as per the Freudian construction?⁸¹

80 For the sake of clarity, let it be noted here that Polanyi's usage of the word 'society' has the meaning of a convivial life in a community; it is thus roughly equivalent of the meaning of *koinonia*, rather than the phenomenon which Hannah Arendt dubs 'society', i.e., a worldless and de-politicized 'modern' community.

81 Rosen, for his part, conflates *eros* with *epithumia* (in the sense of "sexuality" or selfish carnal appetite), and thus approaches this position; for examples of Rosen's identification of the two, see Stanley Rosen. *Plato's Symposium*. New Haven : Yale University Press, 1968, 6, 84, 225, 274. See also Rosen, 126, 188, where Rosen is explicit in describing the act of ascent in the Diotimian Mysteries as a form of 'sublimation'. Strauss too, explicitly assimilates *eros* to *epithumia*; see Leo Strauss, *On Plato's Symposium*. (Chicago, Ill, University of Chicago Press, 2001), 58-59. See also Strauss, 10, where Strauss commits the error of identifying the third part of the *psyche* with *eros* - the actual part in question is the *epithumetikon*,

What is the relationship of the heart, the *thumos*, to the matter? What is the place of the *aphrodisiai*, the experiences of conjugal union with the body of another, to the issue: are they properly passionate or appetitive (if indeed we even admit a distinction)? What, finally, is the relationship of the erotic mania of a philosopher to the *philia* and likemindedness of convivial life?⁸² Indeed, what possible relationship could there be? Finally, can *eros* be distorted?

To begin to address these questions, we will turn inward again, and let ourselves be drawn by the questions through another round of dialogue by turning to *The Symposium*, for it is there that we find these questions of the meaning of *eros* are posed and explored. It is also there, represented in the figure of Alcibiades, that we see juxtaposed an exploration of the haunting problem, both in the existence of an individual soul and in the political life of a commonwealth, of the distortion of passion which may give rise to the revolt against reality and the calling of *nous*: particularly when such existence in revolt takes hold among the political elect, amidst a society in spiritual decline.

§1. *A Long Expected Party*

as I identified in chapter 1. The error is explicable, if Strauss truly thought passion to be a form of appetitive drive, rather than vice versa.

⁸² For reference to erotic mania, see for instance *Phaedrus* [237a-238d, 241e, 242b-d, 244a-245c] and particularly [250d-256e].

Socrates, we are told, enters upon the scene of Agathon's inner abode in a manner which is as unambiguously Socratic as it is queerly Falstaffian - he is last to the feast, yet first to an impending battle, and one and all of his friends are invited to wonder how much irony to read into or out-of the order of his arrival. Having evaded the celebratory drinking battles of the previous night, he arrives late to the party, washed, anointed, sporting both footwear and clean robes - and this after having been detained for an indeterminate stretch of time on a neighbour's porch by his own wonderings and contemplations. Having earlier conscripted the uninvited Aristodemos ("Best of the People") into the arrangement, he had left then his poor friend in the awkward position of arriving first, and then with the task of restraining Agathon's restless eagerness to send his slaves to drag the son of Phaenarete inside by his cloak. [175c-d]

This is the scene set by Apollodoros ("Gift of Apollo"), to his speaking companion, Glaucon ("The Gleaming One"), and it already bespeaks of an amusing emotional tangle centred around a certain pot-bellied, Satyr-faced philosopher, who seems Hades-bent on driving his friends to distraction. Aristodemos, Apollodoros implies, was clearly not invited to the party, and both the panting impatience of Agathon and his immediate demand that Socrates lay next to him on his couch when he finally manifested, as much as suggests why: Aristodemos, who spent so very much time with the older man, might very well have been pegged as a rival for the philosopher's affections - or at least his attention.

“The Good” thus finds itself in rivalry with “The Best of the People”, whom Socrates has been tending to, and who he has now steered towards Agathon’s door. So, at least, reports Apollo’s Gift, our cantankerous and ironic storyteller, who spins a recollection of events which now lay many years in the past, and which he himself did not partake in, but merely heard about from Phoenix. Thus we find ourselves resurrecting a recollection and committing ourselves to yet another anamnestic meditation under the guidance of a skilled, storytelling philosopher - who himself is being written by another storytelling philosopher named Plato.⁸³

The anamnesis takes the form of the recounting of a series of *encomiai* or eulogies in honour of Eros, which had taken place among the friends at the banquet that night.⁸⁴ The story written for us by Plato has been passed on to Apollodoros by Aristodemos, who admits to not remembering every speech, nor every word verbatim. [173a-174a, 180c-d] Rather, he evokes a dramatic recollection for his audience, one which conjures up the spirit of the affair. The drama itself then proceeds in a discrete ascent through a series of speeches and interludes. It begins with the bridling of the agents of Dionysus by the rule of the appointed symposiarch, the Asclepiad Eriximachus, the chief agents of the vine-god, Aristophanes (“Shines Forth the Best/The Best to Shine Forth”) and Agathon, having

⁸³ The anamnestic structure and intent of the dialogue is also perceived by Rosen; see Rosen, *op. cit.*, xxviii, 1-3.

⁸⁴ Gill provides us with the six elements of proper a proper encomium, as taken from the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, attributed either to Aristotle or Anaximenes of Lampascus : [1] The origin or genealogy of the subject, or an account of their noble birth, [2] an exposition of their good qualities (other than virtues), such as good looks or strength, [3] virtues such as wisdom, justice, courage, and ‘practices that win reputation], [4] habits and way of life, [5] achievements of the subject, in contrast with those of others; given that the praise is (supposedly) of a god, it also assumed that reciprocal benefits may come to the speaker. Of all the *encomiai*, only those of Agathon, Socrates-Diotima, and Alcibiades are complete praises. See Christopher Gill’s introduction in *The Symposium* (trans. Christopher Gill). Penguin. 1999, xx.

proclaimed themselves to be far too hungover to indulge in further heavy drinking.⁸⁵ That having been decided, the flute girl is sent off to “play for herself, or for the women”, and the men agree to water the wine and to drink moderately, while the initiative for the *encomia* circles from the highest couch in the room and from left to right.⁸⁶

§2. *Phaedrus, The Much Beloved*

That very perch so happens to seat Phaedrus (“Shining Dew”), the handsome and much sought-after young man, and sometime student to Lysias the Orator, son of Cephalus; it is Phaedrus whom, Socrates once remarked, has inspired more speeches than any Muse in Athens.⁸⁷ He, it is said, begins his paean to Eros in the proper manner, by paying honour to the god’s venerable lineage. It is asserted that He is among the very oldest of the immortals, and had sprung-forth from Chaos (literally, “the gaping maw”) along with Ge (“Earth”) in the primordial period before the birth of Chronos (“Time”). Phaedrus finds support for this belief in the accounts of the prophetic poets, particularly Hesiod, but also appeals to the authority of Parmenides, who, the young inspirer recounts, ascribed Eros’ origin to the first creative act of the Goddess, Ananke (“Necessity”).

[178b-c]⁸⁸

85 Note the Thracian and Dionysian connotations of unwatered wine.

86 Note that the flute is a symbolic token of Marsyas, the goatish god once skinned by Apollo, and, later in the dialogue, identified with Socrates.

87 *Phaedrus*, [242b]

88 See Parmenides, *On Nature*, 8.30 and cf. fragments 9, 10, and 13. Phaedrus would appear to be referring to fragment 13, which would seemingly indicate that he is referencing the section on *doxa* rather than *aletheia*. Strauss’ interpretation of Phaedrus’ quotations fixates upon Eros, which dovetails with a reading that gives pride-of-place to *poiesis* and *genesis*, but my thoughts are that this interpretation requires

In this weaving together of the theogonies of the prophets and the philosophers, the young man spins a portrait of a god of nye insurmountable venerability and authority. His Eros has something of the compulsion of Necessity about him, as well as the status of agent of the *hieroi gamoi*, the divine couplings, which brought forth the divine and telluric forces of the cosmos. Eros does not unleash hidden new forces, he compels their genesis and is the one responsible for the generation of the cosmos, which has since become a manifold of immortal gods enfolding a multiplicity of mortal creatures.⁸⁹ As such, Eros is to be credited as the *arche* of the immortal structures of consciousness itself - of Titanic Mnemosune, Metis, Prometheus and Epimetheus - as well as the Time which passes and makes thought possible. Indeed, as the *arche* of Mnemosune, Eros is the very ground of Recollection, and it is thus suggested that he is the ultimate *arche* of the tale itself.

With this account of Eros' venerability and authority thrust upon the table, Phaedrus proceeds to praise the immediate benefactions of Eros upon human beings. Here, the account turns to the dynamic between *eromenos* and *erastes*, beloved and lover, which compels their transcendence of themselves and their doing of immortalizing deeds.

While Eros drives the lover and the beloved - the active and passive members of the couple - together, it is the attending children of Honour, Shame and Pride, which draws the tension between them tight. The fear of appearing shameful and dishonoured in

suppressing the fact that Phaedrus gives equal recognition to the yawning maw of Chaos, and to the broad-bosomed Ge. Cf. Strauss, *op. cit.*, 47-48.

⁸⁹ Hesiod recalls a limited range of primeval parthenogenesis directly after the emergence of Eros from Chaos. See *Theogony* II, 116-138.

the eyes of lover or beloved is more compelling than the fear of death. So strong is it, in fact, that one would sooner lose one's life than break the bonds of Eros by dishonouring oneself in the eyes of one's love; Phaedrus goes so far as to claim that an army of lovers would surely be undefeatable upon the battlefield. So compelled to protect their lovers and to shine in the eyes of their souls would they be, his argument goes, that they would sooner die many times over than act the coward or to fail to defend them. No greater and more permanent guide in living well could be substituted for Eros - not public honour, nor family bonds could inspire as much, and no greater spur for the practices and achievements which make both individuals and *poleis* great [178c-179b].

To push home the point, Phaedrus again draws upon the myths of Hellas. Did not Alcestis, the *erastes* and wife of Admetus sacrifice her life for him, when even his parents would not? Did not Achilles, *eromenos* of Patroclus, cease from his brooding to avenge his lover's death by Hector's hands, knowing the burden of death which that act would bring down upon him? Are they not honoured and immortalized by mortals in myths and gods in the afterlife, at least as greatly as Orpheus is mocked (and even sentenced to be torn apart by Bacchantes) for seeking to win back his wife through faithless trickery? Indeed, in so far as those two came to stand as paradigmatic examples for the Hellenes, right up to Phaedrus' own generation, there would appear to be merit to saying that the eros between mortals is the surest path towards courage and *eudaimonia*, both in life and in death. [179b-180b]

With that, Phaedrus, the shining dew of many an Athenian man's eros, ends his speech. Thereafter, we and Glaucon are told, there passed some number of speeches which Aristodemos couldn't recollect (*diamnemoneuo*) and which Apollo's gift couldn't report on. We are instead left with the impression that they are somehow irrelevant to the object of meditation, and fall by the wayside as the parts which actually bear meaningfully upon the whole are gathered together. So extraneous are they, in fact, that Aristodemos can't even remember their speakers. And yet that very status as extraneous noise which bears no meaning to the purpose of the meditation itself, is itself quite intentionally included for mention in the dialogue, which invites us to reflect upon its meaning relative to, not eros, but upon *anamnesis* as such.

§3. Pausanias, *The Gentleman*

That seed having been planted, the report turns then to the speech of Agathon's older lover, Pausanias ("He Who Stops Sorrow"), whose *encomium* turns the symposium towards, not the god, but rather the goddess, Aphrodite. Thus does the evening's discourse slip into the matters of the undying divinity of conjugal intercourse, *ta aphrodisiai Aphrodites*. Once again, appeal is made to the authority of the poets to establish a venerable lineage, now of Aphrodite and the Eros which serves her. Now though, the myths are mixed in order to establish that not one, but two Aphrodites and two attending Erores form part of the structure of the cosmos.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Hesiod's placement of Eros before Aphrodite in the aetiological chain is politely ignored by Pausanias,

Both Aphrodites, by virtue of their divinity, are to be honoured, but the elder more so by virtue of her age. She is Aphrodite Ourania, the goddess who was born of the seed spilt from the castrated genetalia of Ouranos (“Heaven/Sky”), which fell upon the waves of the sea when Chronos severed Sky’s fecund link to Earth, thereby allowing the Titans the space to emerge from her womb. The older Aphrodite has nothing of femaleness about her, but is all maleness, owing to the lack of a female principle in her genesis. The younger goddess is Aphrodite Pandemia, reputed to have been born of the congress of Zeus and Dione, and, therefore, possesses both maleness and femaleness; both goddesses have their respective names Eroses - Eros Ouranos and Eros Pandemos. The younger goddess is indiscriminate in her effects, attracting all and sundry to each others’ bodies in the pursuit of personal, carnal satisfaction. The former attracts lovers to *psychai*, and is the benefactor only of human males. [180d-181d]

But this attraction of men to the *psychai* of men and youths also seeks satisfaction in physical union with one’s beloved. Moreover, it is difficult to discriminate a lover animated by Pandemic Eros from one pulled by the Eros of Heaven. [183d-184a]

By the account of He Who Stops Sorrow, this quandry of discriminating between two types of lovers gives rise to the peculiar and paradoxical homoerotic customs of such civilized and urbane *poleis* as Athens, where men are accustomed to holding forth in

or brushed over by the assertion, somewhat supported by conventional view, that Eros served at the behest of the Olympian goddess, whatever the relative antiquity of their origins. Rosen, for his part, wishes to sharply identify the Ouranian and Pandemic Aphrodites with the Titans and Olympians, respectively, and Pausanias with the Titans (i.e. Prometheus and Chronos), in order to suggest his temporal and Promethean ambitions, which nevertheless, due to Pausanias’ “softness” seem to be limited to gaining greater license for pederasty through a reform of the Athenian *nomoi*; cf. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 64-68.

eloquent speeches. [184a-185b] The *erastes* is encouraged in his pursuit by friends and family, and is not shamed for kneeling before his *eromenos* like a man enslaved to him. He may sleep on his beloved's porch, beg and plead for his favours, and suffer no recriminations, public or private; even the gods forgive lovers for breaking their oaths in the midst of their heat. [182d-183d]

The younger *eromenos*, on the other hand, is kept away from his suitor, warned, guarded, and threatened with punishment should he gratify his pursuer. All this, says Pausanias, is, on the one hand, to prevent the exploitation of the bodies and affections of youths by false lovers - those enchanted by Aphrodite Pandemia. But, on the other hand, the man who loves his beloved for his *psyche* will find pleasure in the intercourse of words and in the improvement of his virtue and wisdom (*arete kai sophia*). When and if they partake in *ta aphrodisia*, it furthers *philoarete* and *philosophia*, and therefore inspires *philia*, rather than an impulse to flee the scene of a crime. [183e]⁹¹

All of these ends lay behind the erotic conventions of the *polis*, and supports the character of Athens. The *nomoi* present an *agon* to lovers; he who succeeds in the trials will be the one who furthers *philia*, *philosophia*, *storge*, and *arete* in the city. It is only this sort of lover, who benefits both the *psyche* of his beloved and the *philia* which constitutes the commonwealth, whom a youth can gratify and serve without shame, for Athenians hold that there is no dishonour in servitude in the pursuit of virtue.

[184e-185b] These gifts and such forms of love are the graces of Aphrodite Ourania and

91 For Strauss' take on Pausanias' statements regarding loving what is abiding in the lover, Cf. *op. cit.*, 72, 79-81. Strauss sees Pausanias' insistence on making decent character the test of love to be problematic.

the Eros who serves her; the other forms, *epithumia* in particular, derive from “the other Eros, the common one.” [185c]⁹²

So ends the speech of Pausanias, “the best that he can do on the spur of the moment.”

§4. *Eryximachus, The Doctor*

Next, there is a disruption in the flow of *encomiai*, as Apollodoros recounts it. Aristophanes the comic was meant to go next, but he is subjected to a severe bout of hiccups, and he harangues doctor Erixymachus - “Restrains Battle” - to either help control the outbursts of his body, or to take the playwright’s spot in the procession of speeches. His friend offers him one better: he will prescribe a course of treatment which should restrain his silly noises, and give his own pean while Aristophanes inflicts various embarrassing cures upon himself. [185c-e]⁹³

Eryximachus proceeds to praise Pausanias’ plying of Eros in twain, but chides that they should recognize that eros is not solely an emotional response of humans to

92 *Eros Pandemos* and *Aphrodite Pandemia* in Greek; *pandemos* is translated by Bury and by Lamb as “popular”, and by Nehamas and Woodruff as “common”. Alternate translations might be “vulgar”, but this adds a both a pejorative and a patrician sense to the term which is not at all called for; the sense given by the text is of one sort of *eros* which is experienced by all, and another only experienced by few.

93 Strauss reads the reversal of order to mean that the two men’s essential positions on Eros are interchangeable, cf. Strauss, *op. cit.*, 95. Rosen, by contrast, reads this as a symbolic submission of political poetry to *techne*, cf. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 90-92.

beautiful people, but that He is present in the responses of nearly all incarnate things.⁹⁴ It is manifest in the responses of animals to each other, in plants growing in the body of Ge, it is at play in the relationship of antagonistic elements to one another (such as hot and cold, wet and dry, bitter and sweet), in the movements and tempers of the winds, in the seasons, and in the movements of the stars themselves. [186a-b]

Medicine, he puts forth, is the art concerned with reconciling the divergent forms of *eros* in the body, in order to gratify the good parts and to prevent the indulgence of the bad and diseased parts. As the good doctor euphemistically puts it, doctoring is an art concerned with the proper understanding of “emptying and filling” with regards to *ta aphrodisia*; much as Pausanias suggested, one can’t be going about emptying oneself and filling others willy-nilly. [186c-d] Rather than handing-over the proper practice of the gifts of Aphrodite to the ancient customs, though, our Asclepiad suggests that we need a bit of guidance from *episteme*.⁹⁵

It thus falls to the doctors (perhaps contra Heraclitus, whom, we are told, might not have expressed himself very well on the matter) to promote concord and harmony among the divergent elements of the body through the proper guidance of the *erotes*.

94 Eros here takes on the status of a prime-mover, much akin to that assigned to *philia* by Empedocles, who juxtaposes it against *eris* as a force creating unity, as against the disassociating tendency influence of *eris*. The similarity is likely more than coincidental, given the association of Empedocles with the medical arts.

95 Rosen seemingly mistranslates the meaning of *demiourgos* repeatedly throughout his exegesis of Eryximachus’ speech, rendering the word simply as “demiurge”, and taking with that the modern English connotation of a Creator. This English usage is, derivable from Plato’s use of the symbol in *Timaeus*, and by its subsequent adoption into Christian theology and philosophy. However, it should be recalled that the original, Greek connotation is of a servant-artisan of the *demos*; it does not fit well with any attempt to depict the doctor as an hubristic Frankenstein. Cf. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 103, 105-107.

Under the inspiration of the Muse Ourania, goddess of astronomy, music for instance promotes the sort of *eros* of well-ordered folk, while the rhythms of Polyhymnia promote the *pandemic eros*, and must be used cautiously, lest it encourage that over-indulgence in selfish pleasure which Pausanias censures. So too does medicine also aim at the proper handling of the *epithumiai* of the body by the regulation of diet, lest pleasurable indulgences in food lead to illness. [187e]

But, lest we think otherwise, it is the *erotes*, not *polemos* as Heraclitus mused, which influences all of the opposing elements of hot and cold, dry and wet, and so forth. Under the influence of well-ordered *eros*, they come into harmony with each other in a mixture which is *sophrosune*, promoting the health, growth, and well-being of all things. [186d-187c, 188a] But, when the other *eros* dominates, cosmic disorder, destruction, and disease run rampant. [188a-d] Thus do we find the *kosmos* of antagonistic elements which Heraclitus had imagined replaced with one pulled by two loves, one leading to harmony and *kosmos*, the other promoting pleasure, satisfaction, and also disintegration. Eryximachus' eponymous calling to "restrain battle" takes on the connotation of a divine mission to promote in the bodies of men the harmony of the *kosmos*.⁹⁶

Indeed, as if to press that point, the good doctor ends his speech by crowning the sciences of *soma* and *psyche*, medicine and *mousike*, with a third art meant to promote the cosmic *philia* betwixt gods and mortals, children and parents. Sacrifices, divination,

⁹⁶ We note once again the suggestion of Empedocles' call to *philia* in his *On Nature*. Rosen, while recognizing the underlying Empedoclean myth, characteristically focuses upon the issue of pederasty, and reads Eryximachus' speech as a pretension to give such relations a cosmological justification. See Rosen, *op. cit.*, 110-112.

and prophecy are the means by which the gods promote *episteme* of the right order of the *erotes* which affect right-action and piety. [188b-d] The ground of *philia* within the commonwealth and in relationship to the gods is now relegated to the divine and to its representatives: the *iatroi*, the poets, the mantics, the priests, and so forth. *Eros* as all the while is the total and final power, but that *eros* whose power (*dynamis*) is expressed in good-action is marked by *sophrosune* and *dikaiosune*, and is the source of all of our *philia* and *eudaimonia*. [188d]⁹⁷

Eryximachus' *encomia*, though, brings the eulogies only to the threshold of the immanent gods and the cosmos. His is a vision in which it falls to the divine representatives of such gods to maintain harmony and proportionality in the cosmos and among its elements through the management of the dual *erotes*. Disharmony and unrighteous behaviour are not to be construed as an endemic feature of the relationship of beings, but a possibility which can only be understood in the light of the fundamental ordering principles of the cosmos under the rule of the gods and *philia*. It falls to the three categories of human servants of the gods to make right that calling, by channeling the

97 In all of this, we seem encouraged to anticipate, or else recollect, the status of the *philosophos* as the *erastatos*, the most erotic lover, who, as judge and statesperson, judges and seeks to turn around the *eros* in the souls of their fellows. Indeed, it is Socrates' status in the *Politeia* as the *iatros* of the diseases in the souls of Hellenes and the disorders of the *poleis* which is recalled to mind, as is the grounding of *philia* in the *zetema* which is induced by the *eros* for the *Agathon epekeina*. Rosen, on the other hand, sees Eryximachus' as advocating the use of *techne* to "eliminate the natural war between opposites", i.e. to overcome nature, which dovetails with the doctor's desire (ultimately thwarted by contradictions) to uphold pederastic over heterosexual couplings.

I see this reading as rather forced, given the decidedly subordinate and mediating position given to the *iatroi* in Eryximachus' myth. Rosen's reading can only be upheld by first demoting the cosmological symbols to an exoteric status, and then, secondly, by accepting the premisses i) that the first three speeches are chiefly and esoterically concerned with presenting arguments for pederasty and for conquering or controlling nature, ii) and that the speeches miss their mark due to contradictions, which are to be resolved in the final speeches. Cf. Rosen, *op cit*, 112.

divine forces in the manner befitting three categories of immanent existence: as bodies, as psyches, and as members of the *koinonia* which represents man in his relationship to the divine cosmos.⁹⁸

Eryximachus' account, therefore, remains compact and quasi-cosmological in terms of its horizon of understanding. The *erotes* and their related Muses possess a divine status whose hands can now be said to be felt throughout man's being, however, they retain a status of immanent, cosmic forces acting within and actively reconstituting the *kosmos* through the institutions of the *poleis* as the collective *cosmioi*. There is not yet a clear conception of an ordering force within the individual *psyche*; *philia* and *eudaimonia* are presented as the bequeathments of a certain expertise exercised by the divine servants, and the gods themselves take on an ambiguous status. On the one hand, human beings are brought into *philia* with the gods through the prophets, whom have the understanding of how the operations of love in human life lead to right behaviour and piety.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the gods bear little resemblance to the immortals depicted in the Homeric myths, who sow discord and strife amongst mortals and bring entire *poleis* to ruin out of *phthonos* and sheer contentiousness. Eryximachus' Empedoclean myth of the *kosmos* directly challenges the *muthos* of the epic poets, much as it does the *logos* of Heraclitus: *kosmos* and *philia*, rather than *chaos* or *eris*, constitute the ground of the quarternarian

98 A similar compactness of symbols can be seen at play in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, in which the poet muses both that it might be impossible to be a good man in an evil *polis*, and that entire *poleis* may be destroyed for the badness of a few. The possibility of being just in opposition to a surrounding disorder lies somewhat outside the horizon of experience or articulation of either man. See Eric Voegelin, *O&H*, v.2, 195-224.

99 One can read this elevated calling of the prophets, mantics, and oracles as an anticipation of the story of the mantic Diotima, later in the dialogue.

structure of reality. The lot of harmonizing man and society in the *sumphonia* of divine *erotes* falls to the *techne* and *logoi* of the three orders of servants.¹⁰⁰

§5. *Aristophanes, The Comedian*

And with the ending of the Asclepiad's speech, so do the comedian's disorderly eruptions finally come under control, though only, he chides his medic, after he had tried holding his breath, gargling with water, and inducing sneezes as he had been prescribed. [189a] He can scarcely think of which orderly part of his body wanted for all that. After a bit more mutual ribbing, Aristophanes resumes his post as speech-giver, and warns the others away from treating his *encomium* as a joke, though *his* muse may well induce him to say absurd things. [189b]¹⁰¹

In spite of everything, this epicycle in the speeches results in a steady course; whereas Aristophanes' speech shall burst the seams of their tapestry, those of Pausanias and Eryximachus had taken-up and expanded Phaedrus' in their turn. As they account for it, Eros, when well-tuned, serves the symphony of the *kosmos* by driving mortals above themselves; through its *kinesis*, they may participate in weaving the *philia* which binds them together in *poleis*, and the *poleis*, in turn, in harmony with the immortal gods. In the process, they may immortalize in eternal Mnemosyne through the path of right-action and

100 Note that Eryximachus' myth is incomplete, in so far as it lacks the historiogenetic dimension, or any sort of genetic myth whatsoever, unless we suppose that he takes-up that of his friends - a possibility which may introduce paradoxes.

101 See also Rosen. *op. cit.* p.131-132. Rosen advances the case that the brief exchanges betwixt Aristophanes and Eryximachus dramatize the danger of splitting *logos* from *muthos*.

by reconstituting the erotic *philia* of the *kosmos* through the common *muthoi* depicting an authoritative Past. Phaedrus established the personal *pathos* of immortalizing *eros* for one's beloved; Pausanias, the political *nomoi* which foster the pleasures of heaven-borne *aphrodisia*; and Eryximachus, the ranks of divine servants whom guide the frothing course of the *erotes* into the overarching symphony and firmament of universal *philia*.

Our fourth-hand account of the comedian's eulogy to Eros makes rubbish of all of that. Human nature, we are told he said, was not once what it now is, and we must learn the *physis* of what it means to be human, and its *pathemata* ("*dei de proton humas mathein ten anthropinen phusin kai ta pathemata autes.*"), if we are truly to *aisthanomai* - to see - the power of Eros and do him the honour which he deserves. [189c] To that end, our "Vision of the Best" then conducts us through a concise anthropogony, which establishes the place of humanity in the weave of things.

In ancient times, we were not as we are now, two sexed and walking about on two legs. Rather, we were two-fold and of one of three *genes* sprung from one of the chief celestial gods, Helios, Ge, or Selene (the Titanic Sun-god, the Earth-Mother, and the Moon-Goddess). Like them, we were round and even in all directions, being whole and sufficient in body and in *psyche*: we possessed two heads, four arms and legs, two sets of sensory organs and of genitals, and could thus perceive in all directions at once and find pleasure within ourselves. However, when aroused to do so, we could, like *kukloi* ("wheels, circles, cycles") spin about on our two sets of limbs and set-off with a tremendous fury. Our division of sexes were three-fold, corresponding to the three divine

parents and the possible combinations of the two sexes of the present-day: the *arres* (“male”) descending from Helios, the *thule* (“female”) sprung from Ge, and the *androgynes* (“man-woman or hermaphrodite”), descended from Selene. [189e-190b]

The trouble with our wholeness began when, glorying in our strength and vigour, we took it into our heads to storm heaven and assault the gods themselves; this then is the true story behind the myth of the gigantomachia which is sometimes attributed to Ephialtes (“Nightmare”) and Otus (“Doom”). [190c] Rather than electing to annihilate humanity as they had the ancient Giants who had been born of Ge, (and, consequently, interrupting the sacrifices), the gods agree to Zeus’ plan to knock some proper humility into us by splitting us all in twain with his thunderbolt. And thus, violently were we all split from our other halves, and found ourselves weeping and clinging piteously to them upon the ground. So calamitously effective is the breach in our wholeness and the consequent bereavement that we were then found to be endangered with extinction, for all would so lie, prostrate, dying even of thirst and starvation, clinging pathetically to our other halves. [191a-b]

Looking down upon that scene, Zeus is then said to have conspired to make something workable out of the piteous mess of humanity, and moved their genitals around to the front of their bodies, so as the better to join in each other for a brief spell and find some respite from their woes. Indeed, now, with the conjoining of the female and the male members, children might even be conceived within the woman, whereas

before, the *sperma* of the two sexes could only be spilt upon the Earth to mix and to conceive after the fashion of certain bugs. [191b-d]¹⁰²

Eros and congress in Aphrodite are thus the *iatroi* who apply balm to the divine wound of our broken natures. To be sure, though, Phaedrus and Pausanias were not wrong to dither over the particular place of the male-male couple. However, we are slyly made to wonder at the veracity of Aristophanes' praise of the custom of pederasty, though he insists that he is not poking fun at Agathon and Pausanias. [193c]¹⁰³ For where, after all, is to be found that symmetrical other-half, that proportional yearning for my equal, in the seduction and keeping of a younger, passive partner? The conventional division of the erotic relationship between the active lover and the passive beloved, whatever the particular genitalia involved, is implicitly critiqued as radically insufficient to the needs of our broken natures: we find sufficiency only in being lovers and beloveds of our others, in being pursuers and pursued.

Moreover, the Empedoclean vision enframed by Eryximachus' speech is left challenged. Aristophanes' moving account of our *pathemata* and our brokenness stands in stark contrast to the *pathos* of an harmonious symphony of *philia* under the divine

102 Note that "woman" has been distinguished from "female" by this point in the speech, possibly indicating a new, now purely conventional role of "manness" and "womanness" under the new order of a divided human nature.

103 Strauss believes that Aristophanes is entirely serious in his lauding of pederasty, arguing that the comedian is setting-up a natural, stratified hierarchy in the erotic relations in the city, wherein pederastic relations will bring-out the most splendid (Sun-like) political life. However, given that that symbolic circularity of the original males demands two equally proportioned halves, it seems to me that the manifest inequality implied in the relationship of an established adult and a youth or adolescent is being criticized. Rosen falls into the error of simply conflating homosexual and pederastic relationships, ignoring that the latter necessarily implies the inequality of lovers while the former does not; we can thus logically interpret that the comedian is only critical of the latter category, which would necessarily imply also heterosexual pederasty. See Strauss, *op. cit.*, 135-137, cf. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 140.

guidance of the gods and their servants. The depth of the tension is captured first in Aristophanes' myth of Hephaestus. There, it is posited that, given the choice by that god to fuse ourselves to our other, and thereby become one and a whole, both in life and in death, wouldn't every one of us leap at the opportunity. This as much as suggests that our deepest quest for wholeness can only be fulfilled by subsuming ourselves and our others in a single, physical body, radically annihilating our beings and our differences.

[192d-192e] Further on in his speech, our Aristophanes then warns that we would do well to submit to the new hegemony of Eros, lest in opposing him we incur the wrath of the heavens. Instead, we should follow his dictates - let everyone find their favourite, and in them find their ancient nature (*ten archaion phusin*), for that is the path open to us. Eros does us the boon of bringing us to our own, and this excellent hope for the future: that he will heal us and restore us into blessedness. [193a-d] Clearly, we'd do better to forget about reaching the heavens again, lest we find ourselves further split in two, this time bisected down the nose.

The *pathos* of a *kosmos* under the dispensation of divinely guided *philia* stands opposed to the *pathos* of human bereavement and longing for wholeness. What compactly characterizes the latter, and thereby instigates the opposition, is a sense that the divine *philia* has been broken through the *pleonexia* and *hubris* of humankind. The sense of tension towards the immanent Ground of the *kosmos*, that is to say the *dike* of Olympian Zeus, has been lost, and with it, the character of Eros and Aphrodite as its divine guides. What we are left with in its place is a purely immanent quest for wholeness through recognition by one's own, one's beloved - but this is merely the unending hope in

the future to return to the wholeness of the past. Man's place in the *kosmos* is now to keep his head down, honour the gods, and yearn for a complete unity with another body which must ever be deferred, due to its sheer impossibility.

In the *pathos* of Aristophanes - a man living amidst, and acutely aware of, the moral inversion of his contemporary Athens - the present under the gods is broken by a life divided between the future and the past; the sense of the cosmic symphony has been lost, even as the sense of individual yearning for wholeness and recognition has been gained. The structure of human nature as erotic yearning for completion has been differentiated, and with it, a clearer sense of the concrete experience of the individual. But for Aristophanes' human beings, the *pathos* of *eros* is very much a matter of the body; the truth of the *psyche* has somehow been entirely lost, and order might only be restored through both an *eros* which is definitively projected into the private realm of somatic union, and the threat of divine wrath.

Already, we seem only a step or two removed from an Hobbesian psychology of immanent, psychosomatic drives, with its emphasis upon the power and pleasure drives; continuous future fulfillment constitutes worldly felicity.¹⁰⁴ There too, the chief political question becomes one of insuring a politically workable balance of the objects of the drives, by emphasizing a private life of commodious living in the pursuit of felicity, bracketed by the fear of an overhanging Nemesis - that crusher of the proud and vainglorious, whom Hobbes proposed to reliably supply in the form of the Leviathan.

¹⁰⁴ What Hobbes terms "passions", I will refer to as "drives", in order to avoid confusion with what Plato and Polanyi mean respectively by *eros* and passion.

What is lost in Hobbes, but retained by Aristophanes, is the sense of the depth and agony of the rupture in human nature which attended the rupture with the heavens and the reduction of the world to the play of immanent drives and powers. The longing for wholeness is recognized as the fundamental mark of being human, but its fulfillment is impossible, or at least cosmically and politically undesirable: men and women are not capable of living peacefully with themselves, each other, or the rest of the universe when they are of one piece and off of Eros' leash.¹⁰⁵

§6. *Agathon, The Good*

Having thus recounted the tragic myth which passed from the lips of the great comedian, Apollodorus proceeds to narrate the new comedy of Eros bequeathed by Agathon (the Good himself in the flesh, as it were), that very same Agathon who immediately is very nearly seduced into witty exchange by Socrates. Until, that is, Phaedrus intercedes to rein-in the seduction, and to spur the tragedian on his course.

[194d]

¹⁰⁵ Nussbaum has noted that there is something quite odd and fleshy about Aristophanes' usage of *psyche*, writing that, in his usage it refers "probably not [to] an incorporeal substance, but the "inner" elements of a person—desires, beliefs, imaginings—however these are, ultimately, to be analyzed and understood. The operative contrast is the one between the "internal" and the "external." We might further note that it appears that Aristophanes invokes the word *psyche* only once, at 192c, and in this purely nominal way. Rosen reads Aristophanes' myth as Heraclitean, given a characterization of a predicament in which men are eternally and hopelessly at war with themselves, the gods, and the cosmos, i.e. in which "war is the father of all". See Martha Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades: A Reading of Plato's Symposium", *Philosophy and Literature*, Volume 3, Number 2, Fall 1979, 143. See also Rosen, *op. cit.*, 157-158.

Once freed from the Satyr's questions, the young man proceeds to spin a lovely yarn. Its alliteration, cadence, and rhetorical display were so fine and pleasing to the ears of men that Socrates feigns fear that Agathon would suddenly produce the head of Gorgias and stun him, much as Odysseus has feared, during his descent into Hades, that Persephone might send along the shade of the Gorgon, Medusa, and so turn him to stone. [198c] Clearly, the audience was blessed with a bedazzling display of epideictic enconomizing, to which the sour "Apollo's Gift" devotes his mightiest strain to pantomime.¹⁰⁶

In substance, the eulogy is short, through the refrain is long. Contra Phaedrus and Hesiod, the Good in the flesh maintains (on his own creative authority), that Eros is the youngest of the gods, not the oldest. [195a] In evidence, does not "like to like come together", and does not *eros* flee headlong from the old? (We seem invited to picture that barb being thrown at Socrates.) Certainly, he further sustains, the cosmos cannot have unfolded as Hesiod and Parmenides maintain. For the gods surely would not have done such violence as castrating and fettering each other in the course of the becoming of the generations, had Eros been among them. Had he been, *philia* and peace would have ruled (*basileuei*) them then, as they do now. Eros, furthermore, is to be compared to Ate, whom Homer said walks only on the softness of mens' heads, while Eros walks on the softness of the *psychai* of gods and men, but those whose characters' have been made hard, he

106 Rosen misinterprets Agathon's opening sentence ("*Ego de dé boulomai...*") as "an assertion of will... [which] from the perspective of the history of modern philosophy, it is impossible not to be impressed by the prophetic conjunction of ego, will, method, and technical innovation." (Rosen, 169). The Greek *boulomai* has the more appropriate meaning of "wish", while *ego* is more properly understood as simply an emphatic or emphasized pronoun. Thus, one would translate the passage as "*I indeed wish first of all...*" Agathon, in short, is depicted as a narcissist, not a Gnostic.

leaves quickly - though he is pliable, and can slip through any crack. Lastly, he possesses every form of *arete*, as demonstrated by some ever-more questionable acts of verbal free-association. [196b-197e] Nevertheless, Eros is clearly elevated to the principle of all *homologia* and therefore of *dikaia* before the *nomoi*. He is the controller of all pleasures and appetites, and thus eminently temperate; braver and more righteous than Ares, as proven by the fact that *eros* for Aphrodite led to the capture of the war-god in Hephaestus' net. Lastly, Eros is *sophia*, as evinced by the artistic inspiration he breaths into lovers. In short, all good things, and *aretai* besides, can be ascribed to the workings of Eros. [197d-e]

Agathon's shining speech concludes to thunderous applause, for the poetry, comedic amusement and deft employ of fallacy of his performance have a captivating cleverness about them - enough to make one truly wonder of a depth of pedagogy under the orator Gorgias. But the tragedian's play isn't without its serious bits. At the heart of it lies a critical rejection of the cosmological speculation both of Hesiod and of Parmenides. While we cannot long be diverted upon an exposition of those two, a few points are pertinent. First, it is disallowed that Eros came to be alongside Ge and, what Eric Voegelin once termed, the articulated nothing of Chaos from the inarticulate nothing.¹⁰⁷ The theogonic articulation of a *kosmos* through the waves of parthenogenesis and marital relations is left to the compulsion of Necessity, particularly through Bia ("Force"). Only lately, it is held, has Eros appeared, and with it, the *philia* of cosmic order embracing the gods, society, and human beings under the *kubernan* ("pilotage") of Zeus. Two ages, one

¹⁰⁷ See Eric Voegelin, *O&H*, v.2, 195-224.

of Necessity, one of Eros, are primarily set-up in opposition to each other, corresponding to opposing experiences of blind compulsion on the one hand, and of service and agreement on the other: formerly, all was compulsion, but now a *philia* through the common *logos* generated by Eros has been made possible. The erotic movement of the soul is the *aitia* - the formative principle - of cosmic order as such; the essence of the first triad of speeches is taken-up into Agathon's, but now with an articulation of history, culminating fully under the aegis of Eros proper.

Secondly, the tragic myth of humankind, represented through Aristophanes, with his earthy, utterly bodily exuberance, is again rejected in favour of the life of the soul as the sensorium of transcendence through *eros*, and with that comes a renewed sensitivity to cosmic *philia*. Moreover, the discovery of the *psyche* appears to correspond to the discovery and *pathos* of *eros*.

Thirdly, and along with that, the life of *arete* comes alive to mortals; Eros as the carrier and vehicle of the cardinal virtues works through the *psyche*. A twinkling of a path to *arete* springs open, one which leads neither from the compulsions of the *nomoi* placed upon the *psyche* for the sake of harmony and order (as with the first three, more purely cosmological *encomiai*), nor from the compulsions upon the dirempted bodies of the purely carnal women and men for the sake of restoring peace and order upon Earth (as with Aristophanes' more anthropological myth). While the Eros of the first three speeches leads from the *kosmos* to man for the sake of binding the quaternarian structure of reality, and the fourth leads from my fully individual body to yours, - thence to the next

in an endless search for wholeness - for the sake of no higher end than the status-quo, the Good's suggest the source of order and purpose exists from some depth of the individual. But to what specific goal and by what reason is left unclear.

§7. *Socrates, The Lover*

Socrates' apology for love begins in dialogue with the Good, but it is a rapid *elenchus* ending in an *aporia*, for the *logos* between the old Satyr and our tragic Agathon ultimately cannot sustain that Eros is beautiful or good at all. [201c] But all is not lost, for the aporetic descent clears the way for puzzlement, a knowledge of one's ignorance, and thence for the search for the true nature of passion. The ascent from the depths of the raw *pathos* of *eros* to comprehension and understanding takes the form of a further layer of anamnestic induction - now into the Mysteries of Diotima of Mantinea, under the guidance of Socrates. Structurally, the dialogue thus takes on the elaborate structure of a meditation within a meditation within a meditation, in which we find ourselves attempting to indwell.

Accordingly, we find Phaenarete's son recounting a temporally compressed story of his tutelage under the homeless prophetess, and his own induction into the Mysteries under her direction. [201d]¹⁰⁸ The precise details of the relationship between student and teacher is left to the imagination. We are told that Socrates was a younger man, that he clearly respected and deferred to this woman named the Prize of Zeus, whom he

¹⁰⁸ For more on Socrates' studies of the *physiologi*, refer to the *Apology* and *Phaedo*.

describes neither as *kore* ('a girl') nor *parthenos* ('virgin') but only as his teacher in *ta erotika*. No more is said.

Socrates' story concentrates his recollection upon his assumption into the final mysteries; he has been following or visiting his teacher for some time before the narrative begins, but where and for how long is left vague. Diotima's grip on the reins of her pupil is firm and authoritative, her tone mixes a strong dose of prophetic command into the loving-cup of philosophic enticement. Accordingly, her induction of the younger man into the *elenchus* has colourings of stern chiding, and begins where the direct dialogue with Agathon ended.

Eros cannot be *kalos*, for it is in the nature of love that love is of that which is presently lacking or which is not forever secured for the future. Therefore, if love loves the beautiful or the good, then it must be from a lack of secure possession. [201e] When the gob-smacked young man asks incredulously if Eros is then ugly and bad, he receives his first chiding. Is then nothing in-between (*metaxy*) being beautiful and good, on the one hand, and ugly and bad, on the other? [202a-b]

Young Socrates' confusion rests upon an impulse to dichotomize - one which seems to reflect a habit of mind which seems to be in the intellectual air. It is in his youth that a younger Socrates studied the thoughts of the *physiologoi*, and, we are told in other contexts, that the intellectuals of the age dichotomized being from non-being, *physis* from *nomos*: discussion of any *metaxy* seemed entirely absent and unexamined.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ See, for instance, *Phaedo*, 97a-100a; *Sophist*, 237a-e.

Diotima vibrantly affirms the dignity of human life in the *metaxy* against Socrates' hesitations, first by securing his concord that there is more to the life of the *psyche* than alternatives of *sophia* or *amathia*. What follows, however, is no simple expansion of a dichotomy into a trinity, but a rapid irruption of symbols; the discovery of the *metaxy* of the *psyche* allows for a sudden, rich out-pouring of reflective symbols. To the dyad of *sophon* and *amathias*, with their respective association with immortals and mortals, she adds the categories of *ortha doxazein* ('to judge rightly'), *epistesthai* ('to understand'), *logon* and *alogon* ('with reason and without reason'), *orthe doxa* ('right judgements, correct conjectures, right opinions') and *episteme* ('understanding'), and the later addition of *anoia* ('folly'). [202a, 210b] By securing the young fellow's concession that it is possible to judge rightly without understanding or a *logos*, she differentiates the question of the orientation of the *psyche* from that of the contents of consciousness; the possibility of understanding and of *logos* shall now hinge upon the question of whether one's *psyche* is turned rightly or wrongly in its *eros*.

In furtherance of these questions, the *elenchus* of the Mysteries continue to fill-out the symbolism of the *metaxy*. By virtue of previous admissions, not only should Socrates admit to the reality of existence between beauty and ugliness, immortality and fatality, gods and mortals, wholeness and brokenness, divine *eudaimonia* and human wretchedness, *tw wn* and *tw me wn*. Diotima's *mythos* of Eros brings together the differentiated elements of the suchness of being in the *metaxy* in the form of an aetiological tale. Eros, she recounts, is not what he has been said to be. Conceived on the day that Aphrodite was born, and, for that reason, always following and attending to her,

he is son of Metidos, himself son of Poros, and of Penia, whom, in her Poverty, came begging at the banquet of the gods. There, finding Metidos quite drunk on nectar and passed-out on the grass, she contrived to improve her lot by getting herself with child by him, and, so contriving, lay with him. [203b-204a]

As such, he is a great *daimon*, existing somewhere in-between the states of gods and human beings, and as one of the *daimonia*, he is one who helps to establish communion between the divine and the mortal. In accordance with his mixed parentage, he is neither beautiful nor complete unto himself. Rather, he is hardened and tough, shoeless and homeless, often found taking his rest on doorsteps and in the open air. Like his mother, he is ever in want, but, like his father, he is brave and skilled, impetuous and high-strung, forever weaving a stratagem in his pursuit of the beautiful and the good, loving wisdom all of his life and wise in his desires and cunning (*phroneseos epithumetes kai porimos*); he is a veritable juggler, a witch-doctor, and a sophist. [203e] One day, all is well and vibrant with him, yet the next he is bereft and dead, only to be revived again by his father's nature, for he is neither mortal nor immortal, and stands between *sophia* and *amathia*. The physical similarities of this description to what we know of Socrates hardly need pointing-out. Socrates is the mortal twin of Eros; he is the *daimonias aner* - the daimonic man - who has fully committed himself to the immortalizing pursuit of the beautiful and good in his love of wisdom. [203a]

From the prophetess and the philosopher, we learn that *eros* moves the *psyche* in response to an awareness of her own insufficiency and *amathia*; through this, a passion

and a desire arises in her for what is radically other than herself and her own, as does a yearning to possess it evermore. [203e-204a, 207a] From this fundamental outpouring motion of life, then emerges a further stratification of living. Beasts are entirely *alogos*, being without language and thus mentally hobbled, and pursue the beautiful and the good through the bodies of each other, and thereby partake of the relative semblance of immortality necessary to keep it through the acts of mating and reproduction. Humans as well make the pursuit through mating and progeny, but add to that the peculiar desire to mate with and give birth in the *psyche* of others through the *logos*. Most daimonic, though, are those who carry-on a direct pursuit of beauty itself. It is in carrying out that chase, culminating in the vision and contemplation of beauty-itself, young Socrates assumes - by analogy with the pursuit of good things (*twon agathwn*) - that one carries-out an ultimate human wish for *eudaimonia*. The prophetess, who first suggests the analogy of the good and the beautiful to break past his *aporia*, agrees that that answer does seem ultimate (*dokei telos*). [205a]

The Good then comes to view as the ultimate beloved, and *eudaimonia* the expected consequence of its possession. *Eros*, furthermore, takes on the outline of a primordial yearning passion in the *psyche* underlying all the various kinds of passions and affections, and their multitudes of expression. *Epithumia*, in particular, takes on the deepened aspect of the drive of *eros* expressed through one's body unto another's, with its purpose being to immortalize oneself in their beauty. It is furthermore consequent that this immortalizing of oneself through the union of bodies itself seeks to bring in to being

a child both beautiful and good. But *epithumia* is not the least problematic aspect of *eros*, nor the best vehicle for erotic expression.

For one, it is quite clear that not every somatic drive can or will result in the begetting of children, as Aristophanes alluded to, and of which Agathon and Pausanias serve as obvious reminders. Secondly, the spectre of sexual hubris - of rape - hovers in the background, as Alcibiades shall remind us when he bursts in upon the party, and, in his drunken mania, threaten the object of his obsession. The expression of unalloyed lust reflects the primal delusion of the ego turned despotic, when the experience of reality becomes one of one's despotic "self" standing separate from a field of use-things. Under the aegis of the isolated ego, unrealized lust for the desired possession (we would hesitate to say 'beloved') itself easily becomes a threat and an outrage to the carefully crafted illusion of self, and lends itself to rages. Thusly, and lastly, while the expression of *eros* through the couplings of *epithumia* contains within itself the possibility of engendering something transcending the ego, no such thing is guaranteed. Children may be an impossibility, or miscarry, and while an initially lusty drive may form the foundation of a relationship transcending one's self - an relationship of *philia*, *agape*, *storge*, or romantic *eros* - neither is that a necessary consequence.

The paradox of human *eros* when expressed as pure *epithumia*, is that it rests upon a delusion of the ego projected as the good, and the satisfaction of that delusion taken to be the source of *eudaimonia*; the wish for infinite recognition as if one were the beautiful and the good is a peculiar problem of the human heart, as exemplified by

Alcibiades. Lesser forms of potentially criminal *eros* are mentioned only in passing; their truly drastic potential for evil, on the scale, for instance, of an entire commonwealth, becomes actual only under such demonic leadership as one such as Alcibiades can arouse.

Perhaps anticipating that one's crashing invasion, our recollection of Diotima's speech ends with an account of the Mystery of *Kallone* ('Beauty', feminine declension) and her *paideia*. The *paideia* itself is simple enough in outline. From the *eros* for a particular body, the *psyche* must be led upwards to the love of all beautiful bodies, and so on on the path to the gradual witnessing (*theorwn*) of beauty itself, from which will flow beautiful *logous kai dianoemata* ("speeches or reasonings, and dianoetic insights"). In its nature, there is also nothing which disbars the spontaneous ascent along the path, as, at each stage, one persists only in deepening a reflective *eros* for the beloved, understanding them ever more so in light of the common participation in the overarching reality of Beauty. [210a-211d]¹¹⁰ The focus, however, is clearly upon evoking the practices by which ecstatic meditative experiences may be transmitted to and re-enacted by the student, within a pedagogy structured loosely like the stages of a Mystery.

The preparation for the mystical experience which structures and gives substance to the philosophic life takes place within the context of the erotic relationship of a student and master (or mistress, as the case would have it). The 'normal' convention between mistress and student, older and younger, lover and beloved - ably described by Pausanias - however, is subverted, with the mistress taking on the role of beloved, preferably with

¹¹⁰ Strauss writes that the *epistemai* spoken of by Diotima during the enunciation of the final Mysteries are the mathematical sciences; no such thing is written or implied by the text. See Strauss, *op. cit.*, 232.

the engagements in physical congress subdued or altogether removed from the relationship. As we learn from Alcibiades' castigation of Socrates, the erotic entrapment of a promising pupil hinges upon the sudden reversal of roles; Alcibiades complains that he has been stung with the poison of *eros* by Socrates' beauty, and loses all sense of an *eromenos*' self-contained composure in that one's presence. [215d-216a]¹¹¹

We hear no such complaint or calumny issue forth from Socrates against Diotima of Mantinea, and bear witness to the recollection of his ascent under her guidance. Indeed, we are very much engaged to participate in it as well, by indwelling in his *anamnesis*: by dwelling upon the dialogue as a token bearing upon a *psyche* meditating upon the beautiful and the good, we may bear upon the experiences symbolized and signified in the speech. Nor should we for a moment forget that at least three of the younger men - Agathon, Phaedrus, and Aristodemos - in the scene have been stricken by Socrates; the old Pan has done well to take the occasion to engage them into the Mysteries through his eulogy. *Episteme*, though, we are reminded by Diotima, is hard-won, and maintained only through practice; as we are ever becoming a new person, our understanding always threatens to fade away. [208a]¹¹² Beauty, in this case in her aspects of Moira and Eleuthera, is eternal fate and midwife of our *episteme*; the practice of her

111 See also Nussbaum, *op. cit.*, on Alcibiades' usurped role as *eromenos*. Gill, contra Nussbaum, suggests that the sudden reversal of roles is meant to produce "a mixture of humiliation, puzzlement, anger, and admiration" which may spark a dialectical investigation into the true nature of love; thus, it should be taken as a practice with the same intentions as the more familiar *elenchus*, with its drive towards *aporia*. Whereas Nussbaum holds that the practices of the Diotimian Mysteries, taken together, lead to a spurning of individual relationships, Gill holds that the same practices, in fact, deepen them. See Gill in *op cit*, xxxiv, xxxviii.

112 See also Rosen, *op. cit.*, 253-255.

Mysteries through *anamnesis* and *ennoesis* are essential for maintaining the bedrock of our cognition.¹¹³

By the end of his recounting of his mistress' speech, Socrates has assimilated numerous elements of his companions' *encomiai*, but utterly transformed them as a whole. To review, *eros* leads to acts of self-transcendence (Phaedrus), and may form the basis of *philia* (Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus); it may be perfected in a romantic, pedagogic relationship, leading to a love of wisdom (Pausanias), yet is not identical to an *epithumia* for use of the *soma* of another (Pausanias, Eryximachus); it is the indice of our incompleteness and our yearning for wholeness and satisfaction (Aristophanes), but is tragic, in so far as it is unending (Aristophanes), particularly if only expressed in body; it is the well-spring of *arete* (Agathon, Phaedrus, Pausanias), and serves to maintain the harmony of being by opening a pathway for human harmonization with, and appreciation for, the rest of the cosmos. And yet, the new myth represents a break with the cosmological myth presented by Phaedrus, Pausanias, and Eryximachus; the knowledge of the rupture in the comity of cosmos, gods, men, and society which Aristophanes senses and symbolized with his story, is real. The breach is not so much repaired as transcended with the speeches of Socrates and Diotima, and what we detect is a new movement of the soul towards a Ground beyond being.

Thus, three movements of the soul emerge in the course of the dialogue: a first movement, representing the old tragic-heroic cosmological form, spanning the period of

¹¹³ See *Symposium*, 208a for Diotima's remarks on the importance of the practice of *ennoesis* for the development and retention of knowledge.

the epic and tragic poets (represented by Phaedrus and Pausanias), to the Galenic-Empedoclean myth of Being (represented by Eryximachus); a second, downward movement, symbolizing the entombment of the soul in the *soma* and its forgetfulness of itself, and the consequently increasingly immanent-profane somatic existence (a virtual death of the soul) of the Athenians under the intellectual climate created by the sophists and the *physiologoi* (ably represented and depicted by Aristophanes); and a third, upward movement inaugurated by Socrates-Diotima, with the joyous re-emergence of the soul with the discovery of itself in its very opposition to the prevailing disorder, and in its Ground in the experience, pursuit, and exegesis of its *eros*.

§8. *Alcibiades, The Bacchante*

Yet the third movement is not over. Alcibiades suddenly bursts in upon the scene as Socrates' speech concludes. He is drunk, garlanded, and supported by a flute-girl. He is the very image of Dionysus, and the foil for the Apollonian Eryximachus. [212d-e] His entrance too signals a breach, both literal and symbolic. He breaches the boundaries of Agathon's home and the order and harmony set by the Apollonian doctor, much as the cult of Thracian Bacchus and his Mysteries disrupted the Homeric myth and the traditional order of Olympus.¹¹⁴ On the level of symbolic depth, the good doctor's attempt to contain and regulate the god's Bacchanal, (in the very wake of the civic celebration of

114 Within Plato's own time, Hestia, for instance, seems to have been at least partially displaced by Dionysus in the civic pantheon of Athens. See Dorter, K. "Imagery and Philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 9 (3), 279–288 (July 1971).

his cult of tragedy no less,) is undone completely by the god's symbolic avatar.

Alcibiades follows Socrates in breaking the bounds of the Apollonian order, but he bears with him all the accoutrements of immanent frenzy and rebirth: massive drunkenness, serenaded by the discordant flute, crowned in ivy and violets of regeneration - tokens respectively of Dionysus and of Aphrodite.¹¹⁵ He is, at the very least, an unexpected addition to the party, and scarcely a containable element.

He comes in search of the Agathon, only to find the Good associating with his hated beloved, Socrates. Attempting to sit beside the former, he sits between them, not spotting Socrates for want of unimpeded vision and sobriety. [213a-b] It is then our Dionysus who, finally spotting the philosopher sitting beside him and flirting with Agathon behind his back, bequeaths Phaenarete's son with the sobriquets of Silenus and Marsayas, reminding us of that god's role as a pedagogue and father-figure to Bacchus. [215b] Upon hearing of the subject-matter of the symposium's speeches, he declared himself quite willing to contribute his own, but he will eulogize Socrates, claiming that the older man will not withhold a violent hand if he praises another god in his presence. Not a few moments before, the philosopher himself beseeched the Good, with the irony of mock seriousness and mock comedy, to keep his wayward student off of him, for fear of his *hubris*. [213c-d]¹¹⁶ But, he relents in protesting or interrupting when Bacchus binds himself to tell the truth; when handed an over-flowing loving-cup of wine, Socrates quaffs it in one gulp. [214a-b]

¹¹⁵ See Nussbaum, *op cit*, 62-164 for an extended commentary on these two tokens.

¹¹⁶ See above for the connotation of rape implied by the fear of Alcibiades' *hubris*.

Alcibiades, as we recollect it, eulogizes Socrates in full style, comparing him to the statues of Silenai often sold in the marketplace (a not unfamiliar place to find the wandering and shoeless older-man). Ugly on the outside and hollow, by opening them up, one finds a beautiful image of the god within, hidden away from all appearances. He is tireless, confounding, bewitching, inscrutable. He despises public honours and is temperate beyond all previous experience and conventional expectation. He is cooler than the Winter in the face of battle and violence, never breaking rank, never fleeing nor abandoning his arms - he even once dragged a wounded Alcibiades off of the field while maintaining the good order of a fighting withdrawal. He is ugly as sin and beautiful beyond measure; he alone makes the Bacchic avatar feel ashamed of himself and his entire way of life. When Socrates speaks and questions him, he finds himself awakened to the grossness and the lie of his life, and so he stops-up his ears and flees. [216a] Not even Pericles, adopted father and noted patron of *sophistai* and *physiologoi*, could compare to our Marsayas for the powers of beguilement and charm. Worst of all (from Alcibiades' point of view, or that of his ego), he is odd and *atopos* ('unplaceable, out of place') - he simply does not fit. He not only has spurned the younger man's proffered physical charms, but broken his self-assured composure as an *eromenos*; whatever whole Socrates may or may not be searching for, it apparently is not to be found in bed with the young nobleman. [217b-219d]

Alcibiades' speech mixes equal parts of existential wonder and calumny, but none of what he says is refuted by the unusual man at the centre of it. The substantial issues must, however, be unpacked. On the exoteric level, there is the issue of the rivalry of the

pedagogies of the Great Sophist, on the one hand, and of the Diotimian-Socratic Mysteries, on the other, with their war for the *eros* and the souls of the young. On the esoteric level, there is the symbolic interplay of Agathon-Dionysus-Marsayas, on the differentiated level of the third movement of the soul.¹¹⁷

With regards to the first, Plato's character selection and careful psychological analysis personalizes the problems and questions which are handled with greater theoretical distance in the *Politeia*. The youths who are present in the symposium are the concrete persons in whom the way of the pedagogues has played-out historically. As such, they are sufficiently fleshy and psychologically complex to bring-out the concrete *pathemata* of the youths caught-up in a war of souls, while their status as the incarnate persons at the centre of a constant and generalizable forces allows them to be used in a theoretic examination somewhat as archetypes. Plato strikes the mean between an abstracted and depersonalized "objective" psychology and a vapid, subjective existentialism: human beings exist in-between the eternal and the temporal, and their lives play-out in the light, however obscured, in presence under eternity, *sub specie mortis*.¹¹⁸

117 Strauss recognizes the symbolic allusion to myth of Marsayas and Apollo, but not the more immediately important relationship of Marsayas to Dionysus. Rosen seems uncertain as to whether the symbolism of Apollo should be associated with either Socrates or Alcibiades, or both, and also neglects the pedagogic relationship between Marsayas and Dionysus. Both men overlook in their readings of Alcibiades' scene, his symbolic role as Dionysus, god of the civic cult of tragedy. See Strauss, *op. cit.*, 263. See also Rosen, *op. cit.*, 297-298.

118 Cf. Rosen, *op. cit.*, 229, wherein Rosen holds that "Man is perpetually intermediate between two species of nothingness: the death of the body and the perfection of the psyche [through achieving the goal of *ousia*, which would amount to its cessation or negation]". This should be taken in conjunction with Rosen's hypotheses that *eros* is *epithumia* (*ibid.*, 6, 84, 225, 274); that man must be "radically temporal", if "Eros is equivalent to, or defines the essence of psyche" (*ibid.*, 219-221); and that psyche is an epiphenomenon of the

Apollodorus and Aristodemos clearly have been won-over to the side of *Kallone* and the Agathon. The latter comes-off as a congenial, studious sort, destined to absence himself from the *ekkleisia* and the *agora* for a more noetic environment, while the former's cynical running-down of the whole *polis* betrays an equally sensitive disgust with the state of affairs. Neither betrays any particular passion for the recognition of the multitude. Noble Phaedrus, he whose face had launched a thousand speeches, comes across as a well-bred, somewhat romantic young gentleman, a lover of beauty and one well-disposed to the physical sciences and Socratic philosophy - yet he will be implicated in the charges of profaning the Mysteries which shall be brought against Alcibiades and his circle during the ill-fated Sicilian Expedition.¹¹⁹ The young gentleman will be driven into exile and die an early death.¹²⁰ Pausanias, by contrast, manifests as a well-established and traditional figure, the very image of a confident *kalos k'agathos* in a somewhat untraditional relationship with tragic Agathon. He perhaps best exemplifies the ancient gentilian culture of Hellas as it was manifest in the older generation of Aeschylus and Marathon, when the order of the *polis* and the cult of tragedy were transparent to the call from Zeus Dike. In the symbol-play of the dialogue, his *eros* for his beloved suggests the stability of the relationship of a relatively individualistic, gentilian culture to the Ground of Being as mediated through the Dionysian civic cult towards its older, anthropological

body (*ibid*, 243). Rosen, in my judgment, goes quite far afield from the text by holding to these hypotheses, and by reading them into the dialogue.

119 See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, VI.27-28.

120 Andocides, *On the Mysteries*, 1.15-17. Also Debra Nails, *The People of Plato*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2002; 233-234.

symbols; Pausanias loves (*eratai*) the Agathon by way of the tragedy, and loves the tragedy by way of Agathon. He is proof positive of the pedagogy which he preaches.

Eryximachus, friend and fellow-traveller, also presents as an orderly, good-humoured fellow of the new sort, who perceives being as a *kosmos* of immanent-divine tensions and movements. One senses, though, his quizzical exasperation with the obstreperousness of his patients; he laughs and submits to the disruptive tom-foolery of his friends, but his speech betrays a consciousness of the seemingly anti-cosmic forces in the depths of the world and the soul, for which he has no account or firm understanding. The Galenic-Empedoclean *episteme*, in spite of its merits, has no answers to that mystery.

Aristophanes, on the other hand, takes on the dimensions of the tragic-fool, who can tell the king that he is wearing no pants (and is likely mad), by sugar-coating the revelation with humour, and by taking embarrassment upon himself with his hiccuping fit. He is quite aware that something is broken, that that something is the *philia* binding the *kosmos* (let alone the *polis* or Hellas), and that the fault lies somehow with man and correlates with the misplacement of his soul. Yet Aristophanes refuses to engage in the search for its recovery, and stubbornly refuses its existence; like many moderns of an ‘existentialist’ attitude, he too comes across as one of those strange, human peculiarities: the victim of a spiritual robbery to which he nevertheless finds himself intellectually committed. It is a queer sort of spiritual pride which Socrates proves adroitly able to prick and take advantage of, by poking fun at Aristophanes’ myth of the divided-self in his

recounting of Diotima's speech. Apparently, the comedian's sense of humour doesn't reach as deep as the Satyr's.

§9. *The Satyr and the Symbol-play*

Of the puzzle of Socrates, no more can be said by Plato, or by us, than what the author of the dialogue can reveal through Alcibiades and Diotima; he is the ultimate lover and the ultimate beloved, utterly unconquerable and entirely insatiable. He is a daimonic human being - the *daimonios aner* - and the perfect foil to Alcibiades' Dionysian demonism.

And Alcibiades is the main attraction, the Shylock who makes the show. He is something of a *philosophos manqué*, a *daimonios aner* perdue - a newly discovered human potentiality only fully revealed with the third movement of the soul. Historically, he will whip-up the disaster of Athens and Hellas, seducing and betraying the Athenian Empire against the Peloponnesian League against the Great King of Persia and his satraps, in a performance which fascinated and awed hard-boiled Thucydides - all the while reportedly carrying a shield emblazoned with Eros wielding a thunderbolt.¹²¹ By the near end of the war, he had seduced the Athenian fleet and had prepared it to wage war against Athens herself, scant weeks after serving as military advisor to the Persian satrap Tissaphernes! The Alcibiades of the dialogue laments that the Satyr causes him to lament

¹²¹ "He had a golden shield made for himself, which was emblazoned not with any ancestral device, but with the figure of Eros armed with a thunderbolt." Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 16.

his fixation with the affairs of Athens, while Thucydides' history gives us an account both of his declared love for the city and his declared wrath at its spurning of him.¹²²

The analysis of the mystery of Alcibiades' demonic passion is continued, though, by Plato on that esoteric level of the symbols Agathon-Dionysus-Marsayas, under the aspect of *eros*. Dionysus-Alcibiades enters the house, exuberantly drunk, and half-blinded by his ribbons, with the intention of crowning Agathon - the winner of the contest of tragic productions which have been performed in honour of the god. This corresponds to an understanding of the cult's meaning as the vehicle for the transcendental constitution and representation of the *polis* under the divine Ground. Yet the cult-god is half-blind at best, and ends-up sitting himself between Agathon and Marsayas-Socrates, who then ends-up fondling the former behind Dionysus-Alcibiades' back. Suddenly, there is a *metastrophomenon*, a turning-around, and our Dionysus "sees", as he becomes aware of the presence of Marsayas-Socrates; the symbolism of turning-around and the parallel change from blindness to seeing recalls the familiar Platonic symbolizations in the *Politeia*. Here, our god of the vine "sees" for the first time as he lays eyes upon the pedagogue-philosopher, whom he promptly accuses of attempting to bushwhack him, while Socrates-Marsayas asks the Agathon to be protected from the wine-god's *hubris*. Both accusations are uproariously funny, and deadly serious. Socrates threatens the drunken, half-blind lie of Alcibiades' life and doings, as the latter himself admits; while Socratic *philosophia* has condemned the increasingly decadent and false civic cult, and

¹²² See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, VI.88-93.

Socrates the man will take upon himself to suffer the *hubris* of the city in his service to “the god”.

In the meantime, however, Marsayas has served as pedagogue to Dionysus, but the education clearly has miscarried. What specifically has gone wrong with Alcibiades? By his own account, in attending to Socrates himself and to his words, and by engaging with him many times in conversation, he had glimpsed something wondrous and beautiful, and had become aware of himself in light of something - some authority - that was higher than either his own ego or the city. Thus far, in accordance with the Diotimian-Socratic Mysteries, the teacher as representative of *Kallone*, has served as the immediate token of the reality of the beautiful and the good. By indwelling in the beautiful *psyche* of the teacher, the student has been induced into conscious participation in the quest for the beautiful itself and the Ground. The *eros* of Alcibiades, however, has become oddly twisted, and Alcibiades-Dionysus presents himself as both a rival of Socrates-Marsayas in his pursuit of Agathon, and a rival of Agathon for the favour of Socrates-Marsayas.

On one level of the symbols, Dionysus and his civic cult of tragedy are depicted as blinded in the absence of the philosopher-pedagogue, and, ultimately, as unsuccessful suitors of the Good. Socrates chides Alcibiades to not attempt to disallow Agathon to move himself to sit at the philosopher’s right side, so that he may be eulogized by the philosopher in his turn, as Alcibiades did unto Socrates. Yet, while the rituals of the civic cult and their status as transcendental representative of the *polis* has seen its place

usurped by the philosophers, the new sons of Zeus, the blessings of the wine-god and his Mysteries are bequeathed upon the same. Socrates quaffs the great crater of Bacchic wine which Dionysius-Alcibiades thrusts upon him in one long draught, accepts the garlands, and thereby, the god's *enthousiasmos* - but without the frenzied, debilitating effects common among the Bacchantes. The quaffing of the god's wine does not cause Socrates to lose the Measure; the civic cult of Bacchus has failed, and his favour has been transferred to the philosopher, who incorporates his Mysteries under the Diotimian, who sits closest now to the Agathon, and who best praises and eulogizes him.

On a second level, Dionysus-Alcibiades stands as a second son of Zeus - his progeny by the mortal woman Semele, who, while with child, asked to look directly upon the true face of the god, and was consequently incinerated by its brilliance. The Dionysus of the Mysteries too stands in-between the divine and the mortal, as did the daimonic Eros of Diotima's myth, and his rituals present an apparent alternative to the ascent of the *psyche* through her *erotika* ('erotic arts, erotic pedagogy'). Crucially, however, while the Dionysian Bacchanal aims at a chthonic *enthousiasmos* induced by the orgy of wine and the flute, the Diotiman *erotika* guide one's ascent to the *pathos* of the vision of transcendent Beauty. This incorporates the older symbolism of the tension between heaven and earth, expressed, for instance, by Aeschylus as the rivalry between the ancient chthonic deities (i.e. the Eumenides, or Prometheus) and the 'new' gods of heavenly Olympus (i.e. Apollo and Athena as representative of Zeus Dike). The Socratic-Diotiman symbols of *eros*, *to kalon auto*, and *to agathon* clarify to the point of transparency, the

experience of a tension of the *psyche* towards a Ground in which *psychai*, and all being-things, participate.

The rivalry of heaven and earth has thus been sharpened exponentially into a transparent tension between the world and the now overwhelming transcendence of the beautiful. Dionysus' cult of tragedy, in the hands of an Aeschylus, had served to mediate a subdued experience of the calling, under the older anthropological symbols of the gods, through which the chthonic and telluric forces could be represented and accommodated through the mediating institutions of the *polis*, under the overarching aegis and rule of Zeus Dike. The son of Zeus and Semele has thus, after a fashion, served as mediator of the *pathos* of the *polis* and its citizens towards a Ground of being and existence symbolized by Zeus - himself quite ambiguously standing both within the *kosmos* and above it, though himself one of the beings 'born' in time.

The cult curated by Euripides and Aristophanes is not that of Aeschylus, however. The *pathos* of the new Athens of Pericles and the demagogues is the apeironic *pathos* of power rather than of *Dike*. And, against the new cult of power, the new playwrights can scarcely make a dent, and, as we've perceived in the critique of Aristophanes, might scarcely have the spiritual resources to oppose. The Mysteries of Diotima, however, may be too personal, and the transcendent calling of *Kallone* too bewildering for most. The potential solution for individual and civic existence is symbolized in the marriage of the Dionysian mysteries, possibly in their more Orphic form, to the path of philosophy with its conscious, and passionate, noetic tension towards the Good. Dionysus and his

followers will fall under the guidance of Marsayas and be led to philosophy and the direct relationship to the Agathon. Symmetrically, Agathon, the poet, is guided by the erotic spell of the philosopher, Socrates, thus promising a path for the reform of the arts. All the sons and daughters of Zeus are to be reconciled through the spiritual resources of philosophy.

On a third level, though, the apparently successful path to reconciliation is swept away. The inner sanctum of the symposium is suddenly invaded by a crowd of drunken revellers, and Alcibiades is lost in the confusion. By the end of it, only Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes are awake, with the satyr trying to convince the thoroughly pickled young men that one who writes comedy ought to be perfectly able to write tragedy, and vice versa. [223d] What has occurred? On the level of the *psyche* of Alcibiades, the younger man has been swept away by the larger disorder, that much is clear. However, he finds himself a contributor to that disorder, veritably wearing its crown. Accepting the Socratic dictum that the city is the man writ large, we may posit that Alcibiades is the representative microcosm of the forces driving the *polis*.

That array of forces centres upon the *anoia*, that *aspernatio rationis*, *anoia*, the bizarre new type of articulate *allotriosis* ('alienation') which Aristophanes alludes to, and which is characterized by the rejection of *nous* - noetic reasoning. The symptoms of Alcibiades' characteristic disorder of the soul are alluded to in the speeches preceding his own. First is the sense of *allotriosis* resulting from the breakdown in the experience of the comity of the *kosmos*, symbolized as the *philia*. Second is the sense of *eros* as the

movement in the *psyche* which leads in the direction of immortality, the good and the beautiful, and the experience of the good as *oikeion*, one's very own, and the bad as *allotrion* ('alien'). [205c] Third is the warning of the *anoia* which lies in refusing to perceive the presence of the *kalos* in all things. [210b] Alcibiades exhibits the peculiar *anoia* of one who deliberately refuses to be drawn into the ordering presence of the Agathon by *nous*. Rather, his *eros* is signified as a consuming passion to draw the Agathon and the philosopher to himself; on the political plane, his passion manifests as an overwhelming demand for the exclusive recognition of the *polis*.¹²³

Revolt, folly, alienation, overwhelming passion. These would then seem to be the bare tensions deforming the *psyche* of Alcibiades and the *polis*, in the wake of the original *allotriosis* and reversion to a state of *agnoia* brought-on by the breach with the cosmological myth. The path out of the impasse is offered by the Socratic philosopher, but the calling may be consciously refused - this is the revolt which raises the state of personal alienation to a new height characterizable as *anoia*. Whereas ignorance is a morally neutral affair, a lamentable state which we are moved and responsible to overcome when we become aware of it, the folly of Alcibiades and of Athens is a perverse refusal to heed the call to responsibility when it has been heard. The man and the *polis*, moreover, have raised the perversity of *anoia* to the height of making it an ongoing principle of existence, rather than a one-time affair; they are alienated, not by

123 See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, V.43-46; VI.15-19, 60-61, 74; VII.88-93; VIII.45-47, 81-89.

circumstance or due to ignorance, but *on principle*. The destructive, concupiscential dynamism - the demonism - of the two is a symptom of the perverted *eros* of the revolt.

But what is the characteristic perversion of that *eros*? To recollect and understand its physiognomy, its *facies*, we should recall the central point of contention betwixt Aristophanes, and Socrates and Diotima. Aristophanes had held forth that *eros* was the human longing for the whole, directed towards achieving wholeness. Diotima's speech alludes to such pontifications, and she then dismisses them [205e]; it is not wholeness that we truly yearn for, but the permanent and undying mental dissatisfaction of the pursuit of wisdom, founded on the existential tension towards the mysterium of the Good and the Beautiful.¹²⁴ What we truly yearn for is openness and that edifying path of dissatisfaction best represented by philosophy: we crave the fullness of life fully lived in the *metaxy*.

Hence the abyssal potentialities of the perverted *eros* of Athens and Alcibiades: it is limitless by nature, alienated on principle, and cannot be brought to completion by any amount of commodious living. Aristophanes has misunderstood the nature and the severity of the revolt, due to his partial and incomplete anthropology - his folly in refusing to acknowledge the realities of the *psyche*. Within the narrative time of the dialogue, the spiritual disease of Alcibiades and of Athens can only be cured by acceding to the call of the divine servant Socrates, but that call is refused - both would prefer to be at the centre of all things themselves. Socrates will be put to death for his meddlesomeness, and Athens will not heed Plato any more than it did his friend and

¹²⁴ Cf. *PK*, 199.

teacher. In lieu of the refusal to be cured, the disease can only run its course. The citizens of the Athenian Empire will feverishly pursue their own concupiscence right down the abyss, with Alcibiades, his shield emblazoned with Eros, leading from the fore.

Part 2: Passion, Chapter 4: For Love of the Truth

“The story of the Fall presents a strangely apt symbol for this event [of biological differentiation]. For as one part of the body took over the procreation and the animal ceased to survive in its progeny, lust and death were jointly invented”

- Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 387

Thus far we have apprehended a conception from Plato’s works of a stratified reality which has culminated in the genesis and growth of man, matured through the impassioned unfolding of his *psyche* under the guiding star of his intelligent understanding of being. We thus have borne witness to a meaningful understanding of reality taken at an exceptionally high level of generality, and symbolized by such signs as *tw wn*, *tw planetwn*, and *tw me wn* – a structure in tension towards the good and the beautiful, rendered intelligible only through meditative experience and the contemplation of reality as guided by a philosophic pedagogy. The differentiated understanding of reality permitted by philosophic experience and the life of theory, though, and the possibility of the further differentiating the categories of being rests upon the education of the intellectual passions of man. No one can understand oneself, and with oneself, the reality which comprehends one, if one does not understand the nature of one’s *eros* and one’s *nous*, and how greatly it differs from vegetative or merely sentient life.¹²⁵

All that having been done, we yet still find ourselves short of an account of our *anthropogenesis*, which would complement the categorical account of human essence (which, takes its bearings from the eternal pole of human existence, qua the mystery of

¹²⁵ In the *Timaeus*, the titular character offers a further differentiation of necessity from *hule*, in the sense of unformed *prima materia*. See *Timaeus*, 48c.

the ground) with something of an historical dimension. Even in his most historically-minded anthropogonies, Plato's dialogues suggest no authoritative natural history of human life, accept to point-out the problem of origins in time, which arise in a participatory tension with the eternal.¹²⁶ The empirical difficulties of working-out a natural history can be perceived when the problem of the fundamental structures of reality has been differentiated and their implications are spelled-out for a philosophic anthropology. Whatever the essence of human existence, an understanding of anthropogenesis is clearly called for, but the characters of Plato's dialogues must rather settle either for anthropogonic myths, or leave the matter entirely open when the theoretic problem has been identified. By their nature, though, myths either blur the boundaries between the temporal and the eternal - through their mixing of cosmogony, theogony, anthropogony, and historiogenesis (e.g. the archaic myths of Homer and Hesiod) - or else place overwhelming stress and accent upon the *psyche* (that is to say, upon the eternal pole of existence, e.g. Plato's Myth of Er, or the Myth of the Charioteer).

Fortunately, there has been some progress in working-through the problems of anthropogenesis since the time of Plato's discovery of the question.¹²⁷ To advance our

126 In *Theaetetus*, 174e-175b; Socrates, in discussion with the mathematician Theodorus, makes a number of remarks on the differences in character distinguishing the philosopher from the practical man. Among other things, he says, the philosopher is apt to laugh when practical men wax poetic on the nobility of their ancestry, tracing back their family twenty-five generations to Heracles or Amphictryon. The philosopher laughs, because he well knows that every man has had countless thousands of ancestors before Amphictryon, from every quarter and of every walk of life, thus rendering the question of origins and genealogy completely muddled and obscure.

127 Note that I am treating the ancient Democritean-Epicurean solution to the problem - largely shared with modern objectivism - as illogical and a non-starter, for reasons which will be expanded upon throughout this chapter. Suffice to say here that the proposed solution consists in positing all origins to accidents, and all accidents their being by virtue of non-being - e.g. as results of the motions and collisions instigated through interactions of matter and void. Thus, the idea of accidental origins, in this sense, rests upon treating non-being as if 'it' were a 'thing' which can be made the object of critical concepts. This is,

understanding of the problem of anthropogenesis and natural history as it bears upon philosophic anthropology and political science in general, and upon the meaning of passion in particular, we shall turn again to Polanyi's exegesis of the structure of reality in light of the centuries of studies upon the problem.

§1. The Isomorphism of Knowing and Being

Polanyi's exegesis and analysis of anthropogenesis begins from the facts of evolution and of natural history. The evidence for the truth that progressively more complex biological forms succeeded upon the achievements of previous generations and species is not only held as incontestable, but also represents a simple transposition of the older, vertical and a-temporal orders and phyla of the tree of life onto a horizontal time-line. This historicization of the emergence of life-forms, by Polanyi's reckoning, represents the true breakthrough of modern biology – one far out-weighting the contributions of theories from the neo-Darwinian school, which do much to explain incidental adaptations in form through the analysis of selection pressures and the effects of mutations. By the same token, he also saw that the neo-Darwinian fixation upon such matters only obscured or bracketed the much more interesting and important problems of the emergence of wholly new forms of life – to say nothing of the emergence of life per se: they obscure the phenomenon of biological achievement. As a consequence, neo-Darwinian frameworks, like behaviouralism, due to their essentially objectivist commitments, have a tendency to obscure the realities of distinctly human being and

strictly speaking, scientific and philosophic non-sense.

existence in a rush to define both life itself, and the question of who man is, in the terms of physics and chemistry – and by that token, as something even less than a mechanism.

With that in mind, we shall turn to a survey of the new vista of truly novel questions which Polanyi perceives as having been opened up by the discovery of evolution. In both *PK* and the collected essays of *Knowing and Being*, Polanyi dwells upon the ontological questions inspired by prolonged research and meditation into biology, questions which centre around the process of reality and the emergence of novel structures within it. These questions are then further complicated, but also greatly enhanced, by the self-reflection of a knower who attempts to know being, for they themselves and their knowing, stand as incarnate, finite, and fallible beings within reality, prone to corruption and error, and responding to the call to know from within an inheritance of convivial institutions and culture – themselves also vulnerable to corruption and error. As Polanyi remarks,

“Let us remember the facts of power and material ends. Though men be harmoniously guided by their agreed convictions, they must yet form a government to enforce their purpose. Civic culture can flourish only thanks to physical coercion. It is sown in corruption. We must expose now the instability of our moral beliefs in face of this fact.” (*PK*, 224)

For the moment, we shall bracket this question of human beings knowing themselves in their passion for the truth of reality, only to bring it into focus again later, when, as it were, we have gathered together the subsidiary clues which bear upon its meaning.

Life, it seems, is an open system; a sustaining chain of achievements bearing upon some profound meaning. Fuelled at its roots by raw materials of inanimate matter and

energy, life itself maintains in principle, even as its leaves and branches differ and change in every particular. Central to this, however, is the conundrum of the (accidental) emergence of life and the principles of evolution. It is these questions which we must then clear as we chase the primary questions of passion and anthropogenesis, for I believe that they bear ultimately on the matter of whether or not our passionate existence intends an intrinsically meaningless reality, onto which we project meaning as a mask for our self-interested drives to power and advantage. I do not believe that even a strictly accidental unleashing of the processes of biotic emergence and achievement would necessitate such conclusions; it is thus that interpretation of accidents, underlying objectivist and Democritean frameworks, which requires some gradual elucidating.

When perceiving focally the most basic, decomposed, and strictly meaningless level of reality, we find ourselves peering at its most basic parts, consisting in (for Polanyi's purposes) wave-particles of matter and energy. Viewed in and of themselves, such things as hadrons and bosons are devoid of any particular meaning, and are quite uninteresting to us. This revelation is none too surprising, as this experience of boredom is reproduced regularly in high-school physics classes wherever the culture of science has taken root, but when these particulars have not been successfully shown to bear, to the students' minds, upon some profound and comprehensive reality of which they are signs and clues.

And, in fact that is very much what is at the core of any successful science class. The teacher must inspire an appreciation of the profundity of physics or chemistry by teaching them to see past the parts in themselves, and to perceive the increasingly wide

vistas which lie behind them. She must reveal to them the hidden beauty represented in the formal theories and mathematics, so that they may be inspired to love her science – the preciseness of its theories, the symmetries of its subjects and symbolizations – and, being inspired, to desire themselves to understand.

The love of physics and chemistry is not inspired by its particulars. No one has ever been moved to stare in rapture at a boson taken in itself, and the idea quite rightly strikes us as ridiculous. Rather, it is the general laws and hidden orders which are sensed lying behind otherwise meaningless objects and physical events, which inspire the mind. Thus, we would say that it is the higher, comprehensive realities of natural laws, harmonies, symmetries, and orders, and their beauty, which must become the focal object and the distal term of the student's awareness, if she is to know the meaning of the thing which she is being asked to observe or measure. As for the particulars which she's beholding (likely with incomprehension), she must learn to comprehend them as subsidiary clues to such general principles or comprehensive realities. She must learn to see things differently.

This conversion in one's way of knowing and perceiving things – an experience to which we all, as sentient beings, are privy – reveals to us an isomorphic character in the structure of tacit knowing and understanding which parallels that of the aspects of reality which we struggle to apprehend. Polanyi has labeled the four different aspects of this structure as the *functional aspect*, the *semantic aspect*, and the *phenomenal aspect*, which

ultimately bear out the *ontological aspect* of, or an *ontological claim* regarding, reality and what is real.¹²⁸

Within the structure of tacit awareness and understanding, these reflect what and how we know, and what we intend, in three dimensions. Firstly, the particulars of our perception and of what we perceive, are comprehended as having a *function* as clues or subordinate elements of a more comprehensive entity or reality. Secondly, meanwhile and in tandem, they are comprehended as *signs* pointing towards something which is their meaning. That is to say that they come to be included in the role of the *from* in a *from-to* or *from-at* relationship of intentionality, which provides for its sense – a semantic relationship best exemplified for us in the relationship between a word and what that word points to or signifies.¹²⁹ Thirdly, and finally, the comprehension of subordinate clues and elements reveals something which had previously been hidden from view - allows it to “shine forth” for us (translating liberally from the Greek *phainomenon*). By dwelling in the clues under the guidance of a teacher, driven by curiosity and desire to make sense of

128 See Polanyi, “The Logic of Tacit Inference” in *K&B*, 140-142; also “Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading” in *K&B*, 194-195; and “The Structure of Consciousness” in *K&B*, 212-216. See also Mullin’s concise overviews in Mullins, “Polanyi’s Participative Realism”, and Mullins, “Comprehension and the ‘Comprehensive Entity’”, 34.

129 Gulick, on the one hand, prefers to speak of the “*from-via-to*” structure of consciousness, “in which the “*via*” stands for the symbols evoked to mediate sensations of interest into perceptions, or feelings of interest into thought”; I have generally elected to use Polanyi’s idiom, in which one’s personal knowledge (including symbols) is understood to provide the basis for one’s intentions and commitments. Jha, on the other hand, seems to me to be advancing a rather odd conception of the *from-to* structure of intentionality, writing as she does that, “the epistemology of tacit knowing forms the “*from*” dimension, and the ethics of the society of explorers by their responsible action (TD 52) forms the “*to*” dimension”. This would imply that consciousness only intends the ‘ethics’ established by society, which would entail that nobody and no creature has consciousness before it is fixed or created by society. Logically, this is an example of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. See, for instance, Walter B. Gulick, “Beyond Epistemology to Realms of Meaning,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 24–41. Cf. S. R. Jha, “Polanyi’s Problematic ‘Man in Thought,’” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 15-16.

a vexing situation only partially comprehended, the student brings to bear their existing repertoire of experience, know-how, and concepts, and hopefully, gropes their way to a dimly perceived and beckoning shore. If one is up to the task, and the problem does not too greatly exceed the present horizon of one's understanding – if the problem is of the right size – then the reward will be illumination and new-found understanding of reality.¹³⁰

§2. The Natural Emergence of Meaning

With this in mind, can it be the case, then, that comprehensive entities such as gas-clouds, stars, planets, and so-forth, which regularly arise in inanimate nature, can be said to be strictly meaningless and accidental? Given what has been said, I do not think that they can, if by accidents we mean events controlled by nothing more than pure contingency. Say then that we set aside the problem of how - logically - pure, meaningless contingency could regularly produce such a universe of harmonies and symmetries, and, moreover, beings capable of apprehending those orders. Even if we should choose to do such a thing, and to blanket the question under a cloud of dogmatic injunctions, we would only substitute a much greater problem. For, it stands to reason that any stable order, represented in any comprehensive entity given to us in such a strictly absurd universe must be of infinite intrinsic meaning and worth. This would be so,

130 See *PK*, 122. Polanyi, quoting Pavlov, also stresses the point that one must be sufficiently vexed and obsessed with a problem that one 'goes to bed with it, eats with it, lives with it' (see *PK*, 127-129) in which one finds oneself passionately committed to finding a universally satisfactory solution (*PK*, 301). But what is further necessitated by this is that the scientist or philosopher must be allowed to select their own problems; it will be up to the individual scientist, working from within a particular scientific culture, to both find interesting problems intimated in the existing systems of science, and to pour their persons into the attempt to discover a satisfactory solution, see Polanyi. "The Republic of Science" in *K&B*, 69.

for we would still be forced to admit that its parts bear a subsidiary, functional, and phenomenal meaning with regards to the whole. However, now, the meanings which we would perceive in it would not bear upon some more meaningful order to which said entity pointed as a clue. Now, the entity itself would be the centre of meaning. Given also the infinite improbability of it transpiring that any comprehensive entity whatever should arise from pure contingency, we would be forced to appreciate every entity to be of infinite intrinsic meaning. It would seem, then, that one cannot hold the manifold of actually existing things to be both purely contingent and strictly meaningless.¹³¹

Matter and energy, and more complex chemical compounds, operating purely and solely within the boundaries set by the laws studied by physics and chemistry, quite readily give rise to features which are more intrinsically meaningful, and thus more interesting, than individual particles. The list would include the entire range of stellar phenomena which are studied by astronomers, as well as the more earthly inanimate features studied by geologists, geographers, and cartographers. But even at the level of physics and astronomy, we begin to see novel features arise which are not strictly accountable in objectivist or Laplacean terms.

¹³¹ And, in fact, only the medieval scholastics seem to have approached a logically tenable resolution to this irreconcilable set of premises, while also acknowledging the *prima facie* reality of existence and the phenomenal world. And they did so by equating contingency with the will of God, thereby allowing for the intrinsic meaningfulness of a creation which yet bore witness to the infinite, inscrutable contingency of the Creator's love and grace. I shall take it for granted that the majority of my colleagues will not care to rescue their tacit or explicit belief in contingency by making a commitment to Scholasticism, and will thus be open to a reconsideration of the meaning of accidents. But even if the consequences were not so, I would not be inclined to bracket the earlier questions and the problems to which they point. For more on the topic of contingency in Scholastic and Thomistic thought, see Ivan Illich, *The rivers north of the future : the testament of Ivan Illich as told to David Cayley*, ed. David Cayley (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2005), to whom I am indebted for the observation.

Let us focus, along with Polanyi, upon the simple example of a gas cloud; as he points out quite pertinently:

“The Law of irreversibly increasing entropy governs fundamental processes of equilibration in nature. But the entropy of a system cannot be computed from a knowledge of its atomic configuration, for it is measured by the extent to which this configuration is uncertain. This argument can be made more definite by assuming quantization. The entropy of a precisely known atomic configuration is, then, zero, and remains zero throughout the future; equilibration by increasing entropy does not take place. We can have equilibration only if we introduce conceptions of probability, by assuming that the configuration of atoms is to a considerable extent uncertain.” (*K&B*, p.174)

The important point, here, as far as we’re concerned, is that probability and systems ruled by probability, as well as entropy and equilibration, are completely unaccountable under the terms of a Laplacean conceptual framework. Both quantum mechanics and the behaviour of inter-stellar gas clouds – two kinds of such phenomena, which are well studied in physics and astronomy – stand slightly at odds with the expectations of the Laplacean mind. The precision in measurement demanded as an ideal by such a view as Laplace envisioned could, by its very nature, only be obtained by destroying the novel comprehensive features manifesting in such processes and phenomena.¹³²

As intrinsically interesting as these phenomena are to some, however, and though they are describable in reasonably precise and explicit terms, they pale in interest to us when compared to biological phenomena and the emergence of life. This is certainly so, generally speaking, not only for the fact that we ourselves are biological and naturally

¹³² See also Polanyi, *PK*, 390-393 for Polanyi’s additional commentary on the emergence of randomness and probability.

interested (not to say invested) in ourselves. It also happens to be the case that we are more easily captivated by the effort to comprehend and understand another living being than we would be by something inanimate – most especially if we are trying to know other human beings, who demand our respect, and who may command our most profound love and highest admiration.¹³³ This we have touched upon already, but now we would do well gradually to turn our attention to those peculiar features of living beings which make them unlike the manifold phenomena of inanimate nature, from which life has arisen, and upon which it is strictly dependant.

§3. *Intelligible Meaning and Rules of Rightness*

As we have briefly considered earlier, the correct perception of anything whatever, and of a living being especially, is primarily a tacit operation. When we perceive correctly the face and figure of someone we love, or correctly identify at a glance a particular kind of gemstone, we do not explicitly know how we know them. We may easily observe that this is so, for there is no formal procedure by which we go about integrating the clues of our senses; the inner workings of our eyes, musculature, and nervous systems; the entire range of past experiences and acculturation; and then bring it up against a present background which we are experiencing personally and are intending to make sense of, and which differs almost entirely in all of its details from every previous instance in which we have seen our beloved, or identified similar gemstones of the kind. And yet, under such ineffable conditions, we take in the features of a familiar face at a glance, and we do so, as we have said earlier, by actively reading the meaning of

¹³³ See chapters 1 and 2.

the clues by attending from the particular elements of the situation, which we treat subsidiarily (and, which we may not be able to describe well, if at all, or may even be aware of only subliminally) in our focus upon the whole which we trust and infer they comprehensibly bear.

Up to this point, we may be confident in saying that there is nothing particularly different in how we know the physiognomy of a face, or a gemstone, or a kind of star or other celestial object. And, this might in turn suggest that there is a firm ontological similarity between faces, gems, and stars, in so far as they are all “wholes” integrating “parts”, the former of which is the bearer of a meaning which is not present in the parts alone. But, in fact, I wish to show that we should not be too satisfied that we have gotten to the bottom of things with this, and that we shall shortly see that a reflection, guided by Polanyi’s work, upon meaning, accidents, emergence, and passion reveals far more mystery.

As Polanyi himself has shown, even the act of properly identifying and evaluating such things as gemstones brings to bear powers of comprehension and judgement which exceed what we could expect of a strictly critical intelligence. Certainly, the highly specialized art of grading gemstones of a kind, of sorting them for appropriate polishing and cutting which will best bring-out their beauty, is an act requiring of the expert a great deal of professional connoisseurship, reflecting a great deal of tacit and explicit knowledge. But this is not all, for that personal knowledge of the gem-expert must take its bearings from some reality which she finds expressed or reflected in the particular gems before her. For, even if she knows little or nothing of the formal science of

crystallography, she certainly knows that certain cuts and shaping are appropriate to the gem at hand: that it will take some and be aesthetically improved, while other cuts will ruin or even destroy it. She, in fact, has a knowledge of kinds, and her classification of kinds takes a great deal of direction from a knowledge and recognition of intelligible symmetries of structure, as well as a host of other qualities (i.e. weight, hardness, light-play, etcetera), some of which qualities are themselves, in part, reflections of the particular structural patterns and symmetries proper to the kind.

Whether or not our gem-expert has any notion of the atomic and chemical relations composing the symmetrical structures of the crystalline matrix before her, she certainly is aware of their comprehensive expression in the physiognomy of the gem.¹³⁴ She may even have a formal knowledge of the geometry of its kind and of many others besides. Either way, her knowledge of the degrees of symmetry of a specimen is an invaluable clue in her ability to identify a true specimen of a real kind of one of the 32 possible classes of symmetry, themselves based upon 6 elementary types, and now known

¹³⁴ Polanyi also points-out that, in some instances, the whole may be entirely more visible than the parts, in other instances, the parts may be more easily perceived than the whole, see "Knowing and Being" in *K&B*, p. 123-129. For examples of the first, he presents both the instance of a doctor making sense of the *facies* of a pathological condition (e.g. correctly distinguishing a true epileptic seizure from an hysterio-epileptic seizure), the identification of a familiar face, and the identification, for the first time, of the contours of undiscovered ruins in a well-travelled field when the field is seen from the air. For examples of the second, he notes the difficulty in forming a comprehensive conception of the topography of a the human body - though the individual organs are readily identifiable - and his own experience in a scientific controversy, in which he and H. Mark in 1923 found themselves in disagreement with one Prof. van Arken of Holland over the atomic structure of white tin. It latter turned out that both parties had been correct, but that van Arken's description had approached the problem from an angle displaced 45 degrees relative to those of Polanyi and Mark; nevertheless, this fairly trivial difference in approaching the whole of the atomic arrangement from the particulars was completely effective in rendering it mutually unrecognizable to both parties, until they developed a sufficient understanding of the arrangements involved in atomic arrangement.

further to be expressions of one of 230 atomic patterns or space-groups, forming the repeating polyhedra of the crystals.¹³⁵

Furthermore, her judgement of the gem will be reflective of its own particular degree of perfection with respect to the standard of its kind, with defects in structure – such as deformations, contaminations, and occlusions – counted against it. Thus, the discovery and adoption of a real standard for judgment sets-up certain *rules of rightness* of greater or lesser degrees of generality and formality, for the expert as well as the rest of us educated in the subject-matter.¹³⁶ It is an anterior knowledge of rightness which allows our gem-expert to judge the gem as substantially right or wrong in appearance. And, if it appears to be entirely wrong or unusual, she may quite justifiably judge that it is of a completely different kind than she'd initially been informed or suspected, and that it is thus subject to different standards than those which she initially applied, while still altogether bearing upon an even higher standard of symmetry and orderliness as such, themselves taken as signs or tokens of beauty.¹³⁷

And such rules of rightness are brought to bear as well at a higher level, when judging biological forms and physiologies. Only then, we find ourselves judging both the fitness of an animal's form and whether or not its many organs and parts bear constructively in the function of sustaining an active life. Already, at the level of

135 This information on crystallography is taken from Polanyi's exposition in *PK*, 43-48. It is beyond the scope of this work, and the author's competence, to say whether significant new advances in crystallography have necessitated a change in the numbers of classes and so forth. Nor would it be particularly pertinent to the main line of argument, which is simply that relatively informal and tacit knowledge, and connoisseurship, underlie expertise in the identification of real forms.

136 We have already brushed-up against *rules of rightness* in chapters 1 and 2, in which we explored the conception of human *paradigmata* or exemplars. Our paradigms of humanity are, in effect, our informed understanding of how it is right to be human.

137 For more on the recognition of beauty as a token of truth, see for instance *PK*, 133, 145-150.

physiology, we find it necessary to judge both the parts and the whole of a living animal (or, for that matter, even a dead one under dissection) according to the degree to which its organs and physiognomic features aid or detract from its ability to realize certain identifiable *operational principles*, as Polanyi dubbed them.¹³⁸

At the most general level, the physiologist and the pathologist both look from any particular organ to its function in enabling and sustaining an animal's (or a person's) ability to go about in the active strivings to maintain itself as a distinct, incarnate being within its usual environment of things which are not distinctly part of its body. At a lesser degree of generality, one would equally look to a heart's specific ability to pump blood, limbs' ability to propel the animal effectively, sensory organs' ability to enable the correct perception of the immediate environment, and so forth. In each case, ascending from the most primitive organelles of individual cells, to the functioning of organs, to the drive and perceptive existence of the animal entire, one finds structures shaped towards a highly general principle, the responsibility for the realization of which, in more complex

138 Robert L. Causey is one of a few who has deigned to directly confront Polanyi's indictments of reductivism, by attempting to hold that Polanyi has failed to distinguish between micro-reductions which attempt to explain what is *empirically possible* and what explains something's *actual existence*, as well as between *direct* and *indirect reductions*. While interesting, Causey's defence of reductivism is weighed-down by straw-men: among other things, he fails to confront the issue of rules of rightness, as well as the aspect of purposiveness which emerges in such comprehensive entities as machines and biological forms, neither of which would one normally ascribe to atoms or molecules. This is to say nothing of his self-forgetfulness - that his own intent to debunk Polanyi can't be explained away as a property of the atoms in his frontal-cortex. Indeed, ultimately, Causey recognizes that he can only defend his position through an appeal to faith to the behaviouralist goal of reducing "human behaviour to physics and chemistry", which he has equal faith will also allow us to reduce the structure of the machine. Cf. Robert Causey, "Causey, Robert - Polanyi on Structure and Reduction.pdf," *Synthese*, no. 20, 2 (August 1, 1969): 230-37.

species of life, has been spread and differentiated among a multitude of organs under the control of an active centre.¹³⁹

But, what has happened here? It seems clear from this that there lays a clear rift between the physiognomic rightness of a crystal versus that of a plant or animal, for there are no clear operational principles to be found in effect upon the crystal, principles which impose boundary conditions determining its success or failure in being a crystal. While both a crystal or a rose may rightfully be said to be comprehensive entities – wholes through which emerge properties not present and manifest in its separated parts – only against the rose would we attribute judgments of success or failure in being a rose. This is so, moreover, for we recognize, however tacitly, that a rose may succeed or fail in realizing the operational principles which guide its growth.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, we would even recognize that success as provisional, and perhaps miraculous, given that every living thing must fall before the thousand different possible causes of its death, no matter the principles of life and success. Thus disposed, we would recognize a gradient of success, and judge any particular bloom at a particular time according to the scales of the principles and rules of rightness appropriate to it – something which is in fact routinely done at botanical shows the world over.

§4. *Operational Principles and Accidents*

139 While we will bracket-out the larger, though fascinating, discussion of the emergence of *active centres* as a specific evolutionary achievement in *morphogenesis* and biological equipotentiality, Polanyi's remarks on the matter can be had in *PK*, 344, 354-357, 388. See also "Life's Irreducible Structure" in *K&B*, 236-239 for the emergence of mind from lower strata of biological existence.

140 For more on Polanyi's analysis on the essentially Democritean or objectivist standards of biology as practiced in his day – and the essential absurdities of those standards – see *PK*, 358-362. For his retort against those standards, and his assertion of the need both for rules of rightness and an understanding of the primordial logic of commitment in order to study life and practice biology, see *ibid*, 360-366.

Living beings and their parts, like machines, can only be truly known in respect to their operational principles, and can only be usefully analyzed at a lower, critical level, to help determine causes of failure. But now it is this question of said principles which must preoccupy us, for it has implications for our general understanding of our own anthropogenesis, as well as for the spectacle of being and of evolution. It is quite simply impossible, logically, to maintain that things shaped and guided by clear operational principles - which define their success while leaving largely undetermined the specifics of their unfolding, the context and the conditions of their realizations, and the causes of their failures – and meaningfully constrained by higher and lower boundary conditions, can be described in terms of phenomena entirely bereft of such features. The reductive fancy of objectivist frameworks is thus entirely impractical, unscientific, and destructive when actually and consistently employed in the study of the practical and productive sciences – which must always contend with ends and purposes, successes and failures – and renders the theoretical sciences absurd.¹⁴¹

The reality of operational principles, however, begs the question of the how and the when in the aetiological chain they do, in fact, become operational. We have previously rejected explanations which hypothesize from a premise of pure contingency. Must we then vacillate to the opposite hypothesis of pure determinism? Ought we to say

141 Gulick affirms that Polanyi's "evolutionary and ecological perspective" (i.e. his account of evolutionary ontogenesis, perception, and achievement) is an overlapping framework of his argument against objectivism, and works alongside his frameworks of analysis on personal knowledge, and tacit knowing. Gulick writes, "Any and all living things privilege mechanisms that utilize environmental signals and resources to fulfill these interests through responsive (and often integrative) acts. Such acts are primitive forms of meaning construction. Consequently, from an evolutionary perspective, meaning construction has from primeval times been in deep and, I would claim, causal contact with reality." See Gulick, "Beyond Epistemology to Realms of Meaning", 25.

that all things are and come to be by necessity, or, as Polanyi puts it, should we say then that fate was set and inscribed in the first incandescent gases of the universe? From a Socratic perspective of reality, such as developed in chapter 1, this option would seem to deform and to conflate *tw wn* and *tw me wn* so as to obscure the experience and knowing of *tw planetwn* – of existing in the *metaxy*. We have also, in part, disposed of at least one sort of determinism in the section on contingencies, and, in light of experience illuminated by the theory of tacit knowing, would be justified in being suspicious of an hypothesis which would make strict absurdity of experiences we know not to be absurd, but meaningful and bearing on meaning.

Working from Polanyi's own investigations into this problem, I believe that I can adequately dispose of this problem in its entirety, by calling attention once again to the problem of accidents, and juxtaposing this as yet hazily indicated class of happenings against the as yet equally vague concept of events.

We have said previously that the whole range of individual phenomena and happenings which are usually studied as kinetics and other such branches of physics and chemistry, are strictly meaningless, taken in and of themselves. We have also affirmed that these phenomena – such as atomic collisions – are only meaningful to us as tokens of a more general or comprehensive reality, and otherwise possess no intrinsic meaning. And yet, we have already been confronted with a range of kinds of phenomena, such as gemstones and stars, which do possess meaning, and which draw out our appreciation of their value as we come to know and perceive them. But it is particularly the spectacle of living beings, such as plants and animals, which strikes us most soundly, for here we are

confronted not only with things possessed of meaningful comprehensive features, such as the star's brilliance, but the emergence of entirely new and meaningful ways of being, characterized, at the most basic level of living, by the operational principles of a physiognomy and physiology.

All that being admitted, we must nevertheless also acknowledge that the emergence, persistence, and sustainability of all of these meaningful features are utterly dependent upon the lower level of intrinsically meaningless phenomena of wave-particles and chemicals. This is so, for the laws governing these phenomena structure the conditions of success, and may indeed be the causes of failure, of anything which exists at a higher, comprehensive level. A stellar mass may only come together and ignite as a star if there is a balance struck in the mass, distribution, and chemical composition of the materials which have come together in a certain region of space. Furthermore, it will only persist as a star, with all of a star's meaningful features, for as long as those conditions continue to be met within a certain tolerable range of deviation, as well as if an additional balance is struck between the gravitational forces threatening to implode it, on the one hand, and the nuclear and electromagnetic forces threatening to tear it to pieces, on the other. And that, of course, is to say nothing of interactions of that star within the enfolding environment.

Similarly, a natural gemstone's genesis, at its base, depends upon a fortuitous conjunction of chemicals, geologic pressures, and time, and the lack of those materials and processes would destructively occlude the crystallization of its matrix or otherwise break the symmetries of its bonds. And both the proper operation of a machine and the

basic physiological, machine-like processes of a living being's organs depend upon the material substances and energies out of which they have been made or generated, in the right form or proportions, in the right places and in the right time or with the right timing, in order for it to maintain its purposes successfully. In the absence of anything, a machine-part or an organ may suddenly fail in its purposes with potentially catastrophic effects for the device, the rose, or the animal.

While it is therefore wrongheaded to attempt to understand a machine or a living being, or their parts, in strict physio-chemical terms, and to imagine it to exist without reasons or operational principles, a physio-chemical analysis can often be quite useful in identifying the causes of mechanical failure. When this is done, such sciences are brought to bear on the lower level of something: those underlying boundary-conditions which are suspected to have failed the device or the animal, and which are in fact the proper subject-matter of physics and chemistry. That being said, any such analysis will be fruitless without an anterior knowledge and understanding of the operational principles and the purposes of the machine or the organ. Without such an anterior understanding, no amount of weighing, topographic mapping, and chemical analysis, done from the strict position of a physicist or chemist somehow unacquainted with the meaning of the thing before him, can be of any use to him in determining the causes of its failure. An understanding of failure implies a knowledge of the rules of rightness and of successful achievement which are proper to something.

But for all that, it began with an accident. Whatever potentials for the emergence of higher principles or forms may be said to be entailed within a substance, within an

interaction of substances, or their orderly structural relations, their actual emergence is a matter both of possibility and probability. Much is revealed of this by Polanyi's example of loaded-dice, which have been locked within a chamber and subjected to the agitations of Brownian motion at different pitches of kinetic energy. Let all the dice be loaded to come "6", and be carefully placed in the chamber with random faces facing up. Turn on the device such that $(\Delta E \gg kT)$, and most of the dice, if not all, will eventually come up "6"; this is a stable pattern due to an intrinsic (dynamic) ordering principle. Increase the Brownian motion such that $(\Delta E \ll kT)$, and the dice will be put back into maximum disorder and randomness of arrangement. Conversely, a collection of normal dice, extrinsically ordered by us to show "6" will be similarly thrown into disorder and randomized in their face-up values.¹⁴²

What follows from this is the simple insight that, whatever the intrinsic potential of a system or a phenomenon, or even a person, the realization and emergence of the higher potential will only be possible when given a background environment which is both ripe and rich soil for its development. Proteins and enzymes shall never emerge from the conditions present in the core of our Sun, whatever sort of vague, intrinsic ordering principle we may theoretically recognize in its materials to fuse, interact, and structure themselves, in stages, under more conducive conditions. Similarly, injecting a mountain of self-replicating proteins into the Sun shan't cause the beginnings of life to take hold there, for the extrinsic ordering principle, now represented by our mountain of proteins, would quickly be overwhelmed, destroyed, and subsumed, right down to the level of atoms and fundamental forces, under the environmental conditions of the Sun.

¹⁴² See *PK*, 38-40.

We would therefore say that for something more comprehensive to emerge; or something whose reality is deeper, more novel, and exhaustive in its possibilities than that from which its potential has been realized, *something must happen*. It is this something, which is without immediate intentionality, and which either sparks something new and meaningful, or, conversely, disrupts or destroys something meaningful, which we should call an *accident*. It is this sort of phenomenon, which reveals and unleashes, or else extinguishes, meaning, while itself being relatively without intrinsic meaning (and being meaningful to us only semantically: only with respect to its results or consequents), which appears to be implied by Polanyi's reflections on the emergence of open systems. To explain his meaning, he makes use of the example of a simple gas flame being sparked, while reflecting on the specific problem of the emergence of life:

“...The potentiality of a stable gas flame bears the same relation to any random fluctuation to any random fluctuation which ignited it as the ordering principle inherent in the potential energy of biased dice does to the randomness of Brownian motion, as described in the third imaginary experiment in Chapter 3 of Part One [of *Personal Knowledge*]. But we must note the following important difference. The fluctuation which leads to the establishment of an open system does not vanish after the event, as does the Brownian impulse which made the dice tumble into stable positions. The atomic configuration which ignited a flame keeps renewing itself within the flame. It is a fundamental property of open systems, not described before now, that they stabilize any improbable event which serves to elicit them. R.A. Fisher's observation of the way in which natural selection makes the improbable probable [in Huxley, Hardy, Ford. *Evolution as a Process*. London, 1954, p.91] is but a particular application of this theorem. The first beginning of life must have likewise stabilized the highly improbable fluctuation of inanimate matter which initiated life.” (PK, p.384)

These reflections on accidents do much, I submit, to clarify potential confusions as well as to dispel the spectres both of contingency and necessity which have, when taken as fundamental hypotheses and then divorced from experience as free-floating

ideas, have given rise to doctrines which ever threaten man's meaningful sense of his life and of reality.

§5. Judging and Striving

Our reflections on accidents, moreover, provides us with a general definition of a nominal and heterogeneous set of phenomena or happenings, which, taken individually or chained together, allows for a better understanding and explanation of both: (1) The novel features of a comprehensive entity which exists at more or less exactly the same level as its constituent parts (e.g. the otherwise bizarre, super-dense iron mantle and extreme electromagnetic field of pulsars, or the selection pressures which Darwin observed affecting his finches in the Galapagos), and (2) the unleashing of higher forms of being, featuring principles, reasons, and standards of rightness which are not active or realized at lower levels, but which, nevertheless, remain the indispensable conditions for their coming into being, their persistence, and their sustainability (e.g. the existence of a lichen laboriously building itself from the mineral sustenance it wrings from a rock, or the proper operation of an engine, whose parts and materials are subject to the depredations of corrosion and friction).

Let us accept then, that some accident or rather series of accidents gave rise to the primitive beginnings of life in a primordial tide-pool. Shall we call that emergence miraculous? If, but meaning nothing else by it at all, we intend a joyous appreciation of an ever-unfolding outburst of ever higher meanings and potentialities, only incipient in the incandescent gases of an expanding universe, then so be it. Nothing else, but nothing less, is strictly necessitated.

Passing on to the higher matters of anthropogenesis, we should now look to the evolution and stratification of life, and particularly of sentient, sapient, and finally articulate forms of animal life as they differentiate from the more vegetative or nutritive forms of life which preceded and underlie them, in both natural history and our own personal development - first, within our mothers' wombs, then, within an articulate culture. As Polanyi often puts it, the spectacle of evolution is very much at play and present in our own immediate biographies.¹⁴³

The most immediately striking feature of any specimen of life - beyond any appreciation of form and functionality, and our judgments thereof against true and proper standards of comeliness and rightness - is that living beings strive. More appropriately, we know that living beings strive to live, that living itself entails struggle in an ongoing series of situations (of which none are entirely easy-going), that living is always somewhat active, dynamic, and in motion, and that life is usually workable. It is the most basic type of striving to maintain the necessary conditions and principles of living which we'll intend by the word "drives", and which underlies both Polanyi's use of that term, and Plato's concept of *epithumwn* as used in the dialogues we've reviewed.

Even the simplest forms of life, found clinging or rooted to stable surfaces or floating freely in the open, strive. This is so, in so far as they have grown to shape themselves so as to capture the substances required to maintain themselves, to develop a surplus, and then to propagate themselves through a mitosis of their germ plasm. If they are badly shaped, or badly located in their environment, or their environment changes in

¹⁴³ See, for instance: *PK*, 382-390.

such a way to make it considerably less hospitable, all that striving could easily come to naught. And that is to say nothing of the possibility of destructive accidents, of losing a competition over necessary but finite resources, or the inopportunity of being consumed. This is the level of striving being attained by a myriad species of vegetation, bacteria, and other such orders and phyla which emerged early in the natural history of evolution; it also describes the general position of a human zygote implanted in the uterus, with the important difference that the cell-mitosis within the egg remains under the control and direction of the principles of the maturation process.

It is when we turn to the more active strivings of creatures which propel themselves or grope, nearly insensibly, through their environments, that our initial interest begins to be piqued by a more active spectacle in which we can indwell and sympathize with the subject of our study. We may say this for the simple reason that it is with regards to such creatures – even a blind amoeba swishing its flangella about wildly in its effort to find food – that we can judge and appreciate, not only its form and proper beauty, but also the success or failure of its performances in pursuit of ends we judge to be reasonable. It is in so far as we appreciate the amoeba's need for material sustenance to survive, grow, and divide, that we can judge it's performance, not only in terms of success or failure, but as wether it is reasonable or pathological. The striving for sustenance in itself we would judge correctly to be right and reasonable in meeting those ends, but, if the creature were to float around listlessly, we would be quite justified in judging it's behaviour to be pathological – a sign of damage or disease.

When we raise our gaze to apprehend sentient, perceptive life forms, particularly those species gifted with sight, the depth and range of possible actions on the animal's part are greatly enhanced, and the range and depth of our judgements of its actions come to be similarly gradated and differentiated. Polanyi refers to a range of experimental studies of rats, for instance, by way of demonstration. In one experiment, a rat may correctly decipher the series of acts it must perform in order to release nutritive food pellets from a mechanism in its cage. In another, a rat may feed itself endlessly on a diet of saccharine, which is sweet to the taste, but totally without nutritive value. By another token, another rat may accidentally trigger the release of food pellets in a different experiment, and fruitlessly engage in the same actions in order to repeat the success, until it becomes utterly frustrated by the ordeal and tries something different. Finally, a rat suffering from severe brain mutilation may engage in totally irrational or pathological behaviour, much like a madman who compulsively consumes newspaper.¹⁴⁴

The experiments adumbrated above represent artificial set-pieces with their own well-defined rules and boundaries for right-action and achievement. The situation, in this case, is controlled at a lower logical level by the physiological realities of the rat; and, on a second, higher level, by the realities of its perceptive, mental life; and these guided and directed by a third logical level, the rules of the game or the experiment, as set-up by the scientist. What it reveals is a four-fold categorization of activity, which becomes particularly obvious in perceptive life forms, though it is at least implied or incipient

¹⁴⁴ For such examples, refer, for instance, *PK*, 365-366.

among simpler orders of life.¹⁴⁵ What we have then are four broad types of actions and judgments regarding actions:

- i) Correct inferences reached within a *true system*,
- ii) Erroneous conclusions arrived at within a true system (like an *error* committed by a *competent* scientist),
- iii) Conclusions arrived at by the correct use of a fallacious system. This is an *incompetent* mode of reasoning, the results of which possess *subjective validity*.
- iv) *Incoherence* and *obsessiveness* as observed in the ideation of the insane, particularly in schizophrenia. The morbid reasoning of suffers from systematic delusions should also be classes here, rather than under (iii), since such delusions impair the very core of a person's rationality.¹⁴⁶

What this reveals is that the new vistas for existence opened-up by the evolution of perception – the mental control, however rarified, of one's sense and experience of one's environment – opens up more than the possibility of correctly apprehending, anticipating, acting, and reacting to realities which are now more distinctly experienced as not oneself.

It also introduces the corresponding possibility of error. With the emergence of perceptive

¹⁴⁵ Polanyi observes that experimental evidence demonstrates that even an organism as simple as an earthworm can learn: when prodded by electric shocks, a worm can eventually be taught to turn in a certain direction whenever it comes to a fork in a maze, even when the inducement of the shock has been removed from the equation; see *PK*, 316-317.

¹⁴⁶ This variant of the table is excerpted from *PK*, 374. See also *PK*, 363-366, 375-378; and cf. *TSoM*, 76-77, 87; for alternate variations on the same schema.

existence, we are already confronted with a form of being which is living presently in light of a past and in anticipation of the possibilities of the future impinging upon it perceptive, mental horizon.

At its very base, a perceptive animal must learn continuously to bring to bear some reservoir of tacit, inarticulate know-how from its being, if it is to skillfully orientate and adapt its body, and focus its sensory organs in situations which will differ in almost every particular to any other memorable situation which the present may generally resemble. While pure sensation itself may perhaps then be said to be a passive experience, perception can only be described as a skillful activity, prone to error and subject to correction in a manner which sensation logically is not.

What is both remarkable and notable about the act of correctly perceiving, and of then acting in anticipation of some achievement or intended purpose, is that it arises as a wholly tacit and inarticulate act, and remains largely so even for articulate beings such as ourselves. Whatever we may clearly say about the act of riding a bicycle, our words most assuredly leave much to be interpreted and discovered by the novice with no practical experience. What is even more remarkable is that the inarticulate mental performance of a mouse is at least as successful in tacitly generalizing from its perceptive experiences, a genuine personal knowledge of cats, and an understanding of their implications for mice, as would be the most verbose of scientists or philosophers (indeed, perhaps more so, for a human being may easily fool themselves through all sorts of ingenious internal dialogue).

Tacit knowing, as indicated earlier, when true, bears upon general conceptions which signify that which is more real, in so far as the reality signified can be anticipated to

reveal itself in a perhaps inexhaustible array of future manifestations, to which we accredit ourselves the ability to recognize in their generality as they truly are.¹⁴⁷

As such, the initial, inchoate drive towards the objects of the appetites unfurls gradually as desire for intellectual control of the environment. No healthy or sane animal of any sapience would deliberately choose to act or to live in error, against its own intents and purposes, or even with respect to what it understands to be real and true. Polanyi makes mention of certain psychological experiments on dogs, which are known to eventually induce neurotic mental breakdowns, also known as experimental neurosis.

The experiment begins with a simple test with signs signifying ‘food’ or ‘no food’, signs which the dog in question quickly learns and masters. The test then continues onwards, and the experimenters gradually increase the mental difficulty of the test, such that the signs eventually become almost entirely ambiguous. All the while, the dog reacts with increasing consternation and agitation, until the mental and emotional strain induced by the vexing problem itself induces a complete neurotic break; the dog becomes hostile, moody, depressed, and refuses to engage any further in the game. Only after a great deal, perhaps weeks, of care and coddling does the same, formerly normal dog, return to its previously healthy psychological condition.¹⁴⁸

Polanyi brings-up these experimental studies, and many others, in order to emphasize that the animal’s reaction to a vexing problem - one which narrowly outstrips

¹⁴⁷ This aspect of reality is what Esther Meek, in her 1983 doctoral dissertation, first termed, the IFM (or “indeterminate future manifestations”) Effect, a term which is now frequently used by Polanyi scholars. See Esther L. Meek, “Recalled to Life,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 74.

¹⁴⁸ *PK*, 365-368.

its capabilities so as to be tantalizingly close to fruition but ever just beyond reach – is not explicable by reference to any materialistic ends on the part of the animal itself. As he puts it, both an intelligent animal's enjoyment of a trick, maze, or a game that it has invented or learned, and its frustration when faced with a problem, are not so explicable. This is so, for an animal may continue to play a trick or a game and teach it to others, may run an obstacle course, and may struggle with a problem, even when any initial inducements of food, water or punishment, are absent, and its appetites are no longer appealed to or have been satiated.¹⁴⁹

Polanyi's point is that an intelligent animal will both engage itself mentally in play for the sheer enjoyment of the activity, and frustrate itself over a problem out of an inarticulate passion to master and to understand it. My point will be to further emphasize that this entails, even at the merely perceptive level of existence, an innate desire to convert or to reform one's own knowing and being, in order better to apprehend the real. This comes in response to coming to know one's ignorance of it, in some given aspect or respect. Thus, we may say that the Socratic dictum that knowing one's ignorance is the beginning of wisdom proves as true of the dog as it does of the man.

In the process of this ascent to the meaning of perceptive life with the concomitant emergence of success and error as real and actual possibilities in the universe, I have perhaps blurred the line between sentient and sapient life. I think that this is perhaps inevitable, and we can only qualify as truly sapient, those forms of life with an intensified mental existence, whom are capable of a more or less self-motivated mental life,

¹⁴⁹ *PK*, 206, 210, 300. Polanyi here is drawing on the experimental work of the German gestalt psychologist and phenomenologist Wolfgang Köhler.

biologically organized around an active centre to which the rest of the body and its sense organs are submitted, and demonstrably moved to understand or engage in mental play – regardless of the presence or absence of any initial inducement directed from or to the appetitive drives. This allows us to clearly distinguish a gradient of difference between the level of participation in being of earthworms (which, Polanyi notes, can actually be induced to learn under experimental conditions¹⁵⁰) versus that of cats, dogs, or great apes.

Whatever the graduation between simple sentience and the first inklings of sapient existence, and whatever happening – be it accident or event – in our natural history which spurred or unleashed the potentials of mental life in the animal kingdom, nevertheless, we continue to see what Polanyi termed the *principle of dual control* in effect at this new level of being. At the lower level of a living entity's being, we can see the boundary conditions defined by the operational principles of physiology, themselves layered upon antecedent strata of lower-level principles and boundary conditions, right down to the basic laws studied under physics and chemistry. At the higher level, we witness the layering of the first active and intentioned principles: first of the purely self-interested drives (most intensely observed and experienced in base drives for sex and to cheat death), and then, secondly, of a commanding, impassioned mental existence.

With the recognition of the emergence of each new level of being, we are always tacitly recognizing both the achievement of a latent potential which had hitherto been unrealized, and every achievement as a revelation of the meaning of lower or antecedent phenomena. This, furthermore, is equally true for us whether we are appreciating the

¹⁵⁰ See, for instance, f.137 and 138 above.

achievement of a child, or that of a species taken collectively. The child's development and maturation is an achievement equal to that of the species, in so far as she must struggle upwards and realize herself and her calling within the same boundaries and towards the same principles or ends as did the very first of her kind, as she grows from the vegetative existence of a zygote to the status of a mature human being. Indeed, she may even do a better job of it. Whatever the case, every achievement is, to use Polanyi's poetic turn of phrase, "sown in corruption": to strive for or to achieve any purpose, end, principle, or potential can only be done from within the underlying matrix of boundaries, principles, and substance which have made it possible. For the higher animals, particularly we humans, this means that the universal intent of our personal moral and intellectual passions remain reliant upon and in tension with the selfish physiological goals of the drives.¹⁵¹

§6. *Sex, Death, and Individuality*

The existence of the lowest orders of life are remarkable when contrasted against a background of inanimate orders of being, which are wholly devoid of intent or personhood. Even when regarding single-celled animals, we witness something actively trying to maintain its individual existence, which has often been organized around some active centre or ruling part – if only a cell nucleus – which it dumbly strives to protect at

151 The full quotation can be found in *PK*, 244. A fuller exposition on the *principle of dual control* and on *boundary principles*, and its meaning for life can be had from "Life's Irreducible Structure" in *K&B*; this can then be compared to his extrapolation of these principles on the level of culture and society in "The Republic of Science" in *K&B*; and *PK*, 181-182, 213-224. In brief: both science and the free society are threatened when thought either (a) comes to be held hostage to purely economic demands for material goods, or the political demands of power, or (b) becomes completely unhinged from a recognition of those necessary boundaries and conditions. This topic will be explored in greater depth in later chapters.

all costs. The drives of such beings aim at the purely selfish end of maintaining their own individuality, in so far as even propagation is a simple matter of a-sexual fission of the germ plasm or genetic material among largely identical specimens. Such is the life of amoebas, hydras, and some worms. Things quickly become more complicated with the emergence of sex and sexual generation.

Sex and death were conjointly born, Polanyi muses.¹⁵² From a point-of-view of pure selfishness, it would certainly appear to be the worst deal one could possibly make. Certainly, if selfishness and self-maintenance of one's individuality were the greatest concern and the highest possible principles of life, sex could only be qualified as an horrific absurdity and a terrible mistake. A species of life which conjoins the genetic offerings of parents for the generation of children whom are, at best, neither exactly half of each, foredooms all purely self-centred individuality, for each parent will die, and the child is not either of them.

While mortality was born with the invention of sexual generation, so too, though, are some rather interesting vistas for life's achievements. Whereas the previous levels of biotic achievement, physiological and perceptive existence respectively, brought to life the possibilities, first, of success or failure, then, or being correct or being in error as primordial expressions of commitment, sex and mortality quicken the universal pole of being and commitment. Indeed they may very well transform the subjective self-regard of individual lives into a passionate consciousness and concern for others. Polanyi, borrowing from Martin Buber, refers to this calling from the I-It to an I-Thou relationship

¹⁵² See *PK*, 387-388.

as pertaining primarily with respect to relationships among men (by which he means human beings), but I see that his own understanding of these things implies reason to recognize the primordial forms of the commitments implied in the I-Thou relation in much lower orders of in-articulate, sapient and sentient life. And let it be said also that this, Polanyi's recent, scientific view of these things, can be seen to be largely commensurable with the Socratic-Diotimian understanding of the meaning of *eros* and mortality.¹⁵³

Be that as it may, sexual reproduction is an exceedingly poor way of chasing after any real form of earthly immortality. The genesis of new beings, or *ontogenesis*, through sexual copulation is a hazardous, even dangerous affair which begets children whom are simply not their parents – however much gloss may be spread over that reality. Whatever, then, the meaning of sexually-founded ontogenesis may be, it cannot be the same meaning as the drives, whose immediate meaning ever bears on the self-interested continuation of the individual experiencing them. Reflecting upon the innovation of sex, we once again find ourselves shading from a vision of self-interested, appetitive existence to existence bearing on something outside of and other than itself. In so far as mate-selection, attraction, and sexual competition among animals entail success and failure, correct judgment and error, it entails at least the passion already present in all knowing and perceiving. Insofar as it is rooted in and emerges from self-centred, appetitive existence, it retains some character of a drive. Both modes of experiencing sexual

¹⁵³ See Chapter 4. Cannon points out that MP does occasionally describe commitment as "personal fiduciary passion" (*PK*, 303), which would effectively allow us to assimilate commitment as a form of passion or *eros*. See Dale Cannon, "Some Aspects of Polanyi's Version of Realism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 53–54.

yearning and sexual union itself, as universal intent or self-centred and egotistical, are validly implied in, and would evidently colour, sexual experience to one extent or another, until some extreme point at which one mode may entirely vanish.

That being said, sex is absurd when experienced purely as a drive, and, objectively, bears upon goals which are impossible for beings born of parents, when acted-out according to the principles of a drive. Sex, we should say, only begins to make meaningful sense when it bears upon the universal pole, or upon others. It must either be the spark or the flame of a more fully realized passion, if it is to come into its own – much as perception comes into its own only when senses had evolved which could both apprehend something outside of one's own body and consciousness and experience those things as, indeed, outside and other than oneself.

Because of all this, it behooves us now to ask certain questions. Namely, is it valid to premise the drives as an entirely different order of experience of the passions? Furthermore, is it valid, whatever our affirmation, to interpret Polanyi one way or the other?

Given what has been said, and given meditation upon the originating experiences, I shall affirm that the two cannot be held to be real categories, distinct from one another. Rather, I will say that they are nominal distinctions signifying different intensities of expression of a fundamental tension, reflecting also certain gradients and intensions of consciousness.

At one level, we have a living being intending something for its own self-interested use, which recognizes the meaning of its objects only as they refer to the pains of its drives and the pleasures of their fulfillment. At another level, we recognize a capacity to completely submit or subsume oneself in something, some other, or some question, which may make infinite demands of us; being so conscious, one is rather more liable to recognize intrinsic meaning outside of oneself, and to find oneself called to reform one's being in response to the passion to discover and to know the reality of that intended. The from-to structure of intentionality remains constant, but in the lower mode, one related in an almost entirely from-at manner, such that a "hard distinction", so to speak, is made between *from* and *at*, inside and outside, "subject" and "object".

In the higher intention of passionate awareness, on the other hand, a living being's indwelling within a problem, a mystery, or a beloved, shifts the balance of emphasis to the *to* of the *from-to*, and is experienced as much as a pouring oneself out into what we are passionate about, as it is an assimilation of it to our own bodies in the effort to know. Here then, any attempt to distinguish between inside and outside, subject and object, becomes rather muddled and misleading – even meaningless – while, conversely, personhood is recognizably deepened through such passionate endeavours. The purely self-centred existence of an amoeba, dumbly and dully perceiving itself against a universe of objects, may contain that primordial spark of personhood, in so far as it is an individual life, but it will never compare to a man who has learnt deeply to love, raise, and understand a child, a nun who serves all in open *boddhicitta*, or the student

submitting themselves to a thousand sages in wisdom. An amoeba may be a perfect example of a subject, but it is a rather terrible person.

Let us then affirm that passion is the fully borne-out expression of that tension which is muted and inchoate when expressed and experienced as drives meant to spur the fulfillment of appetites, and let us even give that highly general category of tension or yearning itself the name “passion” for that reason. Would it then be valid to interpret this either as Polanyi’s meaning, or an implication of what he said? I believe that the subsumption of drives as a particular class of passionate experiences is validly understood from the force and vector of his writings. This can be affirmed, for the belief that drives could be separate from passions, or, conversely, that all passions are sublimated and transformed drives, itself rests, in no small part, on a dualistic conception of existence which would purport to distinguish between rational and irrational forces. As I think I have demonstrated thus far in my exegesis of Polanyi’s thoughts, one cannot extract any vision of a detached, calculative, “rational” nature opposing and imposing itself over an emotional, “irrational” nature. Nor can we extract any notion of certain emotions which are rational and passionate, and others which are irrational and appetitive. Rather, it is the ends and intentionality of our invigorating (or else enervating) emotions, which qualify them as this or that. Whatever equivocations in his writings or lectures which one might find upon a pedantic analysis, this I will hold to be the reality upon which Polanyi’s insights truly bear.¹⁵⁴

154 Yeager, on the contrary, writes: “The passions arise as a function of the human development of symbol systems enabling speech and writing. Whereas the appetites are grounded in our existence as biological animals and seek nothing but their own surcease in bodily satisfaction (whether the satisfaction of release or the satisfaction of fulfillment), the passions belong to a higher emergent level and are distinctively

§7. *The Birth of Lust and Death*

Whatever sort of happening in the evolution of life gave rise to sexual diversification among species, its implications ought to be seen as absurd, if analyzed, honestly and consistently, from a viewpoint which insisted upon the “rational”, self-interested nature of all existence. This is so, for strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as sexual reproduction, for the startlingly obvious reason that sex cannot produce children that are copies of its parent. Therefore, nothing meaningful can be said to have been re-produced – even the individual alleles of the genetic code are altered in their meaning by the shuffling and re-combinations which occur as a result, say, of the insemination of an ovum. Rather, what we are faced with when we encounter a child would be less confusedly called the outcome or achievement of sexual generation, or sexual ontogenesis.

What we should further say is that every child of parents should be understood as a comprehensive and unique achievement. From begetting to birth, every stage of fetal development would be infinitely improbable in a truly contingent, Laplacean universe, and yet the generation of children, like evolution, has a way of making the infinitely unlikely into a day-to-day occurrence.

human and personal. The passions have to do with a layer of reality that is essentially a social construction, a layer of reality which comes into being only insofar as our complex symbol systems enable us to enact into being institutions and practices—an entire convivial order—that, while being contingent upon materiality, cannot be reduced to material conditions.” This formulation is problematic, in so far as it suggests a huge gap in man’s being: a passionate, social man; and an appetitive, natural one. Yeager thus presents a reading of Polanyi which places him rather close-by Rousseau and Freud, which is rather problematic. Cf. D.M. Yeager, “Confronting the Minotaur: Moral Inversion and Polanyi’s Moral Philosophy,” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 29, no. 1 (2003 2002): 36.

The mammalian womb, like the mythical, primordial tide-pool, is the site at which a mix of complex chemicals and minerals, under certain ambient conditions, suddenly become subject to operational principles which harness the materials present to the chain reactions of an open system. As more meaningful structures develop, and as long as the underlying boundary conditions remain propitious, additional principles manifest in the process which both restrict the potentialities of the system, and open-up new possibilities and forms. In the case of the womb, it is not at all long before physiological principles come to dominate, and the inability or failure to meet the minimal standards of those principles on their material foundations may quickly lead to the miscarriage of the maturing life, or a child who is subject to physiological discomforts or diseases. Within time forms develop upon forms; followed by an active physiology; sense organs and sensation; and by some accounts, even some level of perception and a distinction between pleasurable and painful experiences, and a conscious intent to cling to one and to reject the other.¹⁵⁵

Given that each stage of development can succeed or fail, each successful stage is by that token an achievement bearing rightly upon some end, structuring or controlling it – as it were – from above. The child as a whole, we'd do well to warrant, is a unique achievement in whom the parents share a hand, and in whom they may justifiably take some measure of concern and pride. All the more so the child in whom one indwells in love and care, or whose mental life and achievements have been guided by oneself as a chosen paradigm or which one has helped to guide or shape.

¹⁵⁵ I will bracket the question of whether and to what extent these emerge and develop serially or in parallel, though my own understanding of this is that they emerge serially, but develop to maturity in parallel.

§8. *Maturation*

A wise man once remarked that faith was in equal parts trust and longing, and indispensable to wisdom and to the eye which would see reality. In earlier chapters, we have examined the place of trust and apprenticeship in human life, while here and in the previous chapter, our focus shifted to illuminating the place of longing. During the course of that pursuit, several questions have been brought to light, and which bear now formal recognition, for they are both well worth the reminder in themselves, and they have a bearing on the following chapters. These things have been:

- a) A deeper exegesis of what Polanyi termed the *isomorphism* of i) the structures of reality and ii) the structures of consciousness of reality, in which it participates and which, paradoxically, seeks to comprehend even as it is comprehended (in all senses of that word). This is the mystery formally explicated by Plato in the drama of the Divided Line in the *Politeia*, which Socrates and Glaucon draw and reflect upon. It is also what Polanyi observes in the relationship between knower and known, the comprehender and comprehensive entity comprehended, who then seeks to comprehend himself. The relationship between our tacit, subsidiary knowledge, on the one hand, and our explicit knowledge and focal awareness, on the other, is of an equivalent structure and meaning to the stratified, structural relationship of the parts of an entity to the whole or to its highest controlling principle.

Thus, the isomorphic character of knowing and being invalidates any premise of the intrinsic meaninglessness of life or the overarching reality in which it exists, while allowing that much meaning may be extrinsically given, or else be mistaken by the knower or entirely illusory. This effectively, logically, necessitates a rejection of both objectivism and of relativism.

- b) Human trust and longing are meaningful, or, to put it differently, bear on real, meaningful achievement, though the aims and foundations of any person's passion may fail entirely, be foolhardy, or entirely in error. This essential feature remains a constant, whether we aim to raise a family; to leave a name behind us, engraved in our culture; or to plumb the depths of reality down to its roots. All of our potential achievements take their bearing from atop of or within a web of convivial, articulate relationships which give shape to our personal passions - to our knowing and being - and which both point in the direction of our callings while drawing the limits of our responsibility. In short, our informal and formal educations, given from within our familial and civic lives, provide some meaningful boundaries and directions in life – that principle of dual control, now found at work at the level of conscious intent – though these two may fail us or prove entirely foolish or corrupted in their turn. Plato draws for us a picture of the first in the *Politeia*, with Socrates' depiction and critique of the

moribund civic cults of Athens. He provides an exemplar of foolishness – of *anoia* – in the *Syposium*, with the depictions of Alcibiades rejection of the mystery of *nous*, of Aristophanes' materialism, and the comparatively mild critiques of the artificial limits imposed by Eryximachus' vision. The examples of error come both in the running critique of Sophistic thought in the dialogues, and in the portrayal of run-of-the-mill self-deception and delusion among men and women, symbolized by the myth of the cave-dwellers. While we may, from the depths to the heights of our beings, long to know, we may be, and often are, led astray, or allow lower demands to take unnecessary priority over higher callings, as often through cowardice, laziness, confusion or anxiety, as through *anoia*.

- c) It follows from this that heeding that which we seek in our longing, follows not from the sublimation of *eros*, but is a consequent of maturation. The desire to know and to get a handle on reality, as we have said, is already evident at the basest level of perceptive life, and is at least implied in primitive sensual existence. So too is it thus entailed, give the structure of personal knowing, that we long to reform ourselves according to the demands of the real. It is therefore incumbent on us, upon reflection, to admit that we are at least as driven to know the truth of reality as is the average lab-rat or monkey. To claim that the mental achievements of a child, absorbing the world

for the first time through the vehicle of her culture, is spurred on by artificially sublimated sexual drives is a strictly foolish conclusion, based on the sorts of facile dichotomizing of human nature discussed earlier.

- d) As now often touched upon, the maturation of our passion such that we set it on the matters and mysteries which foster an open existence is perennially needful, but never the more so than when a culture, a *noosphere*, has burst into dynamic articulation and continuous reform under the influence of science or philosophy, or that “shirt of flame” bequeathed by the ecumenical spiritual paths and religions. This is needful, for the demands upon one’s person and one’s society are very much increased – may be increased beyond measure – by the call to openness and questioning, or to moral perfection, in a free and dynamic society. Whatever the path taken in such a journey without ends, it is certain to be less immediately comfortable than the hazy world of dreams experienced by Socrates’ cave-dwellers. In fact, it is liable to be highly upsetting in most every way; as it was written in the *Politeia*, the one who sets her hands upon her fellows’ chains in the dreamworld is likely to be subjected to rejection, if not murder. Plato certainly had in memory the execution of Socrates. In the West, the cultural inheritance of Christianity provides the added example on Calvary.

But at least as needful as an awareness of the potential rejection of path, calling, and responsibility, is the twisting of their eschatological potential. After the epiphanies of reality, the moral passion of a man, the demand to reform one's being – or all of being – into a state of perfect conformance with the Beyond, or some image of it caught in the water or amongst the shadows, may overwhelm the balance of his life. In effect, the fervour to conform oneself to a truth not of this world, or else, to pull it into the world, is a new possibility made actual by a differentiated consciousness and understanding of being. We have touched upon this new potential in our analysis of the figures of Alcibiades in chapter 3, and of Polanyi's Minotaur in chapter 2, and we will bear down upon it again in the following chapter.

For now, it is worthy to remind ourselves that, by Polanyi's analysis, our maturation is realized in its potential only with our discovery of the vehicles for our yearnings for permanent mental dissatisfaction in which to anchor our more immediate searches and endeavours. By this token, the temporal natural history of anthropogenesis, and each of our retellings of it in within and without our mothers' wombs, becomes secondary in our maturation to things of a higher nature, insofar as they are more real: that is to say, are discovered by us to have perhaps infinite potential for future manifestation in the here-and-now. Such realities are not temporal, passing things of the world – not concrete in the sense of cobblestones, to use Polanyi's oft-used example – but speak to and from all times and places. In his sometimes repeated estimation, the life of the mind of Christians had found such a happy dwelling-place of the mind in the mystery of a crucified God, the

Sermon on the Mount, and the practices for knowing the unknown and sustaining faith through prayer, and through certain meditative and contemplative arts.¹⁵⁶ This tradition and worship rounded-out in the Word and the Way, an effectively measureless upper limit and calling to men's understandings and pursuit of moral reform, to their sense of righteousness and achievement, which was not of this world: it is simply unrealizable by human effort by very principle. And, unlike the pursuits of Beauty and Truth through science and philosophy, we might add that the Christian Way has been accessible to persons of all graces and temporal callings, rather than a subset of humankind of certain rare *charismata*. The mystery and calling of existence thus heightened, things were bound to go very wrong with the breakdown or corruption of the Christian traditions wherever they had transfigured life. This is what theologians of the Church, such as Ivan Illich, have long referred to as the *mysterium iniquitas*.

156 For some of Polanyi's explicit statements on Christianity in *PK*, refer to 197-199, 200-201, and 280-286. His specific comments on Christian mysticism and contemplation occur on p.197, and his remarks on Christianity's fulfillment of "man's craving for mental dissatisfaction" on p.199. See also Polanyi. "Forms of Atheism", *TaD*, 40:2 (2013-2014), 7-11; and the pre-amble by Phil Mullins on 4-6. For an introduction to the wider controversy on Polanyi's religious or spiritual commitments, see for instance Torrance, Thomas F. "Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith - A Personal Report", *TaD*, 27:2 (2000-2001), 26-33; Apczynski, John. "Torrance on Polanyi and Polanyi on God: Comments on Weightman's Criticisms --A Review Essay", *TaD*, 24:1 (1997-1998), 32-34; and Weightman's response on 35-38; Torrance, Thomas F. "Torrance Answers Prosch on Polanyi's Convictions About God", *TaD* 14:1 (1986-1987), 30; and Prosch, Harry. "Postscript to *Meaning*: Prosch Replies to T.F. Torrance", *TaD* 15:1 (1987-1988), 24.

Part 3: A Tale of Two Cities, Chapter 5: Order and Empire

“[Critias] You must march bravely forward to encounter your speech, and as you invoke Paeon and the Muses, display in your hymn of praise the bravery of your ancient citizens.”

“Dear Hermocrates, you stand last in rank, but since someone is standing in front of you, you are still confident. That courage is needed, you will discover yourself, when you take my place. But I must pay attention to your exhortation and encouragement, and, in addition to the gods you just named, invoke other gods and make a special prayer to Mnemosyne. The success or failure of just about everything that is most important in our speech lies in the lap of this goddess.”

- Hermocrates and Critias, *Critias* (108c-d), trans. Diskin Clay

§1. *The Little Cosmos*

‘Man is the cosmos writ small.’

Such is the corollary which arises from the descent portrayed in the *Timaeus*, and capped by the *Critias*, which neatly juxtaposes that pithy maxim derived from the *Politeia*: that the polis is the *psyche* writ in large letters. Together, then, they are, “the city is the man writ large; man is the cosmos writ small”, and, together, they should strike us as a radical development with respect to cosmological conceptions of the world. For, whether conceived in modern times or ancient, whether from the mind of a high-priest of Amon-Re of the German Black Forest, whether they conceived the firmament as fundamentally sacred of alien in substance, these have ever tended to lead to symbolizations of society *en toto* as the quasi-divine expression of an enclosing, immanent cosmos. By such lights, the individual person, as a consequence, whether thought to possess something like a soul or not, naturally tends to fall to the status of a part in a whole - a droplet in a miniature *animus mundi*, if you will - who derives

meaning in life through their participation in the sacralizing actions of the Kingdom, the Nation, or the People, whether they be existentially and transcendently represented by King, Party, or Führer.¹⁵⁷

These sequels to the *Politeia* take-up again the question of who man is, but with *Timaeus*, the accent shifts to charting the depths of the cosmos, which are also necessarily the depths of that “little cosmos”, that *cosmion*, which is the human person. With *Critias*, and the myth of the ancient war of Atlantis more generally, the accent is placed on re-imagining the Kallipolis as an historical polis - a city moved (*kineuw*) - rather than a city *en logon*. The aim of the sequels, as announced by the characters themselves, is to expand and to compliment the *logos* arrived at the previous night, in the anamnestic dialogue recounted by Socrates.

What remains here, then, is to distinguish how this is accomplished, and to what end. The following questions must then be addressed: i) What is the essential and substantial

157 Here, I am adopting Voegelin's terminology of representation, see Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics in Modernity Without Restraint*, 109-149 for a detailed analysis of the meaning of representation. To be brief, elemental representation refers to the particular institutions of a given society, which comprise the outward formalities of its underlying or dominant *ethos* or *paradeigma* (to keep with the Platonic terminology). The existential representative(s) of a political society are those charged with organizing and leading it for pragmatic political action. Transcendental representation refers to that which is said to organize or lead men and/or society with respect to the ultimate, essential ends which it recognizes as true. In ancient, cosmological orders, for instance, that of Egypt, transcendental and existential representation overlap almost entirely: society as a whole represents on Earth the divine-immanent order, and finds its specific head in the figure of the King - the various elements of elemental representation (which varied over the centuries) were secondary and derived from this primary experience of reality as a quarternarian structure of cosmos-gods-society-men. In anthropological orders, transcendental and existential representation may split, as, for instance, in the case of *philosophia*, when the *psyche* is discovered as the actual sensorium and site of a tension whose ground is beyond the quarternarian structure. Ultimately, however, if the underlying experiences which enculturate an anthropological or soteriological order are lost, the tendency will be to attempt to find a ground for personal and social order in immanent reality - often in a highly perverted form - by projecting spiritual ultimacy on this or that idea (e.g. “the race”, “the nation”, “the people”) or so forth, and authority in their representative (e.g. the Führer, the Party).

nature of the cosmos - what is its most basic structure - and its relation to the Beyond? ii)
Can it be borne-out that man is the cosmos writ small - a *cosmion* in the pregnant sense?
iii) To what extent are the speeches and the drama of *Timaeus* and *Critias* necessary to
the fleshing-out of the *episteme politike* and the philosophic anthropology of *Politeia*? iv)
What, in fact, is being suggested about human destiny, political affairs, and order?

To even commence tackling these questions will again require beginning in the
middle of something - with an exegesis of *Timaeus*.

§2. *A Feast for a Feast (or, a Shortly Expected Party)*

The festival of Bendis, moon-goddess, who is both Thracian Artemis and Selene
(to say nothing of her aspect, through Artemis, as Hecate, goddess of crossroads), is over.
However, five individuals have now gathered again on the following day to repay a debt.
Now, the setting is the opening of the festival honouring Athena, goddess of wisdom and
war, the wily virgin patroness of Athens, who, it is said, once cleaned Hephaestus'
unwelcome seed from her thigh, casting it to the Earth to rot and conceive a king in the
Attic soil.

Finally, we learn the identities of Socrates' unknown speaking companions, who
are now revealed to be the one's who owe him the debt of a feast of words in recompense
to the sustenance he provided them at the last gathering. Those gathered include the old
Satyr, Critias, Hermocrates, Timaeus, and an unknown other who sends apologies for
their absence, but for whom the reader ably fills the space in the circle.

Of the other four, only Socrates, Critias, and Timaeus will furnish speeches to fill the table. Hermocrates' speech will never come, nor is it certain that it was ever meant to come. His mere presence is story enough perhaps; it is Hermocrates, the great democrat of Syracuse, who will ultimately succeed in rallying the defenders of that city against the Athens and her allies, and put a dramatic end to Athenian ambitions in Sicily.¹⁵⁸ The fifth member of the party, on the other hand, who also happens to be the host, will find their hands and bellies labouring under the sustenance of the three full courses supplied by their companions.

Socrates' moonlit feast is done (or so, at least, it seemed), and his friends are eager to repay what they owe, but at their prompting, he is happy to remind them (*memnemetha*) of the gist of it. This appeal to memory and remembering - to *mneme* - proves not to be a simple literary device on the part of Plato - a trick employed for the sake of a forgetful audience. Rather, the remembering serves both the dramatic and the noetic purpose of priming the sails for Critias' grand recollection (*anamnesis*) of a certain story handed down from ages past; under the festival banner of Athena, Socrates is being cajoled to set the rudder for new meditative odysseys (17b).

In the meantime, the old icon of Eros, in a brief dialogue with Timaeus, happily engages in expounding the chief features of the city in speech which was rendered on the previous night. And, at each reminder, the Pythagorean from Locris ascents, saying "we remember", else "we well remember" (*eumnemoneta*), or "that is precisely what we said", or the equivalent (18b-e). It is after summing-up the previous night's events with

¹⁵⁸ See Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Bk. 6, ch. 32-35, for Hermocrates' rousing speech to the Syracusans.

the stranger from Locris that Socrates takes the time to praise his companions and to laud their many accomplishments in life. But, he also laments at his own inability sufficiently to magnify their “city”. The old philosopher would so dearly desire (*epithumian*) to see their city aroused in some grand struggle (*agon*), much like one feels moved to wish to see any beautiful, reposing creature - be they real or depicted in image - to be stirred to something befitting their physique.

But Socrates is in luck! As it turns out, relates Hermocrates (“Strength or Might of Hermes - the god of stratagems, cross-roads, and boundaries”) , the philosopher’s tale of the Kallipolis excited the memory of Critias as to a certain tale he once heard in his youth. Critias himself recounts that he spent half the night awake in *anamnesis* and *ennoesis* (contemplation), attempting to pull together a *logos* which he first heard as a stripling from his father, Critias, who had been given it by his father, Dropides, who had received it from his good friend, Solon the lawgiver, who had himself laboured for years to write the epic of the *logos*. Sadly though, Solon was prevented from completing the grand tale of the *logos* by his many political responsibilities, else, affirms Critias, his fame would surely have outshone that of Homer throughout Hellas (21c-e).

The time-coullisse of the *logos* by no means ends with Solon, however, as Critias’ account of the *anamnesis* recalls - for Solon himself recovered the tale during his sojourns in Kemt, the Black Earth, the Two Lands of the Nile, known to the children of Hellas as Egypt. There, in Sais, temple-city of Neith - war-goddess and mother of the Sun - Solon had the *logos* from the goddess’ priests, who only gave back to Hellas’ child a

tale properly originating from and belonging to the children of Athens: for it is the story of a war they fought nine-millennia past (23a-e).

Here then, already the time-coulisse of the tale sounds the temporal depths of the *logos*, and reveals their almost abyssal proportions (if indeed it is proper to speak of proportionality with respect to abysses). The meditation upon the temporal aspect of the *logos* has brought the tale directly to the matter of the *last* great act of a more ancient Athens: its war against imperial Atlantis, before both were swallowed-up in a great cataclysm (Athens by the Earth, Atlantis by the Ocean), shortly after the latter's final defeat. Behind *that*, however, lay the entire *historia* of Athens, and the understanding that many such cataclysms had occurred before in the history of things.

But even on the axis of the everlasting (if not yet the timeless), still greater depths have been already sounded by the dialogue, and these are signified and announced by the presence of the gods invoked. The immediate complexity of the matter requires some unpacking.

First, we have been reminded, and must now "recollect", that the paradigm uncovered in the *Politeia* was revealed by the light of the moon - that is to say, under the divinity of Artemis-Bendis-Selene. Under these aspects, the dialogue comes to be associated with the hunt (reflected by the *zetema*), midwifery and birth (through Artemis' associations with those portfolios, and reflected in Socrates' unique art), to menstruation (through the symbolic association with the moon, and the menses themselves serving as a symbol of something transcendently feminine in itself - an unlimited but unformed potential), and to the moon's status as a reflector of the light of the Sun.

By this last token, we then recollect the Simile of the Sun and the good-beyond-all-suchness. Given that we were warned by Socrates that the Simile of the Sun was a completely inadequate attempt to point at something completely beyond imaging, the *Politeia* itself takes on the meaning of a reflection on something beyond the words and depictions. Thus, as the written dialogue stands to an actual *dialektikos*, so does the memory thereof stands to anamnestic recollection, else so does forming an idea or a notion (*to dokein*) stand to conceiving an understanding (*to epistesthai*), or does light (*phos*) stand to vision (*opsis*), and so stands the *Politeia* and its sequels to the matters which they bear-upon: they are the light by which to hunt for the unforgotten reality of things, and through which perhaps to give birth from one's potential.¹⁵⁹

The immediate object of the previous night's hunt had been *dikaiosune* and her paradigm, but to spy her out, it somehow proved necessary first to develop vision through an apprehension of the Beyond and the structure of existence in the *metaxy*. The text itself now takes on the cast of a reflection of a reflection of the light of the vision of an actual, concrete human being - a mentor. That is to say that it is Plato's second-best

159 In his commentary on *Timaeus* and *Critias* in volume 3 of *Order and History*, Voegelin argues that Plato is complementing the ascent inaugurated by Socrates in *Politeia* with a descent into the collective depths of the people (represented by the transmission of the *logos* from Solon to Critias), to the depths of mankind (Sais to Athens), to the primordial life of the cosmos ("the level of the gods"). Thus, the problem of instantiation of the Idea (i.e. the *paradeigma*) which was evoked by the individual soul of Socrates is related back to its transmission from old to young, and to *anamnesis*, with the agedness of the historical situation and the men juxtaposed against "the youth of the unconscious". Thus also, E.V. there holds that the political problem of evoking and instantiating the Idea in a society is being related to the mystery of the cosmic cycle. See *ibid*, 231-233.

alternative to the guided practice of philosophic ascent through dialogue with Socrates, i.e. a master, one who “sees”.¹⁶⁰

Second, with the *Timaeus* we are brought under the aspect of Athena Parthenos. Having (presumably) attained vision by light of the moon, we come under the immediate patronage of the goddess of wisdom. In a first impression, we may find ourselves noticing the symmetry of the allusion, given that we are to hear the *logos* of a wise city, which girds itself for its last, greatest, and noblest war. We are also reminded of the goddess’ rivalry with Poseidon for the affections of the Athenians in the ancient myths - both that she had won them over with the gift of the olive-tree (which they cherished even more than the sea-god’s gift of the horse), and that the god of the seas and of earthquakes will be revealed shortly as the patron of Atlantis.

Moreover, Athena is an Olympian, a sky-goddess whose temple-residence in Athens lay high on the rocky Acropolis, and that she is both *parthenos* and, after a queer manner, parthenogenerated, having been born fully-formed and armoured from the brow of Zeus (with no small help from Hephaestus’ hammer); this followed his swallowing of her pregnant mother, the Titaness Metis (“Craft, Cunning, Counsel”). Though Athena is an eternally virgin goddess of the sky, she is yet credited with inseminating the Earth (with another notable quantity of help from Hephaestus); though “female”, she puts form into the accommodating womb of Ge, rather than accommodating seed or form within herself. It is therefore proper to say, alongside the poets, that there is something

¹⁶⁰ Note that I am ignoring any association with time suggested by the moon’s cycle, in order to not conflate commentary on the timely with the timeless or everlasting, which actually become thematic only later in *Timaeus*.

altogether “masculine”, and in no ways “feminine” about her - and one may note the similarity and the foreshadowing of her before the Demiurge.

It is this comparison which is furthered by seeing in the myth’s compact, cosmological form, a retelling or re-speculation on the the relationship of Heaven and Earth, with emphasis now upon the ambiguous status of a particular polis - Athens - between the two. Athenians, it is oft recounted, represented themselves through the polis as autochthonous, by virtue of having descended through that primeval insemination by their patroness. In the hands of Plato, Athenians thus can be creatively understood to be in tension towards wisdom - an understanding of existence at least incipient in the story, and in the cultic festival which is the context of the dialogue, and which brings Athenians into ritual focus upon the Wisdom of Heaven who seeded them in the womb of Earth.

Third, though still travelling by Athena’s star, Critias’ anamnesis quickly brings us into contact with Dionysus. As it turns out, the older man had first heard the *logos* during the Apaturia festival held in the god’s honour, during which, on the third day, known as “Cureotis”, the children of city are registered. Here then do the heights meet the depths, and the unfolding *logos* thereby is slowly brought to light. But what sort of *logos* is it which is drawn up from the depths, and what the nature of the drawing? What is the purpose in invoking Dionysus in such a context? The *logos* itself is apparently something which happened in the past, in time, but yet the label of an *historia* is quite carefully avoided - though certainly it would have been an obvious choice. We are thus led gently away from the thought that we are getting the facts of a matter which happened.

This leaves emphasis upon the second dimension - that the *logos* is *of time*, and that it bears upon the temporal. Such a nature already sets it apart from the *logos* of *Politeia*, in which one's *nous* employs the temporal device of words and other images in order to bear upon eternal sources. In the "here and now" of the sequel *logos*, the anamnesis which once bore upon the *paradeigma* laid-up in *ouranos* has evoked a complementary anamnesis in which Critias is led back in memory - now, as a mature adult - to that time-coulisse with its unfathomable depths. The *logos* to follow is neither of the nature of an *historia*, nor exactly a *mythos*, nor is it precisely a demonstration with necessary conclusions. Rather, it is drawn-up out of the depths by *anamnesis*, guided by memory, and bears upon retrieving an image in time of eternity. Dionysus now comes to stand as the symbol of the peculiar plunge through which such boundless depths may be sounded, when submitted to the wisdom won through vision.

Fourth, we are told that Solon recovered the *logos* in conversation with the priests of Sais, whose divine patroness, it is asserted, is none other than that goddess whom the Athenians call by the name of Athena, but whom the children of Egypt call Neith (21e). Moreover, Solon was told that the laws and customs of Kemt are actually a replica of those of that ancient Athens which once warred against Atlantis. This then leads us to the sudden surprise that the Kallipolis, taken literally, is not an improved Spartan regime, so much as the paradigm behind the kingdom of Egypt. Laying that aside (along with the suggestive comparison of philosopher-king and Pharaoh), we are left with the added question: are we to take at face value the suggested symbolic equivalence of Neith and Athena, such that we simply assimilate the former to the popular, Hellenic image of the

latter? It seems unlikely that the meaning of the new *logos* would be satisfied by such a facile and popular conception of the goddess, but much may be gained by assimilating to Athena the well-known attributes of Neith.

For, besides from her great antiquity (quite possibly antedating even the First Dynasty of the united Two Lands of Egypt, as evinced by her depictions wearing the Red Crown of Upper Egypt), and her status as a war-goddess, she has also the aspect, in some stories, of mother of Re - that is to say, mother of the Sun. By virtue of the syncretic reading of the symbols, we are led to apprehend Neith-Athena as mother of that which is likened - as the sensible source of seeing and all that can be seen - to the Ground of all things intelligible, itself Beyond such and all. Thus do the visible manifestations of wisdom's "son", his light, provide the sight by which one may ascend to the intelligible questions which may lead to vision; a *logos* partaking of the time-coulisse and the things of the world might prove a path to wisdom - perhaps even a necessary compliment.

§3. *How to Tell the Tale*

But a full account of the war with Atlantis, it has been decided (between Critias, Timaeus, and Hermocrates), should wait until after some *logos* has been given of the *genesis* and origin of humankind in time. This, furthermore, can't help but require a lengthy exposition of a weighty question: that of the *genesis* of the *cosmos*, in which human beings strive to grow into the status of *cosmioi*.¹⁶¹ In the meantime, we must

¹⁶¹ Here, I intentionally avoid predicating the *cosmioi* of the *cosmos*, as does Timaeus, and avoid implying that the *cosmioi* are likenesses or reflections of the *cosmos* - another immanentist construction which is deliberately avoided. By doing so, Plato neatly avoids recapitulating the cosmological myth in which society acts as the transcendental *eikon* of a divine-immanent cosmos, and thereby avoids the strong tendency of such narratives to reduce human beings to the status of parts of an image of a whole.

satisfy ourselves with the summary that the war against Atlantis was won, *arete* and *eleutheria* triumphed, and that both Athens and Atlantis were swallowed-up by one of the great cataclysms which are said to commonly leave Egypt relatively unscathed, and thus her collected traditions, records, and sciences in-tact.

Presently, though, Timaeus must take-up his part in the drama. Doing so, he quickly begs the forgiveness and indulgence of his friends, stating that we should surely call for salvation from the god in this undertaking, as with all things (and that they should call upon the whole panoply of goddesses and gods too, for that matter)(27c-d). That being done, he will expound “*ego diannounai*” - as *he* thinks it, dianoetically - on the origin of things and of their comprehending manifold, but that we should perhaps consider this all but a “likely myth” (*eikota muthon*). Lest we take the discourse as too sheerly fanciful, however, we may remember the very serious purpose of a philosopher’s myth in exploring matters of the soul, and to observe that Timaeus will shortly toy with us, describing his exposition now as a “likely account” (*eikota logon*), now as a real *logos* (*aletheian logon*).¹⁶²

This manner of structuring the dialogue accomplishes three tasks:

¹⁶² Voegelin’s take is that Plato is being playful, but is quite cognizant of the fact that the myth has a provisional character, which is true and self-authenticating by virtue of the fact that the symbols well-up from the depths of the *omphthalamos* of the soul, which by virtue of being part of the cosmos, responds in its meditation on the cosmic *eikon* with imaginative evocations of *eikoi mythoi*. Zeyl argues that a relatively literal reading of the dialogue can be upheld against metaphorical readings, given that the distinction between intelligible things and opinions concerning sensible things (e.g. the cosmos) has been upheld - but this only invites us to throw out the onion and keep the skin. Taylor understands by it that Plato and Timaeus are recognizing that cosmology and the natural sciences are always provisional expressions of the whole of ascertained facts respecting the sensible world, i.e. that science is progressive and their business is to save the phenomena, not to advance ultimate systems regarding events. See Voegelin, *Order and History*, v.3, 248-253; A.E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1928), 59-61. Cf. Donald Zeyl, trans, *Timaeus* (Hackett: Indianapolis, IN, 2000), xxxiii.

i) It adds an esoteric layer to the dialogue, making it less than clear whether anything should be taken seriously - as dogma - or worthy of serious thought, while inviting one to fall into the trap of obsessive pedantry in trying to parse the “serious bits” from the jokes, ironies, and pure fancies.

ii) It highlights the paradox and the mystery involved in attempting to speak of or to give an account of consciousness, the cosmos, and reality, all at once; and yet also the necessity of doing so if one is to seek to comprehend reality, even provisionally. Since reality comprehends the *psychai* who, through thought and comprehension, seek to truly understand, one must necessarily seek to understand not simply “*psyche*” as an “objective” category or thing, but oneself - and this very act of attempted self-understanding itself introduces a change in things. The upshot of the paradox is that one must speak both a myth (in order to speak of experiences of the soul adequately) and a *logos* (in order to adequately separate and differentiate lower order, or less intrinsically mysterious structures in reality), in order to do this.

iii) It reminds us that the ‘mythologos’ of the speaker must avoid hypostatizing the mystery of existence into discrete objects of study, and thereby induce forgetfulness of the fact that one finds oneself, from the heights to the depths of one’s own being - psychically and somatically - always and only in tension and in-between: that is to say, in the *metaxy*. Within the dialogue, this experienceable, observable, and quite general structure in reality is denoted by equally general terms, such as *kinesis*, *methexis*, and *metalepsis*, while particular experiences of the tension, those which pertain only to matters of psyche (e.g. *eros*, *philia*, *epithumia*, *anamnesis*, *dialektikos*, *ennoesis*, *zetema*,

dianoesis, *noesis*, etcetera), and which were examined or else acted-out in *Politeia*, are retained as givens, and are invoked matter-of-factly, or else simply displayed dramatically (e.g. by Critias' *anamnesis*, Timaeus' *dianoesis*, or the *philia* of the collective engagement of the companions dialogue or of the community of the most ancient Athens). As for the mythologos itself, it is given the epithet of "*eikota*" or "likely", and is thereby associated with the ontological status of an *eikon* - an image - which reflects or manifests something intelligible. In other words, it itself expresses the manifest tension of a concrete person attempting to paint a picture of reality, someone who is conscious of their own paradoxical, merely participatory status in-between "here" and "there."

§4. *Finding the Path*

With that prayer and that proviso, Timaeus continues, with Socrates' effusive encouragement. He proceeds "*ego diannounai*" and lays-out several explicit premises, which guide his *logos*:

- a) That that which is *kalon* must have had something everlasting (*aei*) as the paradigm for its *idean* and *dunamin*;
- b) That that which is not *kalon* (i.e. which differs from the everlasting standards of the *kalos*) must have been modelled after something which came into existence - i.e., something generated in time. (28a-b)

These premises (*hupoarchontwn*¹⁶³) being granted, the *cosmos* must be some such image of the everlasting (*eikota tinos*), and it therefore behooves us to start (*archasthai*)

¹⁶³ Note the avoidance of the term *hypothesis*.

at “the natural beginning (*kata physin archen*)”(29b). The *logois* of that which is copied (*eikonos*) after the paradigm will be analogous and “likely” (*eikotas*); for, as suchness to becoming, reality to belief (“*ho to per pros genesin ousia, touto pros pistin aletheia*”), and Timaeus’ own *logos* of such things as the gods and the genesis of the all, shall be but a likely myth (29c-d). As for the *aitia* of *genesis* and the all, we must say that he is good and devoid of *phthonos*, and greatly wished all things to come to be and to become like successors unto him, who we will call the *demiourgos* (29e).

Here then we must pass from the explicit and the focal task, to the tacitly understood and what we are assumed to be holding subsidiarily in mind. Firstly, we have been careful to note that the premises of Timaeus’ mythologos are not hypotheses, but *hupoarchontwn* - they are descended from an *arche* proper. Rather than being stepping-stones, employed simply for the sake of gaining theoretical insight (the description of *hypotheses* given in book VI of *Politeia*), an *hupoarchontos* is an explicit statement derived from and experientially grounded in such insight, after it has been gained. The essential difference is that implied nowadays in scientific practice by the contrast made between true theories and simple hypotheses. This differentiation of the one from the other is the fruit of the hard-won ascent made in the *Politeia*, and of the formalization of the companions’ discoveries in the image of the Divided Line.

Secondly, then, and laying further back in the realm of the tacitly understood, is the expectation that we have experienced some vision of the *agathon epekeina tes ousias*; proper *theoria* and its *hupoarchontwn* proceeds from an understanding grounded in such vision, with vision itself proceeding from the noetic ascent to the Ground. One, in short,

cannot go down without first going up; theorizing well regarding the structures of being and of being-things requires preliminary insight into their Ground, at least of some sort.¹⁶⁴

Thus Timaeus' *dianoumai* of a mythologos of both cosmic reality and of human existence is not to be mistaken for an overly convoluted series of syllogisms, formalizing explicit conclusions from hypothetical propositions. Plato has no interest in expositing a metaphysical system, nor a canon of dogmas for memorization. Rather, the *muthoi* and *logoi* of this dianoetic counterpart to the *Politeia*'s noetic psychogogy, represents the descent back into the orders of being, after the initial ascent to their Ground.

And, much as the vision and the *epekeina* remain largely ineffable - known tacitly in terms of the illumination of existence, one's *periagoge*, and the living practice of *philosophia*, and known focally only in contemplation and reflective recollection - so do aspects of the suchness of things. Certain participatory structures in reality may be differentiated quite clearly, many structures and things named, and categories and species (*eidoi kai genoí*) systematically investigated in their turn, but certain dimensions remain queerly obscure, and knowledge of them leans more heavily upon the faith underlying the understanding which one derives from noetic ascent. Since the cosmos comprises all of these dimensions, along with the aforementioned paradoxes and mysteries, the prudent

¹⁶⁴ Voegelin correctly recognizes the need to read the *Timaeus* and *Critias* in light of *Politeia* and also reads it in light of *Statesman*. So too does A.E. Taylor's commentary draw out the links to those dialogues and others, though his commentary focuses on the immediate task of breaking-down and digesting *Timaeus*. Both Zeyl and Vlastos commit the error of attempting to treat the *Timaeus* in isolation from both *Politeia* and *Critias*. Vlastos compounds that error by insisting on reading the dialogue as a closed system of facts deduced from Plato's own metaphysical postulates, and by illicitly importing Aristotelian/Ionian physical theories into the dialogue (e.g. equating *chora* with "chaotic matter"). He thereby accomplishes the triple feat of equating the author with a character in his dialogues, isolating a sequel from its sequence, and hypostatizing the contents of the dialogue in a single fell swoop. See Voegelin, *O&H*, v.2, 225-233; and Taylor, *op cit*. See also Zeyl, *op cit*; and Gregory Vlastos, *Plato's Universe* (University of Washington Press: Seattle, WA, 1975), 28-30, 62.

know that even a well-grounded account of it shall be more or less likely or seemly, whereas un-grounded accounts, picked-up from books, poets, or mere memory are simply *doxa* - and perhaps false *doxa* at that.

What thus guides the *diannousthai* is one's underlying experience that the orders of being move in a tension towards beauty and the good - that they are called to be "like successors unto him", i.e., are in some sense moved towards the ground which is ultimately responsible for them, and in which they participate. Figuring out the order - the *taxis* - of the cosmos thus demands discovering its meaningful beauty and goodness, first by reference to that fundamental experience, but then by coming to comprehend those other structures of reality which are implied in its schema. In the meantime, the investigation requires that we take beauty, harmony, longevity, and order as tokens of the truth of reality, bearing upon the good.¹⁶⁵

Now then, in the process of the attempt to differentiate the immanent structures of reality, our descent with Timaeus' *logos* slides mercilessly up, down, and sideways in the attempt to grasp the *physis* of the cosmos in which we find ourselves situated. What quickly becomes apparent is the need to comprehend the paradoxical nature of a comprehensive whole (i.e. the *cosmos*), which comprehends itself, and is comprehended through conscious human efforts. If we lose sight of any of the poles of this paradox, we risk running into certain personal derailments: Too much emphasis upon the "wholeness" of the manifold, and I risk reductively, and regressively symbolizing concrete human persons as "parts" or predicates, and nothing more, much as is the commonality in

¹⁶⁵ One seems invited by this, as in many things, to see in it the parallel with the ordered, harmonious *psyche* of the philosopher, whose quest also bears upon the good.

cosmological symbolizations of existence. However, if I place too much emphasis upon the experience of the individuality of concrete persons, such that I tend incorrectly to view the manifold “objectively” as if from above and from a distance, and as either a simple *horaton* or even a *noeton*, I risk invoking a sense of alienation in my own *psyche*.¹⁶⁶

The semantic difficulty is overcome by complementing the earlier epithet of *to pan*, often used synonymously with *cosmos*, with the additional sobriquet of *hen holon holwn* - “one whole of wholes. (33a) Timaeus’ formulation manages the trick of symbolizing the comprehensive, manifold experience of the cosmos, while maintaining the parallel dignity (writ small) of individual human beings.¹⁶⁷ But what is the basic structure of the manifold cosmos, and of we would-be *cosmioi*?

The cosmos is visible, and so has body. It is moved from within itself (and must be, since it is senseless to speak of something “outside” the cosmos, “stirring” it, as it were), and granted that that which actively moves a body from within, without a need or recourse to another agent, is *psyche*. In so far as we witness and experience a tension towards a ground beyond the immediately present structure, we must say that it is possessed of *nous*. The basic structure of the cosmos, and of ourselves, therefore must be said to be *Nous-in Psyche-in Soma*, and the *psyche* is understood to be stretched throughout the body, and the totality moved by the noetic tension towards the truth of reality. (30b)

¹⁶⁶ Voegelin notes precisely that the potential for existential derailment or hypostatization of the structures of reality arises from the paradox of consciousness-reality-language. See Voegelin, *O&H*, v.5, 100-107.

¹⁶⁷ Both Taylor and Voegelin recognize the same. See Taylor, *op cit*, 77-79; and Voegelin, *O&H*, v.5, 100-103.

Ergo, Timaeus has asserted that the *idea* of the one whole of wholes, of “the visible god”, is *Zoe* - Life. It is *zoe*, which the *demiourgos* seeks to instantiate in all of its singularity and plurality of possible *eide*, through the application of the *paradeigma* (30b-31b). *Cosmos*, as the visible *idea* of Life, embraces all of the hierarchy (*noetama*) and categories of living creatures (30c). It is thus the surpassing beauty of Life which the god takes for the *idea* and the *dynamis* of the *hen holon holwn* - the tension or procession of the whole and of the little wholes which it embraces is reflective of Life in itself, and this is so by the wish that “they should become like successors unto him.” (92c)¹⁶⁸

Timaeus, though, has barely begun his descent from Life, to *Cosmos*, to men. To continue, he must speak further to the matter of the *psyche* and the *soma* - the reality of *nous* itself being further demonstrable only in the action of the descent itself, and in so far as we partake in and mimic in it as an attentive audience (much as it was first articulated through the dialogue mounted in *Politeia*). Rather than first speaking of the *psyche*, however, the Pythagorean finds his speech wrangled by a bit of happenstance and likelihood (*prostychos te kai eike*), for he first speaks to the visible and tangible aspects of immanent reality - of the “elements” from which all is composed, the totality of which (we are told) are mixed according to as analogous a ratio as possible. From there, they joined and fashioned into the visible and tangible heavens, whose body was harmonized

168 Taylor interprets that the employment of the *noeton zwon* as the *paradeigma* of the cosmos, “amounts to saying, in pictorial phrase, that the model or plan which is always being realized but never is finally realized in the visible world is the complete system of the Forms or *eide*” (Taylor reads the primal *eide* as being those differentiated in the *Sophistes*, i.e. Ousia, Sameness, Difference, Stillness, Motion). His reading thus tracks with Voegelin’s and my own, in interpreting that we are being led to understand cosmos as an open-ended process beyond itself; I part ways with Taylor in so far as I read that the tension of *nous* does not terminate at the *eide* (in whose presence the cosmos partakes), but rather “in” the *idea* of the *agathon*. See Taylor, *op cit*, 80-81.

(*homologesan*) in proportionality (*analogias*), held together by *philia*, and indissoluble by any other than he who generated it (32c).

§5. *The Path Lost and Then Found*

This part of Timaeus' mythologos constitutes his first digression - the first occasion upon which he feels diverted from his course by the obstreperous nature of the quarry. Logically, as he admits, it would have been better to speak of the *psyche* before the *soma*. That would have been consonant with a descent from the *nous*, and the understanding of *cosmos* and men as *zoon empsychon ennoun*. Why, then, the digression, and the break with the more obvious path - particularly as the matter will only be taken-up again later? To this, we may offer the observation that three dimensions underlie the oddity.

First, and as noted earlier, it provides Timaeus with the opportunity to warn, both explicitly and tacitly, through his deeds, that their quarry is not easily susceptible to *logos*. Even to try the pursuit is to partake in the "happenstance" which seems to lay at the bottom of things. The nature of this "happenstance" which resists *logos* will ultimately be found to lay in the *apeironic* depths of *chora* ("space in itself"), but only after the descent has allowed us to apprehend certain structures of being (*ousia*), on the one hand, and, underneath the foundations of the world, a limitless, everlasting "*ousia*" of endless possibility, which is strangely without form, without time, and without structure of any sort (49a).

Second, it recalls to mind the status of the visible, as signs or icons of the intelligible, and that, when employed in a philosophic pedagogy such as that previously prescribed in *Politeia* (e.g. comprising *astronomia*, *geometrikos*, etc.) these serve as the best and most immediate stepping stones leading from an appreciation of visible beauty and harmony, to the greater, intelligible sources of the same. By recalling the *ouranos* at the end of this first digression, Timaeus re-grounds the *logos* not only in experience and perception, but in the particular kind of education which builds upon and deepens them. It also reminds us that there is a visible standard, set up in the heavens, by which to judge the *logos*, its truth and its likelihood.

Third, this digression in *Timaeus*, as in the *Symposium*, provides us with an initial, provisional cosmology from which we may launch ourselves. And, much as then, with Erixymachus' *encomia*, it will be Empedocles' account of the *cosmos* which will provide the initial fodder.¹⁶⁹ As then, Empedocles' vision will be subjected to major revisions. This will once again be due to certain inadequacies, but also for the sake of pursuing further, certain clues to reality which are implied in his theories. Indeed, Timaeus' speech begins with a series of revisions, demanded by the noetic theophany described by Socrates, by knowledge of the *metaxy* and the participatory structure of existence, and so forth. Empedocles' theory needs now to be seen as a subset of a more comprehensive theory of reality.

¹⁶⁹ Taylor also recognizes that Timaeus is playing with an Empedoclean cosmology, and also notes that Plato's depiction of him is consonant with the sort of preoccupations which a venerable Pythagorean philosopher of the fifth-century B.C. would have had on his mind: squaring Empedoclean and Pythagorean theories with one another. Vlastos incorrectly asserts that the "corpuscular theory" at hand is Democritean, which, as Taylor demonstrates, would have been wildly anachronistic writing on Plato's part, and perfectly unnecessary. See Taylor, *op cit*, 17-19, 84-85, 297-9. Cf. Vlastos, *op cit*, 70.

It also, however, needs deepening and further revising in light of two discoveries. First, the differentiation of *hupoarchontwn* beyond immanent, sensible reality invalidates the hypothesis that either the elements or some immanent *philia* of elements (balanced-off by the fudge-factor of some eristic principle, in order to explain the fact of change) are the *archai* of all that is really real. Second, the discovery of *eidos* as such, and *idea* as such, demands a differentiation of the “elements” (which turn out to not be so elemental), from both that which gives them shape and form, and that which takes on the form which gives rise to kinds of matter.¹⁷⁰ Here too, the problem will only be fully sounded as the descent approaches the apeironic depths of *chora*.

§6. *The House of Psyche, the Sister*

With that digression, Timaeus once again takes-up the merry way, now with a view to the *soma*’s elder, *psyche*. Once again, the in-between nature of *psyche* is expounded upon - its suchness lies between that which is everlasting and indivisible, and the divisibility of bodies which arise in the process of *genesis*; and that it is mixed with a third form of *ousia*, of *physis* itself and otherness. In short, it is said that *psyche* is ever the same in its from-to structure, that it is always of *something*, and that it is ever changing in the active play of its tensions (35a-b).¹⁷¹

170 For the sake of simplicity, clarity, and felicity of style, I will occasionally use the word “matter” as a general synonym for “the elements”, which I primarily use as a translational for Plato’s term, *stoiechaia*.

171 Taylor argues that Timaeus treats *genesis* and *ousia* as incompatibles (as would be proper for an orthodox Pythagorean), and that this sets the discussion apart, for instance, from that in *Philebus*, wherein all becoming is openly posited to be *genesis eis ousian*; I am holding that the metaxy structure of *genesis* is strongly symbolized, particularly by the influence of *peitho* on *chora*, and by the *nous-in-psyche-in-soma* nature of both being-things and the manifold. Cf. Taylor, *op cit*, 32-33, 86-87.

Psyche's most basic, and most general structure is thus poetically described by Timaeus as a mixture, violently joined in tumult, combined from suchness, sameness, and otherness, which has been articulated (*poiesamenos*) by the divine *aitia*. *Nous* is in *psyche*, or perhaps it is better said that *psyche* is wholly embraced in *nous*, as the body is by *psyche*, but one can apparently, gently, abstract one from the others for the sake of isolated investigation (as has been done earlier in the dialogue regarding the *soma*), so long as one de-abstracts in the course of things (as is done by integrating the *logoi*s and the dialogues as a whole). *Psyche* herself may therefore, with due cautions, be isolated as the focus of one's thoughts and spoken of as that which acts or responds, through the body, to experiences arising through *nous* and *aisthesis*.¹⁷² She, though, is placed in the middle of the *cosmos* and stretched throughout (36e), much as our own *psychai* are said to be mixed throughout our bodies' marrows, and moves his *somatoeides* - compared with which she is the more perfect, being spherical and complete, whereas the visible form of the *cosmos* is, at best, a dodecahedron (55c). In and of herself, she is a divine *arche*, unceasing and insatiable (*epaustou*), and possessed of wisdom (*ephronos*), partaking of *logismos* and harmony, and "*tw'n noetw'n aei te ontw'n hupo tou aristou ariste genomene tw'n gewethentw'n*" (36e-37a). Encountering sameness, difference, or *ousia*, she feels moved to say what is what, to what, where, how, whether and when, and how it stands, i.e., to apprehend the reality of it (39a-b).

Consciousness, then, in fewer words, is thoroughly personal and embodied, proceeding from the flesh and to the truth of the good and the beautiful.

¹⁷² One may be reminded here, as I am, of Plato's *Laws*, and the Athenian Stranger's image of human beings as puppets under the tension of a variety of bronze and iron strings, as well as that of a single gold strand leading us upwards.

§7. *Finding Time Along the Way*

These matters having been clarified, it then behooves Timaeus to speak to the issue of time. This is certainly necessary, for what sense is there in speaking of the movements and tensions of the soul without some understanding of time and its passage? Time, we are told, is fashioned as an *eikon* of *eiwnos*, only “moved” according to number (*kineton...kata arithmon*), and coming into existence alongside the *ouranon*. Properly speaking, Timaeus continues, we should then say “is” only with regards to *aidion ousian*, whereas *én esti*, and *estai* properly refer to generation in time - for both what was and what shall be are *kineseis* (38a).

Here now we should perhaps truly call upon the protection of the god and the Dog, for the technical precision of the passage is nigh impossible to reproduce in English (it is, at least, nearly impassable, if not impossible). However, descend we must, and attempt to point at the meaning beyond the words. What is most pertinent, for our purposes, is that, in the wake of the differentiation of being from beyond from genesis; and in wake of the correlated discovery of the metaleptic structure of existence, which is in some way mysteriously grounded in the beyond; is that time comes into focus as a *kinesis* - a sense of being moved, and sensing that all other beings, and even the cosmos, are similarly “moved”. With regards to all things which admit of being born or of perishing, of being “younger” or “older”, there are forms (*eide*) generated according to the cycle of number, that come of time’s mimicry of the everlasting (37d-38c). Thus, form comes and goes, beings are born and die, and this transpires with respect to a source of the ineluctable process in reality - it is this experience of a process which we call

“time”, and our own particular “upwards” *kinesis* which can be symbolized by the movement of the *ouranos*, and the poetic expression of being born of a god and drawn by our own guiding stars (41d-e).

However, the “downwards” movement towards formlessness remains obscure. This movement is sensed, it is experienced and observed, it is, in short, a fact, but it is not understood with respect to an *hupoarchontwn*; it seems oddly easier to gain an understanding of that which underlies the experience of immortality than that of mortality. We sense both in the *kinesis* acting upon us and in the world around us, but the latter has no clear *aitia*. It is sensed “as if in a dream, apprehensible only through a sort of bastard reasoning.”(52a-d)

§7. *The Depthless Depths of Chora, the Mother*

It is only after turning to the task of giving a direct account of the origins of humankind that Timaeus finds himself forced to own-up to the problem. It had been easier to give a likely and reasonable account of the heavens and of the visible gods. Among the latter were named Helios, Selene, Ge, Aphrodite, and Hermes, thus comprising the visible signs of the Good (Helios); that which reflects its light and signifies birth (Selene); the mother and womb of our immediate, historical existence (Ge); beauty and longing (Aphrodite); and death, the crossroads, and the boundary-marker (Hermes).¹⁷³ *Ouranos* and *kosmos*, on the other hand, are set apart as the visible-intelligible signs of time and of a higher, comprehensive reality embracing all of the

¹⁷³ Taylor points out that this seems to be the first recorded instance of the Greeks giving even epinomial names, let alone proper names, to the so-called “tramps or wanderers of the sky”, which otherwise had designations such *puroeis* or “fiery star” (i.e. Mars). See *op cit*, 194-196.

various dimensions of being - a status reflected, in small letters, in human beings, the *cosmioi* (38c-d).

At a glance, one may take said symbolization as completely adequate, comprising and accounting as it does for all of the constant factors and tensions of life in the *metaxy*.

One has even the following clusters of differentiations, among others:

<i>ousia</i>	<i>aiwnos</i>	<i>genos</i>
/ \		
<i>stillness</i> <i>kinesis</i>	<i>aei-chronos</i>	<i>gigonen-genesis</i>
<i>sameness</i> <i>difference</i>		
 <i>sameness-difference</i>	 <i>idea</i>	 <i>noos</i>
<i>similar</i>	<i>paradeigma-eikon</i>	<i>dianoesis-eikasia</i>

...and one may expand on any of the triads or pentads through the joining of common poles. What then spurs Timaeus' new digression? The difficulty expresses itself in the context of the apparent inadequacy of one of our provisional hypotheses - one deriving namely from the Empedoclean theory of *physis*. As it turns out now, in addition to the limitations of that theory which were explored in *Symposium*, the atomic theory of Empedocles model cannot possibly represent a fundamental insight into the whatness of material or matter. His understanding of the elements implicitly assumes them to be hylomorphic entities of a sort - something-or-others which *have* form, and are *archai*. This is problematic, for one should then ask, what is the something which takes a form, and then "has" it, and what is the essential form which can give structure to a plurality of

different, yet relatable similar types of matter? All of this bears the dialogue again to the question of who man is, for it questions the assumption that we can be accurately understood as conscious, spiritually active bundles of atoms.

What is said to have been missing has been an investigation into “the Wandering *Aitia*” (*to tes planwmenes eidōs aitias*) - that which comprises the deepest depths of the orders of foundation, and is indirectly apprehended as that other pole in the *kinesis*. Indeed, it is this Wandering *Aitia* which is sensed to provide the foundations of time and *genesis* as such. The Wandering One, provisionally identified by Timaeus with Ananke, is also held to be the one responsible for the earlier slip of the speaker’s tongue, as well as for his current digression.¹⁷⁴ She would also appear to be whom we should name as responsible for the “wandering” which defines *to planeton*, which was so obliquely mentioned by Socrates in Book V of *Politeia*. At the time, we had accepted that *to planeton* “wandered” between being (*to on*) and difference (*to me on*); now Timaeus insists that we dive deeper into the matter, with the immediate purpose of moving our theoretical understanding beyond mere atomism.

¹⁷⁴ It ought to be noted that Ananke, as it will shortly be understood, has a meaning or aspect of contingency, rather than strict necessity. I am supported in this observation by Taylor and Voegelin; see Taylor, *op cit*, 300-1 and Voegelin, *O&H*, v.3, 253-259. Zeyl and Vlastos, by contrast, make no particular note of the matter.

The elements, then, are reclassified as secondary *aitia*, and are distinguished from the primal *aitia* - chiefly the Divine and the Wandering¹⁷⁵. These two classes of *aitia* can be differentiated in status by virtue of several criteria:

i) Having versus lacking *logos* and *nous*;

ii) Self-moved versus moved (*kinew*) by others and impacting upon others;

iii) Invisible versus visible;

iv) Those which are *demiourgoi* of beautiful and good effects which accord with *nous* (*kalwn kai agathwn...meta nous*), versus those which accomplish accidental and disorderly effects (*exergazontai... to tuchon atakion*)(46e)

The senses themselves are the first group of phenomena to have been classed as *aitia* of the second rank, and the criteria for that classification have now been clarified. Now though, it proves equally evident that the elements themselves, whose impacts give rise to our sensations, should also, and quite logically, be so classified themselves. But, to get at the question of the generation of the elements is no mean thing, and, to Timaeus' mind, something not attempted before: no one has yet revealed (*memnenken*) their *genesis*, "though we all call them *archai* and presume them to be elements of all (*stoiecheia tou pantos*)."(48b)

175 The question arises: should *psyche* also be included as a primal *aitia*? On the sheer basis of the text, one can only answer ambiguously. On the one hand, all that is *psyche* can *kinew*, which as much as proposes that both cosmos and individuals *psychai* are *aitiai*. However, *psychai* themselves are caught-up in the tension between the Beyond and the *apeiron*, which suggests ultimate boundaries, and a degree of subordination. Taylor, it seems to me, leans in the direction of answering the question in the affirmative, as does Voegelin: *psyche* is the third primal cause. My assessment is that Taylor and Voegelin are correct, but that the question is resolvable only by recourse to *anamnesis* or similar meditations, thus I bracket it for the sake of this commentary. See Taylor, *op cit*, 80-81; and Voegelin, *O&H*, v.3, 251-53.

Now though, we must cease to think of them as *archai*, and it would even have been better to avoid calling them *stoicheia* if possible - for they do not now look as elementarily elemental as the word implies. Be that as it may, three *eide* are distinguishable, and can be brought to bear in the search for the Wandering Cause:

a) The *eidos* of the *paradeigma* - intelligible, everlasting, and descended from being-in-itself (*ws paradeigmatos eidos...voeton kai aei kata tauta on*)(48e);

b) That which stands as a mimic of the *paradeigma* - possessing a *genesis* and visible aspect (*[he] mimema paradeigmatos...genesin echon kai ouraton*)(48a);

c) That which is the reservoir and nurse of all generation (“it is baffling and obscure”) (*he hupodoche kai tithene genesews*) (49a).

The descent now takes our *logos* down to the pursuit of this “baffling and obscure” Nurse of us all, but Timaeus foresees two quandaries. Problem #1 is that we seem first compelled to discuss the elements before we can discuss the Nurse, *Chora* (49b). Problem #2 is that the elements themselves seem to pass into one another, giving us little in the way of reliable and stable language to use (49b-c). The problems, though, prove to be dispensable. To dispose of them we are first encouraged to simply avoid referring to these “elements”, which are in fact always in the process of becoming something else (i.e. losing form and taking-on new forms), by words such as “this” or “this here” (*touto* or *tode*), since these words suggest stability and that we are dealing

with stable “things”. Instead, when referring to them, we should refer to “that of such a kind or quality” (*toioutos*)(49d-e).¹⁷⁶

Secondly, upon reflection we should find that it is only proper to or point refer to that “wherein” and “wherefore” these *stoicheia* manifest (*phantazetai*) and perish, through use of the words “this” or “that”. Thus, if we speak clearly of “this nurse wherefrom and wherein manifest elements of such a kind, and whereto they perish”, we will keep our heads clear of pseudo-problems arising from an hypostatized language of elements *qua archai*.

For the present, Timaeus urges, we should thus *dianoethenai* of three *eide*:

i) That which becomes - The Offspring - engendered in-between the other two (*to gignomenon, ekgonwi - ten de metaxu toutwn phusin*);

ii) That in which this becomes - The Mother, The Nurse, The Receptacle (*to en hwi gignetai*);

iii) That whence the reproduction of that which comes to be is begotten - The Father (*to hothen aphomaioumenon phuetai to gignomenon*)(50d-e)

The Mother, moreover can now be distinguished from the others, according to its several features:

¹⁷⁶ Taylor prefers to translate the term *toioutos* as “phase” or “passing phase”, and this is in keeping with his thinking that Whitehead’s philosophic language of process (speaking approximately, events = *ta onta*, objects = *ta eide*, while basic elements would be passing phases within space-time in the process of reality) represents the closest English approach to the actual meaning and intent of Plato and the Pythagoreans. Zeyl prefers the translation “what is such”. Voegelin characteristically prefers to focus on the meatier matter of the *apeiron*, and provides no translation or comments. Cf. Taylor, *op cit*, 319; Zeyl, *op cit*, 38-39; Voegelin, *O&H*, v.3, 254-57 and *O&H*, v.5, 90-93.

- a) All receptivity, like the odourless base of a perfume;
- b) In itself, wholly devoid of *eidos*;
- c) Invisible;
- d) Unshaped (*amorphe*);
- e) Partaking (*apolambanon*) in an “aporetic” way, in the intelligible and thought (*noeton*)(50e-51b)

What arises from the discussion is ultimately that *to on*, *genesis*, and *chora* exist (*einai*) before *ouranos*, and that *chora* was filled with formless potencies - “shook with them” - but that these are *alogos*, without balance or measure (*ametrws*)(53a-b)¹⁷⁷ That being the case, it falls to the *demiourgos* to give structure to the endless (*apeira*) potentiality of *chora* and the inchoate *stoicheia* through form and mathematical principles (*eidesi kai arithmois*). In effect, the endless and boundless potentiality of *chora* is given meaning and real substance through its seeding with mathematically determinate structures and symmetries.¹⁷⁸ Thus-wise is dreamlike potentiality made fair and good, and

177 Note the present tense of *einai*, which would seem to denote that we are to infer ontological priority of the three, rather than anything like a temporal sequence.

178 Timaeus proposes that the basic mathematic form of the order of formation is the triangle, of the right, scalene, and isosceles forms, which combine within the *chora* such as to give rise to such and such daughter *materias*, and goes on to propound on how such and such *stoicheia* might interact and give rise to higher, compounded entities. For my own part, I see that the initial problem which has been discovered (i.e. the curiosity of the hylomorphic nature of matter), is both real, and taken seriously by both the characters of the dialogue and the author. I also see that the attempt to theoretically determine the nature of the relationship between mathematical *eidoi* (which have already been determined, through *noesis*, to be really real, in some sense, rather than nominal generalizations from sense-impressions) and matter, to be expressive of a problem which at least occupied the interest of Plato and students of the Academy, and continues to occupy science and philosophical disputes down to our own time.

That being said, it is hard to say exactly how seriously we are to take this *particular* proposal. Indeed, the proposal of the triangle as a baseline *eidos* seems at the least to be purely speculative storytelling - not only does it not seem ever to be proposed by Timaeus to be a genuine *hupoarchotos* (i.e. a theory), but it only

we make some further sense of our experience of *genesis* as *to planeton* - a sort of wandering between thisness and thatness (53d). Coincidentally, we also discover that all this leaves no place nor need for a void in space (*kenen choran*) in the All in order to account for movement, thus dispensing with an additional hypothesis of the atomists (57d-e, 79c).¹⁷⁹

§8. *Chasing Life Incarnate and Her Nursemaid*

What arose from the digression on the Wandering *Aitia* was a sort of “bastard *logos*” regarding a dreamlike and baffling aspect or stratum of reality which can be only ephemerally touched with words - it can be experienced through sustained contemplation and pointed to rather vaguely, yet not truly spoken of. Its suchness is *apeironic* - in all

begs questions. For instance, granted that we classify the question of the *methexis* of matter in *eidos* as being only a special problem of the participation of *nous-empsychos-ensomatikos* (one provisionally addressed in a manner of great generality, by reference to the *animus mundi*'s overarching *kinesis*, expressing itself in all of the parts of *cosmos*, as well as in the whole), there is no particular reason given as to why Timaeus proposes two-dimensional planes as the starting-point for deriving the aetiological chain of matter proper. It would seem to be more consonant to ask the question as to why one wouldn't try to determine the relationship of hylomorphic matter to lower-dimensional *mathematoi*, such as one-dimensional lines, or zero-dimensional points - or indeed to non-dimensional numbers, which is indeed played with in his description of the rotations of the *kosmos* and his *ouranos*. Given the obviousness of this, and given Plato's sense of humour, I find it rather hard to dismiss the interpretation which was playfully suggested by a close colleague (which I shall dub “the Freamo Hypothesis”), that Timaeus' “triangles” are meant to suggest the vagina - a symbolism which would actually be quite in keeping with the immediate investigation into the feminine principle of reality, i.e. the nature of the Mother *qua chora*. Whether or not a modern reader finds the idea of Plato's serious joke about an immanent universe built entirely from colliding vaginas to be funny, may be a matter of taste.

179 For his part, Taylor identifies *chora* with the Pythagorean *kenon*, qua “pure geometric extension”, as well as with *apeiron*. I believe that the passage cited makes that interpretation somewhat problematic, at least in terms of strict textual analysis; on the level of symbolic equivalencies, however, Taylor's thesis may be somewhat stronger, though my judgement is that naming *chora* a “pure geometric extension” has the perverse side-effect of imposing a concept of limit (*peira*) on that which is expressly *apeiron*. Zeyl attempts to reconcile what he designates the “Traditional” and the “Alternative” interpretations, which hold that the *chora* is primal “stuff” or else analogous to a mirror which reflects the Forms, by designating it a “room” as in “room to move around in”. Vlastos is simply wrong to assert that *chora* is a sort of “chaotic matter”, when that possibility has already been dismissed within the dialogue - he is importing Aristotle's interpretation into the text, and betraying his own rather overt biases in favour of Democritean physics. Cf. Taylor, *op cit*, 131; Zeyl, *op cit*, lvi-lxvi; and Vlastos, *op cit*, 25.

senses limitless, boundless, placeless, timeless, and without any autonomous purpose or end, though it is limitlessly receptive and boundless potential. Moreover, it is “in” all things, even the *kosmos*’ paradigm - Life - “has” *chora*, in some sense¹⁸⁰. Life’s structure, then, is understood to extend from the apeironic depths of sheer spaciousness, to a ground in the Beyond, which is immediately experienced in our *psychai* through *nous*. At one pole, *chora*, at the other, the formative presence of Beauty and the Good, and in between, the tensional, participatory structure of *nous-in psyche-in soma*. The experiences which underwrite the cosmological myth, which placed human beings between Heaven and Earth, or the masculine and feminine principles, has, in effect been re-articulated, corrected, and radically extended upon anthropocentric terms. The key breakthroughs which allowed for the advancements were the discovery of the *psyche* as the sensorium of transcendence, and the discovery of noetic practices.

Somatic existence arises in distinction from the articulation of minerals and vegetation, following *chora*’s initial acceptance of form and the consequent emergence of elements. Within the context of the Pythagorean’s mythologos, it is said to come-about

¹⁸⁰ In this, I am essentially agreeing with Voegelin’s translation of the text, though reserving judgement regarding his interpretation of its meaning, cf. Voegelin, *O&H* v.5, 116-120. Voegelin’s interpretation of the *Timaeus* at this late stage of his life and meditations, contends that the symbols adumbrated (e.g. *chora*, *paradeigma*, *cosmos*, etcetera), emerge from Plato’s meditation upon conscious experience. This strikes me as perfectly correct, and quite consonant with the *noetic* and *ennoetic* practices and exercises which have been the subject of the dialogues here under study. That being said, my interpretation of Voegelin’s own understanding of the order of reality which he *himself* derives from his anamnetic meditations bears closer resemblance to that of Thomas Mann, or some schools of the Dao or Buddhadharma than to the interpretation which I am deriving from Plato. I.e., as I interpret at least his late writings, Voegelin sees the order of reality as emerging from some primal, immanent beginning, and articulating an apogee and Beyond in the personal consciousness of concrete human beings, who then articulate the symbols, the accoutrements, and the practices of culture and society based upon their experiences of order (or, negatively, disrupt, distort, or destroy those same achievements). For my part, I take seriously that Plato himself was referring to an ineffable experience of a ground of reality, always presencing and present-to but mysteriously before and beyond *psyche*, when, in *Politeia*, he has Socrates reluctantly refer to the *to agathon epekeina tes ousias*. See chapter 1.

under the direction of the aforementioned celestial divinities of the *ouranon*, after the *demiourgos* has delegated to them the task of populating *cosmos* with the pluralities of living kinds contained with *idea* of Life - of which *cosmos* is meant to be a comprehensive *eikon*. The somatic existence of animals - including human animals - though, differs from that of the minerals, in so far as they possess personal *psychai*, apart from the cosmic *psyche*. As a consequence, both we and they possess a degree of individual personhood which demarcates our personal existence from the cosmic background and the *psyche* of the manifold; beings with *psychai* can originate acts of *kinesis*, and are not merely subject to impacts, accidents, and the general *kinesis* which moves *cosmos* as a whole. And, according to the earlier symbolism, mortal lives proceed under the influences represented by the visible gods of the heavens and our guiding stars.

At bottom, however, it is the spacious, apeironic element of our existence which is of chief inquiry. It is only the case that the body is that part of us which lies “closest” to *chora*, hence an inquiry into the flesh’s causes and conditions provides a certain purchase for descent. That being said, it has also been noted that the *apeiron* is also mysteriously present in consciousness, that our *paradeigma* “has” it, that it is always dimly recognized as present in the background of our experiences, and that its peculiar suchness can be made the focus of inquiry. Here too, as in the *Politeia*, it is taken as an experiential fact that we are incarnate persons - our *psychai* are themselves described as entirely mixed within our marrows (chief among them the brain, followed by the heart, then the guts and lower organs - thus corresponding to the tripartite description worked-out in *Politeia*). One’s consciousness is thus very much on one’s bones, as it were - there is no sense

intended that our *psychai* are of such a wholly different kind, set apart from space. There is no opposition or absolute distinction between an *apeironic* body, and a spiritual, otherworldly *psyche*. Rather, we are, like the *paradeigma* of *cosmos*, amidst space, and have space, and from space respond to the divine *kinesis*, even as we are confused and distracted by myriad phenomena - and by the *apeironic* Nurse within us.

§9. *The Path of Folly, Power, and Atlantis*

We are swarmed with confusions, hence the follies of our lives. We emerge into the order of being, born into a family, a place, and a commonwealth, all of which are better or worse furnished to equip us to act in accord with our deepest callings and responsibilities. We are pulled by love, remembered of death, vision illuminated by Sun and Moon, guided and compassed by the stars of the firmament; these are the intelligible factors of our beings. Yet, we are incarnate, ever reaching from the body to the heavens behind the heavens, moved to move from sight to vision, but ever prone to confuse the glammers (*doxa*) of the world with understanding, to cling desperately to sensible pleasures and to flee from pains, from the grave, and from the demands of love. Thus, in confusion and folly, we become disorderly and mortalize ourselves in a counter-pull to the gentle, everlasting tugging of the *kinesis*.

In our confusion, in an habitual, topsy-turvy sleepwalking existence, we lose any comfort we might have had in space and with the vision of the Sun. We find it is much easier to rest in the cool shadows and the supposed permanence of the cave. It's rocky firmament doesn't move quite so much, and its shadows are easy on the eyes. We may even find that it could be terribly pleasant to sit on a bench and count figures with some

cave-compatriots for a while. We can, in short, become terribly engaged with an essentially lunatic existence, at least until something or someone drags us out into the waking world, and reality - *aletheia* - slaps us out of our confusion of “such and such a kind” with suchness as such. To become *cosmion*, to immortalize ourselves through a response to the divine calling, consists in shaking off the confusion and of making good on the order of being, writ small, of our personal existences. For like the the only-begotten (*monogenes*), the “one whole of wholes” (*hen holon holwn*), we are structured in depth and in height from the *apeironic* depths of *chora* to the *peras* of the divine measure apprehended in the *nous*.¹⁸¹

Needless to say, while confusion and vision remain constant and perennial factors of existence, regardless of time or place, that calling to awaken, to be *cosmion*, and to “be like successors unto him”, may, in our personal situations, be greatly helped or hindered

181 The full order of formation of *anthropoi* could thus be symbolized by a sequence extending from divine *nous* down to the *apeironic* depths of *chora*, with several layers of foundation arising in-between. An abbreviated version, focusing upon *anthropoi qua cosmioi* may be imagined thusly:

-----order of formation (call)----->
 Divine Nous | Psyche - noetic | Psyche - sensual | Animal nature | Vegetative nature | Inorganic nature | Apeiron
 <-----order of foundation (response)-----

The full variant would extend the table on a separate axis, to include the order of formation of society and history (see appendix). Cf. Voegelin, “Reason, the Classic Experience” in *Anamnesis*, 113-115; for our purposes I have adapted a variant of Voegelin’s table, which he himself derived from his interpretation of the Platonic-Aristotelian *philosophia peri ta anthropina*. I hold Voegelin’s adaptation to be accurate, and agree with his insight that a philosophy of history is present in Plato’s writings. I am somewhat in disagreement with what he has written there in two respects: (i) in that I see that the Platonic philosophy of history is merely expressed esoterically and in sharp disagreement with any hypostatized notion of time as a linear progression towards an immanent *eschatos*, and is in principle complete (save perhaps for the ambiguity of whether or not he had a theory of apocalyptic, as differentiated from simply prophetic, experiences); (ii) in that I see the need to add an additional arrow indicating an order of foundation from history *qua historia*, through society *qua koinonia*, to men and women in their personal existence between *peira* (*nous*) and *apeiron* (*chora*). Voegelin’s chart appears to accidentally omit the insight (which occupied much of his own career) that the particular symbols, practices, beliefs, institutions, and so forth, which constitute the criteria of the order or disorder of a society in history, can either help or greatly hinder the personal search for order, without determining its outcome. Hence his own expression that “No man is obliged to participate in the crimes or disorders of his age.”

by context and circumstance. One is not compelled to be a bad man by happenstance of birth in a bad or corrupted *politeia*, as Hesiod feared. Nor does a life spent in a good one *make* one good, as opposed to merely well-mannered - a lesson contained in the Myth of Er. However, as remarked upon in that same dialogue, a bad *politeia* is rocky ground in which for Arete to flower. While the cosmological mythos of the sort available, for instance, to Egypt, has been rejected in context of the dialogues, and, with it, satisfaction or belief in the myth that we are parts of a communal *cosmion* which represents and mediates cosmic order, man's personal calling to be *cosmion* better flourishes in a good regime after the break.

The *Politeia* provides a first pass at the question of the general features of a good regime, and of those of bad regimes. Critias' tale deepens the matter, by contrasting two seemingly good regimes, much as Timaeus' tale deepened the probing of matters left unsounded during the previous nights' conversation. Upon an exoteric reading, *Politeia* makes it seem 'obvious' that there is one good and many bad regimes. Critias' tale considerably muddies the waters, even if one wanted to content oneself with that reading, first by suddenly pointing to Sais as the living replica of the *paradeigma* laid-up in the *ouranos*, second by describing a war between two regimes - Atlantis and most ancient Athens - which both seem beautiful, good, and godly.

The opposition is twofold. It is foremost, as Voegelin observed, the opposition of an ordered *polis* to that of an organized empire - the contrast being primarily of political order versus political organization, and, derivatively, that of a hegemonic *polis* leading a

federation versus that of the power politics of an empire.¹⁸² More esoterically, though, the story of the war is comprehensible as the opposition of two *poleis* which express, in large letters, two different responses to the *kinesis*.

On the one hand, we are painted a portrait of an Athens very much resembling the *Kallipolis* outlined in *Politeia*, save perhaps for some of the less congenial aspects from Book V, which are quietly downplayed, if not dropped, now that the younger men are absent. That said, the most ancient Athens is much larger than even the companions' contemporary Athens - incorporating in its commonwealth a territory which included, we are told, much of southern mainland Hellas, the Peloponnese excepted. Moreover, the soil of the territory, and the overall conditions and means of life were rich enough to support a population so large as to be able to maintain a force of *phulakes* numbering twenty-thousand (112d). As for Hellas as a whole, its *poleis* freely regarded Athens as *hegemon* and natural leader - and well it could afford to safely, for its citizens, ruled by *arete*, had neither need nor desire for anything outside of themselves (112b-e). Centrally, the city was *diakosmesasa* and *suntaxin*, on account of instructions and dispensations given by the goddess Athena, on account of whom great care was given to cultivating *phronesis* and learning, the sciences and the arts, and to cosmic order. Indeed, it was a city very

182 I owe this initial insight to Voegelin's early work on *Critias*; Voegelin also draws out Aeschylus' influence on Plato's myth, particularly the similarities which the Atlantis bears to the *Persians*, though I'll be setting aside that comparison as it is beyond the scope of this study. See Voegelin, *O&H* v.3, 260-261.

much established by the goddess to reflect her character, being both a lover of war and of wisdom (23c-e).¹⁸³

On the other hand, have we Atlantis, the land established amidst the sea by Poseidon and through his *epithumia*. It is there, Critias relates to us, was it said that the god in his lust took Cleito, the only-begotten daughter (*monogenes*) of Euanor (“Good Man”) and Leukippe (“White Mare”), and set about reshaping the very land of Atlantis so as to guard his prize. Through her he bore ten sons - five sets of twins. Chief among them was Atlas, but altogether they were named Eulemos, then Ampheres and Avaemon, Mneseus and Autochthon, Ellassipus and Mestor, and Azaes and Diaprepes. The lands were then divided among the sons and their rulership (*archon*) within their own fiefdoms was absolute and beyond the law, and they submitted only to the sovereignty of house of Atlas, with their relations with each other as a commonwealth being regulated by the written precepts of Poseidon, these having been inscribed upon a pillar of *orichalchum*. In the beginning, the old man relates, the kings and *archons* were true to the divine blood within them, despised the wealth and plenty of the land, and ruled with *arete*. But, in time, that *charisma* became mixed ever more with mortal things, and to those with vision or eyes to see the most important things, they became ugly to behold.

Scarcely a bit of the island was left unchanged by their great works over the generations, their engineering of the land and waters almost beggaring the imagination. And, before long, in spite of riches greater than any that of any land, then or since, they

¹⁸³ *Diakosmesasa* and *suntaxin* are quite difficult to translate in context. Both carry the colloquial meaning of to arrange or to set in order, e.g. as a general marshals and arranges an army or fleet. *Diakosmesasa*, however, plays off of the word *kosmos*, while *suntaxin* plays off the word *taxis*. Thus, we have the implication of spiritually ordered and being together disposed towards the proper ends.

began to acquire that of others, expanding the Empire upon unto the very borders of Hellas and Egypt. In the meantime, the land of Atlantis and its peoples were submitted to geometric shaping and quantification, and one is struck by the effective equality of all under the kings and their spearman. It is an hyper-organized land, powerful beyond all normal reckoning, rich beyond imagining, of unearthly beauty and accomplishments. One is also struck by the understated private freedoms of Atlantean life which match the equality - there is no mention made of great public burdens of any sort (asides from taxes, and the remote possibility of military conscription), no political life nor religious obligations. All Atlanteans were equally free beneath the sovereign power of the kings, living in the land of plenty and the resplendent - all was fine and beautiful to the eye.

The temptations of Atlantis are tremendous, and it is only by being held in contrast to the earthly beauty of Athens does the invisible ugliness of the place become intelligible. Atlantis is a titanic, hyper-rational state of Promethean disproportions and aspirations. It's very land is submitted to the geometric rationalization which is expressive of dianoetic reckoning, much as its population is reckoned in terms of quantities and goods - never as persons. The rationalizing activities, though, are upon such a scale as to be almost invisible and rarely burdensome to anybody in particular. Moreover, they are scarcely comprehensible for what they express, save when one notices what seems to be lacking or missing (asides from the lack of distinctive personalities).

To wit, Athens represents a *polis* which is philosophical. Its traditions, customs, and the dominant character of its citizens are reflective of an erotic responsiveness to

personal *arete* and expressive of the divine *kinesis* in the *psyche*. That responsiveness serves as the grounding of personal and political order, for the mediation of order and *arete* through particular institutions and practices. *Arete*, thus, is continuously enculturated in the city, so long as its institutions and practices hold in some recognizable form.

Atlantis, however, serves as a foil. Its founding is not a reflection of the cares of Athena Parthenos, but of the *epithumia* of Poseidon. Such divinity as it possesses, moreover, is a matter of the body - it is a blood *charisma*, rather than one located and originating in the responsiveness of the *psyche* to the *nous*. As such, it is subject to degeneration as time moves on, and distance separates new generations from the divine origin - and this being said if even we are meant to accept at face-value the kings' claims to divine patronage. Acts of divine *epithumia* would certainly run counter to the previously enunciated accounts of the gods.

Be that as it may, there is no grounding of Atlantis, through the *nous*, to the divine. Tellingly, its chief metal is not gold, representing the divine chord in the soul, but *orichalcum* - a legendary alloy of brass. There is no living law, embodied in concrete human beings and their practices, but a pillar's weight of unchanging precepts, and no essential or legal bar upon the sovereign wishes of the rulers. Most striking, upon a moment's reflection, is the fact that Critias has been careful to make clear that the Empire's expansion is completely unnecessary - it is neither threatened, nor requiring any conceivable materials. There is neither political nor economic necessity laying behind

Atlantis' war of conquest - its power and riches are beyond compare or rival. What then are we to conclude?

That Atlantis is the *apeironic* soul writ large, to match the *noetic* soul writ large in Athens, is the conclusion. Its movement is not "upwards" but "downwards", the city and its kings are unbalanced by the lack of an ever-presencing *peras* ("a measure") - to give purpose or ends to its *apeironic* potential; it has no boundaries, and conceives none. The magnificent, terrible city of legends resembles nothing so much as the soul of an Alcibiades writ in grand letters - a spacious, expansive *psyche* without a paradigm, boundless in her epithumic *eros*, utterly Dionysian.

Part 3: A Tale of Two Cities, Chapter 6: A Society of Explorers

“The ideal of a free society is in the first place to be a good society; a body of men who respect truth, desire justice, and love their fellows.”
- Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, 29-30.

A free society, at its best, is a Society of Explorers. As such, it exemplifies, at a highly general level and from its depths to its heights, the dynamic, spontaneous order which is practiced within the Republic of Science. At the heights of its uppermost layer - the noosphere which signifies a society's heritage of the mind - the cultural institutions of the ideal Society broaden its borders beyond those of that Republic, so as to include the plurality of men's highest pursuits and endeavours. At its lower and lowest layers, it is maintained materially through the spontaneous order of a polycentric market economy, and protected and sheltered by a public power which is exercised by magistrates responsible to the meaning of the law. In the midst of all of these, one finds also such institutions of civic culture that inspire a form of loyalty to the Society which transcends the purely parochial submission to the traditional or charismatic power of a group, by also cultivating a common sense of individual responsibility to transcendent principles, e.g. of truth and excellence. This paradoxical cultivation of civic and individual responsibility would constitute the grounds of the same sort of civil fellowship which Plato and Aristotle spoke of as true *philia* - a friendship grounded in the common enjoyment and delight in the higher principles belonging to the intelligible world.¹⁸⁴

None of this fairly gnomic pronouncement is, to my knowledge, fully brought together in such explicit terms by Polanyi in his writings. But I believe that it can be

¹⁸⁴ See chapter 3; see also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a-1172a15 for his full deliberation on the *philia* of good men, as distinguished from lesser or deviant forms.

borne out, for I see it very much hinted at among the many clues found scattered in his works. I do not hold, to be sure, that Polanyi intended to be esoteric in his advancement of a sociology or a political science. Rather, I take it as granted, given that Polanyi, after writing *Personal Knowledge*, did not advance a thorough-going work of specifically political philosophy which comprehensively applied his later insights to matters of public affairs (which had in fact occupied him since the First World War), and that he became more immediately concerned with performing a triage of the modern mind and its pathologies. Priority, one might say, was given to identifying and staving off the source of infection, and to suturing and bracing the stable intellectual foundations of the free societies of his time. Given the tragic decline in his own health and faculties in the last years of his life, it is doubtful that any such comprehensive political opus could have been expected, when, by the accounts of those close to him, his first concern laid in solidifying the foundations of a more humane, post-critical philosophy, most especially by working-out the implications of the theory of tacit knowledge.¹⁸⁵

Thus, in this final chapter, I intend to bring to term what I find ripe in Polanyi's later political writings. I also intend to do so in the way that will show that those fruits are logically consonant, both with Polanyi's own concern with establishing the Republic of Science as the empirically existing exemplar of freedom under a common traditional authority, and with the Socratic maxim that "the City is the *psyche* writ large, and the *psyche* is the *cosmos* writ small."

185 See Rutledge, David W. "Poteat's Use of Polanyi." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 42, no. 1 (2015): 34–44, 38–39; and Breytspraak, Gus, and Phil Mullins. "William H. Poteat and Michael Polanyi: Toward a History of Their Relationship from 1952 through 1976." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 42, no. 1 (2015): 18–33.

To repeat, I do not hold that Polanyi intended at all to carry-out such a consciously Socratic endeavour, in spite of his allusions in *PK*, and a lifetime spent visiting both Plato and Aristotle through their surviving writings.¹⁸⁶ Rather, I shall maintain that he himself independently recognized that a society, ultimately, cannot help but reflect the dominant characteristics of the men who belong to it. Thus, on the one hand, objectivist societies (e.g. of Communist, Fascist, utilitarian, or National Socialist stripes), are simultaneously images of the Minotaur writ large, and of a truncated vision of an atomistic universe writ small. On the other hand, the Republic of Science, and the Society of Explorers, would, in principle, represent the spirit of the scientist or the post-critical philosopher writ in large letters, and the open, stratified truth of reality writ small. This I see prefigured in Polanyi's writings, particularly "Beyond Nihilism", "The Message of the Hungarian Revolution", "The Republic of Science", and "The Growth of Science in Society" in *Knowing and Being*, as well as in *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man*, and in post-humorously published materials such as "The Four Forms of Atheism", and his McEnerney Lectures.¹⁸⁷

186 For instance, Polanyi explicitly mentions Plato on page 7 of *Personal Knowledge*, where he anticipates that his colleagues may accuse that his vision of the scientific apprehension of reality may strike them as so-much "mystery mongering of an out-dated Platonism", but that he intends to uphold it nevertheless. In his 1962-1963 Terry Lectures at Yale University, later published as *The Tacit Dimension*, he explicitly addresses the theme of his talk as a response to the paradoxes of the *Meno* (*TD*, xvii). In *KB*, he addresses himself to a question which he believes was first recognized by Plato - that of how, in applying our conception of a class of things, keep successfully identifying objects of that real class which in fact differ in every particular; I believe that Polanyi is referencing *Theaetetus*, though he makes no explicit mention of the dialogue which he has in mind (*KB*, 165). The Polanyi Papers at the University of Chicago also reveal that he kept detailed notes on *Timaeus*, *Politeia*, and *Protagoras* (see Polanyi, Michael, Papers. [Box 24, Folder 12], Special Collections Research Centre, University of Chicago Library).

187 See Polanyi, Michael. "Forms of Atheism." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 40, no. 2 (2013): 7-11; and Mullins, Phil. "A Prefatory Note on Polanyi's 'Forms of Atheism'." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 40, no. 2 (2013): 4-6. See also Polanyi, Michael. *McEnerney Lectures, History and Hope: An Analysis of Our Age*, Pacifica Radio Archives. Broadcast in

The way in which I will more clearly extrapolate from the clues in Polanyi's own thoughts lies in this: through the thorough application of Polanyi's vision of the post-critical philosopher as the general exemplar for human excellence (see chapter 2), so as to "blow it up to the size of a *polis*" as once did Socrates playfully suggest to do with his companions in Plato's *Politeia*. The purpose of this exercise will be to flesh-out Polanyi's generalizations regarding the Society of Explorers as the ideal form of a free society, which he developed from the concrete example of the actual Republic of Science (i.e. the community and culture of scientists), and of which he himself was a full citizen. I perceive that this is necessary, for two reasons. For one, as noted above, Polanyi was not thorough-going in his extrapolation of the implications of his own political studies, but is rather highly suggestive. For another, while Polanyi spends much time in his writings correcting incorrect understandings of science and scientific practice, he does not explicitly fold those corrections (nor explicitly prescribe them as corrections) into his writings on the Republic of Science as it actually functioned; consequently this leaves a certain hazy penumbra hovering between us and the Society of Explorers.

In short, I shall give a bit of flesh to the outline of the Society, by applying and combining the groundwork of the previous chapters with Polanyi's aforementioned political works, and by giving the whole process logical structure by following that of Polanyi's chapter on Conviviality in *PK*. By doing so, I will also address the more basic theoretical questions of what society is, who an explorer may be, what a Society of Explorers would look like, and what causes and conditions must pertain for such a Society to exist.

1964. 4 disks or audio-files (<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/McEnerney-intro.htm>).

I perceive this to be both in keeping with the thrust of Polanyi's insights, and with those of Socratic political science with its emphasis on *philosophia peri tes anthopina*. But, I dwell on this for a further reason - that Polanyi, much more boldly than Plato (or at least, less esoterically), outlines the form of a society which is philosophic in character: a society which Plato depicted, not in the form of the Kallipolis, but, perhaps a little more subtly, in the little fellowship of seekers who gathered together to pursue Sophia and Dike, once upon a time, under Cephalus roof.

§1. The Theory and the Reality of the Scientific Life

Throughout his career, Polanyi was at pains to persuade all who listen that the prevailing opinions regarding the nature of science and scientific practice were distorted by several fundamental illusions and misconceptions. The average layperson, he wrote, held to an orthodoxy which had the blessings of professional philosophers, and to which scientists themselves typically avowed outward faith - or to which they at least paid lip-service. The chief of these illusions are the positivist commitments to the objectivity of impersonal knowledge, ideally formulated when it could be presented explicitly, with complete dispassion, and with reference to the clearly self-evident and verifiable facts of sense-data. The positivist conception of science, like those of other species of objectivism, thus rests on a reductive, Democritean philosophy, paired with a form of Pyrronian skepticism.¹⁸⁸ Together, these two doctrines teach that practicing science consists in dispassionately pulling-apart phenomena, while maintaining a critical mindset and proceeding according to a pre-established method, all for the sake of teasing-out data

¹⁸⁸ See chapter 2 of this study.

for correlation and modelling. Being a scientist, according to this way of seeing things, therefore essentially consists in holding a critical, Laplacean mindset, and following the rules of the scientific method.

On the social level, the orthodox picture of scientific practice also made pronouncements regarding the culture of scientists. Three of these are of prime importance to Polanyi. First, it's held that science is always completely open to revision of its premises whenever new facts are brought to light. Second, that the facts of science are held to strict, objective standards of experimental verification or falsification, which anyone with the proper tools and methods could, in principle, reproduce and behold by themselves. Third, that science is, in principle and ideally, an enterprise free of any sort of authority.¹⁸⁹

Polanyi's extensive work on the theory of tacit knowing and commitment, as we have seen, reveals a structuring of consciousness which belies the possibility of any of these three premises. For one, if science-*qua*-understanding is personal and incarnated in one's being, and not an abstract free-floating "thing" or collective entity, then to be a scientist must consist in possessing (indeed, *living*) an understanding of certain matters

189 See for instance, Polanyi's reconstruction of the Velikovsky Affair in "The Growth of Science in Society" in *KB*. To summarize, in 1950, one Immanuel Velikovsky published a book in which it was suggested, among other things, that a wide range of terrestrial upheavals from the 15th to the 7th centuries BC had been caused by the passage of a comet through the solar system, which comet subsequently collided with Mars, lost its tail, and became the planet Venus. It was further suggested by Velikovsky that Mars then nearly collided with the Earth, causing it to temporarily turn upside down, thus explaining mythological account of the Sun rising in the West and setting in the East; all of this required Velikovsky to furthermore supplement Newtonian gravitation with the assumption of powerful electric and magnetic fields operating between the planets (see Velikovsky, Immanuel. *Worlds in Collision*, New York: Doubleday. 1950). The book and Velikovsky were, unsurprisingly, dismissed by astronomers, though they appealed to a wide range of laymen. This dismissal created a public furor, in which appeals were made to the criteria above.

which draw upon layers of formal and informal education, know-how, and practical skills. Clearly, one cannot, and would not, completely revise one's knowing and being, from top to bottom, on the drop of a dime.

For that matter, one also could not be expected totally to suspend one's very being on each occasion that some new offering is made to the system of science, or someone somewhere claims to have made a radical new discovery. Indeed, this would be foolish, as such an act would testify that I, as a scientist, not only can, but *ought* to, like Pyrrho, render myself an imbecile on every occasion that someone somewhere produces some logically self-consistent proof or data that claims to turn the world on its head. As Polanyi puts it, any great and profound revision of our knowing is truly a revision of our minds and bodies - it is a *conversion* of our beings which is no less deep and demanding than the stepwise process of conversion related by St. Augustine in his *Confessions*. Such complete conversions do occur in our lives, but sanity and common-sense dictate that they will be rare, and that we will only engage in such a process when we feel deeply compelled to do so by a high sense of responsibility, by the pressures of our callings, or by reality simply bursting in upon us and demanding our acknowledgements and respect.

It should be no surprise then that, in the normal case of affairs, scientists will very frequently dismiss out of hand, any data or findings which are at odds with an established scientific consensus - even if the findings are apparently reproducible.¹⁹⁰ As Polanyi points out, any competent scientist will typically shrug-off such offerings as mere oddities, of no systematic importance whatsoever. In the normal course of affairs, as a

¹⁹⁰ See, for instance, "TGoSIS", 77-79 for a short list by Polanyi of well-known cases.

scientist, one trusts in what one knows and in the established consensus of scientific opinion, and one's conversions consist mainly in the experience of discovering the implicit and hidden implications of what one already knows, in a sudden illumination of new comprehension resulting in greater understanding.¹⁹¹

On the second point, while it may be claimed that the scientific community is beholden to strict and universal methods of objective verification, accepting the personal nature of knowing (let alone consciousness) must immediately bring that faith into question. Simply put, if the understanding and practical know-how entailed in "doing science" and becoming a scientist, does indeed entail a gradual education, apprenticeship, and conversion from child or ignoramus, to layperson, to student, to apprentice, to master; if the ability to even read a scientific or scholarly paper and to find one's way around a library or laboratory (or whathaveyou) relies on years of such antecedent effort and induction; if being able even to see the subtler aspects of reality and to differentiate them requires acquiring and then exercising connoisseurship; then it is absurd to claim that anyone anywhere can verify or test the claims made in the name of science. As Polanyi puts it:

"The popular conception of science teaches that science is a collection of observable facts, which anybody can verify for himself. We have seen that this is not true in the case of expert knowledge, as in diagnosing a disease. But it is not true either in the physical sciences. In the first place, you cannot possibly get hold of the equipment for testing, for example, a statement of astronomy or chemistry. And supposing you could somehow get the use of an observatory or a chemical laboratory, you would probably damage their instruments beyond repair before you ever made an observation. And even if you should succeed in carrying out an observation to check upon a statement of science and you found a result

191 See "TGoSIS", 79-80; as well as *PK*, 121-131; and *TD*, 20-21, 87, as well as chapter 2 of this study for a synopsis.

which contradicted it, you would rightly assume that you had made a mistake.”¹⁹²

With respect to the third point, the very personal nature of knowledge and of the process of learning how to be a scientist, already entails a series of relationships based in authority. As we have seen, the nature of the endeavour is such that one simply must have a teacher from whom to learn by example. Such a submission to a figure of authority is not done arbitrarily, however, when one apprentices oneself to a master of a science which one desires to master as well. Rather, the submission is a commitment, made with a reasonable degree of trust and confidence (trust in the teacher, or their reputation, and confidence in one’s own judgment) that *this person* is a personal exemplar from whom to learn. In doing so, one is expressing confidence and an openness to undergo some degree of revision of oneself. No less than that is involved when trying to do as the master does, to see how and what they see, and submitting oneself to a certain amount of correction and judgement from them - sometimes very harsh judgement indeed, for it really is one’s way of being which is under analysis.

The purpose of apprenticeship does, of course, differ from the sort of submission suffered in servitude. My decision to apprentice myself to a master of the science is a recognition of authority, given freely from within my background of education and comprehension, with all of its limits and problems. The meaning or purpose of the submission, though, is to understand fully the truth of something about which I am passionate. My ultimate submission, then, is to the truth, and to the reality which it expresses. This standard transcends even my teacher, no matter how brilliant they may be, and in following their mind, and dwelling in their manner of being, I am effectively

¹⁹² *TD*, 63-64.

aiming to move *from* my own relatively ignominious state, by seeing *through* the master, *to* the truth to which we are both responsible, and of which we are both lovers.¹⁹³

In terms of my own education and self-rectification, what I aim for is the competency necessary to see on my own, and to pursue my passion without constant aid. When I do achieve as much, the nature of my relationship to my teacher changes. No longer do I necessarily look up to them in a spirit of self-criticism and revision, nor do they cast their critical eye downwards at a novice in need much help and correction if I'm ever to be trusted on my own in a laboratory or in the field. The apprenticeship is complete when we can look at each other evenly, and can mutually judge each other's work and each other's grasp of things in light of standards which transcend both of us.¹⁹⁴

It is in this pursuit that we are joined in. It is, so to speak, a fellowship of submission. Authority remains, but now it is the semantic meaning of standards of truth and excellence which prevail. In so far as these can be held universally, those standards comprise the relatively objective, universal pole of a commitment, personally upheld with universal intent. Writ large, the culture of science is a Republic of equals and equals in the making, held together by a love of truth - a universal authority. This authority is incarnate insofar, and only insofar, as its citizens hold themselves and each other responsible to the calling to revise themselves to apprehend better a reality overflowing with possibilities to reveal itself in limitless, nearly unspeakable, future manifestations. On the other hand, in the absence of a general consensus of trust or commitment to

193 For a longer exposition on the *from-to* structure of consciousness, see chapter 2.

194 See for instance, *PK*, 346-348, 376-379, wherein contrasts the I-It to the I-Though relationship, and the disposition of apprenticeship to a superior; cf. *SoM*, 71-72, 81-83.

thought and truth as an independent power, deserving of our respect, commanding our love, and demanding our continuous reformation, the entire project is liable to collapse, or to ossify into a parochial culture of doctrinaire scholasticism, or empty metaphysics.¹⁹⁵

§2. *How to be Civil, Individual, and Cultured Without Even Trying*

This active cultivation of individuality and excellence is what Polanyi dubbed the *individual culture* that partly defines the character of a free society, such as the Republic of Science. By the same token, the Republic, as a free society, is also upheld by a *civic culture* which evokes a community of scientists, transmits and maintains standards of practice, and fosters both cooperation among scientists, and a just allocation of honours and resources (as well as blame, dishonour, and penury). This dual culture of science reflects Polanyi's four-fold differentiation of the coefficients of society - society here defined by men's common ordering of their lives by common morals, custom, and law, or *mores*.¹⁹⁶ Polanyi defines the basic coefficients of society as: (i) the *sharing of convictions*, (ii) the *sharing of a fellowship*, (iii) *cooperation*, and (iv) *authority or coercion*.¹⁹⁷

Furthermore, by Polanyi's reckoning, in the specific instances of free, dynamic societies, these four coefficients, tend strongly to be articulated in different sets of more or less distinct institutions. This stands in contrast with static societies (e.g. primitive societies, or, in Polanyi's view, highly traditional societies such as those predominating in

¹⁹⁵ See, for an example, Polanyi's remarks on the Lysenko affair in the former U.S.S.R., "TGoSIS" in KB, 80-82; also *PK*, 150-152, 182-183, 218-219.

¹⁹⁶ *PK*, 215.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid*

medieval Europe), in which such differentiation is absent, or less pronounced.¹⁹⁸ In their most general form, these four sets of institutions consist in: (i) institutions of *culture*, which foster shared convictions (e.g. churches, museums, universities, theatres, etc.); (ii) institutions fostering *group loyalty* (e.g. social intercourse, rituals, and common defence); (iii) an *economic system* which fosters cooperation for the purposes of achieving a joint material advantage, and (iv) *public power* to shelter and control the other institutions of society, through the use of authority and coercion.¹⁹⁹

It follows from this, that a free society's mores hinge upon the simultaneous cultivation of individual and civic culture. This amounts to the prevalent recognition among the plurality of its members of both individuality and a common good. However, knowledge and commitment to the common good in a free society is evoked, at the highest level, by such convictions as uphold the independent power of thought, and a passion for truth, excellence, beauty, or justice in general. Conversely, at a lower level, it is bound and shaped by the necessities of power and profit.²⁰⁰

What this largely amounts to in a healthy free society, is an ongoing cultivation of individual excellence, together with a restriction of individual selfishness - a restriction which should necessarily apply to moral inversion, and morally inverted behaviour. The children of a free society are persuaded to overcome the tendency towards selfishness through their enculturation, through which they find expression for the higher passions. This is personally accomplished through their initiation into convictions transcending the

¹⁹⁸ *PK*, 212.

¹⁹⁹ *PK*, 215-216.

²⁰⁰ *PK*, 213-216, 224; also "TRoS" in *KB*, 69.

baser drives for power and profit, by both creating an atmosphere wherein genuine fellowship and conviviality can flourish, and, when necessary, through the imposition of the standards of morality, custom, or law through the authority or the coercion of the institutions of public power.

Individual excellence, on the other hand, will necessarily be restricted and channeled by the standards and practices of the prevailing network of institutions at the upper level. At the same time, it is in danger of being stifled or left fallow on account of circumstances arising from injustices, failures, or outright sins originating from the institutions of the economic system or the public power. And yet, in recompense, the prevailing recognition of universal, transcendent standards provides individuals with opportunities to challenge and reform prevailing standards and opinions. Indeed, a free society will reserve its greatest accolades for those persons who have most deeply refined or expanded the *noosphere* in accordance with previously unrecognized intimations of the meaning of the most beloved principles.²⁰¹

§3. The Character of the Republic of Science

How then does Polanyi's account of the Republic of Science shape-up to the standards of a free society, and what of the intimated Society of Explorers?

The personal character of the Republic's individual culture was the focus of chapter two of this study. There, we found that an exegesis of the scientist, and the post-

²⁰¹ See, for instance, *PK*, 196, 244-245, 276-277; "TPToA", 93-95, "TGoSIS", 82-85, and "TRoS", 70-71 in *KB*.

critical philosopher revealed several features which hold generally across the whole spectrum of particular pursuits.

The first feature, and the one of foremost importance, was the deep, personal rootedness of a scientist's knowledge and understanding in the body and the structure of commitment. This, we then unpacked to reveal that one's commitment is necessarily anchored in a deep and extensive network of tacit knowing, a taproot of passion, growing and articulating itself from and through an articulate cultural framework towards the ultimate sources of the mind's light and nourishment. This process of personal maturation, furthermore, could only be held together by a certain faith and confidence.

Seen in this way, it is apparent that each scientist's commitments are, like Ishtar, progressively stripped in their engagement of arbitrary or meaningless predilections, both from above and below. From below, the education of one's passion to behold reality and know the truth - in all of its variety of manifestations - fixes one's direction, much as the limits and extents of one's tacit repertoire determines one's calling and one's existing existential resources. From above, an articulate inheritance of language, symbols, textbooks, maxims, rules-of-thumb, and jargon provide the nodes and the signposts - the supportive atmosphere - from which and through which one may then pour oneself outwards, and, doing so, perhaps better imbibe the light. If lacking in any of these in one's cultivation, it is apparent that any child would be, as Plato wrote, like that rare flower found blooming on rocky ground - one would owe little of their successes in growth to the society or the environment that all but wilted them.

The second feature revealed by reflecting on the personal knowledge of the scientist, was the largely personal nature of education - both formal and informal. It is a matter of fact, too frequently confirmed, that tremendous failures or abuses in upbringing can distort the entire emotional life of a child. Such tragedies may greatly impair, not only one's sense of society, but the entire order and experience of one's intrinsic passions: it may easily dam or channel them down crooked canals. Conversely, a healthy induction into the emotional spectrum of convivial life may help that passionate desire to comprehend and understand to straighten and deepen, even as it may cut its ways down particular paths, reflecting the spark of love which passes from teacher to student. The transmission of a spark of passion often comes about as an effect of a pure, convivial indwelling of the pupil in the company of a loved one.²⁰²

Knowledge, like wisdom, we may then say, begins in love. That being said, it is equally true that it is just as easily obstructed by hate or aversion, which are opposed to any appreciation of or indwelling in the thing hated or avoided. Such dispositions thus oppose the assimilation of a given reality into oneself, and the necessary outpouring of oneself needed to come to understand it.

A third feature which was brought into focus by our exegesis, was that the extension of one's understanding lies through apprenticeship, and an ongoing mastery of a tradition. In the case of the individual culture of the Republic of Science, we have seen that one becomes a scientist through a process of self-reformation and critique under the guidance of a senior or master scientist, or scientists, who themselves embody the

²⁰² For more on pure conviviality, see *PK*, 209-211.

practical wisdom of their domains, and who transmit that wisdom as much through their way of being as through their explicit words or published materials.

Indeed, the words and figure of the research or scholarly papers of a master scientist will be largely meaningless to anyone who hasn't learnt to "see" properly. Scientific education, to paraphrase Polanyi, involves more than the master can tell. Such is the nature of tacit knowledge, and of its transmission from one generation to the next. The process of becoming a scientist, is, therefore, characterizable as a conversion, and being a scientist requires an openness to continued reformation of oneself in response to the universal pole of one's calling - with its open-ended possibilities.

In so far as one's calling is, by definition, given specific shape by education, one's responsibility as a scientist is thus further limited in addition to those limits imposed by the causes and conditions of physiology and appetitive needs. Education is always weighted by context and circumstance (not the least circumstance being the available choice in one's teachers, especially the limited choice of one's own family), and always retains a hint of the parochial as a consequence. However, in so far as the individual culture of the Republic calls for its citizens to fix the guiding star of their commitments to the truth of a reality which is held to be unlimited in its possibilities, dissent is cultivated for the sake of continuously revising scientific consensus. This tension between these two quintessential elements in persons of every scientist is what leads Polanyi to point out so frequently that science cultivates dissent in particulars, while teaching conformance to scientific authority in general.

This dichotomy helps to explain the furiousness with which certain scientific controversies are conducted. Certainly, the esoteric nature of some of these battles can only baffle laymen, but the sharp revision of one's understanding which is at stake with some of these subtleties in fact demands of one side or another, a potentially painful revision of the very beings - not to mention the very embarrassing admission of an erroneous comprehension of things before their peers. Such an admission as much as suggests that one's vision of reality may be quite distorted, or that one may be very badly turned around indeed.²⁰³

§4. *Finding the Authorities*

At this point, we find ourselves turning gradually to the issue of the civic culture of the Republic of Science, and with it, the second side of the shared convictions and institutions of the society of scientists. One outstanding feature of the Republic is that there is a notable absence of a specific authority - either embodied (e.g. in a monarch or assembly), or abstract (e.g. in a written code of law, or in an explicit credo or set of eternal commandments). There is no Sultan of Science, nor a Bill of Science, which effectively commands the common enterprises of biologists, physicists, chemists, political scientists, ethnographers, geologists, and the other myriad classes of practicing scientists.

This is a state of affairs which may lead one to surmise that there is no civic authority present in the Republic, but this would be a mistake. As we have already

²⁰³ For Polanyi's formal discussions on scientific controversy, see *PK*, 150-160. For further examples of such controversies, see *PK*, 156-158; "TGoSIS", 70-74, and "TPToA", 88-95 in *KB*; and his reproduction of the war between the Copernicans and the Scholastic Aristotelians in "Science and Reality". *The British Society for the Philosophy of Science*. volume 18. no. 23. (Nov. 1967), 177-196.

observed, the cultivation of individual student or apprentice scientists relies upon the dual authorities of the teacher or master, on the one hand, and upon the truth of the matter which they intend to understand. This latter authority, we have said, is one which is at least tacitly recognized by all classes of scientists, whatever their status or background, and forms the firmament of the firmaments - it is the basic reality from which hangs the moving horizon of the *noosphere*, and to which one appeals when one calls for the latter's reformation (along with the universal reformation of oneself and one's fellows, by extension).

The former, more immediate form of authority, moreover, is, like the latter, one freely elected for; one can never be effectively forced to learn or to see. Like the prisoners bound to the bench of the cave, one always has at hand the option of ignoring or manhandling anyone attempting to turn one about. Similarly, one either responds to a paradigm or a personal exemplar or not. Arbitrary authority may train a man to avoid the stick, but it cannot educate in him a genuine love and appreciation of a flower; beatings do not make botanists.

These two authorities, however, are personal, and stand above oneself, while the authority of a master may conceivably come to be lacking, if one runs out of teachers. They are, for all that, one's own personal, specific authorities, albeit not chosen arbitrarily. Now though, when widening the discussion to the community of scientists, we find another authority emerging - one reflecting the convivial fellowship of scientists

forming a common society. This newly apprehensible authority is the *mutual authority* of scientists to judge each other as equals and peers.²⁰⁴

Polanyi lays out eight overlapping features or coefficients of general authority among scientists, four of which effectively constitute that medium of public authority or power which shelters the Republic from internal dissolution, while also serving economic functions and inspiring group loyalty. The first and most conspicuous of these features is that of *scientific consensus*, denoting the current, settled opinion of scientists regarding the facts and theoretical foundations of matters of interest to the system of science - i.e. broadly speaking, what is true, what is false, and what is plausible or indeterminate.

Just as importantly, the consensus of scientific opinion plays a role in upholding *scientific standards*, by helping to set the general measure of scientific competence, and of what meets the bar of competent scientific performance and research. Scientific consensus and scientific standards then dovetail to a third coefficient, that of judging the *scientific merit* of those offerings or findings which are presented to scientists for consideration.

The judgement of the merit of new facts or theories which are offered to the overall system of science, is itself the functional product of a series of antecedent judgements²⁰⁵:

204 See "TRoS", 56, "TGoSIS" 84-85 in *KB*. Cf. his comparison of *competent* v. *supreme* authority in *PK*, 164.

205 The following listing proceeds primarily from Polanyi's differentiation of the components of scientific culture as he presented them in "TRoS", 53-54, and "TGoSIS", 77-86, but I supplement it primarily with similar dissections in *PK* and *TD*, cf. *PK*, 135-137, 187-190; and *TD*, 70-74.

(1) *Plausibility*. For a finding to be found to have some merit and to be granted any recognition, it must be deemed at least plausible by a plurality of scientists who are competent to render judgement on the matter. As we may very well infer from chapter 2, it follows that, as a rule, an offering must not run too far counter to the prevailing understanding of things, if it is to be taken seriously. This is so, for the ultimate criteria of judgement is not, in fact, the methodology, the procedures, or the data proffered through their application, but the actual understanding, know-how, and connoisseurship of practicing scientists who know something about whatever is at question. Given the *from-to* structure of intentionality, the logic of commitment, and the tacit dimension of knowing, it should come as no surprise that Polanyi reports that experts in a field will routinely dismiss with a shrug, published findings that are in fact reproducible in a lab when an exact methodology has been followed, but which are wildly unaccountable with experience and existing theory.²⁰⁶

While it is true that science bears upon the universal, *-to* pole of intent, it always must build upon and proceed *from-* the reservoir of accumulated knowledge, embodied in practicing scientists who have long investigated and contemplated the matters at hand. It is a correlate of faith that, hard won as it is against the prevailing winds of one's skepticism, that it is not then easily turned again. Whatever the specific case, there is no objective test of plausibility which holds universally, and which can be applied mechanically to scientific papers or other presentations. Rather, there are only practical

²⁰⁶ See Polanyi's example of the findings of Lord Rayleigh, whose published experiments (*Proceedings of the Royal Society*, 189 (1947), 296-299) seemed to show that hydrogen atoms striking a metal wire transmit energies of up to 100 electron volts, in "TRoS", 54-55. See also "TGoSIS" in *KB*, 74-76, 77-79; and his own recounting of his experience of landing on the wrong-side of an emerging scientific consensus in "TPToA", 87-96 in *KB*.

rules of thumb, and the sensible maxim that the fault for bizarre findings in a lab most likely lies with the experimenter, or in a temporary blind-spot in the existing literature which hasn't yet been worked-out, but which will eventually dispel the error or illusion. This leads us to:

(2) *Scientific value*. Findings which are brought forward for the consideration of the community of scientists must meet some appreciable threshold of scientific value, if they are to gain the acceptance, attention, or accolades of one's fellows. In practice, Polanyi finds that the value of findings usually can be measured in terms of three aspects: (i) the *intrinsic value* of the subject matter; (ii) the *systematic importance* of the findings, and; (iii) *accuracy or precision*. It is also matter of course that deficiencies in one aspect of a finding can be compensated for by its strengths. Thus, for instance, do the findings of physicists - which are often quite dull in and of themselves and arouse little interest in most persons - compensate for their lack of *intrinsic interest* through their high degree of *accuracy* and *systematic importance*. This is so, for such findings are often amenable to expression with a great deal of mathematical precision, and the findings of physicists often have a great deal of bearing on much more interesting phenomena, such as the subject-matters of biology and astronomy. Similarly, the findings of medical science and biology, particularly the taxonomic classification of new forms - while being a quite imprecise science which is grounded mainly in connoisseurship - compensate for a comparative lack of precision, and their often more limited systematic importance, through recourse to the higher degree of intrinsic interest which their subjects arouse. Tales of bonobos and bursitis are much more arousing than stories of bosons, for animals

and our fellow human beings command a much deeper and comprehensive effort and experience of indwelling than do sub-atomic particles. To appreciate a flower or to know another human being, requires a deeper exposure of ourselves, and a fuller exercise of our faculties of heart and mind - to know them demands a profounder stirring of the possibilities of what is most real about us.

(3) *Originality*: to quote Polanyi's own impeccably concise description:

“A contribution of sufficient plausibility and of a given scientific value may yet vary in respect of its originality; this is the third criterion of scientific merit. The originality of technical inventions is assessed, for the purpose of claiming a patent, in terms of the degree of surprise which the invention would cause among those familiar with the art. Similarly, the originality of a discovery is assessed by the degree of surprise which its communication should arouse among scientists. The unexpectedness of a discovery will overlap with its systematic importance, yet the surprise caused by a discovery, which causes us to admire its daring and ingenuity, is something different from this. It pertains to *the act of producing the discovery*. There are discoveries of the highest daring and ingenuity, as for example the discovery of Neptune, which have no great systematic importance” (emphasis added)²⁰⁷

Taken altogether, these criteria of scientific merit, taken alongside the weight of scientific opinion, provide the substance of mutual authority among scientists. They also provide the general criteria for the apportioning of honours in the Republic, with such prizes as awards and medals, research and academic postings, grants, scholarships, festschrifts, and so on, being judged and justified on account of the merit, accomplishments, and potential of the recipients. Conversely, to be shut-out of the hallowed halls of honour represents a profound vote of non-confidence on the part of the community, and may very well flounder or destroy a career.

²⁰⁷ “TRoS” in *KB*, 54.

What, though, of the question of cooperation among scientists? Is it the case that cooperation in the Republic of Science is an effect of the functioning of an underlying economic system, as Polanyi holds to be the prevailing case in free, dynamic societies? In fact, it does not, nor does general authority in the Republic amount merely to the blind enforcement of prevailing opinions.²⁰⁸ Rather, it is the case that cooperation and the exercising of authority among scientists rests upon three practices or institutions which constitute the Republic as a *spontaneous order: self-coordination through mutual*

208 This statement runs contrary to such sociologies of science as those of Thomas Kuhn, which err in the direction of asserting that “normal science” consists in deducing the consequences of such problems or statements (aka. “theories”) as have been defined by an abstract paradigm or orthodoxy. The consequence of this point-of-view is naturally that science has nothing to do with the truth, but only with the working-out of a horizon of ideas until such time as a “paradigm shift” or “revolution” occurs, which comes to a conclusion when some charismatic figure sets-up a new orthodoxy to be worked-out in turn. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2012). As I see it, this perspective on science is not novel, but is in fact, ironically, at play in the dispute of the nominalist-leaning Scholastic Aristotelians against Copernicus, Galileo, and their followers and sympathizers. By Polanyi’s reconstruction of the matter, the Aristotelians insisted that Copernicus’ system was but a novel calculative device for predicting the movement of planets - perhaps better or worse than other devices to, but certainly no more “true” or “false”. The Copernicans held, to the contrary, that their system was actually true, that it therefore better represented reality, and that the Aristotelian account was simply wrong. It was thus implied that the Copernicans were better in touch with reality than the Aristotelians, and this existential critique underlies the unusually personal and vitriolic conflict between Galileo and the Aristotelian Pope of the day. See Michael Polanyi, “Science and Reality”.

As I view it, this view of science as a deductive game taking place within an established horizon, which is championed by Kuhn and by the Scholastic Aristotelians, is much more rigorously borne-out and argued by Hobbes in his *Leviathan*. There, he clearly deduces that a conception of reason which is totally immanent, derived and compounded from passive sensation, necessitates that science can be nothing more or less than reckoning with the consequences of an established system of signs representing sensible objects - what system to be established by the authority of the Sovereign. See Michael Oakeschott, “An Introduction to Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*”, (Oxford, 1946).

The basic error of Kuhn’s conception of science, and those of similar perspective, is that it effectively begins with the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, by abstracting knowledge from a flesh-and-blood knower to an ephemeral, disembodied “paradigm” (itself never properly defined) - and this is to say nothing of the ontological premises which underlie such an epistemological oddity. For more on the dispute between Polanyi and Kuhn, see Philip Lewin. “The Problem of Objectivity in Post-critical Philosophy.” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 18, no. 1 (n.d.): 18–26; also Martin Moleski. “Polanyi Vs Kuhn, Worldviews Apart.” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 33, no. 2 (2007 2006): 8–24; Maben W. Poirier. “A Comment on Polanyi and Kuhn.” *The Thomist*, 1989. <http://www.thomist.org.proxy.library.carleton.ca/jourl/1989/892aPoir.html>; and Maben W. Poirier. “The Polanyi-Kuhn Issue.” *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 33, no. 2 (2007): 56–65.

*adjustment, discipline under mutual authority, and the principle of overlapping neighbourhoods.*²⁰⁹

The self-coordination of scientists is explained by Polanyi using two metaphors. On the one hand, one has a group of women shelling peas or chess-players playing chess. On the other hand, a group of persons attempting to put together a puzzle. Of the two, he writes concisely:

“[The] total amount of peas shelled and the total number of games won will not be affected if the members of the group are isolated from each other. Consider by contrast the effect which a complete isolation of scientists would have on the progress of science. Each science would go on for a while developing problems derived from the information initially available to all. But these problems would soon be exhausted, and in the absence of further information about the results achieved by others, new problems of any value would cease to arise, and scientific progress would come to a standstill.”²¹⁰

In the one case, then, the mutual isolation of the members of a group would hardly have an effect upon their joint progress towards the end. In the latter case, progress is greatly reduced, relative to what is possible if members are allowed freely to observe and communicate with one another while attending to the specific problem and the specific clues before each of them - the clues here being symbolized by the puzzle pieces, the problems being the specific corner of the puzzle which is any specific individual is immediately trying to put together or solve.

Furthermore, the task of scientific discovery, or of putting together a puzzle, is almost as effectively impeded if the joint purpose and endeavour is organized under the specific authority of a single “node” - be that a single person or a committee. Indeed, the

²⁰⁹ *KB*, 84

²¹⁰ “TRoS” in *KB*, 49-50.

whole project may even do more poorly than if scientists were kept in mutual isolation, if the central authority was itself relatively or totally incompetent - which has indeed proven to be the case when science has been forced to submit to ideological powers.²¹¹

Be that as it may, the ability of scientists to make the heuristic breakthroughs needed to comprehend the clues and solve the problem before them in an important or surprising new way, is greatly aided by their ability to draw upon the pieces of the puzzle being handled by others. These clues, in turn, can be found scattered in the surrounding neighbourhood, both in explicit, articulate forms (e.g. in books, publications, speeches, records, and artifacts), but also in the unspoken or relatively tacit clues embodied in their colleagues. Sometimes, the greatest revelations come from debating or arguing-out a problem with a peer, who intends - or has previously intended - to resolve the same question or solve the same problem, or one quite similar.

Discipline under mutual authority arises as a consequence of the fact that, as Polanyi puts it succinctly, “scientists keep watch on each other” and maintain the sorts of standards which we considered above. The specifically dynamic character of the indirect consensus of scientific opinion - ever being reformed and revised in some or many corners - comes about as a reflection of *the principle of overlapping neighbourhoods*. Put simply, every reputable scientist is an authority in their field, and a master of some specific domain of knowledge and inquiry. This mastery denotes in them the personal judgement needed to appraise the facts, phenomena, and the findings of others within their field. By exercising their judgement, scientists are intently appraising each others’

²¹¹ See n.137, n.145 above.

work as competent or incompetent, and as reflective of a true or an erroneous intellectual framework for understanding.²¹²

As it also so happens, the general competencies of any scientist will extend into neighbouring fields of investigation, as, for instance, a chemist will often find herself able to judge the plausibility of the data published in a physics paper, or a political scientist a work of economics or sociology. In this way, the Republic as a whole and open process can be pictured as a patchwork of overlapping neighbourhoods, with individual scientists continuously exercising their authority on each other and submitting to the same authority in turn.²¹³ This spontaneous ordering of affairs differs from the personal authority of the master scientist over the apprentice, in which the master looks down and the apprentice up in judgement, in that this general authority is exercised between scientists mutually recognizing each other as peers and holding each other to common standards bearing on the truth with universal intent.

§5. The Paradigm of the Republic

These features, practices, and principles define the boundary conditions of the Republic, and its secondary representation in wide and varied institutions. Below, it is bound by the limited resources available for scientific pursuits - these measured both in terms of time, and external goods. On a higher level, it is bound to the joint pursuit of the truth, while shaped by the noosphere and such specific features as scientific opinion and standards. These give structure to scientific endeavours, provide some sense of grounds

²¹² See *PK*, 374-378; *TSoM*, 87-89.

²¹³ This description of the mutual authority of scientists is, for instance, quite comparable with Aristotle's account of citizenship, consisting in being able to rule or be ruled. See *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1274b30-1279b10.

and direction, and define necessary limits to one's calling and one's responsibility, while maintaining - even encouraging - a certain tension towards intimations of a hidden reality which transcends them all. Taken together, all these features characterize the Republic as a spontaneous order: a society of self-coordinating, free individuals who jointly submit and exercise general authority among them in the common pursuit of truth with universal intent.

All of this may seem strangely ordinary, in some ways, and yet almost miraculous. It seems altogether improbable that such an arrangement could have arisen, yet the fact of the everyday, prosaic work of scientists (never without its farces), belies that incredulity. Such, though, are the hallmarks of any emergent order which operates as an open system: let the spark be lit in the coal mine, and the flame will burn. The Republic of Science, in this sense, is the logical outcome of a society struck between individual scientists exercising their passions and responsibilities, as these were outlined in chapter 2. However may the secondary institutions differ or change from place to place or time to time, the general features of that society can scarcely be done without without greatly disordering and deforming it - they are the matrix through which science (that is, understanding or *episteme*) can be jointly pursued and enjoyed convivially with one's peers. The alternative to this arrangement would be the metaphorical scientist, shelling peas alone in his study, or attempting to exercise solitary authority over a pseudo-Republic through an army of submissive subordinates.

This description of the Republic as the paradigm of a free society is, in a sense, ideal. It is ideal in the very specific sense that it outlines, in great generality, a

paradigmatic Republic whose members and institutions are largely free of embarrassing or destabilizing self-contradictions - who do not, in a word, hold themselves or each other to the strictures of objectivist dogma. The assessment tacitly presumes that most of the citizens of the Republic of Science follow broadly in the shadow of either of the two post-critical figures which we drew-out in chapter 2 - the scientist or the philosopher. It also presumes that most of its members do not follow the shadow of the nihilist or the Minotaur - that they do not tacitly and explicitly hold to a strictly absurd idea of reality, conjured by a mindset holding to the implications of Democritean physics and Pyrronian skepticism.

In point of fact, of course, Polanyi saw very well that the culture of scientists of the times was very much beset by such beliefs. He also saw quite clearly - clearer and more deeply than most - that the sciences can and have continued to progress by silently disavowing in the practice of actual scientists, everything which is affirmed to be the case “in theory”. It is not too much to say that many scientists are public positivists, and deeply closeted Aristotelians, and to wryly appreciate the irony that this supreme performative contradiction sustains scientists and their Republic in spite of the strict folly of the prevailing creed.

While this existential contradiction may be rendered relatively harmless as long as the practices and institutions of the Republic remain relatively strong, and are not impaired from the outside, it is not altogether without consequences. Two consequences require mentioning. First, the distortion of scientific standards and of the judgment of scientific merit induced by positivistic screeds can impair and distort sciences which deal

with higher-level phenomena than those of physics and chemistry. We have dealt with some of these in chapters 2 and 4, and Polanyi himself compiled numerous examples of completely absurd statements and publications (emanating, for example, from anthropology, biology, and psychology), over the course of his career - and that is to say nothing of controversies arising in the more precise sciences. Second, in so far as the Republic of Science and the mutual authority of scientists comprise a principle institution of culture within a wider, surrounding society, and in so far as the vision, the pronouncements, and the ability of scientists to furnish sound guidance is impaired by positivism or other forms of objectivism, that wider society will itself be subjected to the disordering influences of objectivist mores. This tendency then opens up the door to the sorts of dynamo-objective couplings which tend to find final expression in comprehensive ideologies.

These societal and individual tendencies are exacerbated to whatever degree that the sciences of man are made essentially impossible to conduct. For, to have a science of man is but to use a shorthand to say that there are common endeavours to understand the essence of man and how to be most fully human, in that indelible tension towards the ground of one's being. Such sciences are, in effect, practices in the art of being human - of maturing one's purpose and way of being.²¹⁴

214 Compare with Aristotle's definition of the *spoudaios*, the mature human being, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "And if the work of a human being is a being-at-work of the soul in accordance with reason, or not without reason, while we say that the work of a certain sort of person is the same in kind as that of a serious [*spoudaios*] person of that sort, as in the case of a harpist and of a serious harpist, and this is simply because in all cases the superiority in excellence is attached to the work, since the work of a harpist is to play the harp and the work of a serious harpist is to play the harp well—if this is so and we set down that the work of a human being is a certain sort of life, while this life consists of a being-at-work of the soul and actions that go along with reason, and it belongs to a man of serious stature to do these things well and

But, as Polanyi points-out, the reductive image of man which is consistent with the affirmations and expectations of the Laplacean mindset can only be expressive of whatever “certain”, quantifiable, concrete “facts” which survive the solvents of systematic doubt. “Values” too, will be cut-off from the moorings of reason - i.e. one’s hard-won understanding and appreciation - by the insistence on perceiving all things in terms of their component parts. This critical habit necessarily diverts one’s focal awareness away from intrinsic meaning, purpose and reason of comprehensive entities or higher-level aspects of reality, and towards the less meaningful parts which only contribute to their presence. When turned to one’s fellows, this critical analysis will quite naturally tend to mistake the appetitive drives as the essence of man, for they at least can be referred back to concrete material ends.²¹⁵

As a consequence of adopting the objectivist mindset in pursuit of an understanding of men, the unpredictable and highly fecund reality of mind will quite naturally be bypassed for the less real, but more concrete immanent tensions of power and libido, and their objects. “Values” will thus tend to be rendered suspect as the hypocritical masks and epiphenomena of power and gain, and politics will tend to be reduced to calculations of who gets what, where, and why. By such a distorted measure, moral and intellectual honesty could only consist in behaving as an enlightened psychopath, or as a child.

beautifully...” (1098a8ff, trans. Joe Sachs).

215 This of course, is erroneous, as every observant but scrupulous “materialist” seems to eventually admit. The *libido dominandi* of disordered souls so frequently bursts the banks of any conceivable river of concrete, bodily appetite that to persist in the belief that all men are moved by such simple appetites, against all evidence, would require, not only folly, but great and terrible stupidity.

It stands to reason then, that a reformed Republic of Science, reflecting the full spectrum of Polanyi's thoughts, would be disembarassed of objectivism, and broaden itself to openly respect research into emergent, teleological phenomena. This would necessarily include attempts to gain understanding of the most comprehensive and meaningful aspect of human existence - the intents of men's hearts and minds, and their bearing on the eternal search for communion with the ground of their principles. As a consequence, *philosophia peri tes anthropina* and a more general concern with the structures of consciousness, society, and history, would be brought back into the fold of orthodox investigation and learning. Conversely, those same endeavours, and the *geisteswissenschaften* dealing with them, would necessarily be held to renewed standards of scientific merit and excellence.²¹⁶ In fewer words, the Republic would become more consistently Socratic, rather than the unfortunate Chimera that it currently is.

§6. *Finding the Borders of The Republic*

At the level of their institutions of culture, those belonging to a free society, conceived now as a Society of Explorers, find their shared convictions in a joint exploration, enjoyment, and submission to the truth of reality - *aletheia*, that most hoary of mistresses. This is a soberingly naïve statement, but it is a mark of how quaintly sober a free society's members are, that they can contemplate such a thing as truth with

²¹⁶ This is to say that, for instance, scientists such as those practicing political science in free societies might be expected to actually engage in the preliminary hard-work of meditating on the nature of man, society, history, and the ground of being before presuming to pronounce dogmatically on public affairs. This would be quite a change from the current custom of treating respectfully such "doctors of philosophy" as indulge in deforming public opinion with the products of various ideological deformations of reality, born of their dalliances with the various "-isms" of the age. On the one hand, this custom leads to a self-satisfied consensus on the objective value of the status quo, on the other, to a relativistic acceptance of the airing of the worst non-sense under the sun. Both are born of the same sort of dalliances, inherited from the objectivist conviction in the absolute rift between objective "facts" and subjective "values".

credulity. The critical mind, after all, is liable to balk or sneer reflexively at such a notion, in proportion with its nihilism - just as Callicles sneered at Socrates' credulous insistence that the just man is happier suffering injustice than the unjust man escaping just punishment.²¹⁷

Certain objections obtain, however, and deserve reflection. Presume then that the Republic of Science has reformed in the directions outlined by Polanyi, and openly permits serious and open contemplation of a surd, stratified, and emergent process of reality, and fully reintegrates the sciences of human existence (*Geisteswissenschaft*) into the fold, without further subjecting them to the erroneous standards of positivism and its kin. What would this entail?

At the least, it would entail a much more Socratic-like philosophic anthropology be entertained in the science of man - one which takes seriously the flesh, passion, and reason as the foundations of the dynamic order of existence. It would also then entail developing insight into the diagnostic arts required to identify the deviations, neuroses, and pathologies of the *psyche* which disorder existence on a personal, societal, and inter-societal level, and the therapeutic arts which might ameliorate them.

Such would also, as we've seen, entail taking seriously, the maxim that the city is the *psyche* writ large and that society and its institutions cannot be hypostatized in complete abstraction with the people who represent themselves through them. Lastly, it would require admitting that, over the long run, the characteristics of a society cannot help but be a representative reflection of the prevailing image of what it means to be

²¹⁷ See *Gorgias*, 481b-486d.

human. That is all but to say that the society of men will reflect and enforce the perception of *aletheia* that they have of her, and that perception may be altogether lacking in vision or appreciable wisdom: a society may come to be the Sophist or Alcibiades writ large: a city of fools or men in permanent revolt against reality. Such sciences, most especially political science, would be historical, in the sense that their practice would involve studying and judging the affairs of an actual public in the process of existing, in terms of the relative responsiveness to the open and dynamic order of reality, and the particular articulations of that response - these to be measured in due light of the limits and possibilities of their inherited noosphere, at the higher end, and the context of time, place, power, and resources, at the lower level.²¹⁸

A second, greater wave approaches though, which must be confronted. Did not Polanyi repeatedly say, throughout his vocation, that the arts and religion, along with history and the other sciences, contribute to the articulation and expansion (or, occasionally, the regression, as in the case of the influence of scientism-*cum*-objectivism) of a free society's noosphere? If the Republic of Science excludes such things as art and religion from its boundaries, can it be sustained that a Society of Explorers should include them? Should it be held, contrarily, that what is implied by the force of his thoughts, is that the Republic *should* include these endeavours and practices? Or are they somehow truly entirely separate affairs from science? Or are they subordinate to them?

218 See *TSoM*, 87. Jon Fennell, too, has directly investigated the implications of Polanyi's thoughts on the value, evaluation, and morality for positivistic political science, and also concluded that non-judgemental political science is impossible. I go further than Fennell in so far as I have argued that Polanyi has indeed established a philosophy of science and a philosophic anthropology which provides the foundations of a political science allowing for such post-critical evaluations. Cf. Jon Fennell, "Polanyi's Arguments against a Non-Judgmental Political Science," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 37, no. 1 (2010): 6-18.

Or are they superordinate? This is no small wave, indeed, and it seems that we have stumbled once again upon that “ancient war between *poiesis* and *philosophia*” which Socrates, in *Politeia*, claimed to have inherited.²¹⁹

While the potential scope of the question is vast, it is perhaps possible to make some preliminary remarks and inferences from what we have so far drawn from Polanyi’s work. Firstly, it may have to be admitted that theology, in the precise, original sense implied by Plato is a legitimate neighbourhood of study, with a bearing on the human sciences in general and the art of being human. To express my meaning briefly, to theologize, in this sense, is to give a *logos* regarding *theos* or *theoi* - divinity or divine things as such. But what does this actually mean? Some are of the opinion that theology is the art of mastering and expounding a received dogma or tradition. Others opine that it is the study of texts. Still others would say, that it consists in speculating on the nature of God or gods. And, in specific traditions, “theologian” is held to be a discrete office within an established church. None of these attempts at a definition necessarily points towards the fundamental experiences which give breath and substance to the symbols which Plato employed to coin a name for the sort of *episteme* which is the concern of *theologia*.

If we draw upon the exegeses done in chapters 1, 3, and 5, we find a useful theory of what is meant by theology and theologizing. We note that a *logos*, for instance, is not an objective statement regarding a thing or things, but rather a complex of symbols bearing upon the understanding of the suchness of something which has aroused our curiosity. Comprehending that opens us up to apprehending that any *logos* is an outward

²¹⁹ *Politeia*, 607b

sign (*sema*) of an *episteme* whose focal meaning draws upon the full structure of knowing - the very same structure which was both enacted and scribbled on the earth by Glaucon in Bk. VI of *Politeia*. A *logos* is therefore, on the one hand, irreducible personal, for it cannot be fully reduced to a set of entirely objective, free-standing propositions which might later be found scattered about the environment and picked-up from books or other such media, and then assimilated through memorization.²²⁰

On the other hand, any attempt to bypass the hard work of noetic ascent will result in answers which are mere dianoetic calculations from unexamined hypotheses, or entirely unaccounted fancies of the imagination. By this definition, then, whatever is meant by *theoi*, it cannot be given a *logos* through any set of simple linguistic or logical operations or analyses, such as those employed for textual criticism. There is, in other words, no *logos* of *theos* independent of *theoria* and the derived *hypoarchontwn*, and no theory independent from some form of fundamental experience of the *theos*.

Regarding the meaning of *theos*, we may then observe several things. Firstly, as Voegelin observes, the symbol *theos* has no content independent from the symbol *anthropos* ("human"), and the related symbol *athanatazein* ("to never die", i.e., deathless) has none independent from *thanatazein* ("to die") - itself being a replacement for the more compact symbol *thnetos*, or mortal. What is divine is thus whatever is most distinctly different from our human existence, and the most immediate and defining

220 For more on the topic of the potential scarring of the *psyche* caused by an excessive reliance on memorization and ideas, see Jacob Klein's excellent commentary on the *Meno*, in *A Commentary on Plato's Meno*, (University of North Carolina Press: 1965), 184-189. The term which Plato employs to designate this peculiar corruption of *psyche* is *psycharion* - "little or shrunken soul" - which Klein found first deployed in *Theaetetus*, 195a. See also Plato, *Phaedrus*.

experiences of ourselves as *planontwn metaxy* (“wandering in-between”) arises from the knowledge of mortality. But this, in turn, is knowable and expressible only in contradistinction of an experience of immortality - of a something which does not pass away. The two symbols have no meaning independent of one another. However, the reflective experience which gives rise to these symbols is not a sense-object found lying about on the earth like a rock in the path. It rather arises that one recognizes through such fundamental experiences, reflections and symbolizations, that one possesses something like a *psyche* which is itself moved between something and something - two extreme and differentiable poles of being which are somehow present in one’s own reflective, incarnate psyche. It is then through the reflective exegesis and imaginative efforts of a first-rate philosopher, or other such figure, that an entire array of symbols may be given-birth, as the complex structures and processes of reality, and its ground beyond being, are explored and articulated from within one’s own being.²²¹

Theos, in this context, takes on the meaning of that lying at the other end of the tension, as do such intelligible constants such as *Eros*, *Thanatos*, and *Dike*. Furthermore, it becomes a characteristic calling and responsibility of the philosopher to reform the gods of the *polis*, i.e. to employ the inherited repertoire of symbols (e.g. the Telluric and Olympian gods of epic yore) to express the newly differentiated understanding. This done, the new myth may then serve the purposes of pedagogy and *anamnesis*.

221 See chapter 1; c.f. Eric Voegelin, *O&H*, v.5, 40-47. C.f. also Polanyi’s few remarks on imagination and maintaining an indelible tension towards a fully incomprehensible, transcendent principle (i.e. The Cross) in *PK*, 197-199, 280-285.

Whatever specific forms or deformations may accrue in particular times and places, or within an individual *psyche*, and whatever articulate repertoire may be available for use to those who theologize, the purpose is to give birth in beauty to a *logos* of divine things, in this quite specific sense. It is simply true, as many charge, that such intelligible experiences are not amenable to strict verification, in the sense demanded by objectivism. One's *psyche*, after all, is not an atomize-able sense datum. However, it is simply untrue to say that such matters cannot be judged for their *validity* - as chapters 1 and 2 have dealt with - what is judged is the person themselves, who they represent and articulate themselves to be, essentially, through her being. By their fruits yea' shall know them: in the comprehensive whole of their words, arts, deeds, and understanding, in the way they walk in the world and their manner of representing themselves in response to the mysteries of being. That is also to say, by implication, that yea' shall know them in proportion to how well yea' know thyself.²²²

That much for theology and similar studies, then. The question of the extent to which they should be a neighbourhood of the Republic, disappears under this light: when practiced as a response to the Delphic command, so to speak, theologians are engaging in a study of man. Theology, religious studies, and contemplative sciences generally, when practiced properly, naturally inhabit districts of the human sciences, and will overlap with the neighbourhoods of other sciences of man to varying extents. The practical question is one of common standards - and determining the right standards, no less.

²²² For an alternative approach to the argument for recognizing theology or 'theological realism' under the umbrella of valid cultural pursuits, see Andy F. Sanders, "Science, Religion and Polanyi's Comprehensive Realism," *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26, no. 3 (1999): 91-92.

Objectivist standards erroneously posit criteria of merit which, as we have seen, are not only absurd in and of themselves, but have the perverse effects of lowering the standards of all *Geisteswissenschaften*. This lowering of standards occurs through twin effects. For one, they lead to a heightened demand for mathematical precision where it is improper to expect such things, and for the explicitness and strict objectivity of knowledge; in the realms of higher-level phenomena, such as those of interest to the human sciences, these demands can be met only at the expense of shifting one's attention away from the more intrinsically interesting and profound realities of what one is attempting to understand (e.g. *psyche*), towards its less comprehensive, subsidiary elements. This can only be accomplished at the expense of the merit or plausibility of one's findings, given that, for instance, the quantifiable bits of political life cannot in and of themselves supply any intrinsic guidance to public affairs or furnish any plausible standards of excellence. At best the findings of a quantitative study of political life can only provide the subsidiary materials for the common-sense decisions of political representatives (assuming of course that any common-sense is available).

For another, when objectivism prevails as a creed, there is a perverse tendency to banish from the borders of the Republic, those very same domains of study which, by adopting the creed, effectively degrade themselves to the point of no longer meeting the threshold of acceptable scientific standards, or which cannot or do not meet with its demands.²²³ The first very nearly holds true for political science and history, the latter

²²³ For a particularly wonderful, if unintentionally ironic demonstration of this state of affairs, see for instance *Political Science and Politics*, volume 48, special issue 8 (September, 2015). The stated purpose of the special issue is to address a perceived crisis in the circles of political scientists in the United States of America that no one, particularly politicians, journalists, or American citizens, seem to take them seriously.

certainly holds true for theology. The same perverse effect, moreover, holds true for the arts and humanities, in so far as the attempts or the abilities of artists to evoke profounder thoughts on this human condition, or standards of beauty and truth, are relegated to the outskirts of fancy and imagination.²²⁴

A third and final wave approaches, though, and by no measure the smallest: it is the one, we could easily imagine, might, as Adeimantus said to Socrates, inspire all sorts of men to strip themselves, and grab whatever tool might be at hand so as to do all sorts of wonderful things to us.²²⁵ The issue is no mystery, she has been plainly named - Aletheia, that goddess to philosophers since time immemorial. We have affirmed it directly that it is a passion for the truth and beauty of reality which guides the words and deeds of modern scientists, and that it is this common quest for a deeper encounter with her which brings together the Republic of Science, no less than it brought together the dinner party under Cephalus' roof.

This Republic has been affirmed to be the natural unfolding of what it means to be a scientist in society with others who have heeded the calling and the responsibilities, and

224 C.S. Lewis in his account of the long process of his own conversion from rationalist atheist to Christian in *Surprised by Joy*, (Butler & Tanner: London, Great Britain, 1955), has, I think, quite clearly related the issues which this mindset creates for those who hold to it, and for society when it becomes the prevailing dogmatism. There he speaks of his bifurcated inner life, objective and skeptical in his application of Reason to the world, but prone to retreats into pure fantasies of the Imagination in order to attain momentary experiences of meaning in life. The modern separation of ("objective") Reason over and against the ("subjective") Imagination, he recounts, created in him an inability to reconcile meaning and the world. He writes: "Such, then, was the state of my imaginative life; over against it stood the life of my intellect. The two hemispheres of my mind were in the sharpest contrast." (*ibid*, 161)

As he would put it "Bluspels and Flalansfreres" in *Selected Literary Essays*, (Cambridge University Press: London. 1969): "Reason is the natural organ of truth, imagination is the organ of meaning." (*ibid*, 165) - it would be through the reconciliation of these two "hemispheres of [his] mind" which would in a few words, make for meaningful reasoning; i.e. dianoetic thought or the comprehension of meaning.

225 *Politeia*, 474a.

we have outlined its general structure. But, I have also asserted, alongside Polanyi, that the truth is the ultimate principle of a free society of explorers. Such an assertion may strike a raw nerve among skeptics, and even among decent people who have been taught to doubt all claims of truth, as claims of hidebound dogmatists, of prejudicial and bigoted traditionalism, or veils for meaner motives for power or gain over others. To the morally decent, a form of relativism may seem like a safer strand upon which to found toleration and mutual respect.

But this strand is not impervious to erosion. In the English-speaking world, as Polanyi and other before him noted, a sturdy bulwark of habits and customary accommodations sedimented over many years. These then have themselves long-since been built-up and institutionalized in a tacit recognition of principles which cannot, in fact, be upheld under the solvents of a critical mind who would declare that all things are “subjective”.²²⁶ Simply put, if one recognizes no higher expression of reality (and therefore, possibility) in existence than power, then toleration and respect can indeed only appear to be - as the sons of Ariston challenged - but strategic postures, adopted by the weak to maintain a tolerable *modus vivendi*, they having calculated that one cannot (yet) conquer and dominate the others in a war of all against all.²²⁷ Relativism is a poor and corrosive substitute for ecumenic respect and *philia*.

²²⁶ See, for instance, “BN”, p.11, 21-23; and “TRoS”, 67-69 in *KB*. See also Bernard Crick’s masterful work, *In Defence of Politics*, on politics as a *practice* or set of practices, which has served to maintain a sense of society and introduce an open-ended tradition of reform to political life in Britain. Cf. Michael Oakeschott, “Rationalism in Politics” in *Rationalism in Politics and other essays*, Indianapolis : LibertyPress, c1991. 5-42.

²²⁷ *Politeia*, 365a-366d.

A relativistic stand in defence of toleration is also unnecessary. If one accepts that one's morality is an embodiment in one's being, and an aspect of one's personal knowledge and understanding of things - something which grows and deepens in proportion to one's appreciation, judgement, insight, and skill, in essence, one's practical wisdom - then the evaluation of what is good and what is excellent is but an unfolding of conscientiously seeking an ever deeper encounter with reality, and reforming oneself accordingly. This is as much as to say that values, properly understood and held truly, are reasonable, and amenable to reasoned judgement - that fine dance between the powers of comprehension and critical analysis. The practical judgement of purported values, in all their plurality, and of the words and deeds affirming them can only be (following from the theory of personal knowledge) an irreducibly personal matter of connoisseurship. This is why Aristotle, as an example, declared that the *spoudios* is the law unto himself, and that the *nomoi* (which, we must remember, included the standards of public education) should ideally aim at seeding and inculcating such maturity.²²⁸ But, while the seed is not flowered, one has recourse to the moral paradigms and the exemplars against which to judge oneself and others, and even the laws themselves.

That having been said, our understanding is always mediated through whatever culture which we have managed to digest and assimilate, and which includes our moral understanding as much as it does our ability to dwell appreciatively in the beauties of poetic verse or the proofs of mathematics. We may naturally strive towards purely universal values, but the theory of tacit knowledge reveals the extent to which they are dependent upon the *from* pole of the *from-to* structure of intentionality. This in turn sets

²²⁸ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1095aff, 1098aff. and *Politics*. 1332a-bff.

some limits to the extent of our calling, as well as setting boundary conditions upon our personal responsibility. It is also why Polanyi affirms, in *The Study of Man*, that it is a rationalist error to judge historical events and persons strictly in light of breakthroughs in understanding and possibility which are entirely foreign to the actors - an error which he perceives Voltaire and Gibbon as falling trap to in their histories. On the other hand, we are never freed from that basic responsibility to the truth, and we are never strictly defined by history or context. We are in fact called upon, from one extent to another, to aid in the unfolding of the hidden intimations of the truth, seeded in the articulate culture at our disposal.²²⁹

This being so, I will then affirm that it is consistent to hold that the Society of Explorers is nothing more or less than a free society upholding a common tradition or culture which openly and consciously recognizes the responsibility for continuous reformation in response to the truth of a reality which will reveal itself in unlimited future manifestations. Moreover, such a Society is traditional, in the sense of acknowledging that all of its collected knowledge and practices rest on a faith in a wide variety of teachings, customs, and persons, some or all of which may conceivably be completely wrong. This commitment to reform in response to the truth as much includes the posture of submission to an underlying ground or overarching standard of morality beyond the

229 Gulick, by contrast, wishes to affirm that reality is distinct from meaning, and thus writes regarding values, "I see values as special expressions of language which play a major role in expressing interests, directing thought, and guiding action toward rich consummations of existential meaning." In doing so, Gulick is effectively attempting to elevate "values" above independently-subsisting, empirical reality, while simultaneously tying them to language. As I've attempted to show, Polanyi's thoughts relate all value to understanding, and moral values to an understanding of what it means to be human, thus bypassing Gulick's difficulty with treating extrinsic meaning as an aspect of reality. Cf. Gulick, "Beyond Epistemology to Realms of Meaning", 31.

inherited firmament of the *noosphere*, as it does require a prevalence of the practical wisdom to know that human beings are an irreducible plurality of persons, bearing upon that same journey from a myriad of ports. The logic of such a free society thus upholds the pluralism of civil society as a logical necessity, without endangering the loadstone of its commonwealth to the misleading magnetism of relativism, or its objectivist siblings.

§7. *The Freedom of the Free Society*

What Polanyi means by the freedom or liberties of a free society is, by this reading, both the freedom to uphold the truth from within a culture and the civic rights required to do so, and this throughout the vast cultural expanse of endeavours of such a society of explorers. This is what is indicated by his aphorism that man's freedom within a free society is his calling, and his remark in another context that a man's freedom in a free society is "of a positive kind".²³⁰ It is neither the negative nor the positive freedom defined by Isaiah Berlin, nor yet the autonomous freedom of a communal will defined by Rousseau.²³¹ Rather, it is reminiscent of the freedom (*eleutheria*) lived by the sage or the *spoudios*, as exemplified in the *Politeia* by the character of Socrates (and perhaps the briefly-mentioned Sophocles²³²). It is, in Polanyi's terms, the freedom of self-compulsion in the pursuit of self-set standards. The more real and less immediately concrete the standard, the greater the self-discipline and the material sacrifices required, but the greater the joy (potentially) to be found in it. It is this paradox, that discipline in service of wisdom or truth brings joy, which allows the sage Socrates to affirm that the just man

²³⁰ "TRoS" in *KB*, 70.

²³¹ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy* (ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Judith R. Masters), St. Martin's Press: USA, 1978. 52-64.

²³² *Politeia*, 329b-e.

is *eudaimonia* - truly blessed and contented - even if he is thought to be unjust, and is consequently vexed and tortured, and put to death by his fellow citizens.

It is this understanding of freedom - always quite personal, and always hard-won - which, by Polanyi's estimation, actually gives lasting substance and form to the civic rights of a free society. Conversely, civic rights and personal liberties are endangered in a society, in proportion to which there is a general lack of the understanding and practices which foster individual freedom. It is these which are fostered by seeding a respect for truth and the courage to declare, as did Luther, "Here do I stand, and cannot do otherwise."²³³

When Aletheia is repudiated, Eleutheria awaits her time to kneel at the block. This pith only means to highlight what Polanyi so often drew attention to: that the repudiation of objective facts and of "bourgeois truth" is a common feature and pre-condition of totalitarian societies. We, for our parts, should also note the parallels of Polanyi's description of the totalitarian dreamworld, with Plato's description of the dreamworld of the tyrant in Book IX of *Politeia* and the titanism of empire in *Timaeus* and *Critias*.²³⁴

§8. *Opening-up the Society of Explorers*

Society, as we have alluded to, is an expression of fellow-feeling among its citizens. It exists to the extent to which sufficient conviviality exists among all and sundry as to engender not only mutual fellowship, but also group loyalty. No earthly society is possible without at least the tacit or else passive acceptance by all that the commonwealth

²³³ *PK*, 308.

²³⁴ See chapters 1 and 5.

evoked by convivial intercourse, ritual, and the needs of common defence, is something good in itself, demanding of everyone certain duties and obligations - even sacrifices, up to and including one's own life or external freedoms. But can this understanding of society and group loyalty be squared with the pluralism which also has been posited to be a characteristic feature of a Society of Explorers? It may be objected, as Polanyi himself recognized, that the parochial attitudes which can stem from feelings of brotherhood, can threaten to swamp the ship of freedom by subordinating individual culture to civic culture and its demands.²³⁵

Let us admit, as he did, that this is a danger, and an ineradicable one at that. By the logic of the relationship of lower and higher strata of reality, the higher demands of individual culture, and the mores which support it, are challenged or limited by the necessary demands for group loyalty, cooperation, and for a public power capable of sheltering all higher, cultural aims. This truth, moreover, is further complicated by similar individual frailties and failures which may cause an individual to fail to live up to or to succeed in her or his own personal responsibilities to higher human ends. Let us say quite frankly that there will always be causes by which a free society, ideal or not, will fall short of its higher reasons and purposes. These may arise from a myriad of sources: the inadequacies of a society's present mores, its institutions, its magistrates, or its transcendental or existential representatives; or due to more prosaic sins or errors. Let us

235 See, for instance, his thoughts on the necessary tension between individual and civic culture in *PK*, 213-216, 222-224; and similar remarks made in *Forms of Atheism*, in Polanyi, Michael. "Forms of Atheism." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 40, no. 2 (2013): 7-11. See also Gelwick, Richard. "A Clue Toward Knowing Truth and God, and Polanyi's 'Forms of Atheism'." *The Polanyi Society Periodical*, 2014, 26; and Mullins, Phil. "A Prefatory Note on Polanyi's 'Forms of Atheism'." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 40, no. 2 (2013): 4-6.

also be observant of the fact that lower reasons may sometimes be prioritized over higher ones, to tragic effect, as the tale of Antigone's clash with the tyrant Creon in Sophocles' play of the same name, perennially reminds us.

Do these hard truths bind us to say that free society is an illusion or hypocritical mask, and therefore bar us from any discussion of the standard of a Society of Explorers? Not in the least. For, as we have argued, the logic of the emergence of concrete expressions of higher, more real principles of reality in political affairs, is still but a reflection of the logic of emergence. Within this logic, the elements of lower levels of reality are harnessed and directed by comprehensive principles towards new reasons, purposes, or ends, when the proper conditions obtain, and only for so long as they obtain. As such, they provide both the underlying conditions for success, but may ultimately be the undermining cause of failure. By this token, the measure of success of a society is the degree to which human maturation is enabled and insured, and a spirit of responsibility to the standards of truth and excellence prevails. The obstreperous stuff from which success must be won is quite a different affair from the measure itself.²³⁶

Be that as it may, we are left with the question of the extent to which pluralism dovetails with the logic of the Society. We have seen that a plurality of paths and endeavours do in fact prevail in the Republic of Science, and I have argued that that plurality would only broaden with its reformation. The pluralism of the Republic is expressed in the overlapping neighbourhoods of scientists, apprentices, and students, with

²³⁶ This recognition of the somewhat fraught relationship between a principle emergent in the world, which takes control and directs a system towards new possibilities, and the obstreperous stuff which it commands, largely parallels Timaeus' myth of the relationship between form and space. See chapters 2, and 5 for lengthier discussion.

each neighbourhood's members attending to the matter of gaining knowledge and understanding of the object of their passion, while paying some degree of attention to neighbouring enterprises overlapping their own. The plurality of pursuits of scientists remain reasonably coordinated, almost as if by an "invisible hand", by virtue of common standards and a common faith in the scientific pursuit of truth under mutual authority. In so far as a defect in the whole enterprise persists, it has been also said that this is a reflection of official, though needless, adherence to the idols of the mind preached by positivism. Those idols, if anything, have most impaired the pluralism of the otherwise polycentric and ecumenic order of the Republic.

Existing free societies too, are effectively pluralistic, in the sense that they tolerate or encourage a wide variety of institutions of culture to enrich, expand, proselytize, or administer a vast ocean of knowledge, opinions, artifacts, and practices, which those societies actively or passively allow to guide their development. As has been said earlier, the character of a society is but a magnified reflection of the shared convictions of its members, the pursuit of which convictions is guided and shaped by cultural institutions, while said society is bound together by whatever institutions foster fellowship and a sense of kith. If, though, objectivism encourages the pursuit or enforcement of false or debased standards and principles (e.g., the much ballyhooed "value relativism"), to such an extent that even the comparatively high and pluralistic standards of the Republic are impaired, then one would expect even greater troubles to arise when objectivist view are expected to guide a much broader society.

By Polanyi's estimation, that is precisely what has occurred in societies where forms of objectivism have effected a sufficient dissolution of traditional moral restraints and guidance. It was most flagrantly the case, he writes, in those societies which turned to the fighting-creeds animating the myriad forms of fascism, National Socialism, and Marxism. In all such societies where such ideologies have gained power and singular authority - but also in the wider range of societies where they have at least widely influenced the minds and self-conceptions of men - some form of nihilism and partial moral-inversion had already preceded their political ascendancy. These, to boot, usually followed on the heels of the spread of objectivism among the educated, principally through the adoption of forms Enlightenment rationalism and romanticism.²³⁷

If the English-speaking world has escaped the worst of such inversions, Polanyi writes (and we are ignoring the obvious historical cases of moral failing represented in, for example, Ireland under the rule of England, the slave trade, apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, the travesties of Dickensian England, and the morally horrendous policies of assimilation practiced in the colonies, before and after independence from the Britain or the achievement of home-rule), it has been due to the sheer strength and flexibility of

²³⁷ Polanyi expresses this assessment of the drift of European intellectual history quite consistently throughout his career, and only adds greater nuance or else investigates the phenomenon from different angles as time goes on. By the time he joined the meeting of J.H. Oldham's discussion group in 1948 to present the essay, *Forms of Atheism*, Polanyi was already of the mind that the Enlightenment was rooted in a revolt against faith in the Biblical God, which (to paraphrase) only drove Him underground, to re-emerge as the four gods of modernity: rational Athene, riotous Dionysus, Prometheus the Planner, and Clio, goddess of History. With the publication of *PK*, in 1958, Polanyi had narrowed the direction of his analysis to focus upon the specific influence of skepticism and atomism as intellectual dispositions in Enlightenment philosophy, and the effects of their coupling with moral passions heightened and educated by Christianity, e.g. the "dynamo-objective coupling" which we addressed in chapter 2. In later works, such *TSoM*, "BN", and *TD*, all composed between 1958 and 1962, he also addresses the specific character and contribution of European romanticism and medieval Millenarianism. For his remarks on romanticism, see "BN", and *TSoM*, 95-98. For his brief direct remarks on pre-Enlightenment Millenarian outbursts, see "BN", 4; and *TSoM*, 79. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Modernity Without Restraint*.

political and civil practices, together with a pronounced tendency to subordinate theory (that is, abstract ideas), to the expectations of established practice. We do, like Hume, turn away with disgust from the logical consequences of our most radical skepticism, and find a haven in comfortable habits.²³⁸ This is perhaps a mark of deeply ingrained decency, but, as Polanyi notes, this happy *détente* is not stable. On the individual level, pseudo moral-inversion must eventually resolve itself, either into true moral-inversion, quotidian nihilism, or a spiritually and intellectually secure rapprochement between faith and reason. As far as pluralism is concerned, it is to be noted that truly morally-inverted societies (totalitarian societies being the most abject examples) possess the definable trait of officially denying truth and reality as givens which place eternal and universal demands upon all. When “party truth” or “the truth of the Volk” or “the truth of the People” is declared supreme to thunderous applause, the polycentric pursuit of men to know, to articulate, to debate, and to persuade each other of supreme ends will necessarily be subordinated to the concrete, utilitarian ends of material welfare and power.²³⁹

Enlightenment rationalism was successful in breaking-up the worst of Europe’s medieval idols, and in setting into motion whole series of social reforms, the conclusion of which is still to be seen after more than three-hundred years. Yet the strict consequences of combining a blind faith in Democritean and Pyrronian thought could only be the sort of individualism premised by both Hobbes and Rousseau, and a society which could only then be maintained, as they both concluded, by the erection of an

²³⁸ Polanyi makes this remark in “BN”, 12. He addresses Hume’s skepticism more frequently in *PK*, see *PK*, 9, 137, 238, 270, 279, 284, 304.

²³⁹ See, for instance, *PK*, 242-243, as well as “BN”, 19-23; “TMoHR”; and “TTC” in *KB*.

absolutely artificial and Sovereign public power, itself capable of organizing, directing, and, in fact, creating society.²⁴⁰ In short, this philosophy calls for the repudiation of transcendent principles, and with it, both the very grounds for the general and mutual authority of a society of flesh-and-blood human beings to negotiate a commonwealth; and the freedom to reform its character, its representation, and the noosphere which would rightfully guide it.

To extrapolate from Polanyi's few direct clues, the Society of Explorers, by contrast, would simply reflect in theory what existing free societies do in practice. That is to say, that a Society of Explorers is essentially defined by a openness to submitting to the guidance of the general authority of a wide range of experts from across a multitude of neighbourhoods of exploration - and this in full understanding that any currently accepted consensus may conceivably be wrong, and that Aletheia will continue to reveal herself in infinite future manifestations. It's character, I will suggest, would be a quintessential mix of confidence and humility, curiosity and conviction, which strikes a mean between the restless scurrility of the morally-inverted zealot, and credulity of a clay-footed traditionalist. I will further suggest, alongside Polanyi, that being free from the absurd demands of objectivism would allow for a rapprochement with tradition and religion in the modern mind.²⁴¹ Thus, the seeding in the generations of a respect for truth, combined

²⁴⁰ "BN", 6-9.

²⁴¹ For Polanyi's stronger statements with regards to a rapprochement between the premises of Western culture, religion, and worship, see *PK*, 280-286, 324; *TSoM*, 42; *TD*, 90-92. It is, I believe, at least implied in "TTC", and the question is mooted at length in *Forms of Atheism*.

with a intellectual humility and curiosity, and a regard for tradition and the necessity of faith, are the bases for fellowship in any such Society - no more, no less.²⁴²

§9. *The Convivial Structure of the Society*

The essential features of such a self-consistent free Society of Explorers, can thus be summarized as it's spontaneous ordering from within, its internal dynamism, and its polycentricity. These may imaginably manifest in a myriad of ways and in varying proportions to each other in any particular time and place (as in fact, we find to be the case in actual free societies, past and present). However, it should be abundantly clear that they are mutually implied aspects of freedom as Polanyi understood its meaning.

To recap: freedom is manifested by those in the act of responsibly exercising their calling to encounter, to know, and to proclaim the truth. This responsibility is honoured and upheld in such societies that honour truth, and submit to her guidance for the sake of self-reformation. What separates the comparatively conservative character of static societies from the dynamism of free societies is not, in fact, the desire for society to

²⁴² Polanyi is remarkably silent on one of the perennial questions of political theory and philosophy - the best form or constitution of the commonwealth. He says nothing quite directly on the topic of whether it is better or not to be ruled by one, a few, or many; his explicit statements only distinguish, on the one hand, between static and dynamic societies, and the subdivides the second category into free and totalitarian societies. Thus, we are given a basic distinction between good and bad (i.e. healthy v. deviant or corrupt) societies, with no particular prescriptions as to a particular form. Given that the Republic of Science and the Society of Explorers, though, are defined by freedom in submission to the pursuit of truth, truth "being taken to comprise here, for the sake of brevity, all manner of excellence that we recognize as the ideal of self-improvement", two observations can be made. One, that this personal concern with the pursuit of excellence is the classical definition of aristocratic principles. Second, that the principle of freedom defines democratic or democratic-leaning *politeiai*. Combine these with the observation that the administration of the culture of a free society is necessarily diffused among a vast network of experts, then we can conclude that free societies, and a Society of Explorers pre-eminently are an effective mixture of aristocratic and democratic forms - at least in the sense of respecting the aristocratic concern with free traditions.

reflect the truth, *per se*.²⁴³ Rather, what differentiates the latter, by Polanyi's estimation, is the degree of honour paid to the critical powers of the mind as a requirement for understanding, and, therefore, for proper reforms. It is an additional feature, bearing on the history of social reform, that the heightened moral passions educated by Christianity,

243 See *PK*, p.213-215. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Modernity Without Restraint* and *The Ecumenic Age*, O&H, v.4, (Columbia : University of Missouri Press, c2000), Author's Introduction. Voegelin is more perspicacious on the matter of the homage paid to truth in ancient or traditional societies, and makes more subtle distinctions, in distinguishing *cosmological*, from *anthropological*, and *soteriological* societies. The essential difference which distinguishes the three classes is the degree of compactness or differentiation of the truth of the structures of reality which has taken place, been articulated, and become more-or-less institutionalized within a given society. In the case of cosmological societies, the symbolization and understanding of reality is defined by the primary or primal experience of the consubstantiality of being, i.e. men understand themselves as participants in a divine-immanent Whole, expressed mythopoetically in terms of an interplay of historiogenesis, man, society, gods, and the cosmos. Thus, in, for instance, the imperial cosmological myths of the Egyptian Memphite Theology or the Mesopotamian *Enuma Elish*, society is characteristically seen as an image-writ-small of the Whole (i.e. the *cosmion*), in which men participate as parts, and through which order and meaning are introduced into the world. In the strict sense, cosmological societies do not maintain the sort of *individual culture* defined by Polanyi, due to the relative absence of a differentiated insight into a process of reality, which moves each and every person beyond its immanent structure.

By contrast, anthropological and soteriological societies are defined by an articulate culture which gives expression to a more highly differentiated experience of reality, one which recognizes for instance, a ground beyond being, the process of reality, man's individual *psyche*, it's transcendent calling and responsibilities, etcetera. Thus, in the highly articulated symbols of Socratic philosophy which have been explored in this study, one is able to differentiate such structures as the *epekeina*, *nous*, *metaxy*, *psyche*, *eros*, *cosmos*, *chora*, and so on (see chapters 2, 3, 5, and glossary). In political affairs, the immediate consequence of the discovery of *psyche* as immediate site of the divine-human movement - the true *cosmion* - and its status as the "sensorium of transcendence" (as Voegelin often puts it), is that the actual site of existential order is found to lie in the individual response of one's *psyche* to the ground of being; i.e. one discovers one's individual conscience, which exists within, and yet in some way prior to and independent of, society or the cosmos. Thus, we would say that anthropological and soteriological societies are definable by their maintenance of a true *individual culture*, whereas such a thing is nearly unimaginable from within the compact cosmological experience, wherein one's individuality is primarily construed as a droplet within the *micro animus mundi* of society. Therefore, we could amend Polanyi's tri-partite division to distinguish *cosmological* static societies from *anthropological* and *soteriological* static societies. Furthermore, we might also distinguish *anthropological* and *soteriological* free, dynamic societies (including the Republic of Science and the Society of Explorers) from *cosmological* or *pseudo-cosmological* dynamic, totalitarian societies. This revision would be called for, by the very fact that totalitarian societies, as both Polanyi and Voegelin affirm it, hold to a regressive, immanentized vision of reality. We may call them *pseudo-cosmological*, in so far as the tendency within such societies is to attempt to re-divinize a world experienced as intrinsically profane and meaningless (which sets them apart from true cosmological societies), through the sacralizing magic (e.g. through the magic of work, labour, war, or blood-letting), and/or through divinizing one or another element of the profane world (e.g. the People, the General Will, the Volk, blood, soil, culture, profane history).

has provided tremendous energy to the critique of social ills and their remediation - this including by the most ardent atheists. The great moral truths expressed through Christian traditions and other transcendent moral callings, have been no less a factor in the freedom and dynamism of our time, than the astronomical truths unveiled by Kepler and Galileo.

It is for this reason that the Society of Explorers can be considered the philosopher writ large: it represents a balance in the understanding between critique, faith, and comprehension, moved by the all-pervading desire to know. It's dynamism is an image, so to speak, of the post-critical mind, accepting an inheritance of articulate culture as its happy dwelling place in general, while encouraging the emergence of meaningful dissent and reform in response to its principles. Its spontaneous ordering and polycentricity are, in turn, reflective of the emerging control, on a societal scale, of the same principles as help define personal knowledge and the freedom and independent power of thought, along with all of the inevitable human limits, frailties, and failures.²⁴⁴

As we have extrapolated, much of the progress towards identifying new problems and new answers which prevails in individual research in the Republic, which characterizes the Republic as a whole, and which gives both their open and dynamic character, must hold true as well in the Society - as it in fact does, to varying extents, in all free societies. That being the case, it holds that Society would be limited, perhaps

²⁴⁴ Allen has proposed that Polanyi's theory of the Society of Explorers may need to be conjoined with Hayek's concept of the Great Society in order to supplement the weaknesses of both, i.e. the relatively narrow scope of Polanyi's theory, and Hayek's overemphasis upon negative freedoms. I believe that this conclusion stems from reading Polanyi's explicit writings on the Society in his very early and very late works, from his more broadly political or sociological thoughts in *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man*. By contrast, I have endeavoured to demonstrate that, by combining and extrapolating from Polanyi's mature political thoughts, one arrives at an overall theory of free and open society. Cf. Richard Allen, *Beyond Liberalism* (Transaction Publishers: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1998), 185-211.

fatally, by the imposition of the central planning of a specific authority, or by organizing individual or collective endeavours like an exercise in pea-shelling. This is a truth that prevails as much for the cultural coefficient of society, as it does for the production and distribution of the external goods of life. In a complex society, both are only effective if they are permitted to find a spontaneous order through cooperation and the principles of mutual self-adjustment and overlapping neighbourhoods.

Moreover, the relationship of the spontaneous order of a free society's noosphere to that of its economic system is a semblance of the relationship between one's intellectual passions and one's material appetites. As was observed earlier, our valuation of things is very much a reflection of our due appreciation and understanding of them - that is to say that it is a function of our knowledge and comprehension of the intrinsic and extrinsic meaning of things. The price mechanism of the market, on the other hand, is but an imitation of value; it allows for buyers and sellers to coordinate their actions, as if by an invisible hand, by providing them a sign by which to come to rational judgements regarding a multitude of transactions in goods. In this way, an order arises through mutual self-adjustment in the ineffably complex and extensive network of needs, desires, and production.²⁴⁵

245 See "TRoS", p.50-53, 69; "TGoSIS", p.84. Cf. *TD*, p.70-73. For a lengthier discussion of Polanyi's thoughts and contributions to economics, see Mitchell, Mark. "The Origins and Implications of Polanyi's Political Economy." *The Political Science Reviewer* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 44-67; also Gulick, Walter. "Michael and Karl Polanyi: Conflict and Convergence." *The Political Science Reviewer* 37, no. 01 (Fall 2008): 13-43; and Roberts, Paul Craig, and Norman Van Cott. "Polanyi's Economics." *Tradition and Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 25, no. 3 (n.d.): 26-31.

Though I agree with Mitchell that Polanyi shows a concern with demonstrating that the marketplace is the only effective and efficient way to coordinate production in a complex society, I differ with him, in so far as I believe that he does not apperceive the implications of Polanyi's thoughts on the nature of value judgements for understanding the actual functioning of markets. I am in agreement with Gulick that there is

Yet the spontaneous order of a market is, in itself, nearly blind to value, and in fact relies on an antecedent education which evokes an understanding of value, something which can only be supplied by one's individual acculturation within a noosphere. A mountain of corn is of no value to a starving man, if he has no experience of it, and has not the slightest knowledge of how to prepare it for consumption - it only follows from this that its price could never be set low enough to stir his interest in it. Similarly, the Egyptian peasants whom, for years, used volumes of the Nag Hammadi scrolls for kindling, had too little knowledge to understand that there may be a market for such priceless cultural artifacts.

Yet this disjunction between price and value is a commonplace, and at times it becomes farcical, as when attempts are made to dispute the market price of things which are strictly priceless, owing to the fact that they are pre-conditions of the existence of a market, of civilized life, or life simply. All of this is merely to point out that the invisible hand of the markets are always subordinate and dependent upon a properly functioning culture - a great deal more "market value" would be irrevocably destroyed by a collapse of one's culture into a fixation with purely vulgarian appetites than by the collapse of a stock exchange. The latter would require a re-coordination of finances, debts, and

more agreement between Michael and his brother, Karl Polanyi, than may generally be recognized, though I once again perceive that Michael exceeds his brother by establishing the grounds society and common values in (a) the person, and (b) the establishment of meaning and appreciation through comprehension and commitment. He thus avoids Karl's tendency to fall into the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, by treating society as if it were a free-standing entity independent of any further grounding. I agree with Roberts and Cott that Polanyi's thought is reconcilable with, though it transcends, both Keynesian and monetarist economic thought regarding proper political policy vis-à-vis the vicissitudes of the market, i.e. that the interventions of the public authorities in markets can be justified when necessary to stave-off or correct widespread social dislocations, but that influencing the flow and availability of money will generally prove more efficient in attaining such ends than intervening directly in production.

exchanges; the former would see Rembrandt in a fireplace. Yet this simple observation is but another side of the same need to educate the passions which we perceived at the individual level, and merely goes to show the ubiquitous power of thought, and its necessity to bringing our conduct in-line with reality.²⁴⁶

I believe that it is in a similar manner that Polanyi sees free societies ideally directing the forces of their public power. We have seen that within the Republic, the primary means by which scientists exercise their authority on each other, and advance their common goals and common good, is through the apportioning of honour, shame, and resources. In the much wider life of a Society, such allocations of punishments and honours can be no less necessary, for the range of sins, moral failings, and irresponsibility that are of importance to any free society is very much greater. It is also the case that, much as scientists authoritatively judge their peers and their works, but also the understanding and contributions of the apprentice-scientists, students, lay-experts and laypersons whom greatly outnumber them, so too must the case prevail in the maintenance of the mores and moral standards of excellence of a Society - as it must for any society to exist.

²⁴⁶ It follows from this that labour-theories of value are wholly erroneous. I.e. if our judgement of what is and is not of value is a reflection of our apprehension of its meaning, then it arises from perception and comprehension, and is an aspect of our understanding. Value cannot be created by work or labour, for the simple reason that judgements of value cannot be divorced from the personal act of knowing and perceiving. This observation is borne-out daily in common-sense and experience. How often have we heard an aficionado of this or that complain that their favourite and most valued work or product, and its creators, are undervalued by the vulgar consumers in the marketplace? How often has an artist or writer come close to starving to death for lack of any appreciation of their works, only to be sustained by a lone appreciative patron, and then become a millionaire in the afterlife, after men and women at large have learned to appreciate them? Cf. also Karl Polanyi's critique of the "commodification myth" sustaining liberal economic thought, i.e. the erroneous premises that money, labour, and nature are market commodities, rather than the pre-existing foundations of economy; and the resultant critique of the notion that the market is *sui generis*, and naturally autonomous from politics and social relations, in *The Great Transformation*.

And, in fact, in a free society, the adjudication of right and wrong has been made the subject of the expertise of e.g. jurists, lawyers, and officers of the peace, who are apportioned the task of determining the law and maintaining the right. It is noteworthy as well that Polanyi particularly approved of the common-law tradition, with its emphasis upon “finding the law”, for this tradition, he judged, much better expressed the living and personal character of the universal intent of law. As such, we would infer too that the public power of the Society too is a spontaneous order, setting upon all and sundry of the commonwealth, the boundaries of a moral calling and the duty to exercise responsibility with universal intent from within the apprehended noosphere. In Platonic terms, it comprises the “thumotic” ordering of the commonwealth.

Such then are the signs and the standards of a Society of Explorers, as I have drawn them out through long dwelling on Polanyi’s meaning and intent, and by contemplating the problems, the questions and the clues which he has left behind. And such too, then, the reasons for affirming that his insights are, essentially, Socratic in kind. The Society can be affirmed to be an image of the truly free man writ large, and he, the *cosmos* writ small - forever in the process of becoming something in light of eternal sources of illumination.

Appendix, glossary

Adikia, *wrongdoing, injustice, wrongful act or offence*

Agape, *love without selfishness or advantage, selfless love*

Agapw, agapein, verbal conjugations of *agape*

Agnoia, *want of perception, ignorance*

Aiwnos, *the ages, eternity*

Aisthanomai, *to perceive or to apprehend by the senses, to understand a perception*

Aisthesis, *perception, sensation, sense-perception*

Aitia, *responsibility, guilt, blame, cause*

Aletheia, *truth as opposed to a lie or mere appearance, reality*

Allotriosis, *strange, foreign, estranged or estrangement, alienated*

Amathia, *unlearned, ignorant, stupid, boorish, lacking in culture, wilfully blind*

Anamnesis, *recollection, to call to mind, to reflect, or reminisce*

Ananke, *force, constraint, necessity, natural need*

Anoia, *a want of understanding, falling, without nous*

Anthropos, *human being*

Apeiron, *boundless, infinite, endless*

Aphrodisia, *belonging to the goddess of love, thus sacred, sexual pleasures, the genitalia*

Andreia, *courage, bravery; manliness, manly character; in the bad sense hardihood, insolence*

Aporia, *being at a loss, difficulty, perplexity, puzzlement*

Archaios, *ancient, old, hereditary, original*

Arche, *beginning, origin, first principle*, also *magistracy, office, command, realm*

Archos, *leader, chief, ruler*

Arete, *goodness, excellence of any kind*

Chora, *space*

Cosmion, *well-ordered, orderly, decent*

Cosmos, *order, world-order, natural order, the universe*; also *ornament, decoration* (esp. of women, but also men, animals, objects, and praise)

Daimon, *god, goddess, deity, divine power, spiritual or semi-divine being, the power controlling the destiny of individuals*

Daimonios, *of or belonging to a daimon, miraculous, marvellous*; also used as an honorific to address others

Daimonion, *a little daimon*

Demiourgos, *one who works for the demos, a skilled workman, maker or producer*, in many Greek states the title of a *magistrate*

Dialectos, *discourse, conversation, discussion, debate, a back and forth argument*; also a *dialect or language, or articulate speech or language*

Dianoesis, *process of thinking, thought*

Diairesis, *division particularly of genus into species, separation, dissection*

Dikaion, *observant of custom or rule, well ordered, civilized, observant of duty, righteous, lawful and just with respect to right*

Dikaiosune, *righteousness, justice*, particularly in the sense of being or embodying righteousness or justice

Dike, *custom, usage, order, right, what is fit, a judgement as by a judge, the object or consequence of an action, atonement, punishment, or penalty*

Doxa, *notion, opinion, conjecture, or judgment in the sense of a conclusion of one's thoughts; also one's good repute, honour, glory, or splendour*

Doxazein, *to think, imagine, or formulate a judgment or opinion; also to magnify or extol*

Dynamis, *power, might, capacity, ability, capability or a faculty*

Eidos, *form, shape, class, kind or nature*

Eikasia, *a likeness, a comparison or conjecture, or an apprehension of or by means of images or shadows*

Eikon, *a likeness, image (e.g. a reflection in a mirror), shadow, semblance, or phantom*

Eikota, *suitably, fairly, reasonably*

Elenchus, *cross-examining, testing, scrutiny or scrutinizing, an argument of disproof or refutation*

Encomia, *a speech in praise of something or someone*

Ennoesis, *contemplation, reflection*

Enthousiasmos, *inspiration, enthusiasm, frenzy*

Epekeina, *beyond*

Epistamai, *to understand or to know how, to know, rarely to know a person*

Episteme, *understanding, knowing, skill*

Epithumetikon, *the part of dimension of the psyche which is the centre of epithumia*

Epithumia, *appetite, drive, lust, sexual desire*

Eramai, *verbal form of eros*

Erastes, a *lover* or *admirer*, most especially the active party or the pursuer in a romantic or carnal affair or coupling

Eris, *strife, quarrel, contention, rivalry*

Eromenos, a *beloved*, most especially the passive or receptive party, or the pursued, in a romantic or carnal affair or coupling

Eros, *passion, yearning, desire, love*

Eudaimonia, *true, full happiness, blessedness*

Genesis, *generation, coming into being, becoming, birth*

Genos, *family, kind, or genus*

Helkw, helkein, *to drag, to draw*

Historia, *inquiry, systematic account, narrative or history*

Homonoia, *likemindedness, oneness of mind, concord, unanimity*; a common understanding of the good.

Holon, *whole, the whole, the whole of something, something as a whole*

Horaton, *sensible, visible, perceptible through the senses*

Hubris, *insolence, an outrage, violence, wanton acts, wanton violence, violation, rape*

Hugies, *healthy*

Hypothesis, *supposition, presupposition, assumption, a premiss, a preliminary statement of fact*

Hypoarchontwn, *what is subject to, dependent upon, attends from, or is under the agency of an arche*

Iatroi, *doctor, physician*

Idea,

Idios, *private, personal, private person, peculiar; one's own* in the sense of “one's own business”, also *personally attached* to one, such as one's relatives or family.

Kalos, *beautiful, fine, noble, good or of fine quality*

Kaloskagathos, contraction *kalos kai agathos, beautiful or noble and good, gentleperson, e.g. gentleman*

Kinesis, *motion, dance*, in Cyrenaic philosophy also *emotions*, also as in Thucydides a *political movement, change, or revolution*, in context *the sense of being moved or pulled*

Kinew, *to move, change, or set in motion*

Koinonia, *communion, fellowship, society, commonwealth*

Logistikon, *endued with reason*, the part or dimension of the *psyche* which reasons

Memnemetha, verbal form of *mneme*

Metalepsis, *partaking, participation, transference*

Metaxy, *in the midst*, hence, of Place: *in-between, betwixt, between*; of Time: *between-whiles, meanwhile, in the midst of*

Methexis, *participation*

Mimesis, *mimic, imitation, reproduction of a model, portrait, or representation by means of art*

Mneme, *memory, remembrance, memorial, record*

Monogenes, *only-begotten*

Morphe, *shape, outward form, appearance, kind or sort*

Mousike, *any art over which the Muses presided, especially poetry sung to music*

Muthos, *word, speech, counsel, tale, story, narrative, fiction*, or the *plot* of a comedy or tragedy

Noesis, *intellection, thought, comprehension, apperception, in essence cognition partaking of nous*

Noeton, *falling within the province of nous, perceived through nous*

Nomos, *that which is in habitual practice, use, or possession; also usage, custom, statue, ordinance made by authority*

Nous, *Intellect, Reason, Divine Reason or Intellect*, sometimes synonymous with the *arche* or ground of being

Opsis, *vision, view, sight*

Ousia, *suchness, being, substantia or substance*

Paideia, *the rearing of a child, thus education, training, teaching, and the resulting enculturation or state of education*

Pan, to, *the whole in the sense of every and all, or the sum; in Pythagorean philosophy the name for ten*

Parideigma, *pattern, model, precedent, example; also foil or contrast*

Pathos, *that which happens, what one has experienced, experience; also a passion, emotion, misfortune or calamity*

Peras, *end, limit, boundary; also the perfection of a thing, or that which limits or has limits*

Periagoge, *turn around, spin about, whirling around, carrying round, rotation*

Phainw, *bring to light, cause to appear; make known, reveal, disclose; show forth, display in action; what appears, is observed, or what is evident or manifest*

Philia, *friendship, affectionate regard, fondness, amiability; also the natural force which unites discordant elements and movements*

Philw, philein, verbal conjugations of *philia*

Philoarete, *love of excellence or virtue*

Philochrematos, *lover of things*

Philodoxos, *lover of opinions, lover of ideas, lover of glorying*

Philokerdes, *lover of gain*

Philokalos, *lover of beauty, lover of the fine, lover of the noble or ennobling*

Philomathos, *lover of learning*

Philonikos, *lover of victory*

Philosophos, *lover of wisdom*

Philotimos, *lover of honour*

Phronesis, *practical wisdom, prudence in government in affairs, sagacious*

Phulakes, *guardians, guards, protectors*

Physis, *Nature, the nature or constitution of something*

Pistis, *faith, trust, credence*

Planeton, to, *that which wanders*

Pleonexia, *greediness, assumption, arrogance, excess*

Poiesis, *fabrication, production, poetic composition*

Polemos, *war, battle, fighting*

Polis, *city*

Politeia, *constitution, regime, government, civil polity or constitution of a state, form of government*

Polypragmosune, *busibodiness, curiosity, officiousness, meddlesomeness*

Praxis, *doing, action, act*

Psyche, one's life, psyche, soul, mind, consciousness, ghost or departed spirit

Schole, leisure, rest, ease

Skepsis, examination, speculation, consideration, inquiry, hesitation or doubt

Soma, a body

Sophrosune, moderation, temperance, soundness of mind, discretion

Stasis, faction, sedition, discord

Stoicheia, element, a simple sound of speech or basic component of a syllable (i.e. the sound of a letter)

Storge, love, affection

Taxis, arranging, arrangement, the drawing-up or ordering for instance, of an army or a political order; order or regularity; political order or constitution

Techne, an art, skill, or cunning

Thaumazein, to wonder, marvel, admire, honour or worship

Themis, that which is laid down or established, law as established by custom; pl. decrees of the gods, oracles, also judgements or decisions by kings or judges

Theoria, the sending of theoroi as ambassadors to the oracles or games, thus sacred embassy or mission; viewing, beholding, contemplation, consideration

Thumos, heart, the principle of life, feeling, thought, sometimes as the seat of thought, mind, desire or inclination

Wn, participle for being, especially the totality of being or of that which is undying and unchanging

Zetema, that which is sought, a thing not easy to find, an inquiry or question

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