Leo Strauss

Plato's *Republic*

A course offered in the Department of Political Science, The University of Chicago, autumn 1961

Edited by Peter J. Ahrensdorf

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With assistance from Alex Orwin

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Editor's Introduction

Introduction to Leo Strauss's 1961 Fall Seminar on Plato's *Republic*

Peter J. Ahrensdorf

Plato played a singular role in the intellectual life of Leo Strauss from his adolescence to the end of his life. According to his own recollection, "When I was 16 and we read the *Laches* in school, I formed the plan, or the wish, to spend my life reading Plato and breeding rabbits, while earning my livelihood as a rural postmaster."[1] In his most famous book, *Natural Right and History*, published in 1953, Strauss introduced the very "idea of philosophy" with an account of Plato's image of the cave: "Philosophizing means to ascend from the cave to the light of the sun. The cave is the world of opinion as opposed to knowledge . . . Philosophizing means, then, to ascend from public dogma to essentially private knowledge" (11-12). And for his final book—containing 15 chapters in all, including chapters on thinkers he had spent much of his life studying, such as Maimonides, Xenophon, and Machiavelli, as well as two chapters on Plato—Strauss chose the title *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, thereby suggesting that *all* of the studies contained in this book were conducted in a distinctively "Platonic" spirit, as examples of "Platonic" political philosophizing.[2]

And yet at the time of this seminar on the *Republic* in the fall of 1961, at the age of 62, Strauss had not yet published a single commentary on a Platonic dialogue. This state of affairs, however, was soon to change. A few months after the completion of the seminar in December 1961, in the spring of 1962, Strauss delivered at the University of Virginia the Page-Barbour Lectures that form the basis of his book *The City and Man*, including an 89-page chapter on the *Republic* (completed in July 1963 and published in 1964). In 1963 he published a chapter on Plato in the *History of Political Philosophy* that contained short commentaries on the *Republic*—which he described as "an earlier and shorter version" of his commentary on the *Republic* in *The City and Man*—the *Statesman*, and the *Laws*.[3] Over the remaining ten years of his life, Strauss was to complete commentaries on the *Minos*, *Euthydemus*, *Apology of Socrates*, and *Crito*, and a book on the *Laws*.[4]

The 1961 seminar on the *Republic* sheds important light on Strauss's thinking on the eve of this outpouring of writing on Plato over the subsequent twelve years, writing that would naturally establish him as a Plato scholar. More specifically, it sheds important light on his essay on the *Republic* in *The City and Man*. Strauss taught the *Republic* in the spring of 1957 as well as in the fall of 1961, and Strauss's remarks in both classes foreshadow in significant ways his *City and Man* essay on the *Republic*. Both classes anticipate Strauss's discussion in *The City and Man* of how to read a Platonic dialogue (50-62), a discussion that emphasizes so powerfully and so memorably the great difficulties of knowing what Plato thought: "In none of his dialogues does Plato say anything" (50); "Could it be true that Plato, like his Socrates, the master of the

knowledge of ignorance, did not assert anything, i.e., did not have a teaching?" (51); "Let us abandon every pretense to know. Let us admit that the Platonic dialogue is an enigma––something perplexing and to be wondered at. The Platonic dialogue is one big question mark" (55). Strauss devotes a portion of the first session of his 1957 seminar to discussing how to read a Platonic dialogue and he devotes all of the first session and also all of the final (seventeenth) session of his 1961 seminar to explaining how to read a Platonic dialogue, explanations that foreshadow quite specifically the discussion in the *City and Man*. Moreover, both seminars—sessions 2-6 of the 1957 class and sessions 2-7 of the 1961 class—anticipate in many ways Strauss's detailed commentary on books 1-4 of the *Republic* in the *City and Man* (62-115).

However, neither the 1957 nor the 1961 seminar prepares us for the relatively brief treatment of books 5-10 in the *City and Man* essay. While only 23 of 88 pages of the *City and Man* essay are devoted to books 5-10 of the *Republic* (115-138), both seminars spend fully half of their sessions on books 5-10; in the case of the 1961 seminar, more than half (9 of the 17 sessions). And while the *City and Man* discusses Plato's famous theory of Ideas in a thematic way with remarkable brevity—3 out of the 88 pages (118-121)—and may appear to dismiss that venerable theory as "utterly incredible" (119), both seminars discuss that theory at considerable length—the 1957 seminar in 6 out of 15 sessions and the 1961 seminar in 8 out of 17 sessions. In this way, both seminars reveal just how seriously and deeply Strauss studied and reflected on the "metaphysical" Plato, the Plato of books 5-7 and 10 of the *Republic*, the Plato of the theory of the Ideas. But the seminars also raise the question: Why did Strauss deliberately choose to omit a detailed discussion of books 5-10, especially of 5-7 and 10, and most especially of the theory of Ideas, from his *City and Man* essay?

The 1961 seminar in particular suggests a possible answer to this question. For in striking contrast with the 1957 seminar, which discusses only briefly the classical scholar and translator Paul Shorey (especially sessions 9 and 12), Strauss discusses at some length throughout the 1961 seminar a number of prominent classical scholars, especially Shorey (sessions 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14) but also John Burnet (sessions 1, 3, 17), and, more briefly, W. D. Ross (session 1) and Francis Macdonald Cornford (session 17). Now Strauss offers considerable praise for these scholars. For example, Strauss praises the "great merit" and "courage" of Shorey in doubting the confidence of the vast majority of classical scholars of his time that they could "trace the development of Plato" (session 1; see also 11). Strauss also praises Burnet as "one of the greatest Plato scholars of our century" and singles him out for taking Plato seriously (session 17). Nevertheless, taken as a whole, Strauss contends that the classical scholarship of his century constitutes an obstacle to taking Plato seriously because of its certainty that it understands Plato completely: what Plato thought; how his thought developed (sessions 1, 3), which of the writings attributed to him are genuine (sessions 7, 14, 17); which portions of his writings are "metaphysical," which are "logical," and which are merely "poetical" (sessions 10, 11); what his "system" is (session 9); and what he meant by his "doctrine of the ideas" (1, 5, 9). The effect of this scholarly certainty, Strauss explains, is to foster a deadening intellectual complacency among students of Plato, and hence "to close us to Plato" (17), to close us above all to the sense of wonder that is the precondition for understanding

Plato. Accordingly, Strauss strives in his seminar to awaken that sense of wonder—even a childlike sense of wonder—among his students:

> "I believe the greatest errors which we all commit all the time, including of course myself, is that we do not take proper cognizance of the obvious, of the surface, because—we despise it somehow because every child can see [it]. Yes, but not every child pays attention to it. Yes? I mean, the true sophistication, if I may use the term, is the one which would start from the surface, from the surface of the surface, and go down to the center. And the false sophistication begins already beneath the surface, and therefore never reaches properly the center" (session 5).

"First of all, we must consider the situation. Glaucon has gone down to the Piraeus in order to pray and to look at the procession. They were perfectly satisfied [with the] wonderful spectacle and they [were about to go] home, and they were prevented from going; and then they sit there and then—I mean, well, no one among us, I believe, has ever had such an experience. In that evening what is poured over the heads of these people, especially Glaucon, these fantastic things: communism in every respect, equality of the sexes, and now finally the rule of philosophers. This absolutely is unbelievable, and these people somehow survive! Yes, but I think one must make this clear and not take it for granted because everyone of us has probably read the *Republic* when he was or she was very young, and you get accustomed to it and you don't wonder anymore, but you must recapture that wonder. What a fantastic situation. Every one of us has observed gatherings where there was a marvelous [conversation] about, or someone who has really done great deeds and told of them. It's very impressive, but in a way that is all child's play compared with what these people have been exposed to on that evening. They had never in their lives heard such a thing . . ." (session 9).

"No, the richness is absolutely overwhelming, but the only thing which one—I think if one does not become penetrated by the sense of its richness, one will never understand anything. But one thing one must say as a warning: that must not lead one to give up the articulation of the richness, but it must be an encouragement to do one's best to articulate it . . . Then, in other words, the richness would not be merely divined, but it would become perfectly lucid, and then one could say one has understood the *Republic* to that extent" (session 8).

Strauss sees his task as a teacher of the *Republic* to encourage "a maximum of distrust" of the certitudes of the Platonic scholarship of his day that his students are inclined simply to embrace, not because he seeks to dismiss that scholarship (see session 1 on Burnet), but because he seeks to inspire in his students a salutary awareness of their *own* ignorance that will impel them to think on their own and for themselves about Plato's text.

"[It] is . . . extremely difficult to understand a Platonic dialogue. And nothing is worse, at least for those who wish to be not merely edified by Plato (that is very good and we all must be grateful to Plato for his edification) but who wish to understand him, than the belief of so many people—of all people, as a matter of fact, who write books on Plato's

doctrine—that they knew what that doctrine is. I think the greatest skepticism is the most prudent thing to do, if I may [say] something very paradoxical. [Let] us try to shock ourselves out of any complacency. I would make the following statement. There was perhaps only a single man who ever understood Plato fully, and that was Aristotle. That I regard as a much sounder suspicion than the certainty of the people who write books on Plato's doctrine of ideas, Plato's ethics, and I don't know [what else]. That is not so. And I would say [that] if our primary task [is] to transform ourselves from self-satisfied, conceited people into people who wish to learn, to understand, then—and I'm sure that this was a Platonic intention—then the least we expect to know or are sure to know, the less we have, the better. I would like now to mention a number of points with this general intention, to create the maximum of distrust of received opinion" (session 1).

"You see, what I try to do in my preceding remarks is to awaken, if I can, every one of you who need this awakening, to the fact that in approaching a Platonic dialogue we are approaching an absolute riddle, really a riddle and not something which we know and to which we only have to turn to the people with the old long white beards who know everything, but even they know in the decisive respect as little as we do" (session 1).

"Shorey believes [that] he possesses complete understanding of the Platonic system. Yes? And on the basis of this alleged knowledge, he translates that. He as it were improves on Plato on the basis of his allegedly perfect knowledge of the Platonic system. Perhaps there is no Platonic system. We don't know" (session 9).

"Now if we look at this whole educational program, there is something very strange about it. It consists only of mathematical disciplines, plus dialectics. Dialectics means in itself the art of conversation, but it's used here for knowledge of the unchangeable ideas. Is this not strange? I mean, this seventh book, the [educational program], is so well known, and I believe every one of us has read it in a very early age at least once and perhaps more, [so] that we take that for granted—'Of course, that's the education program of Plato'—and we don't take a distance from it and say: 'How strange!'" (session 12)

"And here Socrates now links up this question of the highest piece of learning, the idea of the good, with the so-called doctrine of ideas and what does this mean? We have already found a specimen of that at the end of book 5 and already in book 6, and we have seen how terribly difficult that is; and it is infinitely better to admit to oneself "I don't know what a Platonic idea is" than to say dogmatically, as Shorey [does, that] ideas are concepts. What is a concept, by the way? Is this so evident? In addition, a concept would seem to be something in the human mind, whereas the idea is something toward which the human mind is directed which is a so-called object of the human mind" (session 11).

Strauss therefore stresses from the beginning to the end of the seminar that we must approach Plato with a proper awareness of just how little we truly know and hence with a due philosophic caution. For, as Strauss explains, the philosopher is, in a sense, the most cautious of human beings.

"We must really try to understand what Plato or Socrates says here without falling into the easy primrose path of, 'Oh yes, we know; we have read an article or a textbook and then we know what it is.' We must really start from scratch" (session 9, 248).

"Now what is the difference between a philosopher and a nonphilosopher on the simplest level? I believe it would still be admitted that the philosopher is a man who raises a fundamental question and the nonphilosopher does not. And a simple example, it is regarded still as a philosophic question: What is law? If you ask a policeman at the corner what are the city ordinances regarding parking in this neighborhood, that is a question dealing with one particular law here and now, and that is of immense practical importance if you drive a car, but it is surely not a philosophic question. But the difficulty is this: when you ask the cop about this ordinance and you may not even use any term, notion [such as law]. 'May I or may I not?' you may simply say you presuppose, without knowing it, an answer to the question, 'What is law?' You see [the philosopher] is in one [sense] really the most cautious man. As nonphilosophers, we have answers to this question, act on them all the time, and that is that; and the philosopher says: 'Oh wait, do I know that? Do I really know what I mean when speaking of law explicitly or not?' The philosopher thinks when the nonphilosopher has ceased to think or never began to think" (session 9, 249).

Accordingly, Strauss not only begins his 1961 seminar highlighting the enigmatic character of the Platonic dialogue but he continues to do so in the middle of the term and even in the final, concluding session of the term.

"Now strictly speaking, of course, you cannot say that Plato says anything. You know? Because you can only say Socrates says it and Socrates never says anything except with a view to some peculiar interlocutor. I mean, [he speaks with a view to] Glaucon and Adeimantus, or Gorgias, whoever the interlocutor may be" (session 7, 187).

"We always speak of Plato, but strictly speaking we never hear Plato but always someone else. Why did Plato write dialogues? Why did he not write, as some people did before his time, books on nature? . . . And here in the Platonic book titles, with very few exceptions, like the *Republic*, you know absolutely nothing of what is going on in the dialogue. Why did he do that?" (session 11, 307)

"But let us again say, as someone can say and turn my weapon against me: 'Yes, well, what did you do? You said what Socrates says in the *Phaedrus*, and this is something [that is] not the words of Plato. You make your own old mistake by using Macbeth's sayings and imputing that to Shakespeare. That was [said by] Socrates, [who is] entirely a character of Plato. How can you impute that to Plato?' All right. Let us meet the issue on this ground, and I think it's necessary to do that, and then we have to return to a very simple admission which is very easy to make for people who are young in age or have retained a certain youth, namely, to say: We don't know. I don't know. Much better than to pretend to know, because then you come very soon into the embarrassing situation where someone will find out that you don't know; and you know what happens then, and it is even more embarrassing outside of examinations than in examinations, for there you

get your punishment on the spot and you forget it, but if it happens to you on other occasions, more embarrassing. Now what does it mean? The Platonic dialogue: we don't know what it is. Let us say it is an enigma, a riddle, and that's all we know" (session 17, 478-79).

Strauss's 1961 seminar, then, sheds important light on why Strauss wrote the *City and Man* essay as he did. He devoted so much time (pages 50-62), 12 of 88 pages, one seventh of the essay, to emphasizing so powerfully the difficulty of understanding the Platonic dialogue in order to counteract the complacent certitudes of the classical scholarship of his day and to foster a salutary perplexity among his readers. Similarly, the reason that Strauss focuses on the first four books of the *Republic*, focuses less on the last six books, and speaks so briefly of the "utterly incredible" theory of Ideas is to counteract the powerful tendency of the classical scholarship of his day to treat the *Republic* simply as a metaphysical treatise and hence to focus on the presumably metaphysical books of the *Republic* (sessions 5-7, 10) and above all to focus on the famous doctrine of the Ideas. The 1961 seminar suggests that Strauss's first goal in the *City and Man* essay is to awaken his readers from their dogmatic slumbers and to help them to recapture a childlike amazement before the strange wonders and mysteries of Plato's dialogue on justice and the best regime.

But it is important to note that Strauss seeks to encourage his readers to go beyond a naïve sense of wonder before the richness of the dialogue, to articulate that richness and to strive for clarity and understanding of the whole of Plato's thought, including most emphatically his "metaphysical" thought about being. As Strauss remarks in his *City and Man* essay: "Plato's work consists of many dialogues because it imitates the manyness, the variety, the heterogeneity of being. The many dialogues form a *kosmos* which mysteriously imitates the mysterious kosmos. The Platonic *kosmos* imitates or reproduces its model in order to awaken us to the mystery of the model *and to assist us in articulating that mystery*" (61-62, my emphasis). If Strauss's essay does not focus on the Ideas and the "metaphysical" discussions of Plato, it is not at all because he wishes to discourage his readers from striving to grasp Plato's understanding of the Ideas and of being as a whole. Indeed, as one studies the *City and Man*, one becomes more and more aware of the extent to which Strauss discusses the Ideas beyond the brief and seemingly dismissive discussion on 118-121 (see 29, 92-93, 99, 112-113, 135; see also 19, 45-46, 110, 138) and that even in that discussion he actually states that "to begin with"—perhaps only "to begin with"?—the doctrine of Ideas is "utterly incredible." Strauss wants us to study all aspects of Plato, including most emphatically his theory of the Ideas, but to do so properly, with a proper foundation in a Socratic awareness of our ignorance and with a healthy dose of the wonder that is the only proper beginning of philosophy.[5]

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[1] Leo Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity* (Alabany: SUNY Press, 1997), 459-460.

[2] See the Foreword by Joseph Cropsey in Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), vii, as well as the Introduction by Thomas L. Pangle (1-26).

[3] See Leo Strauss, *City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), Preface; "Plato" in *The History of Political Philosophy*, ed. with Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), 7-63 (*Republic*, 8-41; *Statesman*, 42-51; *Laws*, 51-61).
[4] "On the *Minos*," in *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 65-75; "On the *Euthydemus*," *Interpretation* 1:1 (summer 1970), 1-20; reprinted in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); "On Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito*," in *Essays in Honor of Jacob Klein* (Annapolis: St. John's College, 1976), 155-170; reprinted in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*; *The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).
[5] Plato *Theatetus* 155c8-d4.

The Leo Strauss Transcript Project

Leo Strauss is well known as a thinker and writer, but he also had tremendous impact as a teacher. In the transcripts of his courses one can see Strauss comment on texts, including many he wrote little or nothing about, and respond generously to student questions and objections. The transcripts, amounting to more than twice the volume of Strauss's published work, add immensely to the material available to scholars and students of Strauss's work.

In the early 1950s mimeographed typescripts of student notes of Strauss's courses were distributed among his students. In winter 1954, the first recording, of his course on natural right, was transcribed and distributed to students. Strauss's colleague Herbert J. Storing obtained a grant from the Relm Foundation to support the taping and transcription, which resumed on a regular basis in the winter of 1956 with Strauss's course "Historicism and Modern Relativism." Of the 39 courses Strauss taught at the University of Chicago from 1958 until his departure in 1968, 34 were recorded and transcribed. After he retired from Chicago, recording of his courses continued at Claremont Men's College in the spring of 1968 and the fall and spring of 1969 (although the tapes for his last two courses there have not been located), and at St. John's College for the four years until his death in October 1973.

The surviving original audio recordings vary widely in quality and completeness, and after they had been transcribed, the audiotapes were sometimes reused, leaving the audio record very incomplete. Over time the audiotape deteriorated. Beginning in the late 1990s, Stephen Gregory, then administrator of the University's John M. Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy funded by the John M. Olin Foundation, initiated digital remastering of the surviving tapes by Craig Harding of September Media to ensure their preservation, improve their audibility, and make possible their eventual publication. This project received financial support from the Olin Center and from the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The remastered audiofiles are available at the Strauss Center website: https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/courses.

Strauss permitted the taping and transcribing to go forward but did not check the transcripts or otherwise participate in the project. Accordingly, Strauss's close associate and colleague Joseph Cropsey originally put the copyright in his own name, though he assigned copyright to the Estate of Leo Strauss in 2008. Beginning in 1958 a headnote was placed at the beginning of each transcript: "This transcription is a written record of essentially oral material, much of which developed spontaneously in the classroom and none of which was prepared with publication in mind. The transcription is made available to a limited number of interested persons, with the understanding that no use will be made of it that is inconsistent with the private and partly informal origin of the material. Recipients are emphatically requested not to seek to increase the circulation of the transcription. This transcription has not been checked, seen, or passed on by the lecturer." In 2008, Strauss's heir, his daughter Jenny Strauss, asked Nathan Tarcov to succeed

Joseph Cropsey as Strauss's literary executor. They agreed that because of the widespread circulation of the old, often inaccurate and incomplete transcripts and the continuing interest in Strauss's thought and teaching, it would be a service to interested scholars and students to proceed with publication of the remastered audiofiles and transcripts. They were encouraged by the fact that Strauss himself signed a contract with Bantam Books to publish four of the transcripts although in the end none were published.

The University's Leo Strauss Center, established in 2008, launched a project, presided over by its director, Nathan Tarcov, and managed by Stephen Gregory, to correct the old transcripts on the basis of the remastered audiofiles as they became available, transcribe those audiofiles not previously transcribed, and annotate and edit for readability all the transcripts including those for which no audiofiles survived. This project was supported by grants from the Winiarski Family Foundation, Mr. Richard S. Shiffrin and Mrs. Barbara Z. Schiffrin, Earhart Foundation, and the Hertog Foundation, and contributions from numerous other donors. The Strauss Center was ably assisted in its fundraising efforts by Nina Botting-Herbst and Patrick McCusker of the Office of the Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences at the University.

Senior scholars familiar with both Strauss's work and the texts he taught were commissioned as editors, with preliminary work done in most cases by student editorial assistants. The goal in editing the transcripts has been to preserve Strauss's original words as much as possible while making the transcripts easier to read. Strauss's impact (and indeed his charm) as a teacher is revealed in the sometimes informal character of his remarks. Readers should make allowance for the oral character of the transcripts. There are careless phrases, slips of the tongue, repetitions, and possible mistranscriptions. However enlightening the transcripts are, they cannot be regarded as the equivalent of works that Strauss himself wrote for publication.

Nathan Tarcov, Editor-in-Chief
Gayle McKeen, Managing Editor
August 2014

Editorial Headnote

The course was taught in a seminar form. Strauss began class with general remarks; a student then read aloud portions of the text, followed by Strauss's comments and responses to student questions and comments. The text assigned for the course was Plato, *Republic*, 2 vols., trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930, 1946) When the text was read aloud in class, the transcript records the words as they appear in Shorey's translation. Original spelling has been retained. Citations are included for all passages.

There are no surviving audiotapes of this course. This transcript is based upon the original transcript, made by persons unknown to us. When a portion of the tape was inaudible, the transcriber would in some cases note in parentheses that an airplane flew over or that a student's question or the reader of the text was inaudible. In other cases, he or she would leave a blank space in the transcript. The transcriber also inserted ellipses, which may or may not have meant that the tape was inaudible.

We have dealt with these difficulties in the following way. Ellipses original to the transcript have been retained. Blank spaces and other indications that the audio was inaudible are rendered by us with ellipses in square brackets: [. . .]. In some cases the editor has supplied what he thought was the missing word or phrase, which also appears in square brackets.

This transcript was edited by Peter Ahrensdorf, with assistance from Alex Orwin.

The Transcript

Session 1: October 3, 1961
Introduction

Leo Strauss: [In progress][1] The right mood [in which to approach Plato's *Republic*] can be described as follows. We should approach the *Republic* with the minimum of prejudice and the maximum of expectations. Only then will we get the most out of it. Now in every inquiry one must begin with having clarity about two things: first, why one should study; and second, how one should proceed. Now one could say very much about why one should study Plato's *Republic*, and on the other hand one has to say very little to have a perfectly sufficient reason for studying it. I will leave it today at saying the minimum, and that is what you all know: that the *Republic* is the most famous book ever written on justice, the most celebrated book ever written on justice; and not merely preaching up justice, exhorting us to justice, but answering or trying to answer the question of what is justice, and showing that justice is good. That is a very great undertaking, but an undertaking which is obviously of the utmost interest to any human being. There are quite a few people who would say Plato did not succeed in his enterprise. He didn't prove that this and this is justice, and he didn't prove that justice thus understood is good. But granting for a moment that Plato failed, it is prudent to say that we can perhaps learn more from such a man's failure than from other men's successes.

Differently stated, and never forgetting for one moment that we are members of the Social Science Division,[i] social science is somehow concerned with the factual study of man, human affairs; and that means of course of all kinds of men, and therefore in particular of that small group called the greatest minds. That we are obliged to do as behavioral social scientists. A former president of the American Political Science Association, in his presidential address, described as one of the most urgent tasks confronting political scientists in this country or in the world an immanent possibility of the scientific production of geniuses.[ii] That may be, but surely we cannot even begin to do it if we do not know what a genius is, and therefore we have to study the works of geniuses and perhaps of the greatest genius in particular to do our simple job as political scientists. This much in justification of our attempt to read Plato's *Republic.*

Now how to proceed?[2] That is in a way very simple. We read what Plato said, and we see whether he argues soundly or unsoundly; and if he argues soundly we say yes, and if he argues unsoundly we say no. Simple. That is clear, but there is a difficulty right at the beginning. We read what Plato said and then we are confronted by the shocking fact that Plato does not say anything. [iii] You have read the *Republic*. Who talks? Not Plato. Now let us state the case as harshly as possible. It has been said, and quite truly, that the dialogues are a kind of drama. Now let us look at the most famous English dramatist,

[i] A graduate division at the University of Chicago.
[ii] Harold Lasswell, "The Political Science of Science: An Inquiry into the Possible Reconciliation of Mastery and Freedom," *American Political Science Review* 50 (1956): 961-979.
[iii] For this whole discussion of how to read Plato, see Strauss, *City and Man,* 50-62.

Shakespeare. If someone reads in *Macbeth*, "Life, the tale told by an idiot," has he a right to say that this is Shakespeare's judgment of life? I think everyone would say no—at least not without very long preparation could you say that. Well, then he would probably say, "It's not Shakespeare who says that, but Macbeth says it," and Macbeth in a special[3] [situation] where all of us, if we were in that position, would be most dissatisfied with life. But still that doesn't—we cannot know whether one must not be in a situation like Macbeth to see the full truth of human life.[iv] Great questions arise here. Nor can we say, and here I allude to a prejudice in the[4] [interpretation] . . . of Plato, that Macbeth, manifestly being a terrible criminal, cannot be supposed to express Shakespeare's views.[v] If we enlarged that we would arrive at the conclusion [that] only what the nice characters say corresponds to what Shakespeare thought, and what the unpleasant characters say does not correspond [to what he thought]. That is also[5] a principle which needs justification. It may be true, but it is not self-evident. Now similarly, when, for example, in the *Republic*, when Thrasymachus speaks, that may be something like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Yes? And Socrates, say, a kind of Macduff,[vi] if I remember well . . . Now someone would say that is absolutely ridiculous, what I say, and unworthy of an old professor because everyone knows that Plato has a mouthpiece who speaks for him, namely, Socrates. Good. Let us look at that. In the first place one must say, although that might simply be far-fetched, Socrates is not always the mouthpiece of Plato.[6] Timaeus is the mouthpiece in the *Timaeus*. The Eleatic Stranger is the mouthpiece in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*. The Athenian Stranger is the mouthpiece in the *Laws*.[7] When you speak so easily and glibly of Plato's mouthpieces, you must tell us why Plato changed his mouthpieces from one dialogue, so to speak, to another. If you don't know that, you should be a bit more careful.

But we can give an even[8] more simple argument. Let us say: All right, Socrates is the normal mouthpiece of Plato, and the others are abnormal ones whom we can disregard. What kind of a fellow is Socrates? Socrates is famous for many of his great virtues: his justice and humanity, and so on and so on, but also for another one called irony.[vii] Now what does irony mean? And there is nothing very subtle about irony. One can state this in more precise terms. The original meaning of irony is dissimulation. An ironical man is a dissembler, and that is of course something bad. The term ironical was applied to Socrates by an enemy of Socrates in an attack: Aristophanes.[viii] But it was somehow taken up, and the meaning of ironical was slightly changed in the process because people

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[iv] Macbeth says of "Life," "It is a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/Signifying nothing," when he learns of his wife's suicide as he is besieged in his castle by his enemies (William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 5.5.26-28).

[v] Over the course of *Macbeth*, Macbeth murders King Duncan and the king's two chamberlains, usurps the throne of Duncan, and orders the murders of Banquo and the wife and children of Macduff.

[vi] At the end of *Macbeth*, Macduff slays Macbeth on the field of battle and proclaims Duncan's son, Malcolm, the rightful king.

[vii] See Plato *Republic* 337a3-7; *Symposium* 216e2-5; 218d5-6; *Gorgias* 489e1; *Apology of Socrates* 37e3-38a8.

[viii] Perhaps a reference to Aristophanes *Clouds* 449. There Strepsiades asserts that, as a student of Socrates, he will be reputed by human beings to be, among many other things, "ironic."

became aware of the fact that there is the common phenomenon of dissimulation, base dissimulation, but there is also something called noble dissimulation.

Now what is noble dissimulation? Almost the same as tact. If someone is very beautiful and very strong and confronted with a very weak fellow, he will not stress his beauty and strength and health if he is not a brute. That's noble dissimulation; it will play down.[ix] Now what is true of such virtues like beauty and strength is in a way more true of wisdom, and a man who displays his intellectual superiority to people who are intellectually inferior is in his way also a brute; and what Socrates did was, starting from the surface, that he did not show off his wisdom. You know there were certain characters, vulgarly called the sophists, who were famous for exhibiting their wisdom. Socrates didn't do that. How did he show that? For example, he[9] made no speeches, but he raised questions; and question-raising, that is a very modest thing. A demanding thing is to give answers, and he left that, the giving of answers, in many cases to other people. That is, you can say, very modest of Socrates. But more generally stated, out of humanity or tact to dissemble one's wisdom means not to say what one thinks. Because it's clear: What does it mean to reveal wisdom? To say certain things which are very bright, and if you don't say these things which are very bright, to that extent you dissemble your brightness; you conceal yourself. Therefore, to be ironical means to conceal oneself. There are many reasons why this is necessary in addition to mere humanity. For example, some people become disconcerted if confronted suddenly with strange notions, and they can no longer think; and therefore one must[10] proceed step by step and keep back part of the story.

To summarize this point: if it is true that we know what Plato thought because he speaks through the mouth of Socrates, we do not know what Plato thought because[11] [that] mouthpiece is famous for his irony. So we are really back where we[12] [started]. It is a case which in philosophic literature is unique.[13] But somehow Plato must have meant something by these books—I mean, that's obvious—and he even wanted to convey his thought through these books. How can we find it out? Why did Plato act the way he did?

Now I do not follow a very stringent method, but for the present purposes that may suffice. There is a Platonic dialogue called the *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates—not Plato—Socrates gives, in a way, an answer to this question. The thesis is [that] writing is a very clever invention, but a very dangerous thing, a very harmful thing. And Socrates acted consistently: he never wrote. What is the danger of writing, forgetting about many other things? A writing says the same thing to everyone, provided he knows the language—to everyone the same thing—but it is necessary to say different things to different people, and a writing obviously doesn't have the versatility of doing that.[x] So I say Socrates was wise and did not write. Plato however did write. Now that makes sense only under one condition: if the Platonic writings are writing free from the defect of writing. The Platonic dialogues are writings which say different things to different people—not accidentally; that every writing does. Take any article from the *Political Science Review* or from the *Chicago Tribune*, or whatever you take, that always says different things to different people, but unintentionally. No, not because these people are inept, but because

[ix] See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1108a19-22, 1124b29-31, 1127a20-26, 1127b22-31.
[x] Plato *Phaedrus* 275d4-276a7.

we all approach things from different angles. It's a well-known[14] [phenomenon]. And poetry: that is well known, how differently the same poem affects different people. The Platonic writings are written in such a way as intentionally to say different things to different people.[xi]

Now how is this possible? How is this possible? I will start from the following consideration. It you take a Platonic dialogue, say, the *Republic*, and you find a certain discussion, for example, between Socrates and Polemarchus in the first book, where the question is discussed whether justice does not consist in helping friends and hurting enemies. Argued. Socrates refutes the thesis and shows [that] the just man does not only not hurt enemies,[15] he doesn't hurt enemies because he doesn't hurt anyone.[xii] So that is clear. Everyone can read it, and perhaps when you go over it you may find some "logical" difficulties. You know? And at the end of the first book Socrates admits,[16] in so many words, that the whole discussion was fundamentally faulty, unclear.[xiii] But this you can understand: you can read it and you become convinced or you do not become convinced, as the case may be. These are the speeches[17], the things which you would hear. You must not forget, strictly speaking these things should be heard[18]—not seen, read, but heard. You hear the people talk when you read, but there is something else in every human communication apart from what you hear, and that is what you see. For example, you hear someone say a few things, but you observe the man, his gestures, his expression, the circumstances under which he speaks, and so on and so on; and it was a piece of old proverbial wisdom that deeds, the things not spoken—deeds meaning everything factual but not the words—deeds are more trustworthy than speeches. Well, there are very well-known examples of that. For example, may not a very unjust man make a very just speech? May not a very just man under certain circumstances make an unjust speech and so? So there is at least a question whether the deeds are not at least as important for the understanding as the speech.

Now where do the deeds come in? Where are there deeds in the *Republic*? Can you give me an example, whether there is anything in addition to mere speeches?

Student: Thrasymachus rising in anger, for example.[xiv]

LS: Yes, and also blushing—getting red, at any rate. This kind of thing.[xv] That is one example. And[19] give us two or three more examples so that we all see that this is a not a slight issue.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, good. And such things as [that] at a certain moment, say, in the larger part of the book, books 2 to 10, [in] a considerable part one fellow is the chief speaker with

[xi] See *Lovers* 138d8-e1; *Seventh Letter* 341d2-e3.
[xii] *Republic* 332a9-d9, 335a6-e6.
[xiii] *Republic* 354a4-c3.
[xiv] *Republic* 336b1-8.
[xv] *Republic* 350c12-d3.

Socrates, Glaucon; and in other parts Adeimantus is the chief speaker. No particular reason is given why this change takes place. We have to understand that. Now I will now state the principle. To come back to the question: How[20] can a writing be free from the defects of writings? That was Plato's problem, and the general answer can be given on the basis of this very same dialogue, *Phaedrus*. I will state it first in Greek and try to translate it: logographic necessity, the necessity governing the writing of speeches, speeches in the widest sense, where it includes of course also dialogues. There is a necessity governing that. What does that necessity mean? Socrates gives an example of a living being.[xvi] The living being has a certain function; say, a duck: swimming, generating new ducks, and so on. And now the duck has all kinds of parts; for example, a stomach and feet, and a certain kind of feet, and the beak. Is this the way? Pardon?

Student: Bill.

LS: Bill, thank you—and all the other niceties for which ducks are famous, and they all[21] are functional. [That is the position]; they are meant for a purpose. No part of the body of the duck is superfluous; even if we don't know now what its function is, it still has a particular function. Now in the case of ducks, it may really be true that by virtue of evolution and I don't know what there are certain parts which are not functional. I do not know that. But in the case of a human product made by a very great artificer like Plato, it is possible that every part, however small, fulfills a function. The overall function is clear, the overall function—I mean, just as a duck is supposed to preserve itself and the species of ducks and everything pertaining thereto, the function of a dialogue, we suggest tentatively, is to make us understand, to make us think, and it fulfills this function by virtue of the fact that every part, however small and seemingly negligible, is necessary for the purpose.

This is in a very general way what the Platonic dialogues have set about to do. Now rules of this nature are worse than useless if unintelligently applied, and intelligent application requires experience. So if you would suddenly start, and take a sentence out of context, and say, "Why does he say that, and why does this man say this and why does he not use this other term?" you [had] better give up.[22] You have to start from the massive things, and only very slowly and gradually are you able to raise the proper, specific questions regarding the peculiarities. In other words, you have to proceed in a commonsensical way, and not in a pedantic [one].

I will try now to give a few examples. What comes up in every dialogue is something—I mean, of the things which we have to consider—is what we may call the setting, by which I mean for example this. There is ordinarily, although not always, a chief character, Socrates. And Socrates meets, at a certain time—the time is not necessarily specified in terms of day of the year and so on, but, say, Socrates is young, Socrates is middle aged, Socrates is old. And sometimes you don't know it. Even that is important. It may very well have a reason. They also must meet, of necessity, at a certain place. The place may be in the house of this [or that] man; it may be in a gymnasium, and in many other places. That you have to consider. And another point which is a little bit more

[xvi] *Phaedrus* 264b7-c5.

immediately relevant, although the two others in their way are relevant, are the characters, the [. . .] meaning those who are together with Socrates on that occasion. They are in most cases different people in each dialogue, and you have to see what kind of people they are—even how many is important—and there is a difference between, for example, when the people say "these and these and many more,"[xvii] and the others are not mentioned by name—that is also part of this story.

In this connection, I would like to mention[23] one fact which corroborates to some extent what I said before, but I will leave it at the mere remark. There is not a single Platonic dialogue which is a dialogue between equals. There are—I can prove that—there are certain people which at first glance can be regarded as equals of Socrates, namely, the other spokesmen like the Athenian Stranger in the *Law*s, the Eleatic Stranger in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, and Timaeus in the *Timaeus*,[24] because they are the central figures and the speakers there. But in all these dialogues, there is no dialogue between Socrates and these men. There is invariably Socrates confronted with people inferior to him, and it would have been possible to have a very interesting dialogue between Socrates and Timaeus explaining to us why Socrates does not give this account of the genesis of the visible universe, whereas Timaeus gives it.[25] [It] would be similar[ly] interesting to know why[26] these strange divisions made in the dialogues *Sophist* and *Statesman* [are] not made by Socrates but by the Stranger from Elea. Socrates could have made very good objections to it, to these people—[but] absolute silence; Socrates listens silently. One seeming exception which proves the rule [is] the dialogue *Parmenides*, in which Socrates is not at the top, but at the top are two old philosophers (or middle aged and old), Parmenides and Zeno. But that confirms my rule: Socrates is unequal, inferior to the real heroes of that drama, that dialogue, Parmenides and Zeno.[27] I will leave it only at this remark at the moment. Now let me go on.

Another point which we have to consider is this. Socrates ordinarily raises questions, say, What is justice? Is this your view of justice? and so on. Or if he doesn't raise [questions], there is another thing which is the same as [raising] questions; for example, when he[28] [proposes] in the second book: Let us look at the city in which we will find justice written large.[xviii] I would call this a suggestion. That's also a kind of question. However this may be, let us take the simpler case of questions[29] the other man answers. Socrates goes on from that answer to further questions. We cannot be certain that this answer on which the following argument is based is that answer which Socrates himself would have given. He argues on that basis. We must form our own judgment about it, and we are helped in that by these things which I called the deeds or the setting, of which I was talking before.

Now this in a general way[30] as an introduction, and to indicate this fact which I think we should really [remember]:[xix] that [it] is[31] extremely difficult, not in the way in which theoretical physics is difficult, but [it is] extremely difficult to understand a Platonic dialogue. And nothing is worse, at least for those who wish to be not merely edified by Plato (that is very good and we all must be grateful to Plato for his edification) but who

[xvii] Perhaps a reference to *Republic* 327c1-3.
[xviii] *Republic* 368e2-369b4.
[xix] The transcript has a blank space here.

wish to understand him, than the belief of so many people—of all people, as a matter of fact, who write books on Plato's doctrine—that they knew what that doctrine is. I think the greatest skepticism is the most prudent [doctrine],[32] if I may [say] something very paradoxical.[33] [Let] us try to shock ourselves out of any complacency. I would[34] make the following statement. There was perhaps only a single man who ever understood Plato fully, and that was Aristotle. That I regard as a much sounder suspicion than the certainty of the people who write books on Plato's doctrine of ideas, Plato's ethics, and I don't know [what else]. That is not so. And I would say [that] if our primary task to transform ourselves from self-satisfied, conceited people into people who wish to learn, to understand, then—and I'm sure that this was a Platonic intention—then the least we expect to know or are sure to know, the less we have, the better.

I would like now to mention a number of points with this general intention, to create the maximum of distrust of received opinion. And that is perfectly all right from every point of view, [even] the most conservative point of view, because if the received opinions are sound, well, then if they are tested their soundness will become much clearer than it was before. So let us not be afraid. Do you see what I mean? I mean if certain opinions, say, stated by the great Plato scholars of the last generation, Burnet[xx] and so on and so on, are true, prove to be true after an examination going much beyond what Burnet himself has done, what a compliment to Burnet's instincts, if not to his method. Please note the difference. Now let us add a few more of these general considerations, and then we will have a free for all.

What strikes us first in approaching any book is of course the title. The title of the *Republic* is in Greek *politeia*. *Politeia*. And that has a variety of meanings, of which I will mention only two: *politeia* means—I mean, it has also the meaning of citizen rights, for example; I do not want to go into that because they are not immediately relevant. It means the political life. Politicking would be much too narrow a translation, but to be a member of the *polis*, to be concerned with the *polis*, to be dedicated [to it, that is, to lead] the political life. That is, however, not the most famous meaning. The most famous meaning is that which is expressed ordinarily by the English translation, "the constitution." When the term occurs all the time in Aristotle's *Politics*, for example, and also frequently in Plato's *Republic*, it is invariably translated by "constitution," which is perhaps the best translation if you are in a hurry, but it is not good as a translation. I have thought about this and I have not come up with a better suggestion than to translate it with "regime," understanding by regime the organizing principle of a society which gives a society its character and which is of necessity political, because in order to be effective this principle must literally rule the society in broad daylight, and that cannot be done by anonymous "forces,"[xxi] but as visibly represented by the policeman at the corner, or rather by the people who ultimately are in charge of that—not merely Orlando Wilson,[xxii]

[xx] Classicist John Burnet (1868-1928) produced critical editions of and wrote commentaries on several Platonic dialogues. He is also author of *Early Greek Philosophy* (1908) and *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (1914).
[xxi] Quotation marks appear in the transcript.
[xxii] Orlando Wilson (1900-1972) was the Chicago police commissioner and superintendent from 1960 to 1967.

of course, but in this case the federal government. So *politeia* means the order, the animating order of society as showing itself by the kind of people who rule, and by the purposes to which the predominant part of the society, the ruling part, is dedicated. That is tolerably clear, I hope. That is in a way the subject, but we will come across that later on more fully.

I would now rather prefer to make a brief reflection about the titles of Platonic dialogues in general. You see,[35] what I try to do in my preceding remarks is to awaken, if I can, in every one of you who need this awakening to the fact that in approaching a Platonic dialogue we are approaching an absolute riddle, really a riddle and not something which we know and to which we only have to turn to the people with the old long white beards who know everything, but even they know in the decisive respect as little as we do. They may know infinite details, but the infinite details are not a great help in the decisive respects. As the wise men prior to Socrates[xxiii] put it,[36] [polymathy], knowing many things, does not teach a man to have a mind. Or in the present-day language, the facts must be interpreted; and if there is no interpreter, what good are the facts? Good. So it is an absolute riddle, and I state this problem occasionally as follows. Let us assume we have here a blackboard, and on the blackboard were nothing but that, a question mark: absolutely mysterious.[xxiv] I contended, although that may seem strange, that if there are two question marks it is somewhat less mysterious. Good.

Now applying this to Plato—and of course if there are seventeen, we have already the number 17 which would be eminently helpful—but to apply it to Plato: the dialogue is a riddle, but there are many dialogues and there are many kinds of dialogues, so we have some massive data. You know? Many kinds of dialogues. To mention only one crucial division, dialogues performed and dialogues narrated. You understand the distinction? The *Republic*, for example, is a narrated dialogue. Socrates narrates it. There are others[37] which look like a drama, where there is no narrator but the name of the speaker at the beginning of the speech.[xxv] So we have to start[38] from the externals, and one of them is the titles. Now if we look at the titles, in general we see that this most important individual, Socrates, occurs only in a single title, although he occurs in almost all dialogues. Which is that dialogue, by the way?

Student: *The Apology*.

LS: *The Apology*. Is it a dialogue? Pardon?

Student: It's a speech.

[xxiii] Heracleitus DKB40 (from Diogenes Laertius 9.1): "Much learning [*polumath*iē] does not teach one to have a mind. For it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hecataeus."

[xxiv] It is likely that Strauss wrote on the blackboard at this point.

[xxv] In *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964, 1978, 58), Strauss notes that nine Platonic dialogues are narrated, twenty-six are performed.

LS: Yes, it is a speech. It is a speech which Socrates delivered in order to defend himself, but he calls it—within that speech he calls what he's doing a dialogue with the city of Athens,[xxvi] so you are perfectly right [to] call it a dialogue.[39] The *Apology of Socrates* [is] the only one in which Socrates's name is mentioned, and the *Apology of Socrates* presents his way of life to the city of Athens on the most solemn occasion. He presents his way of life to the city of Athens officially. It is his legal duty to do so because he has been accused. In a way, in this way, [it is] the most important document of Socrates. Now here he describes his life, and there he says how he lives and he gives this picture: He is of course not a philosopher in the ordinary sense of the word; he is an Athenian citizen who got a divine commission from Apollo, the god at Delphi, and fulfilling obeying this mission, he did what he did. And that meant especially he was walking around through the streets of the marketplace talking to everybody. You know? To everybody, as it were buttonholing everyone: Did you do your good deed today? But did you think about virtue today? Yes? This kind of thing. That is the way in which he presents himself. [xxvii] Now here when reading that and having any recollection of any Platonic dialogues, we become aware of the fact that the dialogues do not present us this Socrates on the marketplace, buttonholing people in this rather tactless way. Nothing of the kind. This fact brings us up to the question of what we can call the personnel of the dialogues, and I would like to link this up later with the *Republic*; what I want to explain now is only why this is an important question, the personnel [of the dialogues].

In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*—Xenophon was a contemporary of Plato, the only equal of Plato; that's Milton's phrase[xxviii]—[and] a direct pupil of Socrates, of whom we have writings left. Now where is that? In the third book, chapter 10, Xenophon begins as follows (I take the translation): "Then again whenever he talked with artisans he was as useful," he, Socrates, "to them as to others," and then he gives examples of three artisans to whom Socrates talked, in a single chapter. If you read that as a whole you see those are the only conversations of Socrates with artisans, the only conversations. The next chapter is a conversation with a beautiful woman of bad reputation—I mean, bad reputation from the strict standards. Now compare that: Is there a single dialogue, Platonic dialogue, where Socrates talks to artisans, craftsmen?

Student: He mentions having done it in the *Apology*.[xxix]

LS: Yes, I know that, but you see, what I am trying to show in that fact is this: in his official account of his way of life Socrates gives a certain description, and this description[40] is not confirmed by the other dialogues. I think there is none, and if you would make this experiment and really try to make a sociological analysis of the personnel—you know, what professions, what jobs, age, groups, sex, country of origin and so on and so on, vital statistics, it would be by no means a waste of time. Now I think one can say this: even if you try to make this experiment[41]—once you begin to think that

[xxvi] Plato *Apology of Socrates* 37a4-7.
[xxvii] *Apology of Socrates* 20e6-23c1, 28d6-31a7, 33c4-7, 37e3-38a8.
[xxviii] John Milton, "Defends his Character, and Describes his Youthful Studies," in *The Poetry of Milton's Prose* (London: J. L. Cox, 1827), 78.
[xxix] Plato *Apology of Socrates* 22c9-e5, 23e3-24a1.

this account in the *Apology* is in a certain disproportion to the dialogues proper, and come to think of it and raise the question, where does he [talk with certain people]—surely, not artisans, because I'm sorry to say, they had the view that people[42] who had to earn a livelihood don't have the time for thinking. I mean, because if he doesn't talk to artisans—who might be very rich people, by the way—he still talks of course to common day laborers; that goes without saying. I mean, you have to face the fact. Also, he doesn't talk—that was of course especially an Athenian prejudice—he never talks to a woman, with one exception. He talks once to his wife in the *Phaedo*; but you should read that, and if you call that talking to one's wife: He says brutally to a friend of his, Crito, "Get her out of here." You know [that is] shortly before his death, and she is crying and upset, quite naturally, and she is disturbing him and he says, not to her, "Please go out," but he says [that] to Crito.[xxx] So these things must be seen. They are in themselves just strange sidelights on Athenian mores, but that has a deeper meaning as will gradually appear, and that will appear in the following way. But who are the really bad boys in Athens? Well, that's clear: the great families, the leading men, generals, leaders in war and council. Well, where do we find them in the Platonic dialogues? I trust—because each one of you has read some dialogues, collectively we may have read all the dialogues, and let us make a simple induction. Where do we find Socrates engaged in conversation with statesmen as statesmen? Yes?

Student: In the *Apology*.

LS: In the *Apology*, yes, but is it not fair to say that he talks there equally to all Athenians, and therefore not to them in particular? And in addition, contradicting myself, the *Apology*—apparently contradicting myself—is not a typical dialogue. You know, when a man addresses, say, four thousand men, you can call it a dialogue, but it's not strictly speaking a dialogue. Yes? You know? For example, when President Kennedy makes a speech, you cannot properly say it's a dialogue with the American people. It's too one-sided for that. Now—pardon?

Student: In the *Laches*.

LS: Yes, *Laches* is indeed the most interesting example. There are some others which one could mention,[xxxi] but the *Laches* is the classic example. Socrates talks to two famous generals, and mind you, the generals were political officials in Athens, of course. Yes? Pericles's official basis, I mean the official basis of his power was that he was general . . . Yes, that is the point. So that it is really very rare. To what kind of people does he then talk all the time?

[xxx] *Phaedo* 59e7-60b1.

[xxxi] Strauss possibly refers here to the *Meno*, where Socrates converses with Anytus, who was an Athenian general at the battle of Pylos (Aristotle *Regime of the Athenians* 27.5); the *Theages*, where Socrates converses with Demodocus, who has "ruled in many of the greatest offices of the Athenians" (127e2-4) and who may be the general mentioned in Thucydides (4.75); and the *Symposium*, where Socrates converses with Alcibiades when he seems already to have become general (Thucydides 5.52.2).

Student: . . . to young men.

LS: Young men, yes. In other words, we must make a nice distinction between potential statesmen like Callicles—you remember in the *Gorgias* he is not yet in politics, [he is] about to go into politics.[xxxii] Potential statesmen like Callicles are fundamentally young men. Yes, that is very important. And other groups, types of people?

Student: Sophists.

LS: Sophists, orators, rhapsodes, and well, the kind of people we will see here [in] the *Republic*. By the way, are these the leading gentlemen of Athens to whom he talks there? Does anyone know anything about that? Well, there is a very dignified gentleman right at the beginning: Cephalus. Was he a former general? Does anyone know anything about that?

Student: He was a metic.

LS: A metic. In other words, he came to Athens at the time of Pericles and he never acquired Athenian citizenship.[xxxiii] This is extremely rare, that Socrates talks to Athenian citizens [who are] politically active, extremely rare. Now if we apply that to the *Republic* in particular, there are all kinds of people. Old Cephalus disappears very soon,[xxxiv] so there are only Thrasymachus and the others. The dialogue deals, as the title indicates, with political things. When you want to talk competently about politics, with whom or to whom would you talk, I mean commensensically? To politically experienced people, I would say. The question is here, and [it is a] question of some importance: Are these people politically experienced? Mind you, Socrates is making here extraordinary proposals regarding a change of the body politic, an eventual change, and the key question is: Is this possible, this particular—are these institutions feasible? And the answer given is: Yes, it's possible.[xxxv] But who gives that answer, old hands at politics or people who are not political experts? That this is a legitimate question is shown very simply as follows. There is another Platonic dialogue which takes up the theme of the *Republic* on a different plane, called the *Laws*, and there the mouthpiece, called the Athenian Stranger, talks to two old lawyers as we might say, one from Crete and one from Sparta, who know all the ropes, and[43] therefore the *Laws* is a much more "realistic"[xxxvi] book than the *Republic*. That does not prove in itself, of course, that the scheme of the *Republic* is impossible, because while youth has its infirmities it also has its advantages: it is perhaps not as hidebound as the old ones are. What is the proper judgment on this question remains to be seen.

Now let us see. We have[44] to consider then the characters, the time, the place, and in particular, since the theme is justice, how does this theme come up? How does it come

[xxxii] Plato *Gorgias* 515a1-7.
[xxxiii] Lysias *Against Eratosthenes* 4, 20.
[xxxiv] Plato *Republic* 331d6-9.
[xxxv] 473c11-e5, 540d1-541b5.
[xxxvi] Quotation marks appear in the original transcript.

up? After all, it is not so that Socrates, as they say, buttonholes the first fellow in the street he meets, [asking] "What's justice?" without any preparation. It comes up in a certain context. In conversations with whom? And then there are changes in the interlocutors. In the first book Cephalus goes out, Polemarchus takes over,[xxxvii] and then Thrasymachus takes over,[xxxviii] and later on in the second book following, Glaucon and Adeimantus. What do these changes mean? What does it mean that large chunks of the possible presentation of the good city in books 2 following are developed in conversation with Adeimantus, and other chunks in conversation with Glaucon? I mean, one thing you must not believe for one moment, because that would not even be applicable to a very mediocre novelist, [is] that Plato made such things merely for the sake of variation; you know, to make it a bit—to keep us awake, because we are bored to death he changes the characters. That is utterly impossible to assume. To say a word about this question, in order to appreciate it we must know what kind of men Glaucon on the one hand [and] Adeimantus on the other are.[45] [Enough is] said about these two men that we can answer that question. And here you see, incidentally, the great advantage of a narrated dialogue. In a performed dialogue, you know—you know what I mean by a performed dialogue? It's very simple. Here is Socrates; here is Gorgias. Socrates, Gorgias. Socrates can never tell you what he thinks of Gorgias, or of this particular answer of Gorgias, or of this particular move. But when Socrates tells us afterward, after the conversation [when] tells you the whole story, he can of course give you his comments on the characters and what they did at each point. Therefore that is such a great advantage that one might wonder why did Plato not always write narrated dialogues rather than performed dialogues, but apparently performed dialogues, i.e., Socrates's silences about his reaction, are also instructive, are also something[46] [from] which we can learn something.

Good. Another point I would like to mention: book 1 ends in a failure, to our surprise, because Socrates has licked all three interlocutors to our satisfaction, at least if we just read and listen and then we are convinced. But at the end Socrates says the whole argument is absolutely insufficient. But, of course, why did Plato do that? I suppose one answer we all knew from our own experience: a failure may be as instructive as a success, but this requires that we understand the precise character of the failure; and we may have to go beyond what Socrates explicitly says in his account. The success in book[s] 2 to 8, because there is no longer any breakdown of this kind, is based on the following principle: [47] there is a fundamental parallelism between the individual and the city. I deliberately state it vaguely. We want to know what justice is, and we have failed hitherto. Now let us look at justice written large, meaning the city, the *polis*, and not at the individual. You know, if you can't discern an individual you may[48] be able to discern the outlines of the city.[xxxix] Yet they do something else. They don't look at the city. They found a city. They found a city.[xl] It is never explained why. Never explained why. Here you have a clear case where you[49] are compelled to think by yourself. Why do they not look at an actual city, but found a city? What would you suggest as an answer to this question, a little beginning of an attempt to understand these things? Why do they not

[xxxvii] 331d4-8.
[xxxviii] 336b1-d4.
[xxxix] 368c7-369b4.
[xl] *Republic* 369b5-c10.

look at an actual city, but found a city in speech, as it is called, meaning speaking, making a blueprint of a city and not looking at an actual city? What would you say? Yes?

Student: It might be that if you were looking for injustice you would have said: Let's look at an actual city. But maybe it's implied that since we have to construct one there is no example we could look at.

LS: In other words, no actual city is just. Yes, that would certainly be worth considering. For example—yes, that one must do. But another question arises. Is the largeness of the city as contrasted with the individual the sole reason why they found a city? Is there, perhaps—after all, the subject was justice. Is there perhaps an essential connection between justice and city so that you cannot clarify the meaning of justice without clarifying what a city is? What do you say to this proposal? What would speak in favor of that assumption? Yes?

Student: In the *Crito* he makes a candid discussion of how the city is formed . . . and that man is a product of the city.[xli] In other words, the humaneness of man is a product of the city.

LS: But would this not—but look, when they discuss, say, courage in the *Laches*, they don't found a city. When they discuss temperance in the *Charmides* they do not found a city. But when they discuss justice they found a city. Well, there must be—your argument would hold of every virtue, do you see? What would you say? It is really very elementary, but one must make it explicit. Yes?

Student: It's a social virtue.

LS: Exactly. If justice is a social virtue *par excellence* you must understand society in order to understand justice. That is perhaps the simple reason why a city is founded in speech, and this reason is never given. Now they found a city in speech. They have to do that because no city is actually just, and[50] the city which they found is the best possible city, the best regime, and this regime is characterized by three elements: rule of philosophers, equality of the two sexes, and communism; and communism means here something different from what now is communism because it is absolute communism. Present-day communism is not absolute. There is no private property of any kind. There are no private wives, private children; the abolition of all privacy which can be abolished. I call that absolute communism. That is the key—I mean the most massive proposal in, say, roughly books 2 to 5. What is—again, that is done in a treatise on justice. There must be some connection,[51] an essential connection between justice and communism, thus understood.[xlii]

There is something very silly about that, something unartistic about it. What is that connection? I mean, is there a connection which we can still recognize between communism—which has nothing to do with Russian communism[52]—[and] justice as

[xli] *Crito* 50c4-e7.
[xlii] The tape was changed at this point.

such?[53] There is such a connection. Do you have an idea? We must go a bit beyond the ordinary use of justice in which justice means simply honesty or so, perhaps. We must go beyond that . . . Did you ever hear the word public-spirited? That is one element of what the Greeks understood by justice. You could perhaps also say patriotism, dedication to the whole; and if you radicalize that you reach the conclusion: dedication to the whole without any reservations whatever; and the most tangible expression of that is that you do not have anything which belongs to you in particular. That[54] also has to be clarified. Dedication to the common good and abandonment of the private as completely as possible: Is it possible? Is that possible? The thesis of the *Republic* is yes. I mean, [it is a] long argument. Is this meant to be possible?

In order to answer that question, we would have to take up the key passages on this subject which are at the end of book 7 and at the end of book 9. I think I will perhaps come back later to that. First, I[55] would like to finish my exposition. I will therefore dogmatically state my answer. It is impossible, and therefore the question arises: Why was it presented as possible? And the answer would be this—it was already given by Cicero[56] and was, I'm sure, known to quite a few people prior to Cicero: that the function of the *Republic* is not to present us the best social order, but to make us see the character of political society, the essential limitations of political society.[xliii] The official answer given to the question of possibility arises somewhere in the fifth book. You know, hitherto they have just looked at Socrates building up this magnificent super-Sparta, a Sparta free from all the blemishes of Sparta and having all the virtues of Sparta, and these young warlike fellows, especially Glaucon—and public-spirited, or as we would say, idealistic—were all for it. And then a hitch develops and then they behave, in spite of their relative youth, as all politicians behave, and say: A wonderful proposal, Socrates, but is it possible? You know? Is it possible? I would be all for it, but I just don't know. And[57] Mr. Hennessy will have to think about that, what is the precise reason why Glaucon at that moment rebels in this delicate form by saying: It is wonderful, but not possible. Then Socrates gives an answer and says it is possible, most simply, if the philosophers are kings and the kings are philosophers.[xliv] And that is the way in which philosophy comes in.

Again, let us look at two points in isolation: possible, [and] philosophy. Is there a connection between these two themes, the possible and philosophy? Worth thinking about. Perhaps philosophy has in a strange way to do with the possible more than anything else. We must not endlessly speculate, but we must really think about that. So philosophy comes in, and that is the peculiarity; whereas communism, absolute communism, and equality of the sexes are introduced spontaneously by Socrates,[xlv] the rule of philosophers is introduced only under compulsion because he is [asked]: Can you show how it is possible? Philosophy comes in not as a part of the end, the subject, but as a means, and that is really in a way upside down, that philosophy should be good because

[xliii] Cicero *De republica* 2.52. See Strauss, *City and Man*, 138.
[xliv] Plato *Republic* 471c4-473e5.
[xlv] 416c5-417b9, 423e4-424b2, 451d4ff. But see also 449a1-451b8 and Strauss, *City and Man*, 116.

absolute communism is good and equality of the sexes if good. You know? Upside down. Strange.

By the way, that explains why Aristotle, in his critique of Plato's *Republic* in the second book of the *Politics*—something which every one of you should read—[58][makes you] go through this experience of absolute disappointment.[xlvi] Here is this shining temple on the hill built by Plato, and then this awful pedant, Aristotle, comes and tears it to pieces. You must go through that, because only after you have survived it, then you will see how eminently useful and intelligent Aristotle's criticism is. But this emotional shock—trauma, I believe they call it—is necessary to do justice to both Aristotle and to Plato. Now Aristotle, in his account of the *Republic*, doesn't say a word about the rule of philosophers, not because he wants to denigrate this shining thing but because he has understood it so well. Philosophy came in only as a means. It's not part of the structure itself originally; and having understood it so well he acts on his good understanding. There are other examples of that in[to] which I do not want to go.

Now I will add a few more very broad considerations, and please understand these things properly. These are only developments of what I indicated originally by the single question, things which we have to think about and which we cannot simply passively take in as suggestions of Plato, perhaps expressions of the prejudices of the Athenian upper class at the moment when it was finished, or smelled for one moment the fresh air of coming reaction—I don't know what other things people might say—but [we must engage it] as a serious work. Now this question [of] philosophy becomes then the theme from about the middle of the fifth book toward the end of book 7, so a considerable part of the work. And here I would also try to state the question in the simplest way, in the way in which it must be taken. One can give this simple answer to the question, What did Socrates or Plato understand by philosophy?—namely, knowledge of the ideas. I mean, knowledge of this piece of chalk, it's not philosophy; but of the idea of chalk—if that is possible; it's a long question—that would belong to philosophy: ideas.

Now[59] many of the people who write on these things take it for granted that, for example, Glaucon, Adeimantus, and the others know Sir David Ross's book or chapter on the Platonic doctrine of ideas.[xlvii] Shall I explain that? I mean, they have no imagination, these people, these scholars. Here are some young Athenians, highly educated in the way in which wealthy and noble young Athenians were—you know, Homer and poetry and other things of this kind—but of course we have no right to assume that they have studied the theory of ideas. That is absolutely elementary, it seems to me. Socrates presents this doctrine in there not to professors of classical philology or philosophy or whatever have you, but to very intelligent, very well bred, but of course not philosophically trained people.

And now something very strange happens: these boys somehow understand. I mean, even if we are well trained, we have the greatest difficulty. What does he mean by that? But

[xlvi] Aristotle *Politics* 1260b27-1264b25.
[xlvii] W. D. Ross (1877-1971) wrote extensively on ancient philosophy and on ethics. He is author of *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (1951).

they understand. I suggest—I'm not so sure they understand, but in a way, they obviously understand. Otherwise they couldn't go on. In a way. How do they understand what Socrates has said? What enables them to understand? What enables them to some extent? Now the simple procedure—again, if one wants to be cautious and not prejudiced, one would have to proceed as follows. In this dialogue, in this conversation, long before the ideas become the theme at the end of book 5, ideas were mentioned casually. Well, ideas is the wrong word now. This thing, which in Greek is called *eidos* . . . was mentioned, not in the technical meaning but in the everyday meaning, where it means something like the shape of the thing, the looks of the thing.[xlviii] In the very simple sense, for example, a man or a woman of good looks, good *eidos*; that was mentioned. So they understood, in a way, the word. And so what one would have to do for a full understanding, which we cannot even try to reach here, would be to go through the preceding books and see where this word occurs, the variety of meanings it had, and then see whether it is not possible, on the basis of these commonsense notions which everyone had, to understand the so-called Platonic doctrine of ideas, which then might appear in an entirely different light.

I[60] [will] indicate this by one other example. The example is based on a very specific passage there, [xlix] but I do not want to labor that point. Every one of these people had seen statues, and statues of all kinds of gods, particularly Zeus, Poseidon, but also of such a being called *Nike*: *nike*, victory. Now what is that? You see the *Nike*: Which victory? At Marathon? At Salamis? No, any victory. But there is another statue, say, in another temple, of the same victory. Is this another victory? No. It is a different statue of the same victory. So there is such a thing as victory. And this victory looks, as it is presented in the statue—wings, barely treading on the soil—and this enters whenever there is victory. [It] comes from the word.[l] That everyone knew—"quote knew"—to that extent they surely understand what an idea is, but the question of course is: With what right can you make a so-called philosophic doctrine of these "prejudices of the Greeks"?[li] But what I want to show you is only that we must really enter in[to] the character of such a work and not assume that this was written for classical scholars or other people of the same kind centuries afterward, but [that it] was trying to show how educated young Athenians are led by Socrates, on the basis not of scientific proofs but through appeal to what they knew or understood before, to a deeper understanding of justice.

I make a last point. One of the deepest students of Plato's *Republic* was Sir Thomas More, that contemporary and victim of King Henry VIII, and he wrote a book in prison before his execution called *Comfort Against Tribulation*. And in this book, which is easily accessible in Everyman's Library edition, the following remark occurs: "To prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather a time of weeping, we find that our Savior himself wept twice or thrice; but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear [Sir Thomas More comes in—LS] that he never did; but in the leastwise he left us no example of it. But on the other side, he left us example of weeping."[lii]

[xlviii] *Eidos* first appears in the *Republic* at 357c5 and *idea* first appears at 369a3.
[xlix] Strauss possibly refers here to 536b3 or 380d1-e2.
[l] See Strauss, *City and Man*, 119-121.
[li] Quotation marks appear in the transcript.
[lii] Sir Thomas More, *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation* (1553), chapter 13.

I believe that this statement contains much more than appears at first sight, because Sir Thomas More was a very close student of classical literature, especially Plato and so on. Now when I read this for the first time I was immediately reminded of Socrates, because in the case of Socrates—what he says about Jesus here, just the opposite is true of Socrates. Socrates[61] was very self-controlled: he didn't weep; he didn't laugh. It is sometimes said he joked, but we must assume he did this with a poker face. I mean,[62] [there is] no example of weeping; one or two examples of his laughing in both Xenophon and in Plato.[liii] In other words, the difference is in numerical terms very slight, but quantity is not the most important consideration, and here a slight edge given to weeping in the case of Jesus, and a slight edge given to laughing in the case of Socrates. And I'm sure that Sir Thomas More thought also of Socrates . . . Now what does this mean? Weeping and laughing have[63] found an expression, if I may poorly say so, in the two forms of the drama: in tragedy and in comedy. A tragedy can make us weep; it surely should not make us laugh. A comedy must make us laugh and should not make us weep.

What I'm driving at is this, that we generally underestimate—and that is true also of the most learned men—the importance that the comedy has as the background of the Platonic dialogues. The ordinary reference in the literature is that the Greek tragedy played a certain role as a background, but the references to the comedy in the modern literature are extremely rare, extremely rare. I think the opposite emphasis is in order. What I have in mind more specifically regarding the *Republic* is this. There is one Aristophanean comedy called *The Assembly of Women* which has an amazing kinship with the *Republic*. Needless to say, that is very indecent, and of course in this respect there is no kinship whatever. But you have the key point[s], communism and a radical change in the status of women, as part of a new political scheme meant to save Athens. Later on you will see, if you use Shorey's edition,[liv] the Loeb edition, references that there are certain passages in the *Republic* which are literally identical with verses in Aristophanes.[lv] And there[64] can be no reasonable doubt that Plato reacts to Aristophanes and in his great way tries to show the very clever Aristophanes that he is not clever enough, that in other words, if I may stick to this example, that if you want to have this full communism and a complete change in the status of women, you cannot have it if you don't have the rule of philosophers, the thing which Aristophanes had[65] ridiculed so much in his famous attack on Socrates in the *Clouds*.

[liii] Plato *Phaedo* 84d8, 115c5; Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 28.

[liv] Strauss refers here to Paul Shorey, the translator of the *Republic* whom Strauss refers to, and at times criticizes, throughout this entire course. Plato, *Republic*, 2 vols., trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930, 1946). Strauss often translates the Greek himself for the class.

[lv] In the *City and Man* (61) Strauss remarks: "We may therefore say that the Socratic conversation and hence the Platonic dialogue is slightly more akin to comedy than to tragedy. This kinship is noticeable also in Plato's *Republic* which is manifestly akin to Aristophanes' *Assembly of Women*." He then has the following footnote (18): "Cf. *Assembly of Women* 558-567, 590-591, 594-598, 606, 611-614, 635-643, 655-661, 673-674, and 1029 with *Republic* 442d10-443a7, 416d3-5, 417a6-7, 464b8-c3, 372b-c, 420a4-5, 457c10-d3, 461c8-d2, 465b1-4, 464d7-e7, 416d6-7, 493d6. Cf. *Republic* 451c2 with *Thesmophoriazusae* 151, 452b6-c2 with *Lysistrata* 676-678, and 473d5 with *Lysistrata* 772. Consider also 420e1-421b3."

Now[66] one of the most striking events in the *Clouds*, where Socrates is held up for ridicule, is that Socrates has two figures in his establishment who fight it out among themselves to the edification of the pupils, and these figures—one is called the just *logos*; let us say the just speech, and the other is called the unjust speech—they have a disputation which ends with a victory of the unjust speech, and the just speech deserts to the camp of injustice, and that of course is [. . .] Socrates.[lvi] Now that too is in a way considered in the *Republic*.[67] Now the roles are reversed: the unjust speech is represented by Thrasymachus, of course, and Socrates presents ten long books, so to speak, of the just speech. I think I could go into the details. One could, I think, show very neatly that the *Republic* is—of course that is not an explanation of the *Republic*; it is only an important ingredient of it. The *Republic* is very neatly on this level a comical–serious reply to the comical–serious thesis of Aristophanes's *Assembly of Women*.

Against my wish, I have talked so very long, but since I promised a free for all I'm willing to stay here for a while and have at least the initial stages of a free-for-all.[68] Well, it is now, I believe, five [o'clock]; those who would like to leave are of course free to leave at any moment, but those who would like to have a brief discussion can stay on.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Oh yes. Oh, there is more than that. Mr. Reinken raises the question whether there are not dialogues between Socrates and women, contrary to what I say. To which I say, yes, there are such dialogues, but they are only—they don't take place before our eyes. Socrates reports of instruction he received from Diotima in the *Banquet*, and of a conversation with Aspasia, Pericles's girlfriend, in the *Menexenos*.[69][lvii] Yes, I think these are the two cases. The only woman who appears as it were on the stage is Socrates's wedded wife, in the *Phaedo*—you know, in this deplorable scene where he sends her out.

Student: In the *Menexenos* does Socrates tell us that . . .

LS: [70][He tells] Menexenos that yesterday—and it is obvious, I mean, obviously an invented story.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, Aspasia gave—the question is the funeral speech. The Athenians need a funeral speech, and Socrates meets a young friend called Menexenos and they argue [about] who should be appointed to make the funeral speech. And Socrates—it is not exact, what I said—Socrates as it were says: Well, of course Aspasia. You see, you had two defects: (a) she was not a man, and the praise of fallen soldiers comes more naturally from a man; and in addition, she was not an Athenian citizen. Then he reproduces a speech which Aspasia allegedly had improvised . . . to him and which is a [pack][lviii] of atrocious,

[lvi] Aristophanes *Clouds* 877-1114.
[lvii] Plato *Symposium* 201d1ff; *Menexenus* 236a8ff.
[lviii] The transcript has ellipses here.

patriotic lies; and every point was demonstrably untrue according to what was known at the time, and[71] there are many parallelisms for that. But as I say, Socrates tells it. Maybe it wasn't true; maybe the story of Diotima wasn't. What we see with our own eyes on the stage is Socrates never talking to a woman, and extremely rarely talking to the true man, the true man being the politically active man. Yes, Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: You said[72] something about justice being a kind of social action. There is another discipline that is interested in social action, called sociology. I have in mind Max Weber. Max Weber, investigating social action, attempted to investigate each activity on its own ground; and he claimed in doing this to arrive at a conclusion which is individual or particular to this particular situation. In the *Republic*—and this is my question that I'm coming to—in the *Republic* you say that their investigation of social action ends in their founding a city in speech. Granted, they don't investigate real cities, which is already a difference from Weber, they build a city in speech. But what I'm interested in is[73] that the Greek solution to justice ends in an individual solution peculiar to Greeks, namely, the founding of a city, whereas it seems like cities are no longer applicable to every time—they're certainly not applicable to our time—and that what one needs is an individual investigation of each individual situation which comes up with a solution peculiar to each.

LS: Yes, your argument is not very clear, I must say . . . it is not necessary to bring in Max Weber, for example. If you mean to say—I mean, one thing is to say there are no longer any cities possible, and therefore something tailored—a solution tailored to cities is as such not applicable. That's elementary. But the question is this, using our loose language: Plato appeals to certain principles in the light of which he can make a distinction between a good city and a bad city, and it is after all conceivable that the same principles would also apply to empires—[as] we call such great realms like the United States of America and Soviet Russia, you know.[74] The distinction between good and bad or just and unjust would apply here too, and perhaps these principles are unchanged, the same.

Student: That might be o.k. if you apply, say, Greek principles . . .

LS: If they are merely Greek principles, they are utterly irrelevant; but Plato claims that they are the true principles. Now he may be wrong; in that case—well, in that case we have to [reject][lix] them, surely. I mean, I hope everyone would do that in [the] case [that] he sees that they are wrong.

Student: Isn't there a great less of individuality, however . . .

LS: Yes, in other words—all right, but we can't solve this question now. The only point which I try to make today is what I call the[75] [transhistorical] preparation for the study of Plato, namely, to become[76] as aware as possible of the difficulty, of the enigmatic character of the *Republic*, and at the same time to not be repelled by these difficulties but

[lix] The transcript has ellipses here.

attracted by them. That was my only . . . if I did anything. Whether everything that Plato says is not nonsense, you will see later.

Student: This will probably sound naïve. If we are to determine whether these principles are actually universal principles or only Greek principles, what criterion can we agree upon so that if we find it, we can then say this is really a universal principle? In a sense, what would you be satisfied with as proving?

LS: [77]Now let me state it in a—that is no[78] answer to your question, but . . . if I say of certain principles [that] they are Greek principles, I say in effect they are false principles. You get my point? They're valid for the Greeks, and therefore what can we do? I mean, I have no gimmicks[79]—how would you go about that? Of course, here are certain assertions, say, about the equality of the two sexes, and there is a certain reasoning and you can go through that. You would be confronted with an assertion, for example, that the difference between males and females is not more important than that between bald-headed and not bald-headed men.[lx] Do you think that this exhausts the issue?

Student: No, I don't . . .

LS: All right; then we have to see what other reasons Plato has for asserting the equality.

Student: But what I'm driving at more specifically is [that] if in your own mind you have developed a certain standard which, after doing all these things, if it is met, you can then conclude that these principles are universal principles and not Greek—a particular method that you have developed.

LS: No, no. I don't believe in methods in this way. I think methods come, any methods which are worthwhile . . . come out quite unsought. You have given thought to the subject; you have studied it, and then occasionally when you are tired and talk with a fellow worker, then it occurs to both of you: Didn't you proceed in all these cases in this and this way, and did we not make headway when we did proceed in this way, and [find ourselves] blocked when we did not proceed in that way . . . I know that the modern view[80] believes, at least in certain quarters, that method comes first. I believe subject matter comes first, and we always understand subject matter to some extent; even if we are at the very beginning we would have some inkling . . . No, and there is a long story about the problem of criterion which came up only after Aristotle. In Plato and Aristotle especially, as such it did not play any role. The primary question is that there are many things of different kinds, many problems, and then you can even discern a hierarchy of the problems, a higher and lower order, and to understand—there is never a problem, a question which is not preceded by knowledge. Every question contains some knowledge. If you raise a question, "Is an eagle a mammal, like a lion, or any variant?" . . . there's a [little bit][lxi] of knowledge in that. You know something of eagles; you know something of lions. You know, there is no question which is not preceded by knowledge . . . What we know, however little and however ill-ordered, always causes us to raise questions. All

[lx] *Republic* 453b2-454e5.
[lxi] The transcript has ellipses here.

our knowledge or assumed knowledge points to questions. That is the matrix, and to abstract from that and to raise the abstract question of criteria is not very helpful. We have become much too preoccupied with this kind of thing, and therefore considerations of method have been used for excluding many and perhaps the most important questions from the field of rational intelligence. There is the other—the natural, the naïve approach, would seem to be better for our purposes. Be naïve, by all means. Yes?

Student: Towards the end of the class you mentioned the disheartening effect of reading Aristotle's second book of the *Politics* as regards his criticism of the *Republic*. I wondered if reading the *Laws* does not have the same effect. And at the same time I'd like to raise a question: Wouldn't it be advisable to read the *Laws* as the supplement to the *Republic* or how would you feel on that?

LS: That one could do, surely. But you must not forget, the *Laws* is also a very long book, even longer than the *Republic*, and I fail to see how you can read that in one quarter.

Student: No, I meant—I don't mean a term reading, but as a supplement in the fullest sense of the word supplement; in other words, as something that goes beyond and perhaps revises the *Republic*.

LS: Yes, that one could say, unless you mean by it that Plato did not know when he wrote the *Republic* that such a supplement would be necessary. I don't say that I know the opposite, but we don't know. I regard it as perfectly possible that Plato, when he was thirty or thirty-five, decided if he would know enough to write a book on laws when he would be an old man. You know? I mean, no one can know that, but it is surely as possible[81] [that] he arrived at the notion when he was already rather old. We don't know.[82] That the *Laws* were written after the *Republic* I believe, because Aristotle says it.[lxii] I mean, there is no one very competent on these matters. The classical scholars only today I do not believe. I mean, I will not contradict them because that is a matter of common prudence, of low prudence . . . They know much—they [claim][lxiii] to know so many things—you know, they know the sequence in which Plato wrote the dialogues: early dialogues, middle period—you ought to know this kind of thing. Yes, these are plausible on the basis of certain criteria, you know, very external criteria which may be of some value, but of course which don't settle the most interesting question. Let us assume you can know that this dialogue was written, say, in 370; this was in 390. From this it does not follow at all that Plato did not know in 390 the substance of the dialogue he was going to write twenty years later . . . This was, by the way, I must say, the great merit of Shorey . . . that he had the courage from time to time, when everyone was sure that the classical scholars could trace the development of Plato like one could trace the development of a modern philosopher . . . [that] he[83] [hadn't] found any trace of such development . . . The assertion [that Plato's thought developed] was based on an insufficient understanding of the differences between the various dialogues, which differences were exploited by the people he attacked . . . and the translations [of these

[lxii] Aristotle *Politics* 1264b24-28.
[lxiii] The transcript has ellipses here.

classical scholars] are an effect [of their insufficient understanding of the dialogues]; that goes without saying. I mean, if a classical scholar comes across an expression like "what is by nature just,"[84] which is easily translatable, and says instead, "ideal justice"—well, that ruins intellectually a whole generation who reads this translation. Well, he deserves to be punished, there's no question; there is no necessity for that.

But I think the difficulty is this. In order to avoid these translations, . . . translations can be made only by very stupid people and by very intelligent people. The very stupid will simply say there is no word for "ideal" in Greek. He would try to translate it into Greek and he would say this word has no Greek [equivalent].[lxiv] The intelligent man would know why this word "ideal" doesn't exist in this sphere . . . [The word] arises in a certain modern tradition and that was clearly called "ideal" since roughly the eighteenth century, [but it] would have been called by the Greeks "the natural." That is a very summary statement . . . but what was the point from which we started?

Student:
The point where we started was my question about whether the *Laws* . . . [is a supplement to] the *Republic*.

LS: Yes, there is even a passage—I think it is[85] [739]—which is of course not a reference to the *Republic* . . . an Athenian stranger on the island of Crete talking to an old Cretan cannot refer to the *Republic*—but there is a reference which, if you retranslate you can say this is here the Athenian Stranger somehow speaking for Plato. [The Stranger] considers here for a moment what Socrates, speaking for Plato, has [said in the *Republic*].[lxv] There is such a thing, and that is a very important statement because it states a neat principle more clearly, I think, than it is stated in the *Republic*. The key principle of the *Republic* is the abolition of everything private which is not by nature private . . . [lxvi]

Student: That was the basis of my point, because at many different points in the *Laws* the Athenian says since we cannot actually—actually or really—do such and such a thing, let us then do—I think he either says, the second best or—

LS: Yes sure, one can do that, but there is no rule. The Platonic world is a cosmos consisting of, let us say, thirty-five dialogues and[86] [thirteen] letters. If you are quite careful and don't take the tradition seriously and don't believe what you are told, that six dialogues cannot be Plato's and those letters—if you are cautious. Thirty-five dialogues and[87] [thirteen] letters, and you can begin at any point, any point. That is a purely pedantic question of a low kind . . . [lxvii]

[lxiv] The transcript has ellipses here.
[lxv] The transcript has ellipses here.
[lxvi] Plato *Laws* 739b8-e5.
[lxvii] The transcriber notes: "The fragmentary character of the transcription beginning at page 16 results from the bulk of this discussion taking place at some distance away from the microphone. However, nearly all of the substance is preserved."

[1] Deleted "—into the right mood."
[2] Deleted "Now."
[3] Deleted "nation."
[4] Deleted "revelation"
[5] Deleted "—I mean, that is also."
[6] Deleted "There are—."
[7] Deleted "Why did—when."
[8] Deleted "other—a."
[9] Deleted "didn't –."
[10] Deleted "be—."
[11] Deleted "what."
[12] Deleted "are."
[13] Deleted "Now how can we—"
[14] Deleted "thing."
[15] Deleted "hurts—he."
[16] Deleted "it."
[17] Deleted "which—."
[18] Deleted "and not merely."
[19] Deleted "what—."
[20] Deleted "can a speech be free—a writing—how."
[21] Deleted "however" moved "that is the position."
[22] Deleted "I mean, you will never come."
[23] Deleted "—to mention."
[24] Deleted "I mean."
[25] Deleted "There."
[26] Moved "are."
[27] Deleted "That is—I could—."
[28] Deleted "discusses."
[29] Deleted "—questions."
[30] Deleted "but."
[31] Deleted "it."
[32] Deleted "thing to do, and."
[33] Deleted "and let."
[34] Deleted "say—would mention of."
[35] Deleted "I mean."
[36] Deleted "pelimity."
[37] Deleted "in."
[38] Deleted "—we have to start."
[39] Deleted "the."
[40] Deleted "does not—."
[41] Deleted "come to."
[42] Deleted "who are."
[43] Deleted "therefore—."
[44] Deleted "—we have."
[45] Deleted "That is done—I mean, there is sufficiently."
[46] Deleted "on."
[47] Deleted "in order—."
[48] Deleted "discern, may."
[49] Deleted "must—."
[50] Deleted "this."
[51] Deleted "and again a very—."
[52] Deleted "with."
[53] Deleted "It is surely a certain—."

[54] Deleted "would be—that."
[55] Deleted "want to—."
[56] Deleted "—that—."
[57] Deleted "in this—and it would be the—."
[58] Deleted "one must."
[59] Deleted "the people who—."
[60] Deleted "would—I will give you—which."
[61] Deleted "did not."
[62] Deleted "he did not—."
[63] Deleted "become—have."
[64] Deleted "is—."
[65] Deleted "so—."
[66] Deleted "the *Clouds*—."
[67] Deleted "When you take—."
[68] Deleted "So—."
[69] Deleted "and of—."
[70] Changed from "Tell Menexenos that yesterday—and it is obvious, I mean—I mean, obviously an invented story."
[71] Deleted "there is"
[72] Deleted "that—."
[73] Deleted "this—is."
[74] Deleted "There is after all—."
[75] Deleted "trans-administrative."
[76] Deleted "fully."
[77] Changed from "Now let me state it in a—that is no answer to your question, but….if I say of certain principles they are Greek principles I say, in effect, they are false principles."
[78] Deleted "is no."
[79] Deleted "or graduates."
[80] Deleted "is—."
[81] Deleted "as that this notion."
[82] Deleted "That seems—there is."
[83] Deleted "hasn't."
[84] Deleted "you know—."
[85] Deleted "149."
[86] Deleted "thirty."
[87] Deleted "thirty."

Session 2: October 5, 1961
Book 1: Cephalus and Polemarchus

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —add another simple rule for composition, whether these are papers in class or term papers or doctoral theses, I found it very helpful in writing anything, short or long, after having written—of course one must have a plan before one begins to write, but the plan never works out in practice. Two or three different subjects prove to be susceptible of being handled in a single paragraph, and another subject may require ten paragraphs when you begin to work. After having finished a paragraph, give the paragraph a heading, preferably in the form of a sentence, [on a] separate sheet of paper. Then, while you go on you always look at the sequence and see whether that is orderly, the argument, or not; and that is very helpful both to oneself and to others. You see that only proves that self-interest and the common good are not necessarily in disagreement or that justice is good.

Now this much in general. You have made a few very good and interesting remarks to which we will return later.[i] I have now to mention a few—your defects, rather. You are much too speculative. And what do I mean by that? You act as if you know the fate of the soul after death or what Plato thought about it, which is[1] for practical purposes the same, and you forget that when you need shoes you do not make them yourself but go to a shoemaker. Now to give you—well, one example. When you spoke of a certain passage there in the Polemarchus section, where cookery and medicine are mentioned together,[ii] you took it for granted that justice is here compared to cookery rather than to medicine, without a shred of evidence. That cannot be done. What do you know about cookery and medicine, I mean, in a Platonic way? I suppose you thought of that. What does he say?

Student: Well, there are distinctions in the *Gorgias*, for example—[iii]

LS: Yes, especially in the *Gorgias*.

Student: Especially in the *Gorgias*. Medicine is seen as a health-giving art, something which gives health to the body, and in doing this it uses methods and is a whole art. For example, it gives you drugs; it gives you food; it gives you drink. Now as we all know, the kind of things which medicine gives us are not very pleasant things . . . so medicine is not very sweet. On the[2] [one] hand, [not] a very pleasant thing—on the other hand, it is very beneficial to man: it gives him health. On the other hand, cooking is called in the *Gorgias* a sham art. Cooking doesn't help man by making him more healthy. Perhaps it should. What cooking is mainly interested in is making food, for example, taste better. It is strictly an attempt to make things more pleasant [and] is[3] a pleasure-producing art.

[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 332c5-d1.
[iii] *Gorgias* 463e5-465e1.

LS: So in other words, they are—the one is the genuine art, and [the other is] the spurious art corresponding to the genuine. They deal with the same matter, in a way, with food, and—

Student: I'd like to link this up with what I said here, because it somehow contradicts what I said[4]. I don't think Polemarchus regards cooking as a genuine art. I think he really thinks it is important that we have sweet things given to dishes, to meals. And then I thought that he was—that he thought that justice was something much closer to cooking than I did to medicine.

LS: Yes, but my dear sir, the subjects are brought up not by Polemarchus but by Socrates.

Student: Yes, but[5] he disagrees with Polemarchus's answers, though.

LS: No, in this little question regarding medicine, there is perfect agreement. But that is what I call the speculative character, the unrealistic character, of your paper. But on the other hand, you have seen quite a few things of importance. Now I suggest that we turn to a somewhat coherent discussion. One thing I know, that if Mr. Megati didn't speak more fully about the very beginning of the dialogue, this was not due to his unawareness of the importance of it, but he simply didn't have time for everything. Yes?

Student: I didn't understand it, for one thing.

LS: You did not understand it. All right, then I will say a few words about it. Now this is a dialogue taking place in a way outside of the city of Athens, where almost all dialogues take place, namely, in the harbor of Athens,[6] in Piraeus. And that's the only dialogue which happens to take place in the Piraeus. One must know a bit about the Piraeus; these are very simple things. The Piraeus was the seat of Athens' naval and commercial power, i.e., of modern Athens. You know, there was a simple cleavage in Athens, as you have it in many countries, including the United States: the old-fashioned people, now called the conservatives, and the up-to-date people. The old-fashioned people were the old families plus the peasants, and the modern people were chiefly the rural population and the democracy, the modern democracy. That's what Pericles especially had established. That was a new-fangled thing; and in the circumstances, there it so happened that the old-fashioned people were against the war, meaning the war with Sparta, and the new-fangled people, the liberals, were for the war against Sparta. You know? You find parallels to that sometimes even in this country. The liberal party, called in this country the Democratic Party, the war party; I have heard something in the last campaign. You know? It is not entirely unintelligible, contrary to a certain ideology according to which the modern thing, liberalism, commerce, is peaceful; and the old,[7] [feudal] thing is warlike. Excuse me if I remind you of these elements which are by no means unimportant.

At any rate, to come back: the Piraeus [was] the seat of naval and commercial power and by[8] this very fact the seat of democracy, of the extreme modern democracy. So Socrates went down to that—this is literally true, because the harbor is of course lower than the town. It also has a metaphoric meaning: Socrates descends.[iv] The term will come up later, in the middle of the book, in the center of the book: the philosopher descends to the cave again, to the political life.[v] Now

[iv] *Republic* 327a1.
[v] *Republic* 514a1-520d4.

why did he go there, which he did so rarely, as it appears? In order to pray to the goddess; it is not said which; it may very well be a new goddess, but it surely was a novel festival, a novel thing, innovation. You know? The new-fangled things are there. Socrates gives an extremely brief description of the festival, praising it as a nice man [would] . . . but that was all he says about it. And he's hurrying home and is detained by Polemarchus. Polemarchus: the name means, literally translated, something like warlord, which is important. The warlord commands his slave to command Socrates to stay, and so he stays.[vi]

Now Socrates had come down with Glaucon, the brother of Plato, and they meet then another group: Polemarchus, Adeimantus, the other brother of Plato, and Niceratus, the son of the wealthiest man in Athens, Nicias. You know the general Nicias, who perished in Sicily so miserably, [the] owner of big silver mines.[vii] Good. Polemarchus threatens. He says: If you don't stop, we lick you. Glaucon, Socrates's companion, gives in immediately. Socrates is silent. How Socrates would have acted under sheer duress, we do not know; how Glaucon acted under duress, we know. Then they go. Then, however, Adeimantus—he is apparently the better educated man—uses persuasion and says: Well, if you stay here you get wonderful things to see. And Polemarchus adds to that persuasion: You will also get a dinner, and[9] when we go to that night festival where they have this torch race in honor of the goddess, there you will meet young people and you can talk. In other words, food for every palate, and the dinner and the conversation and the spectacles are promised by Polemarchus. Glaucon again gives in. He gave in to duress. He gives into temptations.[viii]

Now only at this point does Socrates bow, with this reasoning: If it pleases, we have to do it.[ix] This is a legal formula. If the assembly decides by majority, one has to give in. So this is a brief enactment of justice. There is the element of coercion, and there is the element of persuasion there and their cooperation. That is what justice in practice means, and I believe when you look around you will always find that this is the case. And we see a subtle important difference. Some people[10] don't give in to the terror but rather to persuasion; others, the other way around.

Now then they turn to the house, and there they meet another group of five people. By the way, there are more people but they are not mentioned by name and we forget about them. [There is] Lysias, Euthydemus, Thrasymachus, Charmantides, and Cleitophon: five; Thrasymachus in the center. In the first circle: Polemarchus, Adeimantus, Niceratus. Adeimantus was in the center. These are simple signs of a general rule: that whatever is in the center is most important. Now why Adeimantus is most important of the three is obvious; we have only to read the dialogue. He is a chief personage. Why Thrasymachus is in the center of these five is also clear, at least already from the first book. Now here it is simple to see why the central item is the most important. In other cases it is not so simple, but the rule is universal. They find another individual also when they come in, but apparently separate from these five, and that is old Cephalus, the owner of the house.[x] Now if we count them—and we must count only those we are

[vi] 327a1-b8.
[vii] Plutarch *Nicias* 3; Thucydides 7.83-86; Xenophon *Ways and Mean*s 4.14
[viii] 327c1-328b2.
[ix] 328b3.
[x] 328b4-8.

mentioned by name—we get ten, apart from Socrates, ten in the Piraeus. Does this ring a bell? Pardon?

Student: Ten books.

LS: No,[11] Plato didn't count on that. Yes? Can you tell your colleagues?

Student: Well, the Thirty were of the reaction to the Peloponnesian War and the democracy, and an unsuccessful purge of the democracy.

LS: In 403. And there during this so-called Thirty Tyrants, oligarchic rebellion, there was a—there were ten in the Piraeus, namely, the ten officials in charge of the Piraeus. That reminds you of that—I would like to interpret it briefly. That could be developed at greater length partly on the basis of what we learn from book 8 on democracy, and Mr. Megati wisely drew on this information in principle. By this I do not mean that I would agree with every point he makes. So[12] Athens is in a state of decay. That is somewhere toward the end of the Peleponnesian War, and [the city] is in a state of decay; and what we learn later from the eighth book is [that] democracy is decay, not the most extreme form of decay, but it is decay. And that is somehow the background of all these people assembled there. Otherwise this absolutely brutal and irrational attack on democracy in the eighth book would be wholly unintelligible—I mean, [the] definition of democracy [there], that the brutes do no longer obey, you know, and a few others.[xi] It is a most atrocious statement,[13] but that is part of this drama. This is an antidemocratic meeting, at least anti-*extreme* democratic meeting; therefore reform, return to the old order, reaction.

This reaction succeeded in 403, say, about seven years later than this dialogue took place. How did the people mentioned here fare under the reaction, under the oligarchy? Do you remember? They were victims. Niceratus was executed.[xii] The whole family of Cephalus was very badly treated. There is a speech of Lysias—Lysias was an oligarch—in which (I forget now the number) this is fully developed.[xiii] We have here people who were not democrats, who were even anti-democrats, but who were victims of the violent oligarchy. That is a kind of irony which Plato frequently makes. In the *Seventh Letter* Plato says that he was, as a young man, in favor of these reactionaries. And then these reactionaries came to power, and then the thing happened which happens on such occasions—it has happened a few times in our century in some places. And then Plato says, after these people—his friends, in a way—had come to power, the old detested democracy looked like the golden age, because that was infinitely worse than the decayed democracy was.[xiv] Something of this kind is underlying the *Republic.* Here are people who are aware of the fact of decay and are concerned with an improvement, and yet—a radical change is needed, but the overall message of the *Republic,* I would venture to say, is this: that the improvement cannot take place on the political plane. It must take place on another plane, and what that plane is will be developed gradually.

[xi] 562d9-563d3.
[xii] Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.3.39.
[xiii] Lysias *Against Eratosthenes* 4-23.
[xiv] Plato *Seventh Letter* 324c2-325a5. See Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy and Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959, 1988), 54-55.

Now Socrates, being a well-bred man, of course greets the old Cephalus emphatically. I mean, he doesn't greet Thrasymachus and the others. He approaches Cephalus, and we see that Cephalus knows Socrates.[xv] These things are not quite unimportant, I mean, that he knows him. I would like to mention the fact that Cephalus and his family were not Athenian citizens but resident aliens or metics. That is also part of the decay. You see, you don't have the old ruling nobility of fine families together, country-club like, but you have here the elements of decay: Piraeus, metics, and foreign sophists—Thrasymachus and his Athenian followers. So it appears also in passing that Socrates is not very old at the time. Cephalus is definitely older.[14] This would roughly fit with what one can assume to be the date of the dialogue, that Socrates was about in the fifties or so, high fifties perhaps. It is not very important.

Now we have then—we may go back to some details later—[15]a conversation with Cephalus.[16] Socrates did not go there to Cephalus's house in order to have a discussion of justice, of course. No one[17] had this intention. It came up, and it is important to see how it came up. Hitherto, Socrates's staying in the Piraeus was not due to his own volition. I mean, in a way he was forced by the strong arms of these people or at least by their begging him to stay there. From this point of view, the *Republic* is a compulsory dialogue: you know, a dialogue imposed on Socrates, not one [18]for which he goes in spontaneously. The simple example: *Charmides*. Socrates rushes, after having returned from this war, to the gymnasium to find out what is new in philosophy, in highbrow matters in Athens, spontaneously.[xvi] And take at the other extreme his big dialogue with the city of Athens, *The Apology of Socrates*, which is surely a compulsory dialogue; and there are others which are clearly—the *Euthyphron* is clearly a compulsory [dialogue]; he is compelled to have this conversation. The *Republic* is in between; it is not entirely one or the other.

So[19] how does the subject, justice, come up? In a very natural manner. Socrates asks Cephalus a most pertinent question. I mean not the point of view of our somewhat soft gentleness; I believe today some[20] old people would resent being asked about their old age, but these were tougher people, and Socrates asks Cephalus about the most appropriate subject, namely, where he can learn something from Cephalus. Now what does Cephalus surely know better than Socrates? How it feels to be a very old man. So he asks him:[21] What is old age, pleasant or unpleasant, hard or soft? And most people are pleased to display their knowledge, and therefore Cephalus is not hurt by the reference to his old age but is pleased to have an opportunity to display his superior knowledge to a man as knowledgeable as Socrates was supposed to be. And[22] the gist of his statement is: Old age is not bad. People are mistaken when they claim about it, but it depends entirely on your character, what kind of a fellow you are; and does it not depend also what kind of a fellow you are when you are young? So old age is not an important consideration. Character is the cause, is what is responsible.[xvii] This word is very much emphasized. And then, however, he makes another point and that he makes at great length without any instigation on Socrates's part. Why is old age such a blessing, such a relief, Mr. Megati? According to Cephalus. Yes, you know, but you learn from Cephalus.

[xv] Plato *Republic* 328b8-e7.
[xvi] *Charmides* 153a1-d5.
[xvii] *Republic* 328d7-329d6.

Mr. Megati: Because he is free from the desires of the body.

LS: That is a bit general.

Student: You become free from what Socrates calls—let me think—"love."

LS: Let us make it a hundred percent clear. And we are no longer living in the Victorian age: let us say "sex." How is that? So it is wonderful to get rid of this terrible tyrant, and that he doesn't say in his own name to begin with; he says it in the name of such a wonderfully noble poet as Sophocles, Sophocles who wrote perhaps the most beautiful poem on *eros* ever written, I mean the choral song to [*eros* in] *Antigone*.[xviii] Sophocles said: Thank god to be rid of that tyrant. When you compare this report about Sophocles with what Cephalus himself says—we cannot read all these passages; it is in 329c and 329d—you see that Cephalus is even more convinced of that than Sophocles was. Sophocles used only the singular and he, Cephalus, uses the plural.

Now this is a point which is[23] important for a number of reasons. In the first place, it throws some light on Cephalus, I mean when[24] [Sophocles]—I don't remember that[25] [Sophocles] ever said that—thanks god that he is old because of having gotten rid of the tyrant. But it throws some light—and there is also this difference: Sophocles was of course much more decent than Cephalus was. Some fellow asked him: Do you still have these pleasures? And then Sophocles, in self-defense, instead of revealing the truth that he is perhaps no longer physically capable, he says: Thank god that I don't do it anymore. So. And now Cephalus says it spontaneously, you know? That is a much cruder man, obviously, than[26] [Sophocles] is, and a man very much concerned with this kind of thing. You see,[27] when you read the first section, this Cephalus section, the impression you get is [of] a wonderfully nice gentleman, and Socrates says so from time to time. You know? One of these nice old men whom we all like, he says; and in a way that is true. In the ordinary sense, he is a very nice man, but Plato is of course more than an ordinary observer. Plato, if I may say so, uses a kind of x-rays, looks through. Now if we would do that, we could not live together; and if we don't have good judgment, our looking through to a man might lead to terrible distortions of all[28] the people we know. Only a truly competent and truly wise man can afford that luxury, but Plato has enabled us to see through that.

Now there is, for example, the remark right at the beginning: "if I were not as old, we (the family) would come frequently to Athens."[xix] That shows you what a [kind of] man he is. I; we. Yes? I mean, the family—*la famille, c'est moi*: the family, that's me. And he is really a father in a very emphatic sense, and Plato knew these truths, that the father in the full sense is a rich man. I mean, I don't have to prove that because Locke has established this a great length in—where is it? Chapter 5 or a later chapter of *Of Civil Government*,[xx] that the love of children for their parents is affected also by the prospect of inheritance.[29] And that is so. Machiavelli has expressed it in a much more shocking way,[xxi] but these things do play a role, whether the father[30] has any purse strings or not. And the father who really wishes to rule the family must[31]

[xviii] Sophocles *Antigone* 781-800.
[xix] Plato *Republic* 328c5-d1.
[xx] John Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapter 6, secs. 72-73.
[xxi] See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Prince*, 2nd edition, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985, 1998), chap. 17, p. 67.

be wealthy. So he is a man, wealthy. Of course, not a crude *parvenu*, but he is a wealthy man and he knows that it is of some importance to be wealthy[32], not only nothing to be ashamed of, but even something to be proud of within limits. And he is also a father in that sense that father means generation: generating children. Generating children. That has to do with *eros*, and that is an important element in his life, as becomes clear by this remark.

But there is something else which is in the long run more important with this depreciation of *eros* at the very beginning. That is the leitmotif of the whole work. Plato's *Republic* is his most antierotic book, deliberately. Later on, in the[33] [ninth] book, when the tyrant[34] is described, he is described—identified with *eros*.[xxii] Plato wrote also some emphatically erotic books; the most famous is *the Banquet.* Both books supplement one another. Every dialogue—that I say as a rash generalization based on my understanding of the few dialogues which I have to some extent understood—every dialogue is based on the abstraction from something very important and very relevant to the subject matter discussed, a deliberate abstraction from that. Yes? An example which occurs, which comes to my mind [is] the *Euthyphron*, the dialogue on piety: the word soul never occurs. If I remember well, the word "virtue" never occurs . . . The *Euthyphron* abstracts from the soul. The whole doctrine of piety would have to be rewritten if the soul as soul would be considered. In the *Republic*, the whole dialogue would have to be rewritten if *eros* were properly considered. Why this is so, why this abstraction is made, what it means, that subject we may take up on a more pertinent occasion. But I thought I should draw your attention to it right at the beginning. So hitherto we have learned that old age is of no importance, as a matter of fact. The key thing is character.

Now then Socrates, taking cover behind what the many say—in other words, it's not his opinion; he only says what the many would say. It is not the character which is so important as to whether old age is pleasant or unpleasant, but the *ousia*, the substance, wealth. In other words, a wealthy old man can have a nice old age, and a poor old man will have a miserable old age. That is important: wealth, poverty, not goodness or badness. That is what the many in their crudity say, to which Cephalus replies: Yes, wealth is important. But he doesn't put it so crudely. He says: Wealth is necessary but not sufficient. In other words, if you are a very old man and are rich you are better off, but you must also have a good character in addition. But[35] without the wealth, the good character wouldn't be very helpful, because you would become dependent on your children; you would be treated by them in a nasty manner, and so on.[xxiii36] By the way, you must always use your wits. He is speaking to someone; he is speaking to Socrates, and we know a bit about Socrates. Was Socrates rich or poor?

Student: Surely very poor.

LS: He says that he lived in ten thousand-fold poverty.[xxiv] In other words, his poverty was very rich. Ten thousand-fold poverty. He was poor. So the conclusion is that Socrates, if he is sensible—Cephalus, without knowing it, gives Socrates the advice: Don't become old. Yes? Socrates follows the advice, doesn't he? He dies when he is seventy, and Cephalus must be much older. You must take this into consideration. I mean, you know, after all, the author of the

[xxii] Plato *Republic* 571a1-575a9, 578a10-13, 579b3-5.
[xxiii] 329d7-330a5.
[xxiv] *Apology of Socrates* 23b7-c1.

Republic was also the author of the *Apology*, and a man obviously of an amazing memory, who surely remembered what he had said about Socrates in other places. Now this answer, of course, as Mr. Megati has seen, is a classic Aristotelian answer. Happiness requires at its core virtue goodness, but it is also in need of what Aristotle so delicately calls equipment, meaning means.[xxv] Means. If you are very, very poor, your virtue is not, to say the least,[37] very effective. How can you be liberal, for example, and munificent if you are poor? What did you say, Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: . . . You say that Cephalus gives Socrates advice. I would say that on the other hand Socrates gives Cephalus a little bit [of advice]. He[38] addresses him as in a way being on the threshold of old age, and this is the expression which is used twice, addressed to Priam.[xxvi] I think that what happens to Cephalus is very similar to what happens to Priam. He loses all his fortune, and he loses his sons.

LS: Yes, that is very good, but I think he was already dead in 403, wasn't he?

Mr. Megati: I don't know about that.

LS: Yes, one[39] would have to look up Lysias's speech.[xxvii] That's a very good point. In other words, this splendid—that is very good, what you say. Yes, he doesn't know. Eight years later the family will be ruined by this dastardly Critias, Charmides, and his clique.[xxviii] That is very good. Now Socrates does not praise this answer, that what you need is virtue plus equipment. He does not praise that. He does not entirely agree with this estimate of wealth. Instead, he asks Cephalus, as a polite man—Socrates, a polite man towards a much older man—about the source of his wealth: Is it inherited or acquired? And it proves to be that Cephalus is a perfect gentleman. He hasn't acquired his money; that is *parvenu*. He is a moderate moneymaker, as he puts it, namely, he only did his duty by his family. His grandfather was wealthy. He had the same name as he, Cephalus, the head man; and then there came a son, Lysanius—the dissolver, literally translated, who dissolved a considerable part of that fortune. And so of course as a man knowing what he owes to his family, [Cephalus] restored the family fortune to its old splendor. He was of course a good acquisitor, but it appears only as restoration, and then it is not as bad as if it were primary acquisition. He restores it, only I think he had a bit, yes, a bit less than his grandfather had, if I remember well.[xxix] So in other words, at least he is able to present himself as a very dignified man as far as moneymaking is concerned. And by the way, the funny thing, that he has a son—that was a common practice: grandfather's name given to grandson indefinitely. The son, he has a new son, the orator Lysias, which is in a way the same as Lysanius, also a dissolver. You see? So in a way he anticipated that without knowing it.

Now only after this answer does Socrates give a reason why he asked Cephalus for this point. Socrates, in other words, had guessed what answer he would receive from Cephalus. He guessed that this would be the case, but he would make sure that his guess was right; therefore he gives

[xxv] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1099a24-b8.
[xxvi] Homer *Iliad* 22.60, 24.487. The words are spoken both times by Priam, not to him.
[xxvii] Lysias *Against Eratosthenes* 4.
[xxviii] Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.4.19.
[xxix] Plato *Republic* 330a7-b7.

the reason only after having received the answer. He doesn't [have any] prejudice, you see. And in this context he speaks—he says: Well, the people who did not acquire their money, who inherited it, they are nicer people generally speaking because they do not regard the property as much as their own work. You know? They take it for granted. They don't have this egoism which the poets have ("That's my poem"), or which the social scientists have ("My book"), [or] parents ("our children"), this love of one's own. If it is not your own work, you do not have this kind of love.[xxx]

Student: Doesn't he have a little, the father for the child?

LS: Does he not give only these two examples: poets and fathers? Yes, but it is important that this love of—that's also a motif which will have terrific consequences in the sequel: the love of one's own, what belongs to me. That will later on be abolished in a way in the dialogue. That is already mentioned right at the beginning.

Now then we come to the third point. After having made clear these nice things, Socrates—not a word about justice is uttered. What is the greatest good, the greatest benefit, you derive from your wealth? And then Cephalus says, "when a man comes close to believing that he is going to die." That's a very revealing remark. When he was forty, Cephalus would have regarded it as utterly impossible that he could die; and I believe we all know that man is mortal and[40] no one really knows when he will die. He may die when he is forty or even much younger, [as] we can see from the daily papers every day. But [for] Cephalus, a very vital man, healthy, a healthy animal, this thought never occurred to him. But when he is getting old and he feels it a bit, he thinks: Oh, that might even come to me. Some of you may have read Tolstoy's *Death of*[41] *[Ivan Ilich]*[xxxi]—the man who couldn't believe that he would die. Yes, that is in him. Now then[42] he becomes afraid in such a state as old man. Most of his contemporaries are dead already. And why does he become afraid? Extinction? That I think he doesn't visualize, really; he can't believe that such a fellow like him could simply vanish into thin air. No, he becomes afraid of punishment after death for unjust actions. These stories which he has regarded as fairy tales told [to] little children become now—you know, he's an old man; little children, very old men come together: second childhood, as people say. Then these stories become credible to him for the first time since he outgrew childhood: Maybe there is something to it; maybe I should take out an insurance.[xxxii]

Now he knows this, the wealthy man—and here is where wealth comes in, because God knows whether even such a fine gentleman as Cephalus has not occasionally cheated someone. Now he can do something about it: he has the money; he can perhaps leave his children part of the property with the stipulation that this is to be reserved for creditors whom I have forgotten, and they will be paid afterward. And that means immediately a deduction from the punishment after death which he otherwise must fear. The wealthy man who is decent is less likely to have cheated or to have lied to anyone because he doesn't have the simple temptation caused by poverty, even unwittingly; or he is less likely to owe sacrifices to a god or money to a man. So in other words, wealth is good because—no, more precisely: wealth is good in old age because in

[xxx] 330b8-c9.
[xxxi] Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886).
[xxxii] Plato *Republic* 330d1-331a10.

old age you are with one foot in the grave, therefore close to possible punishment; but wealth is a kind of insurance against such punishment because it is an insurance against such actions as might bring on you such punishment.[xxxiii]

This is the nice gentleman, and I think it is important both to see the niceness and the lack of niceness if one wants to understand. I mean, if we see only the lack of niceness, then we are mere debunkers—how do they call them today, beatniks?—which is insufficient, because we are blind in one eye. But on the other hand, if we see only the niceness, then we are only nice and that is also not good enough. I mean, it is important to be nice, but it is also important to be open-minded, and that is not always the same thing. So.

Now here we are. Here the subject of justice has come up accidentally as a consideration which[43] is important for that old man. And Socrates asks him [about] that. Socrates doesn't say a word about—of course, he could develop that, but a man like Cephalus, well, we are sure that he won't suffer any punishment, but he will be treated by the gods with the utmost respect because we all know what a fine man he was. He doesn't say that; that's the point: Socrates turns to something which is really of no particular interest to Cephalus, one could almost say to a purely theoretical or pedantic question, not "What are your prospects after death?" and perhaps[44] helping him to find out whether he did not commit unwittingly an act of injustice which he now should repair. Nothing of the sort. He asks him: "Is this, justice, what you said: 'To say the truth'"—that stands for avoiding all lies or deceptions—"and to return what one has taken away from someone?"[xxxiv] This definition is of course not given by Cephalus; it is only implied. And what corresponds to that in Cephalus's speech? Cephalus had spoken of not deceiving, not cheating, not lying. That's one thing. But he had also spoken: to return what one has taken from someone. But has he not said something else? Did he not speak of another thing which is punishable after death?

Student: Failure to sacrifice to the gods.

LS: Yes? What does Socrates do with that? What does Socrates do with that?

Student: He doesn't mention it.

LS: Yes. How would you explain that? Well, may I use this colloquial expression? Use your head. How would you explain such[45] [an omission] in the case of a thoughtful man and a man with a tolerably good memory?

Student: Well, unless he didn't consider that important . . .

LS: They did not consider it important. In other words, no man will be punished after death for not sacrificing. That's one possibility, that maybe Socrates really thought so. The second possibility of course could also be that sacrificing is a form of returning what one has taken from someone, and I would suggest that[46] every one of us pay some attention to this possibility, whether this makes sense. You see, even assuming that Socrates thought sacrificing is unimportant, it is perhaps an unreasonable action. We still would have to know the reason for

[xxxiii] 331a10-b7.
[xxxiv] 331c1-9.

that, and the reason may be implied in this remark: that sacrificing would make sense only as returning to the gods what one has taken from them. Now we learn later in the second book [that] we have gotten all good things from the gods.[xxxv]

Student: A third possibility?

LS: Please.

Same Student: That Socrates does not mention the one thing that he knows Cephalus does do, because not only did Cephalus go out and sacrifice—

LS: That is a very good point. You are quite right. I overlooked the most obvious thing: that sacrificing is done here. But it doesn't dispose of my question, because the question would only return. Sacrificing, which is so important to Cephalus that not only [does] he mention it in his general definition, as we could say, but he does it before our eyes. Almost does it, because he had done it before—sacrifice proper—and then he has to look after it afterward. That's the reason why he leaves almost immediately.[xxxvi] So then, therefore, the question becomes even more urgent: Why does Socrates drop sacrificing in his restatement?[47] The first answer is that he regards it as unimportant. But why? And then perhaps the reason is implied in this general remark: to return what one has taken from someone. Sacrificing would make sense if the gods would have loaned us a religious expression [of gratitude] and we must return it. Now of course, if that were literally true, that [one must return what one has taken, that] would mean the gods—we would have to starve because we have to return everything, so it can only be a sign of such a return. They give us all good things and we give them some choice things as a symbol of our gratitude. And even that raises the question: Would this be a rational action? We cannot say anything about it here because[48] the question is raised implicitly. No answer is given. The *Euthyphron* would give us an answer. There it is suggested that the ordinary understanding of sacrificing means something like trading, trading between the gods and man; more specifically, like export trade. You know? The city exports certain things to the gods and the gods import certain things into the city. And [that] is rejected there.[xxxvii]

Now Socrates, in his statement of Cephalus's thesis, limits himself to returning deposits and being truthful to a friend. Did you see that, in 331c6? And that gives a hint to Polemarchus. Now what is the point?[49] The argument is very simple. Let us limit ourselves to the clear case of it: [it] is just, it is an example of justice that one returns deposits. Everyone would agree to that, but there are exceptions. If you have loaned a gun, and the owner of the gun has become insane in the meantime, you[50] act unjustly by returning the deposit. Yes, but what does it imply? Why is this unjust? Why is returning deposits not universally just but only in the majority of cases? What is the guiding thought behind it? On the basis of what principle do we qualify: returning deposits is just?

Student: Whether it will serve a good end.

[xxxv] 379c2-7.
[xxxvi] 331d6-9.
[xxxvii] *Euthyphro* 14c3-15e4.

LS: Ah ha. We make one assumption, then. We[51] all do that all the time. We make two assumptions. One is that justice is X, and mostly we could say: Well, returning deposits, not to take away something which belongs to another man, and so on; whatever it may be, we know justice is something. And then we make another assumption: justice is good. And this universal assertion that justice is good acts as a qualifier to "justice is X." Whenever justice equal to X does not happen to be good, we do not allow that justice is X. Is this clear? These two opinions are there and they conflict in certain times, but in case of conflict, "justice is good" has the right of way. That will be crucial for the sequel.

Now Socrates, to repeat, in his final statement on the subject, 331c6, says: Yes, well, of course justice, to be truthful to and returning deposits, etc., is just only if it is good. And the crucial qualification which he makes here—well, in the case of a friend. What that means becomes clear only in the sequel, and Polemarchus takes it up; but[52] this qualifier is introduced by Socrates.

Student: May I ask a question?

LS: Yes.

Same Student: A distinction is raised here between one ought to do something, it is necessary to do something, and justice. What does that distinction mean?

LS: Where is it?

Same Student: 331c8.

LS: "If one takes from a man who is a friend, who is in a healthy mind, his weapons, and when he asks it back while having become insane, then one ought not to return such like things, nor would the returner be just."

Same Student: Is the distinction made here between what one ought to do or what is necessary, and what is just?

LS: Yes, in a way it is a distinction. Yes, in other words, perhaps one ought to do that also—not to do it on other grounds.

Student: [Is] a question of necessity involved here?

LS: I mean, even Al Capone, [xxxviii] who was never particularly concerned with justice, even he wouldn't do it. So in other words, not only a just man would not do it, anyone not a complete fool wouldn't do it[53]. But since what Al Capone does is not identical with what is just, we have also to say how it would look from the point of view of the just man, and the just man too would not return it on slightly different grounds—and of course he would also not tell him the truth, that's clear.

[xxxviii] Al Capone (1899-1947), American gangster and head of the Chicago Outfit, which thrived during the Prohibition Era.

In order to see the importance of this brief discussion, one must consider one point. I think surely the note has seen that. As in many of these conversations, these absolutely untrained people, like Cephalus surely is, say something which is technically deplorably bad and yet contains very much sense. What we have to do is only to make it technically a bit good to see how important this thesis is. Now what is the traditional definition of justice which is reflected here? A firm will to give or leave to everyone what belongs to him—the Roman lawyer's definition, and it is the most famous definition of justice in the Western world. This is underlying it, only he narrows it down to cases which strike him particularly. I mean, the just man is the man who is not a thief, but what is the man who is not a thief? He does not take away other people's property. He leaves them in possession of their property. And murder and all other cases, you come down to this definition. This definition is very sound as far as it goes. It suffers from one simple defect. To give or leave everything [the use of][xxxix] what belongs to him, [or] what is his by justice: the definition contains the thing to be defined. In the late seventeenth century, therefore, Leibniz said "Out with it" and gave a new definition,[xl] and that created a very big uproar because it had great theological implications. But of course the issue was fully known to Plato, as he shows in the *Republic*. In the definition of justice given in the *Republic*, nothing is said of that. The reasoning in the *Republic* is more precisely as follows. What belongs to a man, what do we mean by that? What belongs to him by virtue of the law of the land. But what if that law of the land is unjust? Then it would mean that the just men act justly by abetting injustice. Therefore, you have to go back to a deeper consideration: Give to or leave to everyone what he should have, what it's good for him to have. That's no longer positive law. Then you need all the apparatus of the *Republic* as we will read it later. That comes out partly in the next discussion.

Now Polemarchus takes over as the heir of Cephalus. By the way, did you notice that Cephalus leaves laughingly?[xli] He begins to laugh, or at least—how do you express this in English, Mr. Kendrick? Starting to laugh. Yes, I mean—pardon? No, no, having broken into laughing. That is important. You see, such utterances, such expressions of levity as laughing occur very rarely in Plato. You must really watch them. Glaucon will prove to be a big laugher. Socrates of course never laughs. Adeimantus—yes, Adeimantus is a Puritan, a stern Puritan, as you will see: he never laughs. But that is very rare. This old man, feeling hell, and such a fine gentleman[54] and so glad that he got rid of this terrible tyrant: he laughs. It's very remarkable. That is part of the story. He is really, as I say, a healthy animal, and part of it is this inclination to laughter. Yes.

Now we come to Polemarchus. He breaks in defending his father's assertions, his father's *logos*.[xlii] —Simonides, the famous lyrical poet of whom only fragments are preserved. Simonides. To give you some notion of him contrary to the now-accepted notions, Lessing called him the Greek Voltaire.[xliii] That is, I believe, in the right direction. Now Cephalus's thesis as

[xxxix] In the transcript: "usum (?)"
[xl] Possibly a reference to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Codex Juris Gentium* (1693), 274-275, in *Politischen Schriften*, vol. 5, ed. Hartmut Rudolph (Berlin: Akademie Verlarg, 2004).
[xli] Plato *Republic* 331d1-e4.
[xlii] The tape was changed at this point.
[xliii] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon. An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), Preface. Lessing writes: "The dazzling antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, that painting is dumb poetry, and poetry speaking painting, stood in no text-book. It was one of those conceits, occurring frequently in

restated by Polemarchus is no longer Cephalus's thesis. He makes a change immediately, namely, he drops[55] lying. I mean, truth and—truthfulness has nothing to do with justice. That's out; that is dropped. But a more important reason, perhaps: this definition of justice given by Polemarchus is the only definition explicitly supported by a poet. Neither Thrasymachus's nor Cephalus's is explicitly supported by a poet. And a poet means a wise man. That's very clear. Most of you will know that the poets will be treated in a very dastardly manner in the sequel in the *Republic*, but we are not yet there; in this part of the argument, we still take the ordinary view. Poets are wise—I mean, good poets, of course; the others are not poets. [They] are wise men. So here that's the only definition which has the support of a wise man. Simonides's thesis is different from Cephalus's, there is no question, because Simonides says justice is to do something good, not returning deposits or so. Returning deposits may be good; it may also be bad. Justice means to do something good, and of course to friends. Somehow you can't do good to everyone. It is Socrates, as Mr. Megati observed, who brings up the subject [of] enemies, and thereupon Polemarchus goes into the trap, if you may say so, and says: Yes, sure, and to harm enemies, to do evil to enemies. That is clear. One thing you see here: justice is or remains a social virtue. Justice has to do with what you do to friends. Justice is not a modification of selfishness in any way. Justice is a form of doing good, and this [be]comes clear in 332c. What you owe, the owed, is replaced by the proper or fitting. There is no question any more of returning deposits or paying your debts, of doing what you owe, this legal obligation. It means now to give to your friends what is good for them, what fits them.[xliv] Mr. Kendrick, you know what I mean. Pardon? I don't understand you. *Prosēkon*, yes. No, I mean there is a parallel which makes this beautifully clear in Xenophon.

Student: No, I didn't catch it, though.

LS: Well, this is a beautiful story.[xlv] When young Cyrus, a future monarch, received his first training in justice—in Persia, they had schools of justice as we have schools in Greece, this reporter says, in reading, writing, arithmetic and so on, and there they learn justice. And he was given this problem to solve: a big boy had a small coat and a small boy had a big coat, and then the big boy took away the small coat[56] and gave him his own small coat. When this case was brought before young Cyrus,[57] he said: That's good. And then young Cyrus was beaten by the teacher. He had given the wrong answer: "If you had been asked to find out which coat is fitting [for] whom, proper for whom, then you would have acted rightly. But you were asked[58], "Who is the rightful owner?", which is an entirely different consideration. And[59] the rightful owner is that [person] who has inherited it or has bought it or has been given it, and so on, and surely not someone who has taken it, gotten it by an act of violence.

That's the issue, and that is what Simonides allegedly meant. Justice means[60] giving good things. Justice[61] is goodness. Justice is a form of goodness, at least. It means doing good to human beings in general and of course especially to one's friends. And that is not a legal thing. That has to do only with serious considerations: Does it fit him or not? It's needless to say that all forms of old-fashioned communism—I mean, *old-fashioned* communism—are in that. You know? In

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Simonides, the inexactness and falsity of which we feel constrained to overlook for the sake of the evident truth they contain." *Laocoon*, trans. Ellen Frothingham (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1887), ix.

[xliv] Plato *Republic* 331e5-332c3..

[xlv] Xenophon *Education of Cyrus* 1.3.16-17.

present-day communism, this is much more complex, of course. Yes, but[62] it has another very important implication. Then if this is so, if justice means to give the right thing to the right man, then justice requires judgment to a very high degree, because in the case of coats it is relatively simple if you are not too delicate, and it is only tolerably necessary that it fits tolerably and not according to standards of Bond Street[xlvi] or such like; but in other cases, of course it is much more difficult.[63] That is the last consequence of that . . . justice is an art, not an art in our silly sense, with a capital A, but in the sober sense in which medicine is an art, shoemaking is an art, carpentering is an art: judgment of the matter and what fits together and so on, and what fulfills its purposes. Justice is an art. That great theme comes up only in the Polemarchus section, and it will be very important.

Now justice is an art. If I state it in a little bit different way, you recognize a well-known Socratic thesis: Justice is a virtue. And what is virtue according to a famous Socratic dictum? What did we say about virtue? It is knowledge.[xlvii] "Justice is an art" is only a special form of the same thing. Yes, but is this not a flagrantly absurd thesis? Take the shoemaker. A shoemaker—we will come to that question later on, in [the dialogue with] Thrasymachus—the shoemaker may be a first-rate shoemaker. Can he not[64] at the same time be an absolute crook? I mean, he may be such a shoemaker, competent shoemaker and have so much professional pride that he will only make really first-rate shoes, but is this not compatible with cheating his customers regarding prices and God knows what in the most atrocious manner? Must we not admit that? Is it not necessary to make a distinction between the arts and what Mr. Megati calls morality? Must one not do that?[65] How can justice be an [art]? Is this not truly absurd, what Socrates suggests? What would you say to that? What is your answer to that, Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: I want to see if—I don't know whether I followed you. You asked if there wasn't a—

LS: Yes, we have the[66] assertion that justice is an art and we see that you—for example, the shoemaker, take the dentist, take any profession, however respectable. Is it not possible to be a very competent man in any profession and at the same time be a very great crook?

Student: So what is your question?

LS: Yes. So in other words, how can justice be an art?

Student: The art is defined by the end.

LS: And what is the end of justice?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well, you know [of] the interesting difficulty of the one hundred percent honest man who does not know any art whatever. He is therefore completely paralyzed in his honesty. The man who is nothing but honest is a wholly decent man . . . That is brought out. You remember the

[xlvi] A fashionable shopping street in London.
[xlvii] See Plato *Meno* 87b2-96d4.

case of the fellow who can only sit and watch the safe; and even this he cannot do if there is not some form of cleverness, as we see, namely, that he can watch from what direction the safe breakers, say, the burglars, may come in and so. That is the difficulty, but what I have in mind is something[67] [different]. To come back to this question: that is a question,[68] a very serious problem of this dialogue, to find out what justice is. It is very, very difficult to find out. You remember later on,[69] in the fourth book when they have discovered all the other virtues, they still have great difficulties in finding justice because it is lying in a somewhat dark place.[xlviii] There is—it is hard to see it. Justice is in a way more difficult to understand than the other virtues.

Now what I had in mind is this.[70] What is true of the shoemaker is true of the butcher, of the executioner, of any other artisan. They[71] all may or may not be honest; that has nothing to do with a particular art. So if justice is an art, it must be a universal art which must accompany all other arts so [as] to make the other arts good. The shoemaker's art is not simply good; it becomes good, fully good, only if the shoemaker is honest. The same applies to everyone, to every art; therefore, there is an art of arts. Let us call it that way: an art of arts by virtue of which all other arts are. I can show it also differently. The shoemaker can answer every question . . . regarding the shoes: why he took this material and not that, why he used this movement of the hand and not that, and so on. He can give you a perfect account of what he's doing. He can even tell you why shoes are good, namely, for protecting the feet, and especially against [a] very special kind of stones and so on and so on. He can do that. But when you raise a little bit higher and say—and people say: Well, [the] shoemaking art contributes to health, ultimately, and [to] welfare, the health. But if you raise the question: Why is health good? Maybe it is better to be dead than alive: the question which one must face. The shoemaker is unable [to answer it]. So you need an art of arts which ultimately justifies any art. You see, at any rate, [the question], and that is: What is that art of arts which[72] justifies all particular arts and which makes all other arts truly good? What would you say?

Student: I was going to ask the question.

LS: What would you say? That is surely Plato's—

Same Student: Art of all arts? Moneymaking art.

LS: No. What does Plato say? What would Plato seriously say?

Student: Justice. He would say justice.

LS: No. I think that is ambiguous.

Student: Statesmanship.

LS: Even that is ambiguous. There is a simple, very well-known word used all the time by everyone[73]: philosophy. I believe that is so. But let us not make such very general assertions. Let us see first what answer we get from Polemarchus, who somehow knows that. Now how does he proceed? The subject matter of justice, he says almost in so many words in 332e, is war.

[xlviii] *Republic* 432b2-c9.

Obviously. If justice means helping friends, hurting enemies, then where do these things really come to play? In fighting, where you need allies—yes? Friends. And then these who are to be harmed: the enemies. So justice—and this is never retracted, by the way, but Socrates simply says:[74] Does it not also have its uses in peace?

That is the way in which the discussion goes on, but we must stop here for one moment, because in this particular context in[75] 333a—that's on page 26, 27 in Shorey's translation, where he gives these examples of peaceful arts. The first[76] is farming. What is farming good for? For the acquisition of—how do we translate that?—of foods, of harvests; yes, of health. And the art of the shoemaker:[77] [What] is it good for?[78] And Socrates gives here a strange answer.[79] Socrates says, "I believe you would say"—that's not Socrates's answer [but Polemarchus's]—"for the acquisition of shoes," because Socrates wouldn't say the shoemaking art is the art of *acquiring* shoes but the art of *making* shoes; and this word *ktēsis*, acquisition, comes up later. Now that, I think, is a key word. The subject matter[80] of justice, we recall, is war. Polemarchus says that. Now Socrates suggests for the moment [that] the subject matter of justice is acquisition. Is there a connection between these two things, war and acquisition, may I ask? Pardon? Has war—pardon?

Student: It's what war is for.

LS: Oh! I see. Now we get an interesting answer. The universal art, the art by which all arts become useful to you, is the art of war. That is the universal art of acquisition, obviously. I mean, all these people must work for you if you are the victorious enemy of them. Is it not so? By taking away from the others, namely, the enemies, of course, this art helps the friends. The art of war is useful to the friends because it harms the enemies. You see here the two things are really put together, and that[81] reappears on the surface of the argument. There are always two things going on, two levels. On the surface of the argument we come later on to the thesis which seems very strange and very ridiculous: that the just man is a thief. But that is it. If the art of war—I mean, helping friends and hurting enemies—that finds its clearest expression in war, and here he has a very clearcut distinction between friend and enemy. The question, is he a true friend or true enemy,[82] which comes up later,[xlix] doesn't arise. He has the other uniform, of course. It's very simple. And it is obviously advantageous, provided you win; on a crude level, for you to conquer that enemy. And in this sense the man who helps the friends and hurts the enemies, the just man, is of course a thief on the largest scale, [the] most lucrative form of thievery.[l] Let us not underestimate this. I mean, shall I have to say that this is not Socrates's final opinion? But it is absolutely necessary to face this opinion. If Socrates had not faced the point which Machiavelli made later on with such great success,[li83] it would be criminally foolish of us to study Socrates. I mean, then he would be one of these nice people, you know, who preach decency all the time and really don't know the complexity of the issue. That it is terribly important for the sequel of the *Republic*. I don't have to tell you because [it comes up] later on.

[xlix] 334c1-335b1.

[l] 333e3-334b6.

[li] Possibly a reference to Niccolò Machiavelli, *Prince*, 2nd edition, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985, 1998), chapter 16, page 64; chapter 19, pages 76-78.

Now first of all, one point I would like to make is this. Socrates proves in a way that the just man would never harm anyone, on this very moral ground: that if you have a dog you are of course interested in having him—that he is nice to you.[lii] Every one of you who has ever had dealings with a dog knows how important that is.[84] In order to make him nice, you won't harm the dog. I mean, you will give him food, you will give him a nice opportunity for sleep, and some for promenade and other things. That is clear. That is a way of having a useful, good dog. The same is true of human beings. If you treat them nastily all the time, you should not be surprised if they will be nasty to you, so you [should] be nice to human beings. Strictly low utilitarian. So a sensible man will not harm anyone. But does he ever say that the just man will help everyone? Never. So justice is not human kindness unqualified, by implication. It becomes clear in the next book. In the next book when we build up the perfectly just city we will see that this city needs an institution called the army, the warriors. What are the[85] obvious characteristics of the good warriors according to the second book of the *Republic*?

Student: To help friends and hurt enemies.[liii]

LS: Absolutely. The dog and the mailman, and all these famous stories. They are like dogs: kind to acquaintances and nasty to strangers. That means to help friends and hurt enemies. To that extent, Polemarchus's definition is absolutely preserved. It only loses that ambiguity which it may have here superficially, that one thinks only of private friends and private enemies, but in the broader sense, fellow citizens and damned foreigners, it is absolutely preserved—and not out of any viciousness of Socrates, but because he knows that the *polis* is necessarily a limited society. I mean a society consisting of a part of the human race; whether it is as small as the *polis* was, with perhaps a hundred thousand inhabitants or whether it is as large as a modern empire doesn't do away with the fact that it is an exclusivist club, I mean, even if it has one hundred eighty million members. And the others are treated necessarily differently. The possibility of a war against the others or a part of the others is of the essence of the *polis*[86] [even] if, [as] people say with some justice, with some truth (justice is another matter), this is no longer possible given certain famous inventions of the last decades. That[87] would mean the greatest revolution in the political life which ever existed, if the possibility of war really had disappeared. But you only have to read the daily papers [to see] that[88] we have not yet reached that stage. Therefore, until further notice Socrates is still right.[89] And I would say, even if Socrates would [be] prove[d] wrong a few decades from now, it is important to understand on what grounds he [would be] proved wrong or, in other words, on the basis of what premises, what were the tacit or even explicit premises of the whole tradition effective in political life, not only in political theory. And now some people say [they are] about to be abandoned practically. Whether that is feasible at all is a long question, but we can of course not solve this grave question now.

Now let me see whether there is one—there are quite a few points, of course, which are very important.[90] I mean, all these things would need a very long discussion. We simply do not have the time for that. I will repeat only what I said before, the key point: justice seems to be useless in peace except for safekeeping—only for safekeeping, not for any use, because if you want to use something you must be an expert in that art. For safekeeping. Every fool, as it were, can do

[lii] Plato *Republic* 335b2-d13.
[liii] 375a2-c5.

it.[liv] You don't have to have any cleverness, any skill for that; and then to the extent to which this is true justice, [it] would be a very low thing if every fool can do it without having learned anything. That means, in plain English, a man who is only "honest" and nothing else, absolutely nothing else, is a rather useless fellow.

We are here at the opposite pole of Kant, who said that the only thing which gives dignity to a man is the good will.[lv] The only thing. That is not the earlier view. The question comes only to this. Plato wasn't limited to that. He said: Can one be "only honest" and nothing else? Must you not have a lot of judgment to be honest in any significant way? Think of the safekeeper: Must he not know—or the policeman, must he not know all the tricks of the cleverest gangsters if he is to protect the safe? And the cognitive element in what he does, the cognitive element is identical with the cognitive element in the gangster's art. It is not clear? I mean, must not the good watchman know, as far as knowledge goes, the same things as the burglars know? And so if there is an art of the keeper, it is identical with the art of the thief. That is absolutely true. Now one could say: But does this not show precisely that the question of justice cannot be solved on the basis of the premise that justice is an art?[91] The cognitive element is the same in the case of the burglar as in the case of the keeper. What's the difference? The one is honest and the other is dishonest, but this has nothing to do, it seems, with art but only with purpose. Yes, but can purpose be divorced—is purpose not also knowledge? That is what Socrates says. Surely that is a joke here. It is not this kind of technical knowledge which the burglar possesses, the shoemaker possesses, and so on; it is another kind. But is it not knowledge of some sort? And the knowledge—of course, what do we say ordinarily when we speak of honest people? What do they know? What do they know that the dishonest people do not know? The laws? No. The laws are known to both people. What do they know?

Student: The difference between right and wrong.

LS: But does not Capone—did not the late Capone know the difference between right and wrong? Why did he use the lawyers, and clever lawyers? That is not good enough. He doesn't act on it. What does it mean, he does not act on it? In other words, "justice is right," however you call it, was not an active, acting, energizing thing in him. Yes? But as far as the purely cognitive thing goes, there is agreement. Socrates, however, asserts against all common sense that it is cognition which is the difference between the honest man and the dishonest man. To repeat: It cannot be technical knowledge; it cannot be knowledge of the laws. What is that knowledge which they[92] know? Pardon?

Student: Of the good. The [question is if the honest][lvi] man has not some knowledge of the good.

[liv] 332e3-333e2.

[lv] Possibly a reference to Kant's statement: "Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a *good will*." Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Lewis White Beck, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959, 1976, 9.

[lvi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

LS: Yes, but can you say with any common sense[93] [of] a simple honest man, who never cheats and so on and so on, that he possesses knowledge of the good?

Student: [. . .]

LS: All right. But then that is the great difficulty. In other words, what Plato indicates and makes clear in this way in the *Republic* is [that] it is indeed knowledge, but[94] that [it] is knowledge of the highest kind. The highest knowledge which a man can reach, which a few men, comparatively speaking, can reach after the greatest effort: that is what knowledge of the good means. In other words, knowledge inaccessible to the large majority of men. Now if this is so, what is honesty, common honesty? Granting that the men who possess knowledge of the idea of the good are necessarily honest, granting that, that is obviously not enough for having a society. The majority of people must be honest. Without this kind of knowledge, what kind of knowledge do they have? Pardon?

Student: Belief.

LS: Yes, opinion. They have only right opinion, not more. And how did they get that? Somehow it came down. Somehow it came down. In other words, differently stated—and Plato has brutality, you could say, to say that: they are not truly honest, these honest people. They are not truly honest. And the remark to which Mr. Megati referred in his paper from the end of the tenth book, the well-bred, one hundred percent honest man, coming from a decent society but without philosophy, chooses, in perfect solitude, namely, after his death when he chooses his next life, when no one plays—completely out of supervision—he chooses the most unjust life.[lvii] That is Plato's assertion. There cannot be[95] genuine virtue, genuine justice except in, through philosophy. That he says indeed; and you can say, however, whatever that might mean, it does not in itself solve the problem of civil society, which obviously demands that there is a large bulk of people who are honest without philosophy.[96] Plato knew that, of course, but the problem is to understand that, to understand that, what Mr. Megati calls morality, which is not based on philosophy, which is in a way in agreement with philosophy but that is in a way truly the center, the core of society and which must be understood.

Now it is a bit late, but I have to say a few more points.[97] No, I think I leave it at what—a single point. The section ends again [where it] began, with Simonides. That was Simonides, a great poet. We have only a few fragments of him and we have to trust the judgment of competent people[98] in antiquity who had all the poems. Simonides is the hero[99] of Xenophon's dialogue *Hiero*, on tyranny, where—that gives us a notion of him.

Now[100] this section of the dialogue which begins with the praise of a poet ends with the praise of the poet. [lviii] The first book of the *Republic*, the negative book, consists of three parts: the Cephalus theme, the Polemarchus theme, the Thrasymachus theme. The Polemarchus theme is the central theme, and that[101] means ultimately the most important. From what point of view? In what respect? That we must find out.

[lvii] Plato *Republic* 619b7-d1.
[lviii] 331e5-6, 335e1-10.

Now[102] this central part, that is surrounded by Socrates's praise of poets. Let us keep this in mind[103] when we come to the devastating criticism of poets in books 2, 3, and 10, and let us see whether this criticism must not be restated in the light of other considerations occurring in other dialogues, because as I said at the beginning, every dialogue abstracts from something important to the dialogue. I have indicated that *eros* is that thing from which[104] the dialogue here abstracts. We will see later in what sense that is true. Could there not be a connection between the abstraction from *eros,* between the demotion of *eros* and the demotion of poetry? That would require some reflection about the connection between poetry and *eros*. If there is a connection, then it would necessarily follow that if Plato for one reason or the other wanted to demote *eros* here for a certain purpose, he was compelled to demote poetry too. And in another dialogue which praises *eros* more than any other, the *Banquet*, the two chief interlocutors, excelling everyone else in wisdom, are two poets: a tragic and a comic poet.[lix] That I think we must keep in mind, but we should never for a moment forget that our primary interest is political science. By God, we want to understand what political society is. Why can such questions as poetry, for example, be serious concerns of sober, down-on-the-earth political scientists? We must never forget that. I think those who have had occasion to hear of certain Supreme Court decisions will know the answer. Mr. Faulkner, what would you say to that?

Student: [. . .]

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[1] Deleted "practically—."
[2] Deleted "other."
[3] Deleted "interested—is."
[4] Deleted "which Polemarchus."
[5] Deleted "I mean—yes. But."
[6] Deleted "in Piraeus."
[7] Deleted "the warlike feudal thing is—the old."
[8] Deleted "this—and by."
[9] Deleted "you will get."
[10] Deleted "are not so much."
[11] Deleted "one doesn't know that there were."
[12] Deleted there is—Athens is in a state of decay."
[13] Deleted "and it is made—."
[14] Deleted "so—and."
[15] Deleted "and there is."
[16] Deleted "This conversations—."
[17] Deleted "want—."
[18] Deleted "which he"
[19] Deleted "how does it come up? And Socrates in the most."
[20] Deleted "people would."
[21] Moved "how does it."
[22] Deleted "he—well."
[23] Deleted "of—that is."
[24] Deleted "Socrates."
[25] Deleted "Socrates."
[26] Deleted "Cephalus."
[27] Deleted "what Plato—."
[28] Deleted "our—."

[lix] Agathon and Aristophanes.

[29] Deleted "You know? "
[30] Deleted "has the purse string—."
[31] Deleted "have—must."
[32] Deleted "Nothing to be—."
[33] Deleted "tenth."
[34] Deleted "becomes."
[35] Deleted "without the good character."
[36] Deleted "In—."
[37] Deleted "not."
[38] Deleted "says to him—he."
[39] Deleted "—Lysias—one."
[40] Deleted "one—."
[41] Deleted "*Ivanovich."*
[42] Deleted "—then."
[43] Deleted "apparently—which."
[44] Deleted "giving some"
[45] Deleted "a dropping."
[46] Deleted "we—that each—that."
[47] Deleted "that can only—."
[48] Moved "only."
[49] Deleted "The simple argument, I mean."
[50] Deleted "not—you."
[51] Deleted "have—we."
[52] Deleted "that is"
[53] Deleted "but also it wouldn't be—."
[54] Deleted "—you know—
[55] Deleted "—he drops."
[56] Deleted "because—."
[57] Deleted "[the future tyrant]."
[58] Deleted "which—."
[59] Deleted "that—."
[60] Deleted "in."
[61] Deleted "means—justice."
[62] Deleted "that."
[63] Deleted "justice means, yes, then it means"
[64] Deleted "be."
[65] Changed from "How can justice be an—is this not truly absurd, what Socrates suggests?"
[66] Deleted "—yes. We have the."
[67] Deleted "more—somewhat different light."
[68] Deleted "Socrates—that is."
[69] Deleted "when."
[70] Deleted "In the case of the—."
[71] Deleted "can—."
[72] Deleted "makes—which."
[73] Deleted "pardon?"
[74] Deleted "well, only goes on and says"
[75] Deleted "332e—yes, where we were—then he turns over to this question—to this question—where was that? No, I meant a bit later. I'm sorry. In."
[76] Deleted "are—yes, first."
[77] Deleted "—yes. Now where."
[78] Changed from "And Socrates doesn't—gives here a strange answer—you see."
[79] Deleted "He says, I believe—."
[80] Deleted "—no, the subject matter."
[81] Deleted "is—."
[82] Deleted "—you know."
[83] Deleted "we would not—."

[84] Deleted "And you can't—in order to make him nice, to make him—you will treat—you won't harm the dog."
[85] Deleted "characteristics of the—the."
[86] Deleted "and."
[87] Deleted "means—."
[88] Deleted "this—.'
[89] Changed from "So—and I would say even if Socrates would prove wrong a few decades from now, it is important to understand on what grounds he proved wrong or, in other words, on the basis of what premises—."
[90] Deleted "Yes, you remember that—."
[91] Deleted 'The cognitive element.'
[92] Deleted."
[93] Deleted "that."
[94] Deleted "this is knowledge—."
[95] Deleted "—cannot be."
[96] Deleted "but it—."
[97] Deleted "Yes—."
[98] Deleted "who had—."
[99] Deleted "—the hero."
[100] Deleted "the dialogue—."
[101] Deleted "is—."
[102] Deleted "in."
[103] Deleted "as a—."
[104] Deleted "is abstracted—from which."

Session 3: October 10, 1961
Book 1: Thrasymachus

Leo Strauss: This was a very good, excellent paper,[i] but it suffered from one defect, and I am going to punish you[1] [for] that by not giving you the highest grade. You were supposed to type it. And I think you may say that is mere pedantism on my part; I don't care. The rule is based on a long experience, and I would ask the other speakers to stick to that. But I'm sorry for that, but I think one must take the externals also seriously. That's part of "justice," obviously; you take an advantage, you know? You take more time, in this case, than you are supposed to take [. . .] time and justice. Good. But now let us forgive. Let us forgive and turn to the subject.

You made some very excellent remarks. I will not repeat all the good remarks. The main point you saw clearly, that the starting point of Thrasymachus—I believe that is nowhere seen in the literature, as far as I know—that the starting point of Thrasymachus is a perfectly decent view: that the just is the legal, the view which—where we have evidence from Aristotle, from Xenophon and whatnot, but common sense would tell us that this is the most natural notion of justice.[ii] The just man is the man who obeys the law, who does not use force or fraud but does what the law tells him to do in a given case. Good. That is of crucial importance, and you stated the main point very clearly. If the just is the lawful, which is such a very decent view, you get into the most terrible troubles, because you say then—there is a school now in existence in the last hundred and fifty years called legal positivism, which says law cannot be judged in terms of goodness and badness. If it is formally a law, i.e., for example, passed by a legislative assembly, or if it has the seal of the king as distinguished from a merely ordinary order which the king gave in a state of drunkenness, then it is a law and has to be obeyed, and there is no criterion by which you can judge it as good or bad. This leads to hopeless difficulties, because you have to obey any law, however foolish and wicked it may be; and if this is the case, then by acting justly you act ill, you act badly, as you can easily see if you think of any tyrannical law anywhere on the globe. This point you have made very clear.

Now, but it would have been good to link this up with a kind of literary problem. Now I would like to insert here a point which I myself—I own this—didn't know last time, and that is, I mean, the little things which one can so easily overlook. Polemarchus, you remember, comes in as the heir to his father's speech, his father's assertion. That would mean Polemarchus's assertion is identical with Cephalus's assertion, contrary to what we and everyone else believe, that Polemarchus has a new thesis. Now there must be some shift from a mere repetition of Cephalus's thesis to a new thesis. Now if you look up in the context, you would see that this is in fact the case: that Polemarchus, to begin with, merely says what his father says. He hasn't even listened to Socrates's absolutely

[i] Strauss responds to a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1129a32-b1, 1129b11-14; Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.4.1, 4.4.12, 4.6.5-6. See Plato *Republic* 359a2-4; *Gorgias* 504d1-3.

devastating criticism that if justice means returning deposits, that this cannot be the last word, because of the famous case of the returning of the gun to the madman, the man who has gone mad in the meantime. He has not even understood that. So he[2] bolsters his father's assertion by a quotation or half-quotation from Simonides.[iii] Later on, it becomes clear to him; he understands Socrates's very simple objection and restates the thesis so that it is no longer his father's thesis but his own thesis. And the change is, first he says justice means to pay one's debts or to return deposits, whatever it is; and then he says justice means to give everyone what is good for him, what is fitting for the other—which is an entirely different proposition.[iv] The first presupposes law: you give everyone what you owe to him according to law; the second is, so to speak, incompatible with law. And if you look a bit more closely, you see that this change takes place in the following way. He defends his father's thesis after it has been refuted in the presence of his father. The shift takes place after his father has left, and that shows that he is, among other things,[3] a very dutiful son. Whether the fact that he's dutiful is connected with the fact that he is the heir of his father—how does John Locke put it so nicely[4], that there is no natural law obligation proper of sons to their fathers after the sons have grown up, but there is a practical obligation induced by the inheritance. You see, that parents have a considerable pressure on their children, because they can leave the property to that of his children who has comported most, I think he says, with his will and pleasures. This is a very charming passage in the sixth chapter, I believe, of the *Second Treatise of Civil Government*. Does anyone know it by heart?[v] That's a pity. Good. So you see, one must really watch these little things very carefully and they are instructive . . . Now let us return to Mr. Gelblum's paper.

You also are perfectly right that he is completely indifferent to the difference between aristocracy and tyranny. That means—just as [in] the present day a certain type of present-day political scientist,[5] he takes it for granted that these different regimes are of equal value, of equal dignity. In other words, he uses the term "aristocracy" in a value-free manner. Aristocracy means the rule of the so-called best men. That has nothing to do with any genuine goodness, of course; that's the point. I mention one point where I do not quite agree with you, but we have to take this up in a broader context, namely, his blushing. You said rightly that Thrasymachus pretends. He's dishonest, and from a certain moment on he becomes honest, or at least so it seems; and you link this up with his blushing. Yes, but blushing can have many causes. There is here an indication; Socrates makes that. You see, that is the advantage of a narrated dialogue. You couldn't do this in a performed dialogue, that Socrates can tell you what he thinks about the situation. Strictly speaking, he doesn't blush—I mean, if we translate very literally, he becomes flushed, red. Now[6] what can be a cause of our getting a red face? Heat. It was a

[iii] *Republic* 331c1-d9.
[iv] 331e10-332c4.
[v] "[Y]et it is commonly in the Father's Power to bestow it with a more sparing or liberal hand, according as the Behavior of this or that Child hath comported with his Will and Humour. This is no small Tye on the Obedience of Children." Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, chapter 6, secs. 72-73.

very hot day . . . but I would say something else. Socrates says in this connection: It was the first time I saw him red.[vi] There is—pardon? Did you have—

Student: Anger. Anger or frustration.

LS: Anger. I would like to come to that issue now. Socrates says here: I saw him for the first time red. For the first time at this moment, but before Thrasymachus was angry, and we know that when people are angry they become red. Why did Thrasymachus not become red when he jumped into the fray like a beast? What is your explanation?

Student: Well, we don't know. For all we know, he might have.

LS: He might have? Socrates says he had never seen him before, and we have seen [that] he had watched him very carefully.

Student: [. . .]

LS: That is what I believe. He pretended to be angry. He pretended to be angry. Now[7] this must be linked up with two broader points, and I think I would like to proceed in what I believe is the most convenient, if not the most orderly, manner. In the two preceding sections, the Cephalus section and the Polemarchus section, there was a straight conversation between Socrates and the individual concerned. In the Thrasymachus section there are two interruptions. The second, which comes later, which I will not take up now, is where Glaucon comes in.[vii] Let us forget about that. The first is of a quite unusual kind in a Platonic dialogue, that there is a dialogue within the dialogue in which the dialogists are people entirely different from the chief dialogists, namely, Polemarchus and Cleitophon. Polemarchus, the friend of Socrates, [and] Cleitophon, the friend of Thrasymachus, have a conversation within the conversation.[viii] I call it for myself the intermezzo. This is a series of seven speeches altogether, and according to the rule which I cannot prove but which I know from long practice is a good rule, I always look at the center. Now what is in the center of this intermezzo? Let us see. Where is that? In 340 or thereabouts. Yes? Can you look that up? Yes, 340a to b. There are seven speeches, and the middle speech is the most important according to a purely hypothetical rule. I mean, it must be checked in each particular case. It is a rule of prudence, not a mathematical certainty. What[8] is the central statement? Cleitophon speaking; what does he say? Cleitophon, the follower of Thrasymachus, what does he say? Pardon?

Student: Yes, Cleitophon? "Of course," said Cleitophon?

LS: No, no.

Same Student: "Thrasymachus himself admits—"

[vi] Plato *Republic* 350c12-d3.
[vii] 347a7-348b7.
[viii] 340a1-b9.

LS: No, no, but read—the center of seven is four, as every arithmetician knows, and so that is—

Same Student: Sentence four?

LS: No. First Polemarchus speaks, and Cleitophon answers. Then Polemarchus speaks; then Cleitophon answers. That's the fourth: "for to do what has been commanded by the rulers is the just." This is what Thrasymachus has said. That is the key. Thrasymachus says—that is the starting point. And now the transition is very simple. What is that, what the rulers command? I mean, what form takes this on ordinarily? Answer: the laws. That is the simple point. That, I think,[9] might be the best starting point.

Now then let us consider something else. Incidentally, one must also discuss the question—but we cannot lose ourselves in these extremely interesting detailshy : Why [is there] the opportunity for such an intermezzo? After all, there must be—you know that if people have a heated discussion, and suddenly two other people who were silent have a discussion [while] the others, the chief interlocutors, are silent: How come? Well, I think that is easy to see here. Thrasymachus has been reduced to silence, and while he[10] tries to catch his second wind, this brief scene takes place.[11] Good.

Now, about Thrasymachus's character. You have made some very good remarks, but you have not pursued them sufficiently. That is not a criticism of your paper, because some things need a longer experience. Your paper was very good. You said—let me see what you said about it. He forbids answers.[ix] He tries to silence Socrates and he demands a penalty. I add one more point to the latter point. Socrates says: I would gladly pay, but I ain't got no money. What happened then? Pardon?

Student: They vouch for him.[x]

LS: Especially Glaucon. Yes, they vouch for him. Does this ring a bell? Did you ever hear of such a story, that Socrates was supposed to pay a penalty and couldn't pay, and friends of Socrates said, "We'll pay for it." Pardon?

Student: In the *Apology*.[xi]

LS: Yes. And who was the individual or the thing which demanded the penalty?

Student: He was condemned to death.

LS: Who demanded the penalty?

Student: He suggested the penalty himself.

[ix] 336b8-d4.
[x] 337c7-d10.
[xi] *Apology of Socrates* 38b1-9.

LS: Yes,[12] that was one possibility, but Socrates didn't volunteer a penalty out of a blue sky. I mean, who wanted Socrates to be punished?

Student: The accuser.

LS: The accuser, but still, the accuser was successful, wasn't he?

Student: Yes.

LS: So who demanded the penalty, then, after the accuser was successful?

Student: The people. The people of Athens.

LS: The city of Athens.[xii] That's one thing. The other thing is that[13] Thrasymachus forbids answers. Why was Socrates condemned to death?

Student: Because he wouldn't keep silent.

LS: No! What did the charge explicitly say? And more specifically, what did the charge as interpreted by the accuser say?

Student: Disobedience of the laws.

LS: Oh no.

Student: Corrupting the youth—

LS: Yes. Well it is made absolutely clear that the corruption of the youth consisted not in any homosexual or such malpractices, but in teaching the young not to believe that the gods worshiped by the city of Athens exist. That's made one hundred percent clear in the *Apology*. So the corruption charge is simply a specification of the first charge. The crime of Socrates was impiety, and impiety clearly stated.[xiii] Whatever John Burnet and other people may say,[xiv] impiety as meant by the accusers means that Socrates did not believe that the gods worshiped by the city of Athens exist. Yes, but what does this mean in the light of what we learn from Thrasymachus? The city of Athens forbade a certain answer. If someone raises the question, "Do the gods worshipped by the city of Athens exist?," the city forbade him to say they do not exist. In other words, Thrasymachus behaves

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[xii] 36b3, 38c1-d2.

[xiii] 23c7-d7, 26a8-b7. See also *Euthyphro* 2b12-3b3; *Seventh Letter* 325b1-c5.

[xiv] For John Burnet's claim that Socrates was put to death not because he was believed to be pious but rather because of his criticism of Athenian democracy and its leaders, a claim repeated by such scholars as A. E. Taylor and G.M.A. Grube, see Burnet, *Greek Philosophy, Part I: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914, 1962), 182-189, 117. See also Taylor, *Platonism and Its Influence* (Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1924), 109-110, 143 ; *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 7th ed. (London: Methuen and co., 1960), 157-160 ; Grube, *Plato's Thought* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1935, 1980), 175.

absolutely like the city of Athens, and that we have to link up. Therefore I would say he is the representative of the city['s] definition of justice. The city always defines justice in this form: Obey the laws. The city may have a profound understanding of justice behind it, something of natural law. That may be, but if it comes to a showdown, you have to obey the laws. Yes?

Student: Excuse me. However, there's one other point. When Socrates—I can't remember just where now—says that, it's towards 352—[14] 352a: "But Thrasymachus, just beings are really gods. Are they not?" And Thrasymachus says—

LS: Well, he says that also the gods are just beings.

Student: And Thrasymachus says—

LS: "Be it so." Yes? "Be it so."

Student: In other words, he's really trying to escape this—

LS: Yes, he is not interested—all right, if you wish it. You know, in this whole section Thrasymachus is very conciliatory. He tries to please Socrates. If you want it, that the gods are just, o.k.

Student: The question I had, though: there is no reason whatsoever to bring this in. It's extremely extraneous. Now if Thrasymachus is, as you say, representative of the city of Athens—

LS: Yes. No, it is not so simple. I'm not yet through.

Student: Pardon me?

LS: I'm not yet through. I'm only beginning. I only say if you look at this theme at the beginning—yes?—then I say[15] [Thrasymachus] behaves like the city of Athens. That Thrasymachus is not the city of Athens goes without saying. The city of Athens is not a teacher of rhetoric, for example. Take some more innocent example. But we cannot neglect this point which I'm trying to make. Yes? Now[16] I will make a correction immediately. Incidentally, that he is angry at Socrates is also—he shares this with the city of Athens. The city of Athens proved by its actions that it was angry with Socrates. What I would like to say only is this: that a man who behaves like the city of Athens, at least superficially, should present the view that the just is identical with the legal, period, [as a thing] is wisely done because the city necessarily says so. The city necessarily does not permit an appeal from its laws and its verdicts beyond that, and even if you have a constitution to which you can appeal from the law, as in this country, you cannot appeal beyond the constitution. The constitution is still the law of the land, and not law of an entirely different character.

I would make one point immediately, which I implied and which is I think shown by the blushing example later. Thrasymachus is of course not the *polis*, the city of Athens: he

plays the *polis*. This is his pretense. And the remark which Mr. Gelblum quoted from the *Phaedrus* about the peculiarities of Thrasymachus's art of rhetoric, namely, that he was a past master of arousing passion, means of course also just as an actor.[xv] As a teacher—after all, if he teaches a future public speaker to get angry, he isn't angry in teaching it. You know? But he shows them how one must—with gestures and facial expressions, which are required, with expressions of the face, in order to be convincingly angry.[17] We don't have the time to look up all the passages, but there are plenty of references, I think, to Thrasymachus's playing. Yes? For example, in this passage which you quoted, when he says: "Now I believe you mean what you say," he says before: "Now I believe you do not joke." In other words: You joked before.[xvi] Yes? Yes, near the beginning, in 338a he says: "And Thrasymachus was obviously desirous to speak in order to show off, in order to have reputation." And—can you read it? Do you have that passage? Can you read it?

Reader:
It was quite plain that Thrasymachus was eager to speak in order that he might do himself credit, since he believed that he had a most excellent answer to our question. But he demurred and pretended to make a point of my being the respondent.

LS: You see, he pretended. That is the point which I made in one particular case. But that is true in a way altogether, and that is a very great question, whether, and to what extent, and why he ceases to pretend at a certain point. That we must see. Now why does he enter here, and why was he in a way angry, at least to the extent that he thought it is wise now to play the angry man? I think that is clear: that the result of the Polemarchus discussion was that the just man never harms anyone, with the implication that this is sound or wise, never to harm anyone;[xvii] that, of course, he can never admit, and he never admits that. He never admits that. That seems to him absolutely impossible, and we will come later to that. You must also have observed that in the first part of this conversation Thrasymachus is under the impression that Socrates is dishonest or unjust. You know? He says, "You are known as a trickster," and this kind of thing. And that is part—I mean, to the extent to which he has that passion at the beginning, it is that he is annoyed by Socrates's pretense to know nothing.[xviii] You know? In other words, if there is a play, a pretense on the part of Socrates and the pretense is, and this view is not entirely unfounded, Socrates does know a bit more than he discloses in the first book. Yes?

Now let us turn then to the first refutation. The first refutation, I mean, of the following thesis: the just is the legal, but the legal is what the rulers have laid down. The rulers, needless to say, can be the majority,[18] [as] in a democracy. That doesn't make a bit of a difference: whether it is done by the majority as in a democracy, or by a small clique as in an oligarchy, or by a single individual [such] as the tyrant. By the way, you should not speak of "despot." Despot is not tyrant. Despot is the rule[19] [over] a slave, and that is[20]

[xv]Plato *Phaedrus* 267c7-d2. Thrasymachus—who is identified as a Chalcedonian in the *Republic* (328b6)—is evidently the Chalcedonian man spoken of here. See 266c2-5, 269d6-8, 271a4-7. See also Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1404a13.
[xvi] Plato *Republic* 349a4-8.
[xvii] 335d11-e6.
[xviii] 336c2-6, 337a3-7, 338b1-3.

according to the Greek view a perfectly legitimate thing. What is impossible is only to be a despotic ruler of people who are not slaves.

Student: Yes, but it deals with the character of the rule, not of the man.

LS: Yes, but despotic rule is as such legitimate if applied to the right people. Tyrannical rule is always illegitimate. That is the simple distinction. But that is only in passing. So in other words, to come back: the rulers lay down the laws, and—yes, the laws—the just man is the one who obeys these laws. And of course the rulers, in laying down these laws, don't think of such nonsense as the common good—present-day group politics, there ain't no common good—but they lay down the law for their own advantage. Socrates makes the simple point: All right, but what they lay down as laws is not necessarily in fact to their own advantage. They may be mistaken. Let us not overestimate the intelligence of the governors. And therefore what they command in a given case may very well be to the disadvantage of the rulers, so if you obey the rulers, you harm the rulers.[xix] Thrasymachus ought to have said, and then he would have been safe, it would seem: What the rulers believe to be to their advantage, period. That's the present-day view, in this social science literature. Yes? What they believe to be to their advantage. And that is what Cleitophon says: That is what Thrasymachus meant. Why did Thrasymachus not take this easy road, to say, "I don't care whether it is to their advantage, but what they believe it to be their advantage. That's all there is to it. I don't criticize the laws from the point of view [of] whether[21] the law objectively is to the advantage, say, of this tyrant." Why does he not leave it at that?

Student: Perhaps he doesn't like being corrected by a lesser . . .

LS: No.[22] I mean, he is publicly humiliated anyway—pardon?

Student: Yes, but by a greater man.

LS: Yes, [but] whether he would admit that he was a greater man is by no means certain. Thrasymachus may have been much more famous than Socrates at the time, God knows. I don't know. Surely in that case he would not have contradicted himself. And Thrasymachus refuses to take this way out, although he is given an opportunity to do so. Yes?

Student: He wants to give a definition of justice.

LS: It wouldn't be affected. The just man is the man who obeys the laws, i.e., who obeys, who does what the rulers tell him to do by the laws; and the rulers are concerned only with their own advantage in [his] obeying the laws. Whether it is in fact their true advantage or only their apparent advantage doesn't make any difference. The definition would not be impaired, but something else would be impaired. Yes?

[xix] 338c1-339e8.

Student: I think that Thrasymachus doesn't believe in the absolute subjectivity of the ruler's advantage. He sees a distinction between[23] his true interest and—

LS: Sure.[24] That is quite true. But after all, you must not forget, a certain element of crookedness is not incompatible with Thrasymachus. After all, he wants to show off, as here we are told, and therefore why does he not take the easy way out? You see? Let me state it differently. Why is Thrasymachus interested in maintaining the difference between the true advantage and the merely apparent advantage? Someone in the back—yes?

Student: Because then the basis for questioning the laws opened up. [He] may have to save the ruler from himself, so they are encouraged to think about whether or not the law should be obeyed . . .

LS: Yes, but why should Thrasymachus have the slightest interest in that? Now[25] I propose this simple explanation, and I think there will be some confirmation later. If the distinction is not made, Thrasymachus commits suicide. May I ask,[26] from what does he live? He is a teacher of rhetoric, and of course that means, in the most interesting case, political rhetoric deliberately present[ed]. He teaches statesmen, actual or potential, how to rule. How to rule. He must therefore presuppose that the rulers need teachers. And for what do they need teachers? To take the most massive point: in order to rule to their advantage. But if there is no difference between true and apparent advantage, the rulers are perfectly self-sufficient and don't need a teacher. Look at present-day political science—I mean, not all political science, a certain[27] very powerful school. Political science[28] can't say anything about the value difference between tyranny and democracy. It can teach both the tyrant and the democratic ruler how they should[29] act in order to maintain themselves. I mean, in strict logic, an American political scientist could write, publish simultaneously a book teaching President Kennedy how to rule democratically and Premier Khrushchev how to rule tyrannically: same question of means for ends.[xx] Perhaps Thrasymachus stands or falls by his claim that he can be useful to the rulers. And I repeat, the greatest use, the necessity of use would only arise if there is a fundamental difference between true and apparent advantage. This has of course certain interesting implications. He lives from that usefulness, and [30] how does it work out in practice? Well, [it is] clear: he must be trustworthy. I mean, think of a ruler, a tyrant, who hires Thrasymachus for finding means for ends to him, and the employee uses this cleverness for making himself the tyrant. The stupid tyrant would be much better off without such an advisor than with him. So he must have the reputation of being trustworthy, honest, just. So he knows, in a way, that justice is good. Deep down he knows that, if only as a means.

I used to illustrate it by the famous definition of what politics is about by Harold Lasswell.[xxi] The motivation of political man is income, safety, deference—period. The

[xx] In 1961, Nikita Khrushchev was premier of the Soviet Union, and John F. Kennedy was president of the United States.

[xxi] Harold Lasswell (1902-1978), who studied at the University of Chicago, was a professor of law at Yale and a leading figure in the "behavioral" approach to the study of politics. He was the author of *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1936).

unholy trinity. Now what about Lasswell himself? Is he swayed entirely by concern with his income, safety, and deference? Then, well, why do we take him differently than any politician in any corrupt state or municipality? Income, safety, deference can all be gained by clever dishonesty, there is no question. But you must not be known for that. That's a great difficulty. And therefore[31] the simple explanation, Lasswell would [not] let himself out very easily[32] by saying [that] the best way to deference is disinterested search for the truth. That we do not know. We have seen people who are much more successful than any university professor who were not dedicated to the search for the truth. That creates a different problem. So in other words, these are things which play a role here. These are not puppets; these are human beings, and circumstance in a specific way and these circumstances affect them. Thrasymachus is not identical with the abstract thesis. He has some axe to grind. In fairness, we would have to say Socrates too, but that would be infinitely more difficult to find out. The axe of a man like Socrates, if we still can call that an axe in the last analysis, [would be infinitely more difficult to find out] than that of a relatively simple man like Thrasymachus.

Now in this connection, and that is very important, the question of the arts comes up. And it is interesting, contrary to the Polemarchus section, that in this section Thrasymachus is the one who introduces the arts, in 340d2, where he brings in the first the example of the physician.[33] The immediate context: Do you remember that, Mr. Gelblum? What it is? Thrasymachus wants to assert that the ruler—of course only the real advantage, not the apparent advantage of the ruler is supposed. And in order to defend that, he says if a ruler acts only on his sham advantage, not on his true advantage, to that extent he is not a ruler. And he illustrates this by the example of the artisan, especially the physician: if a physician makes a mistake, as we say, Thrasymachus says, with some justice, to that extent he is not a physician. He is a failing physician, but not a physician. And what is true of the physician is true of the ruler. The tacit premise is [that] ruling is an art like medicine, like [the art of the] shoemaker, like [the art of the] lockmaker, and so on.

Now what Socrates does now is perfectly legitimate and also not quite legitimate—I mean, perfectly legitimate insofar as he hangs Thrasymachus with Thrasymachus's own rope. The illegitimate thing is that he doesn't bring out the point which is here completely disregarded. We are speaking now according to Thrasymachus's demand of the artisan, artist in the strict sense. As such he is infallible. That follows first. And secondly—that is the point—Socrates says: Well, all right, if you demand that, that he is infallible, I will show you some other conclusion from your demand that we speak of the artisan in the strict sense. As artisan–artist he is of course not a moneymaker. The shoemaker as shoemaker is a man who is competent to make shoes, not the man who is competent to earn money. That has nothing to do with the art of shoemaking for the very simple reason: because the physician also is a moneymaker, and that is not peculiar to the art of shoemaking or to the art of the physician, and so on. Moreover, and that is implied, as an artisan–artist strictly understood, he is a servant and not a ruler. In the case of the physician, he is the servant of the patient; and of the shoemaker, he is the servant of the feet of his customers, and so on.[34] I know of no good English word which expresses what Socrates is driving at. I can express it by a German word which I will use for a moment: *Sachlichkeit*. It is between what present-day English means by objectivity and dedication.

He is completely dedicated. He is not concerned with himself qua physician, he is concerned with the health of the patient. He is simply a servant. Now if this is so, and if ruling is an art, it is clear that Thrasymachus is wrong. Thrasymachus is pared on his own sword, namely, "I want to speak of the artist in the strict sense so if that if you want it I give it to you and you will see what follows from that."[xxii]

Student: Could we not translate "professional"?

LS: Perhaps. That's part of it. Yes.[35] I think "professional" is a bit weaker, therefore I use "dedication" also as a part of the story. The artisan is not concerned at all with his own good but with other people's good: the patients, the people who want shoes and so on. But to be concerned with other people's good and only with that, that means to be just in the fullest sense. He is completely altruistic. The artisan as artisan is essentially just. Surely that raises a difficulty. I mean, it[36] [solves] quite a few. Justice, the virtues, can be understood as arts. Virtue[37] is identical with knowledge. We know that this is somehow in the back of Socrates's mind, although not in this simplistic form. But it also creates some difficulties.[38] The implication is this. If this is the artisan, then the art is not good for the artisan. It is only good for the others, and then—well, the poor artisan has, after all, if he is not altogether inhuman . . . also to have some good. You see, he derives no good for himself from this if he is an artisan. Even the reputation is absolutely extrinsic and uninteresting to the man completely dedicated to making the best, most fitting shoes for its own sake. Yes, but still he has a claim to happiness for himself, I would say. How does he fulfill[39] this claim? How does the shoemaker take care of himself as distinguished from the[40] [shoemaker's] . . . [xxiii] customers? May I ask?

Student: They all have money.

LS: So in other words, the shoemaker gets payment; and that is, we see, true of all the artisans and therefore we find out this strange thing. There must be, in addition to all these arts, these specific arts, a universal art, an art accompanying all arts, and that is the moneymaking art. The moneymaking art is the only art by which the artisan is concerned with his own good and which supplies him with a motive, with a sufficient motive for dedicating himself to the wellbeing of everyone except himself. You see here the difference between the Polemarchus section. There we discovered also a universal art. Do you remember what that was? I beg your pardon?

Student: The art of injuring one's enemies.

LS: Weak expression. The art of war. Sure. The art of taking away. You see now how mild Thrasymachus is.[41] He says no, the art of money[making], or you don't have war. And now moneymaking, exchange—barter, or with money—is the most obvious home of justice. Aristotle calls it commutative justice, the justice required for exchange.[xxiv42] When we ordinarily speak of honesty we mean that[43] [a man] doesn't cheat in exchange.

[xxii] Plato *Republic* 340d1-342e11.
[xxiii] In the transcript, following the ellipses: "(?)"
[xxiv] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1131a1-5, 1131b25-1132b20.

That you know. And that—by the way, Cephalus, come to think of it, of course understood also justice very much in terms of the moneymaking art. You couldn't be just in his sense, as he says quite clearly, if you haven't got money. You remember? How could you pay [for] these sacrifices and so on if you haven't got money? So Polemarchus really is distinguished from the man before him and the man after him, [in] that he sees the super-art in the art of war, as his name indicates, war lord, whereas the two others are the moneymaking [arts]. And later on, in books 2 to [the] end, the non-moneymaking people, Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus, control the scene.

Now[44] there is another point. In this connection, Socrates[45] develops a theory of art in general which is quite atrocious, but which is in a way imposed upon him by Thrasymachus. It can be stated as follows. Nature is bad and needs art to become good. Strictly speaking, if you follow that, you can't see with your eyes until you have gone to an opthamologist, or similar things. You know? Good.[46] But while the eyes need the art—the art in this case of the opthamologist, does not need an additional art to be made good. In other words, each art is self-sufficient, perfect; it is in no need of any higher art. I would say the thesis there is—yes, there is no hierarchy of the arts; [there is], as Mr. Gelblum very well said, a democracy of the arts. All arts are of equal rank. For example, the art of the bridlemaker is not subservient to the art of the horseman, as common sense and Aristotle would say, but the art of the bridlemaker is absolutely independent. He doesn't have to find out from the horseman what kind of bridle is best for good horsemanship. Every art is self-sufficient and serves those whom it rules, not the owner of the art. But ruling is an art. Hence, to rule means to serve for nothing, without any reward. Just as the shoemaker in a different case produces shoes—and whether he gets money for the shoes we abstract from, and we are entitled to do so by Thrasymachus's demand on art strictly understood. Thrasymachus is ruined? No. Because what Socrates [argues], the conclusion is—runs counter to our daily experience in an absolutely shocking manner.[47] The interesting question is: Does Thrasymachus diagnose the flaw of Socrates's refutation or of his own initial assertion adequately? Well, for example, he assumes that ruling is an art, an art like shoemaking, like medicine, or so. Is this so? Is not high-grade cleverness sufficient? That is the question which one would have to consider. And above all, can you abstract from the self-interest of the artisan, from the fact that the shoemaker gets payment? Or differently stated, is it of the essence of the artisan to be honest and even entirely self-effacing? Common experience shows that these are wholly arbitrary assumptions.

Thrasymachus restates, therefore, his thesis. That is in 343b. And now he has[48] changed his opinion about Socrates, as we see in this context. He does no longer believe that Socrates is a very clever trickster. Socrates appears to him now as a kind of mathematician who can follow an abstract argument with amazing clarity but is a babe in the woods, and[49] Thrasymachus must tell him the facts of life. He has changed his opinion about Socrates. He calls him, "you most naïve Socrates," as we can say . . . and now how does he show that? He takes an art which is much closer to the art of the ruler than the art of the shoemaker or the art of the physician, as Homer had already indicated: the shepherd. Homer called the kings the shepherds of the people,[xxv] and obviously—

[xxv] See, for example, Homer *Iliad* 2.85, 105, 243, 255, 772.

well, the shepherds take care of the sheep so that their sheep are healthy and fat and so on, but why do they do that? Self-forgetting and concerned only with the well-being of sheep: Is this true about shepherding? Every child knows that the sheep are fattened in order to be eaten. Well, you can also say: Surely the shepherds take care, are concerned with the sheep, but ultimately they are concerned with themselves. Yes, but here something very interesting happens. That's not what he says. There are not[50] merely two things here, ruler and ruled. There are three individuals: we have the shepherd; we have the sheep—I mean, say as [. . .] and we have a third item.[xxvi] Who is that?

Student: The master of the sheep.

LS: The owner. The owner. Yes? And the shepherd fattens the sheep not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of the owner. Why does this complicated relation—why does he do that? Let us apply it to the interesting case, that of the political rule. Where does the political ruler come in here in this? Help me.[51] Who derives the benefit? For whose ultimate benefit are the ruled milked? Here we have—the equivalent of the owner is of course the governor, the governors. Who are the sheep? Obviously, the subjects. Yes? Who are the shepherds?

Student: Rhetoricians.

LS: Yes, him: Thrasymachus. Inadvertently he thinks of his own very interesting case. We can say—I mean to make a joke which is not merely a joke—the political scientist, the man wiser than the rulers. And now we make a strange observation which Thrasymachus lets out of the bag, in case we don't know the facts of life we can take cognizance of them: the men wiser than the rulers, the shepherds who fatten the sheep for the rulers, get much less than the rulers. And I believe if you would look at[52] income statistics you would see that this is correct.

Now, but if this is so, we raise again the question: Is then the shepherd in this case not a fool? Would he not be much better off by becoming a ruler himself? Why does he not try, at least? What would you suggest? Why does Thrasymachus not try to become a tyrant? There were so many inviting places all over Greece. What would you think? Why does he not try? Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Ah ha . . . That's one thing. But also, if you look—I mean, how could he try? What is his technique, his skill, his art?

Student: Persuasion.

LS: Yes?

[xxvi] Plato *Republic* 343a3-d3.

Student: And you can persuade the master that this is the way to take care of the sheep. The tyrant has to work on the people, particularly the soldiers. Thrasymachus isn't a warlord.

LS: In other words,[53] Thrasymachus, I believe you would say, would be wholly unable to persuade a tyrant to abdicate in his favor, and he would also be unable to persuade a multitude, a political multitude, to accept him as a tyrant. Now let us keep this little thing in mind. Generally stated, Thrasymachus somehow knows in his bones that there are limits to rhetoric. That is a very important consideration later on in the *Republic*, because we will find later on in the *Republic*: there is a great scene in which Socrates says, when someone makes an unpleasant remark about him and Thrasymachus[54]: "Don't embroil us. We have become friends now, after having never been enemies."[xxvii] That's a key passage. But they have never been enemies, but now they become friends. Why have they become friends? Because Socrates has[55] given a proof that the best regime can be established by speech, by rhetoric: that one can convince the people by speech that they should accept people like Socrates as their absolute rulers. In other words, Socrates says here,[56] by implication, the right kind of rhetoric is invincible, is omnipotent; and that is, I'm afraid, not true, as Socrates very well knows. But here we have the first indication of that. Thrasymachus, the professional rhetorician, knows of course that rhetoric is not omnipotent. Incidentally, we were shown at the very beginning when they came and Polemarchus—you remember the scene? State it.

Student: Polemarchus came after Socrates and he was asked: "Why can we not persuade you?" And I believe—was it Glaucon who said: "Suppose you can't?"[xxviii]

LS: In other words,[57] how can you persuade us if we refuse to listen? Well, very simple: it's the end of all rhetoric, and to quote another expert in these matters, Hobbes: Whenever reason is against a man, the man will be against reason.[xxix] That applies of course also to persuasion in general. If someone tries[58] to persuade [a man] of something which he absolutely detests, he won't listen, and therefore you need something in addition to persuasion if there is to be society, and how is that other thing called?

Student: Coercion.

LS: Coercion. Yes, indeed. That is the point, and that was shown in the very beginning in this scene: a mixture of coercion and persuasion made possible this interesting dialogue. Mr. Faulkner?

Mr. Faulkner: Does the taming or caging of Thrasymachus cause Socrates then to begin referring to him as [. . .] most wonderful man?"[xxx]

[xxvii] 498c5-d1.
[xxviii] 327c4-14.
[xxix] Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1889), Epistle Dedicatory, xv. Hobbes remarks here, "as oft as reason is against a man, so oft will a man be against reason."
[xxx] Plato *Republic* 351e6.

LS: Yes, let us proceed. I mean, I don't claim that I can answer all these questions, but one thing is clear: at a certain moment, Thrasymachus is a changed man. [He begins to] behave like a changed man, and we would have to see how this has come about.[59] Socrates appeals now to Thrasymachus's justice and self-interest. He says: Have pity with us; teach us this obviously salutary truth which you own.[xxxi] And interesting[ly], Thrasymachus is not nasty, you know, and doesn't keep it for himself: he teaches it. So he is not as bad [as he might seem].[xxxii] —[60][Socrates] applied the strict speech, the [. . .] *logos [of Thrasymachus]*, to the shepherds, i.e., he demands that we abstract from the purpose of the shepherd's art. From this it follows that no art is profitable to the artisan. That's only accidentally and uninterestingly; hence, ruling is not profitable to the rulers. Hence, no one likes to rule. And Thrasymachus says, of course: "No, no, no! Everyone likes to rule." Socrates says, "No, because it is unprofitable."[xxxiii] Before we go on: But if no one likes to rule, or to enlarge [the point], if no one likes to be an artisan, no one likes to help others. You see that? Because an artisan is a man who lives entirely for others. No one likes to act justly in the sense in which justice is a form of beneficence. No one, at least, likes to act justly if justice is not profitable to him. That is what Socrates implies. That is very important. The whole argument here where the discussion with Glaucon comes in is based on this: justice must be profitable to the just man.[xxxiv] Socrates is said to have cursed him who separated justice from advantage, from one's own advantage. Cicero reports it somewhere.[xxxv] That's the same Socrates. That is a genuine remark.

In this connection—and later on you will see [that] Glaucon demands from Socrates, in the second book, that he should prove[61] that justice is choiceworthy even if it is in no way advantageous.[xxxvi] That is Socrates's commission, to prove that, by Glaucon. We have to see whether Socrates meets this commission or whether Socrates does not still hold[62] [that justice] must be of advantage to the just man.[xxxvii] Needless to say, advantageous doesn't mean to be of advantage to his purse or to what people say about him; these are uninteresting considerations because[63] [every one of us has] greater interests than those of income and deference, even safety. In this connection—that was the point which Mr. Gelblum raised—Socrates wants to make sure of Thrasymachus's sincerity, 346a, but later on he gives that up. Do you remember that? In 349a to b, a passage which you quoted, if I remember well. Now let us turn to 349a.

Reader:
For now Thrasymachus, I absolutely believe that you are not "mocking—"?

LS: Yes.

[xxxi] 344d1-345b3.
[xxxii] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxiii] 345b4-347a6.
[xxxiv] 347a7ff.
[xxxv] Cicero *Laws* 1.33.
[xxxvi] Plato *Republic* 358b1-362c8.
[xxxvii] In the transcript: "whether Socrates does not still hold Socrates (sic) must be of advantage to the just man."

Reader:
For now Thrasymachus, I absolutely believe that you are not "mocking" us but telling us your real opinions about the truth."

LS: Yes, well that is of course not quite literally translated. Literally, "but that you seem to say *ta dokounta* about the truth." Now *ta dokounta* does not necessarily mean what seems to you, but what seems, what is taught. It might have this broader meaning: what people, generally speaking, think about it. That is, the Greek is not limited to Thrasymachus, although I can easily see that one understands it that way. To which Thrasymachus replies—go on.

Reader:
"What difference does it make to you," he said, "whether I believe it or not? Why don't you test the argument?" "No difference," said I—

LS: You see, no difference. In other words, [what] Socrates says is in a way sensible. For example, if we have a discussion and someone asserts something, it is in a way uninteresting whether he believes that or whether he wants to have it discussed regardless of whoever holds this opinion. That's perfectly true. But Socrates here apparently changes his mind. Socrates[64] is first very anxious to be sure of Thrasymachus's sincerity, and now he says it's unimportant. Whether you believe it or not it must be discussed. Why is that?

Reader:
But here is something I want you to tell me—

LS: No, no, that's all we need for our present purposes. Yes. I would[65] suggest tentatively that in this last passage Socrates is trying to nail down Thrasymachus, and Thrasymachus recoils, and this is in part—shows the changed situation. In this interruption by Glaucon in 347a to 348b, Glaucon determines the method to be followed in the rest of the first book: Glaucon, not Socrates. Thrasymachus is not even asked, but also Socrates doesn't determine it. Glaucon determines it, and in a way, if the discussion in the rest of the[66] [first] book is so very defective, that's Glaucon's fault. No wonder, then, that Glaucon, at the beginning of the second book, says: I'm very displeased. But it was his fault. He cannot complain to Socrates about it.

Now what is[67] here the point? The new thesis is somewhat different, although it is only a prolongation of what was said before, because if justice means to be lawabiding, and to be lawabiding means[68] to do what is to the advantage of the rulers, i.e., to the advantage of people other than myself, then to be just means to be wholly unconcerned with my own advantage and to be concerned only with the advantage of other people. And that is, according to the crude popular view, foolish. A sensible man takes care of his own advantage. And from this point of view, justice is folly. Now the thesis is now discussed in this form: injustice, i.e., to be concerned only with one's own advantage, is better than justice, or justice is stupidity and lack of manhood, or however you might call it.

Thrasymachus states this thesis with remarkable radicalism, as is recognized by Socrates in 348e to 349a.

What I mean is this, and this is a question which might be well worth your while to discuss because of the many simplistic things which are said about this matter in the literature. There is another Platonic dialogue which has a very great kinship with the *Republic*, and that is the dialogue *Gorgias*. The *Gorgias* does not deal with justice as such, as the *Republic* does, but it deals with rhetoric but from a special angle, because the *Phaedrus* also deals with rhetoric. The *Gorgias* deals with the subject [of] just rhetoric; the *Phaedrus* is not concerned with just rhetoric.[69] [Since the *Gorgias*] deals with just rhetoric, the subject of justice comes up; and in the *Gorgias*, the starting point is simply this: rhetoric is an art like any other and[70] is a skill and can be used for decent or indecent purposes. For example, even a shoemaker can use his art in given circumstances; for example, for murder. You see this every day on the TV, how people trying to commit the perfect murder—and one way would be, for example, put something in a shoe which has a defect. I mean, [for] the details I would have to ask some shoemaker as well as some pharmacologist, but I'm sure it can be done. So every art can be used justly or unjustly. The same is true of rhetoric. And Socrates tries to prove that this is impossible,[71] that rhetoric must be an intrinsically just art.[xxxviii]

Great opposition [to this is shown] by two followers of Gorgias. One is called Polus and the other is called Callicles. Polus is also, like Gorgias, a professional rhetorician, whereas Callicles is a young Athenian citizen about to enter political life. Now Polus and Callicles assert something which looks like Thrasymachus's thesis, but it is important to see the difference. Polus—the name is colt; colt, c-o-l-t—you know, there is also something bestial [in him], like Thrasymachus: a young horse, a passionate creature. And he has, however, an entirely different thesis. Polus says, "Justice is worse than injustice"—in other words, against your advantage—"but justice is nobler than injustice." And then Socrates kills him by this seeming contradiction. [xxxix] And then Callicles comes up; in a way a more impressive character than Polus, but only in a way. And Callicles says: "No, Polus should never have admitted that justice is nobler than injustice. Injustice is also nobler than justice. The just men are cowards and cowardice is something ignoble. The unjust man is the true he-man, and who is concerned only with himself." In other words, he says injustice is both better, more advantageous, and nobler than justice.[xl] Thrasymachus is a very cold fish. He is practically silent about nobility. Nobility be damned, as it were. He is concerned only with the advantageous and he doesn't speak about these matters, and says: "Injustice is more profitable than justice, and noble or[72] [base], I don't care about that." That is important, because later on Glaucon and Adeimantus in the second book will take up Thrasymachus's thesis and we must see whether they refer in any way to the nobility issue.

I would add another point which is also characteristic of, peculiar to Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus, in contradistinction to Callicles, does not refer to nature, to something

[xxxviii] *Gorgias* 460c4-461a7.
[xxxix] 474c5ff.
[xl] 482d7-483d6.

that is by nature good or by nature bad, whereas Callicles appeals against convention to nature, which justifies injustice as both more profitable and more noble. Now what is the argument in this point? What is the argument? How does Thrasymachus refute it? That is the decisive and last step in 349d to 350c. Briefly, the similarity of justice and wisdom. Now wisdom you must not believe is here something very high falootin. Wisdom means, is here understood by Thrasymachus as cleverness, smartness. But of course it has ambiguity. Wisdom can also be something more than smartness, and the peculiarity of such arguments is that the distinction is not made. You say "a wise guy" when you say that you do not necessarily mean that he is a profound thinker but a man who is very good at taking care of his own interest. Now the point that Socrates makes is that justice is similar to wisdom. Justice is similar to wisdom; injustice is similar to folly. But if A is similar to B, A is B. You must admit, [it is] an atrocious way of arguing. Hence, justice is wisdom, and Thrasymachus is refuted.

But let us look a bit more closely at this argument. Justice is similar to wisdom. Justice looks like wisdom. The wise man, the man concerned with his profit, looks like a just man. What could this mean? I mean, in other words, what I want us to do is to see the substance behind the merely verbal exchange and refutation. You see,[73] to be similar means to look like. Justice is the appearance of wisdom. Does this make sense? Yes?

Student: Justice is the action, wisdom in action.

LS: Yes, but in which way? How is this meant here? Could it be meant here with a view to Thrasymachus? Well, is it generally speaking advantageous to be known as a crook? I mean, is it generally speaking advantageous? For example, would you vote for a notorious crook, for a man where they would say—how did they say in the last campaign: Would you sell your old car to that man?[xli] So I think not. The reputation for honesty is an asset, generally speaking, and therefore[74] a wise man, a man shrewdly concerned with his self-interest, will appear to be just. That is made clear later on by Glaucon beyond a shadow of doubt. But the true ambiguity of the argument, I believe, is this: it turns all around the word *pleonechtein*, "to get more." To get more.[75] What is the starting point? Say, a wise man in a specific case: the physician claims to be superior to the nonphysician, but not to the other physician as physician. I mean, you know, we take physician in the strict sense: a competent man. But the nonphysician claims to be superior both to the physician and to other nonphysicians, which is simply not true. The point, the ambiguity is this: to get more can mean in the first place getting more honor and money, and in this sense it is surely true that the unjust man wants to get more honor and money regardless of any other consideration, but what about the just man? Is he concerned with getting more money and honor? According to what Socrates said in 347b, he is not concerned at all with that, the getting more. He is free from it. But if[76] to get more is understood in a nobler sense, namely, being superior in virtue, and more particularly, being superior in justice, the just man has not necessarily the desire to be superior in

[xli] A Democratic Party poster campaign in the 1960 presidential election used the slogan "Would YOU buy a used car from this man?" together with a photo of Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon.

justice to other men, and surely the unjust man is completely free from the desire to be superior in justice to anyone, just or unjust.

The argument is, strictly speaking, a sophistic argument. But here is the point.[77] After this argument has been completed, Thrasymachus gives up. He gives up. I'm sure that Thrasymachus could have seen that there was something fishy. He might not have—you must not forget: we are in an easy position; we can read and reread and can take hours and hours until we discover the flaw precisely. A listener must be very, very clever if he grasps the flaw at the single hearing. You know? But still, he surely could have said it, but he gives up. From now on he's concerned only with pleasing: with pleasing, with doing favors, *charizomai*.[xlii] Why does he do that? Is it out of sympathy with Socrates, because he thinks that Socrates is such a babe in the woods, or what? No, I think he has seen where the sympathy of the majority [78]of those present was, and [79]he is sufficiently concerned with being famous, with being admired, and he is not as convinced simply of the truth of his thesis, and he sees how the wind blows and then he gives in. He is much more interested in his art, to be a first-rate rhetorician and know how to produce these passions, and so on and so on, than with this kind of thing which is wholly outside of his art. I think[80] he has become tame. That is hard to say, and I have not an answer to this question—not because that is a question which cannot be answered; I simply have not understood it enough. I'm sure that the interplay of both Socrates's very great dialectical cleverness and the seeming naivete of Socrates—you know, that Socrates is not such a dialectical crook as he assumed from the beginning, but there is some genuine honesty in Socrates—that the interplay of these two things[81]—and of course the fact that he sees these very high young men, of high social standing, not like these resident aliens; Glaucon and Adeimantus are on Socrates's side—does make an impression on him.

Now, but Socrates in the sequel then gives a proof which is, I think,[82] the only genuine proof in the Thrasymachus section: that no society is possible without justice. But this victory is also a defeat, because it applies equally to a *polis* and to a gang of robbers.[xliii] No society is possible if there is no cohesion, as they say, among them, which means if there is not a considerable degree of trust—and how can you trust people of notorious untrustworthiness? Within these limits justice is absolutely necessary, but this means, of course, as is shown by this beautiful example of the gang of robbers, [that] justice is needed for the sake of injustice. In other words, even if you want to be unjust on a larger scale, that you cannot do without associates. Then you have to be just towards your associates. Here you see that there is a similarity of justice to wisdom. These robbers are just among themselves, although that to which they are dedicated is injustice.[83] There are other arguments here which are also—we simply don't have the time for that.

I would like to mention only a few more points generally speaking about Thrasymachus, because he is a very important figure in the *Republic*, and it is a great error to believe that someone who speaks relatively little, as Thrasymachus does from now on, is for this reason an unimportant individual.[84] His presence is absolutely essential and it will appear very clearly, I think, at the beginning of the fifth book where the initial scene is re-

[xlii] *Republic* 351c5 for this exact word.
[xliii] 350d6-352a9.

enacted,[xliv] and now Thrasymachus has become a member of the group. And that is a most important change, because that means, in plain English, that rhetoric has been admitted. Thrasymachus, who appears to be the angry man, also presents himself, especially by the example of the shepherd, as the servant of the rulers. The angry man presents himself as a servant. That will remain true. The *Republic* stands and falls, as we shall see later, by the assertion that anger is a passion of the highest dignity, a thesis which is by no means simply true, but it has a certain plausibility within a certain context. But anger, we are told, must be ruled by reason. The angry rhetorician must be ruled by Socrates, and that is the meaning of the first book. He is now, for a variety of motives, willing to obey Socrates. But that must be properly understood. The true problem is not this individual from Chalcedon, but angry rhetoric. There are all kinds of rhetoric: there is also pleasing rhetoric, and there is also a form of angry rhetoric which we, to use another word, another expression to show that this is not[85] a mere riddle, [may call] punitive rhetoric: punitive rhetoric, a rhetoric which induces people to become afraid of punishment. Without that, according to Plato, a *polis* is not possible.[86]

The first book of the *Republic* reminds of some other dialogues of Plato. I don't know whether you know that (I must surely mention this) according to a view which is now generally accepted, one can know the sequence in which Plato wrote the individual dialogues. I know nothing of that, because that depends on very technical considerations of which I understand nothing. But the argument is in a way absolutely uninteresting, because[87] even if we knew with certainty that a given dialogue is written at a given time, we do not know when Plato conceived the dialogue. He might have conceived the *Laws*, his last work, when he was twenty-five. How can we know that? Therefore, it is ultimately not interesting. But at any rate, according to the popular view—this is the accepted view—there are a number of dialogues which Plato wrote in the early period in which all ended without a position. For example, the *Laches*, the question is raised: What is courage? [It is] discussed: no result is achieved. The *Charmides*: What is moderation? Same thing: no result. The *Euthyphron:* What is piety? No result. First book of the *Republic*: What is justice? No result.[88] This similarity exists regardless of what the dates were. But what is the difference between the first book of the *Republic* and these other dialogues? What is that? Pardon?

Student: Nine books follow?

LS: Yes, sure, that is clear. In other words—and perfectly correct. In other words, the theme of justice has—the importance of the subject is indicated; that here the skeptical dialogue is followed by a positive, constructive answer to the question of what is justice, that is important. But within the first book, what is the difference? Well, these other dialogues end [89]with the assertion of Socrates, and he has shown it to all people present that they do not know what courage, moderation, piety, or whatever it may be, is. Here[90] Socrates does something else. Here Socrates proves, allegedly, that justice is better than injustice; and then after having proved it, he says: "Well, I made this proof and I did not even know what justice is. How can I prove that justice is good if I don't know what

[xliv] 449a1-450a6, 327b1-328b2.

justice is?"[xlv] Do you see that? I mean, there is no parallel to that in these other dialogues. The treatment in the first book of the *Republic* is, on the surface, much more playful than in these three other dialogues. There is a kind of bantering which is not crude in any terms. One has to listen to the material: a kind of bantering. Thrasymachus plays; Socrates also plays in the first book. And this[91] must be considered. In the *Laches*, for example, the people who speak about courage, Laches and Nicias, take courage very seriously. Of course courage is a virtue. And the same applies to the *Euthyphron* and the *Charmides*. But here the chief interlocutor, Thrasymachus, does not take justice seriously. I mean, he is not unjust in the sense that he is a fellow—I mean, he makes occasionally a remark, when Socrates uses the example of purse snatchers, and he says: "Oh, that also can be advantageous."[xlvi] Yes? But somehow one is reasonably sure he wouldn't snatch purses, not out of deep moral conviction, but somehow that's not his line. He wouldn't do this kind of thing. He "plays" the unjust man. But one thing is true: he does not take justice very seriously, and that could mean—I mean, you find this very often among educated people, that they say: "Of course one is honest. I don't know why, but it just is so. It's terribly complicated to be a crook, much more easy to be honest. It's nothing to boast of, nothing of any interest. It is a convenience." I have heard this more than once said by absolutely honest people. His seriousness doesn't lie in his justice. That is a quality of no interest to him. His seriousness lies in his art, in his rhetoric. This kind of man exists. Why Socrates is playful is a much more difficult question, and I do not see that this question could be answered on the basis of the first book. Or do you have an answer? One point which I have had occasion to make in quite a few courses and seminars is [that] there is a certain simplistic view of Socrates according to which he is a preacher of virtue or justice in general, or justice in particular—and that is all [there is] to it, that is all to it. That is not even the main point. Socrates is interested above all in understanding, and it is clear to him, as it will be made clear in the sixth book, that if one is truly concerned with understanding the most important things, one will be "decent" as a matter of course, because one has no motive for indecency.[xlvii] But the prime interest is in understanding, even in the understanding of justice.

In yesterday's class[xlviii]—I don't know whether there is anyone; yes, some were there—someone pointed out (I mention this as an example, in conclusion) that Socrates of course was absolutely lawabiding and believed in the dignity and the sanctity of the laws. Proof: the *Crito*—you know, that Socrates will rather die than disobey the laws.[xlix] Yes, but what does he do in the *Apology*? In the *Apology* he says that if the Athenians would forbid him to philosophize, i.e., to try to learn, he would not obey them.[l] Now that means if the Athenians would make a law—that's the only way in which the Athenians can forbid something—forbidding, for example, that Socrates would go to this gymnasium and have these conversations and so on and so on and similar things, he would not obey

[xlv] 354a8-c3.
[xlvi] 347d5-9.
[xlvii] 485a10-487a5.
[xlviii] During the same quarter (autumn 1961) Strauss also taught Basic Principles of Classical Political Philosophy.
[xlix] *Crito* 50e2-51c5.
[l] *Apology of Socrates* 29c6-d5.

the law. So[92] Socrates is not unqualifiedly lawabiding. He abides by this law under discussion in the *Crito*, that's all.

Now what is true of law is also true of justice. Justice has many, many levels, and one level is that of simple lawabidingness. Another level came to the fore right[93] at the beginning. The first point which Cephalus made is: Justice is honesty, i.e., to say the truth. What about that? What about truth saying in the *Republic*? There is an important passage, an explicit passage. Do you remember that, Mr. Gelblum?

Mr. Gelblum: [. . .]

LS: No, not in the first book. The noble lie.[li] So in other words,[94] to say the untruth can be nobler under certain conditions, in certain respects, than to say the truth. So what becomes of the simple identification of justice with honesty, in the sense of saying the truth under all circumstances to everyone? That's sufficient. Yes.[95] And that applies to every primary notion. In other words, what we think generally speaking about justice is sufficient surely for all practical purposes, for almost all practical purposes. There are always extreme cases admitted, where it is admitted that one may deviate from this rule legitimately. Well, one case which is today I think not universally but generally admitted would of course be the case of espionage. I mean, if you happen to be in Russia and make some very interesting observation valuable to our government and would be asked by the police there, security police, and if you would tell them that which is not about what you have seen, I believe very few people would blame you for that, and many would praise you for having brought over this information. The most simple example. Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but I don't see that there is any evidence[96] that Socrates is a trickster. Yes? Remarks to this effect[97] don't prove that he is opposed to tricks as such. You know? That is the same thing: he doesn't want to be tricked;[lii] that doesn't mean that he is simply opposed to tricks. That in itself wouldn't prove more. Yes? I mean, for example, if someone complains in a shop that the shopkeeper is trying to cheat him, that doesn't prove that the complainant is an honest man. Surely not. It only—he doesn't want to be at the receiving end of the deception, that is all.[98] One could say even an honest man might accept the deception without complaint. You know?[99] I would say there is no shred of evidence in favor of your assertion.

Mr. Megati: [Inaudibly restates his point.][liii]

LS: I see. Yes, but that—in other words, he is surely not injustice incarnate. Injustice incarnate. That is clear. If you mean that, surely. But because the unjust man incarnate is of course very much concerned with the reputation for justice, as Glaucon [says][liv]—I

[li] *Republic* 414b8-415d5.
[lii] Possibly a reference to 345b7-9, 346a3-4, 349a6-8.
[liii] As noted by the transcriber.
[liv] 360e4-361b5.

mean, who are the people who openly admit that they are crooks? The people who have no choice, who have already admitted it in deed. I have been told that in penitentiaries the inmates refer to themselves as crooks and to the outsiders as squares. I suppose you are familiar with that. Yes. But that is not an act of honesty on their part, because everyone knows that they are formally and solemnly declared to be crooks and they have no choice. I mean, their denial would be wholly useless, by which I do not mean that there may not be some people in penitentiaries who have been unjustly condemned. Of course. But generally speaking, I believe they did what they were accused of having done.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, sure. That is as absurd as if someone who was caught in the act of stealing . . . would say: "I have not stolen." It is a wholly stupid and ineffective thing to do. But ordinarily, crooks, clever crooks, make sure that no one knows that they are crooks. You see these people who are generally suspected of being crooks, [who are generally] simple people.[100] Firstly, they have not been caught; and secondly, they are not crooks of the first order. Then you must—clearly, because to be suspect is already on the way to the penitentiary. The true crook—in that respect, Glaucon is absolutely correct—the true crook would never be recognizable.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but the question, however, is this. I mean, I don't say that this is decisive, what I say, but . . . consider. Could[101] [Thrasymachus] avoid doing so? . . . Can he ever get employers if he does not convince them by what he says [that] he knows the ropes? Machiavelli's problem when he wrote *The Prince*: he must show that he knows all the tricks. Otherwise, how would any prince be willing to accept him as an advisor? So he must teach all the other men. That implies, of course, also that he, on his part, doesn't aspire to any higher position than to be a teacher or advisor of tyrants and not to be a tyrant himself, because [102][once] that is clear, he ruins his possibilities.[lv] But the point which I think we should keep in mind is that Thrasymachus is not simply an unjust man.[103] He is not simply a just man, but he is not simply unjust. Otherwise he would never say that.[lvi] As little as Callicles in the *Gorgias* is of course[104] an unjust man.[105] Callicles is really much more "moral" in quotations than Thrasymachus is, because his primary motive is moral indignation, that the unjust speaker can ruin the just ones, and therefore one must be as tough as they.[lvii] That is Callicles's motive. That is not—Thrasymachus is a cold fish compared to him. Pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, sure. And a reputation for that, and I believe also a genuine concern with competence in his art. That you must not underestimate, just as in the case of Polus in the

[lv] See Machiavelli, *Prince*, Dedicatory Letter, chapters 22-23, 92-95.
[lvi] Possibly a reference to Plato *Republic* 343d1-344c8.
[lvii] Apparently a reference to Gorgias 510d4-511b6.

Gorgias. That's a very great motive. He wants to be really competent. That becomes independent of considerations of profit.

Student: [. . .]

LS: [. . .]

Student: Speaking of Thrasymachus in comparison with Machiavelli, the only difference that I can see between them so far is that at first Machiavelli is graceful . . . and Thrasymachus comes in like a wild beast.[lviii] Can you give some more fundamental distinctions?

LS: Yes, I would say this, that in these doctrines as Plato presents them—and it is perfectly possible that there were some individuals around of a similar persuasion who were much cleverer than they are, that is a long question. But the most obvious difference is that Machiavelli absolutely knows the point which Socrates makes. Ruling means serving. There's no question.[106] What is the motive of the ruler in Machiavelli's sense? Glory, eternal fame. In other words, something not petty. Yes? Not petty. And I think that what happens in the second book is a tacit enactment of this point.

Let me say these few words. At[107] the end of the first book, and even after the speeches by Glaucon and Adeimantus, we are confronted with this situation: we do not know what justice is; we do not know whether justice is good. We . . . have heard only a very strong and powerful case against justice from Glaucon and Adeimantus. Then Socrates founds the *polis*, and there is no longer any question whether justice is good. It comes out obviously. We want to have a *polis,* and we want to have a *polis* which is technically good; and then we are of course concerned with lawabidingness or with the other things which come in. But in this transition a very important change is taking place in the souls of Glaucon and Adeimantus, and to some extent of the others. Hitherto[108] [they] were attracted, the young people, by the tyrant. That is the real change. You know? I mean, someone [who] would [engage] in dishonest practices—a senator or congressman, a Supreme Court judge, or whatever it may be—that is chicken feed. But if you are the tyrant, then you own the whole community, literally. That's the point. Literally, it's their property.[lix]

So the tyrant is—that is clear: if you want to be concerned with the maximum advantage by hook and by crook, become a tyrant. And now Socrates shows, without saying a word about it, by what he does, this: What a petty fellow, such a tyrant. The tyrant: What does he do? [He rules][lx] the city [. . .] and he exploits it for his own benefit. Well, sooner or later he'll be murdered. Maybe he dies on his bed; it doesn't make any difference. But he will be absolutely forgotten. He was every day in the newspaper together with his wife or mistress, whatever it may be, but then nobody will even talk about him. We have seen some experiences in Europe in our age . . . He's nothing. He has a very narrow horizon, a few years during which he lives. But look at the other man, who has really a broad vision,

[lviii] *Republic* 336b1-6.
[lix] See 344a3-c2.
[lx] The transcript has ellipses here.

as selfish as the tyrant, but broad: the founder of a city, the father of a constitution, who is revered and gratefully remembered by generations. And there is not—in this stage there is no moral conversion. There is only an enlargement of the horizon from petty objectives, which[109] are not fundamentally different from that of Al Capone or so, to a very large objective. That is what Machiavelli has in mind, and he makes clear—that is Machiavelli's special mark—that[110] there is no moral difference, moral difference in the strict moral sense. The motives are himself in both cases. But[111] there is simply an enormous difference whether someone is concerned with what the Greeks called eternal fame . . . and the petty satisfaction of vanity and other desires with which most politicians, including tyrants, may very well be satisfied.[112][lxi]

Now, but the difference is this. After this has been done successfully—Glaucon and Adeimantus please themselves in the prospect of being the founders of the first absolutely good *polis*. I mean Theseus, the founder of Athens, [is] chicken feed compared to what they are doing. Then, after they have been purged of vulgar ambition and have become ambitious in the highest sense, then some two or three hours later,[113] the true conversion takes place, namely, the conversion from any political ambition, even the very highest, to forgetting about ambition: philosophy. And what you can say or [. . .] at any rate is in Machiavelli, there is no equivalent to the conversion, the second step. You know? That one can say with [. . .][lxii] that is true, but the first step . . . Machiavelli knew that, that the ruler has to serve . . . How can he successfully rule if he is not the most industrious man in the community? He gets much less sleep. I mean, not only because of fear[114] [for] himself, but because of—how is it President Eisenhower stated it, or General Eisenhower stated it about his job as President? What a man-killing job that is. Surely every clever knave[lxiii] has a man-killing job. That means service, and yet the tyrant believes that this effort—why did you laugh?

Student: Because the tyrant is man-killing.

LS: Yes, I see. I thought you meant that President Eisenhower[115] was not killed by his job. Now[116] Machiavelli's position is infinitely more intelligent than that taken by Thrasymachus or Callicles or Polus. That goes without saying. That is clear[117] [by] the mere fact of the trouble he takes. After all, Machiavelli develops at great length very specific rules of governing successfully. You know? In other words, he enters into the subject matter of politics, which these people do not do.[118] What Aristotle says about them I believe is correct. They thought political science is rhetoric.[lxiv] Machiavelli never believed that. Rhetoric plays a very subordinate role in Machiavelli's teaching. That is not what [the sophists believed]. Aristotle, who knew all these writings which are lost—you know we have none of these writings, we have only Plato's reports—and[119] [Aristotle] says they reduced that to [rhetoric]—they were entirely different men. Machiavelli is in this respect truly a pupil of Plato and Aristotle, that he takes very

[lxi] Possibly a reference to Niccolo Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, book 1, chapters 10, 27; *Prince*, chapter 6.
[lxii] The transcript has a lengthy blank space here.
[lxiii] In the transcript: "knave (?)"
[lxiv] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1181a12-15.

seriously the subject matter of politics—from a particular point of view, undeniably, but he is truly a man concerned with political matters. [lxv] What does our fellow say here? Nothing but the triviality that the laws depend on the regime. Yes? You know that. In other words, in a democracy, democratic laws depend on a democratic regime.[lxvi] That is really very important, but elementary and no entering of the subject matter. That, I think, seems to be true, and—no, it is very long—one could, in discussing this question of the so-called sophists and Machiavelli bring out very interesting and important things. But I believe that the point which I mentioned would prove to be the most important. The detailed study of political matters in what we generally call a scientific or philosophic way begins, as far as we can see, with Socrates and his pupils. Of course great historians, especially Thucydides, did this too, but the sophists as sophists didn't do that. We have no evidence. And Machiavelli in this respect continued[120] this very painstaking analysis given in the central parts of Aristotle's *Politics*, but in an entirely different manner. Good.

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[1] Deleted "with."
[2] Deleted "—and he only—he."
[3] Deleted "—that he is."
[4] Deleted "about when he speaks of."
[5] Deleted "he does not."
[6] Deleted "when do—."
[7] Deleted "—but."
[8] Deleted "does—what."
[9] Deleted "would be—."
[10] Deleted "catches—."
[11] Deleted "And—."
[12] Deleted "no, but who."
[13] Deleted "he forbids—."
[14] Deleted "well, I'll find it in a minute."
[15] Deleted "Socrates (sic)."
[16] Deleted "he is furthermore—now."
[17] Deleted "By the way there are—we cannot—."
[18] Deleted "you know."
[19] Deleted "of."
[20] Deleted "perfectly—."
[21] Deleted "it—."
[22] Deleted "that would—well he has—."
[23] Deleted "the true—."
[24] Deleted "Yes, but why does—sure, but still."
[25] Deleted "let—."
[26] Deleted "what it is—."
[27] Deleted "but."
[28] Deleted "doesn't say"
[29] Deleted "teach—how they should."
[30] Deleted "that—."
[31] Deleted "that—."
[32] Deleted "not."
[33] Deleted "the point which"

[lxv] See Leo Strauss, "Machiavelli," in *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd ed., edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963,1972, 1987), 316-317; *City and Man*, 17, 23.
[lxvi] Plato *Republic* 338d7-339a3.

[34] Deleted "There is no—."
[35] Deleted "Yes. It—.'
[36] Deleted "selves."
[37] Deleted "can be—."
[38] Deleted "That means—."
[39] Deleted "this—fulfill."
[40] Deleted "shoes."
[41] Changed from "He says no, the art of money, or you don't have war. And not money-making, exchange—barter or with money—is the most obvious home of justice."
[42] Deleted "That is—."
[43] Deleted "That is—."
[44] Deleted "let—yes."
[45] Deleted "makes—."
[46] Changed from "But the art—while the eyes need the art, the art—in this case, of the opthamologist—does not need an additional art to be made good."
[47] Deleted "and it is only—."
[48] Deleted "seen—he has."
[49] Deleted "he must—."
[50] Deleted "two—not."
[51] Deleted "No. "
[52] Deleted "an."
[53] Deleted "—yes—."
[54] Deleted "He says."
[55] Deleted "made—."
[56] Deleted "there are no—."
[57] Deleted "if we—."
[58] Deleted "a man."
[59] Deleted "Now."
[60] Deleted "was that he."
[61] Deleted "—that Socrates should prove."
[62] Deleted "Socrates (sic)."
[63] Deleted "there are more—greater interests than—that everyone of we have than these."
[64] Deleted "says—."
[65] Deleted "say—."
[66] Deleted "second (sic)."
[67] Deleted "then—what is."
[68] Deleted "what—."
[69] Deleted "So—but since it."
[70] Deleted "can be—."
[71] Deleted "that his rhetoric"
[72] Deleted "case."
[73] Deleted "look like—."
[74] Deleted "to—."
[75] Deleted "And the just man gets—no."
[76] Deleted "it—now."
[77] Deleted "At this—."
[78] Deleted "of the present"
[79] Deleted "he did not"
[80] Deleted "—he has."
[81] Deleted "makes Thrasymachus."
[82] Deleted "that's."
[83] Changed from "and—well, there are other arguments here which are also—we simply don't have the time—time for that."
[84] Deleted "He is—."
[85] Deleted "—not."
[86] Deleted "If you—the dialogue—."

[87] Deleted "the fact—."
[88] Deleted "There is—."
[89] Deleted "with the question."
[90] Deleted "it is merely—here."
[91] Deleted "is—this must be—."
[92] Deleted "that is no—."
[93] Deleted "in the beginning, right."
[94] Deleted "the untruth—.'
[95] Deleted "So—."
[96] Deleted "I mean, what he says about."
[97] Deleted "they are of course—they don't."
[98] Deleted "That is not—that is not—he could even be—."
[99] Deleted "There is no—."
[100] Deleted "; no one knows it."
[101] Deleted "he."
[102] Deleted "and."
[103] Deleted "That is—."
[104] Deleted "not."
[105] Deleted "He is really—."
[106] Deleted "That makes—might still be to the—in other words, why—."
[107] Deleted "the beginning—at."
[108] Deleted "we."
[109] Deleted "every—which."
[110] Deleted "he makes clear."
[111] Deleted "that simply—."
[112] Deleted "That I think is."
[113] Deleted "then."
[114] Deleted "of."
[115] Deleted "did not—."
[116] Deleted "that I think is—Machiavelli is—."
[117] Deleted "and."
[118] Changed from "They—what Aristotle says about them I believe is correct."
[119] Deleted "he."
[120] Deleted "is in this respect—in this respect he."

Session 4: October 12, 1961
Book 1: The Definitions of Justice

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —a clear survey of the first half of the second book. I think you were wise in stopping more or less where you did,[i] and the next speaker knows automatically where he has to begin next time. That's Mr. Warden. Good. Now there was one point in your presentation which I thought[1] touched the rest of the matter. You confirmed, restated what Glaucon says at the beginning, that Socrates had only seemed to prove the superiority of justice and had not given a true proof; and you made it clear, especially toward the end, that this difference between seeming or appearance and truth is crucial, because the whole theme later on in these two speeches surely is the difference between seeming justice, which is injustice, and true justice, which may very well be in certain cases seeming injustice.

But now look. Let us draw a further conclusion. If Socrates has given only a seeming proof of the superiority of justice in his discussion with Thrasymachus, is Socrates not an unjust man? You know? I mean, is this not a form of dishonesty? I mean one word: the word justice. We translate the Greek word *dikaiosunē* by justice, but that has a very great range of meaning. What we mean by honesty is also peculiar. And on the other hand, there is much more. Sometimes people say *dikaiosunē* should be translated by "righteousness," which is familiar to you from the translation of the Bible. That is also correct; *dikaiosunē* has a much richer meaning than present-day English justice, but it surely includes also this little thing called honesty, simple honesty.

Now as I say, Socrates has admittedly given a seeming proof of the superiority of justice.[ii] A seeming proof is not a true proof. Is this not an act of injustice, of dishonesty?

Student: For rhetorical purposes cannot one "seem" momentarily?

LS: Oh, I see. So that shows that it is not so simple. That shows that the problem of justice is complicated.

Same Student: This would be my position. I would say yes.

LS: Yes. Now[2] that you understand that, let us look at the alternative, which says: No temporary injustice under any conditions. Yes? Under any conditions. Do you know a man who upheld this radical view? Lying, to use a clear word, is immoral under all conditions. Pardon? Kant, sure.[iii] Kant said that more strongly at least than any

[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 354a8-c3.
[iii] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical First Principles of Virtue*, in *Werke* (Berlin: Konigliche Preussischen Akademie der Wissenchaften, 1902-1938), 6:464.

philosopher. Theologians will generally speaking imply it rather severely. Yes, but the same Kant also taught, not in his moral philosophy but in his political philosophy, that the[3] only basic right is the right to freedom, which includes the right to free speech, [and therefore] includes the right to lie.[iv] Do you see what this means? Can you recognize any practical political fact in this very general assertion that man has by nature the right to lie?

Student: Governments do not have by nature the right to censor.

LS: Exactly. In other words, the liberal society, as we call it, says this, of course, but societies are never as straightforward as philosophers are and they don't put it in this way. If you limit the right to[4] the freedom of speech to the freedom of true and honest speech, you admit the [right][v] of censorship as a matter of course. So the interesting thing, however, is—that is very interesting—that the philosopher who was in a way the most severe moralist, Kant, taught in one breath that morally lying is absolutely wrong and legally the right to lie must be protected. I think one can—I believe one cannot find a neater formula for the difficulty of the liberal position. I say "difficulty": I don't say it's an absurdity, but that is the problem which—the real inner difficulty of modern liberal society. Yes?

Student: Another answer to your question, an alternative answer, would be Socrates is just in giving a seeming answer to Thrasymachus's seeming attack. He said he was pretending.

LS: That you can [say], yes, sure. But still, that is also an interesting moral question discussed by Kant, although not simply answered. What about jocular lies? What about this kind of lie which we all commit, at least, even today: "yours sincerely," "yours cordially," and "your obedient servant," and so on. But no one—you all laugh about it, but a very strict man might very well find a difficulty in that.

There is one other point which I would like to ask Mr. Jacobson. When he spoke of the ring, you referred to a cave. You did this not without an intention, I'm sure. Can you spell out that intention?

Mr. Jacobson: I was hoping that you would pick this up and explain it. I realize that this involves a very deep and abstruse—

LS: Yes, but state it to the extent to which you see your question here if you don't believe you can answer it.

Mr. Jacobson:

[iv] Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right*, in *Werke* (Berlin: Konigliche Preussischen Akademie der Wissenchaften, 19-2-1938), 6:238.
[v] The transcript indicates that something was inaudible here.

Well, basically, [a] man goes into a cave to find a ring which will enable him to commit an act of injustice. [The] cave as an object that comes later on[vi]—I think I would rather that you—

LS: Yes. In other words, you were thinking ahead, and of [the] cave later on in the sixth and seventh book. That's the point. And you suggested tentatively, modestly, there may be a connection between the two. And the connection—well, the cave, is not the cave the world of appearance Is the[5] [cave] not later on the world of appearance, shadows? Yes? And is not appearance and shadow seeming? Let us leave it at this very general remark and see whether it is so.

Now before we turn[6] [to the second book, I would like] to remind you of the most massive point of the first book—I mean, the three definitions of justice given there by Cephalus, Polemarchus, and Thrasymachus; and I would like to restate them, because it is of some importance to see that Plato does not choose these opinions arbitrarily. I would contend, and subject to correction by the class, that these are the three most important opinions on justice.[7] Of course, one must intelligently interpret them. The first is the classic or traditional definition: justice is the will to give everyone what belongs to him, which means either to return it to him or leave it in [his] possession. That doesn't make any difference. Polemarchus says justice is dedication to the common good: patriotism, however you call it. And Thrasymachus says justice means simply to obey the law: justice [is] legality. I don't believe that there is another general definition of justice which can compete with any of these three in practice, and[8] we must see what will happen later to these three definitions.

I will give you only one example, the Roman lawyer definitions, [and] Cephalus's view: Justice means to give everyone what is due to him. Due of course according to positive law, but this may be very bad for that man. If you give his inheritance to a playboy, you may ruin that playboy, and the positive law says, nevertheless, [that] since he has a right to that inheritance as everyone else has—subject to inheritance taxes which may come close to confiscation, but that is a secondary consideration. And[9] then in these cases, and quite a few other cases, justice is obviously bad. It harms that fellow. The consequence indicated at the beginning of the Polemarchus section: one should give everyone only what is good for him. That means, in institutional terms, abolition of private property, i.e., everyone will be assigned by the rulers what is good for him. And that means of course that the rulers must be wise men, good judges of what is good for each. The whole large chunk of the *Republic* is implied in these considerations.

If you look at Polemarchus's definition, justice is helping friends and hurting enemies: intelligently understood, not merely private friends and private enemies, but friends and fellow citizens. The enemies are the foreigners. What happens to that definition[10] [later on], those of you who have ever had the good fortune of reading beyond the first book?

Student: It comes up in the case of the guardians. [vii]

[vi] Plato *Republic* 359c7-360b2, 514a1ff,
[vii] 332d7-9, 375c1-5.

LS: It is preserved. It is preserved. The third, Thrasymachus['s definition that] justice is legal, I would dare to say is not preserved because law—I mean, there remain some laws there, but fundamentally it is a direct rule by the wise men. So the central definition is the most important definition, and that is one point which we should keep in mind.

Now I have [to] address my question to Mr. Jacobson. What is the difference between Thrasymachus's thesis and Glaucon's and Adeimantus's thesis, without making our difference between the two brothers? What do they bring out, what Thrasymachus did not bring out?

Mr. Jacobson: Are you referring to the—on a broader scale, [to] the fact of what appears to be versus what is, or is there some more—

LS: You could say that. That is one way of putting it. I believe it is not the[11] clearest way of expressing it, but it points in the right direction. Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: . . . the question of the gods.

LS: No, of Glaucon particularly, and I think Glaucon refers partially to the gods; Adeimantus is the man who speaks of the gods. No, but something much more massive. Yes?

Student: I would say that Glaucon says that justice and injustice is by nature.[viii] He refers to them by nature . . . He has a much more complex doctrine than does Thrasymachus.

LS: On what point?

Same Student: On a much more profound level, I would say, than does Thrasymachus.

LS: Exactly, and that is what you meant by appearance and being. Glaucon and Adeimantus explicitly bring up the difference between nature and convention, and from that point of view, [compared to] Thrasymachus, their analysis is more radical and more profound.

Now we have a parallel in the *Gorgias*, to which I referred already last time. In the *Gorgias* we have also three men, just as we have here three groups of men. Groups of men: I mean Cephalus, Polemarchus; Thrasymachus; and Glaucon and Adeimantus. There we have Gorgias, also an old man, Polus, and Callicles; and there also the last is the most outspoken, just as Glaucon and Adeimantus are the most outspoken. And in the *Gorgias* it is said explicitly by Callicles that[12] Polus and Gorgias got into troubles because they were not outspoken and therefore contradicted themselves.[ix] And why were they less outspoken? Because they were foreigners, and Callicles is a native Athenian. Now here we have a similar situation. Glaucon and Adeimantus are the only hundred

[viii] See 358e3-4, 359c3-6.
[ix] *Gorgias* 486e6-487c1.

percent, full-blooded Athenian citizens, compared with the metics, Cephalus and Polemarchus. Now a somewhat more subtle question: What's the difference between Glaucon and Adeimantus?

Student: Well, basically, Glaucon is speaking the case for injustice. He takes on, as I—the way I had it in the paper, he speaks as a lawyer. He's not emotionally involved in the sense that Adeimantus is; and given his speech, Adeimantus is practically boiling over with a certain moral indignation[13] and is not speaking the part of someone else. He's speaking in a straightforward manner. Therefore, it could be said that, in a sense, Glaucon is taking the part of—is taking the appearance of something that he is not, whereas Adeimantus is forthright in speaking.

LS: Ah ha! I do not know whether you are right, but you may be. Yes?

Student: Couldn't it be said that Glaucon's view is that of a secular—is a secular view, whereas Adeimantus's is that of a religious—

LS: I don't—you mean the mere fact that he speaks about the gods so much?

Student: His argument is couched more in terms of deity than Glaucon's.

LS: Yes, but what does he say about the gods?

Student: He's disparaging as far as his remarks about the gods are concerned, but the basic difference is that in Glaucon there is only at the end reference made to the gods.[x]

LS: Yes, all right, but that does not mean that—Adeimantus surely disparages the gods. That could very well be religious if he would appeal to a loftier notion of the gods. Does he do that?

Student: No.

LS: Ah ha. So in other words, you can say he is only more critical of the gods than Glaucon is, and what it means we don't know. You wanted to say something?

Student: In part, it is shown from the initial part of the first book, where we find Glaucon with Socrates going down to the Piraeus and we find Adeimantus with Polemarchus, and somehow Glaucon is closer to philosophy, to nature than—

LS: No, don't speculate. Glaucon is closer to Socrates. There is no question about that, and that is very good, but that is very ambiguous and we must see what it means. Now I would mention first one thing which I knew a long time ago, and that is that Adeimantus really[14] pushes the analysis more than Glaucon does. The distinction between[15] nature and convention is used by both, but Adeimantus is the only one who uses a clear term for indicating what nature, our nature, desires. Glaucon is less precise about that, and

[x] 362c2-8.

Adeimantus calls that the pleasant, the pleasant. This principle does not come out in Glaucon. If you want to look up the passages: 363c4 to d2 and in 364a3. So that is one point.

Now I think the best thing to do would be to read a passage where both say apparently the same thing, but say it very differently. Now that is in Glaucon, 360e6. It's on page 120 to 21 in Loeb, to 361a5. Will you read that? And now look up—and with the other hand, so that you find it immediately, 365c6. That is on page 137. Now let us first see what that is. Where was that? [At c]6, now "in the first place," in the middle of the paragraph. Do you have that, "In the first place," Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken:

In the first place, the unjust man must act as clever craftsmen do: a first-rate pilot or physician, for example, feels the difference between impossibilities and possibilities in his art and attempts the one and lets the others go; and then, too, if he does happen to trip, he is equal to correcting his error. Similarly, the unjust man who attempts injustice rightly must be supposed to escape detection if he is to be altogether unjust, and we must regard the man who is caught as a bungler. For the height of injustice is to seem just without being so.

LS: Let us stop here and turn to page 137, in 365c6. The middle of the page: "it is objected it is not easy."

Mr. Reinken:

easy for a wrong-doer always to lie hid. Neither is any other big thing facile, we shall reply. But all the same if we expect to be happy, we must pursue the path to which the footprints of our arguments point. For with a view to lying hid we will organize societies and political clubs, and there are teachers of cajolery who impart the arts of the popular assembly and the court-room. So that, partly by persuasion, partly by force, we shall contrive to overreach with impunity. (365c-d)

LS: Yes, let us leave it there. Now do you see a difference between that: the first statement was by Glaucon; the second was by Adeimantus. Identically the same theme. What was the theme?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. No, that is not precise enough. Sure, but what does it require, not to get caught? What is needed for that, as both admit? Pardon? An art. An art; both agree. The truly unjust man is a great artist, artisan. And what's the difference in the way in which they state it?

Student: Adeimantus is less sanguine about the possibilities.

LS: Adeimantus, less sanguine?[16] I don't see that. He only speaks more specifically of the fact that it's difficult, but that is also implied by Glaucon. I would say that

Adeimantus is much more specific about the arts required than Glaucon is. Much more specific. He speaks, for example, of the two rhetorical arts which you need, both forensic rhetoric and political rhetoric. Glaucon speaks only of forensic rhetoric. Yes?

Student: Isn't this . . . [might you be] be reminded, as I was, by Adeimantus's argument, of nocturnal councils in the *Republic*?

LS: In the *Laws*, you mean.[xi]

Student: I mean in the *Laws*, but the philosopher—that he describes the unjust getting their ends by—

LS: Yes, but[17] permit me to drop that now, because we[18] have to clear up the relation of the two fellows. I say that Adeimantus is much more specific, and also Adeimantus pushes the analysis deeper by bringing up the issue of pleasure. Furthermore, he quotes the poets all the time, whereas Glaucon speaks only once of them, of Aeschylus.[xii] Also, Adeimantus is much more detailed regarding this grave question of the gods. I would suggest, but there is another theme which is somewhat more emphatic, I believe, in Glaucon than in Adeimantus—although I have not made a statistic; in such matters, statistics is a good thing: Glaucon is somewhat more emphatic on honor, glory, than Adeimantus. Now I would say, first, Adeimantus is more sophisticated than Glaucon, but Glaucon has another quality indicated right at the beginning of the second book by Socrates. Glaucon is of outstanding manliness, courage. I don't know how they translate it. At the beginning of the second book.

Student: . . . "[For Glaucon, who is always an] intrepid, enterprising [spirit in everything]" . . .

LS: Yes. Well, why does he[xiii] say that? "Since he was—being, of course, always most manly." He is "most manly." But Adeimantus is less manly than Glaucon, but more sophisticated. I think that is a very common, of course not a universal experience, that the more he-mannish people are not necessarily the more sophisticated. Yes? That is a theme which occurs in Plato all the time. It is particularly—the last which I read, *Laches*, where Laches and Nicias, both generals, Athenian generals: Nicias, much more sophisticated than Laches; Laches, a kind of General Patton type.[xiv] You know? But Socrates is closer to Laches than to the sophisticated Nicias. Nicias knows a lot about Socrates's theories and uses them in the discussion,[xv] and yet Laches is closer to him. That happens. Socrates is not—you know that is the famous problem of the intellectual, if we use the present-day term. An intellectual is of course not necessarily a more intelligent man, I mean, contrary to a vulgar misconception. An intellectual is only a man who does more reading and

[xi] *Laws* 951c6-953e4, 960e9-968b2.
[xii] *Republic* 361b5-362b1.
[xiii] Shorey, the translator.
[xiv] George S. Patton (1885-1945) became a general in the United States Army during World War II and is known for his military success in the European theatre.
[xv] See *Laches* 194c7-d2, 197d1-8, 2004-d4.

writing than the nonintellectuals do, but he is not necessarily more intelligent. There is something like natural intelligence which is much better than an inadequate sophistication. The best thing would probably be both: to have a good native intelligence plus the right kind of sophistication; a unity of these two things, and that is somehow represented in [the] deeper Socrates.

And now this superiority of Glaucon, I think you all must have felt, shows in his speech. The most impressive part of the first half of the second book is without any question the story of the ring of Gyges and the marvelous confrontation of the unjust man who is buried with the greatest public honors as the greatest benefactor of the city; and on the opposite, the perfectly just man who is crucified as the arch-criminal. Now how do you call such a quality, when a man can present such things that impress you and they stick in your mind? How do you call that?

Student: Paradox or—

LS: No, how does Socrates say when he interrupts? If I'm not mistaken, Socrates interrupts only Glaucon once, and never Adeimantus. Is this correct? I mean, after they begin their speech. Yes, it is correct, and that is in 361d. Have you read that passage? In Loeb, 125.

Mr. Reinken:

"Bless me, my dear Glaucon," said I, "how strenuously you polish off each of your two men for the competition for the prize as if it were a statue!"

LS: Glaucon acts like a statuary. May I ask you for a modern generalization from statuary, sculptor? How do we call these chaps? Pardon?

Student: . . . painters, artists—

LS: Artists, yes. In other words—I will now introduce an older term which is more proper to the Greek text. Glaucon has a poetic gift which Adeimantus does not have, a native gift for presentation. And he's much more of a poet than his much more educated brother, Adeimantus, who has a greater [sophistication],[xvi] and there is a connection between this natural courage, manliness, and the courage of presenting these things vividly. So we must keep this in mind, and we must also not forget [it]. Now when the discussion begins of the city, from next time on you must always watch whether Glaucon or Adeimantus is the addressee. That is important. Whether we understand it in each case is another matter, but you will see. For example, the beginning is Adeimantus, and that follows rather naturally, because he was the second speaker in the first half of the second book, but at a certain moment he is interrupted by Glaucon.[19] Adeimantus is perfectly satisfied with the South Sea island existence; Glaucon is not. He rebels against that.[xvii] He's too vital for that. That is one thing. Later on, there will also be such changes which must be watched. Whether we are, to repeat, whether we understand them or not is

[xvi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xvii] *Republic* 372c2-d5.

another matter, but we must surely watch them and not claim that we have understood the *Republic* if we are not able to know why these changes take place.

Now let us see, then. At the beginning of the second book it is perfectly clear that Glaucon is responsible for the continuation of the conversation, just as he was responsible at the very beginning that Socrates stayed in the Piraeus. We owe it to Glaucon that Socrates had this conversation. We must not forget that. Now what is the precise question, then, which Glaucon addresses to Socrates? There are three kinds of good things.[xviii] Which are they, in the order quoted? Mr. Jacobson?

Mr. Jacobson: In the order quoted?

LS: Yes, sure.

Mr. Jacobson: Things which are desired for themselves, things which are desired both for themselves and their consequences, and things which are not desired for themselves but are desired for their consequences.

LS: Yes. Which are the most choiceworthy? I mean, which are the most choice—

Mr. Jacobson: The second, the middle.

LS: So just for the fun of it I mention that, and in this case it is perfectly easy to see that they deserve to be central. In other cases it is not as easy, but one must raise this question. Yes?

Student: Is there any connection between the fact that Socrates chooses the mean between the two extremes as being the definition which fits justice, and that Glaucon defines justice as being the middle ground of the two extremes?[xix] Glaucon says that justice is—

LS: Yes, I remember. That could be. It is certainly remarkable that we have also here three things. Yes? Undiluted injustice, undiluted doing injustice; undiluting suffering injustice in between. Yes, but here is the difference. From Glaucon's point of view this middle thing is not the most desirable, but it is the most important in the context. That's justice we are concerned with. Yes, sure. So Socrates says, after Glaucon, what his opinion, his wholly unsupported opinion about justice is, and he says he thinks it belongs to the central thing: to the good things which are choiceworthy both for their own sake and because of their consequences. It is [made very] clear[20] [that] the crucial implication is this: justice is not a thing like gymnastics or medicine, meaning in itself painful, but good because of its consequences. Justice is in itself attractive, not repulsive. Now[21] that is Socrates's view: Justice is easy or attractive. The alternative view is that of Thrasymachus and the many: Justice in itself is harsh and repulsive, like bitter medicine, but desirable because it has good consequences.[xx] In other words, the issue is in a way

[xviii] 357b4-d2.
[xix] 359a4-b1.
[xx] 357d4-358a9.

limited at the beginning. There is no question that justice is good; the question is only on what grounds it is good. Is it choiceworthy for its own sake or only for its consequences?

Now why is this at the beginning taken for granted? We must keep this in mind. We have heard one argument which was absolutely devastatingly strong against the unqualified lovers of injustice. Do you remember that, in the first book toward the end? There was one argument which was really sound and based on the constant experience of men in all conditions and circumstances. Yes?

Student: That[22] even a band of robbers has to have some measure of justice—[xxi]

LS: Yes. No association, no human association without justice within the association. Yes? Good. And therefore, there is no question: since we all need associates, we all need [justice]. Justice is good. We may loathe it; if we belong to a gang of robbers if we have to share the loot. Yes, [it is] bitter medicine, but it is healthy. Otherwise we won't stay together and not make the next haul at the next bank, or wherever it may be. Now this happens prior to the discussion. Yes?

Student: Excuse me. Couldn't one hypothesize that an association of men could be formed without having this trust between them? Each man fully aware of[23] his own interests as regards his trusts and his desires, and also, as much as is subjectively possible, fully aware of the fact that the others will take advantage of him—

LS: [24]Well, surely there are various degrees; but if you think through what you say, you see a situation where every man is in his foxhole and has not only the enemy line of foxholes against him, but all around there are—in each foxhole there is an enemy. That is thinkable. But[25] the only thing which is wrong with that: it is not a society. It is Hobbes's war of everybody against everybody.[xxii] That is at least a thing which needs to be considered. The only thing which is clear: it is not a society. Society means that at least two men lie in the same foxhole with their backs against one another. Or say in a trench; a foxhole is too small.

Student: To take up your Hobbesian statement there of war of every man against one another, would it also be if two men come together fully realizing that if he does turn his back in that foxhole, he's likely to have his head cut off, but the purpose being so that in the state of nature they want to kill the beast so they both go out and kill the beast and go off their own ways, and while they're out hunting neither trusts the other, neither turns his back, neither turns aside.

LS: Yes, but the mere fact that they meet for this common enterprise of hunting plus cutting into pieces is a temporary association where there is trust. Otherwise, how could they possibly approach? You know? I mean, think: you can see it every day on the TV.

[xxi] 351c8-352a4.

[xxii] Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, chapter 1; *Leviathan*, chapter 13.

You know? How do you know? I mean, if you know the other one is Gary Cooper[xxiii] or someone like him, and know he's the best shot. But you don't know that. You may be a better shot than him.[26] No association is possible—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but[27] how does the other fellow know that this is not feigned on your part, by which you are going to put him off his guard? You take a relatively simple situation, say, two business corporations, or, for that matter, two labor unions who are very dishonest toward one another. But of course that is not one hundred percent distrust; the distrust is considerably mitigated by the presence of a police force, of government, and quite a few other things. You must really then be as consistent as Hobbes was when he tried to think it through, and then you have the clear—you know what Hobbes says? Everyone crawls out of his foxhole at the same time, hands high. [Laughter] Honestly. That is Hobbes's notion of the original contract, and I think he is consistent. Yes? Good.

The point is, however—I mean, the situation changes when Glaucon returns to his speech. He proposes: Let us disregard rewards and any other consequences. In other words, let us disregard our need for society, even on the lowest level, on the level of the gang robbers; let us disregard that and take justice entirely by itself without any regard to its profitableness. And Glaucon says: "If I do that, then I must say justice is repulsive or bad," and Socrates is as it were commissioned[28] by Glaucon [and] by Adeimantus to prove that if I disregard all the rewards and consequences—naked justice, justice is attractive and good.

Glaucon proceeds, by the way, in a very good way. He is not an entirely untrained man, as you can see. He[29] gives his plan in 358c, consisting of three parts: (a) what is justice and whence it came; second, all men who pursue justice pursue it as a dire necessity, not for its own sake, not as intrinsically good; and three, they are right in doing so. This plan is really followed, so he has learned the rudiments of composition much better than some students at the University of Chicago.

Now then we come to his long speech. Let us pursue it. First he raises the question of what is the "coming into being" and the "being" of justice. That would be the literal translation: the "coming into being," the "becoming," and the "being." The traditional translation of this word which I translate now as "being" is "essence," but "essence" is—that would need a very long comment. That is the artificial Latin word *essentia* which was used for the translation of *ousia*. This is used synonymously here with the "nature" of justice. That's the same as the "being" of justice, and out of which "nature" arises, "by nature." That is the coming into being of justice. Justice has a natural basis. It arises by a kind of natural necessity. That we must understand if we want to understand justice. Justice can be understood only in the light of its genesis. It is derivative. It is not strictly speaking by nature, but only by convention, for by nature man seeks to do injustice, surely, if he is a true man. Yes. What does it mean to do injustice? Do we not presuppose

[xxiii] Gary Cooper (1901-1961), American actor who played characters with remarkable marksmanship in films such as *High Noon* (1952) and *Sergeant York* (1941).

everything when we speak of injustice? Yes, well, Glaucon knows that. Glaucon uses another term, therefore, so that he is not formally guilty[30] [of using] the thing to be defined in the definition. What is the other word which he uses for doing injustice? "Having more," "the desire to have more," overreach, to have more, to be superior to the others; and that is in a particularly clear case the desire for supreme honor. Yes? To be superior. And justice is the will to be satisfied with the same, with the equal with everyone else. That is his view, and Glaucon says by nature every one of us wants to be the boss of everyone else. That is our nature, and then some artificial contraptions are needed which compel us then to be satisfied to stand in line as one among many.[xxiv]

Now then there comes this remarkable story, completely remarkable story by which he tries to show that all men pursue the maximum of superiority in wealth, in honor, whatever have you, if they can. This is the story of the ring of Gyges. A story of Gyges is told by Herodotus in his history, near the beginning, in book 1, paragraphs 8 following, and the Platonic version is very different. There are all kinds of theories that there were various stories current in Asia Minor and Plato chose this version and Herodotus chose that. That is entirely uninteresting for us. The interesting thing is to take Herodotus's version and Plato's version and compare them point by point without going into the unanswerable question whether Plato's version really is also Persian, which has been asserted. No one knows. I cannot go into that. I mention only one point. The burden of the story of Herodotus, where not a descendant from Gyges but Gyges himself is the hero, turns around the question of nature and convention, but in a different way.[xxv] Gyges was a courtier.[31] Candaules was the king. Candaules had a marvelously beautiful wife, and he wanted to show her beauty to his courtier Gyges; and since the complete beauty is of course beauty of the whole body, he had to show her to him naked. And that was absolutely impossible according to the rules of Lydia and, by a strange coincidence, also according to the rules of Western civilization. I believe quite a few other civilizations agree on this matter. And so he had to, as it were,[32] [peep] through a keyhole, and Mrs. Candaules became aware of it and was absolutely disgraced, and[33] [she] then said to Gyges: "After you have disgraced me in that way, I kill you now unless you kill my husband and marry me to restore my honor"—which Gyges did. And then he became the ancestor of a royal line which lived for quite some time until they were conquered by Persia[34] [in the time of] Croesus.

And now the point is this. In this story, some general remarks are made—I don't have Herodotus here and I haven't yet looked it up at home, but I speak from memory. Please check on me. Now Gyges refuses to do this thing, what his master demands from him, giving a general reason:[35] Everywhere men are supposed to see only their own beautiful thing. Well, in this application, a husband is supposed to be the only one who sees the full beauty of his wife. But here, of course, generalized, society is supposed to know only its own values, not the values of other societies, as its values. I mean, they may know that the others have different manners, but of course barbaric manners, miserable manners, not as values. That is the principle of every society, to be in this decisive respect self-contained. And this is a proper introduction to this book by Herodotus, who does exactly

[xxiv] 358e3-359c6.

[xxv] Herodotus *Histories*, 1.8 ff.

the same wicked thing which Gyges did: he travels and sees other peoples', not only the Greeks', beautiful things without any clothing on. So it has truly to do with our question, but Plato or Glaucon treats it very differently. I cannot go into everything. For example, there is a horse. He goes down into a chasm. The earth opens [up into a] chasm and he finds a horse, a large horse; and in the horse he finds a corpse. There is a famous story of an [artificial] horse[36] within which there were human beings. You know?

Student: The fall of Troy.

LS: And who was the chief man in connection with the fall of Troy?

Student: It was Achilles.

LS: Oh no. Achilles—

Student: Maybe Ulysses.

LS: Sure, sure. Oh no, Achilles was much too honest for such tricks. The wily Odysseus. And wiliness has very much to do with our question here, hasn't it? Good. So there are many more things[37] into which I cannot now possibly go[38].

Now the story of the ring which makes you invisible, and what the man did: He lived happily ever after. You know, he committed adultery with the king's wife, murdered the king, and he was absolutely fine because he did these all invisibly. And Glaucon's thesis is that everyone of us, if we had such temptations, such possibilities, would go in for that.[xxvi] Do you see? Adeimantus, incidentally,[39] says there are certain kinds of people who never would go in for that.[xxvii] You remember that . . . Glaucon is in this respect more naïve, and says: Who could withstand that? And justice is necessary only to the extent to which we are seen. Yes? And of course that leads to a very interesting thing. For example, if you make a false tax declaration, you are surely not seen in the act of doing that. But you can very well be detected, as you well know, by the authorities; but that is detecting it. Now we must enlarge it. Justice is necessary only to the extent to which[40] what we do is detectable, i.e., my mere thoughts and intentions are as such not detectable. Yes? So in my heart I can be a hundred percent crook, provided any words and any deeds are correct. That is what he is driving at. Justice is not a good for a man himself, not a good privately (360c6 to 7), which means it is a good for society, for living together.[41] More precisely, justice is a good for society; it is a good for each as a member of society—even to Al Capone, you know, to the extent to which he is a member of the gang—but only insofar as we are observable by other human beings.

Now this is entirely different in the case of other virtues. That is the interesting point. For example, if you eat much more than you should, i.e., if you act intemperately, whether someone is present while you have this nausea or whatever it may be afterward, or you get your heart attack and so, that is wholly uninteresting. And the same applies of course

[xxvi] Plato *Republic* 359c6-360d7..
[xxvii] 366c3-d3.

also to courage. When you, say, go alone tiger hunting and you are a coward or the opposite, no one has to observe you. That is self-rewarding or self-punishing. But justice does not have this effect. If the observation does not enter, no harm comes to injustice. [42]There is an element of truth in that.

Now this is first the assertion of Glaucon, and now he tries to show that the men, by acting in this way—meaning, by acting unjustly when they can get away with that—act wisely. And in order to do this, he gives this confrontation of the perfectly unjust man and the perfectly just man. The perfectly unjust man is a master in the art of injustice. Now this art includes the capacity to play the just man in the most perfect manner;[xxviii] otherwise he is not perfectly unjust. Otherwise he is a failure in his [art]. You know? I mean, in other words, the criminals, the men of the syndicate so widely admired, are not really masters in their art because, while they cannot be technically punished, they are constantly watched and one day they may be caught. They live in a state of constant apprehension, [and] must live, because they can never be sure of it. The master criminal is the man who is never even suspected, the most respectable man in the community, the pillar of society. That is the point.

Now by the way, some light falls back from here on Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus is not the master criminal in any way. On the contrary, he is the man who plays the unjust man rather than that he plays the just man. Yes. And the virtues which the master criminal absolutely needs are power of persuasion—and that means, more generally stated, wisdom; he must be very clever—and courage, [too]. These are virtues which are indispensable. Indispensable. These are natural virtues. This thought plays a very great role in Machiavelli later on, but it's very well developed in classical antiquity already. And the just man, on the other hand, the perfectly just man who is so genuinely just that he doesn't have any seeming justice, he's so genuine that he has no seeming of justice. He has no semblance of justice, and he of course in the clearest case will be regarded as the most unjust man in the community, and he will have the most atrocious punishment. And he will be punished as the greatest criminal in the community: crucified, as is almost said here.[xxix]

Now the decisive result here is this: the reputation for justice is terribly important. That is never denied. But justice itself is most undesirable. Now if we think of that for one moment: Is this true, what Glaucon says? I mean, is this true? And on his basis, of course, not introducing other considerations. You see, you must not forget the first statement, the statement is introduced by the simile of the ring. Now is this possible, such a ring? Is this possible? Yes? Pardon? No, I mean, is there such a ring? Can a man make himself literally invisible? I have heard of men entering houses unseen and committing all kinds of crime, but "unseen" means of course not invisible: he could have been seen. Yes? So there is no such ring.[43] Then he uses another example: the perfectly just man, the perfectly unjust man, and this is compared by Socrates to statues. These are also, if I may use a modern word, idealizations, poetic idealizations. Is there such a thing as a perfectly just man who is universally regarded as a perfectly unjust man, or the perfectly unjust

[xxviii] 360e1-361b5
[xxix] 361b5-362a3.

man who is universally regarded as a perfectly just man? Very great cleverness is surely possible. That a man who is a very great crook conceals this very well. But what does it mean? What is really demanded of our fellow, of our perfectly unjust man? There must not be a single action and a single word which can possibly give him away. If he wants to be really clever he cannot even say [anything] to his closest associate, because that closest associate might one day betray him. In other words, the perfectly unjust man would have to act justly all the time, and then he would have to speak justly all the time. Now if he does that, is this not going to have an effect on him? Have you ever heard of habituation? If you do act justly all the time, speak justly all the time, what remains of that injustice deep in your heart? What does the injustice amount to, eventually? That he does this only in order to be praised as the justest man. But he deserves to be praised as the justest man because he acts so justly. You know, there may be a very subtle distinction from the point of view of biblical religion, but from the biblical point of view, all men are sinners. No man is just. The whole problem of Glaucon would have to be restated radically.

Student: Doesn't this remind you of a story about Socrates, some gossip that a man who felt the bumps on Socrates's head and said that you have the physiog—how do you say that?—your head is the shape of a criminal's. Socrates is supposed to have said: You're absolutely right.

LS: As Nietzsche puts it: You are perfectly right, mister; you have seen through me. But that is Nietzsche's improvement on him.[xxx] But Socrates said: Yes, but I know, I made something else out of me. Yes? Something of this kind. Yes.[44] If I'm not mistaken, the subtle mistake which Glaucon makes is this.[45] It is undoubtedly true that a shrewd mixture of justice and injustice can be very helpful toward worldly success. I believe we should admit that. You know? But this shrewd mixture is something entirely different from the clear-cut distinction between inner injustice and outer justice. I think Glaucon's case is, humanly speaking, impossible; and the famous case of which one thinks immediately—for example, some people say Socrates, the justest man, was treated as the unjustest man. Look at the facts: that's not true. He was condemned to death, but at least almost a minority as strong as Mr. Nixon's at the last election[xxxi] didn't believe it. You know? He was condemned by a very small majority, and after a few years the Athenians are said to have repented it completely,[xxxii] so it was not so terrible—I mean, unless one can say capital punishment is the worst thing which can happen to a man of seventy years, and that I would absolutely deny. I think that is based on a somewhat unbalanced scheme of values. Yes?

Student: A different point: Is there any basis for the contention that perhaps Glaucon talks that way because of Socrates's primary choice of what justice was? Socrates[46] chose the

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[xxx] Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.80; *De Fato* 10-11; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, section 2 ("The Problem of Socrates"), aphorism 3.

[xxxi] In the presidential election of 1960, John F. Kennedy received 303 electoral votes and Richard M. Nixon, 219. Kennedy won the popular vote by 112,000 votes (of the 68 million cast), a margin of 0.2 percent.

[xxxii] Plato *Apology of Socrates* 35e1-36a6; Diogenes Laertius 2.43.

second of three possibilities; in other words, that justice should be valued not only for itself, but also for what it brings.[xxxiii]

LS: Sure, that's it. That's it. Glaucon differs from Socrates: Socrates says justice is choiceworthy for its own sake and for its consequences. In other words, the reputation of justice is something not to be completely rejected, that you are trustworthy. Socrates is much more commonsensical, but the young, idealistic, extreme Glaucon makes an impossible demand on Socrates, and one must confess that he does it in a very impressive way. I think no one who has read this description of the perfectly just man and the perfectly unjust man can ever forget it.

I mention another point, again subject to your correction. I think [that] Adeimantus never refers to helping friends and hurting enemies as a very great good. Glaucon does.[xxxiv] Now helping friends means of course the relation of trust among the friends. It means that within a certain sphere, you are just. Now let us turn to Adeimantus. Adeimantus says, and that is very important, at the beginning that the most important thing [has not been said][xxxv] —[xxxvi] He mentions here already the divine rewards of justice. What do the divine rewards mean? Justice must [not be good for its own sake][xxxvii]. . .[xxxviii] [All agree that one must be intelligent to recognize goods] and tough in fighting for them.[xxxix] Wisdom and, in this sense, courage are virtues from every point of view. That is never controversial. The meaning is affected in the controversy, but crudely understood, wisdom and manliness are always good. To be intelligent or smart and to be courageous. That is stressed by everyone; at least it was so in fourth century Greece, but I think we can recognize it even today if we look a bit deeper. The virtues which were questionable were moderation and justice.

And then he refers again to the most extraordinary or most strange speeches dealing with the gods. The gods give many good men a miserable life and many evil men a good life; hence one must bring sacrifices and pray in order to expiate crimes. What does he mean? The gods are indifferent to justice, but they are concerned with their own wealth and power and therefore they are persuaded. The implication, again: if justice is to be sought for its own sake—for its own sake—the gods must be unconcerned with them because otherwise, out of fear of what the gods could do to you, i.e., not for the sake of justice by itself, would you be just. In 364c to d, the gods have made virtue difficult. Yes? The quotation from Hesiod: i.e., the gods have made virtue difficult, i.e., by nature repulsive. You have to sweat to become virtuous. [The] implication: justice ought to be easy. As Socrates said at the very beginning: "I would count justice among the attractive, easy things, naturally alluring." Justice ought to be easy and attractive. This seems to be

[xxxiii] Plato *Republic* 358a1-3.
[xxxiv] 362b7-c1.
[xxxv] 362d5.
[xxxvi] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxvii] 362e1-363e4.
[xxxviii] The transcriber notes that the tape was interrupted.
[xxxix] Apparently discussing 363e5-364b2.

Glaucon's and Adeimantus's tacit premise, in a way granted by Socrates, but now let us watch how this goes on.

He speaks again of the gods, 364e following: the gods can be persuaded by sacrifices not to punish injustice. Now why does this show that justice is not intrinsically attractive? If justice is intrinsically attractive, injustice must be intrinsically repulsive, hateworthy, unforgivable; but the gods, the highest beings, forgive it if they receive sacrifices and honors. Again, the gods—the wisest beings, supposedly—esteem wealth and honor more highly than justice. They are more concerned with wealth and honor than with injustice. Adeimantus also admits that the appearance of justice is good, but the appearance of justice, i.e., actual injustice, is difficult.

Now we get here a strange point. Happiness, perfect bliss, is said to be perfect injustice; and now we learn that perfect injustice is not easy, but difficult. Do you see that point? First it was said against justice that justice was so difficult, and therefore repulsive, and now we hear that perfect injustice is also difficult, hard to get—you must be awake day and night—and also not within easy reach. If you compare the passages, 364a4 and 365c7, the same Greek word, *eupetes*, is applied contradictor[il]y to [what was said first]. I say that because the translators always, or in many cases, because they don't like the contradiction, you know, because they don't understand what it could mean, try to bring it away by translating the same word differently in different contexts. Yes, but that leads to a very interesting consequence. If[47] the perfectly unjust man must go to many troubles, perhaps justice is more convenient than injustice. When studying Machiavelli I was forced to think this simple thought which I express as follows—Machiavelli himself doesn't express that. Goodness at acquiring by hook and by crook is praised because it is rare, difficult to practice and salutary to its possessor. The same [thing is what] they say here about injustice: it requires at least as much toil and sacrifices of ease as does moral virtue. That—does it not affect the situation? If you are concerned with bliss in the sense of what is easy, where you can relax, then injustice is not that. I mean, think; you can see that every night on the TV. The weeks of casing and of very detailed preparation required for making a haul, and [it is] by no means certain that they will get away with it. I mean, that's not an easy life.[48] I would say any professor or student at the University of Chicago has a much easier life. Now differently stated, if what is by nature good is the pleasant, ordinary vulgar virtue is preferable to both justice in the highest sense and injustice in the extreme sense. But that doesn't quite—that comes out in the Adeimantus section, because Adeimantus is a different man than Glaucon.[49] For Glaucon the highest good is truly honor, distinction, and that is never easy to get. Never.

There is one passage of very great importance for the whole dialogue and I would like you—would like us to read that. That is 366c3 to d3, in Adeimantus's speech.

Mr. Reinken: "In sooth, if anyone is able to show the falsity of these arguments—"

LS: No, where are you? 366c. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: Yes.

LS: All right. Yes. I'm sorry. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"if anyone is able to show the falsity of these arguments, and has come to know with sufficient assurance that justice is best, he feels much indulgence for the unjust, and is not angry with them, but is aware that except a man by inborn divinity of his nature disdains—"

LS: Yes, by[50] divine nature. Yes? Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"disdains injustice, or, having won to knowledge, refrains from it, no one else is willingly just, but that it is from lack of manly spirit or from old age or some other weakness that men dispraise injustice, lacking the power to practice it."

LS: Yes. Now you see Adeimantus, in contradistinction to Glaucon, admits that there are two human types who are not interested in doing injustice and not interested in having more than the others. The one are those who have a divine nature, and the others are those who have acquired knowledge. Two different types. How do they react? I mean, they both are not interested in doing injustice, but in different ways. What's the difference?

Student: One disdains and the other refrains.

LS: Yes.[51] But it is a bit more developed, if you look a bit in advance. Read again the beginning of the statement; then you would see. "If someone is able to show the falseness of what we have said." Yes?

Student: "and has come to know with sufficient assurance that justice is best, he feels much indulgence for the unjust, and is not angry with them."

LS: Yes. Stop here. You see, which type is that? Pardon?

Student: That's the man of knowledge.

LS: Exactly. The man of knowledge[52] is not angry with the unjust. He pities them, but he is not angry.[53] The other type [is one] who loathes injustice is by nature—the word [*duscherainōn*] means, primarily, he is unable to endure injustice. He may very well be angry. Pardon?

Student: He will hate the sin but not the sinner.

LS: Yes,[54] [but] let us be careful. I mean, the Greeks are not necessarily thinking in biblical terms. No, here he makes this distinction: the man of knowledge has no indignation about the unjust man. He has no interest in having more. He despises this

kind of things in which the unjust men are interested. The man with a divine nature, however, he has this indignation. That is the implication of that. That is, I think, of great importance for the sequel. Later on in the dialogue we will find a tripartition of the human soul: wisdom, knowledge—no, let us say, reason, and its virtue is wisdom; spiritedness; and desire. Spiritedness[55] shows itself in anger, and the virtue of spiritedness as spiritedness is courage or manliness. Now this, what we call moral indignation, zeal for justice, that belongs to that spiritedness rather than to reason, and that is here indicated for the first time. In the immediate context, I repeat, what is most important is that[56] [Adeimantus] admits even in the context of his argument that there are people who are by nature just. I mean, not all men are by nature unjust: some are either without any doing on their part, by nature, from the moment of their birth, as it were; they have such a temperament, such a natural [. . .] a divine nature. And others acquired [it] by acquiring understanding and knowledge.[57] There was no reference to this possibility in Glaucon's speech.

Now in order to understand that,[58] I would like now to summarize these points, because it seems to me that here we have one of the deepest nerves of the *Republic* before us. I must confess I saw it, or I began to see it only this time. I have read that more than once. And[59] one can also see that this begins much earlier; it [is] so difficult to see because they are inconspicuous. Now let us go back for a moment to Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus said for certain reasons that the artisan or ruler—the ruler understood as an artisan—in the strict sense does not err. If the physician errs, *qua* erring he is not a physician. As physician, he never errs. Developed by Socrates, each art is entirely self-sufficient. Each art is entirely self-sufficient: it doesn't need another art to be made good.[60] Also, in the case of the individual artisan, the art does not need something else in order to be made good for him, strictly speaking. The artisan in the strict sense is therefore indifferent to his own good. As artisan, he lives only for the customers: the people who want shoes, the people who want health, the people who want good government, or whatever it may be. And he lives only for the good of others.[xl] The artisan in the strict sense is just for justice's sake. That came out in the Thrasymachus section. Of course[61] Thrasymachus had to admit it for reasons which had to do with his particular situation, that he is an artisan and needs trust as a reliable artisan.

Now Glaucon and Adeimantus take this up.[62] Let me begin at the beginning. Adeimantus says [that] the whole official teaching of Greece denies that justice is to be sought for its own sake. Enlarging that, the demand made by Glaucon and Adeimantus on Socrates, that he should prove that justice is choiceworthy entirely for its own sake, is wholly novel, wholly novel, and therefore it is important to see where it does come up in this most clear and radical way for the first time. And I say it comes up in the Thrasymachus section. This shoemaker or physician who as shoemaker or physician has no concern with [anything] other than to serve others and does not think for one moment of the money he gets for his services, he is the perfectly just man. Here we have it.

Now Glaucon and Adeimantus demand from Socrates that he prove that justice is choiceworthy without any regard to the just man's own good; differently stated, that

[xl] 340d2-342e11.

justice is choiceworthy without any regard to happiness in the ordinary sense of the term happiness. Now what happens in the sequel? We will hear that next time from Mr. Warden, that now, after this case against justice has been made in the most powerful manner, we must found a just city in order to see what justice is. It is here implied in the very beginning that[63] justice is a quality of the individual as well as of the city. The individual and the city can be just. The whole thing turns around that. What about happiness?[64] Will the city be happy after it has been founded? Will the individuals of the city be happy? Pardon?

Student: Not necessarily, or at least the happiness of all is not the happiness of any one group of individuals in the city, but of the city as a whole. But that doesn't exclude that the individuals themselves will have some happiness.

LS: Yes, but[65] I remind you of Aristotle's very powerful criticism in the second book of the *Politics*, where he refers to a passage in the *Republic*.[xli] What is true of the groups—that the groups are not so altogether happy—is, you can say, even more true of the individuals. The *polis* is perfectly happy; whether the individuals are happy is at least doubtful. Do you see how important the distinction between justice and happiness is? Do you see how crucial that is? On the basis of the distinction between justice and happiness,[66] that justice has nothing to do with happiness, a profound distinction between the individual and the city appears. Both individual and city are just or can be just, but only the city will be happy, and the individual will not be.[67] But if justice is the most choiceworthy thing for everyone, who cares for happiness of himself? He will care only for happiness of the city.[68]

There is a connection between the unqualified dedication to justice as justice without any concern for the consequences or rewards and that passion which negatively expressed is moral indignation, spiritedness. The characteristic thesis of the psychology of the *Republic* is that spiritedness is superior to desire, but desire is the same thing as *erōs*. Spiritedness—that is the peculiar thesis of the *Republic*—spriritedness is superior to *erōs*. The absolutization of justice, meaning that justice is praised as the highest thing without any regard for happiness, that belongs in a way to that faculty called spiritedness. The just man as just man, meaning the man dedicated to justice without any regard for happiness, is the man of moral indignation or of zeal. These things—I'm perfectly clear that what I stated now[69] is only a question. I will repeat the question. The characteristic thesis appearing hitherto is [that] justice is to be shown to be choiceworthy for its own sake without any regard for happiness of the individual who tries to be just. [That's] number one. The second characteristic of the *Republic*, of which we have found a trace in the Cephalus section, is what I call the demotion of *erōs*, and that means the demotion of love, of desire in favor of spiritedness or anger. These are two important characteristics of the *Republic* in contradistinction to other works of Plato. The question which we must try to solve, and which we surely have not even begun fully to understand is: Is there a connection between these two characteristics teachings of the *Republic*?

Student: One thinks of an old man when you say is there any relation—

[xli] Aristotle *Politics* 1264b15-24; Plato *Republic* 419a1-421c6.

LS: Pardon?

Student: One thinks of a very old man who becomes angry. You know, the discussion in the eleventh book of the *Laws*.[xlii] He loses his desires, and also the spirited part, the angry part, increases, and these two things are united.

LS: Yes. But[70] cannot young people also be very angry? Is not Glaucon—

Student: [Inaudible reply regarding desires][xliii]

LS: Yes. Well,[71] you know the literature as well as I do, and if you read the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the chapter on the young men and the chapter on the old men, and I hear that old men also have their infirmities. They differ from those of the young, and they have also desires, perhaps.[xliv] Yes? So we would have to enlarge the issue, and this I think we must keep in mind.

Student: Is there any place else—

LS: Pardon?

Student: Any other unity than these two things?

LS: [72] Permit me only to make one point in advance.[73] At the end of the *Republic*—you must know in case you haven't read the end—Socrates will restore to justice all its traditional concomitants: honor with gods and men, and so on and so on. You know? At the end of the *Republic*.[xlv] But already in the middle of the *Republic* he speaks of people who live during this life on the islands of the blessed, i.e., perfectly blessed men. Who are they? Who are they?

Student: Philosophers.[xlvi]

LS: Philosophers. So in other words, there is a possibility of perfect happiness, and that is the combination of wisdom and justice, isn't it? They are perfectly just because they are perfectly wise or perfectly philosophic, and vice versa. Yes?

Student: Would this have anything to do with what Aristotle says about only beasts and gods—[xlvii]

LS: Yes, sure. Sure, sure. Same thing.

[xlii] *Laws* 922c7-d8.
[xliii] As noted by the transcriber.
[xliv] Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1389a3-1390a28.
[xlv] Plato *Republic* 612b7-614a3.
[xlvi] 519b7-c6, 540b5-7.
[xlvii] Apparently a reference to Aristotle *Politics* 1253a27-29.

Student: And that *erōs* is more proper to a philosopher and *thymos* is proper to—

LS: Yes, sure. That Aristotle doesn't say, but that is perfectly correct. No, but let me now follow this up for one moment. The philosophers live on the islands of the blessed, at least in this particular society, and what must they do then? Are they permitted to remain on that happy island?

Student: Down into the cave.

LS: Pardon?

Student: Down into the cave.

LS: Back into the cave again,[xlviii] yes, for fifteen years and so. All right. So in other words, you see even those who are most happy as individuals are compelled to undergo unhappiness, to become administrators. That is one way of putting it: to become administrators in the perfect city. That is only the proof that there is not individual happiness. There[74] are other passing references to this fact in the *Republic* throughout. Yes?

Student: Doesn't this afford a reason for Socrates's praise of Thrasymachus as blessed, in that Thrasymachus is always concerned with one's own, the happiness of one's own—

LS: Yes, but it can of course also be meant ironically. I mean this term which he uses, blessed, means also[75] that he has all good things in abundance,[76] and it can very well be an ironical reference to his poverty. Yes? You know? His seeming wealth, seeming intellectual wealth. That depends on the circumstances, and I think one can say that Socrates would perhaps—as far as I understand him, have understood it hitherto—say that Thrasymachus becomes to some extent blessed by the conversion he undergoes in the next books of the *Republic*. I believe at the end of the first book it is still premature to call him blessed.[xlix] Good. Is there any other point anyone would [like to] raise?

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[1] Deleted "was—."
[2] Deleted "what is—let us—now."
[3] Deleted "right to—the."
[4] Deleted "speak—."
[5] Deleted "café."
[6] Deleted "I have another question—two other questions, but I would—to bring to"
[7] Deleted "The first is what—."
[8] Deleted "the—what will happen—."
[9] Deleted "now this—."
[10] Deleted "—I mean later on—."
[11] Deleted "most—the."
[12] Deleted "he is more—that Glaucon (sic)—that."
[13] Deleted "that—and."

[xlviii] Plato *Republic* 519c7ff., 539e2-540c2.
[xlix] 354a8-9. See also 341b3, 346a3.

[14] Deleted "is—."
[15] Deleted "nature and law is used by"
[16] Deleted "That—."
[17] Deleted "that is—."
[18] Deleted "would—we."
[19] Deleted "and then—."
[20] Deleted "made very."
[21] Deleted "what—."
[22] Deleted "they are not—that."
[23] Deleted "In the transcript: 'his own interests (?) as regards his trusts (?)'"
[24] Deleted "Yes, no, but I think—."
[25] Deleted "it is not an—."
[26] Deleted "there is"
[27] Deleted "before you—."
[28] Deleted "to say"
[29] Deleted "makes—he."
[30] Deleted "to use."
[31] Deleted "His king—I believe—yes of—."
[32] Deleted "peeping—peeping."
[33] Deleted "they."
[34] Deleted "over."
[35] Deleted "Man is regarded—."
[36] Deleted "within which—within which—an artifact."
[37] Deleted "which we do—."
[38] Deleted "and which are—which are surely many."
[39] Deleted "makes—."
[40] Deleted "we—."
[41] Deleted "It is—."
[42] Deleted "we must."
[43] Deleted "Now what about—that is a."
[44] Deleted "I would put it."
[45] Deleted "There is—."
[46] Deleted "chose—he.'
[47] Deleted "in—."
[48] Deleted "I mean."
[49] Deleted "Glaucon is very—.'
[50] Deleted "divine—by.'
[51] Deleted "And what—.'
[52] Deleted "—the man of knowledge does—."
[53] Changed from "The other type who is by nature—loathes injustice—he is by nature—the word means primarily he is unable to endure injustice."
[54] Deleted "that—."
[55] Deleted "is that—spiritedness."
[56] Deleted "Thrasymachus.'
[57] Deleted "These are not—.'
[58] Deleted "—let me first see about the time—oh, it's not so bad—."
[59] Deleted "I—."
[60] Deleted "It does not—also."
[61] Deleted "it was not—."
[62] Deleted "In other words, it is not so that—."
[63] Deleted "the individual—."
[64] Changed from "Will—will the city be happy after—the good city—after it has been founded?"
[65] Deleted "that is—."
[66] Deleted "that justice has nothing to do with—.'
[67] Deleted "just."
[68] Deleted "Now—another—there is—"

[69] Deleted "are only."
[70] Deleted "are not young people—also."
[71] Deleted "maybe older men have—."
[72] Deleted "No let me—.'
[73] Deleted "we must"
[74] Deleted "is even occasional—there."
[75] Deleted "—it means also."
[76] Deleted "—you know—."

Session 5: October 16, 1961
Book 2: Glaucon and Adeimantus

Leo Strauss: I didn't understand the beginning of your paper because I had to get accustomed to your way of delivery.[i] What did you say on the first page, roughly? If you want to, you can reread it.[ii]

Yes.[1] You know what Glaucon especially had commissioned Socrates to prove, that justice is so choiceworthy for its own sake, that even if it is accompanied by the greatest misery it is still choiceworthy. You know? Question: Does Socrates ever prove that?

Student: No, he goes on to prove that justice is choiceworthy not in itself, but because of its consequences.

LS: So in other words, in a way he never fulfills the task imposed on him. That is what you meant. I see. All right. Now you made a number of very good remarks.[2] Nothing [of] what you said was wrong, but you made some very good remarks, especially by observing the reactions of the interlocutors—in particular, Adeimantus. That you don't take this as mere—how shall I say—ornament would be no[table] [. . .][3] [since that view] is sheer stupidity—you know, that Plato had for some reason [4][written] a dialogue, and then of course the other fellow had to say, "yes," "yes," "maybe," "certainly," and so on and without making any [remarks of his own]. And this does make a difference. You are aware of that, and I was very glad to see that.

Now I would like to ask you a few points [about] the parallelism between the individual and the *polis* with which the argument in a way begins.[iii] I would now like to make a dogmatic assertion. This parallelism is of course of crucial importance, but it is of crucial importance only critically. It is not the constructive principle. The best city is not built up on the basis of that parallelism. You know? It's built up on the basis of other considerations, and then when it is finished and we have the perfect *polis* in front of us, and also the perfect individual, then we are asked what Socrates never does. Is there a genuine parallelism between the two? That [is what] I mean by critically. Is there not a great difficulty here?[5] I may take this up later, but what is the constructive principle? I mean, what is the principle according to which the best *polis* is built up so far as you have read hitherto?

Student: What principle of construction has gone into the[6] supplying of—

[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper (probably Mr. Warden), read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcriber notes: "The student reads." The reading was not recorded.
[iii] Plato *Republic* 368e2-369b4.

LS: No, the overall principle which guides Socrates hitherto in[7] making the city in speech, as he puts it. After all, he must have some guiding notion; I mean, you can't build without having some notion of what you are building and towards what you are building.

Student: Well, he has a conception of the good man and the good *polis.*

LS: Yes, does he? Does he? I mean, at the very beginning, when he—

Student: Well, he starts out with just the basic needs.[iv]

LS: All right, that is clear. But even what that means does not become quite clear if we do not[8] consider the next step. Once we know that men have a variety of needs—yes?

Student: Is it not the satisfaction of needs?

LS: Yes, sure. That is the same, clearly. I mean, the mere needs[9] are only the occasion for satisfying them. Satisfaction is a complement of the needs, but how are the needs satisfied? What is the principle used when he speaks of the satisfaction of the needs, the characteristic principle?

Student: [10][An equal] satisfaction of the needs.

LS: Yes, sure. Yes, but what does this mean here precisely?

Student: A functional breakdown of the society.

LS: Pardon?

Same Student: A functional breakdown of the society.

LS: Yes, the word "functional" is, as you know, in so frequent use now that one doesn't know what it means. More simply, and in the terms in which he says it?

Same Student:
The satisfaction of the needs will use a mold of satisfaction according to nature.

LS: Yes, the last expression you used is the one at which I was driving, but the expressions you used before were not helpful. I mean, the main point is[11] one man, one job, and that is defined by the nature of the man. And you have very clear cases; you don't have to go to Plato for that.[v] To be a tailor you don't need the nature which you need in order to become a blacksmith, or vice versa. Yes? I mean, other cases are not so clear. You know, a tailor can be a very, very weak fellow, and a blacksmith has to be a[12] very strong fellow, and other things going with that. So this is then the constructive principle: nature. And what you call the needs is of course also the natural needs, needs

[iv] 369c9-d5.
[v] 370a7-c6.

which man as man necessarily has, not superfluous wants. That is not in the strict sense natural.

So nature, and that is the key word for the *Republic* as a whole and it occurred more than once in Mr. Warden's summary. And this we must link up with what we say in the first book, the definition of justice given by Cephalus, to give every man what is due to him. What is due to him. Yes? What does this mean? What is due to him according to law, to the positive law? And this is, while practically quite sound, theoretically by no means satisfactory, because we suppose justice is good and justice is giving every man what belongs to him; but by giving him[13] what belongs to him according to law, you may ruin him. Yes? I mean, the playboy who gets millions and corrupts himself and others with that money, it's not good for him. So you see justice, the two definitions or the two opinions[14] [about] justice, that [it] is good, and it is leaving everyone what belongs to him according to law, contradict one another. And that was already indicated in the transition from Cephalus to Polemarchus, when[15] [Polemarchus] says, quoting a famous wise man, Simonides: "Justice is not giving to a man what is owed to him meaning legally owed to him, but giving him what is becoming for him, what is good for him, and for him according to his nature."[vi] If he is by nature a temperate fellow, then he can be given quite a few things which cannot possibly be given to a man who is by nature intemperate, and so on and so on. So that is by no means sufficient, but that is the primary constructive principle of the *Republic*.

Now then we come to what you said about the first city. The first city is the city[16]—you know, the south sea island: no violence of any kind, no want proper; they have enough for satisfying their simple needs. Then Glaucon is dissatisfied and the feverish city is built[17].[vii] The dynamic city would be an exact modern equivalence of that. You know what they mean today by "dynamic"? [It] can be translated by "feverish." Yes, you say the artists occur only in the feverish city; that is correct, but in order to be fair to Plato or to Socrates you must also admit that another kind of people also occurs only in the feverish city, not in the first city. I mean, you must not load the dice against the poets. Which other class of men also cannot occur in the first city?

Student: Well, there are cooks—

LS: Yes, sure. I mean, that's a lower kind of artisan, but an interesting class.

Student: Well, the guardians.

LS: Sure.

Student: Philosophers.

[vi] 332a7-c3.
[vii] 372c2-373a8.

LS: Philosophers. The philosophers are as impossible there. Do you see? That shows the difficulty of the first city. Now[18] Adeimantus is perfectly satisfied with that first city. You have observed that. Glaucon is dissatisfied. Why? Why is Glaucon dissatisfied?

Student: Well, he doesn't think that's sufficient.

LS: Yes, that is the same. What does he crave, what he doesn't get there in the first city?

Student: Power.

LS: Pardon?

Student: Power.

LS: No! He doesn't say a word about that.

Student: He wants the amenities—

LS: Much too general still, although that is a bit closer than what Mr. Reinken said. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, he says it is "a city of pigs." But why is it a city of pigs?

Student: He wants sweets, rather than just—

LS: Sweets, yes.[19] The Greeks made this distinction.[20] The basic thing was the bread, and you add something to the bread which they call in the Greek *opsa*, and that includes everything which you eat with the bread. But there is one thing which is particularly important to him. That doesn't come out immediately. We have to read carefully. Yes?

Student: If you eat well and you have a little leisure, that means you can also do some thinking.

LS: Not a word of it. What does he really crave, which becomes clear very soon? You have to read.

Student: Salt?

LS: Salt. Well, who—salt, no!

Student: War?

LS: Pardon? Work?

Student: War.

LS: No, [although] war comes out as a consequence. The primary demand is this.[21] There is one class of men who comes in in the feverish city for the first time. In the first city they have cowherds and shepherds, and now they get also swineherds. May I ask why?

Student: In the first city, there's no meat for eating.

LS: Meat! That is what he wants. Sure.[22] I mean, he is not a vegetarian; he is [. . .] not a vegetarian. And you must[23] see this in the situation: they have been invited to the house in order to get a dinner, and in the meantime Cephalus has been doing something about the sacrifice.[viii] That means simply about the preparation of the dinner. You must not forget that. Smell, odors are coming. Our young healthy fellow, Glaucon, is hungry, of course; and in addition, the elders and so. Now what happens in this respect in the whole dialogue? What happens in the dialogue? Where[24] is the dinner served?

Student: Never.[25]

LS: Never. So? That is very important. That is a silent accompaniment of all the speeches, that they don't get anything to eat. Differently stated, they are trained in temperance, especially Glaucon, and therefore[26] the austerity of the whole *Republic* is acted in the *Republic* itself because they get nothing to eat. There was one man, surely, who understood this marvelously, and that was Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*. That is also a so-called ideal city, ideal society, in the *Utopia*; and that is characterized by one external difference: the perfect society of the *Utopia* is described after luncheon.[ix] And that is reflected in the substance: it is a very nice, pleasurable society and lacks completely the austere features of this super-Sparta. So you see, Thomas More understood the issues[x]. Good. Now that is funny and more than funny, but now let us be [serious][xi]—no one will believe that; especially Mr. Reinken refused to believe that this can be a serious criticism of the vegetarian city. You see? This is a city without any bloodshed: not only no war, but even no killing of brutes for human food.

Now[27] what is the serious objection to that city? I mean, you see, what happened in the case of Glaucon is what happens to all of us. We are confronted with a proposal or with a thesis, for example, and we don't like it, and we are not able to—if confronted with it for the first time, [in] our first reaction, what we say may be very stupid. In other words, because we have to think about it, what we mean, we have only the general dissatisfaction without being able to say what it is. That is what happens to Glaucon. Glaucon could have said after a few hours of intensive thinking what he objected to, but he could not say it at once. Now what is it, what he objects to?

[viii] 328a7-8, 331d6-9.
[ix] Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Clarence H. Miller, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 81.
[x] In the transcript: "issues (?)"
[xi] The transcript indicates inaudible words here.

Student: I'm reminded of a parallel here with book 1 of Aristotle's *Politics* where he says that the city comes into being more or less for the preservation of life, but that its purpose becomes the good life[xii] and that, I think, would be the problem . . . here, that the only purpose of the first city is more or less basic necessities, but it does not develop—

LS: Yes, but do you see that you don't answer the question? Here is a young man called Glaucon, and[28] he rebels against the proposal on manifestly insufficient grounds, and yet we[29] sense somehow there is a good ground. What is that good ground?

Student: There's no room for his nature in the city. He's not a herdsman; he's not a shoemaker.

LS: All right. That you can say. But all right, that I grant you.[30] But shall I show you the exact answer? Now let us look at two passages. The first is in that description in 372b, where Socrates describes how they live[31] in great pleasantness, and the only thing they do apart from eating and drinking is—and procreation, of course—what do they do beyond eating, drinking and procreation? The only thing?

Student: Singing hymns to the gods in pleasant fellowship.

LS: Yes, all right, because the pleasant fellowship—what does this mean? I think that is not defined. It could very well mean "Skol!" you know, and not go beyond that. And therefore I think we should say "singing hymns to the gods." Yes? Singing hymns. You see, being together can also mean—forgive me for saying so—just sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse, yes? And therefore that is not clearly going beyond the mere sensual pleasure. But singing hymns to the gods. Well, I find it right away; one moment. Which was this passage here?[32] 607a. Do you have it? It's on page 465 of the second volume of Shorey.

Student: I have the Jowett.

LS: All right: "but we must." Well, read it.

Student: "We must remain firm in our conviction that hymns to the gods and praises of famous men—"

LS: Of good men!

Same Student: "of good men . . ."

LS: Good men.

Same Student: "are the only poetry which ought to be introduced into our state."

[xii] Aristotle *Politics* 1252b28-30.

LS: Yes, all right. That's all we need. So hymns to the gods occur in both the first city and the final city, but there is something which does not occur in the first city and occurs in the final city, and that are praises of good men. That's the same as praises of virtuous men.[33] We have a simple formula. Virtue is absent from the first city. That is all. And Glaucon senses that without being able to express it. Now this seems to be contradicted by a remark shortly before when Socrates says we will find justice in the first city, and this is by no means ruled out.[xiii] It is also not asserted that we find it here, but still it may be there. Where could justice be? Where could justice be in this first city?

Student: Each man doing his work according to his nature and sharing the fruits of his work with his fellow citizens.

LS: Yes, there is a more—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, he says literally, or Adeimantus says, "perhaps in their mutual need for all these things." "Mutual need." But where does this "mutual need" show? The shoemaker makes the shoes, the carpenter makes cupboards, and so on. But how do they come together?

Student: Exchange.

LS: Exchange. So exchange is the locus of virtue, and how is that called, the virtue which men can show in exchange?

Student: Commutative justice?

LS: Justice. Yes, the lowest form of justice, commutative justice, you know that, you don't cheat in exchange. That exists, and then you can even say there exists something called moderation. You know, they don't procreate too much and so on and so on. Yes? Now about this moderation you find an interesting remark in the fourth book of the *Laws*, 710a to b, which I read to you from[34] Bury's translation.[xiv] "The vulgar temperance, not the kind men mean when they use [oh God—LS] when they use solemn language and identify temperance with wisdom, but that kind which by natural instinct springs up at birth in children and animals so that some are not incontinent, others continent, in respect of pleasures. And of this we said that when isolated from the numerous so-called goods it was of no account."

In other words, there is a kind of very vulgar temperance which is surely better than intemperance, but it is nothing to make great fuss about; something very low, and it has to be something very low for the very simple reason[35] [that] the first city is characterized not only by the absence of bloodshed but by the absence of any education. The education comes in in the second [and third] book. [There is] no habituation to speak of. These are

[xiii] Plato *Republic* 371e12-372a2.
[xiv] Plato, *Laws*, 2 vols., trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).

simply good natured people conditioned by the simple environment to a simple harmless life. They don't have a virtue proper. Good.

Now another point, and the last point which I would like to discuss immediately on the basis of Mr. Warden's paper. You raised the interesting question whether the acceptance of the army—you know, they have to conquer foreign territory, and this is accepted by Socrates.[xv] Does he not accept, by this very fact, injustice? Was this not the question you raised? I was not quite clear what your answer was.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well, let me put it this way. They conquer that foreign territory in order to be able to have a dynamic society which later becomes a good society. Yes? "Dynamic" means "feverish." No other virtue.[xvi] Do they ever return the territory which they took away? Because after all, I mean, the feverish society will be[36] [purified] by education. They will become good men, but will they restore the territory which they originally took away in order to be able to become a larger society?

Student: Well, it could be that the right word is in [book] 6, where he has that large bit about[37] how Hellenes ought to behave with Hellenes[xvii] . . .

LS: I didn't understand the noun you used, how—

Student: How Hellenes, how Greeks—

LS: Oh, I see. Yes.[38] Still, that is another matter from now on, as now constituted. I mean, you have the Greek cities now, and then they should not invade one another. But what about the restoration of the original state? Yes? I think nothing is said. Pardon?

Student: Yes and no. Ultimately to be individuals they're brought into the new just Athens, but they don't get back their old Corinth.

LS: Their old?

Student: Corinth. Say, if Athens conquers Corinth—

LS: Oh, Corinth. Yes. No, I think that is at least a question. That is a very great question, and Socrates may very well have meant—surely he meant one thing, that one can safely say: Without evil or vice[39] [there] is no higher development of man. Yes?[40] I mean, if there is not at least the danger of vice, the danger of evil, and therefore the action against evil to prevent it: no higher development.[41] Mere innocence is incompatible with the higher development of man. In biblical language, there has to be the Fall if there is to be a higher development. That was the way in which, for example, Kant interpreted the story

[xv] Plato *Republic* 373d4-7
[xvi] In the transcript: "virtue (?)"
[xvii] In book 5, 469b5-471b8.

of the Fall.[xviii] It is of course not the biblical interpretation of the Fall, but that is what Plato meant. Yes, but still the question whether some kind of injustice is not an ingredient of the highest development—that is still the question, and what Mr. Warden reported about the character of the guardians has something to do with that. What is the character of the guardians?

Student: Well, they're to be gentle to friends and harsh to enemies.

LS: Yes?

Student: And also have the other qualities, such as strength and wealth—

LS: Yes, yes, sure, the other things; but still their harshness to strangers on the basis of the mere fact that they are strangers. Do you remember what Socrates says? Like the dog who barks at any stranger regardless of whether the stranger has done him good or ill, before he could do anything to him he already is harsh. You know? So[42] Aristotle rebukes Plato for this remark about the harshness to strangers, quite rightly from a strictly moral point of view, but Plato didn't retract it.[xix] Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. Yes, you can put it this way; but only in one way it is of course much harsher here, because if you take the third book of the *Laws* this cannibalistic stage is simply overcome and there is nothing said about its survival in a modified form in the higher society.[xx] Here I think the war, the possibility of war, the fall, remains the condition of the best *polis* throughout.

Well, let me state the difference simply, the thought which we all know. The political society is in the strict sense a closed society. I don't care now what some people now call a closed society,[xxi] but it has frontiers. Only a small part or only a part of the human race belongs to[43] each political society. Political society is essentially exclusive, and that means that it is surely in itself something uncharitable. That is of its essence, and therefore the clamor, especially in our age, for one world state or one world society. The question is only whether that is feasible. That's the real issue. But[44] from the point of simple unqualified goodness or charity, political society as such constitutes a problem. I think one must admit that, and that is, I think, what Plato brings out.

And you refer to that discussion with Polemarchus: the just man never harms any other man.[xxii] But what does he do when he fights as a soldier in a war? Well, you can make all wonderful casuistry and say: Of course he will only fight in a just war. But that is not

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[xviii] See "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" in Immanuel Kant, *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1963), 55-63 [111-117].
[xix] Plato *Republic* 375c1-376a10; Aristotle *Politics* 1327b37-1328a16.
[xx] Strauss is probably referring to the passage on the Cyclops in Plato *Laws* 680b1ff.
[xxi] Strauss is probably referring to Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945).
[xxii] Plato *Republic* 335d11-13.

quite true, because he is not the judge of whether the war is just: he has to obey orders. That's the government's business. And in addition, it is not so easy to distinguish between a just war and an unjust war as we believe on the basis of certain experiences in our century. This leads to all kinds of—the only simple solution, if possible, would be the abolition of war, of course, i.e., the abolition of particular societies, because as long as you have closed societies—sovereign states, as we call them[45]—you have the possibility of war. That's inseparable, and every possibility sooner or later becomes an actuality. Otherwise it is not a possibility. That is[46] the difficulty. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: You can—yes, ask it now.

Student: Which is the city of pigs strictly: the first or the second, more luxurious [city]? The reason that I ask is that I've watched pigs, and they're neither clean nor moderate nor pious, and these first citizens are.

LS: Oh, I see. Yes. But first, who says it is a city of pigs? Who says it?

Student: Glaucon.

LS: Glaucon. So not Socrates. Perhaps Glaucon lacked this knowledge which Socrates had. Secondly, what does he mean? You see, there is a nice Latin joke which they make about bad etymologies, and [47]they say, for example, *canis non canere*. Did you ever hear that? *Canes* is a dog, and *canere* means singing. A dog is called *canes* because he does not sing. Yes? Good. And similarly, we can say it is a city of pigs because there are no pigs in it. There are no pigs. That's the joke, the involuntary joke. Yes?

Student: The swineherd is mentioned later as being—

LS: He comes in with the luxurious city.[xxiii] Yes, sure. Sure, sure. It is the city of pigs: that is the involuntary joke of Glaucon.

Student: And Socrates never says "city of pigs"—

LS: Of course not. He says it is "the healthy city," and later on, in the fourth book somewhere, he calls it even simply "the city," and that[48] is not a thoughtless expression, but we don't have to go into that now.[xxiv] It is a city of pigs in the sense of the lowest and most despicable brutes living more or less together with men, disregarding lice, of course, and rats.

Student: The latter city is closer to the city of pigs, isn't it? A city of gluttony, selfishness—

[xxiii] 373c4-6.
[xxiv] 372e6-7, 433a2-6. See also 374a5.

LS: Yes, sure. Sure. Yes, but that is the involuntary irony of Glaucon. Socrates cannot be held responsible for that. Yes?

Student: On the same thing, I'm not sure where you're going to go; I'd like to raise a question that perhaps you will deal with later. Many people have said that it was originally Glaucon who brought up the idea of a social contract,[xxv] and yet it would seem in this passage where Socrates first starts to describe the ideal city or original city . . .[xxvi] What could be the plausibility of the fact that Socrates is doing nothing more than poking fun at these people who would like to think that such an ideal city could exist? And the reason I say that is because in the *Laws*, when he talks about such a city he says: Well, we all know that this is a city that may have been, but it certainly will never come again.[xxvii]

LS: That is such a long question and I would—where shall I start? Social contract: Where is there any reference to the social contract there?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but you mustn't do that if you have no evidence for it. There is a social contract in the Glaucon story; there is no social contract in the Socrates story. They just come together. There is nothing said about a contract. But if you bring in Rousseau, that is a very grave crime, because the Rousseauan social contract is of course the establishment of government; and the social contract—I mean, if we call it a social contract, which is discussed by Glaucon, is also the establishment of government. You know? And so there is no question. I mean, under no circumstances is anyone entitled to speak here [in the Socrates story] of a social contract, because social contract in the more emphatic, clear sense of Rousseau is the establishment of government or sovereignty. There is no sovereignty, and secondly, there is not a word about any contract here. They just come together.

Student: I meant the coming together of the people which is the origin of the Rousseauan state.

LS: Yes. No, in Rousseau they come together in order to subjugate themselves to a common power, just as in Hobbes, and this common power is only in the case of Rousseau necessarily the community. Yes? But the community is sovereign. Nothing of this kind here: they live together. In modern lingo, it is a society and not a state.

Student: I didn't make myself clear.

LS: Yes, I believe so. Yes?

[xxv] 358e3-359b1.
[xxvi] The transcriber notes: "several inaudible words"
[xxvii] *Laws* 739b8-e5.

Student: What I mean is I'm referring to the state, if you want, unencumbered. The state described in the second discourse of Rousseau speaks about different men coming together to satisfy their needs, and I wonder if this doesn't find—

LS: Yes, but in Rousseau's case it is also—Rousseau thinks very much, if I remember well, in the *Second Discourse* first of the rule of the father,[xxviii] and nothing is said here about that.[49] After all, there are families there, aren't there, in the Rousseauan state of nature? I mean the more advanced state. I think it is of no help. It is of no help. Good.

Now[50] if it is all right, let us now follow the argument and begin at the beginning. Socrates says, "I will try to solve that, but let us not"—in other words, the question has nothing to do with the *polis*, in the first place, but with justice.[51] Socrates makes this proposal: In order to see justice, let us look at the just city or justice in the city rather than justice in the individual because the city is so much larger than the individual, and here is writ large what is written in very small letters there. But that means the same letters. The same, say, capital A—we must do something like that here and here, so that you can see from afar and very clearly. So it is written large. But what does this mean? It is the same thing, identically the same letter, only written large there.

Right at the beginning there is already a doubt. Is this identity or only similarity? That will be developed later much more fully. In this connection, we will see a similitude of the larger in the shape of the smaller, 369a. Shape is used: the word used here is *eidē*, which derives in the English word "idea." And I believe that's the first time that this key word occurs in the *Republic*, and here it has its simple meaning, or vulgar meaning of shape. Later on, it will undergo terrific transformations, as we shall see in the sixth book. So. But I would like to anticipate. Everyone, I believe, has heard of the fact that Plato's philosophy is the doctrine of ideas, and these ideas are located, if one can speak in this way, in a super-heavenly place, meaning they[52] do not belong to the visible world properly. They appear somehow within it,[53] but they are not there. Why does Plato not just look at the idea of justice? Why does he not do that? Well, that he never does, but in the other dialogues he proceeds in such a way that various opinions about, for example, courage are given and they are examined, and gradually we are led to understand what courage itself truly is and that is the idea of courage. Here he does not proceed [in] that way in any way.

Student: Isn't it true [that] in this respect that the question, What is justice? is never raised, never comes up—

LS: But it is—that is not correct. The definition of justice is given later on. Do you remember what it is?

Student: Yes.

LS: Please tell the class, in case anyone hasn't seen that.

[xxviii] See "Discourse on the Origin of Inequality" in Jean-Jacques Rousseau *The First and Second Discourses*, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 146-147, 165-166.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no, no. Doing one's own business, minding one's own business . . . or something of this kind.[xxix] You see how insufficient the definition is. I will tell you what I believe, what the exact definition is: to do one's job well, not simply to do one's job. Yes? That, I think, is what he means. But that is also not very helpful because it needs a long interpretation.[54] So the question "What is justice?" is answered, but the question is: Do we recognize in this answer anything reminding us of ideas as ideas, as Platonic ideas are ordinarily understood? I put this only as a question. So far from looking at an unchangeable, eternal idea of justice, Socrates begins the discussion with the genesis, with the coming into being of the city. The ideas don't come into being and don't perish. The *polis* essentially comes into being and perishes. The very first word in the original is the word *gignetai*: it comes into being, the *polis*.[xxx] Of course what Socrates gives here is not the genesis as reported by some people of former ages but the essential genesis; as we can say, true genesis. We can also say [that] of course he has to begin with the genesis of the *polis* because Glaucon's account of justice was an account of the genesis of the *polis*. You remember? Glaucon's account of the essence of the city was an account of the genesis of the city and how it came about by this conflict between our desire to have more and our weakness, our inability to get more, and so we settled on having the same.[xxxi] You[55] remember that.

Furthermore, the other implication: they[56] observe the genesis of a *polis* in order to find out what the just city is. They do not look at Athens, for example, which is at their doorstep, or at Sparta, which is not too far away. The implication is [that] we are not so sure whether[57] these cities are just, and we want to build up a just city. More generally stated, with a view to what follows later: No actual city is just; and therefore, if we want to see a just city, we have to build it up in speech. This is compatible with the fact that this just city might become actual, but it is not of the essence of the just city to be actual. That's the point. We take this up later.

Now he begins, then, and the basis[58] of the association is need or want. I want food.[xxxii] In the basic stratum, my own advantage is absolutely present. Yes?[59] You remember the demand: forget about advantage of myself, of any "myself." [60]Socrates doesn't do that. We begin—the society originates in self-regarding motives. [61]And all the needs are mentioned, the most fundamental needs, except the most important for understanding society. What is that?

Student: Government.

LS: No! Government: that is not a moot question, whether the anarchists are not right. That would have to be discussed. But there is one basic need of man which essentially

[xxix] Plato *Republic* 433a1-b4.
[xxx] 369a5-7.
[xxxi] 358e3-359b1.
[xxxii] 369b5-d5.

calls for another man—for another human being, I should rather say. I mean, the need for food does not call—you can pick a banana [yourself]. Yes?

Student: Speech?

LS: Pardon?

Student: Speech?

LS: It's not mentioned. No, no. Some[thing] much cruder: sex! I'm sorry to say. So, no procreation, no *eros* is mentioned. I mentioned this before already, at the beginning in the Cephalus scene, when Cephalus spoke in such a derogatory way about sex, that it is a very bad tyrant—or rather, Sophocles was quoted as having said so.[xxxiii] This abstraction from *eros* is very important, and we will have to watch that later, what this means. It is clear that all these wants mentioned are wants of the body or inseparable from the body: food, protection against cold and heat, and so on.[62] Wants of the body means, however, wants of that part of man which is radically private, according to Plato. Thoughts are essentially sharable. The affections of the body are as such not sharable—as such. Your toothache is never felt by another man unless he happens to have a toothache at the same time. But as such it is your toothache. But if you think of the clearest case, if you understand a mathematical demonstration, that's never merely your thought: this thought is by its nature absolutely sharable by everyone else who also can understand it. If there is anything private in your understanding of a demonstration, it's wrong!

So these are the two extreme cases: mathematical demonstration and toothache, and the other cases are somewhere in between. Now then there comes the key question: Should everyone live only for himself, do only his own business? You know, with a view to the later formula: Should everyone mind only his own business by[63] preparing his own food, by preparing his own clothing, his own house or so, or should there be a division of labor? Answer: Division of labor. And division of labor means already now a grave qualification of minding one's own business: minding one's own business means division of labor, i.e., somehow working for others. That we must keep in mind for later. The division of labor is recommended because of the difference of natures. Different men are by nature differently fitted for different things; and hence, if this is acted upon, the exercise of a single art by each becomes finer. So if I do nothing but making shoes, my shoemaking will be superior than if I am a jack of all trades.[xxxiv]

Here is the most radical difference between Plato and Marx. Marx, with the development of all faculties of each, is at the opposite pole of that.[xxxv] The individual is incomplete. I mean, not only that he has less strength enough—that he has less strength than five individuals combined, but he is qualitatively incomplete. He can do only things of a

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[xxxiii] 329b6-d1.

[xxxiv] 369d6-370c6.

[xxxv] Possibly a reference to Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, "German Ideology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 160. See Strauss, *City and Man*, 133.

certain quality[64] which have to be done, and the others have to be done by different natures. Man cannot live well in—need not live well, surely—in isolation.

Now if you turn to[65] 371e, you will see—

Mr. Reinken:
"And there are, furthermore, I believe, other servitors who in the things of the mind—"

LS: Yes, you read that. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:
"And there are, furthermore, I believe—"

LS: No, excuse me. No, I must first say that in 370e4, when Socrates says: "Well, if we need all these things the city will be."

Mr. Reinken:
"practically impossible to establish the city in a region where—"

LS: No, Mr. Reinken. We don't have to read that. What was the point? Socrates says: "Well, although we get all these other artisans in, it will still not be a big city" and Adeimantus answers, "Nor will it be a small city, having all these kinds of things."[xxxvi] You see, that throws light on the character of Adeimantus: he is not for the big thing. Yes? This city which has perhaps twenty different artisans, let us say,[66] [is, in his opinion], not small, [but] quite big.[67] He is in favor of the small, then. Now read in 371c5, if you have that.

Mr. Reinken:
"If, then, the farmer or any other craftsman taking his products to the market-place does not arrive at the same time with those who desire to exchange with him, is he to sit idle in the market-place and lose time from his own work?' "By no means," he said, "but there are men who see this need and appoint themselves for this service—in well-conducted cities they are generally those who are weakest in body and those who are useless for any other task. They must wait there in the agora and exchange money for goods with those who wish to sell, and goods for money with as many as desire to buy." (371c-d)

LS: Yes. Well, only one point. This is the longest answer ever given by Adeimantus. That is also characteristic of him. He[68] is interested in these little things, what we now would call economic things, and which were of course despised by the gentlemen. Yes? So that Socrates was compelled to say to one of these gentlemen one day: Don't despise the economic men. Beautiful sentence: "Don't despise the economic men."[xxxvii] I think one could use this as a motto for a book, "Principles of Economics." And so you will see why it is necessary when you look at this first city, which we may call Adeimantus's city, insofar as Adeimantus seems to be perfectly satisfied with that. What is its characteristic?

[xxxvi] Plato *Republic* 370e2.
[xxxvii] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3.4.12.

It is a temperate, moderate city, and a sign of temperance and moderateness is not to look out for the great things, for the big things. And[69] both are very nice people, Glaucon and Adeimantus, but they are very different people; and the characteristic of Adeimantus is moderation. Moderation; perhaps an exaggerated moderation, because it is after all only his nature without having undergone a sufficient education. You see?

Now what is the alternative? Plato has a very simple typology he uses, one can say, throughout his dialogues, bringing it out most clearly in the dialogue *Statesman*. Moderation or temperance is one thing, and the other is manliness. Manliness, yes, manliness. You see, the human race, as you know, consists of two parts, the male and the female. That's the real fundamental bipartition. And according to nature, as the Greeks said, the male element is the fighting element, the outgoing element, "outgoing" in the literal sense: going out of the house, and of course fighting. And the women stay at home. That was at least the Athenian practice; the Spartans had the opposite view. That was the reason why the most famous or most notorious Greek woman, Helen, was a Spartan woman, you see. So that was taken as a sign of the inadequacy. These are not my thoughts—I say this to the ladies—I merely report old views.[70] But the Athenian view was [that] the women stay at home, spin, talk, and may also have some secret drinks. That was regarded as inevitable.[71] Yes, temperance: silent, temperate, restrained.

Now the difficulty is that this is not universally true. You find male women and female men. So in other words, the distinction appears within the two sexes, and one way in which Plato states the problem is this—the political problem as well as the problem for the individual: the proper combination of courage and moderation. The proper combination. And that becomes very clear in the *Statesman*, where it is explicit, but it is tacitly there everywhere; and that is used also in the dialogues,[xxxviii] for example, here in particular clarity in the case of Glaucon and Adeimantus. Adeimantus is the moderate, restrained kind, and his brother the outgoing, courageous, manly kind. Because they differ—that's the difference between Plato and modern relativism—because they differ; and so that one has to be supplemented by the other, we have to go beyond their diversity and try to find a union of both. And this is of course here presented by Socrates most clearly, Socrates who is both restrained and daring. And how this combination is possible, and what is the right mixture—I mean, in which way should it be done, in which respect a man should be of utmost boldness and in which respect he should be of utmost decency or restraint.

That is a great question which is, I believe, discussed in the *Phaedrus*.[xxxix] —You see,[72] the word which I translate by "moderation"—in Greek, *sōphrosyne*—has various opposites: just simple intemperance, but also *hybris*, "insolent pride," one could perhaps say, and *mania*, "madness." Madness. In the *Phaedrus*, philosophy is identified with the highest form of madness, which means philosophy as such is the opposite of moderation.[xl73] Does it make sense to say that philosophy is absolutely lacking

[xxxviii] See Plato *Statesman* 308d1-311c8. See also Leo Strauss, "Plato," in *History of Political Philosophy*, 76-77.
[xxxix] Possibly a reference to *Phaedrus* 246a3-256e2.
[xl] 256a7-b7. The tape was changed at this point.

moderation? Well, we all know it is only a paradoxical—it is not paradoxical, even, but not [. . .] familiar formulation. Rabbi Weiss?

Rabbi Weiss: He's searching for truth.

LS: Sure. In other words, if someone is a moderate thinker in the sense that he doesn't go to the end of the road, that's very bad. But what is true of thought is not true of speech, of expression, and there is a combination *hybris* or *mania* in thought and decency in speech. That is what is suggested in the *Phaedrus*. Now let us come now to the daring, manly, spirited Glaucon, who is dissatisfied with that city of pigs because there is no meat, and ultimately what he doesn't say. What he cannot say now is that the city, the first city, lacks any possibility of human excellence, and therefore it is[74] unsatisfactory.

Now[75] on the basis of Glaucon's dissatisfaction, Socrates develops then this feverish city. This first city, has exchange—you know, exchange—and even export and import, as you will have seen if you have read. Someone called it a commercial society. I think that's wrong, because a commercial society is more than an exporting and importing society. Practically every society is exporting and importing to one degree or another, but a commercial society is a competitive society, and the first city is not competitive.[76] The feverish city is competitive or, as we can say, acquisitive, as is made perfectly clear in 373d to e; and because it is an acquisitive society it is a warring society. So[77] there is smooth sailing up to one point when Socrates says: Well, we must wage war. Glaucon is delighted: no difficulty.[78] And this war business is very important later on. In the fifth book, at the center of the book—of the work, we can say—when philosophy as such is introduced for the first time, it comes in via the war issue. Whoever read this paper is requested to watch that. Because of Glaucon's dissatisfaction with the restraints on warfare, does he raise the question, as every shrewd politician would, and say, "Well, it's a wonderful scheme, Socrates, but how is it possible?" You know,[79] that you ordinarily do when you are confronted with a scheme: you don't deny that it is desirable; you say it's not possible. And then Socrates says it is possible provided the philosophers become kings, and then the issue of philosophy arises. [xli]

But now Glaucon's first difficulty concerns not warring but the fact that there should not be a citizen army proper, but a professional army. This issue is so important that after it has already been settled between Socrates and Glaucon, Socrates comes back to it later, in 374b to d, because he knows Glaucon must be absolutely [convinced]. That's crucial: if Glaucon has to admit the principle of a professional army, Socrates can convince him of all the consequences. That's the key step, [a] professional army, because that implies already, on the basis of everything, that the soldiers are only soldiers, and not, in addition, moneymakers or something else. And this severe, monk-like soldiery of the *Republic* follows from the principle "one man, one job." Hence, soldier is nothing but soldier.

You see, incidentally, how important for the whole argument of the *Republic* this discussion in the Thrasymachus section was when the issue came up: What is art strictly understood? You remember that, where art was shorn of all frills, either the advantage

[xli] *Republic* 471a9-473e5.

which the artisan might derive for himself from his art.[xlii] You know? The artisan as artisan is nothing but a servant to the people for whom he works. Nothing else. This very severe notion of art, which comes out for the first time in the Thrasymachus section, is the basis of—in particular, of this argument regarding the army, and of this whole spirit of the *Republic*, this austere spirit. This is a fact. How to interpret or to understand that fact is another matter. I believe we do not know enough in order to answer this question.

Now these soldiers are[80] called the guardians for the time being. The guardians, the keepers. You remember a discussion about keepers in the first book? Pardon?

Student: The keepers of the safe?[xliii]

LS: Yes.

Student: Well, I could elaborate on it.

LS: Well, the simple—what was the point?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but more simply. I mean, if they know to watch, to guard. Yes?

Student: He must have the same knowledge as one needs to steal.

LS: So in other words, the guard has the same art as the thief has. Now how far is this true here of our guardians who are now in the coming?[81] To what extent must they not also be good thieves? Empirically, without—pardon?

Student: They plunder neighbors.

LS: Yes, sure. In the first place, they took away the land from their neighbors. Yes? And then they have, surely, in the war to plot, and to spy, and all these other things which are not well possible without immoral action.[82] Yes, you wanted to say something.

Student: Is there any relation in this to Polemarchus in the first book saying that justice is the art of keeping things safe? You give your money to the just man so he'll keep it for you . . .

LS: Yes, sure. The argument is, of course, you can say very ironical, but that is never enough because [there is] no irony, no interesting irony without its element of truth.[83] I only meant this. Now this section—let us go back for one moment. The first city was an Adeimantus affair. Yes? I mean, it was discussed between Socrates and Adeimantus. Then the question of the army and the question of the nature of the guardians is a Glaucon section, and later on when the education of the guardians comes up, is again as

[xlii] 341c4-342e11, 345e1-347a3.
[xliii] 333c5-334a8.

Adeimantus section. This all reflects the two characters, the characters of the two men. Now first of all, the nature of the guardians. The[84] [quality] which comes first to sight is one which is translated ordinarily by spirit or spiritedness—in Greek, *thumos.* Anger, indignation, desire for superiority, for victory: this all belongs to what he calls *thumos*. The subject will be discussed later on more fully in the *Republic*. Now this comes to sight for the first time when the guardians are discussed, and then the question arises: Yes, all right, they must be spirited fellows, but that is obviously not enough; they must also be gentlemen. And the division is very clear: they must be spirited against their enemies, foreigners, and gentle toward their fellow citizens. And this seems to be impossible, to have this combination. You see, if you start from that distinction I suggested before, the moderate and the feminine, and the courageous or the masculine, there seems to be a difficulty.[85] Can the same man be gentle and spirited? Well, Socrates says: No, we don't have to go very far; every dog will show us that this combination is possible. Well, everyone who has ever had a dog or been in a house where there was a dog[86] has had the opportunity to make this experience; we don't have to labor that. But what is more important is this, that Socrates now says this quality of the dog shows that the dog is a philosophic beast.[xliv] Did you understand that?

Mr. Reinken: I think so.

LS: Did you understand it? All right.

Mr. Reinken: He's being playful and ironic, because the dog, after all, is not judging by realities but by appearances. He wants to tell us that the guardian needs to judge wisely, but in fact the guardians will judge by appearances. They'll go out and fight. There is an enemy. He's wearing a blue uniform. Hit him. But the guardian does not know that this is a good man and that his king or ruler, whoever told him to go out, may be an evil man.

LS: Mr. Reinken, may I make a general remark at your expense? I think I know you long enough and I have certain privileges of old age. I think [that] the more I think about the difference between old and young people I have come to the conclusion that the most common infirmities of young people compared with old are, in the first place, a much greater rigidity. Flexibility, strangely enough, seems to come with age. And the second point is—that you didn't show now—rigidity is a terrible sophistication of the young. They cannot answer a simple question.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. No, but why don't you state first the very simple explicit argument, why the dog is a philosophic beast? You said why it is wrong and—or why Socrates's remark is ironical, and that is very pertinent later, but first we must know the statement by itself.[87] After all, Socrates is not such a foolish man that his ironic remarks do not have some substance in themselves. Now why is it—I mean, what permits him for a moment to say the dog is a philosophic beast?

[xliv] 374e6-376c6.

Mr. Reinken: It seems to me because he's friendly to intelligence and alien to ignorance.

LS: Yes, but how? How does it show? No, what is the phenomenon? What is the phenomenon known to everyone who has ever observed a dog for any length [of time] whatever, stated here? Well, if you are the master or belong to the family, he comes to you and wags his tail and is highly pleased, and if the postman comes or any other alien, he barks at him, [and] can get very angry. And[88] that is so. In other words, what is characteristic of the dog is that he loves acquaintances and hates strangers, i.e., he makes the fundamental distinction with a view to knowing or not knowing; i.e., his highest value, as they would say today, is knowledge. That is the joke, but[89] why is it such a joke?[90] Yes?

Student: Could it be that the dog only goes by what he knows already?

LS: You can put it this way. Let us now first take not the thing with which it's compared, but the thing to be understood: the guardian, the fighter, the citizen. The citizen in action: that's the fighter. Now the citizen who says—as this famous Englishman, if I may use a British example, [said]: British bankers who made a trip throughout Europe, the Balkans and everywhere and when they came back, the main result was, "British buns are best." So in other words, one's own is the best and everything alien is bad: what is now frequently called parochialism, as I have seen on another occasion. Parochialism. That is the natural character of the citizen as citizen if he is not trained specially at the University of Chicago or other places. Now one moment. Now that is the irony, that Socrates[91] takes as an example the dog, because this habit of the dog is just the opposite of the philosophic habit. The philosophic habit is to be not parochial, but the dog—or a dog or citizen—is the incarnation of parochialism. That, I think, is just the reverse. Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: I've come across that there were other men in Greece who were called dogs, and these were the Cynics, and this word here comes up again. Does this have any meaning that you can see, say, in this particular context? Does the dog here have any reference to the Cynics?

LS: No, I don't think so. I mean,[92] I don't see anything, but I would have to look up several things, when the term came up. The founder of the so-called Cynic school is of course Antisthenes, and that was prior to the [time when the] *Republic* was written. I don't know when[93] the term came into common use. It is surely—Antisthenes, where he is referred to in Xenophon, for example, there is no reference to dogs. I mean, I say no, but what is what you meant? I mean, what is cynical about that here?

Mr. Megati: What is cynical about what?

LS: Oh, I see what you mean, because if you take the speeches of Antisthenes, surely, in Xenophon, then he is so emphatically [a] simplistic citizen.[xlv] Yes. Yes, but I think it is really a matter, as far as I can see, of more antiquarian interest. I don't believe it contributes anything.

[xlv] Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 28.

Student: But another thing a cynic must be, for example, is a cosmopolitan, a man who has no city, who goes from place to place—the opposite of this.

LS: Yes. Yes, but I see no—how shall I say?—no peg here to hang that on. I mean, if you show that to me, I will—no, no. I think that for the time being I would regard it as vain speculation,[94] until you lay a foundation. Good. Fine.

Now then we turn, as I said, to the education of the citizens, of the guardians, and that is Adeimantus's section, because Adeimantus is the [more] sophisticated of the two—you know, the intellectual, as they would say today. What are the key points? First, music, and then gymnastics. Yes? The two branches of education: training of the body; training of the mind, the soul. And music first, because you can't begin with gymnastics. At least the Greeks didn't begin with gymnastics in the cradle, whereas you sing already to a baby in the cradle. So, music first.[xlvi] Yes?

Student: The point which I was making before was that by raising this philosophy of the dogs, comparing the dogs with the guardians, he shows [that] the guardians, insofar as they are raised philosophically, are not truly philosophic, and is laying the ground for the later distinction of the poetic from philosophy.

LS: Yes, sure.[95] But I think, nonetheless, what I said, I believe is simpler. Yes? The identification of the guardian with the philosopher is impossible, as is shown by the reflection on the similar, because the dog, what makes the dog allegedly philosophic makes him in fact antiphilosophic. That's simpler.[96] But you see, the interesting point was this. What you said was absolutely relevant. I did not deny that. But it was unnecessarily complicated, and why? That is the general lesson we can learn from that: because you did not begin with the obvious. I believe the greatest errors which we all commit all the time, including of course myself, is that we do not take proper cognizance of the obvious, of the surface, because—we despise it somehow because every child can see [it]. Yes, but not every child pays attention to it. Yes?[97] I mean, the true sophistication, if I may use the term, is the one which would start from the surface, from the surface of the surface, and go down to the center. And the false sophistication begins already beneath the surface and therefore never reaches properly the center. My metaphors get mixed up a bit, but you will get the gist of what I mean.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, yes, but that is too general. That is too general. I try to make it simpler.[98] Here is, first, music, because cradle songs precede any gymnastics; but Socrates then forgets about this and[99] doesn't speak of any songs in particular, but he speaks of stories which are told to children. And he says, obviously, the first stories which are told are fairy tales, as we would say. He says *mythoi*, myths, in the sense of untrue speeches, and these untrue speeches are presented here as the stories told about the gods by the poets. By the poets: that is important. Stories about the gods are also told by nurses, old wives, and

[xlvi] Plato *Republic* 376c7ff.

whatnot, and in a way by the city itself. Namely, in the ritual and in the official presentation in sculpture, painting, or whatever else may be, there is of course also a story of gods told. This official theology, the theology of the city or the civil theology, is never attacked by Plato explicitly. He attacks only the poetic theology. That has a long story, and in Augustine's *City of God* there is a very reasonable discussion of that: that the Greek and Roman writers attack all the time the poetic theology and never explicitly admit that this is also an attack on the civil theology, say, of the city of Rome or of any other city.[xlvii] And of course naturally Plato knew that, but he didn't think it would be proper to do that.

And the question, therefore, is: How to tell noble lies, fine lies? The question is, what is forbidden are not lies, but base lies, degrading lies.[xlviii] That is the context. And then there is a great difficulty to which Mr. Warden, I believe, alluded, namely, in this context Plato develops what[100] Adeimantus calls "theology," the first time that the term theology occurs in the preserved writing.[xlix] Theology means, literally translated, "speeches about gods."[101] Now these two dogmas which Plato establishes here as models are surely noble; there is no question about that. But are they noble truths or noble lies? That remains absolutely dark and has to be studied very carefully in order to draw a line. Now what are these two dogmas? The first: the goodness of the god. I agree with Mr. Warden; one should always translate god with a small g and not with a capital G, because that introduces a wholly non-Greek distinction if you use God with a capital G. The god may of course well mean, as it very frequently means, the god of whom we are now speaking. It could be Apollo, it could be Zeus; I don't know who. And even if it is a single god and the godhood of any other beings is denied, it still is not god with a capital G, as we, the heirs of the biblical tradition, take it. John Locke, who was a very thoughtful man, made the distinction in this following way:[102] he capitalized God, but he spoke of a God (God capitalized), which was his indication of this problem.

Now what are the two dogmas?[103] Mr. Warden, what [is] the first dogma?

Mr. Warden: About the nature of god?

LS: Yes.

Mr. Warden: The first one is that he is good.

LS: Yes, the goodness of god.[l] Hence he cannot be the author of any evil, and since we have many more evils than goods, as we have said, most of what we have is not due to god or to any god. And it is due to what? To what it is due? How come that we have so many evils? Does he suggest an answer here?

Student: [. . .]

[xlvii] Augustine, *City of God*, book 6, chapters 5-10.
[xlviii] Plato *Republic* 377d8-9.
[xlix] 379a5-6.
[l] 379b1-380c10.

LS: Yes, but he has a more specific expression: he speaks of punishment. Yes? Of punishments. So in other words, man would be the author of many evils, not god. But of course he does not exclude a third source of evil apart from god and man, and that is what later would have been called matter—I mean, what Aristotle and his successors would have called matter. That [is] in the nature of things. In other words, a Platonic god is not an omnipotent god who created the world out of nothing; and therefore there is another source of beings, and which for Aristotle would—in Plato it's difficult how to describe it, but in the Aristotelian term it is easy to understand. There is matter . . . There is no difficulty here, as is shown by the fact that Adeimantus agrees immediately. The basis of the agreement is a notion of god which is not developed here but which was developed only in later theology, and which [culminates in] the famous traditional definition of god: god is the *ens perfectissima*, the most perfect being. Somehow people, even the pagans, divine [that] the gods are higher than man, superior to man, and the most radical expression of that thought is that the god is the most perfect being, and then is of course simply good. And then the question arises: How can there be evil in a world ruled by the god? And the answer is surely [that it comes] not from god, and either man or matter.[li] And from the biblical[104] point of view, of course, it cannot be [from] matter, because matter is also created: it can only be man or the angels, which means also other created beings. Good. But the second point, the second *theologoumena*, is which?

Student: The god is changeless.

LS: The gods do not change, or the god does not change his shape, his *eidos* or *eidē*, his looks. Here Adeimantus does not agree immediately, and it is interesting to see why. So in other words, that is the real innovation, relatively speaking, at any rate. Why does he not agree? Because the purport of this assertion, "the god does not change," is that the god does not deceive. Does not deceive: you know, change, appearing in different shape, disguising oneself. Yes? The crude cases of Zeus appearing as a bull to Europa, you know, and seducing her this way, but also in other ways. The gods do not deceive.[lii]

Now[105] this is the point which Adeimantus doesn't understand. Why does he have a difficulty here? Was it not established that the god is good, and is it not, as Descartes thought, a necessary consequence from the goodness of god that he does not deceive?[liii] You see, whenever people speak about god they start primarily from human analogies. The[106] difference between the most perfect humans and the lowest humans gives them an inkling of what absolute perfection would be. Yes? Now therefore, on the basis of this we can understand Adeimantus's difficulty. Would a perfectly good man ever deceive another man? And Adeimantus doesn't see that. No, I'm sorry, I just said the opposite of what I should have said. Adeimantus thinks that the perfectly good man, what we call [a] perfectly good man, might very well deceive other men, and therefore he doesn't see why the most perfect being should not deceive men in general. Now what is the basis for this

[li] Presumably "and hence from either man or matter."
[lii] 380d1-383c7.
[liii] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, VI.

contention that the most perfect man, the best man, might out of his goodness deceive other men? Is this a novel issue in this context, or have we come across it?

Student: The false stories which are told to children.[liv]

LS: Yes, indeed. I am sorry that I did not think of this most obvious indication. You are perfectly right. One couldn't give a better reply. I give you an inferior reply: the discussion at the beginning, when Cephalus said the just man never lies, and Socrates gives the example of the madman to whom you might have to lie to bring him back into his self or wherever else he would belong.[lv] So goodness is in itself perfectly compatible with deception. But why then do the gods not deceive? In order to answer this question, we would have to know which men legitimately deceive which other men—I mean, not illegitimately. That is infinitely open. Which men decently deceive other men?

Student: Philosophers.

LS: Yes, well, let us first take a broader view. For example, say, the sane man, the madman; the parents, the children. It was at least admitted in former times, you know—I don't know whether you still are told of the stork. Those of you who have heard this story have seen that they were told the thing that is not, and without any immorality. On the contrary, the parents felt that if they would tell the truth they would act immorally. Yes? Good. Now[107] let us rise from this case: the sane man compared with the madman; the parents compared with the children; the rulers compared with the ruled. Yes? The famous case of the general deceiving the army in a terrible situation: the morale is very low and he says, "Succor is coming tomorrow; let us stand fast only for twenty-four hours more." Yes? This general is universally praised, especially if the end is victory.[108] But more generally, the rulers and the ruled. Are the gods not rulers, the rulers of men, and—pardon?

Student: Perhaps to a large extent, no. We just said that, if so much is ill in our life, we carefully excluded that as coming from the gods.

LS: So in other words, at least that is a subject which would deserve consideration, whether the implication of this theology here—as distinguished from the theology in the tenth book of the *Laws*, where providence is explicitly taught[lvi]—does not imply that there is strictly speaking no government by the gods. Now is there any evidence in the Platonic works for such a view?

Student: The citizen as the lawgiver.

LS: No, that is divine rule, isn't it? No, I mean for this somewhat different view here, that the gods might not rule. There is a Platonic dialogue called the *Statesman*, and this is, well, even obviously a very difficult dialogue. Needless to say that every dialogue is very

[liv] Plato *Republic* 377a4-7.
[lv] 331c1-d1.
[lvi] *Laws* 899d5-905d3.

difficult, but the *Statesman*, even if you read it superficially in bed, you will see that it is more difficult than the *Republic* and the *Laws*. And there a myth is told in order to make clear the political problem, and the myth is this: that there are two periods in the world's course: one in which the world, the heaven, moves this way, and one when it moves the other way, the opposite way. I forget now the details, but the point is this. When the world moves in the first way the gods rule, and everything is wonderful, a golden age. And when it moves this way, the gods do not rule, and that is the period in which we live. And that is the period in which political society is necessary, i.e., rule of men over men, because the gods do not rule.[lvii] So you have a kindred suggestion, but in the *Statesman* this suggestion is made by the Stranger from Elea, not by Socrates. Socrates is present and doesn't say a word about what he thinks about this as well as many other outlandish proposals of this Stranger from Elea.

At the end of the dialogue—there is a young man there who[109] is the chief interlocutor of this great man from Elea. He happens to have the same name as Socrates, and he's called the younger Socrates. The last word of the dialogue is the remark by the younger Socrates: "What you have done is wonderful."[lviii] A recent commentator changes this; [he] says: "That's impossible." He is not an Englishman, but he comes from Yale—that is as close to England as you can come here. And he says, "It's absolutely improper that this young man should thank, in the name of the company,[110] this distinguished foreigner for his marvelous exhibition: of course that must be said by the old Socrates"—against all evidence of the manuscript. But this is very—how shall I say, a nice sense of social delicacy, but it is dramatically impossible, because it would make Socrates responsible for what the Stranger for Elea said. But this only in passing. Because he says not only "That's a marvelous exhibition"; he says: "You have really solved our problem," and that means subscribing to everything this man said. So I say the thought that there is no particular providence, as it is called later on in the Middle Ages or so, meaning concern of God with the individual human beings as distinguished from the preservation of the human species, this doctrine is not simply alien to Plato, and therefore we should not be altogether surprised by such an implication. But whatever anyone may think of it, one must read carefully. The goodness of the god: no difficulty. That the god should deceive creates a difficulty for Adeimantus, and we surely must try to understand that.

Now is there any other point you would like to raise, because I have nothing more—I mean, I have quite a few remarks of a general character, but the time is much too short for that and I believe I will postpone that until a proper occasion, because very slowly, very slowly the nerve of the *Republic*, if you know what I mean—the real, the central thread comes to sight to me. Please don't misunderstand me. I see what I mean in a very hazy manner, and if I am very lucky I will see it clearly at the end of this seminar. And when I read the *Republic* next time, I may find that there is still a more central nerve which one has to see in order to understand. That of course I do not in no way exclude. You wanted to say something?

[lvii] *Statesman* 271c8-275c3.
[lviii] 311c7-8.

Student: [Inaudible question relating to Adeimantus's failure to understand why the gods may not deceive.][lix]

LS: Sure. Now first, the massive external fact: He has no difficulty in granting that the god is good; he has a difficulty in understanding that the god does not deceive. The only thing we know about his theological conviction is that he believes the god is good, and he must have thought the goodness of the god is perfectly compatible with his deceiving; otherwise his action is not defensible. Then we must try to understand that. How can a man think that the god is good and [that] the god deceives? And I say, taking human analogies, good human beings who deceive other human beings—of course decently, legitimately. We have such cases. Yes? We have such examples. I refer only to the most beautiful example, of which Mr. Reinken reminded us, that here we are told that we should tell the children fine lies, yes, by Socrates himself. So that would seem to settle it: that the good man can deceive, may deceive.

Student: What happens to the dogma, then?

LS: Pardon?

Student: What happens to the dogma that is [. . .] here [stated] by Socrates? He still maintains his position that the gods should not deceive. Doesn't he?

LS: Oh, yes, there is no question. But let us try to understand that. If—I mean, we must first try to understand Adeimantus before we can understand Socrates. Now Adeimantus thought it possible that the gods deceive. And the premise that the gods do not deceive, that means the goodness of the gods is radically different from the goodness of good men, because good men may deceive. But[111] why is goodness compatible with deception? That's the question, fundamentally, since goodness goes together with perfect rulership in the widest sense, in the sense in which the sane man can be said to be by nature the ruler of the insane man. Yes? And of course parents of children, and rulers of ruled, wise men of unwise, and so on. If the gods do not [deceive], then it follows that[112] they do not rule. That is what I tried to show. Now this is of course an implication which comes out only by thinking through what is said. And then the question arises, of course: Is this conceivable?

Now let us take another case to show you that this is a necessary question. If someone would figure out by studying certain Platonic texts[113] [that] the only solution to this difficulty is the theory of relativity, such a man would be laughed out of court, because all the characteristic premises of any theory of relativity are absent from Plato and therefore it couldn't be. Therefore one has to look around in Plato, in our case. Is there not some additional evidence that Plato considered the possibility of the gods not ruling, apart from here? And then I say: Yes, see the *Statesman*. And therefore I regard this as established, at least to my satisfaction. There may still[114] be objections to that, but they have then to be argued out.

[lix] As noted by the transcriber.

Student: Socrates does provide an answer to this dilemma of Adeimantus without going into this explanation, namely, when he begins this discussion about the veritable lie, the essential falsehood, and [claims] that men and gods alike abhor the veritable lie.

LS: Now[115] I will answer that, but that is very simple. What is the true lie, the veritable lie? The lie in the soul. That means that no one wishes to be deceived. Yes? I mean, no one wishes to be deceived, which of course needs some qualification, because Socrates knew very well that people[116] frequently prefer pleasing delusions to an unpleasing truth. But let us not go into that. The remark about the lie in the soul must not be taken out of its context. The lie in the soul is distinguished from the lie in the speech. While the lie in the soul is simply hateworthy—no one wants to be deceived—the lie in speech is necessary for humans. That is admitted. And now there are some reasons given. For example, sometimes people lie in speech out of fear. Yes? Out of fear. Think of Soviet Russia, Hitler's Germany, and other places. And then there is this: Can the gods ever have fear? Of course not, because they are so powerful. Yes? And he gives some other reasons why men lie in speech, but he does not discuss one reason which is the most interesting reason why men lie in speech:[lx] that is, out of social responsibility, what the ruler does, what the parents do, and so on and so on. And this is not discussed. You see?[117] But it is most pertinent in our very context.

That is the subject, and therefore we have to raise the question: What is the condition for legitimately lying out of social responsibility? And the answer[118] is given later on with great clarity: no subject has a right to lie to the ruler. For example, the soldier can't lie to the general, but the general can lie to the soldiers—I mean legitimately, as in the case given. He can make morale-boosting statements which are not supported by fact in order to save the army. And generally speaking, all rulers may legitimately lie to the ruled.[lxi] Do you see? I mean, you must only think that through and not—one must not be hypocritical. There is such a thing—you are a political scientist, I take it, and so you have heard of security. Yes? There is classified material and non-classified. Now you can say that's clear; there is nothing difficult about that, because the government is not obliged to tell all the truth about American preparation and American armament so that the enemy can hear it. But the line is very difficult to draw. You see, in some cases you have not only to conceal certain things, but you have also to say the thing which is not in order to deceive the enemy, and therefore indirectly, by implication, also the American people, because what the government says to the American people is listened to[119] by Moscow. Yes? You see?

So[120] secrecy, secretiveness and positively stating the untruth are not so easy to separate. Kant, who was a very severe, morally severe man, drew this line. He said I am entitled—yes, under no circumstances may I lie. If a potential murderer asks me as to the whereabouts of his victim, I cannot lie to him. I cannot say, for example, [that] he runs

[lx] *Republic* 382a1-382e11.
[lxi] 389b2-d6.

this way while I know that he runs that way.[lxii] That's a lie, and I cannot lie. The thing which I can do is[121] to say, "I refuse to answer," or "No comment." That is simple. And Kant acted on that, but if you go into the details of what Kant had to do—who lived under a very severe absolute monarchy, of course, that was the time of the French Revolution, and Kant had great sympathies with certain elements of the French Revolution—and you should see how Kant finds his way. That is knowable.[lxiii] One hundred percent honesty in the sense in which he defined it. You know? It's very hard to draw the line, and these are unpleasant subjects, but I believe—I wonder whether there is a teacher of morals, a moral teaching proper, in this country, who would defend even such ordinary things as espionage. President Eisenhower had the courage to do so, but he was not a professor of ethics. You know? And everyone knows that espionage is absolutely impossible without deception—I mean, the mere fact that the spy can of course never say, "I am a spy." You know? And you can imagine that this silence will never be sufficient. He will have to pretend positively to be something different than he is. His whole activity rests on lying and deception, and I think we must face that. That has also many consequences. Therefore, the people who say there should not be war in any way, not even prospects of war—not even prospects of war, i.e., one world state, because that's the only way in which this can be radically abolished—[these people], from a strictly moral point of view, have a very strong point there. Do you see? I mean, they say [that] morality, fully understood, is not possible as long as there are closed societies, because these closed societies, they may be in a crude sense moral[122] [. . .][lxiv] and you know, the other crude sense; but in either respect it is inevitable and one must face that. And now[123] what was the question with which we started?

Student: Can we not say that the second dogma is that the gods may not be said to tell the essential falsehood . . . so that the gods too are permitted to lie in speech . . .

LS: But I can only—I ask you a question of fact. I mean, you may be perfectly right. Is there a passage there in the second half of the second book where Socrates says that the gods deceive? You see, the noble lies of which he speaks are of course lies committed by men. But[124] is there any reference to the gods legitimately deceiving? I don't know. I haven't seen it. So therefore, in that sense he is consistent[125] in this section. The dogma [that] the gods do not deceive is asserted, in its way established, and that's that; but what we are concerned [with] is only what is its implication, and the implication, I say, on the Socratic basis. We are not doing now biblical theology [but] Platonic theology. On the basis of Plato the implication, I would say, is that the gods do not rule. And when we come later to the discussion of the noble lie in the[126] [third] book, where it is made perfectly clear that the noble lie is essential to civil society—you know, later on in the [third] book, that becomes the theme, and an example is given of a noble lie explicitly.[lxv] Then we will reach further clarity, and the key point will come out. [127]You see, today

[lxii] See Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals with On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 63-67 [425-430].
[lxiii] In the transcript: "knowable (?)"
[lxiv] The transcript has a lengthy blank space here.
[lxv] Plato *Republic* 414b8ff.

people use such words which confuse more than they help. For example,[128] "ideologies." What are "ideologies" according to the strict understanding, and not to what people say from one part of their mouth while forgetting what they say with the other part? What do they say? Well, you know where the term in its present meaning comes from, although not originally: Marxism. And it means of course [a] wrong view, a wrong view of social reality, or what have you. Now, and this meaning it still had—for example, the book by Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*,[lxvi] which had such a great success in this country. But what does it mean today, I mean in social science? [129]An "ideology" is an attempt at justifying a value system. Yes? How can you justify a value system, according to the orthodox doctrine in the profession? Well, there is one way which is absolutely uninteresting. You can justify a derivative value, *a*, by tracing it to the ultimate value, "alpha."[130] All right, but how do you justify ultimate value "alpha"? You cannot justify it. You can only pretend to justify it, and that means you can try to derive ultimate value "alpha" from certain facts—"aleph," however you call it. But any attempt to derive a value from facts is, in principle [futile] . . . [lxvii]

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[1] Changed from "Did you mean by that, that—you know what Glaucon especially had commissioned Socrates to prove that justice accompanied by the greatest—justice is so choiceworthy for its own sake that even if it is accompanied by the greatest misery it is still choiceworthy."
[2] Deleted "and I think you—."
[3] Deleted "but it."
[4] Deleted "wrote."
[5] Deleted "I will not—I may take this up later, but what is—I was—you know, what is the constructive principle?"
[6] Deleted "—the.'
[7] Deleted "building up—in."
[8] Deleted "take—."
[9] Deleted "would—wouldn't—they."
[10] Deleted "Unequal." In the transcript: "Unequal (?)"
[11] Deleted "that—."
[12] Deleted "—a."
[13] Deleted "or leaving him what he."
[14] Deleted "re (?)"
[15] Deleted "Cephalus."
[16] Deleted "—you know—."
[17] Deleted "the city in—."
[18] Deleted "Glaucon—."
[19] Deleted "Yes, well, he wants—."
[20] Deleted "You had—."
[21] Deleted "He—there is one class of men who comes in in the—in the feverish city for the—which comes in in the feverish city for the first time."
[22] Deleted "He—."
[23] Deleted "not—you must.'
[24] Deleted "does the dinner—where."
[25] Deleted "LS: Pardon? Student: Never."
[26] Deleted "it is a very—."
[27] Deleted "why—."
[28] Deleted "this—."

[lxvi] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1954) [Ideologie et utopie (1929)].
[lxvii] The transcriber notes: "End of tape."

[29] Deleted "see—we."
[30] Deleted "From—that is possible."
[31] Deleted "—you know—and the—."
[32] Deleted "372. I have here a not—no, 607a—I'm sorry—."
[33] Deleted "and—let me see—praises of virtuous men."
[34] Deleted" this—."
[35] Deleted "—because.'
[36] Deleted "pured."
[37] Deleted "the—."
[38] Deleted "Yes, but—in a general—but does"
[39] Deleted "it."
[40] Deleted "Without—."
[41] Deleted "The mere absence—."
[42] Deleted "this."
[43] Deleted "it."
[44] Deleted "that."
[45] Deleted "as long."
[46] Deleted "—that's."
[47] Deleted "for instance"
[48] Deleted "—not—I mean that."
[49] Deleted "Yes, there are—."
[50] Deleted "let us—."
[51] Deleted "In order to—."
[52] Deleted "are—."
[53] Deleted "but they do not"
[54] Deleted "But—."
[55] Deleted "know—you."
[56] Deleted "don't—they.'
[57] Deleted "this—."
[58] Deleted "is—."
[59] Deleted "Not—."
[60] Deleted "that."
[61] Deleted "Yes, there is however one—I mean."
[62] Deleted "i.e., they are."
[63] Deleted "making his own."
[64] Deleted "which another."
[65] Deleted "370e, this—at the beginning of 370—no. I'm sorry. Is that it? No, I'm sorry, that is."
[66] Deleted "—that's."
[67] Changed from "He is—he is in favor of the small, then. Now—and now read in 371c5, if you have that."
[68] Deleted "has—he."
[69] Deleted "Adeimantus is—.'
[70] Deleted "And so—."
[71] Deleted "And—yes, temperance."
[72] Deleted "there is—."
[73] Deleted "That—."
[74] Deleted "dissatisfied—it is."
[75] Deleted "Glaucon—."
[76] Deleted "Glaucon's."
[77] Deleted "everything."
[78] Deleted "but then."
[79] Deleted "ordinary—."
[80] Deleted "now."
[81] Deleted "Must they—."
[82] Deleted "So this section—yes."
[83] Deleted "and—sure."
[84] Deleted "question."

[85] Deleted "how can you."
[86] Deleted "knows—."
[87] Deleted "and—."
[88] Deleted "so—.'
[89] Deleted "—that is the joke because—not if—."
[90] Deleted "I mean, why is it such a joke?"
[91] Deleted "calls."
[92] Deleted "I simply don't—in the first place, no."
[93] Deleted "it—."
[94] Deleted "Good. But."
[95] Deleted "I mean, but I think the irony—very well."
[96] Deleted "Yes, sure. Yes, sure—no, no."
[97] Deleted "You see, we are—."
[98] Deleted "—no."
[99] Deleted "says—."
[100] Deleted "Glaucon—what.'
[101] Changed from "Now—and one never knows—are these two dogmas which Plato establishes here as models—are they—they are surely noble."
[102] Deleted "he didn't capitalize—I mean, he did not write."
[103] Changed "The first—Mr. Warden—what are—the first dogma."
[104] Deleted "view—."
[105] Deleted "there is—."
[106] Deleted "most perfect humans and their difference—the."
[107] Deleted "furthermore—now."
[108] Deleted "So—."
[109] Deleted "happens—who."
[110] Deleted "to."
[111] Deleted "in which—."
[112] Deleted "if the gods do not deceive."
[113] Deleted "and would say."
[114] Deleted "—there may."
[115] Deleted "let us—all right—I think—."
[116] Deleted "like."
[117] Deleted "And therefore—."
[118] Deleted "is—that."
[119] Deleted "—listened in to."
[120] Deleted "this is—secrecy, secrecy—.'
[121] Deleted "not to say—."
[122] Deleted "you know, say the."
[123] Deleted "here—."
[124] Deleted "does he say that—."
[125] Deleted "—yes—."
[126] Deleted "fourth."
[127] Deleted "that"
[128] Deleted "like."
[129] Deleted "I mean, I take now the people who are"
[130] Deleted "Yes but—."

Session 6: October 19, 1961[i]
Books 2 and 3: Education of the Guardians

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —Who is the just man?

Student: He is the one who is fulfilling himself in his proper place in society.

LS: And what is his proper place in society?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well, he does what he is by nature fitted to do. In other words, justice is here defined—according to this view it's defined entirely in terms of the individual. He who does what he is by nature fitted to do is just. Where does "society," as you call it—the *polis*—come in?

Student: You say where does the *polis* come in?

LS: Yes.

Same Student: Well, in one of Socrates's previous myths where—about the necessity of just societies being in—those people doing what they are fit to do and exchanging goods between one another so that they can . . . and make shoes and—

LS: Yes, but still we must take a more simple or precise answer. Why should the fact that a man does what he is by nature fit to do constitute justice? I mean, in other words, why—where does the *polis* come in? If everyone does what he is by nature fit to do, how do we know that is in any way good for the *polis*? . . . Well, more generally or more cautiously stated, when we speak of justice we imply a relation to the *polis*, don't we? And the relation between what is good for the individual and good for the *polis* is not clear.[1] And[2] in addition there is of course the other point. You say, "Socrates's definition of justice," but[3] there is no definition of justice.[4] He's just laying the ground for a possible discovery of the definition of justice. Now to the extent to which he makes use of a definition of justice already here, that is a very grave thing because he was supposed to start from scratch, [and] not to make any assumptions which have not been examined. That leads to great questions.

Student: It seems to me—

[i] The transcriber notes: "Small part of beginning could not be transcribed due to tape malfunctioning. Transcription below begins with the discussion of the day's seminar paper already in progress." The session begins with Strauss discussing a student's paper, which was read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.

LS: Yes?

Student: That these, the images that he uses are pointing to—kind of in the nature of things in the body politic, there is a given inter-relationship between all the people that are given certain natures. Almost a given structured interrelationship.

LS: But I simply can't stand these words you give here—I mean, from sociology they have spread everywhere. You know: "interrelationship," and "function," and so. One does not understand anything. The issue seems to be simply this: With what right does Socrates assume that what is good for the individual, that he does what he is by nature fitted to do, should be good for the *polis*? I mean, that is[5] a question. One cannot pass [over] it, you know, by some sanguine notion that there will be a harmony.

Student: What is good for the *polis* seems to be good for the individual.

LS: Yes, but is this true without any doubt? I mean,[6] that's a great question. But it is only important in our present stage that we remind ourselves of that, and I believe we can answer[7] the question properly only if we remind ourselves of the three definitions given in book 1 and which were all, it seems, refuted. But perhaps they contain an element, each of them, which was not refuted and which would give us[8] [an answer].[ii] But that is of course a very general remark which is in a way unintelligible. If we have time today I will take it up later. Mr. Reinken? Good.

Now[9] [there is] only one more point which I would like to bring up. You did not explicitly state, although you brought it out in fact, the remarkable disproportion between the length of the discussion of education and the amazing brevity of the discussion of institutions, at least up to now. I mean, this terrific institutional change, the abolition of private property—and what an abolition. Everyone can enter everyone else's room without knocking on the door. I mean,[10] that is abolition of privacy.[iii] And that is said in roughly one page, and education fills the whole book. That is quite remarkable. So the institutions are much less important than education, and I think that is the general teaching of classical political philosophy. Not that institutions are unimportant, but there are two elements, education and institutions, and of the two, education is by far the most important. In order to understand that, we must of course know what education is. What is education according to Plato? I mean, very generally? Is it what we are doing here?

Student: Isn't it remembering what you already know?

LS: Oh God! I mean, why must one always jump to the ceiling and beyond the ceiling when there is such a simple answer, if you are aware of it? I mean, that is an answer which is—how shall I say—appears at the outer limits of Plato's reflections with all kinds of questions.[iv] But let us never forget that this extremely soaring mind of Plato was at the same time a mind never surpassed, perhaps never rivaled, in sobriety. That is the strange

[ii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[iii] Plato *Republic* 416c5-417b9.
[iv] *Meno* 81c5-86c8; *Phaedo* 72e3-77b1,

complication of Plato. Now what does he do? I mean, education doesn't mean here, as we have discussed, what we are doing now.

Student: [. . .]

LS: All right. It is also not what is going on in grade school, in kindergarten, or—

Student: Is it?

LS: I mean it is not. It is not. What is it? There's a very simple word by which we still understand it. The word occurs all the time: *ethos*. *Ethos*, character. Education is formation of character. So the issue is then the relative importance of formation of character on the one hand and of institutions on the other, and in this respect Plato and Aristotle say with one tongue [that] the formation [of] character is much more important than institutions—which doesn't mean that the institutions are unimportant, but they are less important. And one can say that this is one of the most striking differences between modern political philosophy . . . and classical political philosophy, that in modern times the emphasis is just on the other side. Institutions are much more important, but institutions can be taken in a wide sense. [They] needn't be limited to political institutions, [but] can also include economic institutions and whatever have you. Again I quote a famous modern philosopher—who, because philosophers are the most honest people, I mean the real philosophers, and these[11] hate the lie in the soul, as we have heard—and that is Kant, and Kant's fantastic statement that the best political order, nationally and internationally, is generally regarded as a terrible thing. Men have to become angels in order to become members of a first-rate society. Kant says: No, the best society can be established in a nation of devils, provided these devils are shrewd calculators. [v] You see, that is the formal denial of the importance of formation of character. That's the difference.

So education, formation of character. Now this education of the guardians which[12] he begins to discuss in book 2 and goes through book[13][3], roughly the whole book, is based on a principle, as Mr. McLean stated. What is that principle?[14] That comes out, but at the starting point, and [it is] really referred to frequently in your paper. For example, in the case of imitation, how—to what extent there should be imitation. What is the principle from which that question is settled?

Student: Should we associate with those things that are intrinsically harmonious.

LS: Yes, but that is in a way [not] an outcome, but the principle at the start. You referred to it at least twice; the principle of the whole construction in a way discussed last time—not sufficiently, as Mr. Seltzer pointed out to me in my office, by God, not enough—one man, one job.[vi] Yes? Good. Now in order to discuss this principle a bit more, I would like to put this question:[15] since this principle, one man, one job, is not so perfectly self-

[v] See "Perpetual Peace" in Immanuel Kant, *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1963), 112 [366].
[vi] Plato *Republic* 397d6-e9.

evident as to carry complete conviction in every respect, perhaps we can do without it . . . Why is there an education of the guardians[16] and only of the guardians? What is that? The official reason given is one man, one job, and therefore the guardians must have an education of their own. But we could of course raise the question: What about education of the others? So why is there such a fuss made[17] [about] the education of the guardians and only of the guardians? That can be understood without reference to the principle of one man, one job.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. Yes, that you can say, but I meant something more elementary. Only a part of the *polis* can be educated, strictly speaking. Yes? Only a part of the *polis* can be educated. That is the tacit presupposition, but obviously the presupposition. Why is that so? I mean, contrary to our present-day notion, only a part of the *polis* can be educated.

Student: I see one relation in that we've already said that the guardians must know[18] evil as well as good. They must be able to be a good thief in order to be a good guardian.

LS: Yes, but that is—all right. I mean, this could be questioned. It is more complicated. But why should not everyone be educated? They don't need [to be] a guardian; I mean, after all, the guardians are also policemen. You must not forget that.

Student: There's a difference in capacity, isn't there?

LS: Ah ha! Then we would be back to that, but still, what is—is there such a great capacity presupposed, I mean, if you look at it carefully? After all, we have universal military service in modern times, and that could very well be enlarged, that they become not only good fighters but also gentlemen. And does this require such a very rare nature?

Student: Well, I thought in terms of Plato's scheme—

LS: Yes, yes. Sure.

Student: Surely it[19] goes all the way through. Is there not a great stress laid . . . that this is a very rare combination of characteristics that they're looking for.

LS: Does he explicitly say so? Does he not rather say it is a very paradoxical combination to begin with, the combination of gentleness and toughness? And then he finds it is after all not as paradoxical because every dog has it, in a way,[vii] which would—

Student: Isn't that in a way getting 'round it?

LS: Yes, or it is not also perhaps that it is not as rare as one would think, if one is struck only by the ever-stated paradoxy of the combination? But let us leave this open. I only would like to say that that is a crucial point, that only a part of the *polis* will be educated,

[vii] 375a11-376a10.

educated in any strict sense. And this is of course also not peculiar to Plato and was rather common for reasons which we may take up later, and which are very external. There is simply not enough money or leisure available for educating the whole, all members of the *polis*.

Now first let us now follow the argument[20] step by step.[21] The first part—again already [beginning] in the second book[viii] it is concluded in 392c, and that deals with speeches: which speeches are to be permitted, [22]especially [which ones] the young ones [are] permitted to hear. This includes of course the principle of censorship, and the censorship is very severe, very detailed, and that is another great difference between modern and classical political thought. It is obviously connected with the issue mentioned before: [whether] institutions or [the] formation of character [should take precedence]. If it is the function of civil society to make its members good and doers of noble deeds, then it must interfere with education infinitely more than if its function is only to keep the peace or something of this kind. Yes?

Student: . . . I always assumed that rudimentary character building would be given to all, all children.

LS: But what do you mean by "rudimentary" now?

Same Student: And then there would be a separation of the wheat from the chaff.

LS: Now what[23] do you mean by rudimentary?

Same Student: The education in music and gymnastics.

LS: No, no, no. The rudimentary education means simply—that is made clear in a certain passage—obeying your superiors, to be lawabiding in a general sense. Yes? And you can also add honesty if you want to, in a very limited way, but not what is given here. [ix] I mean, what the guardians get is much more. There are some references to that.

Same Student: Well, yes. I didn't mean to say that—music to the extent that higher education would involve music.

LS: Yes. Let us speak of the guardians' education, to make it quite clear in contradistinction to the education of the others, of which there is hardly anything explicitly said, but there are some implications. Everyone must have some education[24]—that goes without saying—but that is extremely limited as far as the common people are concerned. Yes?

Student: The confusion that I have about education in this scheme is that[25] the explanation is, to a large degree, that there is neither enough money or leisure to educate

[viii] 376e9ff.
[ix] See 389b7-c6.

the other people in the *polis*, when there is enough money and leisure to do this. What implications does this have for Plato's distinction about different natures?

LS: That would not be affected. That would only mean that you could—it comes out rather this way. Now ordinarily we argue it on this premise: if there is enough money and leisure, one can invest much more effort in educating people who are much more difficult to educate. So let us put it very simply. In a very poor society only straight-A students could be educated. Let us assume that; I mean, from the point of view of justice. In a richer society, also B students; in a still richer society, also C students, and in a very rich society, up to E and F. Doesn't it make sense? Of course it would mean that—I'm speaking now only of intellectual education—[26] [for example], people who are wholly ungifted for music are compelled to study music—you know. I don't believe that it will make the overall population more musical, but someone who likes the maximum of equality will say, All right, everyone got his musical training. Yes?

Student: [Inaudible follow-up question relating to the opportunities in a richer society for people to develop their natures, so that there may not in essence be a real difference between people who are fitted to rule and those who are fitted to obey.][x]

LS: Oh no. I mean, let us not blur the issue. But the real issue, I believe, is this, as Plato will make clear, because Plato too is a very honest man: hating the lie in the soul. This statement about the "by nature better and by nature worse," that is only in a crude way true. It will inevitably happen that first-rate people will be relegated to the *demos* and very unsatisfactory fellows will belong to the upper class. I mean, in practice that cannot be avoided. In plain English, in every society there is a considerable amount of injustice in the social stratification. The social stratification will not agree with the natural stratification. Now if you have a very rich society, this kind of injustice can be more easily avoided. You know? Do you see? Because even the poor miner's son has as great a chance to go to college as the son of a very wealthy industrialist. Yes? Do you see? This way it comes out. Good. Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: I make what I hope is an obvious remark: education hasn't been introduced as an end, but only because it is found necessary to the guardians.

LS: Yes, sure. No, education is not an end. That is made perfectly clear. The education is the means for formation of character. The good character is the end, but the good character[27] [is not defined in any detail]. We come to that later. That comes out later on.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. No, it comes gradually out. He starts[28] very empirically, very empirically. He says[29] if you tell these young children these abominable stories about Zeus and Hera, and they are supposed to think that Zeus and Hera are [im]mortals, and then they hear of the terrible scene . . . well, it is in a way a very beautiful scene, but in another sense also very terrible, that Zeus simply cannot control his desire and throws Hera down where they

[x] As noted by the transcriber.

stand and lies with her. Yes, and that's very powerfully presented.[xi] Well, he speaks [about] how when they engaged in this pleasure for the first time without the knowledge of their parents. Now is this good for teenagers? Now the objection of course is that [made] by Milton: what Plato does is to produce a "cloistered virtue." "A cloistered virtue." That is the objection. Virtue, true virtue, can only arise if you are exposed to temptation, and not if the temptations are kept away from you; and Milton develops this with great rhetorical power in the *Aeropagitica*.[xii] But[30] the simple objection to Milton is this: if Milton were right, all children would have to be brought[31] [no later than the age of one] to brothels so that they see the ugly facts of life and all the temptations as soon as possible. Well, this even Milton of course didn't mean, because Milton was a much too sophisticated man as not to know that you must have a certain habituation to decency before you can[32] [face][xiii] temptations, and that is what Plato means. I mean, Plato has no objection to the rulers, and especially the highest class of rulers, knowing and reading all kinds of things. Even in the third book it is already said [that] the judge must know all these terrible things, but first you must build up a resistance to them.[xiv] Yes? That is the point. And as you know, that is one of the hottest issues in present-day America: see *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and other examples of the recent past.[xv] Now let us—yes?

Student: You didn't mean that in a very rich state even artisans would have liberal educations? Is that what you meant? Wouldn't that ruin them for being artisans?

LS: Yes, but that Plato did not discuss. You see, Plato did not discuss[33] a society in which[34] there is an autonomous technology. He did not discuss that. You can say he wasn't aware of it. He was aware of the principle, but he was surely not aware of the difficulty.

Student: No, what I—well, you said that the reason that the education is described as limited to the guardians was that there wouldn't be enough money to . . . Is the real reason simply that there wouldn't be enough money to educate the others?

LS: That is surely important; [it] plays a role, although [it is] not explicitly stated. The emphasis here is simply as you stated, [which] is we select for higher education the most gifted young people. Yes? That's all. And which means—Plato means both ways. In the

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[xi] 390b6-c6. See Homer *Iliad* 2.1-4, 14.294-351.

[xii] "As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbeare without the knowledge of evill? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." John Milton, *Aeropagetica*, edited by Richard C. Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1644, 1918), 18.

[xiii] The transcript has blank space here.

[xiv] Plato *Republic* 408c5-409e3.

[xv] D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).

first place, only they can be educated properly; and in addition, they also can be spared from work on the farm or in the workshop, or wherever it may be. Yes?

Student: But if only they can be educated properly, then the others must be educated improperly.

LS: Yes, not improperly, but a lower education. That is implied. That's implied, although[35] nowhere emphasized. One characteristic of the *Republic* is the studied contempt—studied contempt for the common people, and that is shown not only by speeches in the eighth book when he speaks of democracy,[xvi] but by deeds: by saying very little about the lower class. Therefore the famous controversy, which is ultimately so simple to solve: Is in Plato's *Republic* communism limited to the upper class, or also does it extend to the whole society? The evidence is ambiguous, not because Plato hadn't given it any thought but because he wanted to indicate it. It doesn't matter so much. In this, the studied contempt for the *demos* . . . that is the posture which is taken here for reasons which we will gradually see. This is not the last word of Plato on this subject, [it] goes without saying, but we must face it. Do you see, we are very much at the beginning;[36] and in addition, we read the book with an absolutely indecent haste, as I'm sure you know, so we can only bring up a few things. Yes. Now that's the last question at this point? Yes?

Student: Socrates introduces a very severe censorship over the *polis* because he is building [the] character of the guardians. Now does he demonstrate that if this censorship over the *polis* is not made, then it will really—that this is the crucial thing in the formation of the guardian's character, that you must have this censorship, or does he simply have[37] Adeimantus accept it without very much demonstration that his censorship—

LS: Adeimantus sees it immediately. You don't see it immediately; hence you have a different nature than Adeimantus. What kind of nature does Adeimantus have? That becomes very clear. You know it gradually. He is a man of great austerity; he likes that. Glaucon wouldn't like it so much. Glaucon comes in later when the issue is already settled and adopted. But surely, before we begin to blame Plato for his wholly unreasonable posture toward poetry, we must first understand it.[38]

Permit me now to talk for about fifteen minutes, or twenty. Now first, the plan of the discussion of the speeches. Five subjects are clearly distinguished from one another. First, the speeches must enable or induce the young people to honor the gods and parents. Number one. That was in the second book.[xvii] In other words, an education in piety in the old Roman sense. Secondly, education in courage. That means above all the abolition of the belief in hell,[39] I mean, in [the] terrors of[40] hell. And then no weeping. No weeping. They shouldn't become easy weepers.[xviii] Third point: they shouldn't become easy

[xvi] Plato *Republic* 557a2-569c9.
[xvii] 376e9-383c7.
[xviii] 386a1-388e4.

laughers, [and this] follows very naturally.[xix] Fourth point, they should become truthful.[xx] And five, they should become moderate, temperate; and that means here they should be obedient to the rulers and be self-controlled regarding food and so on. And[41] since moderation, *sōphrosynē*, in the Greek sense refers for practical purposes primarily to temperance regarding food, drink, and sex, [but] can also be enlarged to include temperance regarding possessions or money, this subject also comes in here.[xxi] And these are the five subjects discussed under this heading.

Now the concluding remark here is this: What about justice, education to justice, which is not yet mentioned? These are other virtues.[42] In all these cases of the five things mentioned, the gods or sons of gods or the shades, the shadows, the shades of departed men are mentioned. Justice refers especially to men. It belongs to men alone. The implication of that is that there is a question of whether one can call the gods just. That has to do with the question [of] whether the gods can rule.[xxii]

I must leave it at this general remark and turn to one point. What is the principle of the criticism of the poets? [Let us read] 387b at the beginning. Do you have that? Near the beginning of the book.

No, no. 387b, immediately after the seven quotes from Homer.[xxiii]

Mr. Reinken:
"not that they are not poetic and pleasing to most hearers, but because the more poetic they are the less are they suited to the ears of boys and men who are destined to be free—" (387b)

LS: Stop here. Stop here. That is all we need. Plato does not deny that Homer was a very great poet. Plato doesn't say that a writer of perfectly moral but incredibly insipid tracts is what he wants. He wants to have poets, moral poets,[43] and morality and poetry are two very different things. Plato never makes any doubt about that. What is poetic, then? We must raise [the question]. Here we get an inkling. The poetic is pleasant. Yes, but not every pleasant thing is of course poetic. For example, a meal may be very pleasant, and without being poetic. What is the specific pleasure of poetry? That would be the question, would it not? Later on, in [396]c to e (we cannot read that), it would appear that this unmixed presentation of the perfect gentleman, which is very edifying—but the unmixed with[out] any other [quality][xxiv] is not very pleasant. We need—to have full pleasure these other things are needed in one way or the other. The clearest example I can find is (in other words, the simplest, at any rate) is at the end of 389, when he quotes the Homeric verses. At the end of that, when he quotes the verse, what Achilles says to Agamemnon at the beginning of the *Iliad*. Do you have that? "Heavy of wine with the

[xix] 388e5-389b1.
[xx] 389b2-d6.
[xxi] 389d7-392a2.
[xxii] 392a3-c5.
[xxiii] The transcriber notes that Mr. Reinken began reading the wrong passage.
[xxiv] The transcript has a blank space here.

eyes of a dog and the heart of—of what? What does he translate? Of a deer. And how does he say [it] then?

Mr. Reinken:
"and the lines that follow, are these well—and other impertinences in prose or verse of private citizens to their rulers?" "They are not well." "They certainly are not suitable for youth to hear for the inculcation of self-control. But if from another point of view they yield some pleasure we must not be surprised; or what is your view of it?" "This," he said. (390e)

LS: Let us stop here. So that is some other pleasure. This is a pleasant verse. It is obviously—the pleasure we have when we hear this verse is not the pleasure we have when we have a good meal.[44] In what does the pleasure consist here in this particular verse? Achilles says to his lawful ruler: "Heavy with wine, with the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer."[xxv] What is the particular beauty of this verse? That gives us an inkling of what Plato means. Only an inkling. I would say it is a perfect insight. You cannot surpass this insight as an insight of a king or warrior. He has the eyes of a dog. I mean, you know how a dog looks if it has fear, but a dog can also bite. Then you have the deer. Take the deer, one of the most graceful beings in the world; but he is not compared with the deer, he is compared only with the heart of the deer, of an animal which can save itself only by flight, not by attack as the dog can. So it is the perfect simile, and the pleasure we derive from it[45] gives us an inkling of what Plato means by the specific pleasure deriving from poetry.

I would go a step further and say that[46] the thought of an insolent and inept ruler who is inferior by nature to a given subject, and that if we visualize for a moment a revolt of this by-nature-superior man to the man who is by nature inferior, [this] also gives us a pleasure, a release. We should never do that, but it would be good if it could be done from time to time. These two elements are clearly discernible, and that gives us the notion. Poetry has also this quality, that it makes possible a vicarious release of feelings which are forbidden but which are not in themselves ignoble. That is also [. . .] In this context, by the way, it is made perfectly clear that—in 388e, if you have that—that Socrates, in contradistinction to Adeimantus—yes?

Mr. Reinken: "'You say most truly,' he replied."?

LS: Yes, all right. Later.

Mr. Reinken: "Again, they must not be prone to laughter."?

LS: No, no. Where you were.

Mr. Reinken:
"But that must not be, as our reasoning but now showed us, in which we must put our trust until someone convinces us with a better reason."

[xxv] Homer *Iliad* 1.225.

LS: What is his reply?

Mr. Reinken:
"No, it must not be." (388e)

LS: In other words, whereas Socrates regards the reasoning as provisional, Adeimantus regards it as settled. That shows very clearly the difference.[47] Not that Plato did not believe in the necessity of censorship. That is clear. But—as much as Aristotle believed in it. But the judgment on poetry entirely from the point of view of the *polis* or of morality, that was not sufficient for Plato himself. That was not sufficient, but it was sufficient for Adeimantus. So now[48] I repeat the fact which some of you will have observed: that of the five items of this section on the speeches, the central one—[49]the briefest but nevertheless the central one—[50]is the prohibition against making the young people lovers of laughter. In other words, a certain sternness, seriousness, is absolutely necessary.

This much about the section about speeches. Then he turns to what one could call the diction, the manner of saying as distinguished from the content of the saying, in 392c to 398b, and here the distinction is made, which Mr. McLean reported, between the simple narrative and the imitation. Now what he means by "imitation" here is what we would call the "dramatic," and Plato—that is a very amusing thing, how Socrates tries to make clear, as if it were so very difficult to describe, what a drama in contradistinction to a narrative, a simple narrative, is. In other words,[51] this is one of the more important passages, by the way, about the Platonic dialogue which occurs in Platonic works. Let us read a few of these passages. In 339c, end, where this long speech of Socrates begins. Yes?

Mr. Reinken: 39?

LS: I'm sorry. 393c.

Mr. Reinken:
"But when he delivers a speech as if he were someone else, shall we not say that he then assimilates thereby his own diction as far as possible to that of the person whom he announces as about to speak?" "We shall obviously."

LS: Now where are you? 393—oh, the end. All right, go on. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"And is not likening one's self to another in speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens one's self?" "Surely." "In such a case then, it appears, he and the other poets effect their narration through imitation." "Certainly."

LS: Do you understand what he means? If[52] poets—

Mr. Reinken:
"But if the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetizing and narration would have been accomplished without limitation." (393c)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here for one moment. In a drama, when the poet speaks through other men, the poet conceals himself. Yes? Does this make good sense? For example, when Macbeth makes a speech, Shakespeare doesn't speak. Everyone would admit that. But Socrates uses another term. He says Shakespeare conceals himself behind the mask of Macbeth, which is nevertheless Shakespeare speaking, although Shakespeare having assimilated himself in a way to Macbeth. Yes, that is crucial. Now if Plato never speaks here in the dialogues to others, you know, the authentic interpretation of that is Plato conceals himself. Yes, but he doesn't conceal himself simply. Everyone knows that Plato has written these books, but in which sense does he conceal himself nevertheless? If Shakespeare speaks to us through Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and so on and so on, is everything which Macbeth and Lady Macbeth say Shakespeare's opinion? Obviously not. The same here. That would be the first conclusion. Plato conceals his opinion and presents to us—that would be the first step—the opinions of Socrates, of Adeimantus, Glaucon, and so on. And if you say, all right, but what Socrates says is surely what Plato says, then we have to take this up and ask what evidence you have for this opinion. But I don't want to go into that. A little bit later, in 394b, after the next speech.

Mr. Reinken: "You have conceived—"

LS: No, immediately after the long speech of Socrates.

Mr. Reinken:
"Understand then," said I, "that the opposite of this arises when one removes the words of the poet between and leaves the alternation of speeches." "This too I understand," he said, "—it is what happens in tragedy." "You have conceived me most rightly" I said, "and now I think I can make plain to you what I was unable to before, that there is one kind of poetry and tale-telling which works wholly through imitation, as you remarked, tragedy and comedy; and another which employs the recital of the poet himself, best exemplified, I presume, in the dithyramb—" (394b-c)

LS: Let us stop here. What is the difference between Socrates's statement—Socrates's repetition of Adeimantus's statement and Adeimantus's statement itself? Yes?

Student: Adeimantus degrades merely tragedy, while Socrates adds comedy.

LS: Yes. That throws light on Adeimantus's character. He forgets comedy. Socrates does not forget comedy, and that[53] of course is a story which is not yet finished. When you look at the modern literature on Plato, especially the German literature but also in the English and French and American, you find very long discussions of the tragedy in Plato and the influence of tragedy and the tragic element in Plato, and you find very, very little about the comedy in Plato.[54] That is unauthentic, entirely unauthentic, because tragedy is a thing of which everyone thinks[55] [in the] first place. We have evidence for that in the

Laws and elsewhere.[xxvi] But comedy, which to begin with is of course something utterly despicable, you know, very indecent and very low—I mean Menander[xxvii] and all this kind of thing—and yet this has a very great importance for Plato, because the comedy, especially the Aristophanean comedy, was in spite of its forbidden exterior of a very great profundity. And there is a story that when Plato died they found Aristophanes's [writings] beneath what we would call his pillows.[xxviii] But this only in passing. The main point is there will be no imitation in the good city. What you would have would be much more simple lyrical poetry: battle songs, patriotic songs, of course, but very little of—yes, especially no imitation of low-class people, you know, drunken sailors and such people. No. The principle is one man, one job. Do you see? That does duty throughout the book. And if you are an imitator of many things—in the first place, if you are an imitator in addition to being a soldier, guardian, you have already two jobs; but if you imitate many types of men you[56] have *n* jobs, and that is incompatible with the simplicity which is required. It follows as a matter of course that there could be no Platonic dialogue tolerated in Plato's own city. That's clear. Plato imitates Thrasymachus and he imitates Meno and other unsavory characters. That would not be possible. There is one remark which is particularly interesting in 395a, according to which it is said that it is impossible to be at the same time a comic and a tragic poet. Is this known to you from another place in Plato?

Student: The end of the *Symposium*.

LS: Yes. What does he say there?

Student: There he—well, I barely just remember it . . . but there he says that a person ought to be able to write both.

LS: Yes. I also remember it only [barely], but that is surely in it. So in other words, there is in the *Banquet*—just the opposite is said, but this is a banquet and the interlocutors are poets at this point, a tragic and a comic poet. Here he talks to young people, and in particular to austere, puritan Adeimantus. The abstraction from the fundamental unity of tragedy and comedy can be said to be characteristic of the *Republic*.[57] Yes, now he enumerates five objects which they are forbidden to imitate, in 395d to 396b. We should read only one passage, the first speech, at the transition of [396]a to b.

Mr. Reinken:
"What of this?" I said, "—are they to imitate smiths and other craftsmen or the rowers of triremes and those who call the time to them or other things connected therewith?" "How could they," he said, "since it will be forbidden them even to pay any attention to such things?"

[xxvi] See *Laws* 658a6-d4.
[xxvii] Menander (c. 342-c. 291 BC), Greek dramatist and one of the best-known authors of Athenian New Comedy. He wrote over a hundred plays. One complete play survives, *Dyskolos*, which won first prize at the Lenaian festival in 317-216 BC.
[xxviii] Olympiodorus *Life of Plato* 65-75.

LS: Yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Well, then—"

LS: Yes. No, that is already enough. You see, that's another sign of the severity of Adeimantus, that there are things which are not immoral in themselves, of course, but which are below that—the things of which a gentleman would take cognizance. It surely shows how strong the antidemocratic prejudice of Adeimantus is, and this foreshadows the critique of democracy in book 8, which we shall see later. Another remark which is relevant to this point occurs in 397e at the end, immediately before 398.[xxix]

Now "for this we will find only in a such-like city the shoemaker as shoemaker and not a pilot in addition to the art of shoemaking, and the farmer a farmer and not a juryman in addition to farming, and the warrior a warrior and not a money-maker in addition to the war-making art, and everyone."[xxx] The central example is the farmer, [who in Athens] is not a juryman. Now this is of course the democratic institution of Athens, and the farmers were those who were least disliked by the gentlemen—I mean, much less than the urban artisans and so. So that goes throughout the book.[58] There is one point which occurs in 398, the long speech of Socrates which follows immediately after. 398a to b, immediately after what I read.

Mr. Reinken:
"True," he said. "If a man, then, it seems, who was capable by his cunning of assuming every kind of shape and imitating all things should arrive in our city, bringing with himself the poems which he wished to exhibit, we should fall down and worship him as a holy and wondrous and delightful creature, but should say to him that there is no man of that kind among us in our city, nor is it lawful for such a man to arise among us, and we should send him away to another city." (398a-b)

LS: Let us stop here. Now what[59] does this mean—I mean, the poet who is not a strictly moral poet? By the way, these things were not without practical importance. For example, in French classicism, in the classical French tragedy and comedy of the seventeenth century, this was the principle of: a moral poetry. And even Voltaire speaks of the indecency of Homer.[xxxi] And the point of view was not identical with that of Plato, but there is a certain parallel: indecency. And the so-called romantic movement around 1800 was an attempt to recover the latitude of poetry prior to especially French classicism. So[60] to repeat, Plato wants to have a severely limited poetry, but poetry, not insipid tracts. That one must never forget.[61] But if there comes a poet who is unwilling to comply with this severely limited art, what do we do with him? Here we have it. We are extremely polite to him, but that is not the point. What do we do beyond being polite to

[xxix] The transcriber notes that the reader loses his place and unsuccessfully attempts to find it.
[xxx] Strauss's translation.
[xxxi] See Voltaire, "An Essay on the Epick Poetry of the European Nations, from Homer down to Milton" (1727 [written in English]); "Notes sur Les Lois de Minos" [1772], *Oeuvres* (Paris, Garnier, 1885) 7:177.

him? We send him to another *polis*. In other words, we have not the slightest misgivings about his corrupting other cities. That's very important. After all, they could pension him off and put him in some nice place and say: You write as many poems as you please, and we'll look them over; those which are first to be published will be published; the others will be destroyed[62] in order to protect other cities against temptation. No. Socrates is completely indifferent to the moral character of any other city, and that's very important. The parallelism between the individual and the *polis* is not complete, of course; I mean, for the individual to be indifferent to the morality of his fellow citizens is absolutely unjust, but the *polis* is not under such an obligation. Good.

Now[63] shortly after, the third item occurs. We had first speeches and the manner of speech, and now songs. This is almost at the beginning. Glaucon comes in because Glaucon is obviously much more competent regarding song than Adeimantus is. And it also has the great advantage—the cleaning, the cleansing of the city in the spirit of what I usually call puritanism, or what we could call Sparta at her best—yes, that is more proper—has already taken place with the help of austere Adeimantus. Now[64] how does Glaucon make his entry here? With what expression?

Student: Laughing.

LS: He laughs.[xxxii] Sure. He is a lover of laughter. That belongs to his character. It appears in the immediate sequel. He is a musical man more clearly than his brother, and he is also an erotic man. All these things are not true of Adeimantus—[65]here in this connection we get the answer to the question, only here. What is the end of what we would now call liberal education? If you turn to 403c you will get the answer: the middle of this paragraph; that's the end of the section on music.

Mr. Reinken: "After music—"

LS: No, no before. The speech immediately preceding.

Mr. Reinken:
"Do you not agree, then, that our discourse on music has come to an end? It has certainly made a fitting end, for surely the end and consummation of culture is the love the beautiful." (403c)

LS: "Of culture," does he[xxxiii] say? Yes. No, you will not be understandable. "Yes, but the musical things must end in," let us say in "love"—*eros*—"of the beautiful." That is the end of liberal education. The opposite is his unawareness of the beautiful. That is the end clearly stated here. There are other answers given, but this is the formal and final conclusion of this section.

Now let us try to understand that. We have here in the first book, you will recall, a statement[66] which was never contradicted and which[67] is empirically testable every day:

[xxxii] Plato *Republic* 398c7.
[xxxiii] Shorey, the translator.

that no society is possible, not even a society of gangsters, without a measure of justice.[xxxiv][68] I mean, justice is absolutely necessary, and then of course the question arises: What is the difference between the justice of a gang of robbers and the justice of a decent society? What would you say? Really, strictly empirically. Yes?

Student: One deals with the love of justice, and the other with the survival of the system.

LS: No, no. We must not always go to these heights. I mean, what is the difference, very empirically and very low? What is the difference between the justice—I mean, if someone would say these are just men because they divide the loot fairly. You laugh—well, but why? What is it you're laughing at? Pardon?

Student: Force and fear.

LS: Oh. How did they get the loot? In other words, because they are grossly unjust towards people who are not members of the gang. Yes? That's the difference. So I mean that is a very imperfect justice if the gang is only just among themselves. All right. What about a respectable civil society like ours here?[69] May I ask how they behave towards those who are not members of the *polis*? Pardon? Yes, even worse; they got their land through conquest[xxxv] and originally by plain robbery, so there is no difference here.[xxxvi] No difference here. I mean, you could say this, and that is the view of many people: that a decent society is just not only within but also without. But this leads to interesting questions, very long questions. This naughty man, Machiavelli, has built a long doctrine, an elaborate doctrine on this kind of observations, but what is Plato's answer here, at least here in the *Republic*?[70] When you go on later you will see certain restrictions on warfare among the Greeks and so, but that doesn't completely settle the issue in any way.[xxxvii]

Now again let us return to our friends the gangsters. They make a bank robbery or something of this kind. You all must have the same sources of knowledge which I have, Perry Mason[xxxviii] and TV and occasionally crime reports[xxxix] —made a haul. You ought to know it. They gorge themselves with all kinds of things and their girls, their dames, if I may use these terms, play a very great role in this connection. Yes, really, and you see how relevant this observation is, to see what do they do: no dames, no gorging, moderation. In other words, the difference between the decent city and a gang of robbers is that in the decent city the way of life of the leading group—they are moderate men, men of taste, of delicacy or however you call it. That's the point.[71] The corrective is not

[xxxiv] 351c7-352a4.
[xxxv] In the transcript: "conquest (?)"
[xxxvi] 373d7-e3,
[xxxvii] 469b5-471b8.
[xxxviii] Perry Mason, fictional defense attorney created by Erle Stanley Gardner (1889-1970). Adapted into a popular television series starring Raymond Burr, which appeared on American television from 1957-66.
[xxxix] The tape was changed at this point.

given via the international law or international conduct, it is given in terms of the characters of the predominant part of the society.

Mr. Megati: You agree, then, that they both love the beautiful.

LS: No! Of course not! I mean, Mr. Megati,[72] yes, but in a very low way. Yes? In other words, you took the babes too seriously.

Mr. Megati: No. That's not fair.

LS: In what you said now. I never go beyond what a man says. I judge men only in this way. Yes?

Mr. Megati: The end and consummation of music is the love of the beautiful.

LS: Yes, sure. Yes, but that refers—for example, how can you combine the vulgarity of the gangsters in their behavior at their banquets and so on with the nobility and gentlemanship of our guardians? Now then the discussion of music is closed, and we turn to the next item, the only other item, gymnastics, which—this is also Glaucon, of course, and gymnastics includes diet. And in this dietal business you see already what has happened to our friend Glaucon, who was so dissatisfied with the absence of candies, cakes and so on in[73] what he called "the city of pigs."[xl] He accepts these prohibitions against delicacies without a moment's hesitation.[xli] You see? That has happened. I mean, that is because he is now the founder of a city; you know, that is not a thing where you can indulge yourself. And [there is] also the effect, of course, of this conversation between Socrates and Adeimantus on him. Yes, and there is a strict parallelism: simple diet and, just as we said previously in the musical section, simple music: a life of simplicity. And that goes through the whole book, of course: one man, one job means also a simple man, simple, single-minded, no complexities. [And][74] there is a parallel suggestion that the end of the education in music is moderation. So the opposite defect is intemperance. Diet is meant to produce health, and the opposite of health is sickness. So[75] the two subjects are brought up: sickness, physicians; intemperance, judges—in both cases the cure for the defect. That is the way in which these two things come in, judges and physicians, and what is the difference? What is the difference regarding physicians and judges? Do you remember?

Student: Well,[76] for the physicians the experience of the disease is o.k. because he treats the disease with his mind and the experience of the disease afflicts the body, whereas the judge treats the disease of the soul with the soul . . .

LS: In other words, the[77] physician must have been sick, and the more the better, we could say, in order to be a good physician—sick in body. But the judge must never have been sick in soul, i.e., he must not be a crook [or] ever have been a crook. Yes? That's clear. Does this make sense? And the reason given is this: because the physician doesn't

[xl] 372c2-e1.
[xli] 403e8-404e6.

heal with his body but with his soul, and the judge of course[78] judges by virtue of his soul, not by virtue of his body.[79] There is one difference, one little thing which can escape one because it is not striking. The judge, the good judge, is a man who knows only from observing others what injustice is. He is himself perfectly free from unjust thoughts. He learns the ways of injustice, and therefore he learns to think unjust thoughts only because he has observed others.[xlii]

Now let us[80] take another case. Why should not we demand the judge—that man the best judge who has suffered all kinds of injustice? In other words, why should Glaucon's perfectly just man not be the perfect judge? This is tacitly ruled out here. The perfect judge is not a man who has been robbed and beaten and cheated in every way but who is an observer. Socrates says, as it were, you must not go so far as Glaucon does because to be exposed to all this kind of things does not make you a better judge.[81] Glaucon's perfectly just man would be unfit to be a judge. Yes?

Student: What's the difference between the judge and the safekeeper or the guardian? Would not the guardian have to think in a cunning or unjust way to anticipate the injustice of the safecracker or the thief or the enemy?

LS: Yes. Yes, that's a very—

Same Student: Or my question could be put this way: Are there any judges in this city? Doesn't he talk about judges elsewhere?

LS: Yes, but there must be—well, there will not be many occasions for judges, but there must be [some]. After all, let us see. From the classic point of view the judge is one kind of the ruler. Isn't it clear? One kind of the ruler.[82] But there is something in what you say. The perfect judge—the judge or the ordinary guardian must know the ways of injustice if he is to do his job well. That's your point? Yes?

Same Student: Yes, but I thought that there's a difference between judging in the court after the crime has been committed and anticipating the crime. The latter would require a different quality, a quality[83] akin to the cunningness of the criminal.

LS: I am not so sure. I mean, you mean to say that the district attorney or the police, the detectives, have an art which—

Same Student: You have to be a thief to catch a thief.

LS: Yes. But still, don't you think that the judge in his overall judgment of the situation must not be perfectly able to rethink the criminal thoughts?[84] I don't believe that this is an essential difference. But there is a very important point which I should have brought up, and that is this. Surely the statement occurring in the Thrasymachus discussion [is] that the knowledge possessed by the guardians or by the judges and the knowledge possessed

[xlii] 408c5-409e3.

by the thief is identical.[xliii] Yes? And then, since justice is knowledge, what is—I mean, can justice be knowledge under this condition? But we have now a provisional answer to that question. What is the difference regarding cognition between the thief and the guardian? The tricks are known equally well to both, if they are equally good in that sense. What's the difficulty? What does the thief not know that the guardian knows? Pardon?

Student: What's good or bad.

LS: Yes, but in the language of Plato.

Student: What's virtue and what's—

LS: Yes, what is noble and base, what is beautiful and ugly. So in other words, that is in a way the implication here. That will be corrected very soon.[85] Virtue is knowledge, but virtue is not[86] this neutral knowledge which is equally possessed by the just and unjust man, by the high and low man, but knowledge is the knowledge of the difference between high and low, between noble and base, and the gangster does not possess it. I mean, if the gangsters speak of[87] [the] squares as distinct from the crooks—I gather that this is the way in which they refer to those of us who [88]are not in a penitentiary—then of course they don't take this seriously. They put tacitly "square" in quotation marks, just like a social scientist when he speaks of "corruption." You know? I mean, they really don't know what "square" means. They say they—you know, these are people who don't go in for this kind of thing, but what prompts them, what these other people have understood in not doing [. . .] they don't know. They have strictly value-free understanding of that. Yes. Now, yes?

Student: You mean that the thief has no knowledge of justice? Surely he has some knowledge of what most people think is traditionally—

LS: Yes, but he doesn't see that with—well, obviously . . . what does he know? Take a certain action, say, robbery. Robbery [is] forbidden. That he knows, yes? Robbery [is] forbidden. He even will know[89] many more details than most of us know about it. Good. And [90]that also means [that it is] regarded as bad. Yes? Regarded as bad. Just as an anthropologist coming to a tribe knows that they regard it as bad to eat this particular kind of fish or[91] whatever it may be: absolutely value-free. He does not know what we are supposed to know: robbery is bad. He doesn't know, because you see . . . he acts on the principle that robbery is good. And that we are not doing it—"chickens," is that the word being used, or something of this kind? So he doesn't know it. Whether that is a sufficient analysis of the phenomenon is another matter, but that is surely an important part of the Platonic argument. He doesn't know that robbery is bad. He knows only [that] it's forbidden. Well, that doesn't mean a thing. That's a merely external fact of no[92] [great weight], of which he could perhaps give a sophisticated doctrine [or] expression along the lines of Glaucon's speech—you know, that the weak, the "chickens," band

[xliii] Apparently a reference to 333e3-334b6 in the Polemarchus discussion.

together in order to defend themselves against the tough guys.[xliv] But he does not know that robbery is bad. If he knew that, he wouldn't do it. There is something to that. Whether it is sufficient is another matter, and there will be[93] very soon an argument.

But let me now proceed.[94] He has discussed now the whole of education, music and gymnastics, and also the cures belonging to each. The cure belonging to gymnastics is medicine. The cure belonging to music is judging. Yes? [By] music, you form a character, but [by] judging, you cure the defect of someone who has lapsed.[95] We have to draw a proportion: gymnastics and medicine equal to music and judging. This reminds of an explicit proportion in the *Gorgias* which is exactly the same, except [that] what here is called music is called in the *Gorgias* legislation.[xlv] Legislation. It is very interesting that it is not here called legislation. Now the function of gymnastics, the purpose of gymnastics is to arouse the spirited element and to bring about its perfect shape, which is courage. The function of music is to bring about moderation, and moderation is clearly used synonymously with love of the beautiful. Love of the beautiful comprises such things as we mean today by good taste, delicacy, and so on. It is also called here, and that is very interesting—a distinction is here made [between] moderation or love of the beautiful and philosophy. Not philosophy in the broad sense—love—"philosophy" means certainly "friendship to wisdom," "love of wisdom." Love of wisdom and love of the beautiful are here used synonymously.

Now then he makes shortly thereafter a transition to the rulers. After all, he has spoken now only about the guardians in general, and then he goes over to the rulers because only a part of these soldiers can be rulers. Now this section regarding rulers belongs still to the theme[96] of education because that function of the rulers which is here discussed at some length is still an educating function, namely, the noble lie. And the whole discussion culminates in that, but before we come to that we have a very interesting discussion of the same subject[97] [with which] you were dissatisfied. In 412c—we should return to that—he said, speaking about the rulers, that they must be sensible and capable, and in addition they must care for the *polis*. Now to some extent justice is the same: caring for the *polis*. And here is a clear distinction. The intellectual quality of being sensible or reasonable is not the same as caring for the *polis*. Someone can be sensible and not care for the *polis*. That is the difficulty you had in mind. Now let us see. Can you read the sequel, Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken:
"But one would be most likely to be careful of that which he loved." "Necessarily." "And again, one would be most likely to love that whose interests he supposed to coincide with his own, and thought that when it prospered he too would prosper and if not, the contrary." "So it is," he said. (412d)

LS: Yes, you see, so that's very important. Here, caring for society, public spiritedness, is described as necessarily linked up with self-interest. More generally stated, there must be a harmony between justice and self-interest, and[98] somewhat later in 414a it will be said

[xliv] 358e3-359b5.
[xlv] *Gorgias* 464b2-466a3.

as a matter of course that the rulers will be honored. You remember what Glaucon and Adeimantus said: no frills, the mere justice without any advantage. That is now completely dropped in this part of the argument. Justice—there must be a harmony between the good of the individual and the good of the *polis*, the question which I discussed with Mr. McLean at the beginning. I mean, if the good city is the good city only because what is good for the *polis* is good for me and vice versa, by doing what I am by nature fit to do, i.e., by doing what I can enjoy doing because[99] it doesn't go against my grain, [100]I do best by the city. Yes, here a little bit later, in e, just read—skip the next speech of Socrates and then read the one following . . .

Mr. Reinken: "'I will tell you,' said I"?

LS: No, in e, 412e. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"I think, then, we shall have to observe them at every period of life, to see if they are conservators and guardians of this conviction in their minds and never by sorcery nor by force can be brought to expel from their souls unawares this conviction that they must do what is best for the state." (412e)

LS: Yes. Yes, but[101] [what is] this conviction or, as is said, this opinion or this dogma? Now this dogma is exactly the coincidence of self-interest and common interest, and that is not [so] universally, but in the good city there will be such a coincidence. Yes, this is crucial. And now after this is clear, after it is perfectly settled that this conviction seems to be unqualified truth, that in a properly organized city there is no conflict between the true self-interest of the individual and the interests of the *polis*. I mean, not self-interest as some fool understands it, a fellow who believes he can be a poet, that this is his self-interest, and he's wholly ungifted for that—that cannot be taken seriously.[102] Good. And yet we need, as appears in the immediate sequel, a noble lie. That's absolutely necessary.

Now this noble lie is here illustrated by an example, but on closer inspection it appears that this is not merely an example but is the noble lie, the untruth without which according to Socrates an ordered society is impossible. And now we have to read that, in 414b. Do you have that? Socrates is very hesitant to speak. You know? After all, Socrates is a man of great honesty and that he should now recommend a lie, that is something where everyone would tremble, and even Socrates trembles. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"How then," said I, "might we contrive one of those opportune falsehoods of which we were just now speaking, so as by one noble lie to persuade if possible the rulers themselves, but failing that the rest of the city?"

LS: All right. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"What kind of a fiction do you mean?" said he. "Nothing unprecedented," said I—

LS: "Nothing novel." "Nothing novel." In other words,[103] he is not a revolutionary. He follows tradition. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"but a sort of Phoenician tale, something that has happened ere now in many parts of the world, as the poets aver and have induced men to believe, but that has not happened and perhaps would not be likely to happen in our day and demanding no little persuasion to make it believable." "You act like one who shrinks from telling his thought," he said. "You will think I have right good reason from shrinking when I have told," I said. "Say on," said he, "and don't be afraid." (414b-d)

LS: You see? Socrates appears to be afraid. Yes? Good.

Mr. Reinken:
"Very well, I will. And yet, I hardly know how to find the audacity or the words to speak and undertake to persuade first the rulers themselves and the soldiers and then the rest of the city, that in good sooth all our training and educating of them were things that they imagined and that happened to them as it were in a dream; but that in reality at that time they were down within the earth being moulded and fostered themselves while their weapons and the rest of their equipment were being fashioned. And when they were quite finished the earth as being their mother delivered them, and now as if their land were their mother and their nurse they ought to take thought for her and defend her against any attack and regard the other citizens as their brothers and children of the self-same earth." (414d-e)

LS: Yes. Now what[104] is the decisive thing?[105] The lie in a crude sense is of course that they are said to have been educated, brought up beneath the earth, which is manifestly not true. But that doesn't go to the root of the matter. What is the key thing? Yes?

Student: That they should not be critical of the principles of their founders . . .

LS: Yes, but there is one point. Let us look at the end toward which they are to regard themselves as brothers because they are all sons of the same mother earth. That, after all, is not in itself a terrible lie. We all are mortals,[106] children of the earth, and all men should regard themselves therefore as brothers. That is[107] perhaps a somewhat metaphoric expression, because our mother literally was a human woman, but that is not so terribly striking. But what Socrates does is here a switch. He speaks first of the earth and then of the land, territory. They are not to regard all men as their brothers but all children of this soil that they know. That is the noble lie, the assertion that the clear-cut distinction between fellow citizens and foreigners is the natural distinction, as natural as the distinction between man and woman. As the Eleatic Stranger puts it in the *Statesman*, there are people who say the whole human race consists of Greeks and barbarians.[xlvi] That is the basic cleavage, and that would be as absurd as to[108] divide all numbers into the

[xlvi] *Statesman* 262c10-263a1.

number ten thousand and all other numbers. Ten thousand: there were ten thousand Greeks in Asia about that time, under Xenophon.[xlvii]

So that is the first point: the substitution of the soil for the earth, of the particular society for the universal society. The particular society must regard itself as by nature distinct from all other societies, and that is an untruth. This is concealed from us today a bit by such questions as culture: that the members of a society are united by a common culture and that this is much more important than nature. Now let us look at the second[109] part of the lie, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"It is not for nothing," he said, "that you were so bashful about coming out with your lie." "It was quite natural that I should be," I said; "but all the same hear the rest of the story. While all of you in the city are brothers, we will say in our tale, yet God in fashioning those of you who are fitted to hold rule mingled gold in their generation, for which reason they are the most precious—but in the helpers silver, and iron and brass in the farmers and other craftsmen. And as you are all akin, though for the most part you will breed after your kinds, it may sometimes happen that a golden father would beget a silver son and that a golden offspring would come from a silver sire and that the rest would in like manner be born of one another. So that the first and chief injunction that the god lays upon the rulers is that of nothing else are they to be such careful guardians and so intently observant as of the intermixture of these metals in the souls of their offspring, and if sons are born to them with an infusion of brass or iron they shall by no means give way to pity in their treatment of them, but shall assign to each the status due to his nature and thrust them out among the artizans or the farmers. And again, if from these there is born a son with unexpected gold or silver in his composition they shall honour such and bid them go up higher, some to the office of guardian, some to the assistanceship, alleging that there is an oracle that the state shall be overthrown when the man of iron or brass is its guardian. Do you see any way of getting them to believe this tale?" "No, not these themselves," he said, "but I do, their sons and successors and the rest of mankind who come after."

LS: Go on; the next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"Well," said I, "even that would have a good effect in making them more inclined to care for the state and one another. For I think I apprehend your meaning. And this shall fall out as tradition guides." "But let us arm these sons—" (414d-415d)

LS: No, let us stop here. The last sentence you read is, "for I understand more or less what you say,"[110] namely, the fact that later generations might believe what the first generation, the eyewitnesses did not accept. There is a very beautiful, if naughty, commentary on this passage in Gibbon, in his history. In my edition, which is a very bad edition—we have not the time—London, New York: Frederick Worn, 1890, page 334 to 335, where he speaks about this, what he says: the strange fact that the Jews who were eyewitnesses of the miracles and the relation of Moses did not really believe, and only

[xlvii] See Xenophon *Anabasis of Cyrus*.

after many generations [did they accept his religion]. "The contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld with careless indifference the most amazing miracles. Under the pressure of every calamity, the belief of those miracles has preserved the Jews of a later period from the universal contagion of idolatry, and in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors than to the evidence of their own senses." This is a very nasty remark—very ironical, obviously—stating the same point: that certain stories that cannot be believed as an account of what everyone knows can be believed as accounts of what happened in the past, especially in the remote past.

But to come back to our problem: What is the meaning of this second part of the noble lie? That these people are by nature different, the varying classes, is not a lie according to the *Republic*. That's the truth; and this oracle, that if the inferior people become the rulers the city will be ruined, is not a lie because it is obviously true that a city ruled by the lowest people will decay. What's the lie? I think we must take a somewhat broader view, and I would say it is this: that[111] the social stratification, if I may use these terms, coincides with the natural stratification. [This is a point which was discussed before.] No society can last if people do not believe that the upper classes deserve to be the upper classes. If they don't believe that—and the question is whether this applies to a democracy in which there are no upper classes, but this would of course demand an answer to the previous question: Is that a proper description of democracy? But if people do not accept the social hierarchy as deserving—I mean the peak, the top group as deserving their position—civil society is necessarily unstable. So the sacredness both of the borders and the peacekeepers, the fellow citizens are cut off from the rest of mankind by a natural division; and secondly, the belief regarding the ruling predominant part as deserving to be the predominant part. These are the beliefs on which every society rests, and the implication of this very harsh statement is that these beliefs are never simply true. You find approximations to[112] [them], but they are never simply true. That is the reason why Plato depicts an allegedly perfectly just society in which it would be simply true. But the question is: Is this perfectly just society possible? And you see here also this remark in what Mr. Reinken read, that this is needed, this noble lie is needed so that people can truly care for the *polis* and not merely knowing [about it]. It is needed for the sake of justice.

Now I[113] mention here only one point. The trouble is that the time is running [short]. In 416a—we simply don't have the time to read it—an old simile, old in the *Republic*, I mean, occurs again. The rulers are the shepherds; the people are the sheep; and the soldiers are the dogs. But who is the owner? Who benefits from that whole enterprise? You know? Pardon?

Student: It's a co-op, isn't it?

LS: Yes, but who benefits? Look, in the case of ordinary sheep and shepherds,[114] there is someone who benefits from it. Differently stated: Who is made happy by this thing? That is the question with which the next book begins.[115] I mean the wonderful arrangement, the best we can think of, but is anyone made happier by it? Differently stated,[116] the

requirements of justice are all fulfilled: everyone does what is good for him, what he is best fit to do, and he gets a reward which is best for him. It's perfectly just,[117] [but] does this make him happy? The requirement of justice is fulfilled; the requirement of happiness[118] [is] not so obviously fulfilled. That is the thing, the thought, which keeps the argument moving beyond that. Now Mr. Gold, I prevented you from speaking.

Mr. Gold: Well, I was going to guess, but I changed my mind.

LS: You changed—all right. Yes, I would like to say only one point which I haven't seen before which I believe is an important part of the argument. I will mention only the most necessary. I think that the central section of the *Republic* for the understanding of this deeper reasoning is the Thrasymachus section. You see, you have first Cephalus and Polemarchus, and then we have Glaucon [and] Adeimantus. That you can also call one group, although because of its length there is a constant change. Glaucon, Adeimantus . . . first case you have father and son; and here you have brother and brother, and fraternity is of course somewhat closer to the political society than father–son. Thrasymachus in the middle: neither father nor son, nor brother. And what is Thrasymachus's point, the key point? I am not now concerned with whether this thought occurs in him spontaneously or is accepted by him at the suggestion of Socrates. And that is the thought of the *techne*, of the art strictly understood and according to which the art as such is divorced from all benefit to the artisan. That has nothing to do with the art as art. The artisan as artisan merely serves. That he gets reward for it, that has nothing to do with him as artisan; that has to do with him insofar as he is a moneymaker. That's not *qua* artisan. Now if we formulate this simply it means [that] since the artisan as artisan merely serves, thinks nothing about himself, about his advantage, art is justice, because justice means this complete surrender to the concern of others. And that is only another formulation for virtue is knowledge: art is justice.

Student: What about the formulation of the legal as the just? How does this tie in with art as justice?

LS: I could answer that question if you had three minutes more patience. I don't know. That's an interesting subject. Now how does it come up? Very briefly, this: Thrasymachus says—that's his major point, that's the starting point: the just is the legal. Yes? That's the starting point.[xlviii] I don't have to prove this anymore.[119] And then he says: Well, what is the legal? What is the law? Answer: The advantage of the stronger, which means it is [120]advantage of the ruler; it is not the advantage of the ruled. That is his thesis.[121] And then the question arises: the true advantage of the rulers or the apparent advantage of the rulers. Thrasymachus says only the true advantage. What is the notion? I believe this: if he would say the apparent advantage of the rulers, justice or the law might be entirely useless. It is by definition useless for the ruled. Now if it is only the apparent advantage of the rulers, it may very well be totally useless. In order to save some respectability[122] [for] the law, he says [it is] the true advantage to the rulers. What I have to prove is how could Thrasymachus possibly be interested in saving the respectability of law? And there is a clear answer. Thrasymachus plays the *polis*. He is in a sense the *polis*,

[xlviii] *Republic* 338d7-341a4.

a subject which will be taken up later, and therefore I think he acts perfectly in character. But I'm now concerned only with the outcome of this point, *techne*, and art is justice for the reason given. We may turn it around: justice is art. And[123] the divorce of justice from one's own advantage, which is already implied in the Thrasymachus discussion, is the basis of Glaucon's demand on Socrates. Justice must be preferred even if essentially leading to the misery of the just man.

Now in order to fulfill this demand Socrates founds the best city, the perfectly just city,[124] where everyone is just without being necessarily happy. This just city is Socrates's attempt to fulfill Glaucon's demand. Is the attempt successful? That's the great question. First, how[125] far does the attempt which is made by Socrates correspond to the commission given to him by Glaucon? If art is justice or justice is art, the just city must be a city of artisans. Everyone must be an artisan, and that is exactly done. The guardians are called in 395b to c (also other passages) craftsmen of freedom—craftsmen just as the shoemaker is a craftsman and so on. And of course later on the philosophers also are artisans in a sense.[xlix] This, I believe, is the point from which we must understand the key principle which is so frequently stated. If the just city is a city of artisans, everyone must have a single art, because what is characteristic if we look at the world of art? There are butchers, there are tailors, there are candlestick makers. Each has a single art. Everyone must have one job, not two or more.

Now there are of course great questions, and I mention here only one, because that was worrying very much Mr. Seltzer. Is this principle, "one man, one art," possible? Now what have we seen hitherto on the basis of the evidence now? Let's look at our[126] guardians. Two things they have to learn: gymnastics and music. Are these not arts? The terms are explicitly applied to the guardians:[127] they [must] possess these arts. For example, in 410b and c to d: they must possess the arts. There is also the other case, for Asclepius, and that is reported by Mr. McLean. Asclepius[128] [and] his sons were warriors and physicians, and no objection was made to them on this ground.[l][129] This "one man, one job" principle has a certain plausibility on the basis of our experience with art and of the usefulness of the division of labor, that is quite true, but that is not sufficient. You would have to consider the alternative assertion, most famous today through Marx[130]: Would it not be better that everyone develops all his faculties?[li] That would have to be discussed. Surely the simplistic formula used here, "one man, one job," rigorously applied, is impossible, as Plato knew. Everyone has to get more than one. Now what is[131] behind that? What is behind that?[132] Is universality absolutely bad as it would seem? Is there not at least one kind of man, [a] kind of man who in a sense to be defined must be universal? Not that he must be a candlestick maker, butcher, tailor, soldier, and what not—not in these simple things but in another sense universal.

Student: The philosopher king.

[xlix] 500c9-d9.

[l] 407c7-408b6.

[li] See Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, "German Ideology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 160; Strauss, *City and Man*, 133.

LS: The philosopher. Yes, even as mere philosopher; forget about the king. Even as philosopher: that is the universal art. And of course that doesn't—he must at least be able to judge of all arts, and that is not possible without an understanding at least of the essence, if I may say so, of each art. What happens here is very strange, and I don't claim that I've understood that, but I think we should bring it up. In the Thrasymachus section, where art becomes for the first time the theme, we have what I called at the time democracy of the arts. Each art is self-sufficient. There is no hierarchy whatever. So in other words, it is impossible to understand how the horseman—the man who possesses the horsic art could give orders to the bridlemaker, which—you know? There is no hierarchy. Of course that is impossible; there cannot be a democracy of the arts. There is manifestly a hierarchy: some are ministerial and others are not ministerial. But what we have here according to this description is strictly understood, I believe, an order of higher and lower without a connection between them. You see, if the horseman possesses the horsic art completely but nothing else, how can he reach an understanding with the bridlemaker? He must have some understanding—he must be to some extent a bridlemaker if he is to give orders to the bridlemaker, and so on. And this is a very difficult thing, how this connection between the arts is possible in spite of their difference. This subject comes up in more than one Platonic dialogue. In the *Charmides*, for example: How is this is possible without being an artisan—you know, say, a carpenter—and yet to be able to judge of it?[lii] And the simple answer, "Well, the customer is the best judge [of] whether the chair is good," is not sufficient here.

Now my tentative suggestion would be this: ultimately we must have a universal art.[133] If someone doesn't believe that—Plato, he should read the first page of Aristotle's *Ethics*, where this same thought is developed. There must be an architectonic art, as Aristotle puts it. That is philosophy and the philosopher—well, how many arts are enumerated in books 6 and 7? Arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy and so on[134]: the philosopher must possess them as completely as the arithmetician, the astronomer and so on, possesses them, and [the philosopher's possession of] the combination of comedy and tragedy is only a kind of secondary illustration of that. And what you said, the philosopher-king [has two arts]: Of course! But the philosopher must not be only a king, where you can say that is a somewhat fantastic suggestion: the philosopher must also be a rhetorician here. I mean, he must possess the art of speaking, which is not simply identical with philosophy proper, and so on.

Now if we take this seriously for one moment, we would reach this tentative conclusion: that at least in these initial parts of the *Republic* Plato abstracts from philosophy, I mean from that art (we can call it that way) which is surely incompatible with a simple self-sufficiency, or the art as simple non-connectedness of the many arts. And therefore philosophy—and that is perfectly in order, because the *polis* is the theme, not philosophy. Philosophy comes in in the *Republic* not on its own feet, if I may say so, but is brought in very indirectly, according to the explicit argument.[135] The perfect city is finished in book 5. Completed. No objections; all objections have been refuted. And then the question

[lii] See Plato *Charmides* 170a6ff.

arises: But how can we get it? And only as a means for getting it, not as an ingredient, an essential ingredient of the good city, is philosophy introduced. [liii]

So this abstraction from philosophy is of the essence of that first half of the work, and that is a kind of shock, that this mere means, philosophy, should prove to be the end. And[136] [there are] good reasons, because if philosophy as such is the end, the whole political life becomes a problem. The title of the *Republic* in Greek, *Politeia*, does not merely mean constitution or regime but it means the political life. The political life. That is the question, and the book starts from the premise that the political life is the highest life, [137]the life truly in accordance with what man is. And this premise, which is never questioned here, which is always presupposed, becomes questioned[138] from at least book 6 on. So.

Now I have made a very long [explanation], and next time we will hear Mr. Seltzer on book 4. Is that correct?

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[1] Deleted "—is not clear."
[2] Deleted "I mean these—and."
[3] Deleted "he—."
[4] Deleted "Yes—no."
[5] Deleted "after all, not—is."
[6] Deleted "even if we assume—I mean."
[7] Deleted "it—."
[8] Deleted "a."
[9] Deleted "let us—."
[10] Deleted "no one—."
[11] Deleted "who."
[12] Deleted "is discussed, which he."
[13] Deleted V.
[14] Deleted "That is—comes out, but at the starting point, and really referred to frequently and referred to more than once in your paper."
[15] Deleted "is—."
[16] Deleted "different—."
[17] Deleted "to."
[18] Deleted "—must know."
[19] Deleted "is—it."
[20] Deleted "somewhat more—."
[21] Changed from "The first section—the first part, again already in the second book it is concluded in 392c, and that deals with the speeches."
[22] Deleted "which speeches, which are"
[23] Deleted "is—what."
[24] Deleted "even where."
[25] Deleted "is".
[26] Deleted "it doesn't necessarily—you know that is not—how shall I say—it is not necessarily—the society in which the F students are—I mean, I'm speaking now only of the intellectual education—are all educated or, say, in which the."
[27] Deleted "].—that is not—it is defined very detailed—what the good character is."
[28] Deleted "out from"
[29] Deleted "does it"
[30] Deleted "this—."

[liii] *Republic* 466d6-9, 471c4-473e5.

[31] Deleted "not later than they are one year old."
[32] Deleted "do."
[33] Deleted "that—Plato did not discuss a sociology (sic)."
[34] Deleted "—in which."
[35] Deleted "no—."
[36] Deleted "I mean."
[37] Deleted "Glaucon—yes, Glaucon—."
[38] Deleted "Now, and—but let me—let me—."
[39] Deleted "as we could say—mean, in life—."
[40] Moved "the."
[41] Deleted "this—."
[42] Changed from "This is not—in all these cases of the five things mentioned the gods or sons of gods or the shapes, the shadows, the shapes of departed men are mentioned."
[43] Deleted "poets."
[44] Deleted "What is—."
[45] Deleted "—that is some—that."
[46] Deleted "since."
[47] Deleted "that—."
[48] Deleted "you—."
[49] Deleted "very brief."
[50] Deleted "no—."
[51] Deleted "in a—."
[52] Deleted "—if."
[53] Deleted "has to do—that."
[54] Changed from "So—in other words, that is unauthentic, entirely unauthentic, because tragedy is a thing of which everyone thinks at first place."
[55] Deleted "at"
[56] Deleted "are—."
[57] Changed from "Yes, now what—what are they supposed—then he enumerates five objects which they are forbidden to imitate, in 395d to 396b. We should read only one passage, in 39—the first speech really in 396b—no, no, at the transition of a to b. ."
[58] Deleted "You would—yes—."
[59] Deleted "—what—what."
[60] Deleted "what Socrates—to repeat—."
[61] Deleted "No—."
[62] Changed from "And in order to prevent other cities—to protect other cities against temptation."
[63] Deleted "let—then."
[64] Deleted "what—."
[65] Deleted "and the"
[66] Deleted "was made."
[67] Deleted "makes—."
[68] Deleted "So that—."
[69] Deleted "How—."
[70] Deleted "The—when you find—."
[71] Deleted "There is—."
[72] Deleted "Oh, I mean because—."
[73] Deleted "the city of—."
[74] Deleted "And this subject we have now—the music is also said—."
[75] Deleted "we are brought—."
[76] Deleted "the experience—."
[77] Deleted "judge must—the."
[78] Deleted "needs to—."
[79] Deleted "That is—."
[80] Deleted "compare the judge—let us."
[81] Deleted "He would be—."
[82] Deleted "And—yes."

[83] Deleted "of—."
[84] Deleted "and—."
[85] Deleted "That there is—."
[86] Deleted "knowledge of—not."
[87] Deleted "that."
[88] Deleted "don't—"
[89] Deleted "much—."
[90] Deleted "what"
[91] Deleted "so—fish or."
[92] Deleted "—which—."
[93] Deleted "immediately"
[94] Deleted "After."
[95] Deleted "This—."
[96] Deleted "which—."
[97] Deleted "where."
[98] Deleted "—yes—and this will be—," Moved "we can't read everything."
[99] Deleted "it is, because my"
[100] Deleted "I am most"
[101] Deleted "that—."
[102] Deleted "But so."
[103] Deleted "there is—."
[104] Deleted "—what is—what."
[105] Deleted "I mean, they should—what is—well."
[106] Deleted "sons of—."
[107] Deleted "not—that is."
[108] Deleted "say—to."
[109] Deleted "that is, the second."
[110] Deleted "because."
[111] Moved "a point which was discussed before—." Deleted "that."
[112] Deleted "that."
[113] Deleted "at the end—"
[114] Deleted "—yes—."
[115] Deleted "Is there"
[116] Deleted "it is the perfect—."
[117] Deleted "and—but is this—."
[118] Deleted "if."
[119] Deleted "Now—."
[120] Deleted "not the advantage of the—."
[121] Deleted "Now—."
[122] Deleted "of."
[123] Deleted "—yes—and."
[124] Deleted "which—yes."
[125] Deleted "does he attempt—how."
[126] Deleted "artisans—at our."
[127] Deleted "that."
[128] Deleted "was—or."
[129] Deleted "one—yes, now if—but why"
[130] Deleted "Could it—no."
[131] Deleted "the—what is."
[132] Deleted "Can there be—is universality absolutely bad as it would seen."
[133] Deleted "That is absolutely—."
[134] Deleted "they are all absolutely."
[135] Deleted "we have."
[136] Deleted "if—and that has."
[137] Deleted "the only."
[138] Deleted "in—."

Session 7: October 25, 1961
Book 4: Virtues and the *Polis*

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —[One fact] of crucial importance which you have not observed, and that came out with particular clarity at the end but was already visible at the beginning, and that is that book 4 is the end of the inquiry regarding justice.[i] The questions raised regarding justice, (a) What is justice? (b) Is it good?, have been answered at the end of [book] 4. You have observed that Socrates has a certain vacillation, but that is overcome; and the transition to the four bad forms of the city and the four bad forms of the soul presupposes that the investigation of the good city and of the good soul is finished and[1] the question of justice is answered. It will be the task of Miss Huckins to explain to us next time why there can be any continuation of the discussion after this question is answered.[2] Socrates had made casually the remark [that] there must of course be community of women, and that is a long, exciting subject. You know? And they are naturally curious what he meant by that, but[3] we must not be too sensationalist, and we must see why is this so terribly important for the question of justice so that the investigation regarding justice is not yet completed if this question of the community of women is not solved.[ii] This I say only in preparation.

Now this is a point which I believe we cannot emphasize too strongly, and we should concentrate on this subject in our discussion later on. Connected with this fact that you did not observe[4] is your description of the first part of book 4. You said[5] the first part deals with the question of the possibility of the good *polis* as sketched up to the end of book 3. You rightly observed that Adeimantus's criticism of the good city is identical with Aristotle's critique in the second book of the *Politics.* Yes, but with one great difference: the disregard of the happiness of the individual of which Socrates is accused by both Adeimantus and Aristotle leads Aristotle to the conclusion: Hence the good city is impossible. Adeimantus does not draw this conclusion; he is only dissatisfied with that.[iii] The question of possibility comes up only in the second half of book 5 as the immediate transition to philosophy, and for this simple reason.[iv] Of course I don't know how far the translation brings that out. More than once it was mentioned when Socrates discussed that thing that this is a myth, a myth, and a myth means a story, and more particularly an untrue story.[v] Now *mythos*—well, originally it meant simply a story, and a true story—I mean, it came to mean that before Plato. Now one can perhaps say that difference between myth and *logos,* true speech, is that the myth is not concerned with possibility. The possibility question—well, even according to the vulgar notion of a myth, you don't care whether it's possible or not. That[6] must be really kept in mind. One

[i] Strauss comments on Mr. Seltzer's paper, which was read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 423e4-424b2, 449a1-451b8.
[iii] 419a1-421c6; Aristotle *Politics* 1264b15-25.
[iv] Plato *Republic* 466cd6-9, 471c4-473e5.
[v] Possibly a reference to 376d9-10, 501e2-6.

could say in a way it ceases to be myth when philosophy enters, but this of course needs much more thorough investigation.

Now there are a few other points which I have to make. Now let me first finish with the discussion of the paper. Mr. Seltzer said when this question comes up with the eyeglasses—you know, this man who looks [and] doesn't find it there on his nose. But of course, in a Greek manner they can't find justice because it is so obvious, and you said that[7] reminded you of the cave.[vi]

Mr. Seltzer: Yes.

LS: That wasn't clear, what you meant by that.

Mr. Seltzer: Well, it reminded me of that because of the talk about darkness and looking off into the distance instead of looking at what's before their very eyes. But I wasn't able in my own mind to see the exact connection between that passage and the cave, even though I reread that story of the cave.

LS: I think you—I believe your flair was very good. You only didn't express it. It is dark in the cave. That you have seen. Yes? I mean, that is something in common and, well, I simply have to go into it. We have to wait for that. You saw clearly what is important to see. Three more points, then you have the floor. The word "soberness," which you used quite a few times—

Mr. Seltzer: That's the translation.

LS: Yes, I know that's Shorey. But it is of course the same term, *sōphrosynē*, which I translate by "moderation" all the time. I mean,[8] the Greek term has a great variety of meanings, but I think the reader or the translator should be reminded of the fact that it's the same term and therefore the thing that is to be used. It[9] simply means moderation. Now when Socrates speaks of these things, courage and moderation and wisdom and so on, he uses a term which Shorey translates, perfectly legitimately, by "forms."[vii] Yes? The form of courage and so on. Now that is all right provided he uses the same term when he speaks later on of the theory of ideas, because the word form is the same[10] word, *eidos*. So in other words, one should either say in all cases "form," or one should—you know, but I'm sure that Shorey, by virtue of an unfailing instinct, really translated differently when the context is "metaphysical" and when the context is not "metaphysical." He has[11] an absolute certainty in himself as to which context [is metaphysical] . . . That is one of these things.

Now a last point which I should have mentioned before is this, but I think it is quite proper that I mention it here because the final discussion of justice in the second half of book 4 is a Glaucon section. Now we know something about Glaucon independently of

[vi] 432d7-e3, 514a1ff.
[vii] Plato, *Republic*, vol. 1., trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930, 1946), 365; *Republic* 432b2-5.

the *Republic*, and that is a very short story in book 3, chapter 6 of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, [where] there is a conversation between Socrates and Glaucon; and I think everyone who reads the *Republic* should read or should have read that. In a word, Glaucon was a young man to whom Socrates was benevolent for the sake of Plato. For the sake of Plato. In other words, the friend[12] of Socrates was Plato, but since he liked Plato, was a friend of Plato, he also took some interest in this less interesting young man. Now who would not—everyone would be less interesting than Plato—but [Socrates took some interest in the less interesting young man], namely, in Plato's brother, Glaucon. Now what was wrong with Glaucon? Glaucon was twenty years old and terribly ambitious: political ambition. He had gone to the assembly and had the nerve to go up to the *bema*—what is the translation for that, the "rostrum"? Yes. And [he] began a speech and of course he was called down with ignominy, and Socrates was asked by the family to take care of this somewhat wayward boy. And he said: Well, you want to go into politics. Oh, that's wonderful. Another Themistocles! Marvelous. I'm sure you are properly prepared. You can tell me something about the revenue. Glaucon had no knowledge. The military dispositions of Athens: nothing. Every other subject, completely ignorant. So Socrates said: Well, the wise thing to do is first[13] to do some homework before you go into politics. Now the action is this: a politically ambitious young man is cured by Socrates of political ambition. And this very limited and charming story [on love of] honor in the most [simple manner]—but it is the same story as this *Republic*. Glaucon is cured of his political ambition step by step. These were the points I thought I should make no on the occasion of Mr. Seltzer's paper, with which I was very satisfied. Now you wanted to say something.

Student: We mentioned, did we not, that Aristotle did not think that the ideal was a possibility?

LS: That Plato's ideal—he has another ideal, yes? Aristotle is as much an idealist as Plato, only he thinks Plato's ideal is impossible, and therefore he develops an ideal of his own which is much more akin to the ideal presented in Plato's *Laws* than to that in Plato's *Republic*.[14] I take now the word "ideal" without quarreling with that.

Student: Also in Aristotle, according to Barker's translation, you see a very confusing thing—a student [of Plato's] for twenty years, which I think he was.[viii] Assuming that Plato's communism was to apply to the whole society, now how are we going to clarify this situation?

LS: What do you mean? What is the difficulty?

[viii] Sir Ernest Barker (1874-1960) was an English political scientist who translated Aristotle's *Politics* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1946). See Strauss's expression of gratitude to Barker in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936, 1966), xiii: "I have to thank Professor Ernest Barker, who read the manuscript of the present study and made very helpful suggestions, and to whose kindness and interest it is primarily due that I was able to continue my work." Barker contributed a foreword to the original, 1936, British edition.

Student: Well, it seems to be manifest from Plato that any community of property lines will apply only to the guardian class.

LS: Yes, and Aristotle says it is not clear.[ix]

Student: No . . . Aristotle seems to imply—

LS: If I remember well, he says it is undesirable [and] unclear. Yes, if I remember well. Well, I mean, I would say this: confronted with such a situation, I would be hesitant and say that maybe Aristotle understood the *Republic* better than I do. I mean, I know that this kind of thoughts are strictly forbidden in a certain school of classical scholarship, but I think it is just a commonsensical suggestion. And shall I prove to you why—I mean, that I have something more in mind than this very simple, general and formal consideration? Let us use our heads, because that is an absolutely necessary condition for understanding anything, and therefore in particular also Plato's *Republic*.[15] Good.

Now let us look at it. A key proposition of the *Republic* is that young people of the lower classes[16] who are gifted are promoted to the higher classes. Yes?[x] How is this possible if the young people of the lower classes know their parents? If they have already become addicted to this man and this woman as their father and mother, and it is a precondition of that life that no one knows who his father and mother is, how is this possible if the communism does not exist in the whole *polis*? This kind of thing Aristotle—Aristotle is not a pedant, I mean that he always gives this kind of evidence and he presupposes people to have read the *Republic*, really read it, I mean, have thought about it and don't believe that everything must have been spelled out by Plato. Because one of the devices of the *Republic*, as it is of every other dialogue with necessary modifications, is that the procedure of Socrates imitates the explicit teaching. Now the explicit teaching is a severely hierarchic society. You know? Here, here, here, yes? And that is imitated in[17] how Socrates behaves. He speaks most clearly and most coherently about the highest class, that you know: the philosophers. He speaks rather clearly[18] but less elaborately about the second class, and he treats the lowest class most contemptuously; therefore there must be lack of clarity regarding what he says about the third class, and that's perfectly—no, I think I would say, before one can read a thing here, Aristotle is mistaken. You didn't say that, but I know many people who stake their reputation on that. That is a very, very difficult thing, and even when it is manifestly wrong at first.[19] There is, for example, the remark that Plato[20] [makes] in the *Laws*, that the two original constitutions from which all others are derived, democracy and tyranny, and Aristotle says that's impossible, because a tyranny is not even a constitution. I mean, an absolute disgrace. And Plato never says so; he says democracy and monarchy. Yes, but is this a mere error of memory? Does not Aristotle have his reasons for accusing Plato of having deviated from the decent view by speaking too highly of tyranny, if you enlarge the question? Proof: Of course Plato says some very good things about a tyrant, that the best city of the *Laws* can come into being in the best way only if the legislator has a tyrant at his elbow.[xi]

[ix] 416c5-421c7; Aristotle *Politics* 1264a11-b6.
[x] See Plato *Republic* 415a1-c6.
[xi] Aristotle *Politics* 1266a1-30; Plato *Laws* 693d2-e3; 709d10-712e5.

That is[21] one way of solving it.[22] [But in general], Aristotle understood Plato. You know? That is [something that] one must simply take as a commonsensical demand. I know people who have this crazy notion that we, poor fish like us, understand both Plato and Aristotle, whereas Plato and Aristotle could not have understood one another.[23] That doesn't deserve to be discussed as a serious proposition. The only interesting question is: What kind of people are they who make such assertions?[24] [Who do they think they are?] I think that is simple; it has nothing to do with humility and reverence and this kind of thing.[25] What I propose is merely to apply common sense to cases which are very rare in our immediate environments. I mean, we are not likely to meet a Plato or an Aristotle. You know? That is all.

Now let us now turn to the discussion, and if you don't mind, I will today begin with the end of the book because that[26] is crucial for an understanding of the whole work. And if we have time afterward I shall very gladly begin at the beginning of the fourth book and take up the question raised by Mr. Seltzer as to what the purport of Adeimantus's dissatisfaction with the good *polis* is. I mean, this much is clear: Adeimantus's attack at the beginning of the fourth book on the good *polis* is parallel to Glaucon's attack on the so-called city of pigs in the second book, and one must see what the difference is.[xii][27] That is absolutely necessary. Now the question of justice and of the goodness of justice is answered at the end of the fourth book, and[28] the full answer presupposes that there is a parallelism between the soul and the *polis*. The *polis* has three parts and the soul has three parts.[29] That is absolutely necessary. Without that parallelism, the whole thing doesn't work.[xiii]

I will not now go into the question whether the parallelism[30] regarding the parts of the soul and the parts of the *polis* is so obvious. I would like to mention only one point. In the case of the *polis*, you have the three classes: the rulers, the soldiers, and the moneymakers. Moneymakers means everyone else: farmers, craftsmen and so on. Now, that the soldiers are superior to the *demos*, to the moneymakers, that makes sense given their function and also given the training which the soldiers get.[31] The three parts of the soul are: reason, corresponding to the rulers; spiritedness, corresponding to the soldiers; and desire or appetitiveness, corresponding to the *demos*. Why should spiritedness as such be superior to desire or appetitiveness? Well, I give you a very simple example. A child desires a doll: desire. Then the doll is taken away and the child is very angry and misbehaves grossly. Why should that anger be morally higher than the desire? You can replace the child by a grown-up and the apple by any object you like. Why should the anger as such—there is no reason, whereas that the soldiers should be higher than the plebs, the *demos*, makes sense. That is only a first implication, but let us assume there is no difficulty here. The difficulty is this: How can there be four virtues if there are only three parts of the soul? Let us try to figure that out. Three parts of the soul, four virtues. Incidentally, the difficulty to which we referred regarding moderation—that Socrates wishes to drop moderation, you remember, may have something to do with that. He wants to have three virtues, but Glaucon doesn't permit him, so—but let us see.[xiv]

[xii] *Republic* 419a1ff, 372c2ff.
[xiii] 435b1ff.
[xiv] 430c8-d9.

Now by the way, there is a certain general importance of this relation of the virtues to the parts of the soul. In Aristotle's *Ethics* the virtues are taken as we know them. Yes? People talk of *n* different virtues. Aristotle jots them down, as it were, and describes each: no attempt at a deduction. I mean, in other words, Aristotle doesn't attempt to prove that there are these eleven, or how[ever] many there are, virtues and no others. If someone says the list is not complete, he would say: "All right, what did I forget?" And then he will discuss it, as he does in one case, and that's the [pseudo]-virtue.[xv] That is the famous unsystematic character of Aristotle, for which he was severely blamed by the German classical philosophers like Kant and such[32] great men, but Aristotle doesn't mind. Plato seems to deduce the virtues.[33] The soul has these and these three parts; hence there must be these and these three virtues, and perhaps we need a fourth for keeping these three together. He has a deduction of the virtues. Very interesting, and that is in a way the model for what was happening in the modern times when people tried to get a strictly rational ethics, not the kind of ethics which Aristotle had, which is simply empirical, you can say. He picks the virtues up as they are known, arranges them properly, and that's all there is to it; whereas a deduction which makes sure also of the completeness of the whole thing. That, incidentally, is also Kant's objection to Aristotle's categories, that Aristotle just picked up the categories, as Kant says, and [did] not deduce them, which deduction would make certain that there are those and only those categories; there couldn't be any others.[xvi] This is only in passing.

Now[34] let us begin at the beginning. What is, then, justice according to the definition of the *Republic*, Mr. Seltzer?

Mr. Seltzer: Justice of the city?

LS: Any—no, it cannot be distinguished.

Student: Justice is each doing the work befitting for him.

LS: Is this really the definition? Yes, but most literally: to do one's own work. Yes? To do one's own work. For example, the shoemaker making shoes and not tables, or interfering with government and this kind of thing. Yes? Doing one's own work. Yes, but is this the definition? Let us look at the key passage: 433a and b. That should be on page 367.

Mr. Reinken: Paragraph X.

LS: Yes. Yes, Mr. Reinken.

Mr. Reinken:

[xv] The transcript has blank space here. Possibly a reference to Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128b10-35.

[xvi] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B105-108, A79-83.

"Listen then," said I, "and learn if there is anything in what I say. For what we laid down in the beginning as a universal requirement when we were founding our city—"

LS: "When we were founding this city." Look at this expression: "the founding of the city." When we were founding it—that was way back. Yes? And that is the secret. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"this I think, or some form of this, is justice."

LS: Let us stop here. Or some "form" of it, some *eidos* of it. That's the definition. To do one's job. To do one's job or some kind of that. Now what does this mean? To do one's job is not a precise—that's a very rough definition, not a precise definition. What kind?

Student: Would there be any possibility of there being a distinction between what is in the individuals and that which is in the city?

LS: No, that is denied.[35] The whole thing stands and falls [on the claim] that the substance of justice is the same regardless of whether it's the individual or it's the city.[36] It is very important later on, but not now when we speak about justice in general. Now what is the kind? What is the kind? I confess that I found the solution to this riddle only through a passage in Aristotle's *Ethics*, 1098a8 to 10. That's shortly after the beginning[37] of the first book, where he says this: When we speak in order to find out what the virtue of a being is, we have to find out what the specific work of that being is—the specific "function," as modern translators frequently say, specific "work." So in other words, the virtue of a horse is different from the virtue of a human being because[38] the work of a horse is different from that of a human being.

Now[39] the following distinction has to be made: doing one's work as a horse, as a human being, as a swallow, whatever you want, and doing it well. Doing the job, doing one's work, and doing it well belong to the same genus, Aristotle says. A flute player and a good flute player belong to the same genus, but there is an essential difference between them. There is a difference[40] between them regarding the *eidos*, regarding the "idea," regarding the "form," that the one is good and the other is not good, which does not necessarily mean that he is bad. He may simply be indifferent. So I would say then the exact definition of justice is[41] to do one's work well. And you must admit that otherwise the whole thing doesn't make any sense: What is the use if the shoemakers are shoemakers and don't interfere with the carpenters and the governors and soldiers, but are miserable shoemakers?[xvii] He means of course that there should be good shoemakers in the city in speech. So the full definition would be to do one's job well, and let us see what this implies. Yes—no, no; that is enough. There is a repetition of that shortly afterward. We don't have the time [to consider it].

Now let us look at the individual. Every part of the soul, the reasoning, the spirited, the appetitive, does its job well, i.e., the reasonable part is wise, the spirited part is courageous, and the appetitive part is moderate. Why do we need an additional virtue?

[xvii] Plato *Republic* 434a3-8.

Because each does his job well[42], there is no necessity for that. Justice seems to be superfluous. Perhaps this is a reason why they cannot find justice to begin with. Perhaps. There is also another possibility: Maybe justice is the virtue of the virtues in the following way, namely, that by virtue of which any virtue is virtuous. Well, what does this mean? It's a very simple and a very common Platonic thought. We have three virtues: wisdom, courage, and moderation. They all are virtues. Yes? In Platonic language, they all are what they are by participating in virtue. So there must be something called virtue which animates all these things and thus makes them what they are. Perhaps justice is that, and surely there are some suggestions to this effect. But there is one difficulty here, as everyone who has ever read Plato knows. According to Plato this virtue[43] by virtue of which any other virtue is virtue is *phronesis*, "wisdom," and not justice. So this is at least[44] no solution to the difficulty. This much I have tried to show.

Now let us then try to see one more, and first regarding the individual. We have the three parts of the soul and each has its peculiar virtue: wisdom, courage, and moderation. But do we not need an additional virtue? Let's forget about Plato. Don't we need an additional virtue to make a man completely good? He should be wise; he should be courageous; he should be moderate. Is this a complete good man? I mean, disregarding now all refinements, that he should also be perhaps urbane and this kind of thing, but a very massive thing, a massive virtue which is indispensable to the city.

Student: He should be integrated, as you might say.

LS: But the integration is implied in that, because if he is courageous—that is the official doctrine of the *Republic*. But that is implied, because if he is courageous, that means according to the definition given that the wisdom, the practical wisdom is animating his conduct towards dangers. You see, the wisdom as it were goes down[45]—pure wisdom, pure deliberation, goes down and animates the attitude towards dangers and it animates the attitude toward desires. They are integrated through *phronesis*, through "practical wisdom." No, but something else is missing, something very obvious. Yes?

Student: Charity?

LS: No—well, that is not a Platonic term. Yes, but look at the Platonic equivalent, the Platonic equivalent of charity. Pardon?

Student: Piety?

LS: No. Justice, of course. This man who is perfectly integrated by being wise, courageous, moderate could be absolutely indifferent to others. And that is what we mean primarily by justice: the proper attitude toward others. I mean, of course he would not have the incentive to injustice which the bad man has: having moderate desires he would not be compelled to steal and this kind of thing, or to embezzle; and being courageous he would not have the reasons, incentives to lying which cowardly people have, and so on and so on, but he still could be fundamentally indifferent to the others. Now let us—yes?

Student: I didn't get this last point. You say justice is comparable to indifference to others?

LS: God forbid. I said justice is the opposite of indifference to others, and what we need is not integration, as you said, but what we need is concern for others, caring for others.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but [as] we have seen,[46] wisdom is a virtue that has very many meanings. Now we have to take the meanings which have come up hitherto, and here we have seen on a former occasion when we spoke of the rulers that it is not sufficient that they are wise: they must also care for the *polis*.[xviii] That's something else. Good.

Now let us look at the *polis*. We have the three parts of the *polis*, and each has its peculiar virtue: the rulers are wise; the soldiers are brave. What about the *demos*? What is the virtue peculiar to the *demos*, which no one else has? Now I would say just commonsensically, and forgetting for the time being about Plato, the industrious and thrifty *demos*—because they are after all the moneymakers, you know, and they should be industrious, that's a characteristic virtue, and thrifty, otherwise all the money which they acquire will vanish. But here we obviously need a fourth virtue if the city is to be good. Let us have these wise rulers, the brave soldiers, the industrious and thrifty *demo*s. We need *harmonia*. We need agreement in a way in which we do not need it in the case of the individual, because[47], for example, the industrious and thrifty plebes might be utterly displeased to have no share whatever in the government. We have had such experiences in modern times, and even in ancient times, that people do that. Accepting the hierarchy [is what we need]. That applies also to the wise men, incidentally: they must be willing to rule.

Now incidentally we may note that there is no specific virtue of the *demos* mentioned. The *demos* has no virtue except moderation in the lowest sense—I mean obeying the superiors. This is by no means an accident. When Aristotle discusses in the first book of the *Politics* the virtues required of craftsmen, he says that the virtue required of craftsmen is lower than that required of domestic slaves, because[48] you live together with the domestic slave and[49] he can't be drunk all the time.[50] But [you don't care what kind of private life] the craftsman [leads] provided he delivers the goods, and it is also not terribly important for the *polis*.[xix]

Now let us then draw a conclusion. Disregarding Plato, but not completely oblivious to his suggestions, we see the necessity for four virtues in both cases, of the individual and [of] the *polis*. But the meaning of the fourth virtue is different in the two cases. [It is] the concern for others in the case of the individual, and the harmony between the parts in the case of the *polis*. Let us pursue that. Now let us look at the teaching of the *Republic* in the light of the—you wanted to say something, Mr. Schrock? Yes? Pardon?

[xviii] 412b8-e3.
[xix] Aristotle *Politics* 1260a36-b2.

Student: What is the harmony? Is that justice or moderation?

LS: Yes.[51] Because of the ambiguity, I avoided that. Plato identifies somewhere in 432a this *harmonia*, this harmony with moderation, but I am[52] try[ing] to follow the argument and come back to Plato. I mean, there is no doubt that Plato presented—what I'm driving at is to understand what is presented here in a very inadequate manner, not because Plato couldn't present it adequately but because he did not wish to present it adequately. He presented an attempt of Socrates to persuade Glaucon or Adeimantus; that's not the same thing as an adequate presentation. Yes?

Student: Therefore it becomes necessary for you to import the notion of justice as concern for others, whereas here it's—

LS: Implied.

Same Student: It's just dealt with as concern with your own, in a way.

LS: Yes, that is exactly the point. I mean, in order to satisfy you a bit so that you are willing to follow me for the rest, that is exactly the point. The definition of justice, to do one's own business, is a very asocial definition: the man who cares only for his own thing, the man who leads a strictly private life. You know? And that is the common meaning of that term. Crito, for example, complains that [the sycophants don't permit a fellow to mind his own business][53]. They don't permit a fellow to mind his own business, to live by himself.[xx] That is the paradoxy, that this[54] view that the perfection of man consists in a private life, in a retired life, is the central definition in the most collectivistic book ever written. Yes?

That is the paradoxy, but we must proceed step by step. Now let us look at the teaching of the *Republic* in the light of the scheme which I suggested, about these four virtues which we need in both cases, but the fourth virtue in the case of the individual is radically different from the fourth virtue in the case of the *polis*. Now what is the relation of minding one's own business to the concern with others? First, regarding the individual.[55] Now we see, if we compare the scheme which I made of the four virtues with the *Republic*, we see that the concern with others is dropped in the case of the *Republic*, but of course it is implicitly recognized. By remaining within his own sphere, the individual does not trespass on others. Yes? The shoemaker does not trespass on others and does not harm others. But does he help the others? To some extent, surely: he[56] produces his shoes which others wear. But does he[57] help the others beyond making good shoes? For example, his neighbor's house burns down[58]—for the time being, we may very well assume that there is private property among the lower-class people—what should he do? Or the child falls into a stream, which could happen even in a communist society where there is no private property: What does he do then? No answer. No answer.

Now let us turn to the *polis*. Needless to say that in principle—there are some exceptions—there is nothing said about the attitude of our *polis* to other cities.[59] If the

[xx] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.9

polis minds its own business, that means it is completely indifferent to the other cities. If the *polis* minds its own business, that means it is completely indifferent to the other cities. Now this can make some sense in the case of the *polis*. One can say, as many people have implied in the modern notion of the sovereign state, it has strictly speaking no obligations to any other sovereign state unless it is a treaty freely entered [into],[60] but the ultimate decision as to whether the treaty must be performed or not still is retained by the sovereign state according to the strict doctrine. So in the case of the *polis* there is no question. Then you can drop the other *poleis* with some plausibility. But it is of course hard to do that in the case of the individual. You wanted to say something. Yes? Pardon?

Student: Can the *polis* be just if it encourages injustice in other cities?

LS: Yes. Well,[61] we have discussed only one example that's relevant thereto. They sent the poet away. They sent the corrupting poet away to another city.[xxi] What is that? What is that? Well, you could say this other city is so corrupt anyway that the addition of another source of corruption, say, D. H. Lawrence,[xxii] doesn't make any difference. You could say that. But you could also take a sterner view and say: "No, you cannot take the responsibility for additional corruption." Yes? So there is really something like such an indifference, and there are also—you remember the passage which we had today: our city, the good city, fighting against another city. Yes? I mean, there is a very wealthy and well-armed city, and we say to another city—of course, also a bad city, and say: "Well, let us make common cause against this powerful city. You get the loot, you get the whole loot and only if you help us." And the others will of course be delighted to get the loot. Well, is this very moral to the other city, to increase their predatory desires?[xxiii] . . . Again, you could say the responsibility of every individual is limited, and even the responsibility of a *polis* is limited, but perhaps it is not so limited. Of course you could say, if it makes a dirty deal with a predatory city, "We act in mere self-preservation and that justifies everything," but that is not a very moral principle.[62] You know the old question about the two men on a shipwreck and only one can be saved: well,[63] he pushes the other fellow into the sea and lives happily ever after. Now[64] I believe most of us would say it is an excusable action, but it is not a nice situation and he probably has quite a few bad dreams afterward when he hears the screams of that poor fellow. That's an old—I mean, that's a low argument. But the tough people, self-preservation people, say: Well, that is simply morbid if he has bad dreams, because self-preservation confers—I mean, that is what Hobbes and Locke teach. That was regarded as the key objection to the principle of justice in classical times. You know?[65] The skeptics said here that shows that justice is a very limited principle because in this case it is not applicable, and of course the strict moralist says[66] [that] surely justice is applicable. You cannot throw the other fellow into the sea. You cannot do that.

Student: [Inaudible remark regarding the just man who would do no others harm.][xxiv]

[xxi] Plato *Republic* 398a1-b4.
[xxii] D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), English writer whose works include *Women in Love* (1920) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).
[xxiii] Plato *Republic* 422d1-423b3,
[xxiv] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Yes, surely he says that.[67] [But] I ask you this question. Take the case of war. What does a soldier of city A do to a soldier of the city B? I mean, if there is fighting, you know, if you don't have the beautiful Hobbean case that they run away from another. Then of course[68] they wouldn't do any [harm to one another]. But if they fight, [what do they do?] Now you can say, "Well, it is clear: the soldier of city A which wages the just war cannot possibly do harm to the soldier of the city B which wages an unjust war." Yes? Because he helps him, even: he liberates him from injustice by killing or maiming him. But that is not so simple, you know, because sometimes it's not so easy to decide who is waging the just war,[69] to say nothing of the fact that the individual soldier is not perhaps responsible for the justice or injustice of the war in which he is engaged. And you can of course also give other considerations of a loftier kind, but this is also not without pitfalls, namely, say, to lose one's lives and limbs is not harming a man; what harms a man is only what degrades or ruins his virtue. Yes? That's also a way of saying it. But it is very hard to speak politically on this basis, because in all political considerations it is taken for granted that life and liberty and certain external goods are goods which are not wholly despicable and negligible, and[70] when we ordinarily speak of harming a man we have in mind, I'm afraid, more harming in life and limb, and even in property, than harming the soul, although that of course also exists. You know?

This statement is much too general, and I would say on the fact of the argument [that] it is refuted by the later happenings, because the guardians as originally introduced—the model is the dog, friendly to fellow citizens, nasty to strangers. Well, that is not this perfectly angelic non-harming being which we discovered in the discussion with Thrasymachus. That is a much longer question which I cannot possibly take up. [But] is this not at least as important an implication of Socrates's teaching, to make us alive to these terrible elements in human life, in political life? You know? I will tell you only one little story. When Xenophon, Socrates's pupil, went to Asia Minor with Crito the younger and he became something like a general, and he had a friend there called Proxenus, who was a student of a famous teacher of rhetoric, or a sophist, you can say: Gorgias. Now Proxenus was obviously a very nice gentleman, but Xenophon says about him [that] he was quite good in guiding gentlemen. In other words, when it was enough to praise or to abstain from praise for guiding human beings—but when he had to do with the rough and tough soldiers who were not impressed by praise and absence of praise, i.e., their punishment was needed, [71]he broke down.[xxv] Yes? The[72] [pupil] of the sophist was not taught the tricks of tyranny. He was taught only the art of persuasion, and persuasion is not sufficient. And now when we look at the pupil of Socrates, Xenophon, and he describes his deeds at great length in this book, we see he was equally good at ruling gentlemen as at ruling nongentlemen. In other words, he—and I think it is possible and I think a necessary conclusion to say [that] the pupil of Socrates, in contradistinction to the pupil of the rhetorician, had learned the necessity of both praising and coercion—the tough word. This is, I think, somewhat underestimated in the present-day view, and perhaps even in the traditional view. In other words, we are too much inclined to see Socrates and Jesus together. There's a great difference. There are other differences which

[xxv] Xenophon *Anabasis* 2.6.16-20. See Strauss, "Machiavelli," in *History of Political Philosophy*, 316-317; *City and Man*, 23.

we will discuss, but we must be careful. Not harming anyone, that is a very extreme demand, and whether a man like Socrates believed in the possibility of a man never harming any other, however good that man may be, is a very long question.[73] That this is said there in the first book is absolutely true, but you have also to read the other nine books.

Student: Is it reasonable to say that Plato meant by a just man a person who also had these other virtues?

LS: Which virtues?

Student: The other three virtues.

LS: Yes, sure.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but the question is what is—after we have understood these other virtues which are simpler to understand because each is coordinated with a single part of the soul. That's why it is easy to understand. The question is: Why do we need a fourth virtue? That's the question.

Student: One further question. When you referred to the just man, he was talking about—

LS: By the way—no, I deny it. I'm sorry. You led me into a trap.[74] I mean, everyone in the best city is supposed to be just. Everyone: the shoemaker as well as the ruler, but the shoemaker of course does not possess any wisdom or courage.

Student: Well, then, Plato: What does he mean by justice? Apparently the just man was the man of the highest intellectual—

LS: [75]Yes, but that is a long question. Justice in the highest sense, yes, [depends on intellect]. In the highest sense. But justice is applied to—

Student: To the ordinary person who is just doing his job and doesn't care for the human mind and doesn't care for the whole.

LS: Yes, but that is the question. If you would kindly permit me now to conclude my discussion—I mean, I'm trying to show a great difficulty in Plato's discussion of justice which appears once one takes seriously that the official definition, justice is doing one's job, is admittedly vague, because it is said this doing one's job[76] or a kind, a species of that is justice. And I said this can only mean justice means doing one's job well, and then we are in for difficulties, which I have sketched.

Now let us consider now the other point.[77] We have discussed hitherto the relation of doing one's work to the concern with others. Now let us consider the equivalent in the

case of the *polis*, and that is harmony. First, in the case of the individual, the harmony is superfluous, for courage and moderation are pervaded by wisdom and not in revolt against [it]. The courageous man is the man who applies his spiritedness only in the proper way on the proper occasions, and so on. There is not revolt of it [against reason]. The same applies to the moderate man. The moderate man controls his desires. There is no revolt of moderation against reason. There may be a revolt of desire against reason, but the moderate man is already a man who controls his desires. In the case of the individual, I would say that [when] every part does its job well, [there] is harmony. On the other hand, in the case of the *polis*, the harmony of the three parts is evidently necessary, as I have shown before. The shoemakers may do their job, and carpenters and so on may do their job well. That does not yet guarantee that they are good subjects.[xxvi] That they obey their rulers, this is necessary.

I summarize this point: to do one's job well is sufficient for the parts of the individual, but it is not sufficient for the parts of the *polis*. I would like to state this difference. According to the ordinary view, justice means primarily the relation of the individual to other individuals. Now each individual is a whole, as we know. The relation of one whole, Mr. X, to other wholes, other individuals. Now what about the teaching of the *Republic*? Justice is the relation of each part of the individual to other parts of the individual. That is what you meant by integration, yes? And justice is the relation of each part of the *polis* to the other parts of the *polis*. The only parts of the *polis* which are considered in this scheme are the classes,[xxvii] the "tribes," as they are called, *ethnei*, not the individuals. Do you see[78] this incongruity? You have the individual and his parts; you have the *polis* and its parts, but the individual is not considered in this scheme as part of the *polis*.[xxviii] That is the thing which comes out most clearly.[79] The conclusion which one would have to draw from this, if taken in isolation, is: There is no relation of justice between wholes, whether these are individuals or cities[80]. And that makes sense, because justice presupposes need, lack of self-sufficiency. You remember that was the beginning of the founding of the *polis*.[xxix]

Now you can of course say easily to me, and I have simply to admit that, that the individual is of course never self-sufficient. That was the beginning, and therefore it should be considered as a part. Yes? But what I say is that in the developed doctrine of justice in book 4 the individual is not considered as a part. You have two wholes: the individual and the *polis*, and each has its part, and that is the meaning of the parallel. In this decisive discussion of justice, the individual is not regarded as a part of the *polis*, and that, I think, is very important.

Now let us—I'm almost through. Let us grant that the perfection of the three parts of the soul—meaning, of reason, desire, and spiritedness—is sufficient to make a man's soul perfect, so that if you are wise, courageous, and moderate your soul is perfect. Is this sufficient for a good life? I would say no[81], precisely because the individual is not self-

[xxvi] Plato *Republic* 434a3-8.
[xxvii] See 434b9-d1, 440e10-441a3, 441d12-442d6.
[xxviii] See 443c9-444a2.
[xxix] 369b5-e1.

sufficient. Be as virtuous as you please; you need something in addition for a good life, that which Aristotle calls the "equipment."[xxx] There was a reference to it somewhere in the third book, where a saying of an old sage was quoted. I forgot now the name. Does anyone remember him?[82] There is a brief discussion [of] whether one doesn't have to get first one's livelihood and think of virtue afterward.[xxxi] Do you remember who it was who said that? Pardon?

Student: Marx said it too.

LS: Yes. Well, quite a few people said that, wicked people. But here there was an old sage who said that. Now let me state it much more simply and without going into this question. What about the body? You have a perfectly virtuous soul; what about the body? What about the needs of the body? Man must earn his livelihood by some work, by some exchange. This can of course be disguised by the fact that he owns inherited property, but that means simply—in this respect, one could agree with Marx—"frozen work." Yes? Property.[xxxii] So if this is true, it would follow that justice is needed for the body, and indirectly for the soul. And here we have a remarkable proof, because the first city, the city of pigs, was called "the true city" and it will later be called "the city."[xxxiii] Now this simple city[83] did take care of the needs of the body, and very generously on the whole. Justice would then be needed above and beyond the three other virtues, but not as the perfection of a part of the soul[xxxiv] —perfection in this way. Could this not be the reason why justice is so low that they have to look down to see it?[xxxv84] I indicated these difficulties because we must keep them in mind and not just pass over them. I read some of Shorey's notes. Shorey has this general posture: if there is a serious difficulty or a contradiction in Plato, then he has some very evasive remark.[85] [Well], what does he say? Yes, Plato is not a pedant or something of this kind, but an argument must be correct, I would say. That's not pedantry. He has a general admiration for Plato wholly untinged by any critical consideration. That is naturally not sufficient. Other people, other commentators, are of course free from this particular thing, but we must take this very seriously. This parallelism between the individual and the *polis* is the nerve of the *Republic*. That's the reason why I insist on that and that is a very problematical parallelism, a very problematical parallelism.

By the way, you have a very direct sign of this difficulty in the following way. At the beginning, when[86] the question of justice is brought up and we turn to the investigation by founding a *polis*, we are told that[87] the just city is the justest man, the just individual, written large; and this parallelism between the *polis* and the individual is the theme constantly repeated in the fourth book. But then a change takes place in a certain stratum of the argument where it becomes explicit. Then it is covered up again. Then there is no

[xxx] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1099a24-b8.
[xxxi] Plato *Republic* 407a7-b3 The sage is Phocylides.
[xxxii] The term is usually translated into English as "congealed labor." See, e.g., Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Part 1, "The Commodity."
[xxxiii] Plato *Republic* 372e6-7, 433a2-6. See also 374a5.
[xxxiv] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxv] 432d7-9.

longer a parallelism between the *polis* and the individual, but between the *polis* and the soul of the individual.[xxxvi] The body is disregarded. Now you can of course say: "Sure, justice is a virtue of the soul and not of the body." That is perfectly true. But must we not consider the body in order to understand that virtue of the soul which is thus justice? Must we not consider the needs of the body, the dependence of one man on others for the satisfaction of the primary needs, if we want to understand it perfectly? Yes?

Student: Was it not considered at least indirectly that the needs of the body were subsumed under the needs of the soul in part? . . . as a part of the needs of the lowest part of the soul, so that in that sense we have . . .

LS: No, no. That is absolutely impossible, but the question is whether in the central consideration of the[88] [individual and the city], the definition of justice [in] it is not supported. Surely not. Otherwise we could not even begin to speak about it, as you remember, when he starts from the needs and the needs mentioned there were the body and the soul. Now let me repeat—I mean, that this would need a much longer and more detailed elaboration, and if possible I would like to turn to another part of the argument and only repeat the main point. I think one cannot take seriously enough the fact that the definition of justice given in the *Republic* is explicitly vague. Explicitly. This or something of that kind [is justice], and that forces us to think: How can[89] we avoid that vagueness. How can we overcome it? And I would say—until better information or further notice I would say the only sensible completion and overcoming of the vagueness is to say that justice means doing one's job well. And I believe then you apply it to the shoemaker, and so you would see immediately that[90] the noninterference with other parts of the *polis* is by no means sufficient. It is necessary that he does his job well. The same of course applies to the parts of the soul. But if you do that, you will see you get into new troubles, because do you then need justice on the ground given in the case of the individuals? And what do you need in addition to the three simple virtues: courage, moderation, and wisdom? And I cannot now repeat my argument. Mr. Schrock?

Mr. Schrock: I didn't understand at all what you were saying about the connection between the true city, the body, and justice, because it seems to me that in 427b—

LS: 427b. Yes?

Mr. Schrock: No. Pardon me, d.

LS: 427d.

Mr. Schrock: When he turns to Glaucon, he says: "We have completed your city." That is, as I understand it, the true city, Adeimantus's city, and he's turning to Glaucon to discuss justice. But I thought that you were saying that justice is somehow or other wrapped up with the first city, the simple—

[xxxvi] 368e2-369a4, 434c4-435c6.

LS: Yes, but not as simple as that. That[91] would come out only after a long argument. You know? I mean, stated as you state it now, I would not[92] recognize what I said. I simply say that if you start from the genuine difficulty regarding the definition of justice, try to rethink the argument of the *Republic* on the basis of that completion of the definition, to repeat: that justice does not mean simply to do one's job, but to do it well. Yes? You have no longer a place for justice along the lines suggested in the end of the fourth book, and when you then seek for a place you come eventually to justice as it belongs essentially and is fully developed in a way in the first book.

Student: Then that's very paradoxical, isn't it? Because each time he brings up justice it's after—

LS: Yes, sure, sure. There is no question. I mean, the paradoxy is inherent in everything. It is after all amazing that a book devoted to the question of what justice is culminates in an admittedly vague definition.[93] We live here; we walk through paradoxies all the time. That is nothing. Yes? Now I know that the argument is complicated and[94] I'm afraid I cannot claim to have it made crystal clear as I should have made [it], but it is very hard, and I can therefore I repeat[95] only the point which I regard as decisive: the starting point, that the definition of justice is deliberately vague. We must think about it and see what its adequate completion is, and if I'm right in saying the adequate completion means justice is doing one's job well, you have to insert this solution in the equation and see what becomes of the equation. And I forget now about the further results[96] [and] elements of my argument. That is the point which I believe is important.

Now there are a few points, I think, which I should bring out under all circumstances. Yes, Mr. Seltzer pointed out that when[97] Socrates discusses the various virtues with Glaucon, he wishes to drop moderation, but Glaucon insists on its being treated. Now this, incidentally, is one of the infinite difficulties which we have. Why does Socrates think he can drop moderation? That is in 430d to e.[98] Of course he doesn't give any reason. Now if you read what he said before about courage—the discussion of courage precedes that of moderation—you would see that courage as explained before includes moderation. Courage is the right attitude[99] not only toward evil things, dangers, but also toward pleasing and attractive things, desires and so on.[xxxvii] I mean, in the *Laches* the same thing occurs: that it is fundamentally the same posture, the same character of the mind and of the soul by virtue of which we resist dangers and we resist desires.[xxxviii] Yes, and I mentioned this at the beginning (that of course needs a thorough study), the proof of the difference between reason and desire, in the first place, and of the difference between spiritedness and desire. This must be very carefully checked; I mean not that there is no difference between reason and desire, but whether that is a proof of it. That is the question, and whether the defective character of the proof does not[100] lead us up to something which we might forget and which is very important. After all,[101] what I suggest regarding this part is a very simple thing. Socrates states at the beginning a universal principle which came to be called later on the principle of contradiction.[xxxix] All

[xxxvii] 429a8-430c2.
[xxxviii] *Laches* 197e10-199e12.
[xxxix] *Republic* 436b8-c1.

right. I don't quarrel with that now.[102] I simply say: Look at the discussion later, whether this lives up to the demand, to the criterion set out at the beginning, the principle of contradiction.

Well, a simple example: [*odium*][xl] *et amor*. A man may love and hate the same thing or the same human being at the same time. Yes? Is this a contradiction? Of course not, because he loves the human being in this respect and he hates him or her in another respect.[103] He gives here the example of drinking[104]. He wants a drink—like a beast, you could say—and then something holds him back.[xli] This which holds him back must be reason, which is of course not true. It may very well be another sense, namely, the fluid may stink infernally. Yes? So in other words, it is a desire opposed by a desire. The proof that it is reason and reason alone which counteracts desires is never given. The same applies to the proof, alleged proof, of the antagonism between spiritedness and desire; and in 440b the absolutely shocking assertion is made—which is interesting only because Glaucon swallows it and throws light on him—that there is never a conspiracy of anger and desire against reason. Every angry child—the doll or whatever it may be—proves the contrary. But it[105] throws light on Glaucon's character. He has a certain nobility of a kind. He gets angry, [but he] would not get angry like that child. When he gets angry it is a noble anger: moral indignation, or however you call it. That is the point, and[106] the distinction between spiritedness and desire, and still more, the distinction between desire and reason, is not absolutely crucially important from Plato's point of view. Of course it is, but it is not proven the way in which it is proven here. We have to turn to that.

Now I[107] have to say something about the beginning of the fourth book: what the peculiar character of Adeimantus's objection is. Adeimantus is displeased with the super-Sparta, as I call it, described until the end of book 3, and his objection reminds of Glaucon's objection to the first city, which Glaucon called "the city of pigs." And yet Adeimantus is very different from Glaucon.[108] He is dissatisfied with the super-Sparta with which Glaucon was perfectly satisfied. Glaucon didn't raise any objection, just as in the case of the first city: You remember, Adeimantus had no objection to this nice vegetarian South Sea island; Glaucon was dissatisfied.[xlii] Now why is that? What do we know of Adeimantus hitherto which would make it intelligible?

Student: He's interested in economics.

LS: Yes, that[109] plays a certain role. You are quite right. His "economic" interest. That is quite true. That comes up later. But let us look at 420a1, right at the beginning, where Shorey translates—overtranslates, but I think it's the right direction. 420a1. That is on page 315, when he says—I read it in his translation: "But they seem, one might say,[110] to be established in idleness in the city, exactly like hired mercenaries, with nothing to do but keep guard." In the Greek it is only "they seem to sit." Yes? "Sit." "Idleness" is a bit exaggerated but it is, I think—in other words, the guardians, the soldiers, have no

[xl] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xli] 439a9-e3.
[xlii] 372c2ff.

peaceful activity to speak of. They are active; they do not sit around in wartime, but in peace they have no activity.

Student: Aren't they policemen?

LS: Yes, but apparently he minimizes—you know, he didn't live in Chicago, and he didn't think that this was a very strenuous job. It would be rather like a constable in the British countryside: not very active; only every twenty years a murder or so. Now let us also remember his long speech in the second book where he says,[111] implies [that] justice is properly praised if it is presented as not hard, i.e., if it is easy to get. On the other hand, he says successful injustice on any significant scale is not easy to get. I mean, the gangsters have to work as hard as any businessman, as you know. He also observed in a passage which we read that knowledge necessarily implies justice, at least in the sense of abstention from injustice. He also suggested that justice must have the character of seeing, hearing, being healthy[112], [or] thinking; in other words, activities which are intrinsically pleasant and not[113] in themselves hard to get.[xliii]

I would summarize this point as follows: Adeimantus rebels against the super-Sparta because there is no justice in it, namely, because there is not in it any peaceful activity which is choiceworthy for its own sake, which is by nature attractive. That is what he divines by justice: something intrinsically attractive and somehow akin to such by nature easy things like seeing sights and being healthy and feeling one's health. In other words, his objection is radically different from that of Glaucon against the first city.[114] Glaucon said there are no steaks. That was the meaning of what he explicitly said. A city without steaks is not a city. What he meant by it, when we reflect about the whole, is there is no virtue in it, no human excellence, surely. But what did Glaucon mean by virtue? I mean, which virtue was particularly important to him? And then I would say courage, manliness. In Glaucon, that is what he primarily misses: it's not a city for males, for he-men; and whereas for the more soft Adeimantus it is the absence of justice in the sense indicated.

Now then Socrates's answer was very well stated by Mr. Seltzer: "We are not concerned with the happiness of each individual, of course; we are concerned with the happiness of the whole city. Everyone will participate as much in the happiness of the whole city as his nature permits."[xliv] We have now this conclusion and that is very important: the parallelism between the city and the individual extends only to justice, not to happiness. The whole[115] city is happy. That's Socrates's assertion. The individuals are not in the same way happy, and that is of course in perfect agreement with the imposition made by Glaucon[116], that Socrates should show that justice is more choiceworthy even if essentially going together with misery. Adeimantus goes on however with his criticism of the super-Sparta, and he brings up [this point]: "Yes, but all right, I grant you that this is so that we must not be concerned with the happiness of the individual, but will our city be able to wage war?" The relatively unwarlike Adeimantus has recourse to that in the last resort, and why? The city must be wealthy if it wants to wage war. That has to do with

[xliii] 363e5-364a4, 365c-d, 366c6-d1, 367c5-d3.
[xliv] 420b3-421c6.

what Mr. Megati reminded us of: Adeimantus's economic interest. The size of the territory is determined by the very moderate needs of the *polis*. Nothing is said about any international obligations here, of course.[xlv] Now I will[117] not pursue this any further.[118]

The long discussion was not mentioned by Mr. Seltzer, if I remember well, that in this city, this perfect city, there will be very little need for legislation. Yes? Very little need for legislation, because if men have the right kind of character they will behave reasonably and properly without the laws spelling out everything for them.[xlvi] The last point made[119] concerns the religious establishment, and that is strictly ancestral. The god in Delphi will determine that. Yes.[120] While it is the last statement, very brief, 427 b to c, it is nevertheless described as most important. Nothing else can be said because the god in Delphi has to speak about that. Here the remark occurs at the end: the question of whether justice or injustice is required for happiness is not yet settled. Of course not, because at the very beginning of the fourth book it was said that we are not concerned with the happiness of the individual. You know? It was understood that we have to live for the city if we want to be just, so our justice was considered, but our happiness was not considered, and therefore the question is entirely open.

At this point Glaucon enters again, and Glaucon is the interlocutor in the final discussion, or quasi-final discussion, of justice. Glaucon is afraid that Socrates might wish to evade the promise that he would come to the help of justice. Yet it appears immediately after Glaucon enters that it is taken for granted that justice is part of complete goodness.[xlvii] Now that goodness is needed for happiness goes without saying. This is the contradictory situation which one must understand in which Glaucon finds himself. In other words, the question regarding the desirability or choiceworthiness of justice is not settled, and in the very same context it is said it is settled. How can we understand that? Now Glaucon surely wishes justice to be choiceworthy.[121] I mean, he is an honest boy, there is no question. For the same reason he wishes that the detractors of justice be genuinely refuted—genuinely refuted, and not a mere sham refutation as we found it in book 1. Yes, but if he wishes a genuine refutation, he ought to wish that justice be not good. You know? In order to counteract his bias in favor of justice he must develop, at least temporarily, a bias in favor of injustice. Now he did this in book 2, in his long speech, but this is of course a supreme effort which does not last.[122] And what happened then? That is a very long play of Socrates, playing of Socrates on the soul of Glaucon, Socrates conjuring all kinds of recollections, not in that metaphysical sense, [but] simple recollections of the decent things of which Glaucon has become aware through his education, and they affect him all the time.

Well, and that—there is an interplay between these recollections and the argument. You remember the argument. There was one genuine argument in the Thrasymachus section: that no society can exist without justice. The famous story, the gang of robbers. They must—you know, if they don't divide their loot with some degree of fairness, they won't

[xlv] 422a4-423c4.
[xlvi] 424e5-427b1.
[xlvii] 427d8-e12.

hold together. [xlviii] Genuine proof. That was the proof, but on the other hand, how do we go over from the gang of robbers to the good city? And then when education is described, music and these various parts, other recollections of Glaucon about the nobility of such and such a conduct comes in and makes it absolute[ly] certain. Of course not a gang of robbers; that's out of the question. There is an essential difference between the city, any respectable city, and the gang of robbers. And[123] that is the background of the argument. Now this means of course that to the extent to which these nonexamined prior certainties of Glaucon are essential for the progress of the conversation,[124] the conversation is not "logical," is not cogent; and therefore[125] if we want to have the cogent argument we have to examine the explicit argument very carefully [to] see[126] whether it is defective, and if it is defective what the defects are, and see[127] how these defects could be corrected if they can be corrected.

There is one more point which I think I should mention. In order to find out what the various virtues—[that is, what] justice [is], they follow a simple procedure. There are four virtues, and if we have discovered virtue one, two, or three, we know the rest is justice.[xlix] Needless to say, there is a premise made: that we know in advance that there are four and only four virtues. That is simply taken for granted. Now in the discussion of courage a remark is made which we should read.[128] 430b, the last speech in b. Do you have it Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: 430b?

LS: Yes.

Mr. Reinken:
"No, nothing," said he; "for I presume that you consider mere right opinion about the same matters not produced by education, that which may manifest itself in a beast or a slave, to have little or nothing to do with law and that you would call it by another name than courage." "That is most true," said I.

LS: In other words, the lion's impetuosity or whatever it may, or the dog's, that is not courage, because it arises without education. [It] belongs to the beast in question by mere nature. Yes? Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Well, then" he said, "I accept this as bravery."

LS: Namely, that[129] correct opinion regarding dangers and so on which arises from education. That is courage. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Do so," said I, "and you will be right with the reservation that it is the courage of a citizen. Some other time, if it please you, we will discuss it more fully. At present we

[xlviii] 351c8-352a4.
[xlix] 427e2-428a10.

were not seeking this but justice; and for the purpose of that inquiry I believe we have done enough." (430c)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. In other words, what does it mean, "the courage of the citizen," or perhaps a bit more literally, "political courage"? Now when Plato applies the adjective "political" to a virtue [it is] just as the equivalent *demōdēs*, which means the demos-like, the popular, vulgar virtue, only the lower kind of virtue, so that the courage of the guardians is not courage in the highest sense. And that will come up later in the sixth book:[l] genuine virtue, which is not political virtue, is possible only in connection with philosophy. Yes? It's based on knowledge proper.

Now if this is true of courage, it is surely true also of the three other virtues discussed in book 4. The wisdom [in book 4], for example, is very remote from the true wisdom described in books 6 and 7, but the most important case for us is of course the case of justice. This justice as described[130] at the end of book 4 cannot be assumed to be the last word of Plato regarding justice.[131] At least it cannot be assumed. It would have to be investigated, what justice on the highest level is. This is only one of the many indications that we must think beyond what Socrates says to Glaucon or Adeimantus if we want to understand Plato. We[132] start from it and we must start from it very strictly and not falsify what he says. But this is not a textbook, this is not a treatise, and, as I say, the point which I mentioned before. The definition of courage as given here includes moderation in the ordinary sense, and therefore it is perfectly intelligible that Socrates says, "I don't want to discuss moderation," because he has defined it[133] [already]; but Glaucon insists, and then he has to[134] give another definition of moderation and which in itself would make it difficult to define justice.[li] You have the shoemaker, and he doesn't need wisdom and courage because he is neither ruler nor soldier, but he needs one thing absolutely, namely, loyalty, obedience, otherwise the city couldn't last. Yes, but that is already implied in what is called moderation here. I mean, after Socrates is compelled by Glaucon to define moderation, and there is a variety of meanings,[135] [but] the meaning important for the shoemaker is obedience to the rulers, loyalty. Now if the shoemaker is loyal and in addition does his work as a shoemaker well, what else does he need? He's a perfect shoemaker, and that is not very much according to Plato, but on the other hand it is the maximum you can expect; and therefore why [is there] still [a need to define] justice? This is only a restatement of the difficulty I sketched here. Now I limited my points. Is there any point you would like to raise? Mr. Megati?

Mr Megati: [Inaudible question regarding a parallel between the *Republic* and the book of Job.][lii]

LS: I don't know what precisely you mean.

Mr. Megati: [Inaudible reply, precisely defining his point][liii]

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[l] 486b1-9, 487a2-5.
[li] 430d4ff.
[lii] As noted by the transcriber.
[liii] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: I see. Good. Yes. Yes, but—good, but the solution is a religion of radically different [character]—the final solution. Yes, the mystery of God's will is the solution of the book of Job, if I understand the end, and there is nothing of that kind here.[liv] There is nothing of the kind here. You can say the discussion of the *Republic* is in a way very unreal, because[136] at least what we have read hitherto gives the solution to the problem of justice if there were a perfect *polis*, not outside of it. Outside of the perfect *polis* we will find the thing about which Glaucon and Adeimantus complain: that very clever crooks are buried with honors as the pillars of their society and very honest men are disgraced. But still there is another solution, however: the philosophic life. Yes? Books 6 and 7. We must see whether that is the solution sketched in the *Republic*, which does not depend on the establishment of a just society. Aren't the philosophers essentially just according to the teaching of the *Republic*?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, perhaps not in every respect. Yes. Yes?

Student: Earlier you stressed the importance of Thrasymachus's demand for a precise definition. In other words, the physician is only a physician as long as he does not err as physician. Insofar as he errs in his medical practice he is not a physician.[lv] Now we have this definition of justice as doing one's job well. I seem to sense some sort of connection.

LS: Oh, that is a very good point. In other words—that is very good, what you say. In other words, you mean to say the completion which I demand is implied in what Thrasymachus said. In other words, the shoemaker strictly understood is a good shoemaker, that is, in doing his work. That's a very good remark. It is a confirmation which I myself didn't think of. Yes? [To students:] Then you, then you. Good.

Student: When you mentioned that the problem of justice [was treated] by Socrates, you said that each virtue is integrated and that if a man has all three virtues they tend to be integrated, and therefore for the individual justice doesn't consist in harmony. But I wonder if in some respect this doesn't conflict with what Socrates desired to bring out in book 3, when he said a man can be courageous, a man can develop his course by way of gymnastics, but he can be a brute, however.[lvi] And by the same token, couldn't a man, even though he had all three virtues, be too much so in any one of these virtues—

LS: Yes, but to that extent he would not possess this virtue properly. There is one point in your argument which[137] one must take seriously and which one could use as an objection to what I said, and that is this. Precisely if the virtues are defined in book 4 and, as we saw in the example of courage or what he says about courage in the passage we read, are not understood strictly, must there not be a uniting virtue to make them true virtues?[138] [It] is made fully clear [that] the definitions of the various virtues given here

[liv] *Job* 33:12-42:6.
[lv] Plato *Republic* 340c2-341a4.
[lvi] See 410c8-412a8.

are inexact, are not definitions of virtue on the highest level. But this would lead to the great consequence that justice thus understood is necessary as a complement for the three other virtues if the three other virtues are on a low level. Do you see that? I mean, in other words, you would not get what he is driving at either.

Student: . . . [Doesn't it seem] that when you get right up to it and you put your hand on justice, there's nothing there? It seems to me that it sort of in this way does vanish when you come to it, and I find this so with both the city's justice and the other justice, that if the other three virtues are working well, I don't see any need for it. I was wondering whether this passage here says, when they're going from the city of pigs to the luxurious city, where Socrates sort of—what looks like a very significant point, that in observing the origin of a luxurious city, perhaps at this point they will begin to find what justice is.[lvii] It seems to me that when you've got the ideal, when everything else comes to the ideal, justice sort of vanishes . . .

LS: Yes, but there could be one thing which[139] one has to consider. I don't believe that this can be the last word, [though], and that is this, the thought which is very serious and which people other than Plato found perfectly satisfactory, namely, this: if[140] justice would reside in the institutions, then you wouldn't need it in the souls. Do you see what I mean? I mean, for example, here the ordinary crimes regarding property can be said to disappear if there is no property, which is of course not quite true, as the Russians find out. You know, you can also embezzle public property, the common property, but still it is something of this kind, that an automatism of the society might make certain virtues superfluous. You know? And that would be a way in which one could understand that.[141] Yes, but still we would still need a "psychological" equivalent for the following, namely, the question: Why do people abide by the automatism? The shoemaker does nothing but make shoes and make them well. Why does he do it? And then you[142] will come back to such things as fear of punishment, concern with praise—you know, this kind of thing.[143] That you would still need. In addition to the automotism you would still need incentives[144]. Is this clear? I mean, the mere machinery is not a sufficient explanation, because the machinery is fed by human acceptance and by human cooperation.

Student: [Inaudible remark asserting that Socrates isn't taking into account the need for the psychological things.][lviii]

LS: Yes, but[145] that, I believe, is permissible as something said in momentary anger, as it were, but a moment's reflection, I think, would show that a man who has given so many signs of a really superior intelligence—and you know the importance he has for such severe sciences as mathematics—that it is unlikely that Plato hasn't a very clear notion of these things, and that has to do with the character of the dialogue. And[146] I think the only plausible assumption possible when studying the dialogues is that Plato did not wish to preach, to indoctrinate. I mean, he also did that and [at] that he was terribly successful. That's one of the most edifying books ever written, as you know. I hear that next to the Bible it's still the best seller, the *Republic*. It is an inspiring work, without any question.

[lvii] 372e2-7.
[lviii] As noted by the transcriber.

Yes, but[147] while this is very important, it is of course not the highest. From Plato's point of view it is more important that one understands than that one is enthusiastic. Yes? And therefore I[148] would assume that Plato does[149] make us understand by these defects of the argument. Yes? That is a way of indirectly making us, inducing us to understand.[150] For example, if there is a lacuna, [one needs] to fill the lacuna not by irresponsible guessing, but by nailing it down precisely,[151] [showing] under what conditions would this be a proper transition and find[ing] out what that condition is, and then see[ing] whether this condition is a reasonable assumption or an unreasonable assumption. If it is an unreasonable assumption, the transition is illegitimate. If it is a reasonable assumption, the transition is legitimate.[152] In other words, one must really [pursue] what you call the analysis of Plato beyond what Plato explicitly says, but using what Plato explicitly says as the guide for that analysis.

Now strictly speaking, of course you cannot say that Plato says anything. You know? Because you can only say Socrates says it, and Socrates never says anything except with a view to some peculiar interlocutor—I mean, Glaucon and Adeimantus, or Gorgias, whoever the interlocutor may be—and that you have to notice. One must not be less awake than in studying, say, a modern, solid treatise, because the so-called ornamental things are not ornamental. They are very serious, very serious, and I think one needs gradually and after a long time and familiarity, one acquires a certain flair for this. Rabbi Weiss?

Rabbi Weiss: What is the basis for Socrates's assertion that it is self-evident that you can make a parallel between the individual and the city?

LS: Sure, that is simply—how shall I say? That is, you can say, an hypothesis.

Rabbi Weiss: Is it because man is a social being?

LS: That would of course not require parallelism. Yes? I mean, that man is a political animal and forms political society does not mean that the *polis*, the political society, is parallel to a man. I mean, look at this very obvious thing. We have seen three parts of the soul: reason, appetite, and spiritedness. But how many other parts of the soul are there which are not even mentioned? Think only of sense perception and memory. Now there were people who made this parallelism complete and said the sense perception, and these are the spies or the detectives, and the memory[153] [is] the clerks, the final clerks. And you know there are long elaborations of this throughout the tradition, but Plato abstains from that precisely because Plato did not take it literally.[154] What the *polis* is is a very great problem for Plato. Look at—in another setting, I mean, which we may take up on a later occasion; I don't know whether we have time to account for that. Plato is famous for his doctrine of ideas—whatever that may mean, but he is surely famous for that—but there is not any suggestion that there is an idea of the *polis*. Yes? There is something said, a city laid out in heaven; yes, sure, but that would not be an idea.[lix] The ideas are in a super-heavenly place. Perhaps there is no idea of the *polis*—again, whatever that may mean. Perhaps there cannot be an idea of the *polis* for certain reasons.

[lix] 591e1-592b6.

Now there is a report of Aristotle of which some people say that is simply a wicked, stupid remark of that old pharmacist, as someone called him—you know, because he was the son of a pharmacist—that he said [that] according to Plato there are no ideas of artifacts.[lx] There are no ideas of artifacts. And they refute this assertion by Aristotle in a beautiful way. There is an idea of a table and such, and a bad—explicitly mentioned in the tenth book of the *Republic*, and there is some other idea of an artifact somewhere else, as if this would settle the issue.[lxi] All right, but let us assume that Aristotle knew more about it than these present-day commentators, and there are no ideas of artifacts. Perhaps the city is an artifact. Plato didn't say what Aristotle says, "the city is by nature."[lxii] His *perfect* city is according to nature. Well, that's an entirely different proposition. Something can be an artifact according to nature; for example, if you have some garment which fits you very well according to the nature of your body. It is according to nature to that extent; it's not a natural thing. Now if the city is not by nature, this would be of course a very powerful reason for regarding any parallelism between the city and the individual as fundamentally impossible.[155]

These are very large issues, but Plato forces one to raise them. The difficulties of understanding such a work as the *Republic* are absolutely awful and can very well be repelling. If I may tell a little story: there is a very tiny dialogue which is regarded by everyone except for me, as far as I know, as spurious, called the *Minos*—the introduction to the *Laws*, Plato's *Laws*. I have read this with care quite a few times, four or five times really very carefully; and then I read it again when I was at the "think tank" in Palo Alto with a few fellows whom I knew from Chicago, and we read it very carefully for weeks. And then after having read it, I found quite a few things I did not see before. We read it again immediately after, because it was also good for these people to make this experience: how many things one overlooks at a casual reading. You know? And so we read it again, and again quite a few things came to sight [that] we hadn't observed before. Now of course I believed before I went to the "think tank" that this little dialogue I had surely understood, and then I saw that there were still steps below these steps. Now this is not the same story of which some critics speak[156] when they say that *Hamlet* is inexhaustible, because they mean by [that] that it is unintentionally inexhaustible—you know, a work of art has such an infinite range of meanings that it can never be exhausted. That is not the point. That may be true, but what I'm speaking about is an intentional wealth of meaning. The things which Plato—I mean, when you find one of these many strata of *Hamlet*, these critics are not concerned with the question whether Shakespeare saw that range of meaning. It's good enough for them if he conveys it unintentionally. I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in the intentional range of meanings, and since Plato, however great a man, was still a human being there cannot be an infinity, strictly speaking; there can only be a finiteness of such meanings, yes, but even how great they are.

[lx] Aristotle *Metaphysics* 991b5-8, 1070a10-21.
[lxi] Plato *Republic* 596a5-b4.
[lxii] Aristotle *Politics* 1253a1-4.

Now if you read a brief dialogue you can gradually know by heart all the incidents occurring [in it]. Even if you don't know the dialogue by heart, you can know, for example, these little things which we didn't even discuss [or] mention here. When Socrates addresses Glaucon by name, or when the others address Socrates by name or the[157] [oaths], "By Zeus," whatever it is—these things we simply forget completely about, but they are part of the story; and I know from other dialogues that sometimes by understanding in a given situation why this oath occurs here, or why here the interlocutor says "Socrates," [one can better understand the dialogue]. After all, if you ask a man, "What do you think about it?" he can simply say yes or no, [or] "I don't know." He doesn't have to add the name. If he adds the name, there must be a reason for that. Then, in the case of the *Republic*, the very length of the book makes this not simply impossible, but practically [so].[158] But on the other hand, if one simply[159] [decides] to read the *Republic* practically, as if this were a Platonic treatise on justice and, for example, if he says certain things—if you read in the eighth book, say, the analysis of democracy, that is Plato's analysis of democracy, just as it is when you read the *Politics* on democracy you are perfectly entitled to say that is Aristotle's analysis of democracy, but here it is what Socrates says to people prejudiced against democracy. And now the question is: Well, would Socrates ever say to people prejudiced against democracy antidemocratic things which he did not believe? And I would say: Well, that depends. Maybe he's after bigger game. Maybe he's perfectly willing to let them have their country club prejudices against democracy. By the way, to some extent Socrates was of course antidemocratic, I would say, but this crude prejudice against democracy—you know, "horses don't obey anymore" and this [sort of] remark.[lxiii] You remember? We will come to that. Then maybe Socrates regards this as necessary in order to receive a hearing regarding things which he regards in this situation as much more important.

Student: May I ask a question?

LS: Yes.

Student: . . . if a man were perfectly happy at his job, if his job was perfectly suited to his nature, wouldn't he therefore consider the common good, the good of the community as a whole, [as] his [own] good? Because by keeping that community in place where he has everything he wants and he is perfectly satisfied, his private good will be identical with the common good because his job is according to nature.

LS: Yes. Well, that is the difficulty which in a not fundamentally different way occurs in Marxism.

Student: Can a man be completely satisfied as a shoemaker?

LS: I'm sure. I know of people who are perfectly satisfied with stamp collecting.[160] Let me put it this way. The difficulty is this: if something is objectively satisfactory for him so that he has no reasonable complaint, that does not mean that he will not have unreasonable complaints, and that is the reason why political society is coercive. You

[lxiii] 563c3-d3.

know? I mean,[161] that was the older view, the non-Marxist view, that however fair and reasonable a society may be, man is such a strange animal that he is not necessarily satisfied with what is objectively the best for him. Maybe this shoemaker thinks he is a born musician. There are such [people], you know,[162] and maybe it is so and he thinks a terrible injustice has been done to him that he wasn't sent to a music academy but simply to an apprentice. I have seen such people, and they burn with resentment, and the only protection one has is that he is prevented, if need be, by a policeman from acting on his unreasonable dissatisfactions.

Student: Suppose a man who has everything that suits his nature. For example, the ruler of a state.

LS: Yes, well, rulers have great comforts, as Plato stated, and that's a different story. I mean,[163] ordinarily people become rulers because they wish to become rulers. That is—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes,[164] you know what Plato has to do. In order to get the real top rulers who, while loathing to rule do nevertheless rule well, he has to have philosophers, and what philosophers. That shows the difficulty on this Spartan stage. Now we have not yet a solution.

Student: We have not yet—

LS: Not yet a solution.[165] No, it is surely true that a just society would be . . . [lxiv]

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[1] Deleted "there is—."
[2] Deleted "I mean—is this merely—well."
[3] Deleted "this—."
[4] Deleted "it."
[5] Deleted "this deals—."
[6] Deleted "is—."
[7] Changed from "is connected with—that."
[8] Deleted "we must not—this—."
[9] Deleted "is—."
[10] Deleted "is." Moved "eidos." Deleted "the same."
[11] Deleted "a certain—."
[12] Deleted "of Plato was—friend."
[13] Deleted "to take"
[14] Deleted "but the, I mean"
[15] Deleted "Now—pardon? Yes. "
[16] Deleted "are—."
[17] Deleted "what Socrates—in."
[18] Deleted "and—."
[19] Deleted "and."
[20] Deleted "says."
[21] Deleted "—I mean, that is."

[lxiv] The transcriber notes that the tape ends here.

[22] Deleted "That is very—I mean, one must be—."
[23] Changed from "I mean, that is—I don't know—I mean, if this is not what—I think it doesn't deserve to be discussed on its—as a serious proposition."
[24] Deleted "What do think think who they themselves are."
[25] Deleted "It has—."
[26] Deleted "is an absolutely (146)—that."
[27] Deleted "—is."
[28] Deleted "this—."
[29] Deleted "therefore—."
[30] Deleted "is—."
[31] Deleted "But why should—now, and."
[32] Deleted "people, such."
[33] Deleted "There are—."
[34] Deleted "what is—."
[35] Deleted "That is—."
[36] Deleted "That's—."
[37] Deleted "in the beginning"
[38] Deleted "a horse—."
[39] Deleted "what is the—now there is—."
[40] Deleted "regarding—."
[41] Deleted "that."
[42] Deleted "which—because."
[43] Deleted "of—."
[44] Deleted "—I mean, is at least."
[45] Deleted "from."
[46] Deleted "—yes, you see, you must not—."
[47] Deleted "—namely."
[48] Deleted "the domestic—."
[49] Deleted "he must—."
[50] Changed from "But if the craftsman—what he is doing—you know—provided he delivers the goods—you don't care what kind of private life he leads, and it is also not terribly important for the polis; something of this kind."
[51] Deleted "now—I mean, I did—."
[52] Deleted "now—I."
[53] Changed from "that the demagogues don't permit a fellow to lead—to mind his own business, yes, or the sycophants, rather."
[54] Deleted "this strictly."
[55] Changed from "Now we see if we compare our scheme—I mean, the scheme which I made of the four virtues which we need—if we compare that with the Republic, we see that the concern with others is dropped in the case of the Republic, but of course it is implicitly recognized."
[56] Deleted "produces—the shoemaker"
[57] Deleted "do—."
[58] Deleted "and we have."
[59] Deleted "To mind—."
[60] Deleted "—you know—and then—."
[61] Deleted "that—but look at this—."
[62] Deleted "Because."
[63] Deleted "and."
[64] Deleted "—well."
[65] Deleted "That."
[66] Deleted "—said."
[67] Deleted "and—but the question is now—here after all, when he—."
[68] Deleted "—then."
[69] Deleted "not to—."
[70] Deleted "we ordinarily—."
[71] Deleted "or he was."

[72] Deleted "teacher."
[73] Deleted "You see, I mean."
[74] Deleted "That the simple—."
[75] Deleted "No."
[76] Deleted "or something—how did he literally say it—."
[77] Deleted "Let us consider—."
[78] Deleted "that—."
[79] Deleted "There is—."
[80] Deleted "for—why."
[81] Deleted "because the individual—."
[82] Deleted "—who—.'
[83] Deleted "—you know—."
[84] Deleted "Now these are only—."
[85] Deleted "—I don't know—the general—yes."
[86] Deleted "justice—."
[87] Deleted "we will have—the city is—."
[88] Deleted "—you know, like these."
[89] Deleted "we get—how can."
[90] Deleted "if the shoemaker—."
[91] Deleted "I mean—that."
[92] Deleted "—I would not."
[93] Deleted "I mean, the paradoxy is—."
[94] Deleted "I don't—."
[95] Deleted "it—."
[96] Deleted "—further."
[97] Deleted "he—when."
[98] Deleted "Why does—why—."
[99] Deleted "toward—."
[100] Deleted "help us—."
[101] Deleted "he begins—."
[102] Changed from "I simply say look at the discussion later: whether this lives up to the demand, to the criterion set out at the beginning, the principle of contradiction."
[103] Changed from "or take an example—he gives here the example of drinking which he discusses and—someone—he desires."
[104] Deleted "which he discusses and—someone—he desires."
[105] Deleted "shows, of course—it."
[106] Deleted "everything—not that."
[107] Deleted "would—I think I."
[108] Deleted "His dissatisfaction—."
[109] Deleted "is—."
[110] Deleted "[the soldiers]."
[111] Deleted "—where he." Moved "implies."
[112] Deleted "being."
[113] Deleted "as."
[114] Deleted "Glaucon's, I mean."
[115] Deleted "—the."
[116] Deleted "—you know—."
[117] Deleted "not— will."
[118] Changed from "Only a few words—yes, the long discussion of—was not mentioned by Mr. Seltzer if I remember well—."
[119] Deleted "is—."
[120] Deleted "this is—."
[121] Deleted "There is—."
[122] Deleted "Therefore—now."
[123] Deleted "this gradually—."
[124] Deleted "that."

[125] Deleted 'it becomes—."
[126] Deleted "what the—."
[127] Deleted "see whether—."
[128] Deleted "430c—no."
[129] Deleted "opinion regarding—that."
[130] Deleted "in—."
[131] Deleted "Merely—whether—."
[132] Deleted "cannot—but we."
[133] Deleted "and then he—."
[134] Deleted "—then he has to."
[135] Deleted "there."
[136] Deleted "it—."
[137] Deleted "is—which."
[138] Deleted "That would be—you know—but the basis for that—would be that this."
[139] Deleted "I believe—which."
[140] Deleted "the."
[141] Deleted "Let us assume—."
[142] Deletd "might have to—."
[143] Deleted "You know? ."
[144] Deleted "in the case."
[145] Deleted "—I mean."
[146] Deleted "Plato—."
[147] Deleted "still that—."
[148] Deleted "think it—I."
[149] Deleted "not."
[150] Deleted "to—."
[151] Deleted "What is the—."
[152] Changed from "In other words, one must really—one must—what you call the analysis of Plato—one must pursue this analysis beyond what Plato explicitly says, but using what Plato explicitly says as the guide, the guides for that analysis."
[153] Deleted "are."
[154] Deleted "The polis—
[155] Deleted "I mean, this—you see."
[156] Deleted "that—.'
[157] Deleted "sermons."
[158] Deleted "and surely how many—and if—."
[159] Deleted "—if one does—the ordinary procedure is to say—."
[160] Deleted "and—pardon—I mean, I would—no, the point—I would—."
[161] Deleted "the maximum you can—."
[162] Deleted "we—." Moved "maybe." Deleted "it is so and."
[163] Deleted "these people—."
[164] Deleted "no well—yes, well that—."
[165] Changed from "No, there—it is surely true that a just society—a just society would be…"

Session 8: October 27, 1961
Book 5: Is the City Possible? Is it Best? The Community of Women and Children

Leo Strauss: I think you did yourself a considerable injustice by the manner of your delivery, but you gave a suitable example that habit cannot be changed by mere command or advice.[i] Now I was particularly gratified to see that you have acquired some knowledge of the other Platonic works immediately relevant, like the *Laws* and the *Statesman*, and you observed the light which they throw on the *Republic*; for example, that the assumption that the dog is a gregarious or political animal[1] may be questioned, and that affects the part of the argument of book 5 considerably. You did not refer to one passage of the *Laws* of which I couldn't help thinking when reading it again, namely, when[2] the Athenian stranger describes the Spartan system and [says that] they stay here in an armed camp, not a *polis*.[3] It's only an armed camp and no one [is] ever taken out of the herd—you know, the [colt is not separated][ii] and given the training for himself.[iii] There[4] the term "herd" occurs at least twice very emphatically. You know? But[5] I should only like to raise one good point. The various remarks of Socrates and so make you doubtful whether all this is meant quite literally, yes?—the communism regarding women and children. And that is a perfectly necessary doubt which can be reinforced by other considerations, but then you gave too simple or factual a reply to the question: Why did, then, Socrates present this communism or equality of women business at such considerable length if he did not mean it? Did you give some thought to the question beyond what you said?

Student: [. . .]

LS: But you see that it would be necessary,[6] because otherwise you would do what a lawyer does all the time when he comes up against something which he admits to be indefensible. He says: "Well, we must not press this so much." You know? Plato is not only a logician: he is also a poet, but how you can say that of a man who expelled the poets with so much disgrace is hard to see. You know, that is debatable. Well, I will try to take this up in the discussion today.

Let me only repeat very briefly one point which[7] must be the background of our discussion, and that is what was said to be the principle of the whole set up: one man, one job; one man, one art. And this was so crucial because it is an element, and the decisive element, of the definition of justice: to[8] be just means to do one's job, to practice one's art. The guardians and rulers also have of course[9] [only][iv] one art, the art of the soldier or guardian and the art of the ruler.[10] Now the basis for this has been [set down] in the Thrasymachus section, when it was said that the artisan as artisan is infallible, and is in

[i] Strauss comments on a student's (Miss Huckins's) paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcript has blank space here.
[iii] Plato *Laws* 666d3-667a7.
[iv] The transcript has a blank space here.

no way concerned with his reward. The shoemaker as shoemaker is concerned with making shoes. That he gets money for it has nothing to do with the art of shoemaking as shoemaking; that is a matter of that universal art called moneymaking which every artisan must possess in addition to his art proper.[v] Yes, but if we take this strict sense of art seriously,[11] [as it] comes out in that Thrasymachus section, we reach the conclusion that to be an artisan means to practice one's art well emphatically, to practice one's art well without any regard for one's own advantage. It means, in other words, art and justice are identical, and I believe more and more that this is the key theme of the *Republic*. Art and justice are identical. The best city is the city of artisans, not in the narrow sense of the term, but so that the soldiers and the rulers also are artisans. Soldiers were explicitly called artisans of liberty, and this is like other dialogues.[vi] There are also such themes and they are of course not meant as simply true, but they are as it were hypotheses which are helpful for the understanding. They will prove to be untenable, but by realizing why they are untenable we will understand better the *polis*, the soul, or whatever the subject is than we otherwise did.

Now I believe if one would think that through—I mean, there are many difficulties, and the thesis that art is justice can easily be refuted. But behind it there is something which will prove to be true. It is not simply true that art is justice, but the highest art, the art of arts, is the only thing which is truly justice. In other words, philosophy is justice. That is the truth of the provisional assertion that art is justice. Now this was what I was driving at in my very misty remarks which I made last time and all the complications in the fourth book[12]—definitions of the four virtues, and you never know, is this definition an exact definition or not? Is justice defined exactly or inexactly? Is wisdom, courage, moderation defined exactly or inexactly? All this is connected with this fundamental difficulty, and[13] we simply would have to have another discussion of book 4 in order to reach somewhat further clarity, and we cannot afford this because we are not theoretical people here but practical people. You remember the statement in the *Apology* where Socrates says: "Well, we would have to have a long discussion, but now there is a watch; I must be through within such and such a time."[vii] But we must be through today with the first part of book 5, and therefore we have to go on. Only to make quite clear[14] [to] Mr. Hennessy: next time, yes?[viii] The second half of book 5. Good.

Now we have seen that in book 4 the question was answered as to[15] what goodness is and whether it is good; and that was after all the theme of the whole conversation. You know? The commission which Glaucon gave to Socrates, prove to us that justice is good, that is settled and yet the conversation goes on. We are only at the beginning of book 5 now and six more books are coming. Why? Well, there was a reason: we[16] do not have a full understanding of justice if we do not have a full understanding of injustice, but of injustice there are various kinds and we would have to consider them. And[17] Socrates wants to discuss the kinds of injustice but is interrupted, and the interruption takes three whole books, because the kinds of injustice are taken up only in book 8.

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[v] *Republic* 340d2-343a2, 345e2-347a3.
[vi] 395b8-c3.
[vii] *Apology of Socrates* 37a2-b2.
[viii] That is, Mr. Hennessey is scheduled to read his paper at the next session.

Now the interruption comes this time from Polemarchus,[18] who is supported by Adeimantus in the first place and then also by Glaucon and Thrasymachus. But this time[19] the interruption does not have the character of an objection, that they say: "That's not good." You know? Or as Glaucon's objection: "That's the city of pigs." But an interruption has the character rather [of] a question prompted by curiosity, because Socrates has said in passing [that] communism must not be limited to private property, it must also be extended to women and children.[ix] And that is of course infinitely more exciting than mere communism regarding property, especially for young people, I suppose. Now but the important point: the theme here, if you would read it with some care, the way in which Polemarchus behaves and all this kind of thing, reminds of the very beginning of the *Republic*.[x] There are some literal resemblances [to] the very first page. And just as we have at the beginning of the *Republic*, after a threat on the part of Adeimantus something like persuasion: You remember, Adeimantus says, "Well, you will be rewarded if you stay here," and then Glaucon says: "Then we have to stay." And Socrates says: "Well, if this is the sense of the meeting, I bow." Now here the vote is explicit. The word "vote" explicitly occurs. So that is in a way simply a repetition of the beginning, but there is never in Plato a simple repetition. There are always important changes, and here the most striking change is what? Of this vote compared with the vote—I mean, sure, this vote is explicit; at the beginning it was not so explicit. But something else.[20] Here we have a voter who was not present at the beginning of the *Republic*. Who is that?

Student: Thrasymachus.

LS: Thrasymachus.[21] In other words, every vote is a kind of a political action, of course, and you can say anywhere a vote is taken, there is a kind of *polis*. Now the *polis* which we have at the beginning of book 5 is one which includes Thrasymachus. Thrasymachus has become a citizen of our little *polis*, and what that means we will see only later, but that is an important indication—and incidentally also some confirmation of what I said at the beginning, that this thesis of the Thrasymachus section which implies that art and justice are identical shows how powerful the presence of Thrasymachus is. Not simply Thrasymachus in himself; it is also Thrasymachus chastened by Socrates, not the others. We must keep this in mind. Now at the beginning[22] of the fifth book it appears that Socrates had wished to rush away from this complicated issue of communism of women. He had tried, we may say, to abstract from the whole problem of *eros*. Now let me see.

Student: At the end of the book he addressed Glaucon as a man of pleasure.[xi]

LS: Of book 5? Where? I mean,[23] let me rather say, what is the relevance of that here? Pardon?

Same Student: That Glaucon comes in and forces the erotic consideration.

[ix] *Republic* 423e4-424a2.
[x] 449a1-450a6, 327b1-328b2.
[xi] Possibly a reference to 474d3-7.

LS: Yes. No, let us postpone that. That will come up next time. We have to go on.[24] Now let us look at [a passage] near the beginning: 450b, when Thrasymachus makes his last speech. Socrates is still trying to evade, and what does Thrasymachus say in 450b?

Mr. Reinken:
"Well, do you suppose this company has come here to prospect for gold and not to listen to discussion?"

LS: Yes. Stop here. You see, Thrasymachus is not a moneymaker, he is a man eager to listen to speeches. Now this is[25] in a way more emphatically the case in the case of Glaucon, as would appear from the sequel.[xii] There is a philosophic element in Thrasymachus and Glaucon. And now[26] Socrates makes then a distinction of the utmost importance for the whole rest of the work, at least up to book 7. And that is the question which one must raise regarding the subject here: (a) Is it possible? and (b) Is it best?[xiii] Or to use another term which is soon introduced instead of best: Is it useful? Communism, community of women might be possible, feasible, but it might not be useful. So there are two different considerations, and that will supply the plan of the whole discussion[27]. I don't know whether Miss Huckins saw this clearly (that was partly a consequence of her delivery), that the two issues discussed in the first half, the equality of the sexes and communism, in the case of the equality both subjects are discussed: possibility and usefulness or desirability. In the case of communism of women, only the usefulness is discussed, not the possibility. Did you think of that?

Student: [Inaudible reply referring to 466.][xiv]

LS: Yes. All right. But Mr. Hennessy will then have to think about that. Why the discussion of—

Miss Huckins: [. . .]

LS: Yes, that is true. But it is in fact not discussed and is replaced by another subject. Good. Here there is a short remark which we might briefly consider in 450d, when Socrates[28] sees [that] it's very hard to speak about that. He's hesitant to speak about it, and Glaucon, this dare-devilish young man, of course says: Well, there is no reason to be fearful; go ahead. Now what does he say in 450d, the first speech of Glaucon there?

Mr. Reinken:
"Do not shrink," he said, "for your hearers will not be inconsiderate nor distrustful nor hostile."

[xii] 450b3-c5.
[xiii] 450c6-d2.
[xiv] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Yes. This can also mean "unreliable" . . . In other words, Glaucon defines here the character of the perfect audience. Yes? The perfect audience. Among such people,[29] it is safe to speak. And what does Socrates then say? Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
And I said, "My good fellow, is that remark intended to encourage me?" "It is," he said. "Well then," said I, "it has just the contrary effect. For, if I were confident that I was speaking with knowledge, it would be an excellent encouragement. For there is both safety and boldness in speaking the truth with knowledge about our greatest and dearest concerns to those who are both wise and dear. But to speak when one doubts—" (450d-e)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. You see, Socrates restates what Glaucon said about the audience to which one can speak with great frankness. They must be reasonable men, intelligent men, and they must be friends. If either condition is missing it is not safe, because unintelligent men might completely misunderstand him and hostile men might not—otherwise intelligent [men] might deliberately misconstrue it. Now, and then Socrates says that's not the point. The point is that he doesn't know; therefore he's hesitant. Yes? And he develops that. We cannot go into that now.[30] Well, all right, read. Read the next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"but to speak when one doubts himself and is seeking while he talks, as I am doing, is a fearful and slippery venture. The fear is not of being laughed at, for that is childish, but, lest missing the truth, I fall down and drag my friends with me in matters where it most imports not to stumble. So I salute Nemesis, Glaucon, in what I am about to say. For, indeed, I believe that involuntary homicide is a lesser fault than to mislead opinion about the honourable, the good, and the just."

LS: Yes,[31] he must add "laws." Yes? To be a deceiver regarding "honorable and good and just laws."[xv] Laws. Yes. Yes? Now the next sentence.

Mr. Reinken:
"This is a risk that it is better to run with enemies than with friends, so that your encouragement is none." (451a)

LS: Does this last sentence remind you of something?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, and what's the principle? It's the same, but what is the principle?[32] Was this principle stated most clearly in the *Republic*? What's the simplest formula?

Student: Doing good to your friends and harming your enemies.

[xv] Strauss corrects Shorey's translation of 451a7 here.

LS: Helping friends and hurting enemies, yes.[xvi] So you see Socrates makes use of that here. This must surely be noted. Yes. Good. And now immediately after the argument begins, first we will discuss the possibility—the possibility—of equality of women. By the way,[33] if this is a book on justice, why is equality of women an integral part of argument? I mean, in other words, why can we not say we have understood justice if we have not raised the questions of the equality of the two sexes yet? Yes?

Student: Well, because we're talking about the principle of one man, one job—one human, one job—and we must consider the nature of those people and ask the question whether the nature of men and the nature of women differ.

LS: In other words, we have to consider whether the ordinary practice of mankind at least in olden times to regard the women as [people] of lesser right is just. You know, if that common practice of giving lesser rights to women is unjust, then the whole society is based on injustice; and then however just in the common sense of the word you may be by obeying the laws, you are substantively unjust in complying with these laws. You know? That's the difficulty all the time. I mean, justice means primarily lawabidingness; in other words, not to use force and fraud but to obey the law. Very well, but what if the law itself is unjust? Then by obeying the law you increase the power of injustice in the world, and therefore we have to find a society or to found a *polis* in which all laws are just; and the status of fifty percent of every society, namely, the female element, is a matter of the utmost importance, of course. Good. Now let us see.[34] How does Socrates begin his argument in favor of the equality of the two sexes? In 451c. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"For men, then, born and bred, as we described, there is in my opinion no other right possession and use of children and women than that which accords with the start we gave them. Our endeavour, I believe, was to establish these men in our discourse as the guardians of a flock?" "Yes." "Let us preserve the analogy, then—"

LS: The flock: who is the flock?

Student: The artisans, the *demos*.

LS: The *demos*. Yes [this is] clear. Yes, but have you ever observed any herdsman, [of] sheep or whatever it may be, [and] how he treats the members of the flock? Very simple thing. Does he assign to each member of the herd the function, the work, for which it is fitted?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Sure. Exactly. So that is the point. You know,[35] the thesis was [that] the good *polis* is an association of artisans, each with his peculiar job, peculiar art. Yes, but is the *polis* to some extent not also a herd where this specialization of function does not take place? That is another sign of the difficulty. In a later passage, in 459e, we will even find that

[xvi] 332d2-6.

the guardians are a herd, so that not only the *demos* but everyone except the rulers are a herd, and therefore the whole question of a fine articulation of a specific function ceases to be important. Yes. Now go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let us preserve the analogy, then, and assign them a generation and breeding answering to it, and see if it suits us or not." "In what way?" he said. "In this. Do we expect the females of watch-dogs to join in guarding what the males guard and to hunt with them and share all their pursuits or do we expect females to stay indoors as being incapacitated by the bearing and breeding of the whelps while the males toil and have all the care of the flock?" "They have all things in common," he replied, "except that we treat the females as weaker and the males as stronger." "Is it possible, then," said I, "to employ any creature for the same ends as another if you do not assign it the same nurture and education?" "It is not possible." "If, then, we are to use the women for the same things as the men, we must also teach them the same things." "Yes." (451d-e)

LS: Let us stop here.[36] Now you see the proof is given by an example of dogs, or more generally, by the example of any irrational animal. The question of whether there is an essential difference between men and brutes is not raised. I mean, take the example of dogs. The great question whether there is a difference between human gestation and doggish gestation, between human babyhood and puppyhood, and the relative lengths of time is not even raised, although Glaucon is something like a dog expert and surely a dog fancier. Yes? And that is simply disregarded. The reasoning, you see, in the extreme is superficial, and?[37] the conclusions follow all from that. Let us read[38] one more passage.

Mr. Reinken:
"Now music together with gymnastic was the training we gave the men." "Yes." "Then we must assign these two arts to the women also and the offices of war and employ them in the same way." "It would seem likely from what you say—"

LS: Yes, you see. Well, more literally, these two arts and the things related to war. You see, we learn here in passing—there were some allusions to that before—that it is not strictly a one man, one art society. Here they have two arts explicitly, and the [art of] warfare is an art different from music and gymnastics, so they have at least three arts. That only in passing. Now in the sequel it is[39] [arranged] of course so women will have to receive the same training, and especially also the same training in gymnastics. That means exercises. Gymnastics[40] is derivative from the Greek word *gymnos*, which is "naked." So the women have to strip in public as well as the men, and that is of course something absolutely ridiculous or shocking, whatever your [. . .] may be. And then the great principle is established that we do not care for one moment for such low and idiotic considerations, whether it is ridiculous, because there was a time when the stripping of men was regarded as ridiculous, and now it is in Greece the common practice. Yes, but behind—that is, good. But what is involved in this little thing: the ridiculous is of no consideration. Yes?

Student: The abstraction of *eros*.

LS: That is important. Yes, that is a very good point, but that is not the most immediate point, because there are things which are ridiculous and which have nothing directly to do with *eros*. Yes? I mean,[41] not all jokes deal with sex. You know? So the ridiculous is not limited to that. But what is[42] one overall characteristic of the ridiculous—and a very superficial and crude one, I mean, not in the most refined form of the ridiculous? Yes?

Student: To begin with, it's opposed to convention.

LS: Exactly. In other words, what is not customary, what is not customary. If[43] something is strange without being harmful, [it is ridiculous]. But something is strange. Someone has a hat, wears a hat which no one else wears. This is in itself ridiculous; it might be a much more practical hat, but it is as such ridiculous. And a tie, or whatever else you might take. So in other words,[44] what is ridiculous is the novel, the unaccustomed. What Socrates is suggesting here is to introduce something unaccustomed, to introduce a change which is "revolutionary." But since it is not at the moment a change where people are up in arms [out] of interest, they only find it ridiculous. You know? But this must not conceal this problem. Now what is, however, the standard in the light of which the revolution is made? To what does Socrates appeal when he makes this revolution in speech? Yes?

Student: To reason.

LS: Yes,[45] but reason has an object, doesn't it?

Student: Yes.

LS: Which is that object?

Student: The beautiful.

LS: Not precise enough. The clearest passage is in[46] 453a1. At the beginning of 453, you find a remark. When he speaks[47] [about] whether human female nature—

Mr. Reinken:
"whether female nature is capable of sharing with the male all tasks or none at all, or some but not others, and under which of these heads this business of war falls." (453a)

LS: And so on. In other words,[48] that to which appeal is made is nature. Still more clearly in 456b to c, at the end of this discussion.

Mr. Reinken:
"Women of this kind—"

LS: No, no: at the transition of from b to c. "Hence, we have not laid down as laws impossible things or things similar to prayers or wishes, since we have laid does the law

according to nature. But what is now happening different from this: this rather, it seems, is against nature."[xvii] The established order which treats women differently from men is against nature, and the equality of the sexes as stated here is according to nature. So the revolution is made in the name of *physis*, and if someone tells you that this happened only in the eighteenth century or so—you know, natural rights versus the old feudal order—then you can tell him that he is mistaken. Plato made that already, and the interesting thing is only what [is] the difference between the natural right to which Plato appealed and the natural right to which Robespierre and these people appealed.

Now the equality of the two sexes is then established, and[49] what is the consequence of that? In the present order, or in the order as it existed until a very short while ago, there was inequality of the sexes, and that meant an entirely different way of life for the woman than for the man. Those of you who remember the older times perhaps can remind us of what this difference was. In a famous movement of our time in another country they used a formula of what the women's function is. The Nazis had a formula: three K's. Yes. Can you translate it into English?

Student: I can't keep the three K's, but simply: Children, church, kitchen.[xviii]

LS: Yes. Now let us forget about the church, that was especially a Nazi thing. But in other words, the place of the woman is in the home. She administers the household. She is the "economic" being, and the function of the man is then rather to acquire. Yes? And he distributes. The man is the warrior or foreign secretary, and she is the minister of the interior. [Laughter] No, that is the way in which it is presented, for example, in a famous treatise of Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, where the function of the two sexes is described in that way.[xix] So that's out. Both go out and no one stays at home, but what does this then mean? What's the consequence? This order in which the man goes out for be it hunting, be it waging war, be it moneymaking, doesn't make any difference—he goes out and the woman stays at home and takes care of the children and of the management of what the man has acquired. And this whole order, of course including also children, servants, and so on, was called the family or the household. So what is the consequence of the equality of the two sexes as described here? Pardon?

Student: Community life.

LS: The dissolution of the family. That's clear. Now this dissolution of the family is of course the condition for the communism of[50] women and children, which is developed later.[51] But we are not yet through with this question of whether the equality of the sexes is possible, because people say the two sexes are by nature different. In other words, it's not a mere convention that the women take care of the babies and not the men, and that the men go to war and not the women. That's not a mere convention. That has to do with the difference of the two sexes. Now this is discussed at some length. There is a note of Shorey which I found not only indirectly helpful but amusing, in its own way, [on page]

[xvii] Strauss's translation of 456c1-4.
[xviii] "Kinder, Kirche, Küche."
[xix] See Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 3.12-16, 7.2ff.

442. Yes, well, the general answer of Socrates[52] is this: We must not call for mere words. For mere words. We have to look—we don't speak of natures absolutely; we speak of natures with a view to the function, to the works. The question is not whether the female body has a different shape than the male body, but whether they are fit for the same functions, and he uses the extreme example[53] [that] some men are bald-headed and others are not.[xx] Yes? It's clearly a difference, a natural difference, yet is it of any relevance for making a man a shoemaker, a physician, a professor, or a president? Obviously not. And now what does our friend Shorey say? Read the remarks[54], [page 442, note *d*].

Mr. Reinken: Note *d*.
For this humorously trivial illustration *cf*. Mill, *Rep. Gov*., chap. viii, p. 190: "I have taken no account of difference of sex. I consider it to be as entirely irrelevant to political rights as difference in height, or in the colour of the hair;" and Mill's disciple Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians*, i. 291: "We may at least grant that the burden of proof should be upon those who would disfranchise all red-haired men."

LS: Yes.[55] But Mill and Stephen didn't have their cheek in the tongue when they wrote that. We don't know whether Socrates did not have his cheek in the tongue. Now what would be the point? I mean, maybe Socrates simply said the difference between men and women as far as[56] [their hairiness][xxi] is that between bald-headed and not bald-headed men, and where the question is who is the more hairy of the two, I suppose, the males or the females. But the question is rather this: Is there any indication of an important natural difference between the two sexes, an admitted natural difference which does have an effect for the function mentioned here? What is the final statement of Socrates regarding the natural difference of the two sexes? Miss Huckins, what[57] [does] he finally say?

Miss Huckins: [. . .]

LS: Yes, sure,[58] and he says that this [difference][xxii] is relatively permanent. But what[59] [is] the overall statement, when he has proven that the women can be a shoemaker, a woman can be a physician, a woman can be a soldier, and so on?[60] One difference remains. Yes?

Student: The physical strength of men and women.

LS: Yes, strength. He doesn't say physical strength.[xxiii] Generally speaking, men are stronger than women. Now we are dealing here with the question of communism, especially of one class, the soldiers, and we would have to raise the question: Is strength relevant or irrelevant for the profession of arms? Well, what would you say to this question?

Student: It's very relevant.

[xx] Plato *Republic* 454c1-e5.
[xxi] The transcript has blank space here.
[xxii] The transcript has blank space here.
[xxiii] 457a6-10. See also 455c4-456a11.

LS: It is relevant. Yes, then one would have to say Socrates forgot that, that we are speaking of soldiers. And there would be perhaps some other considerations—I mean, not developed here by this treatment with very great delicacy, very great delicacy, only some allusions to simple sexual differences, but I think we should not be less delicate than Socrates, and so I will let us postpone that. A few passing remarks [to] consider. 454d, or c rather. Begin at the end of the last speech in 454c and then over to d. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Would it be so," said I, "for any other reason than that we did not then posit likeness and difference of nature in any and every sense, but were paying heed solely to the kind of diversity and homogeneity that was pertinent to the pursuits themselves? We meant, for example, that a man and a woman who have a physician's mind have the same nature. Don't you think so?" "I do."

LS: He says "soul." I don't see why[61] Shorey says "mind." Yes? The soul. In other words, the he-physician and the she-physician have the same soul. Yes? I mean the same understanding, the same skill, or whatever it may be: identically the same. The differences of sex are really irrelevant. Yes? Go on. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"But that a man physician and a man carpenter have different natures?" "Certainly, I suppose." "Similarly, then," said I, "if it appears that the male and the female sex have distinct qualifications for any arts or pursuits, we shall affirm that they ought to be assigned respectively to each." (454c-d)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here for one moment. You see, we see here that what is decisive is the soul, not the body. Not the body. That they have different bodies is admitted, but why is the mind or the soul decisive and the body irrelevant? That is again the old principle: because the *polis* is a community of artisans, a community of human beings understood as artisans, but art is something belonging to the soul or to the mind and not to the body. So you see the simple overall thesis, man is artisan, leads to the abstraction from the body.

By the way, do we have any other Platonic utterances regarding the issue of the equality of the sexes?[62] Needless to say, there are of course no Platonic utterances,[63] [but rather] Socratic utterances or such things, but let us not be too subtle and simply use the vulgar practice. Does Plato say anything else about the two sexes which might be pertinent to help us at least in wondering whether this is the last word of Plato about the two sexes? In the *Republic* itself, a statement which[64] [is] reminding [one] of the beginning of the Bible: there was a perfect condition of man, the best polity, and then it was destroyed. There was a fall. Who started the Fall, according to the Bible—I mean, of the two sexes? We don't go into the ultimate. What does the Bible say? Eve. What does Plato say? Pardon?

Student: The wives.

LS: The woman. He doesn't call her Eve, but he says the woman. A woman is the one who comes in. She has a very nice husband—I mean, a very wise and just man, and he is absolutely indifferent to the petty things. And the woman says—I hate to say these things, but it's really Plato—the woman comes in with these petty things, [saying, for example]: "You are always pushed back by Mr. Jones, and I don't like that because Mrs. Jones also pushes me back on this ground. You must resist. You must fight for your position." And that starts it.[xxiv] And now you could of course say—I mean, whether this is naturally a purely historical remark . . . and therefore no one should feel in any way offended by that, but of course one could of course say in defense of the fair sex that this is perhaps a description of the conventional society where the women were assigned this[65] position within the house and the pettier sphere, and that created or enforced their petty habits. But, therefore, is there any other Platonic utterance on the subject?

Student: Well, this is probably not what you're referring to, but[66] in the very next distinctions, where he talks about the male sex broadly speaking surpassing the women in most arts, that seems to be very important to—

LS: [67]Yes, but is it not always reduced to strength and weakness?

Student: It's not quite clear.

LS: I mean, I don't know which passage you mean.

Student: He gives a general principle that although any given art may have—as a general principle we do not find one sex far surpassing the other—

Different student: In 455d—

LS: 455b—b or d?

Student: 455d: "'You are right,' he said, 'that the one sex is far surpassed by the other in everything, one may say.'"

LS: Yes, but that is what Glaucon says. I mean, maybe Glaucon is—

Student: But Socrates says that before. "'Do you know, then, of anything practiced by mankind in which the masculine sex does not surpass the female on all these points?'"

LS: Yes? Go on. Yes, surpassing, that is not so simple. The Greek word [. . .] means ordinarily of course something like "superiority," but literally it means differences.

[xxiv] 549c2-e2.

Differences.[xxv] Now go on. But I will not press this point. Go on. "Or[68] are we not prolix in mentioning the weaving arts."[xxvi] Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Must we make a long story of it by alleging weaving and the watching of pancakes and the boiling pot, whereon the sex plumes itself and wherein its defeat will expose it to most laughter?" "You are right," he said, "that the one sex is far surpassed by the other in everything, one may say. Many women, it is true, are better than many men in many things, but broadly speaking, it is as you say."

LS: Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Then there is no pursuit of the administrators of a state that belongs to a woman because she is a woman or to a man because he is a man. But the natural capacities are distributed alike among both creatures, and women naturally share in all pursuits and men in all—yet for all the woman is weaker than the man." (455d-e)

LS: Yes, yes. You see, then it is reduced again to that overall formula, "weaker," and which could be taken in the narrow sense as bodily strength. Yes? I mean, you wouldn't say, for example, the woman physician in the best case is inferior to the best physician because she can't carry a body in the way in which a male physician could do it. You see? Well, I admit there is something here, there is no question, but it—yes?

Student: Could this imply the possibility that in the best *polis*, the number of male guardians is not the same as the number of female guardians and therefore—and with community of women there would be no problem as to equality of number?

LS: That—by the way, why should this be the case?

Student: Pardon?

LS: Why should there be less males than females, because of war?

Student: Less females than males.

LS: Pardon?

Student: I said it might imply less females than males.

LS: Why?

[xxv] Strauss is referring to Socrates's phrase *echein diapherontōs*. Glaucon employs a different expression, *krateitai*, is his response, but Shorey blurs this distinction by translating both as "surpassed."
[xxvi] Strauss here translates 455c6.

Student: Because if there aren't as many women of the nature of the guardians . . . as there are of men, then there would be more women whose natures would not befit them to become guardians.

LS: I see. In other words, you would have, say, a thousand male guardians and two hundred female guardians.

Student: That's what I'm questioning, what I'm wondering about.

LS: Yes, that is a very legitimate question, and what would be the consequence of that? I see; there would be a very severe competition among the males, then. Is that what you are driving at? That's a good point, because it would[69] both facilitate and complicate the task of the rulers in assigning the best males to the best females. That's true. At any rate, there are some other considerations: that Plato was free from the vulgar prejudices about the female sex, that simply goes without saying; and that in quite a few cases the females are superior intellectually also to the males is also a well-known fact and was known to Plato. But you see, there is one point which one should consider. When Xenophon wrote his Socratic conversations, he wrote a few conversations between Socrates and artisans; and this chapter, if I remember well, is followed by a conversation between Socrates and a woman. Now she was a woman of loose morals, as it appears, but unusually beautiful, and Socrates had a conversation with her about how to catch men. She didn't know anything about it. Socrates was much better at that, and it's a very amusing thing, *Memorabilia* 3.11, and if you want to enjoy yourselves you ought to read it. Now what about [Plato]? If you look at Plato's personnel, there is never a conversation between Socrates and artisans in Plato. What about conversations between Socrates and women? Are there such conversations there?

Student: There's a recorded one. There's a recorded one, isn't there?

LS: Which one?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, and there is another recorded one.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, the *Menexenus*.[xxvii] And there is only one which takes place, so to speak, before our eyes. Pardon? Which?

Student: In the *Apology*.

LS: No.

Student: Get that woman out—that one.

[xxvii] *Menexenus* 235e3ff.

LS: *Phaedo*. *Phaedo*. His own wife.[xxviii] That is all.[70] Yes, but that of course is only [a] humorous illustration. But as I said, one must always use one's own head in studying Plato and think of the evidence which Plato [has provided]. You see, after all, there were historical books. There were the poets. There were the myths, and the myths, while they may not be literally true—but after all, Pallas Athenae, that was quite a girl, if I may say so, and so the people who created that myth surely did not believe that the women are simply inferior. Yes?[71] Yes, now we have some more evidence than Plato had because a few centuries—millennia—have passed. Now let us look at the interesting case, not shoemakers but governors, statesmen. What about the record in this respect? Pardon?[72] Did women distinguish themselves in that field?

Student: Yes.

LS: For example?

Same Student: Elizabeth the Great. You can hardly find a better case.

LS: Yes, most people would—I would agree with you, but you have some more. You have Caroline the Great of Russia.

Student: You have Catherine, and even this was—

LS: Yes. Well, we are not speaking now of her private morals. And I think you [could] find more. [73] You don't have to go so far.[74] I have seen business women[75] [who] were fantastically clever, much more than most men are. Good.[76] And I think that one would probably find a long list of outstanding women in practice: politics, business, and so on. But what was the other capacity with which Plato is particularly concerned in this book? Kings we had; what about philosophers? Yes, we have the galaxy of great rulers and we have seen Elizabeth I and Catherine II,[xxix] and you would probably think of some more if you would—they are [. . .] But what about the philosophers?

Student: Nor is there a first-rate mathematician.

LS: Yes, we are not speaking—I see. Well. [Laughter] Let us leave it at the philosophers. So you would say zero. Zero. You would say zero.

Student: Yes.

LS: Zero. Good.[77] That was also my impression, and I said that is part of the irony of Plato, that he says these foolish he-men who always say they are so far superior to women, but in that activity of which they are so boastful, namely, rulers, governors, quite a few women could do the same thing. You remember the story. What was the name? [. . .] the famous Dutch leader in the sixteenth century who had such a shrewd

[xxviii] *Phaedo* 59e8-60b1.
[xxix] Of England and Russia, respectively.

grandmother?[78][xxx] He was very young, twenty-one, when he was compelled to go into politics. The family compelled that. And he was afraid of these things, and she, the old wise woman, told him: You have no notion with how little intelligence the world is governed. And you see, she knew the secret.[79] Good. In other words, that, I think, is the irony: that this [thing] of which the he-men are so boastful women can do, but that which the he-men themselves despise as unworthy of—you know, philosophy—they cannot do. Well, I explained this once to a class in an upstate New York college twenty years ago, and the man in charge of the class—I was there a visitor—said, "But you have forgotten Susan Stebbing."[xxxi] And then I simply said: "I'm very sorry; I'd forgotten." But this is I think a very—what, I don't know. Oh, you must know, you come from Britain. She was a very respectable professor of logic, I believe.

Student: Yes.

LS: Yes, but she would not belong to—yes, good. So now let us go on, and now let us turn to the communism of women and children question proper. Now this of course has[80] [been] prepared especially by the noble lie. You will recall the teaching was all fellow citizens are brothers.[xxxii] Now if this is taken literally, it means they don't have mothers, different mothers, only one mother. They don't have[81] different mothers. There is no family, and that is developed here. Socrates asserts here that the usefulness of the community of women and children will be admitted without any doubt; only its feasibility might be questioned. He requests Glaucon to permit him, at any rate, to discuss the usefulness first. He says—well, like daydreamers, you know, who try to figure out what would happen if they had a million dollars [and] what they would do with it, and going to the question of how they get the million dollars only afterward, if at all. Now that is exactly what Socrates is in fact doing. The feasibility of communism of women and children is never discussed.[82] Yes, there is so much which we must postpone, and we will begin with 459a at the beginning to see the character of the argument. No, we must begin a little bit before[83], 459, at the end of 458e. "It is manifest that afterwards we will make marriages." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
Obviously, then, we must arrange marriages, sacramental so far as may be. And the most sacred marriages would be those that were most beneficial.

LS: "Most useful." That's a grave statement. You see how revolutionary, how sacrilegious Plato can be. The most sacred marriages are the most useful. Usefulness for the *polis* replaces the criterion of sacredness. That is only the beginning. Now let's go on.

Mr. Reinken:

[xxx] Charles V (1500-1558), born in Flanders, inherited the Spanish Empire in 1516, and was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. In 1506, he became ruler of the Habsburg Netherlands. His aunt, Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), acted as regent 1506-1515 and then again 1519-1530.
[xxxi] Lizzie Susan Stebbing (1885-1943), analytic philosopher whose works include *A Modern Introduction to Logic* (1930), and *Thinking to Some Purpose* (1939).
[xxxii] Plato *Republic* 414e1-415a5.

"By all means." "How, then, would the greatest benefit result? Tell me this, Glaucon. I see that you have in your house hunting-dogs and a number of pedigree cocks. Have you ever considered something about their unions and procreations?" "What?" he said. (458e-459a)

LS: And so on. Now this is again the key: the brutes. Now what is the most obvious difference between brutes and men regarding sexual union, at least from a moral point of view? I suppose some of you have had dogs or cats or any other animals and know that. Mr. Faulkner, you seem—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Can you state it more neatly, more clearly? Yes, surely there is no marriage.

Mr. Faulkner: Monogamy.

LS: Yes, but here is strictly speaking—there is no monogamy. I mean, some particularly first rate champ can be assigned *n* different wives. You know? Yes?

Student: There would seem to be some attachment in marriage apart from mating.

LS: Yes, that comes [up]. But still, very massive, the most striking thing and shocking thing. Yes?

Student: The animals get in heat and men are capable of—

LS: That is a very important consideration indeed, and therefore the question of human restraint[84] becomes important, because nature does not impose that restraint which is imposed on the animals by not having heat. That is true and a very important point, but [there is] another one which is still more obvious. Yes?[xxxiii] —also comes in. We have to take this up. Well, then I will say: incest. Have you ever seen a dog refraining from intercourse with a bitch because she is his mother? No, never. And that is the real theme here in this section. Now you see what the strange thing is which is happening, the really revolutionary change. It is a revolutionary change. When people speak of justice, and I mean not in classrooms or on the basis of certain textbooks of logical positivism but in a practical way, there are certain fundamental rules which are emphatically sacred, much more than laws regarding embezzlement and forged checks and so, and they are[85] what they now call, with an utterly shocking name, the taboos. Faith in taboos. Yes, but that is of course included[86] because they are truly the basis of society. No family without prohibition against incest, and if no family, that has again infinite consequences. And here Plato's teaching regarding justice is that this most immovable rule regarding human association must be changed very profoundly, and[87] this change is implied already in the method, in the reference to the brutes, where all these things do not exist.

[xxxiii] The tape was changed at this point.

That is not limited to Plato. When Locke discusses the same subject in, I believe, chapter 6 of his *Treatise on Government*, part 2, second treatise, he also starts from this example and says no.[xxxiv] Well, of course a much longer babyhood in the case of men requires that the bond between male and female in the case of men must be longer and firmer than, say, among dogs. But he doesn't say how long and he doesn't say how firm, and he doesn't even allude to the question of incest which means, I believe, in Locke that he regards the prohibition against incest not as [a] natural law prohibition but as [a] divine law prohibition. You know? Revealed by God.

But let us see how this proceeds. Yes, the model is again taken from brutes, as appears from the sequel, if you return to 459, c to d. In the case of men there is something necessary that he doesn't need in the case of dogs, horses, and so on, and that [means there] are drugs, but what kind of drugs?

Mr. Reinken:
"they will have to employ many of those drugs of which we were speaking. We thought that an inferior physician sufficed for bodies that do not need drugs but yield to diet and regimen. But when it is necessary to prescribe drugs we know that a more enterprising and venturesome physician is required."

LS: Yes, "a more courageous," literally. A man—or we could also say a man who has nerve to a much higher degree. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"True; but what is the pertinency?" "This," said I: "it seems likely that our rulers will have to make considerable use of falsehood and deception for the benefit of their subjects. We said, I believe, that the use of that sort of thing was in the category of medicine." "And that was right," he said. (459c-d)

LS: Yes. And so on. In other words, the drugs will prove to consist in certain sacrifices and festivals, but they[88] [serve] as a subterfuge, and that is necessary in the case of men, not in the case of horses, dogs, and birds. So there is an essential difference between men and brutes, but[89] why do they need drugs? Why can they not do what every animal breeder does—you know, find the best stallion and the best mare and put them together? Yes? Or similar things with bulls and so on and so on. Why this ado in the case of this champ who gets the most attractive woman guardian? Why is that ado necessary, and why is not mere command sufficient? Drugs are needed. Well, in the first—yes?

Student: Everybody thinks he's a champ.

LS: Is a champ? Yes. [Laughter] Yes, but[90] he doesn't act as physician. The rulers will dictate. The rulers will get you and her[91] [together], and not otherwise. Why[92] does this not work? Yes?

[xxxiv] Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, chapter 7, sections 79-83.

Student: Hasn't convention been that human beings don't couple in the same way animals are used to coupling?

LS: Yes, but what is the precise point? I mean, we are not interested—

Student: Convention is the point I'm trying to—

LS: Yes, the convention—but we are now concerned not with the convention but with the possible basis of convention. The convention is out. I mean, we[93] live now in a natural society where conventions as such are out.

Student: I might be able to suggest it might be at this point whether you like it or not. You are not really solely dealing with the rational part of the human beings involved and that you need to build the thing up into some kind of an emotional whatever it is.

LS: Yes, I will—I'm sorry. The subject is delicate, and we try to keep it as delicate as we can.

Student: Isn't this simply that the animals aren't choosy, and you offer a stallion the first mare he sees?

LS: Yes, exactly.[94] One of my colleagues, Edward Banfield,[xxxv] whom some of you will remember, had a wonderful bitch, really a very nice bitch, but she associated with the ugliest males and the offspring had to be disposed of. You see, they are not choosy, and therefore the problem is, in other words—yes, but that is exactly—. Now we come to the point. That is a part of what we mean by *eros*. Yes?

Student: It's choosy.

LS: Yes, it's choosy. I mean, it may be a bad choice, that's another matter, but it is the choice of this or that. As they formerly said: [. . .] "not any woman, but this woman." There may be unfortunately a change in the course of time, so one this year, another next year; but still it is not indiscriminate except on the lowest levels of men, and we see here now a bit better what the abstraction from *eros* means. *Eros* is utterly disregarded; I mean, whether he loves her [becomes a] wholly irrelevant consideration. Whether they are likely to breed the best thing [is all that matters], and then of course[95] you need drugs.

Well,[96] the first passage which I read is not so important, although it should be mentioned. You know, the simple command is not sufficient also for this reason, and that is the question which will come out later with a vengeance, because there are limits to force. You have one or two, maybe three rulers, who are probably oldish men, and then you have these marvelous hoplites[97] in the prime of their youth. They cannot be absolutely pushed around. I mean, there are limits to what you can command them [to do], and therefore you[98] need persuasion, but here there is something which is not

[xxxv] Edward Banfield (1916-1999) was a member of the political science department at the University of Chicago until 1959, when he went to Harvard.

persuadable. Yes? I mean, *eros* is not persuadable. I mean, then it is not a real erotic attachment if you can still say, "She is not good," but[99] if is a real erotic passion then it is invincible, as Socrates puts it.

So the demotion of *eros* in favor of the *polis* is absolutely essential. Now in this connection, there is another proposal which for us surely is very shocking, although these things were very shocking for the Greeks, too, which I mention now. But [there is] another one which is not so shocking for them as it is for us: exposure to infants is frequently stated and without any hesitation. Let us turn then to 460a3, at the beginning, simpler to take in Shorey page 462, his note *a*, where you will find it.

Mr. Reinken: "But the number of the marriages we will leave to the discretion of the rulers—"?

LS: No—

Mr. Reinken: "We shall, then, have to ordain certain festivals and sacrifices—"

LS: No, no. On page 463, top, in Shorey.

Mr. Reinken: "Certain ingenious lots, then, I suppose—"

LS: No, no, no: "they may keep the number of the citizens as nearly as may be the same." Yes? Now read Shorey's note.

Mr. Reinken: Oh, the note. I see. "Plato apparently forgets that this legislation applies only to the guardians."

LS: He knows. Well, you know, when Aristotle says it is uncertain and unclear in the *Republic* whether this legislation applies only to the guardians or to the guardians [and all the citizens].[xxxvi] He[xxxvii] says dogmatically [that] Aristotle is wrong, but when he comes across a passage which speaks in favor of Aristotle's doubt, he says: Well, Plato has forgotten what I, Shorey, know. That's the point. Now that is[100] just disgraceful here. No, but the interesting thing is not this. He says "citizens." Plato says that they must keep the number of the men, of the male men, the same. That has something to do with the point which Mr. Seltzer raised. He is not so much concerned—you know, that's very strange. We have perfect equality of the sexes. The number which must be preserved is the number of the male fighters, so the equality of the sexes is not so obvious. Now we come[101] [to] the key issue in 461b at the end. Now where is that?

Mr. Reinken: "But when—"

LS: No, one moment. On page 467, yes? Line 7 on page 467. Yes?

[xxxvi] Aristotle *Politics* 1264a11-b6.
[xxxvii] That is, Shorey.

Mr. Reinken:
"But when, I take it, the men and the women have passed the age of lawful procreation, we shall leave the men free to form such relations with whomsoever they please, except daughter and mother and their direct descendants and ascendants, and likewise—"

LS: In other words, to forbid also sexual intercourse between great grandfathers and great granddaughters. Yes, and you can elaborate [on] that. It leads to interesting conversations. No, obviously—no, these questions were formerly discussed quite seriously,[102] especially by theologians who wanted to lay down very precise rules. You know? Good.

Mr. Reinken:
"and likewise the women, save with son and father, and so on, first admonishing them preferably not even to bring to light anything whatever thus conceived, but if they are unable to prevent a birth to dispose of it on the understanding that we cannot rear such an offspring."

LS: So in other words, incest is strictly forbidden. That is clear, in spite of the destruction of the family. Now Glaucon sees that difficulty.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. Now, wait. Yes, but even that is—now read Glaucon's objection.

Mr. Reinken:
"All that sounds reasonable," he said; "but how are they to distinguish one another's fathers and daughters, and the other degrees of kin what you have just mentioned?"

LS: In other words, it was a principle that no one knows his father and mother. How can he abstain from illicit intercourse with them? Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"They won't," said I, "except that a man will call all male offspring born in the tenth and in the seventh month after he became a bridegroom his sons, and all female, daughters, and they will call him father. And, similarly, he will call their offspring his grandchildren and they will call his group grandfathers and grandmothers. And all children born in the period in which their fathers and mothers were procreating will regard one another as brothers and sisters. This will suffice for the prohibition of intercourse of which we just now spoke. But the law will allow brothers and sisters to cohabit if the lot so falls out and the Delphic oracle approves." (461c-e)

LS: Yes. In other words, the explicit admission of incest between brothers and sisters. That's quite a story. Now in order to understand that one would have to—to appreciate that one would have to read *The Clouds*, Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where one of the accusations against [Socrates is] the key event. I mean, you know what the situation is. Some old crook heavily in debt[103] goes to Socrates in order to get instruction on how he

can talk himself out of his debt in law court, and he is persuaded by Socrates to deny the existence of Zeus and to commit other atrocious blasphemies. He doesn't have the slightest objection to that, but then when he finds out—after a long story through his son, who has become an adherent of Socrates—what Euripides, who spoke favorably of incest between brother and sister, [said], then he, the father, is absolutely shocked.[xxxviii] And that is the point where this old crook [. . .] turns against Socrates. That the gods do not exist: um. But that incest should be permitted is a thing . . . is unbearable. And here the same Socrates, the same Socrates teaches that. I mean, there it is Euripides whose verses are[104] [cited]. Here it is Socrates's own.

Student: Or the boy could beat his mother.

LS: Yes, that comes[105] [up, and] by the way, father beating comes up also later. We will see.

Student: But that's o.k., if I remember.

LS: Here.

Student: He can whip his father—

LS: Yes, that is true.[xxxix] Yes. But here Socrates also teaches father-whipping, as we will see. Yes?[106] I simply—we don't have the time. It would be interesting to see whether the prohibition against intercourse between son and mother and so on is sufficiently prevented by this stipulation here. I mean, I have not yet figured it out.[107] I mean, how far do they know? I mean, do they have badges where you can see—

Student: I got the impression that it was simply [that you should] roughly stay within your own age group.

LS: Yes, but that has become difficult. Yes, but that becomes—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, I know. No, but you see, the point is this. The stipulation here is more precise than what . . . You have here a division into generations. Yes? These are all brothers and sisters, and these are also brothers and sisters, but they are the fathers and mothers of this group.[108]Say, these are ones between twenty and forty, and these between forty and fifty: there is a margin where you can no longer clearly distinguish.

Student: Not likely. There may be a series of successive waves. It is not likely that that this society—everyone between 1920 and 1940 is a generation, but there's a class of 1920 which fathers the class of 1940. The woman who is a member, certainly, of the class of 1920: her son may not breed with [anyone from the class of] 1920. Now if she

[xxxviii] Aristophanes *Clouds* 1369-1377.
[xxxix] 1399-1446.

bred again in 1922—she might belong to several classes—she [faces][xl] taboos. A child of 1940 may not breed with a woman who happens to be in a class of 1920, but it[109] would not be inconsistent to assume that the woman would belong to more classes than one.

LS: Yes, all right. But still, since she however belongs to class 1920, as you put it, she is taboo—

Student: . . . from copulating with class 1940.

LS: That's clear. In other words, they must go around with badges, I say.

Student: No. The woman's not likely to forget the year in which she had a child.

LS: Yes, but[110] the point is this. Oh no, that's not so simple.[111] Incest in the [. . .] moral sense would already begin with erotic desire. You know? With erotic desire. I mean,[112] if it is so late that he learns only at the last-minute cohabitation proper is impossible, that's a Hippolytus[xli] problem; that's difficult. But the point [is that] he will simply know: Well, women[113] [of] 1920 on are completely out. Yes? And he must then recognize the women [of] 1920 immediately, so that they are completely out of any possible erotic consideration.

Student: Why doesn't he think of this? . . . He is concerned with the correct ages for breeding so that he would regard any breeding between a youth of seventeen and a woman of forty as improper, unbalanced, and likely to produce a bad child, whether they were[114] or weren't like kin, and he would prefer to keep the youths away from the class of . . .

LS: Yes. Well, let us not—may I only say I simply have not yet properly figured out how the lines are drawn in a clearly noticeable way, and that would be important for the—Mr. Seltzer, you have a solution?

Mr. Seltzer: Roughly speaking, it's you don't have relations with anybody who is born after you were married or after you first were mated. Therefore, you can tell this simply by sort of knowing who was born when, and when you were married. There is no marriage, so that it's when you first mate, and if someone was born, say, in 1962 and you first mated in 1961, then you know that you could never have relations with that person. And you just ask them.

LS: I see, yes. But that is[115] difficult, because after the passion has arisen, that's a terrible difficulty. At any rate, however this may be,[116] it would be very interesting to make—continue the comparison with Aristophanes. You see, Aristophanes wrote another play which is the immediate "source" of the *Republic*. That is *The Assembly of Women*[117] and that is, of course, also a marvelous thing. Here you have communism of women and

[xl] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xli] Hippolytus, illegitimate son of Theseus and subject of Euripides's play, *Hippolytus*. His stepmother, Phaedra, falls in love with him.

children, not equality of the two sexes, but rule of women, however. Now there the rule is this: Aristophanes's scheme is much more democratic. For the sake of equality, the whole thing is introduced.[118] But democracy means, of course, equality, as we know, but equality—and here is the trouble—means inequality for the superior ones. Well, in our language, equality is equality of opportunity, and this of course is in favor of those who can catch and use the opportunities more than the others. Now if all men can mate with all women, this means a privilege for the more attractive parts of the two sexes. Yes? I mean, say, the young girls would go in for the most attractive younger men and so on and so on. And therefore, in order to have true equality a new law is needed which corrects the inequality of nature, and that is that no young woman can cohabit with a young man before she has cohabited with an old man, and vice versa. Yes? That is an equality. Now Aristophanes of course wants to show the problem of equality in general, and as a comic poet he does it in this particular sphere. Now[119] here you have this situation: that once this is established, you have in fact compulsory incest. I mean, except accidentally, on the ascending and descending line; there is surely no prevention by law, and when no one knows his father and mother but everyone knows he must first cohabit with an older individual of the other sex.[xlii] And Plato's subtle reply is this: You are the wicked man, Aristophanes. You make[120] the grossest form of incest practically an obligation. I permit only the lighter sort, namely, between brothers and sisters. But let us now go on. Now—yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well,[121] that you can very well say, but on a certain level that is an unimpeachable argument, but the trouble is that the same Aristophanes claims in his comedies—that was possible for a certain technical reason—that he is[122] not only intending to make people laugh, but also to teach justice. In other words, Aristophanes claims to be not merely a comic poet, but also a teacher of justice. Now[123] here we have a teacher of justice, surely: Socrates. But this teacher of justice frequently speaks of the fact that it is impossible to draw a very simple line between the serious and the playful. Aristophanes is not merely a comic poet, and Plato is not merely a stern teacher of justice. Yes? That would be my answer.

Now in the sequel in 462, a great principle is laid down which is discussed at great length and with great clarity by Aristotle, namely, whatever makes the *polis* more one is good, and[124] what[ever] interferes with its unity is bad.[xliii] Now here the question arises—this is absolutely crucial and Aristotle rightly treats it as the central principle, but why has this key principle not been stated at the very beginning, because you could deduce all the institutions of the *Republic* from that? Now at the beginning[125] of the construction of the *polis* we had a parallelism between the *polis* and the individual.[xliv] You remember? In order to find out justice in the individual, we have to seek justice in the city. Now in this stage of the argument the city is commanded, as it were, that it should assimilate itself to the individual. The individual is superior to the city because he is much more one than

[xlii] Aristophanes *Assemblywomen* 609-636. See also 877-1111.
[xliii] Aristotle *Politics* 1261a15-b15, 1263b29-35.
[xliv] Plato *Republic* 368c7-369a4.

the *polis* can be. The city should be like a natural thing. The city is not primarily of the unity which a natural being can have. Originally the city was said to be the model. The city is the individual written large: we look at the city and then we recognize it in the individual.

Now the individual becomes, in a way, the model for the *polis*. This is continued in the sequel. In 463c—we cannot now read anything; I must only summarize the points which are important—it is said that all guardians, not all citizens, must regard one another as relatives. That is in a way trivial, but it is now clearer than before that this is a legal fiction. They are not relatives. They must regard one another as relatives. And this leads to the following interesting conclusion: the city according to nature, [the] good city, is in this most important respect more conventional than the ordinary city. In ordinary cities people regard[126] [each other] as relatives who are relatives. The marginal cases where adultery complicates the matter we can disregard. But in the best city there is no one who is a brother of someone else, but all must—and father and so on—but must regard themselves as relatives. The city according to nature is more conventional than—that is, by the way, I think also an element of Aristophanes's *Assembly of Women*. This most egalitarian society brings out more radically the fundamental inequality, and as a comic poet he takes the example of sexual inequality, but the same would of course apply to intellectual or any other inequalities. 464b, at the beginning: will you read that?

Mr. Reinken:
"But we further agreed that this unity is the greatest blessing for a state, and we compared a well governed state to the human body in its relation to the pleasure and pain of its parts." (464b)

LS: Yes, that is correct except he doesn't say "human body," [only] "the body." The good *polis* is like a single body. Yes. Of course, we would say an organic body. And that is very interesting. It is in a way the theme of the *polis* that we must abstract from the body. If anyone has any doubt I will show it to you[127]. We must abstract from the body. We look only at the soul, the *techne*, or whatever it is. We must abstract from the body of the individual in order to make the *polis* a body. That's the paradox. In 464d, shortly before e, can you read that speech?

Mr. Reinken:
"Then will not law-suits and accusations against one another vanish, one may say, from among them, because they have nothing in private possession but their bodies, but all else in common?" (464d)

LS: Yes. That's all. Everything is common in Plato's *polis*. Everything. [Even] the thoughts are common.[128] Well, in our age that is a familiar thing. How can thoughts be common, apparently the most private things in the world? How can they be common? Make the art of propaganda, as it is now called. People[129] can be induced by subliminal and other influences to think exactly alike, but the bodies can never be collectivized. The[130] individual's toothache cannot be felt by another man. He can have sympathy for him, but he cannot feel it unless he is a very morbid man who believes [himself] to feel it.

The body is[131] the truly private, and that is the limit. That statement is repeated, by the way, in the *Laws*: that everything is collectivized except the body.[xlv] Not only the belongings—they can of course can be collectivized easily—but even the thoughts can be shared, as we say. The bodies cannot be shared.

Now[132] in other words, to come back to the simple surface of the argument, our city is most perfectly one. There is no privacy to speak of, and the decisive step is the abolition of the family. No one has a nest where he can bring home gold, silver, or what have you. There is no place for it. Everyone can enter any room at any time. There is no privacy. The city is absolutely one, and therefore good. And the conclusion in 465e to 466c: the guardians are most happy.[133] You remember the doubt we had at the beginning of book 5 where it was still said [that] the *polis* is happy, and whether the parts are happy is of no interest.[xlvi] Now we have found a complete solution to the problem of justice. Justice and happiness go perfectly together. Justice is[134] most choiceworthy not only for its own sake—that Socrates claims to have proven by the end of book 4—but it is also most choiceworthy for its rewards, because the guardians will be honored greatly both while they are alive and after their death.[xlvii135] He has now proven that absolute communism regarding property, women, and children is desirable, and if we had it, we would have a complete solution to the problem of justice: justice choiceworthy for its own sake and for its consequences. But is this true? Is it possible? What is the use of a solution of the problem of justice based on a condition of which we do not know whether it can be fulfilled?

So in 466d Socrates says: Now let us find out whether the communism regarding women and children is possible. But alas, the question is dropped immediately and he turns to the question how they will wage war, which is something entirely different from the question of how communism of women and children is possible. And then there will be another return to the question, but the question is never answered unless the following discussions in the second half of book 5, books 6 and 7 contain implicitly an answer to the question how communism of wives and children is possible. But the explicit content of these books is fundamentally war and philosophy, war and wisdom: the two attributes of Pallas Athenae, a woman. So this much I will . . . Now it is rather late again, but [for] a few, say, five minutes, I can stay here. Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: A rather curious question: you raised the point that justice is art here . . . and then Aristophanes comes up with his very important distinction; in more ways than one I'm reminded of Aristophanes. How does Aristophanes stand with respect to this principle? I mean, just on the fact of it.

LS: Yes, that is very, very complicated. I cannot give you a simple answer to that.

Mr. Megati: Any answer will be helpful.

[xlv] *Laws* 739b8-d5.
[xlvi] Apparently a reference to *Republic* 419a1-421c7 at the beginning of book 4.
[xlvii] 465d2-466c5. See also 468c10-469b4.

LS: Well, in the first place, you must not forget, in Aristophanes, just as in Plato, most discussions of justice are on the practical level. For example: Is this war, the Peloponnesian War, a just war or not? I mean,[136] it is clear that embezzlement of public funds is unjust. Yes? And this kind of thing. Now the deeper question concerns—I mean, in all these questions there is an ultimate method:[xlviii] justice and the good of the *polis*, communism. The deeper question concerns the justice of the *polis* itself, and there that—I mean, that Aristophanes regards this as a question is shown by the fact that he experimented so frequently with utopian cities. There is the city of the *Birds*, and there is the *Assembly of Women*, and other plays, [such as] *Plutos*. *Plutos*—by the way, that's his last play—is particularly interesting in one respect. It has a certain similarity to the *Republic* in one respect. The *Republic* has one stratum which is very simple and which Aristotle of course[137] [brings out].[xlix] Injustice means to take away what belongs to others. Now if you take away mine and thine by communism, there is no possibility anymore of injustice. And Aristotle says: "Well, that does not dispose of the roots of injustice."[l] It amounts to that, [is] what he says.

Now in the *Plutos*, Aristophanes[138] makes this very interesting experiment, and that is also very topical today: Plutos is the god of wealth, and he is cured by[139] the god Asclepius, but at the instigation of an Athenian farmer. The Athenian farmer is a so-called honest man, who is honest but not absolutely honest.[140] He is contemplating whether it might not be better to be dishonest, and so he goes to the god in Delphi: How should he educate his son, in justice or in injustice, because it has become uncertain? And the god gives him an oracle, which is of course ambiguous, and the net result is that the god Plutus is made seeing instead of blind, and the consequence is from now on [that] the just will be rewarded with wealth and the unjust will be beggars.[li] You know? Or as the French [. . .] put it, the just men will become president of the Republic, deputies, directors of banks, and the unjust men will be schoolteachers and social critics and all these other less desirable professions.[141] But then something happens[142] which some people think was a flaw of the comedy: all men become just. Well, naturally. If it is so manifestly lucrative to be just because the god Plutus is seeing you, everyone would be just. So you have a society which is perfectly just[143] because it is perfectly affluent.

Now what has this to do with the question of art? I do not see the direct connection, but that Aristophanes was very much concerned with the question of the arts in this form—

Student: I thought Aristophanes transcended Thrasymachus insofar as comedians transcend, say, tragedy.

LS: Yes, but what is tragedy? What is comedy? What seems striking in Aristophanes, as I said, is that he is very—I mean, the official line, well, that one must say: there was a certain line about justice among the respectable people, and that was of course a conservative line. I mean,[144] you must not apply this literally to present-day America but

[xlviii] In the transcript: "method (?)"
[xlix] The transcript has a blank space here.
[l] See Aristotle *Politics* 1262b37-1263a1-20, 1263b15-29.
[li] Aristophanes *Plutos* 627ff.

in old times. And the conservative line was that the old order of society prior to the extreme democracy, what they called the ancestral polity, that was the right thing. At that time there were elections, but that was very rarely, of course: once a year the peasantry assembled and elected [officials] from the higher classes, because the peasantry had work to do. They didn't sit in juries and all this kind of thing.[145] So in other words, the families, the old families, and the peasantry. And the newer classes, to whom the artisans in particular also belonged—that was not so good. And for example, you know that people like Cleon[lii][146] came from Athens.

Student: Does Aristophanes suggest this?

LS: Yes, sure. Yes, but in a deeper stratum of Aristophanes an entirely different view of art appears, or of the artisans: that they are in a way higher than the people. And that has of course to do with the fact that he himself was a kind of artisan. I cannot answer your question now. I mean, I know that's no answer.

Student: I have a question entirely apart from that. In introducing and sort of permitting incest, Socrates tends to adduce natural evidence. I'm thinking of Grotius and Pufendorf,[liii] who come a few centuries later. In order to introduce the family and at the same time the fact that incest is such an unnatural thing, they call to some of the higher primates that are close to man, insisting that these animals could refrain from incestuous relations. Now doesn't this—

LS: [147]Pufendorf I haven't looked at for a very long time, but Grotius's argument, if I remember well, is precisely[148] what is stated in Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* and also here: that incest between parents and children is against nature on the simple consideration of [. . .] undesirability, you know[liv] . . . And, if I remember well, Grotius says that the ordinary provisions against incest are [found in] divine law . . .

Same Student: But divine law because of—

LS: No, no, no. That does not mean divine. Divine law means revealed, and we cannot discern that. I will give you another example. If you look up such a late book by such a severe moralist as Kant and read what he says about marriage, and [how] he develops that, there is not even a reference to the prohibition against incest.[lv] I think that in Hegel,

[lii] Cleon, Athenian leader in post-Periclean Athens and a general during the Peloponnesian War, was not from the aristocratic classes of the city. For portrayals of Cleon, see Aristophanes's *Knights*, Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and Plutarch's *Life of Nicias*.
[liii] Hugo Grotius, *The Law of War and Peace* (*De Jure Belli ac Paci Libri Tres*), trans. Francis W. Kelsey (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1925), bk. 2, chap. 5, sec. 12, par. 1, pp. 239; Samuel Pufendorf, *The Law of Nature and Nations. Eight Books*, trans. Basil Kennett, 3d ed. (London, 1717), bk. 6, chap 1, sec. 28, p. 354.
[liv] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.4.19-23.
[lv] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 61-64, 179-180.

on the other hand, you find very beautiful deductions of the prohibition against incest even among brothers and sisters.[lvi]

Same Student: No, I was sticking to these others because of nature, the idea of nature.

LS: Yes,[149] nature always enters, but the question is—I mean, I don't remember having read that. Maybe in Pufendorf. I don't think I have seen anything in Grotius about that. I think the overriding view was that the prohibition[s] against incest,[150] especially [between] brother and sister, are not based on natural law, as far as my knowledge goes.

Same Student: The only thing I can do is find the reference, but I remember in Grotius this reference to—I translate it as higher primates, but I mean apes or chimpanzees.

LS: Yes. Well, I'm surprised if Grotius would have regarded that in these particular beings. You know, they didn't have the high status which they acquired in the nineteenth century through Darwin.

Same Student: Yes, but nonetheless—

LS: Good. All right, look it up. Look it up. Yes? That's the last question.

Student: Could I—

LS: No, all right.

Student: I'm still in search of justice, you might say. I was asked a question yesterday. I'm still baffled as I have been for many years about exactly what happens to justice in the end of this book.

LS: I hope you will be.

Same student: It's a very difficult thing, but I'm wondering whether—I have the impression that there may be something in this idea that in the ideal state which is given as a picture, almost, you might say; sort of a static model, if you think of it that way.

LS: Yes, you must think of it.

Same student: In this sense, it has sort of a formal property of a model. I mean, without any moral connotations—

LS: No, that is impossible, to make that distinction. That is impossible. I mean, it is something noble.[151] I mean, it's not a model in the sense of—

[lvi] G.F.W. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §161–168.

Same Student: Yes, but in this sense: that it vanishes. Because then you're talking about a model to a large extent, aren't you? This is the main point which I wanted to make.

LS: No, that is[152] very bad of you. I mean, you must—it is not a model in the sense of present-day scientific methodology. It is a model of perfection, of nobility. [153]The *Republic* is a kind of shining temple on a hill, and that is, the resplendence and the height are absolutely essential to it.[154] That is of course only the first impression.[155] On closer inspection the shining temple may transform itself into a big question mark, and then we have to find the true perfection.

Student: But in terms of understanding the *Republic*, I think from my point of view it's not that it's illegitimate to regard it as a temple, but also to look at it in the light of a sort of, well, commonsense type. Really, this isn't the important thing which I wanted to talk about, although this could be discussed. I was wondering when you were talking about this business of the abstraction from the body, that if this city is to become a body you must abstract from it, and it's noticeable that from now on that [the] body of the individual is less and less thought of in the next few books . . . and also there's very little mention of justice in proportion to what has been done before.

LS: All right. All right, I grant you quite a few things, but where do you—

Same Student: The thing is, I'm wondering whether there is some connection between the sort of thing that you were saying yesterday about the justice in the individual being to some extent concerned with the body, tied in with the body, and that if—I mean, this is only tentative—where if you abstract from the body, whether this is in a way explaining the asymmetry in the notion of justice in the city and justice in the individual, that as you think[156] less and less in terms of the body, so justice in the individual tends to fade out of the picture because the city doesn't have that kind of a need.

LS: Yes,[157] there are two poles, I would say. At one pole, you have justice on the lowest level as a social virtue—I mean, what you need even for the gang of robbers, that's the lowest level. Any people living together must comply with certain crude rules equally obeyed by all. And at the other extreme pole you have the, so to say, perfectly transocial, perfectly just individual: the philosopher. Yes? That comes out in books 5 to 7. These are the two extremes, and these two extremes are as such the least interesting, because what we understand[158] for any practical purpose by justice is more than this [individual][lvii] and less than the city. Is this intelligible to you?[159] But on the other hand, I think Plato means we cannot understand these intermediate things which are so decisively important if we haven't understood both [extremes].[160] And one could perhaps say that all forms of justice which are of any importance, any respectability, are generated by a mating of these two principles. Yes? I mean the perfectly self-sufficient individual who as self-sufficient doesn't need any others[161] and [whose] dignity consists in his being self-sufficient, and the lowest level, that of any society, however low,[162] where there must be a give and take and some form [of] evaluation of the others if it is to exist: both have to enter. Both have to enter, and that—by the way, I never said it as simply as before.[163]

[lvii] The transcript has blank space here.

That I think one can say, that one has the perfect city and there are various levels, you know? There are various levels. For example, if you take the argument of book 2 in the light of the remark about the gang of robbers in book 1,[lviii] these musical guardians, the musical soldiers, the highest goal of their education is *eros* for the beautiful.[lix] That is a kind of divination of what philosophy means. By virtue of this divination, the guardians' society is much, much higher than the gang of robbers, but since it is only a divination it is of course lower, yes? I mean, that can be proved very easily because even the rulers of the guardians—I mean, they are[164] higher than the guardians—as described hitherto [they] are subphilosophic and therefore point to the philosophers.

Student: [165]In terms of understanding the *Republic*, [it seems to me that you] get very parallel things, [and this] seems to me the object. I've got to be vague, but roughly . . . if you can talk about an argument it also runs on different levels, and the richness of the *Republic* lies in the tension and the way that he almost slides between one level—

LS: No, the richness is absolutely overwhelming, but the only thing which one[166]—I think if one does not become penetrated by the sense of its richness, one will never understand anything. But one thing one must say as a warning: that must not[167] lead one to give up the articulation of the richness, but it must be an encouragement to do one's best to articulate it. I mean, that is a mere assertion on my part, but I believe now that this simple thing I stated about justice as art and that man is an artisan, this hypothesis which is not ultimately true, but if—but I believe that from this premise one could develop—which I cannot do now, I mean not only because it is so late but I would need a few more months of careful study at least—one could understand all the complexities of the argument up to the point where we are now. Then, in other words, the richness would not be merely divined, but it would[168] become perfectly lucid, and then one could say one has understood the *Republic* to that extent. That is necessary. Now Rabbi Weiss, and that's the last question.

Rabbi Weiss: So far as the possibility of women becoming philosophers, what would you say about Diotima?

LS: Yes, all right,[169] what I said was only this point: that she never appears on the stage in the Platonic theater. Socrates tells us of her, and you are confronted with the question: Did she really say it, or did he for one reason or another make it up, just as in the *Menexenos* he gives a funeral speech which he had heard the day before yesterday or so from the mouth of Aspasia? You know, the girlfriend of Pericles and a foreign woman, a foreigner and a woman who has made a speech for the fallen Athenian soldiers which no Athenian male could have made so perfectly. [lx] You know? I mean,[170] if you believe the one you can believe the other, and vice versa.[171] And one would have to go into the question of what the *Banquet* as a whole means in order to see why Socrates introduces there such a priestess from very far from town for this purpose. Good.

[lviii] Plato *Republic* 351c7-352a4.
[lix] Apparently a reference to 401b1-403c8 (in book 3).
[lx] Plato *Symposium* 201d1ff; *Menexenus* 236a8ff.

[1] Deleted "is—."
[2] Deleted "he describes—in the *Laws*, when."
[3] Changed from "It's only an armed camp and never—there is no one ever taken out of the herd—you know, the—and given the training for himself."
[4] Deleted "is—here."
[5] Deleted "this—no."
[6] Deleted "to—I mean, that is—."
[7] Deleted "is—."
[8] Deleted "do—to."
[9] Deleted "and."
[10] Changed from "Now this is linked up with the—I mean, the basis for this has been left in the Thrasymachus section when it was said that the artisan as artisan is infallible—you remember—is infallible, and has—is in no way concerned with his reward."
[11] Deleted "—what is—what."
[12] Deleted "that you have—."
[13] Deleted "—but it would—."
[14] Deleted "the—."
[15] Deleted "whether—."
[16] Deleted "haven't—."
[17] Deleted "this however—."
[18] Deleted "and—."
[19] Deleted "there is no—."
[20] Deleted "At the—."
[21] Changed from "In other words, we have—I mean every vote is a kind of—is a political action, of course, and you can say anywhere where a vote is taken there is a kind of polis."
[22] Deleted "it appears—."
[23] Deleted "what is—."
[24] Changed from "Now let us look at—near the beginning: 450b—yes? When Thrasymachus makes his last speech—Socrates is still trying to evade and what does Thrasymachus say in 450b?"
[25] Deleted "more—.'
[26] Deleted "is—."
[27] Deleted "and this is—."
[28] Deleted "doesn't know—."
[29] Deleted "one—."
[30] Deleted "I think—."
[31] Deleted "that is—."
[32] Deleted "Where did this."
[33] Deleted "why is this—."
[34] Deleted "Yes, what—so what is the—."
[35] Deleted "that is the—.'
[36] Changed from "Now you see the proof is given by an example, by an example of dogs, by—or more generally, by the example of any irrational animal."
[37] Deleted "Now you see the proof is given by an example, by an example of dogs, by—or more generally, by the example of any irrational animal."
[38] Deleted "on a few more—."
[39] Deleted "made—of course, this is now."
[40] Deleted "means—."
[41] Deleted "many—I mean."
[42] Deleted "the overall characteristic of—or."
[43] Deleted "is—."
[44] Deleted "it is a—."
[45] Deleted "not—yes."
[46] Deleted "—perhaps in—well."
[47] Deleted "whether the female nature—yes—."
[48] Deleted "it—the—that."

[49] Deleted "this—what does—."
[50] Deleted "wife and children."
[51] Deleted "Now—."
[52] Deleted "given."
[53] Deleted "of—for example, there is—."
[54] Deleted "of—yes."
[55] Deleted "That is—."
[56] Deleted "the."
[57] Deleted "is ."
[58] Deleted "and—all right."
[59] Deleted "it."
[60] Deleted "They have—.'
[61] Deleted "—Plato—why."
[62] Deleted "I mean, well these—."
[63] Deleted "meaning."
[64] Deleted "this straight suggested power."
[65] Deleted "—you know, the."
[66] Deleted "in the next—."
[67] Changed from "Yes, but does—is it not always referred, reduced to strength and weakness?"
[68] Deleted "do we not—."
[69] Deleted "then explain—it would."
[70] Changed from "Yes, but that, of course, is only—are some humorous illustrations, but it—as I said, one must always use one's own head in studying Plato and think not only of the—I mean, think of the evidence which Plato has.'
[71] Changed from "Yes, now if we use—we have some more evidence than Plato had because a few centuries—millenia have passed."
[72] Deleted "Are there some—.'
[73] Deleted "you find—."
[74] Deleted "You find—."
[75] Deleted "you."
[76] Deleted "So—."
[77] Deleted "I—."
[78] Changed from "who—and he was afraid—he was very young, 21, when he was compelled to go into politics."
[79] Deleted "And—."
[80] Deleted "—is."
[81] Deleted "—they don't have."
[82] Deleted "There is—."
[83] Deleted "after."
[84] Deleted "—you know—."
[85] Deleted "these—."
[86] Deleted "but."
[87] Deleted "here we see—and."
[88] Deleted "fulfill."
[89] Deleted "what is"
[90] Deleted "that—one could say all right you—but."
[91] Deleted "—you know—."
[92] Deleted "is this not—."
[93] Deleted "are—."
[94] Deleted "Well, I mean, I know—."
[95] Deleted "this—then."
[96] Deleted "I mentioned—."
[97] Deleted "—you know—."
[98] Deleted "must."
[99] Deleted "it."
[100] Deleted "only—it's."

[101] Deleted "—we are not approaching."
[102] Deleted "by—
[103] Deleted "tries—."
[104] Deleted "said."
[105] Deleted "—that comes—."
[106] Moved "Later."
[107] Deleted "I have not yet figured it out. Here."
[108] Deleted "Now if—but the lines—you see, I mean."
[109] Deleted "could be—it."
[110] Deleted "—you see, but."
[111] Changed from "Where—the incest in the moral sense would already begin with erotic desire."
[112] Deleted "that—."
[113] Deleted "with."
[114] Deleted "utterly—were."
[115] Deleted "—that is."
[116] Deleted "and—it is—I would like—."
[117] Deleted "and that contains."
[118] Changed from "And now—but democracy means, of course, equality as we know, but equality—and here is the trouble—means inequality for the superior ones."
[119] Deleted "—but since—."
[120] Deleted "it practically—you make."
[121] Deleted "to which I can—yes, sure that is—."
[122] Deleted "teaching—is."
[123] Deleted "—you know?"
[124] Deleted "what makes it—."
[125] Deleted "we had—at the beginning, I mean."
[126] Deleted "themselves."
[127] Deleted "yes—no, we must abstract from the body."
[128] Deleted "and that—."
[129] Deleted "think—."
[130] Deleted "man's—."
[131] Moved "absolutely." Deleted "—the body is."
[132] Deleted "—and then—.'
[133] Deleted "Not—."
[134] Deleted "not—is."
[135] Changed from "And then he turns, after he has proven—he has now proven that absolute communism regarding property, women, and children is desirable and—is desirable, and if we had it we would have a complete solution to the problem of justice: justice choiceworthy for its own sake and choiceworthy for its consequences."
[136] Deleted "and."
[137] Deleted "without."
[138] Deleted "has—."
[139] Deleted "an Athenian farmer—no, rather by."
[140] Deleted "You know, so."
[141] Deleted "And then—yes."
[142] Deleted "and."
[143] Deleted "and."
[144] Deleted "I say not—."
[145] Deleted "and that was"
[146] Deleted "—they were—."
[147] Deleted "Yes, I believe—I mean, I haven't read Puffendorf for some time, but if I remember well Puffendorf's—I meant Grotius."
[148] Deleted "that."
[149] Deleted "but nature always enters—it all has to do with."
[150] Deleted "—I mean."
[151] Deleted "That is meant to be—."

[152] Deleted "—that is."
[153] Deleted "I say—I mean if I use—I mean.'
[154] Deleted "I mean, it may be—."
[155] Deleted "It may prove to be—."
[156] Deleted "in terms of the—."
[157] Deleted "or—yes, that I don't know, but you—one could say—."
[158] Deleted "in any—."
[159] Deleted "And the point—and the—."
[160] Changed from "And all—one could perhaps say that all forms of justice which are of any importance, any respectability, are—have become generated by a mating of these two principles."
[161] Deleted "—yes—and who is—who is—his."
[162] Deleted "who must—.'
[163] Changed from "That I think one can say: that one has—and the perfect city—yes, and there are various levels."
[164] Deleted "they are."
[165] Changed from "It's in terms also of—in terms of understating the Republic—that if you get very parallel things—that it seems to me that the object—or this is—again, I've got to be vague—but roughly…"
[166] Deleted "—and one—I think."
[167] Deleted "be—."
[168] Deleted "be—."
[169] Deleted "let us assume—."
[170] Deleted "the same—I mean."
[171] Deleted "That is one—."

Session 9: October 30, 1961
Book 5, part 2: Philosophy

Leo Strauss: I think I would like to take up only one or two points you make in your paper, because it is more practical to take the things up as they arise.[i] You seem to have the impression that in this section there is a greater emphasis on force, on attack and such things than before. Is this not true?

Student: Yes.

LS: What is the basis of that?

Student: Well, in the structure of three discussions, the first discussion being war.

LS: Oh, you mean first the subject matter.

Student: The subject matter, yes.

LS: Number one. All right. And—but . . . the way in which they speak about the subject matter? I mean, was there not a violent reaction of Glaucon to the first city? You remember? To the city of pigs.[ii] And do you have the feeling the action is more violent here, somehow?

Student: I have the feeling both that the action is more violent and that the consequences of the violence are greater, and that here the risk is heightened and a misstep would be more disastrous.

LS: Yes, that is surely a plausible suggestion, and of course it would have to be established precisely by a very precise comparison from the other [discussion of war] . . . before. Isn't that right? . . . Now then you made another point. You said the question of possibility is put on a broader basis. You know? What did you mean by that? I mean, what is the narrow basis?

Student: I meant to say in a broader frame of discussion.

LS: Can you explain that, the difference between the two discussions of possibility?

Student: The first time it seemed that the questions were directed to whether or not it is possible for men to live in a particular type of institution, namely, the community of men and women, and this is possible among the women or among the animals. The second discussion of possibility is, rather: Is a *polis* such as we have described, a just *polis*,

[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper (Mr. Hennessy's), read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 372d4ff.

capable of being brought about, and not simply the institution which is being discussed earlier?[iii]

LS: But does this not amount to the same? After all, the *polis* is characterized by, say, three or four peculiar institutions. Now why should the discussion of the *polis* consisting of the four institutions differ from the discussion of each institution by itself?

Student: I questioned this myself, and I decided that when Socrates began to discuss [the] possibility, he first told us that he couldn't institutionalize the state simply as we had conceived it and that certain concessions would have to be made. I didn't know where the concessions were made. I didn't know that the institution itself would be a concession.

LS: The thing is much more complicated, because this assertion that a full actualization is not possible is only part of the answer. Yes? I make no comment,[1] but I only want to see—good. Now let us then turn to[2] [the discussion] immediately because it is a very long and difficult subject we have today.[3] By the way,[4] you are a political scientist?

Student: Yes.

LS: I see. No, because sometimes there are students here who have a training in the philosophy department, and then they know in a way much about Plato's metaphysics, the doctrine of ideas.

Student: No.

LS: Yes, that is in a way quite good, that you do not have this. But we will see later—because there is a kind of knowledge which is also an impediment to understanding. I will take that up later. Now I remind you of[5] a very broad point which we have discussed before: the *polis* as described in the *Republic* claims to be the *polis* according to nature. According to nature. It is not based on convention but on nature. And the second claim[6] [can be stated] as follows: It is the rational society in the sense that every member of the society has an art, and art means here a way of knowledge. I mean, it's not a manual skill or this kind of thing. The shoemaker can tell you why he does everything he does: whether he[7] might take this material in preference to another, why he makes this operation in preference to the other. He can give an account of what he is doing. That is, he possesses an art. And so it is the city of artisans and that must be understood.

What is the ordinary city? There are artisans in it, surely, but[8] to be a citizen [in it] is not [to be] an artisan. Some citizens are artisans. Now what is the ordinary city in the highest sense? I mean,[9] [who are the] human beings who are there predominant, [who] give it its tone? How were they called? There is a Greek word for it which we can use in a convenient English translation: "the gentlemen." "The gentlemen," *kaloi kai agathoi*. If the *Republic* is the city of artisans, it means it is not the city of gentlemen as gentlemen. Now what does that mean? What are the gentlemen concerned with, or what guides the gentlemen in their choices and preferences?

[iii] 457d8-458b8., 466d6-9, 471c4-473e5.

Student: Honor.

LS: Honor. They are men of honor and, in other words,[10] honor in all the variety of meanings which the word has. But I would like to stress one point only here. They are concerned with being men of high and good repute and with doing things of good repute, but that means [caring about] *doxa*, opinion. They are lovers of opinion. *Doxa* means in Greek both opinion and fame, reputation; and therefore the remark at the end of book 5, [that] we don't want to have lovers of opinion but lovers of knowledge or wisdom, is essential.[iv] It is a kind of capstone of what we had before, but there is another formulation of what the ordinary city is. It is the association of course of human beings, but there is always one kind of human being who is predominant and who gives it this tone: I mean the gentlemen. That would be an association in the best case. But in any other city, old style, I think one can say that the city consists of families, and who is at the head of the family in the good old times?

Student: The father.

LS: The father. The city is an assembly of fathers, and that is another point. Again, what is it that guides the fathers as fathers in their decisions?

Student: Securing their inheritances.

LS: Yes, but still that is already a somewhat nasty unmasking.[11] The fathers are guided by the fatherly things: in Greek, *ta patria*, the ancestral things, tradition. Tradition. And again, here there's no tradition, no things inherited *qua* inherited, but knowledge. Knowledge is only—well, knowledge can also be transmitted, but knowledge owes its dignity not to its being inherited but to its evidence, whereas[12] the traditional things owe their evidence not to their intrinsic evidence but to the fact that they are inherited. So if we say the city is a city of artisans, we oppose it to the city of gentlemen and to the city of the fathers. Now[13] the fathers are abolished. We have seen last time the abolition of the family. The fathers are abolished.

Now let us then turn to our subject. At the beginning, in 466d Socrates says,[14] in effect, the only thing left for a complete solution to the problem of justice is whether the community of women and children is possible. That it is useful we know, but is it possible? And of course[15] he doesn't say that explicitly, but it is implied since the guiding question is the question of justice and the city which we are building up in order to understand what justice is, is the just city. Therefore every institution of it must be a part of justice, and the communism of women and children is a part of a just order of society.[16] We must never forget that. It's not merely recommended as something expedient, but it is part of the justice of the city. So the question is: Is this community of women and children possible? That's the only question left, but this question is immediately dropped and is replaced by the question of how the citizens of that city would wage war. What a funny substitution. What does the question—why does the

[iv] 479d3-480a13.

manner of their warfare prove the possibility of communism regarding women and children? I mean, if the warfare, if the manner of their warfare would prove the possibility[17] regarding women and children, then it would not be absurd, what is happening. Can we understand this?

Now the question which he takes up next regarding warfare concerns not the women but the children. The children are to be lookers-on of the war. So they must get a taste of their future work as early as possible. Yes, the fathers and mothers engage in the war and the children look on. They are relatively safe. You know, that is described very neatly: very fast horses are available at a moment's notice in case something goes wrong, so that the children are safe. [18]That is Glaucon who makes that point. Glaucon says the killing of the children must be prevented at all costs, otherwise the city will not recover from a possible defeat.[v19] And in this connection, as you could see, there is a shift of emphasis from the fathers and mothers to the fathers. These are the data on the basis of which we must try to understand.

I mention only the immediately following point so that we see the context. Socrates then explains how cowards will be disgraced and the brave ones honored in life and after death, and then he will explain how the soldiers will behave toward the enemies.[vi] This is the situation. Now[20] how can we understand that? Now I[21] begin with this question: Who is more important for the recovery of the *polis* from a war? Who is more important for the future of the *polis*, the women or the men? What would you say? A simple empirical question. You must not forget, we had this teaching about equality of the sexes, and it was reduced to the simple difference between bald-headed and not bald-headed people. You know? And that was all there was to it. Now we have a little empirical test on this question. Is it of no importance? I will state it in this way. Now let us assume five hundred women survive and one thousand men, and on the other side one thousand women survive and five hundred men.[22] Which alternative is preferable from the point of view of the further of the *polis*? What would you say?

Student: It's preferable to have more women.

LS: Why?

Student: Because that way you can have more children and populate—

LS: In other words, the difference between the two sexes is really graver than we were led to believe. Good. That is what I was driving at. Yes. So in other words—you see, via the children and the importance of the children for the future of the *polis*, we are reminded of the difference between the two sexes regarding the future of the *polis*. I add another point: a kind of women who is not mentioned here who also have to be considered: the pregnant women. Nothing is said about this subdivision here but we have to think about it, and may I remind you that there cannot be any pregnant men. Yes, that is ridiculous, but it is very important if we speak of equality of the two sexes in a political

[v] 467b2-e7.
[vi] 468a1-471c1.

context, you see, and especially in such a [city].[vii] In other words, war shows whether the equality of the sexes as taught here is possible or desirable or not. War shows that [the] equality of sexes as taught in the *Republic* is not possible or desirable. But how does war show whether community of women and children is possible? After all, it is not that equality of the sexes was the immediate topic, although there is a connection between equality of the sexes and community of women and children, as we have seen last time.

Now[23] we have some help for our imagination by a great man whom Plato knew very well, and that is Aristophanes. And Aristophanes wrote a comedy about this particular question, the two sexes and [their participation] in war. And that is in a way the most famous comedy of Aristophanes, the *Lysistrata*, which is a very indecent play, no doubt, but which is also a very wise play. Now the action is very simple. The wives of Greece force their husbands to make peace by abstaining from sexual intercourse, and they are wonderfully successful. The men are completely licked, and there are very funny scenes, of course, but the main point is, they get peace. Beautiful design. But every Aristophanean comedy—and that is another Platonic theme—every Aristophanean comedy derives its deeper ridiculousness from the fact that it assumes one thing which is impossible. In every comedy, there is something—I mean, apart from the innumerable funny occurrences, there is some basic ridiculous thing, and that is ridiculous because it is impossible. And you know possibility and impossibility are the great theme of the *Republic*, as we gradually see. Now what is the impossibility underlying this ingenious notion that the women force the men to make peace by sexual abstinence? It is also an empirical question.

Student: Women are weaker.

LS: Pardon?

Student: Women are weaker.

LS: Oh! Aristophanes was older than you are now and he knew that women have their way of strength very much connected with that weapon they use in that play. There is no question about it. Yes? Now look at it from a practical way as it is presented there. The women refuse themselves to their husbands, and the husbands are absolutely lovesick. You know? And [it is] a terrible situation. And in order to obtain the favors of their wives, they have to do their wives a favor. That is the action. Now what is the impossibility on which the play is based? Yes?

Student: Absence of desire of the women.

LS: That's one thing, but—very good. That is good, but that is presupposed, that the women, because they are so angry about these foolish men who are always in war—you know, anger can overcome desire. We have learned that before. But what's the other point? Look at it from the point of view of the man. Well—yes?

[vii] The transcript has blank space here.

Student: Well, if they were in a war they might[24] [just get] slaughtered because of their condition.

LS: That is one thing, yes; but since the enemy was in the same condition—yes?

Student: What are—the women are talking about it. They say that they're getting so little sex anyway because the men are always away fighting. Well,[25] what are the men doing without their women? I don't understand.

LS: Yes, that is—it is much more simple.

Student: Well, maybe the men would continue the war to try to get the women of the people they are fighting.

LS: Yes, sure, but it is terribly—yes, sure, too complicated, what you say. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, that was already said.[26] Well, I will say it now, what it is. The impossibility on which this play is based: that sexual intercourse is possible only in matrimony. Yes? That's the simple absurdity on which the play is based. In other words, this man sent away by his wife might conceivably find another woman, and I tell you why: because a war creates a phenomenon called war widows. War widows. And it is one of the nice things in *Lysistrata*: there is only one slight allusion in the whole play to the war widows. In other words, there is, to use a Marxian expression, a reserve army of women around, you know, so that war can procreate itself by making available[27] this reserve army, and that's the point.[viii]

Now let us see. The play, the [*Lysistrata*] is based on this premise which one can state in very dignified language as follows: that *nomos* is *physis*, that [28]sexual relations are physically possible only in marriage. Yes? Legally they are only possible in marriage, that's clear; but that they are physically impossible, that is the deeper meaning of the play. But more specifically, to come back to our point, the comedy abstracts from the excess of women over men as a consequence of the war. No, but here we see already something. The inevitable consequence of the war is an incipient abolition of the family, an incipient [abolition] because you have this reserve army, and of course to say nothing of the fact [that] the men are away for many years, and who knows whether there are not women in these foreign lands? You see? I mean, you must have read something about that in the papers. So of course you can say: Well, in the *Republic* the situation is entirely different, because there the women too fight and there will be as many war widowers, if I may say so, as war widows. But is this so? Is this so? That would be the question, and[29] one would have to study the *Republic* more closely and see whether we can reasonably expect that there will be as many women fighters as men fighters. And I can give you a

[viii] See Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 99-100, 588-598. See also Leo Strauss, *Aristophanes and Socrates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 202-203, 211-212. Strauss remarks at 211, "Lysistrate's design presupposes that unnatural coincidence of *physis* and *nomos* . . ."

reason why I believe that this is a question, because one thing was admitted throughout in the discussion of the two sexes: that the female sex is weaker than the male sex.

Now look at it from the point of view of a simple recruiting officer or medical officer. He would take in many more males, because they are stronger than females. So[30] that's clear. Yes, but now let us see what the great consequence is. If the communism of wives and children would not be possible—you must not forget, it has never been proven to be possible in this book, never—then the whole good city is not possible because it is an integral part of the good city. But if the good city is the only city which is simply just, then there could not be a city which is simply just, and we might have to consider the possibility whether justice simply can be found only in the individual and not in the city. And[31] here the question of war would of course come in very much, because the city is as such a war-waging community. But what I'm contending now,[32] [and] what I regard as important in the context is only this: that the communism regarding women and children has never been proven; and come to think of it, the[33] possibility of the communism regarding property has never been proven. The only thing whose possibility has been proven is the equality of the sexes, so we have to keep an open mind.

At any rate, this is the context, I mean, of this strange switch from the possibility of the communism of women and children to the question of warfare; and the last section of this part is the limitations of warfare. The key point here is the fundamental difference between intra-Greek wars and wars with barbarians. That is the key consideration, and the premise of that is that all Greeks are by nature friends and hence they are by nature the enemies of the barbarians. That is the thesis here. What to make of that is of course a long question. Let us look at two passages. One is in 469c, at the beginning, where Socrates[34] [asks]: What is the principle guiding the limitation of warfare among the Greeks? The Greeks must be fearful or apprehensive of being enslaved by the barbarians. Yes? That's what Socrates says. Now Glaucon takes up the subject a bit later. Do you have it, Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: I have 469c.

LS: Where I left off. Can you read that?

Mr. Reinken:
"Sparing them is wholly and altogether the better," said he. "They are not, then, themselves to own Greek slaves, either, and they should advise the other Greeks not to?" "By all means," he said, "at any rate in that way they would be more likely to turn against the barbarians and keep their hands from one another."

LS: Yes. Is there not a slight difference between being apprehensive of being enslaved by the barbarians and turning against the barbarians? Is there not a slight difference of tone? I raise this question. Let us take a later passage, in 471b—or take the last speech,[35] this long speech going over—

Mr. Reinken: "But I fear, Socrates, that if you are allowed to go on—"

LS: No, no. Before[36], [at] 471a. Yes? The end.

Mr. Reinken:
"Will they not then regard any difference with Greeks who are their own people as a form of faction and refuse even to speak of it as war?" "Most certainly." "And they will conduct their quarrels always looking forward to a reconciliation?" "By all means." "They will correct them, then, for their own good, not chastising them with a view to their enslavement or their destruction, but acting as correctors, not as enemies." "They will," he said. "They will not, being Greeks, ravage Greek territory nor burn habitations, and they will not admit that in any city all the population are their enemies, men, women and children, but will say that only a few at any time are their foes, those, namely, who are to blame for the quarrel."

LS: In other words, those who are the war criminals, the few guilty. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And on all these considerations they will not be willing to lay waste the soil, since the majority are their friends, nor to destroy the houses, but will carry the conflict only to the point of compelling the guilty to do justice by the pressure of the suffering of the innocent."

LS: Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"I," he said, "agree that our citizens ought to deal with their Greek opponents on this wise, while treating barbarians as Greeks now treat Greeks."

LS: Do you see that? That is what Glaucon adds. Glaucon is very much concerned with having some kind of war where he can have fun.[37] Socrates doesn't say that. In other words, Socrates says, as it were: Let us have a reasonable limitation of war.[38] [Let us strive to avoid] an intra-Greek war. Let's try that. But he is not particularly interested in unlimited war against the barbarians. I mean, perhaps it can't be helped, but he doesn't enjoy it. Glaucon needs some outlet for that. You see? Good. This, I think,[39] is important for what is happening because at this point—read on, immediately.

Mr. Reinken:
"Shall we lay down this law also, then, for our guardians, that they are not to lay waste the land or burn the houses?" (471a-c)

LS: You see, Socrates doesn't even allude to the difference—what could be done in the barbarian war. You see? To say nothing of the fact that[40] no decision is reached regarding plunder or rape or this kind of thing, only this limited subject regarding the land and the houses. Yes? And now at this moment Glaucon rebels, and of course we have to know why he rebels; and the simplest explanation on the basis of the context is that he[41] doesn't like these limitations on warfare. Yes, he can't deny that it is an impossible procedure

that Greece ruins herself and falls victim to the barbarians. He cannot deny it, but somehow that's not his cup of tea. And then he does what every politician does on such occasions: If a proposal is made against which he has no reasonable objections he says, "Wonderful idea, but it is not possible." Yes? You must have observed this *n* times, and that is really what he does. But he doesn't speak of this particular measure anymore because it's also a wise political move not to limit yourself to that particular issue and, how shall I say, rub it in, but to broaden the issue. You know? Broaden the issue where your particular complaint is no longer so clearly visible, [42]and [say], "This would be wonderful, but I don't see how it could work." And[43] this is really the decisive event. And the question[44] becomes clear. Socrates has raised the question: How is community of women and children possible? That it's useful or desirable was granted, and Socrates had pushed it back. He had dropped it. And now that question which was pushed back comes back with a vengeance; and now it is no longer merely the question of the possibility of communism of women and children but of the whole thing. The whole thing. Yes, but in what way? In what way? And that is a point where Mr. Hennessy was not sufficiently clear, I believe. I think we just read this rebellious speech of Glaucon. Yes? Where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"But I fear, Socrates, that, if you are allowed to go on in this fashion, you will never get to speak of the matter you put aside in order to say all this, namely—"

LS: He knew quite well what was going on. He pushed aside the question of possibility. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"namely, the possibility of such a polity coming into existence, and the way in which it could be brought to pass. I too am ready to admit that if it could be realized everything would be lovely for the state that had it, and I will add what you passed by, that they would also be most successful in war because they would be least likely to desert one another—"

LS: You see: war. The young colt.

Mr. Reinken:
"knowing and addressing each other by the names of brothers, fathers, sons. And if the females should also join in their campaigns—"

LS: You see the interesting thing: "if." "If." It is not so certain as it seemed. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"whether in the ranks or marshalled behind to intimidate the enemy, or as reserves in case of need, I recognize that all this too would make them irresistible. And at home, also, I observe all the benefits that you omit to mention. But, taking it for granted that I concede these and countless other advantages, consequent on the realization of this polity, don't labor that point further; but let us at once—"

LS: Yes. No, no. Literally, don't speak any further about that polity. Yes, about the polity. He has enough of it. Yes? Yes, but—

Mr. Reinken:
"but let us at once proceed to try to convince ourselves of just this, that it is possible and how it is possible, dismissing everything else." (471c-e)

LS: Yes. Now what is the difference between this possibility question and the possibility question as raised before? I believe it is an entirely different question. Formerly we raised the question, say, equality of sexes: "Is this possible? Is human nature of such a kind? And the political assumptions, are they of such a character as to permit equality of the sexes?" This is not Glaucon's question. Glaucon's question is how it could become possible. Now what does this mean? Let us assume we have a scheme elaborated and show that it is perfectly compatible with human nature. Yes? Everything is settled. There is still the question: How do we get from here to there? That's an entirely different question. That is a practical question, of course, how to get from an ordinary city to that city granted that it's possible, but we don't have the slightest preparation for it now. How to get from there? That is the question, and therefore the possibility means here now something different, namely, "How can it come into being?" not "Is it compatible with the nature of things?" Socrates gives altogether three answers to that question, and we have to consider these answers. Let us begin in 472b. I mean, it is of course disgraceful that we have to leave out so much, but we have to make a selection. Now let us read his first answer.

Mr. Reinken:
"The first thing to recall, then," I said, "is that it was the inquiry into the nature of justice—"

LS: By the way, you see that he says "the first thing." He enumerates, so that he draws our attention to the fact that this is an ordered argument. Later on, there is another item. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"that it was the inquiry into the nature of justice and injustice that brought us to this pass." "Yes; but what of it?" he said. "Oh, nothing," I replied, only this: if we do discover what justice is, are we to demand that the just man shall differ from it in no respect, but shall conform in every way to the ideal?"

LS: Oh God. No, that is disgraceful: "but he should be in every way such as justice is." Now this—I mean, how is it possible? Shorey believes he possesses complete understanding of the Platonic system. Yes? And on the basis of this alleged knowledge, he translates that. He as it were improves on Plato on the basis of his allegedly perfect knowledge of the Platonic system. Perhaps there is no Platonic system. We don't know. And surely one thing we must never forget, that is important for this whole section: Shorey and such people believe that this is a kind of metaphysical treatise that Plato

wrote, but that here Socrates speaks to a young colt, Glaucon, a very intelligent boy but of course wholly untrained, and gives him[45] an inkling of what philosophy is—you know, a first inkling—that is in no way considered. And therefore, how—I mean, it's amazing how much Glaucon can follow Socrates. It's quite amazing, but he thinks that this is written for professors of philosophy—you know?—and that Plato addressed a convention of the American Association of Professors of Philosophy. Yes, go on. I mean, he does this all the time. I only came to point it out here. Yes, go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Or will it suffice us if he approximate to it as nearly as possible and partake of it more than others?" "That will content us," he said. "A pattern, then," said I, "was what we wanted when we were inquiring into the nature of ideal justice—"

LS: Oh God! "When we were seeking justice itself," what like it is. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and asking what would be the character of the perfectly just man, supposing him to exist, and, likewise—"

LS: Yes, "if he could come into being." "If he could come into being." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and, likewise, in regard to injustice and the completely unjust man. We wished to fix our eyes upon them as types and models, so that whatever we discerned in them of happiness or the reverse would necessarily apply to ourselves in the sense that whosoever is likest them will have the allotment most like to theirs. Our purpose was not to demonstrate the possibility of the realization of these ideals."

LS: Yes, "we did not wish to prove that these things could become feasible or possible." Yes, go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"In that," he said, "you speak truly." "Do you think, then, that he would be any the less a good painter, who, after portraying a pattern of the perfectly[ix] beautiful man and omitting no touch required for the perfection of the picture, should not be able to prove that it is actually possible for such a man to exist?"

LS: "To come into being." By Zeus, no. He's thinking of perfectly beautiful human beings appearing in the shape of gods, so he thinks very naturally of such a most beautiful human being as Zeus. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"By Zeus, no"[x] he said. "Then were not we, as we say, trying to create in words the pattern of a good state?" "Certainly." "Do you think, then, that our words are any the less

[ix] In Shorey's translation, which is read here and throughout, on volume 1, 505, it is "ideally."
[x] In Shorey's translation: "Not I, by Zeus"

well spoken if we find ourselves unable to prove that it is possible for a state to be governed in accordance with our words?" "Of course not," he said. "That, then," said I, "is the truth of the matter. But if, to please you, we must do our best to show how most—" (472b-e)

LS: Yes.[46] One must consider also the following point. Here is the first subject, first argument. Now what does Socrates first say? The question is: Is the good *polis* possible, i.e., can it come into being? Now Socrates says: We sought justice herself, and we sought the perfectly just man and of course also the perfectly unjust man. Now it is clear: justice herself *is*. Justice herself doesn't come into being, whatever that may mean. But regarding the just man, the question arises: Can he come into being? The just man as distinguished from justice herself is only an approximation of the just.

Now the second point here: the justice which is and the perfectly just man are patterns, but strictly speaking only the just man is a pattern. The purpose in elaborating the just man was not to prove that the just man is capable of coming into being. What does that mean? What does it mean?[47] You see, he[xi] uses all the time in his translation the word "ideal," and that means he completely kills the problem, because when we speak today of "ideal," everyone knows what an ideal is. An ideal is not supposed to be actualized and all this kind of thing—a thought wholly alien to Plato. There is no Platonic word for "ideal." There is no word. Try to express it in Greek: impossible. So we must forget about it. I cannot correct all these errors of Shorey. Then he explains it to us what it is. He says, as it were, the just man when we elaborate is like a painting. Now when you see a [painting of][xii] Zeus or something of this kind, you are not interested, it's irrelevant to you whether this being is capable of coming into being, whether a human being can be as beautiful as the Zeus presented there. But you can even suspect it can never be as perfect as a painter makes it, yes? It might very well be. You know of course at the same time, if you think a bit, that a living man who is not as beautiful as that has certain advantages compared with that painting or sculpture, because he is living. This statue can't move.

Now he explains it by another point which is nearer home. The just man is like a painting or a perfectly beautiful man. The good city is made[48] by speech or in speech; that is the way in which it is. It is in speech. It is irrelevant, therefore, whether that city is capable of being inhabited. That would be a somewhat more difficult question. We did this as a kind of model. In this section, you would see that the emphasis at the end of this passage [shifts]: he speaks only of the good city and no longer of the good man.[49] I will try to state what we have heard here. Whether we believe it is an entirely different matter, and we would act against the spirit of Plato if we would believe mere assertions of Socrates—I mean, that's preposterous. But let us hear the mere assertion: justice is in itself, whatever that may mean. The just city is not in itself. It is made. We made it in speech. In both cases, the question of possibility of coming into being does not arise, but for different reasons in each case. In the first case, because justice is, why should it come into being? And in the other case, the question does not arise because the primary meaning was that it should be in speech, and the question whether that should be in deed

[xi] Shorey.
[xii] The transcript has a blank space here.

is a secondary question. That is the first answer. Now let us read all three answers so that we can perhaps begin to understand what he means. Now we come to the second, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"But if, to please you, we must do our best to show how most probably and in what respect these things would be most nearly realized, again, with a view to such a demonstration, grant me the same point." "What?" "Is it possible for anything to be realized in deed as it is spoken in word, or is it the nature of things that action should partake of exact truth less than speech, even if some deny it?"

LS: Why he[xiii] adds "exact" I don't know. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Do you admit it or not?" "I do," he said. "Then don't insist," said I, "that I must exhibit as realized in action precisely what we expounded in words. But if we can discover how a state might be constituted most nearly answering to our description, you must say that we have discovered that possibility of realization which you demanded. Will you not be content if you get this? I for my part would." (472e-473a)

LS: Now let us stop here. There is the second answer. Here he appeals to another principle. *Praxis*—"action," "actualization," however you might translate it here—touches truth less than speech does. Now what does this mean? We have described a *polis* in speech and we know that it is good, for we know that it would be useful if it could come about. But actualization necessarily falls short of the model. That means the good city as described in the *logos*, in the "speech," is not possible. [It] is not possible; only an approximation is possible. Let us really try to forget everything you have ever heard about ideals, because then you wouldn't understand a word. Let us look at the Platonic examples. For instance, equality of the sexes: Was that to be possible? Now what does it mean, if actualization necessarily falls short of the speech? That equality of the sexes is only approximately possible. Well, that makes sense. We have seen [that] we cannot have as many women fighters as we have men fighters, and so on. You know? It would be an example.

Now we would also have to raise the following question: Now if the good city as it can be actualized necessarily falls short of the pattern which we made, what is the reason for this shortcoming? And I give you now an example which I believe is somehow the background. Later on, that will come out. Do you know of any case—which every child, so to speak, knows—where the actualization manifestly falls short of what is meant in speech? A very elementary thing and which plays a great role for political thought and comes out later on in this dialogue, and I mean nothing lofty; something very simple.

Student: Geometry.

LS: Pardon?

[xiii] Shorey.

Student: Geometry.

LS: Exactly. Here the straight line necessarily falls short of the straight line we mean.[xiv] Necessarily. That, I think, is the experience to which Socrates appeals when making this statement, and Glaucon apparently knows enough of geometry to know that. The good city would then seem to be like a straight line as meant, in contradistinction with a straight line as drawn. Yes, but there is one difficulty. Can one say of the straight line as meant that it is made by speech or in speech as the good city is made in speech or by speech? Well, we don't know yet, but that's a question, and we cannot assume that Plato agrees with one or the other epistemological theories now prevailing. We don't know. We have to see what Plato means by that. So you see how[50] dark that really is, but it has a certain plausibility, not because Glaucon had the faintest notion of an ideal, but, for example, because he knows perhaps[51] the elements of geometry. This gives us a notion. Now let us see the third answer, which comes now.

Mr. Reinken:
"Next, it seems—"

LS: You see here he says "after these things."

Mr. Reinken:
"After these things,[xv] it seems, we must try to discover and point out what it is that is now badly managed in our cities, and that prevents them from being so governed, and what is the smallest change that would bring a state to this manner of government, preferably a change in one thing, if not, then in two, and, failing that, the fewest possible in number and the slightest in potency." (473b)

LS: You see, Socrates says a commonsense thing. We try to get this good city, and of course [in] the best way. The best way means one little gimmick, and if that doesn't work, two little gimmicks, and if even that isn't good enough, three or four, but a minimum of the easiest things. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"By all means," he said. "There is one change, then," said I, "which I think that we can show would bring about the desired transformation. It is not a slight or an easy thing but it is possible." "What is that?"

LS: By the way, "possible" always means the same as "feasible"—never forget that—in this context. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"What is that?" said he. "I am on the very verge," said I, "of what we likened to the greatest wave of paradox. But say it I will, even if, to keep the figure, it is likely to wash

[xiv] It is possible that Strauss draws a line on the blackboard.
[xv] In original: "Next"

us away on billows of laughter and scorn. Listen." "I am all attention," he said. "Unless," said I, "either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call—"

LS: It's really "in the cities." I mean, "ours" is not so all right. He would have—the Greek could have permitted that particular construction.[xvi] Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"[52][or] those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophic intelligence—"

LS: Yes. No, more literally, "and if these coincide." [It] means here the same thing, literally the "coincidence." And that means of course—as I think "coincidence" now means—it is absolutely a matter of chance that they come together. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"political power and philosophic intelligence—"

LS: And "philosophy." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles, dear Glaucon, for our states—"

LS: "For the cities." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"nor, I fancy, for the human race either."

LS: Yes? Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Nor, until this happens, will this constitution which we have been expounding in theory ever be put into practice within the limits of possibility—"

LS: Yes, well literally, "will grow into the possible." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and see the light of the sun." (473c-e)

LS: Yes, now let us stop here. This is the third answer.[53] Now Socrates gives us an answer. How can the city, as meant, become actual? In other words, the question is: How can we draw a straight line which is as straight as the straight line as meant? How can the good city proceed into the possible? He speaks first[54] of the simplest or easiest way, and

[xvi] In the transcript: "construction (?)"

so there are *n* ways of getting it. Yes? Of *n* ways. But after the very brief transition, there is one and only one way, and that is the coincidence of philosophy and political power.[55] And the whole sequel is then based on this third point: that we are shown a way how the good city as meant becomes actual and the qualifications are dropped. There are here certain difficulties. Can you read the conclusion of that speech where you just stopped?

Mr. Reinken:
"But this is the thing that has made me so long shrink from speaking out, because I saw that it would be a very paradoxical saying. For it is not easy to see that there is no other way of happiness either for private or public life." (473e)

LS: Yes, well here the text is difficult, and Shorey preferred . . . Literally, that means "it's hard to see that any other city could ever become happy or blessed either privately or publicly." Yes, there is also the previous remark in b6. I cannot go into that now; I would only say there is, it seems, a suggestion here that the coincidence of philosophy and political power may not only be the necessary but the sufficient condition for private and public happiness; in other words, that you could conceivably get private and public happiness if philosophers become kings and kings, philosophers, without communism and without equality of the sexes. This interpretation would be confirmed by a remark in the *Seventh Letter* of Plato, in which he speaks of this coincidence of philosophy and political power[56] [and tries to] bring it about perhaps in Syracuse, without any reference whatever to communism and equality of the sexes.[xvii] I do not want to go into that; I would like to limit myself to what[57] [are] the most difficult points.

First of all, we must[58] consider the situation. Glaucon has gone down to the Piraeus in order to pray and to look at the procession.[59] They were perfectly satisfied [with the] wonderful spectacle and they [were about to go] home, and they were prevented from going. And then they sit there, and then—I mean, well, no one among us, I believe, has ever had such an experience. In that evening, what is poured over the heads of these people, especially Glaucon, these fantastic things: communism in every respect, equality of the sexes, and now finally the rule of philosophers. This absolutely is unbelievable, and these people somehow survive! Yes, but I think one must make this clear and not take it for granted, because everyone of us has probably read the *Republic* when he was or she was very young, and you get accustomed to it and you don't wonder anymore, but you must recapture that wonder. What a fantastic situation. Every one of us has observed gatherings where there was a marvelous [conversation][xviii] about, or someone who has really done great deeds and told of them. It's very impressive, but in a way that is all child's play compared with what these people have been exposed to on that evening. They had never in their lives heard such a thing . . .

All right, but still let us be as sober as we can and see how are we prepared for this amazing proposal. After all, Socrates doesn't give any reason; he simply[60] asserts that this whole thing cannot be solved if the philosophers do not become kings. There is no explicit reasoning here, but somehow no one rebels against that. Somehow they sense:

[xvii] *Seventh Letter* 325d5-326b4. See also 340b1ff.
[xviii] The transcript has a blank space here.

yes, that is it. They don't see how it can be, but that would be the wonderful thing. How are we prepared for that? And I believe one can state it as follows. If we go back to the beginning, justice is something like the firm will to give everyone what belongs to him or is due to him. Remember? And now we have learned somehow that this isn't good enough, because what is due to him means, in the first place, what is due to him according to law, positive laws, and that may be very bad for that man. You know? I gave the example of the playboy who is ruined if you give him the million dollars you owe him: it would be much better for him if you would withhold it from him, but of course you would go to jail if you would try to do such a thing.[61] But in a perfectly sensible society, of course he would not get that property which is ruinous to him.

So everyone must be given the things which are good for him. He must be given the work which is good for him, and all this kind of thing. Yes, but what does this presuppose? It presupposes that there are some distributors who can in each case give to each what is good for the soul. These people may be called "physicians of the soul." You know how true that thought is, [as] you see today from the phenomenon of psychoanalysis, which is a kind of imitation of what Plato means—well, but that is [a] somewhat limited imitation. But what Plato says, physicians of the soul: physicians of the body wouldn't be good enough. Yes, but these are the philosophers. Who else could do that [other] than a perfectly wise man? So the rule of the philosophers is implied in the scheme up to now,[62] and somehow that you all know from your experience: when you have a long conversation and so, you learn more than is explicitly said. Yes? You know? It has never been proven that there must be philosophers, in no way. But the various things they learned here and there prepare them for the suggestion, and they are right. That's your point. So yes, but now we come[xix] —he knows philosophers must be kings because Socrates said so, and perhaps on the basis of [the conversation up to now] . . . And who are philosophers? Who are the philosophers? And I will limit myself only to one point, because that's the most important. The philosophers are lovers of wisdom, lovers of knowledge, lovers of learning, and that means lovers of every learning, lovers of every knowledge. Every knowledge. And Glaucon very sensibly says: "That's a nice company. If someone sees someone whispering into some[one's] ear somewhere and likes to know, what did he whisper into that ear, is he not, the curious fellow, a lover of knowledge?" Yes? And[63] that is questioned, because Glaucon knows that is not a lover of knowledge; he is only curious or perhaps a lover of sights or gossip, what have you. And yet what is the difference between [the] lover of knowledge and the lover of gossip? That's again the question.[xx] I mean gossip, you understand, of all kinds of things. Everything is a possible object of knowledge, but that is obviously not meant by philosophy. What is it? And now what is the Platonic answer, or Socratic answer? He gives a wonderfully clear answer to it, doesn't he? I mean, what is gossip and spectacles, on the one hand, and knowledge on the other? What does he say?

Student: That the one is the love of things and the other is the love of the beautiful simply—[xxi]

[xix] The tape was changed at this point.
[xx] *Republic* 475b8-e1.
[xxi] 475e2ff.

LS: Yes, but what of things? That's a word which is never used here. I mean, for example, the fellow—say if someone wants to know something about the sun . . . is this—is he not a lover? I mean, say, an astronomer, is he not a lover of knowledge? So what, and where do you draw the line?[64] Knowledge is knowledge of things. That's not the line which he draws. Now I—pardon?

Student: I'm back in the cave.

LS: No, well that presupposes everything, but here in this short section, what does . . .

Student: Well, the lovers of wisdom, in their spectacles,[xxii] [their love] is to love the truth.

LS: Yes, but he also likes to—what did he whisper into that ear?

Student: Abstractly.

LS: What does that mean?

Student: Abstract thinking.

LS: What does that mean, abstract thinking? Yes, now I will tell you the secret, which is not a secret, as you will see immediately, and which is in a way a very stupid answer but it is an answer which we must give. There is a term which is used by Socrates here and which is the answer to the question, What is the philosopher as distinguished from the lover of gossip? . . . What is that with which the philosopher is concerned? I will try to [explain]. He has a word for that: "ideas." Shorey also sometimes translates "forms." And the lover of gossip or spectacles is not concerned with the ideas or forms, but with things which merely participate in ideas or forms without being themselves ideas or forms. That is a perfectly correct answer but also, I would say, a wholly unintelligible one, because what are ideas? That is, you see, you must not—again, I said before: Glaucon is not a professor of philosophy who had Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and other discussions of the doctrine of ideas in front of him, knew all that, and gives the exact answer which would be prescribed by *Metaphysics*, part 4, chapter 3, paragraph 16. He heard these things for the first time, and the amazing thing is that he somehow understands. He somehow understands. That is a great question.

Now[65] if we were really good human beings, what we would do is this: we would go through the whole *Republic* from the beginning and make a complete list of all passages where this word occurs, because that was a very common word in Greek. I mean, the word which is more frequently used is *eidos*, and that occurs all the time; and everyone knows what an *eidos* is[66]—I mean, not only a bright young man like Glaucon, anyone. And therefore it is not so difficult to understand the word, but to understand indeed what Socrates does with that, that's the difficulty. But that the word itself is intelligible is of

[xxii] In the transcript: "spectacles (?)"

some importance. Now when did he speak, for example, of *eidos*—or *eidē*, as the plural is? Well, when he spoke of the soul: the soul, there is the spirited part, the appetitive part, and the reasoning part. He calls these three different "eidoses," *eidē*, different "forms."[xxiii] That's one way of doing it. There are various human "types." Also there are various "kinds" of animals. All this is called by this word. So *eidos* means in most of the cases where it occurs something like a "class" of things. A class of things. Now let us apply it to our case of the lover of gossip. He is not interested in a class of things; he is interested [in] "What did Mr. Miller whisper into the ear of Mr. Jones?" Very revealing case.[67] What would be the philosopher's interest in that case, if he would observe that? In what would he be interested? Would he be . . . what did he say? What did he say? What would he be interested in if he would be interested in that phenomenon? It's not too difficult to understand. What would he be interested in, Mr. Hennessy? You[68] at least have read it now. In the other cases, I don't know. What would he be interested in if he is confronted with that? To make it still more clear, Mr. Faulkner whispering something into his neighbor's ear: What would the philosopher be interested in as distinguished from the lover of gossip?

Student: Of the truth in what they said.

LS: Oh no. I mean, well, if he is not interested in the gossip, why should he be interested in whether the gossip is true? Yes?

Student: Why do human beings whisper?

LS: Exactly. Exactly. That would be a philosophic question, perhaps: What does this mean, that human beings whisper? That's a [philosophic question], you see. The kind: whispering. Not the individual case. That's the point. So kinds of things. And now Plato makes now however the very strange assertion: It seems that the kinds don't change. I mean, this whispering changes; for example, it starts at a certain moment, then it stops. Yes? And in this case[69] there are all other kinds of changes which take place. But whispering as whispering doesn't change. Does this make sense? That is what Plato says. Yes?

Student: Wouldn't there be a choice, though? Wouldn't the philosopher tend to disregard this completely as being something that is so irrelevant to him even that he wouldn't really care about whispering? He would look on to something else.

LS: Yes, but then one could say he is a superficial man. I mean,[70] that is what Socrates says. To begin with, we don't know what is important, and that is one of the greatest dangers, that we think some subjects are so lofty, yes, so lofty that everyone would be attracted and others are so inconspicuous. The inconspicuous, you don't know what you can learn.

Same Student: But I pose this because he says also[71] that the lover of wine, for instance, will go around sipping wine wherever he can find it,[72] [and] he uses two or three

[xxiii] 435b4-436a4, 4408-441a4.

examples. But it seems to me that the true lover of wine will refuse to even taste certain wines, or the true lover of knowledge will refuse to even taste certain knowledge. Once he has the slightest inkling of its poor quality,[73] he would want something better.[xxiv]

LS: Yes,[74] sure. In other words, you mean there can be things which are utterly trivial. Utterly trivial. That could be. But the question is—by the way, in the case of whispering, I am by no means sure, because since speaking is so terribly important[75]. And on the other hand, [in addition to] speaking, there is also silence, and then you can't understand speaking without understanding silence. And then there are interesting intermediate phenomena, and whispering is one of them: by whispering to someone, he speaks to his neighbor but is silent to the others. You know? That is part of the phenomenon of speech. That could be, but let us not go now into unnecessary complications. We must really try to understand what Plato or Socrates says here without falling into the easy primrose path of, "Oh yes, we know; we have read an article or a textbook and then we know what it is." We must really start from scratch.[76] I mean, [how could one make intelligible the distinction between things which are philosophic or scientific and things which are nonphilosophic and nonscientific]? He really begins from scratch and we must try to understand that.

Now what is the difference between a philosopher and a nonphilosopher on the simplest level? I believe it would still be admitted that the philosopher is a man who raises a fundamental question and the nonphilosopher does not. And a simple example:[77] it is regarded still as a philosophic question: What is law? If you ask a policeman at the corner what are the city ordinances regarding parking in this neighborhood, that is a question dealing with one particular law here and now, and that is of immense practical importance if you drive a car, but it is surely not a philosophic question.[78] But the difficulty is this. When you ask the cop about this ordinance and you may not even use any term, notion[79] [such as law]. "May I or may I not?" you may simply say. You presuppose, without knowing it, an answer to the question "What is law?" You see, [the philosopher][xxv] is in one[80] [sense] really the most cautious man. As nonphilosophers, we have answers to this question, act on them all the time, and that is that; and the philosopher says: "Oh wait, do I know that? Do I really know what I mean when speaking of law explicitly or not?" The philosopher thinks when the nonphilosopher has ceased to think or never began to think.[81]

Differently stated, the philosopher is concerned with that which is always and everywhere. When you are concerned with a city ordinance regarding parking: here, for the time being. But when you ask "What is law?" you mean something which is always and everywhere, always and everywhere, which does not change. The law is changed. Law number one is transformed into law number B, but law number one is a law; law number B is a law. So[82] [law as such] does not change. It[83] never changes. It is therefore not affected by nonbeing. The law which is changed ceases to be and it has come into being. It was once not, but law as law has not come into being and will never cease being. It is not affected by nonbeing. It is simply. That is the point which is meant here. It is

[xxiv] 475a5-b10.

[xxv] The transcript indicates that there is something inaudible here.

simply, and[84] since there is no nonbeing there, there is nothing murky about it, nothing murky, and that is [what is] meant by the references which occur in this section: it is beautiful, it is resplendent. Every such "what is" is resplendent.[85] To use a simile, what is meant by "ideas" looks at first glance as innumerable stars in a clear light. Everything is dark, but there is light. There is light. It's strange, but we must see what this could mean.

Now the difficulty which occurs here immediately is this. All right, whatever you may say about the law as such, you cannot possibly deny the fact that the laws are made by human beings. Yes? Let us disregard for the time being the possibility of divine or natural laws, but laws we ordinarily mean are made by human beings. So is it not strange? Here you have law. You know what is law: Like a star. Then you see: But it is made by human beings. What does it mean? The least you would have to say [is that] there is another star called man and that there is a connection between the star, law, and the star, man. In the more technical language, there is a connection between the ideas—a connection, and even more: an order. Law can be combined by man; man can be combined by law, but law cannot well be combined with rat or dog and so on. One more step: Not only an order; they form a whole, a cosmos.

Now how can we understand? I mean, it's an utterly fantastic assertion in itself and that must be [understood].[xxvi] We must try from another point of view. Again, it's something very simple.[86] We are concerned, all scientists say today—I think old-fashioned people, at least, we could say—with explanation of a disease, of a political crisis, or whatever it may be. What does an explanation mean? We find out how[87] the crisis came about. Khrushchev did that; someone else did that. But if we analyze a bit more closely what this means, we find two elements in that: the through-which the thing came about, say, through Khrushchev, and [the] out of which it came about. There were certain conditions, say, victory after the Second World War was one, and Khrushchev acted on this situation in that way. So there is through which and out of which. The explanation of something is the explanation of something through which and out of which [it came], but what do we always presuppose in explaining something through and out of something? We presuppose something, neither the through nor the out [but] something which is in a way prior to the through and prior to the out of which. Pardon?

Student: That which it's going towards, the end.

LS: I can't hear you.

Student: The end.

LS: No, no. No, no, no, no such metaphysical thing. The thing which we explain, the crisis, is neither the through which the crisis arose nor the out of which the crisis arose; and every explanation presupposes that you know first what is to be explained. That is the beginning of what Socrates and Plato mean. The what is in a way prior to the through which and the out of which. And the what is much more intelligible than the resplendent star. What we have to understand is why Plato eventually could say [that] the what, the

[xxvi] The transcript indicates that there is something inaudible here.

whats, the totality of the whats are the totality of the resplendent stars. That is the difficulty. But we can start from the what because that is the commonsensical experience.

Now let us[88] approach it from a somewhat different angle. Let us not leave it at any individual happening like a crisis or a disease, or birth, or death, or whatever it may be. Let us take the world as a whole and let us assume, as it is so very easy for us to assume, that the world has come into being. I say an assumption because I suppose not every one of us would have all the evidence needed to support the thesis that the visible universe has come into being, but we assume that today and many people in Greece also assumed it. And now the question which was raised originally—that is indeed in every textbook—is: Out of what did the cosmos come into being? And again I follow the textbooks, to some extent even Aristotle. The first man who raised this question said: It came into being out of water.[xxvii] That's an answer; and there were other answers, more sophisticated answers, given. And then there were other people who said: No, it is not enough to know out of what the cosmos came into being; you also have to know through what. Through what. Then they spoke of such things as rarefaction and [condensation][xxviii] or attraction and repulsion, and this kind of thing.[xxix] Good. But still[89] they all presupposed something, however clever they were, namely, the cosmos. They tried to explain the cosmos and they didn't look at the cosmos. Everyone knows the cosmos. Of course there are stars, there are human beings, there are cats, there is the earth, there are dogs, trees, etc. We know that. Yes, but what Socrates says is the primary and most important question is: What is the cosmos? What is it? What makes this ordered whole? What are its essential parts, say, man, animals, plants, inanimate things? And you can go on. That is the beginning of the whole enterprise.

Now someone said something of the end. Yes, now in other words, the structure of the world, the structure of the completed world, that is the theme for Socrates, we can say, or Plato, and[90] that means the order of the whats: of the what is an animal, what is man, what is a plant, and so on. Aristotle asserts—and I must say I regard this as a very high authority in such matters—Aristotle says that Plato admitted only ideas of natural things, not of artifacts. Not of artifacts. [xxx] And it is, I believe, possible to understand that, because if you have an artifact, say a shoe, there is a what: that's the shoe without any question. And that "what" is primarily is [. . .] in the shape of a shoe. Obviously, it must look somehow like a foot. Even if it is a very clumsy shoe, it must reproduce in a way the shape of the foot. Yes, but still, if you have a shoe and have the what, that is not the last word here, because you raise the question "Why?" regarding the what; and by why you do not necessarily mean the out of which (is it leather or wood or whatever it may be) or the through which (what operations of the shoemaker or of the shoemaking machine produce it). The what is still susceptible of an explanation. It's not something where you

[xxvii] Thales of Miletus. Kathleen Freeman notes that he "was in his prime about 585 B.C.," and that "whether he ever wrote a book is unknown; if he did, no genuine fragment survives." *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 18. For Thales's thought, see Aristotle *Metaphysics* 983b19-984a4.
[xxviii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xxix] See 984a6-985b23.
[xxx] See 991b5-8, 1070a10-21.

simply stop and must stop. Why can't you go beyond the form or shape of the shoe in explaining it? I think I know the answer, and you all know it. You know what a shoe is for, and therefore the shape of the shoe is derivative from the end which the shoe serves. It is supposed to protect the foot, and therefore we must cover the foot. It must somehow [do these things], and if it is not to be wholly useless it must be adjusted to the foot . . . So in the case of the artifact, the what is not the last word, but the end. But—and that is the key point in Plato—in the case of the natural things there is no such external, extraneous end, and the what is the last word. You cannot explain why there should be dogs and cats, or a snail or rattlesnakes or whatever—or viruses, whatever you take. The utmost you can—the understanding must stop there. There is no longer a legitimate question why. This is, I think, the background of this point.

Now this of course does not yet explain why the whats—I mean, their order—should be something like the resplendent stars. In other words, why they should be, as Aristotle put is, separated.[xxxi] That is a[91] very long question, and here Glaucon is[92] able to accept that without any difficulty. Without any difficulty. He doesn't have this obvious commonsense objection which everyone has had against the so-called Platonic doctrine of ideas, and I believe it is possible to explain that. At that time in that land, everyone knew something of such things like Platonic ideas, and I think that[93] there is even some evidence for that later on. That is what Glaucon knew. I will give you an example. There is one phenomenon which you all know, and that is called victory. In Greek, *nike*, or as it is pronounced here and also in Britain, I believe, nike.[xxxii] Now [this is] what Plato says: there is a *nike*, a "victory," self-subsisting, different from the victory at Marathon and Salamis or[94] whichever victory it might be. How did they show this belief? There is evidence for that: a goddess *Nike*. In other words, among the many gods which the Greeks had—and most of them had simply proper names, like Zeus and Hera and Apollo and so on—there were also some who had proper names. Very strange. And this Nike you see on a statue, the victory: that is not the victory at Marathon or Salamis. Victory. And it is presented as it is experienced by the victors: [it] barely touches the ground; winged, of course. Good.

Now, and even this is clear: there are many statues of Victory, of Nike, but nevertheless there is fundamentally one Nike. I think that is the so-called, one can say the psychological preparation which Glaucon virtually had. Of course that is by no means sufficient, because one has to raise the question: What induced the Greeks to develop such beliefs? And Plato would of course say these people who talk of Nike and [*Dike*] and [*Momus*] and whatever it may be, they divined the truth; and to that extent[95] the Greeks were better prepared for the Platonic truth than we are by virtue of our heritage.[xxxiii] Now, but look, there is one rule of the old-fashioned pragmatism which I think is a very sensible rule. If we don't understand a doctrine, let us look at its

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[xxxi] See 1078b30-33.

[xxxii] The transcriber notes: "former pronunciation takes a short 'i'; latter pronunciation takes long 'i.'"

[xxxiii] See Strauss, *City and Man*, 120-121. On 120, Strauss refers to "gods like *Dike*" and then refers to 536b3 where *Dike*, the god of justice, is mentioned and 487a6 where *Momus*, the god of blame, is mentioned.

consequences. What is the practical consequence to which it leads? We do not understand the doctrine of ideas. All right, but what does it mean in practical consequences? And I think we should look at two passages, in 479a. Do you have this? The first speech in 479. Mr. Reinken? At the end of 478.

Mr. Reinken:
"This much premised, let him tell me, I will say, let him answer me, that good fellow who does not think there is a beautiful in itself or any idea of beauty in itself always remaining the same and unchanged, but who does believe in many beautiful things—the lover of spectacles, I mean, who cannot endure to hear anybody say that the beautiful is one and the just one, and so of other things—and this will be our question: My good fellow, is there any one of these many fair-and-honourable things that will not sometimes appear ugly-and-base? And of the just things, that will not seem unjust? And of the pious things, that will not seem impious?" (478e-479a)

LS: Now let us stop here. "Seeming" is a weak translation: "which will not come to sight as" [is better]. There is not the word "seem." In other words, when Plato says that there is an idea of justice, whatever this might mean, it surely means that no just thing is simply just. Only the idea of justice is simply just. That you do not understand, but we do understand if someone tells us no just man is perfectly just. That's what it is, and the biblical tradition has the custom to admit this as a matter of course. But also no just things, meaning no laws: no law that ever existed is simply just. No principle of justice, as we say—that is also implied, that is meant by the Greek word, a just thing—is simply just. For example,[96] the equality of the sexes was introduced as something that's just. It is not simply just; that we know in advance, Plato says. There is no rule, even the prohibition against murder, which is simply just. Of course we conceal that from ourselves by saying [that] murder is only unjust killing. Yes? In other words, we are begging the question. If we try to draw a clear line between just killing and unjust killing, you would see the difficulty. And a little bit later, in 479d, when he says then we have found, it seems, that the—

Mr. Reinken:
"We would seem to have found, then, that the many conventions of the many about the fair and honourable and other things are tumbled about in the mid-region between that which is not and that which is in the true and absolute sense." (479d)

LS: Good.[97] Whether "convention" is here the best translation is another matter, but I won't go into that. Whatever is thought to be, held to be just is never simply just. Never. That is the practical meaning. Everything we find among human beings, however good they and their [beliefs][xxxiv] and their society may be, is . . . questionable. Is questionable. Not only that it should be examined, that goes without saying,[98] but it will prove to fall short of what we would design. We divine something all the time; we are always looking, divining something, not insofar as we are crazy or silly or so, but at best we are striving for something which does not find fulfillment. And from this point of view the doctrine

[xxxiv] The transcript has a blank space here.

of ideas is identical with the doctrine that the essence of man is *eros*, desire for something perfect. That is only another side of this doctrine of ideas.

Yes, I think we have to leave it at that, and we must see later on what light will fall on this central doctrine from books 6 and 7, because after Socrates has made this extraordinary assertion that without the rule of philosophers there will not be cessation of misery among human beings, he owes us some account of what philosophers [are and what] philosophy is. That's much too short. And secondly, how it is possible to make the philosophers rulers? That's not so easy. Yes?

Student: . . . I want to come out with a very petty point. Is it this that is the classic example of a sequence of three, where the second point doesn't seem to be as important as the third?

LS: Where?

Student: The three answers Socrates gave . . .

LS: Yes. No, I would say I'm sure that this is, in a way—now what is the practical conclusion? I look at my notes. The good city as described in the *logos* is not possible. That is, I believe, [true].[xxxv] We will gradually find out, I think, what amounts to an admission that the good city is not possible. One statement: At the end of book 7 the statement regarding the rule of philosophers and [the proviso that] the philosophers must become kings is repeated, but then it is greatly modified. The rule of philosophers is not enough. The philosophers must become rulers; that goes without saying. But then, after they have come to power, they must expel everyone older than [the age of] ten from the *polis*, rusticate them, and bring up those young.[xxxvi] Now is this possible? Is this possible?[99] I ask about it. There are—and the end of book 9 also, but that's the question. Now, and of[100] course, if it is not possible, we must raise the question[101] at least on two levels, namely, first on the simple level, these three institutions: complete communism, equality of the sexes, rule of philosophers. Is this possible? Is any of these three possible, and is their conjunction possible? And we can also say: All right, these are special suggestions of Plato; perhaps a perfectly just city is nevertheless possible on a different basis. In other words, we can generalize beyond Plato's particularization . . . I believe that is exactly the point. Plato cures Glaucon from his political ambition in the highest sense of the word by showing to him that the solution of the human problem is not possible on the political plane, and that doesn't mean that politics is not important, but it cannot—the true solution transcends the *polis*. That I think is what the book as a whole means, but of course all the—Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: Would you be willing to repeat these remarks toward the end, *eros* and the ideas?

[xxxv] The transcript has blank space here.
[xxxvi] Plato *Republic* 540d1-541b5.

LS: Yes, the ends are higher than any human achievement, the human ends. No human achievement reaches the end fully. Then it is of the essence of man to long, [to] desire. There cannot be an end to this longing and desiring. The essence of the human soul is[102] [longing], is desire, is *eros*. That is what I meant. Yes? That he surely means.

Mr. Megati: How does one begin with *eros* and arrive at the other? That I didn't see. How does one begin with *eros* and arrive there?

LS: Oh, well, we have *eros* all the time. I mean, I don't mean this in any Freudian sense, but we always need certain things, we always observe our limitations. When we read Plato we will constantly come across great difficulties; and even if we don't read Plato, if we think we can philosophize without such crutches and do it by ourselves, we constantly become aware of dark corners, and that is a sign we must long for more. And the Platonic assertion, I think that he means very literally that man cannot be wise, strictly speaking. He can only be a lover of wisdom—that's [the] philosopher—and that is it. In other words, there is no such teaching of Plato as you have to some extent in Aristotle, where he lays it down the line, and I think the fact that Plato wrote dialogues and no treatises has something to do with that. Plato did not, could not teach that way in which Aristotle could teach. Yes?

Student: Going back to the question of the essence of the philosopher king, you might say, I wondered whether there was not—one element in the preparation is not the protests that Socrates has been putting them all through in the first place. There are references later on, and some before, to the fact that the *logos* of the philosopher who is running the city is very like the *logos* of the people who are founding it, which presumably is the present company; and in this way it would be natural to expect that the approach of the governors to their city had been rather in some way, roughly speaking . . . something comparable to the kind of approach which they have been giving to it in the current discussion as represented in the dialogue.

LS: [103]Yes, but in the treatment which Socrates gives to them, or what? Or in the treatment which they gave to the object of their discussion?

Same Student: Oh, the treatment in that the whole course of the dialogue, that if they look reflectively at what they have been doing in how they've been constructing the *logos* of the city, it must be obvious that to continue such a city some similar kind of approach would be necessary on the part of the rulers.

LS: Yes, but I believe if they would go over it with [care]—you know, that's the great advantage of writing over conversation. They can't—then you must have an amazing memory to remember such things.[104] The first thing they would see is the many mistakes they made, so they would have to restate what they said.

Same Student: Yes, but the general approach which included the mistakes and the making of the mistakes is the case for the philosopher.

LS: Yes. Yes, yes, that is quite true, but there is also one thing which was brought out indirectly by Mr. Hennessy today. That[105] [is] absolutely necessary, this reasoning, reflecting on the *polis*, it is not sufficient. That will be brought out later, but we have already heard an indication of that. The *polis* needs, in addition to reasoning—genuine or spurious, apodictic or rhetorical, I don't make the distinction now—in addition to that, it also needs force, coercion. You see? You must never forget that. I mean, there is no suggestion of anarchism in any manner or form here. Yes? And perhaps this is connected. I don't know whether Mr. Hennessy tried to explain the fact that there should be a strong emphasis on force, coercion when philosophy comes in, you know, as a reminder of that other[106] harsh element which is as important to the *polis* as *logos*. Good.

Do you know these English verses which I read once in England which I always forget, about the difference between the two colleges? You know? I remember only one verse: that the kings to Oxford . . .

Student: He said, "Troops to Oxford and books to Cambridge," to show that one needed keeping in order and the other needed to talk.

LS: No, no.[107] I think it was to Oxford he sends a regiment of force, for Tories know no argument but force, but to Cambridge books he sends, because Whigs allow no force but arguments.[xxxvii] Now Socrates is both a Tory and a Whig.

Student: I know none of those now . . .

LS: Good.

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[1] Deleted "—so—."
[2] Deleted "turn to it."
[3] Deleted "turn to the discussion."
[4] Deleted "did you—you."
[5] Deleted "some—of."
[6] Deleted "which is—we can state it."
[7] Deleted "takes—."
[8] Deleted "it's not a city."
[9] Deleted "what is the kind—what are the."
[10] Deleted "it is—."
[11] Deleted "but."
[12] Deleted "in a tradition the emphasis—."
[13] Deleted "that this—."
[14] Deleted "the only thing left for a complete—he says."
[15] Deleted "that—"

[xxxvii] The epigram, attributed to Sir William Browne (1692-1774), the founder of the prize for odes and epigrams at the University of Cambridge, is on why George I donated the library of the Bishop of Ely to Cambridge rather than to Oxford:
"The King to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
For Tories own no argument but force:
With equal skill to Cambridge books he sent,
For Whigs admit no force but argument."

[16] Deleted "That's—."
[17] Deleted "of communism of wives."
[18] Deleted "Now why is this, and."
[19] Deleted "there is—and."
[20] Deleted "what—so."
[21] Deleted "raise—."
[22] Deleted "What is more—."
[23] Deleted "there—."
[24] Deleted "get just."
[25] Deleted "I—."
[26] Changed from "No, well I will say it now, what it is."
[27] Deleted "—you know."
[28] Deleted "I mean."
[29] Deleted "that is—."
[30] Deleted "you would have."
[31] Deleted "—but that is—and."
[32] Deleted "only—."
[33] Deleted "communism regarding—the."
[34] Deleted "says why—what is."
[35] Deleted "in a—."
[36] Deleted "a-b, a-b, a-b."
[37] Deleted "Glaucon—."
[38] Deleted "In—slightly, to get it more for."
[39] Deleted "only that I would—I think it."
[40] Deleted "Socrates—."
[41] Deleted "is not—he."
[42] Deleted "and says the whole thing."
[43] Deleted "that is an—."
[44] Deleted "of—it."
[45] Deleted "the—gives him."
[46] Deleted "now even if you—."
[47] Deleted "I mean, what—."
[48] Deleted "in—."
[49] Changed from "I will try to state it as follows—what we have heard here."
[50] Deleted "many—how."
[51] Deleted "an element—."
[52] Deleted "of."
[53] Deleted "How—.'
[54] Deleted "from the—."
[55] Deleted "Yes, that is—."
[56] Deleted "without any—bringing it."
[57] Deleted "is."
[58] Deleted "please."
[59] Changed from "and then they went—they were perfectly satisfied and—wonderful spectacle—and they went home and they were prevented from going and then they sit there and then—I mean, well no one among us, I believe, has ever had such an experience."
[60] Deleted "says—."
[61] Deleted "So—.'
[62] Deleted "that—."
[63] Deleted "Socrates."
[64] Deleted "Things is not—."
[65] Deleted "the—I mean."
[66] Deleted "and therefore—."
[67] Deleted "The philosopher is interested—even, let us take—."
[68] Deleted "have—you."
[69] Deleted "—well, there are various kinds—."

[70] Deleted "—you see.'
[71] Deleted "—he says."
[72] Deleted "or—."
[73] Deleted "and he would go on—."
[74] Deleted "but the question is—yes."
[75] Deleted "—yes?—speaking."
[76] Changed from "I mean, how would one—how would on—could one make intelligible the distinction between things which are philosophic things, or scientific; there is no distinction—and things which are non-philosophic and non-scientific?"
[77] Deleted "for example."
[78] Deleted "that is—but."
[79] Deleted "s."
[80] Deleted "man."
[81] Deleted "That is—."
[82] Deleted "it."
[83] Deleted "is not—it."
[84] Deleted "there is—."
[85] Deleted "One could—."
[86] Changed from "We are concerned—all scientists say today—I think old-fashioned people at least we could say—is concerned with explanation of a disease, of a political crisis, or whatever it may be."
[87] Deleted "it came about, how it came about, how."
[88] Deleted "make another—."
[89] Deleted "there was—."
[90] Deleted "the meaning—and."
[91] Deleted "long question, but it is also—that is a."
[92] Deleted "cap."
[93] Deleted "is the—."
[94] Deleted "whatever—."
[95] Deleted "they were."
[96] Deleted ",--we have some examples—."
[97] Deleted "In other words, everything which—I mean."
[98] Changed from "But it will prove to be—to fall short of what we would—would design."
[99] Deleted "Can—."
[100] Deleted "of."
[101] Deleted "we can do it on various—we can raise this question"
[102] Deleted "long."
[103] Deleted "In the—."
[104] Changed from "They would—the first thing they would see is the many mistakes they made, the many mistakes they made."
[105] Deleted "surely—but.'
[106] Deleted "—this."
[107] Changed from "And that—I think it was to Oxford he sends a regiment of force for Tories know no argument but force, but to Cambridge books he sends because Whigs allow no force but arguments."

Session 10: November 1, 1961
Book 6: Philosopher and *Polis*

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —You said the philosopher is a lover of harmony [1]and you raised the question: Why is love of truth necessarily—why doesn't love of truth necessarily . . .[i]

Student: [. . .] almost commonsense awakening to the reality about us leaves us with the only alternative that truth is somehow ordered, somehow systematic. We try to understand—

LS: Yes. In other words—

Same Student: There would seem to be a basic choice at the very start of the process of awakening to reality around us.[2] I might say this is an interesting point of discussion. That's why I raise it.

LS: Yes. Now, well, very interesting. If one could rightly say,[3] what does truth have to do with harmony? Maybe truth is just—is disharmonious. Yes, but surely,[4] [it] is absolutely necessary to raise the question, and that is really the question: Is not Plato a very naïve man? Does he not have a kind of naïve optimism, and the truth is absolutely terrifying, shocking, disharmonious? And you used a word which is a [form of][ii] order. Order. If the truth is [ordered], if the truth of the whole is the order of the whole, the laws of the whole, the lawfulness of the whole, [5]then there would be some connection. But we have seen another suggestion which is akin to that, that the ideas (to which we have to come back later) are resplendences, beautiful things. Now if this should be true, if the core of beings is intrinsically resplendent, then you would make sense, but whether that is the case we are not yet in a position to say, surely.

Now I take up first two other points. You compared Adeimantus's objection to Thrasymachus's, and you say this is the same type of objection. Now we remember one objection of Thrasymachus, perhaps, when Socrates has shown that the artisan in the strict sense is only concerned with the well-being of the things or beings he cares for and in no way concerned with his reward, and Thrasymachus brings up the case of the shepherd. Of course he is very much concerned with the well-being of the sheep, but ultimately not for the sake of the well-being of the sheep, but for their being eaten.[iii] Does he not have a point there?

Student: Yes.

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[i] The transcriber notes that there was an interruption in the tape. Strauss is responding to a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcript indicates that there is something inaudible here.
[iii] Plato *Republic* 342e6-343c1.

LS: Does Adeimantus not also have a point?[iv]

Student: Yes.

LS: Yes. So in other words, we must beware of one[6] danger into which Plato in a way leads us: that we think Socrates is always sound. Yes?

Student: My point was the difference in the manner in which they made objections.

LS: Namely?

Student: Well, this is perhaps the most brutal display of Thrasymachus's character, where he—

LS: Yes, or at least of his manners.

Student: Yes. And Adeimantus is very—the text just simply reads, "And Adeimantus said," "But Socrates . . . " and very calmly presents the same type of objection.

LS: Yes, that is true. Yes. Adeimantus is surely not excited; that is perfectly true. But also [consider] this other point. I[7] saw that you did not go into that trap, but that is a trap into which one can easily fall, that one assumes, because Socrates is such an obviously nice man, that everything he says must be superior to what his opponents say, [8]and especially if his opponents are unpleasant fellows. You know? We must—we all know this, that sometimes a most unpleasant individual may have a very strong point. That is part of our scientific training, that we learn to distinguish the assertion from the man who came to it, although ultimately that may be relevant; ultimately there may be a connection between the opinions a man has and his character. Yes? But penultimately[v] it isn't, and that we must [. . .] What did you[9] make of the goat-stag?[vi] This I didn't catch.

Student: Well, this is . . . he came to his character a half horse and half man—

LS: Yes, at any rate, an—

Student: An unnatural being.

LS: An impossible combination. Yes. What is impossible here in—I mean, Socrates compares something else. Who?

Student: I understood it specifically in the following way, namely, that to give an example of what really—how the philosopher, the true philosopher, is related to the state he has to think of some unnatural example, some impossible example,[10] because the situation is so unnatural. My point is that the goat-stag does not exist in reality, but the

[iv] 487b1-e3.
[v] In the transcript: "penultimately (?)"
[vi] 488a2-7.

unnatural relationship of the philosopher to the state does exist and did exist in [the] politics of states.

LS: Yes, but that is not a combination, [it is] a relation. I mean, here you have the philosopher and there you have the *polis*. That's not a combination.

Student: Well, combination was the example, the ship of state example.

LS: Yes, but where is there the absurd combination? You[11] compare the citizens to the sailors and you compare the natural ruler to the pilot. That is a perfectly simple comparison, yes? I mean that the sailors make a mutiny against the pilot or the captain and drug him, and then they do fantastic things to the ship because they don't know the art [of] piloting.[vii] Well, this[12] is obviously not as fantastic, although it may be very unusual. It is not such a fantastic combination as the goat-stag, or a centaur, or something of this kind.

Student: Well, by my feeling too, I did not find a fantastic combination in the example. I felt that he just used the—he said that the example sort of—in a sense not really meaning that the example was unnatural because it's very natural . . .

LS: Yes, but why does he use this very extreme expression, that he is speaking of a wholly impossible and unnatural combination of two incompatible things? He must have meant something by that. It is not borne out by the simile itself, at least as far as I can see. Is there no suggestion of any combination made in the *Republic* which might very well appear to be like a centaur or a goat-stag or any other fantastic combination?

Student: The philosopher king.

LS: Yes. Perhaps he is also thinking of that, but we must see. And the last point which you raised is what you said about necessity. Can you repeat that?

Student: There is a considerable usage throughout this part of the dialogue of ["necessity"][viii] especially in the answers of the interlocutors.

LS: Yes, yes. Now, all right, but did you not link this up with one particular passage where he speaks of "necessity"?

Student: I pointed out that after he points out that the sophist accepts the necessary as the just[ix] [. . .] then I might point out that Socrates himself has throughout this section recognized certain necessities, namely—

LS: Well, we don't have to go into which, but[13] there are necessities and therefore there is nothing wrong with speaking of necessities. But what is wrong?

[vii] 487e4-489b2
[viii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[ix] 493c3-6e

Same Student: Well, what is wrong is realizing that one simply has to, I would say, not mold or direct the necessities to—to recognize the limitations of necessity, to try to plan beyond, to have certain ends beyond the necessities themselves, to take cognizance of necessities.

LS: In other words, necessities are only a part, and the others deny that it is not necessary. But I think—all right, we will take up the passage when we come to it. And then the last point, where I[14] cannot hold you responsible for that in any way, but I must look: you said near the beginning of your paper, "knowledge of ideal reality." What did you mean by that?

Same Student: I meant whatever Socrates means by . . .

LS: Yes, perhaps Shorey.

Student: Yes. And this is Shorey's way of stating it, which I—after the last class I began to realize this was going to be a shortcoming.

LS: No, you see, if you speak of "ideal" reality, i.e., you qualify reality, there must be a reality which is not "ideal." And I suppose ordinarily we understand as the opposite to "ideal," "real," so there is an "ideal" reality and a "real" reality, yes? And that's awkward. I think[15] in such cases one should simply not speak about[16] [such] matters.[17] If you would speak of knowledge of dogs or cats, that is perfectly simple, because even if you do not give us a perfectly simple description or definition of a dog,[18] you could in a pinch produce a dog and show that, and so that we could know what we are talking about. But if you speak of "ideal" reality [. . .] and I don't blame you for that. I mean, I only use the fact that you went into that trap laid by Shorey to make this point clear.

Perhaps we begin our discussion with this subject which we had already taken up last time.[19] At the end of book 5, the philosophers are those who love the knowledge of the ideas, of each idea. We came to that at the end of book 5. This will be taken up later.[20] What are they? They are things which are simply unchangeable, unchangeable in any respect. This we know. They are purely intellectual, i.e., they cannot be perceived by the senses and they have this quality of resplendence. That is also made clear toward the end of the fifth book. Now we must briefly discuss the difficulty.[21] I did [that] to some extent last time, but I would like to take it up [again]. We had one clear example, and that was suggested to us by the remark about the good city which is in speech as distinguished from any good city in deed, and we made this clearer by thinking of a straight line as meant, as distinguished from the straight line as drawn on a blackboard or on a piece of paper.[x] Now this straight line as meant is perfectly straight, whereas every line as drawn is not perfectly straight. This, the perfectly straight line which is in no way a curve—in no way; it is straight at every point—and this straight line as meant cannot be seen. What we see is something which we draw, but what we draw is never the perfectly straight line, so that if we would generalize from this, we would say in each kind of thing, that which

[x] 472d9-473b3.

is perfectly that thing is not [22]perceptible by the senses and is absolutely unchangeable. But is this true of all other cases?

Last time we used the example of whispering. We will not speak now of the perfectly straight line but of the perfect whispering. Is the perfect whispering also beyond all whispering we observe, we see, or hear? May I tell you a simple story? I was once sitting with a man in a restaurant. [23]We spoke about dogs and the various things they do, and then he imitated the yowling of a dog, and it was quite remarkable. And then a woman sitting at a neighboring table came and said, "I have had kennels in the country for twenty years, but I have never heard such a perfect yowling." Now in other words, if [there is] anything we would merely intellectualize and not hear, would this be a perfect yowling, or for that matter, a perfect whisper? And now I take perhaps the key example: if we take Plato's doctrine literally, we reach this conclusion that the perfect dog is of course absolutely unchangeable. Yes? Absolutely unchangeable. And strictly, he cannot be male or female because that is already something added to the dog. Being perfectly unchangeable, it was not born and will not die. It cannot run around; it cannot bark; it cannot scratch itself, and so on and so on. Is this a dog? That is in a way—I mean, on the surface of it, that's Aristotle's objection to Plato. The true dog is this dog here—and I'm sorry, he isn't here, but anyway—is this dog here and not that dog. That's not the dog.

So Plato's doctrine is absolutely paradoxical. One cannot emphasize this too strongly, and of course[24] in other dialogues we find people [who] have already heard of that; for example, the *Phaedo*: Simmias, Cebes and such people: "Oh yes, that's what we are babbling about all the time, these ideas."[xi] They know it. But Glaucon and Adeimantus have never heard of that, and they accept it. That is a very great difficulty in understanding the *Republic* in particular, and we must gradually see why Plato maintains such an extraordinary assertion, or perhaps[25] in what sense he maintains it. But it is clear that the so-called mathematical objects are the most simple illustration, but, as will be made clear later on, the mathematical objects are not ideas, they are only a kind of illustration of that.

Now let us then turn to the sequence of the argument. The assertion: the happiness of the human race, not only of the cities, depends on the rule of philosophers.[xii] That was asserted, and the question arose: What are the philosophers? And a very general answer was given in the fifth book in order to distinguish the philosophers from their nearest competitors, from other people who love to see, namely, sights and not the ideas.[xiii] At the beginning of book 6 it is said the philosophers have come to sight only in some manner and with difficulty: hardly. Hardly. They have come to the sight hardly. So all right, let us find out what the philosophers are. That they have come to the sight barely is sufficiently proved by the fact that we do not get any answer to this question regarding the ideas. I mean, these manifest objections which must be raised are not answered in any way. Socrates stops. He says we must go on, we cannot stop and give a further discussion of philosophy, for we are concerned with the difference between the just life and the

[xi] *Phaedo* 76d7-77a5, 100b1-c8. See also 65d4-66a10, 74a9-75d6, 78d10-79a11.
[xii] *Republic* 473c11-e5.
[xiii] 475d1ff.

unjust life.[xiv] What a strange procedure. Philosophy is not a mere means for bringing about the just life, but it is the just life, as will gradually come out. Why then, we must ask in retrospect, the roundabout way through the just city, with communism and all these other things? What would you say? What could be an answer to that? Why the roundabout way through the just city if it should prove to be true that the just life is the life of the philosopher? Yes?

Student: To expel any unjustified expectations for justice from the city.

LS: Yes. That is true, but it is a bit general.

Student: Well, the specific difficulties that would . . . I suppose pure selflessness, and in a way pure justice, indicate that that sort of justice[26] hasn't been proved impossible here. It's rather been proved to be very questionable. Likewise, the coercion or the limitations on the persuasiveness, the persuasive ability of the philosophers to gain acceptance.

LS: Yes, and one could add a number of other points . . . I will try to say it very simply. According to a very common view which[27] you find clearly expressed, for example, in Aristotle more than once, there is only one competitor with the philosophic life, and that is the political life, the life of the statesman—I mean contrary to [28] today, when we would say there are *n* types of the highest human life.[xv] In the ordinary view in Greece, there are only two: the life of action, political life, and the life of contemplation, the philosophic life; and therefore it is impossible to clarify what the philosophic life is without understanding what the political life is. Now assuming that all political life as we know it is defective, then we must first discover for ourselves political life at its best, political life in the perfect city, in order to solve that question. I believe that is the connection. Yes, but it also means,[29] to come back to the main point here, we have only a very summary discussion of philosophy, but if the philosophic life is the just life then we have a very incomplete discussion of justice. You see, that would be the irony of this remark. We cannot go into the question of what the philosopher is because we have to rush back to the theme of justice, but if the philosophic life should be justice, we really foreshorten illegitimately the discussion of justice. And I believe that will gradually [emerge], that this is the case.

Now here immediately following, in 484b, the question that's visibly raised: Who should be the leaders of the city, the philosophers or the nonphilosophers? The issue is not yet settled. Socrates has asserted [that] the philosophers should be kings, in 473, but this was only an assertion. Now he will prove it, and he states first what the philosophers are: They are those who are capable to grasp the simply unchangeable. But surely that alone would not enable them to rule the city, because they must also be political men. Political life has to do with things which come into being and perish all the time, and if one doesn't have experience with them, how can one[30] rule the city? They must possess experience, that is clear. In other words, they must have all the qualities that enable a man

[xiv] 484a1-b1.
[xv] See, for example, Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b114-1096a5; 1177a12-b26; *Politics* 1325a16-b32.

to be a statesman according to the ordinary use, and they must have, in addition, knowledge of the unchangeable things. Why[31] is this additional requirement beyond political experience made? Let us not hesitate to spell that out. Why is this knowledge of[32] the unchangeable truth necessary in addition to political practice, experience, skill, or however you might call it? What does he say? What is the answer? Why must they have this knowledge of the truth, of the unchangeable truth, in addition to all the excellences of the statesman as statesman? Well, let us read that, in 484c6. It's near the beginning.

Mr. Reinken:
"Is this, then" said I, "clear, whether the guardian who is to keep watch over anything ought to be blind or keen of sight?" "Of course it is clear," he said. "Do you think, then, that there is any appreciable difference between the blind and those who are veritably deprived of the knowledge of the veritable being of things, those who have no vivid pattern in their souls and so cannot, as painters look to their models, fix their eyes on the absolute truth—"

LS: Yes, literally "at the most true." Yes? "At what is most true."

Mr. Reinken:
"and always with reference to that ideal—"

LS: Oh God, no: "there": there in opposition to here. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and in the exactest possible contemplation of it establish in this world also the laws—"

LS: Establish here, here. Yes. You see that, in other words, [33]that has of course to do with the difference between here, namely, the world of the living, and there, where the dead live. An ordinary opposition in this language, and this is you can say in the other world: the ideas, the truth is in another world. That is this paradoxical assertion. Yes? Read this. Finish this.

Mr. Reinken:
"establish here[xvi] also the laws of the beautiful, the just, and the good, when that is needful, or guard and preserve those that are established?" (484c-d)

LS: Yes. That is the point. Now what do they have, the philosophers? They alone possess in their souls the paradigm, the pattern, the model, that "most true" with reference to which they can establish and preserve the laws and institutions here. So the institutions which they establish or preserve, say, communism, equality of the sexes, is not—I mean, that has to be established here, and [they are] therefore changeable in contradistinction to that to which they look. The great question is that to which they look, the model: Is that the good city? Is that the good city, or is it something out of which they figure out the good city? In other words, is the good city—I mean, if we use this Platonic language—is the good city itself an idea? That is a very great question. But commonsensically it does

[xvi] Following Strauss's correction of Shorey's "in this world."

make sense, doesn't it, to say that the perfect rulers would be men who, in addition to having all other excellences of a statesman, have also a full understanding of the true principles of human action[34]? Would they not be superior to the ordinary statesman, however good, if he could have the combination, if that combination is not a goat-stag? Should we not try to get it?

So from this the consequence is clear. The philosophers must rule, provided a combination of knowledge of the ideas and of experience is possible. *Provided*. Now whether this combination is possible depends very much on what is a philosopher. What is the nature of a philosopher? Nature means here what is the natural equipment which enables a man to become a philosopher. Now only if we know that philosophic nature will we be able to see whether the philosophic nature is compatible with a combination of perfect statesmanship. That we must see. But we must never forget the context. The context is: Is the combination of philosophy and statesmanship possible? And then we have first to know what is it that makes the man a philosopher, and then we would have to see in each point: Is this quality required of the philosopher compatible with being a statesman? If it is, then the question is solved.

Now then he develops here in the sequel, from 485a to 487a, the nature of the philosophers, and he enumerates the following nine points: love of knowledge of everything which truly is. I mean, not love of knowledge of what Mr. Faulkner whispered last time into Mr. Warden's ear—[. . .] this example—but knowledge of what whispering itself [is and knowledge][xvii] of every such thing. And here it is made clear—that refers to a point someone made last time. I think we should look at that: 485a, the first speech. What the philosophers love: they love every field of learning.

Mr. Reinken:
"It would be strange indeed," he said, "to choose others than the philosophers, provided that they were not deficient in those other respects—"

LS: No, no. That we had; a bit later. In b, the second speech in b. Yes, in 485b. And they love.

Mr. Reinken:
"And, further," said I, "that their desire is for the whole of it and that they do not willingly renounce a small or a great, a more precious or a less honoured part of it. That was—" (485b)

LS: Yes, that's all. In other words, the less honored parts, the lower parts, are as important to him as the higher parts. The idea of the rat is as important as the idea of the lion, even as the idea of man. Someone had doubts last time about this matter.[35] You remember that? [36]But whatever may be the truth about it, Plato's view is [that] there is nothing—I mean, not gossip. No serious man is interested in gossip, but as far as true being is concerned, there is no part with which he is not concerned. That's the first point. That is called love of wisdom. The second is called hatred of the lie: love of the truth in

[xvii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

the narrow sense. The third[37] [is] in a way a consequence of what follows: since his love is entirely in this sense in him, the love of the pleasures of the soul is much more powerful than the love of the pleasures of the body and therefore also than the love of wealth. Here we have the third quality, which is moderation, and since he is concerned with the whole—with everything, with the whole—he cannot be petty. He cannot be petty. He cannot lose himself in his little corner of his own self-interest and so. He cannot be illiberal. This is the fourth quality: grandeur. I don't know how to translate this word better: *megaloprepeia*, "grandeur," "grandness." And also, since he has this broadest possible horizon, he must be free from fear of death. He cannot take his own life and death so seriously. He cannot be a coward. That's number five. [What is] the name of[38] the virtue opposite to fear of death and therefore of lesser evils?

Student: Courage.

LS: Yes, or manliness. Manliness, courage. That [word] is not mentioned here. That's very interesting. Number six: the man who has these qualities, number two, three, four, and five, will be just and also gentle. See, that one can easily figure out. If someone is not interested in money, and is of course not interested in honors because that is petty—you know, petty—what incentive does he have for being unjust? I mean, look at most crimes[39], practically all crimes which are committed. He will be just and he will be gentle. He will not be a competitor.

The seventh does not follow immediately from the preceding, but it is clear: he must be a good learner, because if learning is for him simply misery, how will he engage in this effort? The eighth, which is different,[40] is good memory. That I think is obviously necessary. What can you do if you forget the most relevant part of the argument while you concentrate on the other? I once knew a man . . . when you have a sentence, a compound sentence, and, say, a conditional clause, conditional sentence, and then he said to you: "Now first repeat the conditional clause. Yes, I get that. And now the main clause. I get that too. Now put it together again." You know, that's insufficient memory, that he cannot keep in mind two parts of a conditional sentence. And the last point is love of proportions and gracefulness. One could almost say "wittiness."[41] I mean, no deduction of that is given, but apparently that is connected to that. This is a philosopher. In other words, any man who lacks any of these nine things is not a philosopher.[xviii] That's a hard order, but[42] since philosophy is such a great thing, we must be honest about it, you know, and not make concessions,[43] so that anyone who is a teacher of philosophy or a student of philosophy anywhere would qualify. I mean, that is in a way humane, but it is also not truthful.

Now this . . . our question is justice, and therefore we must see[44] where justice comes in here. And we have here in a way an answer that is perhaps the answer of the *Republic*: Justice is a condition or a byproduct of philosophy. Such a man concerned with knowledge of the whole cannot but be just, and here justice—there is no particular emphasis on justice. It simply follows. Simply follows. I would like to comment on one point. The fact that[45] there are three enumerations of the virtues of the philosophers—we

[xviii] Plato *Republic* 485a10-486d12.

come to the others later—but it is of no use to make a kind of simple average of the three enumerations. One has to read each by itself and then see what is the new thing we learn from enumerations number two and three. Now here we make this observation, that the virtue manliness is not mentioned by name.[46] Freedom from fear of death is mentioned, but it is not called manliness. Does this ring a bell? It's a pity Mr. Kendrick isn't here. He would know.

Student: In Xenophon, Socrates—

LS: Ah! Yes?

Student: Socrates is said to have—no, no—he is said to have wisdom, moderation, and justice.

LS: And so, more.

Student: Courage is not attributed to him.

LS: Xenophon gives two enumerations of Socrates's virtues.[xix] In neither of these enumerations is manliness mentioned, so we have some evidence apart from Plato. Now Socrates—well, manliness is of course primarily the virtue of the soldiers, naturally, and Socrates was a first-rate soldier, as we know; but when Xenophon speaks of Socrates's military exploits, he[47] takes them as signs of Socrates's justice, not as signs of his manliness. Of justice: he obeyed the law, was called to arms and ordered on an expedition, and he did what the authorities told him.[xx] That's justice, it's not manliness. Manliness is another matter.[48] By the way, Xenophon, who is such a military man, as you know, says practically nothing about Socrates's military exploits. These things are said chiefly by Plato, and especially where? That is of great importance also for the understanding of the *Republic*, because the whole issue of war is [important].[xxi] The drunken Alcibiades in the *Banquet* gives the most detailed report of Socrates the warrior.[xxii] Not that it is not true what Alcibiades said, but it is important in what connection it is said and by whom. Alcibiades was, after all, the most warlike man of his age.

Now manliness.[49] I would like to mention only one connection of this issue with the *Republic*, with what we have already read. One of the most shocking things demanded in the *Republic* is the equality of the sexes. That means the male sex loses its ordinary preponderance, doesn't it? I mean, disregarding all the complexities, but in itself. So [50]a demasculinization of the society is taking place here.[51] Much could be said about it, but I don't wish to confuse you by details. What do the philosophers do, and how[52] does it compare to the activities of the man *par excellence*? I believe this was already discussed in this class. Yes? Well, look—I mean, in any dialogue. What are they doing here? They

[xix] See Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.8.11; *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 16.
[xx] *Memorabilia* 4.4.1.
[xxi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xxii] Plato *Symposium* 219e5-221c1.

are sitting in a house. They don't even go to the procession to which they were supposed to go.[xxiii53] [In] almost every Platonic work, they sit somewhere and talk: what women do. Women do. They sit at home—in Athens, at least; in Sparta things were different—sit at home and talk. That's a female activity. And I think there was an American anthropologist who wrote a study some decades ago where he [54]tried to find the equivalent of the intellectual in primitive society, and that was the weak male, [as] they were called there. Now Socrates himself was a very strong man, but it is a matter now not of the nature itself, but of the way of life. It's not the outgoing fighting or acquisitive life, that is the point. I think I mentioned this already here once. Now in 487 we have a brief summary, 487a. Will you look at that? When he summarizes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Is there any fault, then, that you can find with a pursuit which a man could not properly practice unless he were by nature of good memory, quick apprehension, magnificent, gracious—"

LS: [Shorey translates as] "magnificent"[55] what I call "grand." Go on.

Mr. Reinken: "grand—"

LS: Yes.

Mr. Reinken: "gracious—"

LS: Or "witty."

Mr. Reinken:
"friendly and akin to truth, justice, bravery and sobriety?" (487a)

LS: Yes. Or "moderation."[56] Yes, a friend as well as kinsman—it goes together—of these four things. Now you can see that since these last four things are taken together—truth, justice, manliness, moderation—under the heading "friend and kinsman of," you either have five items, or if you count each[57] of these things [separately], you have eight items.

Student: You have nine.

LS: [58]Now let me see: memory, quick learner, grandeur, wittiness or gracefulness; these are four. Yes? Lover of truth, five; lover of justice, six; lover of courage, seven—

Student: Lover of truth and kinsman of truth, that's two.

LS: No. What should be the difference?

Student: Friend of truth and kinsman of truth. Yes, I see.

[xxiii] *Republic* 328a1-b2.

LS: I believe that the phrase needs an explanation, and I do not have any such explanation, but primarily I would say—on the face of it, I would say there are eight items. Now in the first case, the center is grandeur, i.e., the contempt of human things. That is in the center. [59]Of course, by "contempt of human things" is not meant, how shall I say, a natural misanthropic condition, that goes without saying, but because of the breadth of the horizon, contempt of human things. Is this of any relevance to our question of—the guiding question? Mr. Faulkner?

Mr. Faulkner: The just man is the one who is not concerned with his own.

LS: Yes, but the guiding question is the question of the compatibility of philosophy and statesmanship.

Student: He's got to be immune to differences . . . differences in the derogatory sense.

LS: Yes, but what about this? What is the statesman, statesman in the best sense concerned with? Pardon? With human things. So that is the difficulty. There is a passage somewhere in the *Laws* (unfortunately I didn't look up the reference) in which the whole issue comes to a head, where the philosopher, there called the Athenian Stranger, has a discussion with two statesmen, a Cretan and a Spartan. And then the philosopher makes a derogatory remark about men and human things, and the Cretan statesman is up in arms: "How can you say that?" And he says, "I'm sorry, I just looked away toward the gods and therefore I came to this view."[60] And then he makes the concession to him, to say the human things are not so contemptible.[xxiv] Here the conflict begins: the philosopher and the statesman is clearly presented. This is the question[61]—of course, that is only the question; the answer is very complicated: How can a philosopher in the sense defined be interested in human things? If he is completely filled with concern for understanding the whole, how can there be any place for the concern with his affairs, the affairs of his *polis*, and so on? Another illustration, which is more easily accessible, perhaps: In the dialogue *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes the theoretical man—the "astronomizing" soul as it is called there—and [62]he says how he lives: he does not even know whether his neighbor is a human being or a beast.[xxv] He is only concerned with what is a human being; what is a beast? [63]Of course he knows nothing of the laws of his *polis*: who would care for that? This is, I say, not the solution of the problem; that's the statement of the problem, and the amusing thing of course [is] that this is said by Socrates, of all people, who so to speak knew every little bit of gossip in Athens.[64] I mean, he knows these people: "He's the son of this man," you know; and he is amazingly familiar with the situation in Athens. And that is a great paradoxy, but that is a paradoxy, not trivial. How can a philosopher or how must a philosopher be concerned with the human things? This is the overcoming of a very fundamental difficulty, not a matter of course, and that is the question which must be solved here. Up to now we are only in the stage of the statement of the problem. To begin with, it is wholly inconceivable how the philosopher could be a king. Will you read the next speech of Glaucon, Mr. Reinken?

[xxiv] *Laws* 803a3-804c1.
[xxv] *Theatetus* 173c6-174b7.

Mr. Reinken:
"Momus himself," he said, "could not find fault with such a combination." (487a)

LS: Yes.[65] Who is Momus?

Student: The footnote says "the god of censure."

LS: "Blame," "blame." Yes, "blame." Yes, but what is he? Well,[66] Plato doesn't say, or Socrates doesn't say: he [that is, Glaucon] very simply says "Momus": even Momus couldn't blame such a thing. Yes, but even Blame with a capital B could not blame. Who is that god? He is Blame itself. He is nothing but blame, every part and parcel. He's nothing but blame, whereas in every actual blame—if someone blames me, for example, my name would occur; that is of course not pure blame, but there[67] are elements added [68]which are not in themselves blame. It is not pure blame; it's mixed blame. Even if you condemn the man completely,[69] not every part of the blame is blame. If you say, "A is an absolutely contemptible and disgraceful nuisance," or whatever strong blame you might think of, the whole statement is not blame. I mean, A is not a term of blame, for example, Mr. Miller, or whatever his name might be. So pure blame and nothing but blame, that's a god. But that is what I tried to illustrate last time: the preparation for the doctrine of ideas is a certain belief in gods, especially the gods whose names are not proper names proper, but are the hypostatized human activity or whatever else it might be.[70] We know now what the philosophic nature is. And now the question arises: Are men of such a nature, if properly educated and after having acquired the proper experience, not the only ones deserving to rule? That's the question which follows immediately afterwards. Yes?

Student: Is there any reason to take the negative aspect of this omission of the virtue of being concerned with the things in their total concept, but when Socrates defines the virtue magnanimity, which he then omits in the following—

LS: Yes, it is not strictly speaking magnanimity, but it is akin to it. All right.

Same Student: He says be careful that we don't let any low intentions enter into this philosophic nature. Now could you then say that the ruler—or would this be an unfair hypothesis, to cast on to the ruler that the ruler can turn his eyes from the high things in regard to the low things . . .

LS: Naturally he must do that.

Student: Pardon me?

LS: He must do that. Even if he is perfectly free from all vulgar pettiness, he must have a terrific attention to very changeable details, all this kind of thing.

Student: Not only the changeable detail, but also to the lower portions—

LS: Yes, sure.

Student: The lower values of human existences.

LS: Yes, sure.[71] . . . That is a misleading question, because we have seen [that] the philosopher must also not despise anything, but[72] he must also be concerned with lower parts of human nature. Sure, that would be a fine philosopher, who would forget that man is a being with a body and with digestion and all this kind of thing. That would be a nice philosopher. Yes?

Student: However, the first philosopher has this quality of looking above or beyond the—

LS: Yes, but[73] you see how difficult it is to find out what a philosopher is. It can become clear when we take such simple examples as we took last time. A whispers something into the ear of B: gossip. What is whispering? Not gossip. I mean, whether that is sufficient is another matter, but that is surely a safe beginning.[74] That is the whole key to philosophy. As long as you are concerned—you can also state it as follows. In a strictly philosophic discussion, no proper names will occur. Does this make sense?

Student: Can one then say that in a philosophic discussion that is not strict, that tends more to the political side, then names are mentioned?

LS: Sure. Sure, and it follows from that that no Platonic dialogue is strictly philosophic.[75] [We] have now prepared an answer to the question. Now we know what a philosophic nature is. Are such men capable of becoming rulers after having acquired the proper experience? Glaucon, who is the interlocutor here, would have said[76] (a pure guess on my part): Of course! But here Adeimantus prevents that. The sober, pedestrian Adeimantus jumps into the fray and permits this simple solution and he, as every commonsensical man would, he points to the facts and opposes—or the Greek word, more literally stated, the deeds, the deeds in the wide sense where it embraces also what we mean by facts—and he opposes the deeds to the speech. Socrates has proved beautifully that the philosophers must be kings. That's what Adeimantus thinks; but the proof is of no value in the moment you forget about the argument and remember what you know from daily experience. By the way, that is an excellent method in all cases. Don't you think so? I mean, if you read a long disquisition, wonderfully argued and yet in flagrant contradiction to what you know from everyday experience, then of course you would say there must be something wrong with the argument. But if you cannot find it easily, you simply say [that] argument as such is such a dubious thing. By argument you can establish almost anything, and the only—the things by which we judge of argument are the deeds. The deeds, the facts, of life show that philosophy, philosophers are at best useless to the cities. Mostly they are even harmful.[xxvi] How is this possible, that you can build up beautiful *logos* and find no flaw in it, and yet it is absolutely unconvincing? That's an interesting experience, I think. We all have[77] [had] that experience.

Student: The man who is a master of the art is speaking.

[xxvi] *Republic* 487b1-e3.

LS: Yes. Now I will give another example which I happen to remember best at the moment. It is in the dialogue *Minos,* a very short dialogue in which Socrates proves that laws are absolutely unchangeable, absolutely unchangeable. And the man to whom he talks[78] finds the argument flawless, but he says: But how come that we Athenians are changing our laws every day?[xxvii] So that is what one ordinarily means by common sense: that he is not overwhelmed by the beautiful argument and remembers facts. That is much more finely developed here by Adeimantus. But[79] what do we do in such a case? I mean, surely you won't believe, but on the other hand we cannot simply leave it at saying this is a beautiful argument, but we must do something with the argument. What do we do?

Student: You go back and question the assumptions that you started with.

LS: Yes, perhaps even the reasoning itself, because there might be some jumps. Yes, sure. In other words, the argument cannot possibly be true if it is so patently in conflict with the deeds. Now Socrates[80] is then compelled to take up this issue.[81] Socrates must explain how the philosophers, while deserving to rule, are nevertheless in fact useless and even dangerous—useless and even dangerous—to the cities. That is the next theme, and this he develops in this long simile which was reported in the paper. Now what is the peculiarity of these people? I mean, the citizens are compared to sailors. The true ruler is compared to the captain or pilot; and they don't permit him to rule. They don't permit him to rule, and they prevent him from ruling by drugging him, by force, by persuasion[xxviii] . . . Can you read, say, the main points?[xxix]

Yes. The key point is, I think, that they say there is no possible art, no possible art.

Student: They deny it can be taught.

LS: Yes. Now in this there is one passage which is particularly interesting, in 488d6, when he enumerates the things which the true captain or pilot must know. He must know the year, and the seasons, and the heavens, and the stars, and the winds. Heaven is in the center, as it should be: the overall, the overarching thing, in a way that which makes the whole a whole, which makes everything that is a whole is that it is surrounded by one arch. That is of course mere [astronomy][xxx] —[But statesmen must know how come to power] and keep themselves in power over an unruly and irrational mob . . . That has nothing[82] whatever to do with astronomy, and astronomy is here a kind of symbol of philosophy. Does it not make sense? This in the literal sense is difficult. The political art is[83] not strictly speaking an art. It is a skill, a skill: a kind of horse sense acquired by long living with that—you know, Jim Farley[xxxi]— much more than any textbook: how you can

[xxvii] *Minos* 314c4-315d5.
[xxviii] 487e4-489b2.
[xxix] The transcriber notes that a student (presumably Mr. Reinken) summarizes the section. The summary does not appear in the transcript.
[xxx] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxi] James Farley (1888-1976), began his political career as a representative to the legislature of the state of New York. He served as Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign manager and served under

keep in power, and come to power, and win the elections. That has nothing to do with any science or any art: that is the *polis*. The conclusion is clear. If the philosophers are regarded as useless, if the philosophers are despised, that is the fault of the cities. It's not the fault of the philosophers because they are such fools, these sailors who try to control that old fat fellow, the *demos*. But Socrates goes on to say in 489d that philosophy is despised is above all the fault of pretenders to philosophy. In other words, it is not only the fault of these corrupt politicians. What does Plato understand by the corrupt politicians? That is a constant—Shorey falls into every trap here. Who are these corrupt politicians? Can you mention a name?

Student: Cleon.

LS: Yes, sure. That is what Shorey thinks. Did you ever read the *Gorgias*? Who is enumerated there among the[84] corrupt politicians?

Student: Great ones.

LS: Sure. Themistocles, Pericles.[xxxii] I mean[85] Plato doesn't mention certain names [here], but strictly speaking, every politician, every statesman who ever was. That will only gradually come out. Now in this connection, in this context, in 489 end, and 490 beginning, the statement about the nature of the true philosopher is repeated: the third and final statement, and the following items are mentioned: [first], love of[86] truth; second, hatred of lies, and following from that, a healthy and just character, which is followed by moderation; that's number three. And then four, five, six, seven are simple: courage or manliness, grandeur, easy learning, and good memory. He omits here the wittiness or gracefulness and the gentleness. Why would be an interesting question; perhaps it has something to do [with the fact] that now he is talking to Adeimantus and not to Glaucon. What is easier to understand is that justice precedes here moderation and the other moral virtues. It follows directly from love of truth and hatred of the lie. And here in this enumeration, manliness is in the center, the fourth out of seven. So these are interesting questions which would have to be cleared up. We cannot afford [to do] that, not because[87] [we] have to rush back to the question of justice but because[88] [we] have another time limit. Now here there is another point of the utmost importance, in 491b. What is the most marvelous thing to hear? Yes? In 491b.

Mr. Reinken:
"The most surprising fact of all is that each of the gifts of nature which we praise tends to corrupt the soul of its possessor and divert it from philosophy. I am speaking of bravery, sobriety, and the entire list."

LS: Yes. Go on.

FDR as Postmaster General and as Chair of the Democratic National Committee. A man of many accomplishments, he is credited with putting together the coalition of constituents, the New Deal coalition, that supported Roosevelt's campaign for the presidency.

[xxxii] See Plato *Gorgias* 503b6-d3, 515c4-517a6.

Mr. Reinken:
"That does sound like a paradox," said he. "Furthermore," said I— (491b)

LS: So that's all! In other words, that is the most marvelous thing; and that is admitted by Adeimantus and no comment is made. Strange. That would need a very long comment. I mean,[89] [he asks]: Why are philosophers corrupt? And he gives *n* reasons for that, and they are developed at great length, but there is one which would seem to be the most interesting, namely, that the philosophic nature contains in itself the germs of its corruption. That's not developed. He mentions two virtues, manliness and moderation, and that will be explained later in the dialogue[90]. We will come to that passage: that there is a kind of tension between the manly element and the moderate element and each in isolation leads to characteristic pitfall, that will be developed later on. We don't have to go into that. But what about justice? Can justice corrupt? He says everything we have mentioned; hence, justice too [can corrupt].[91] I mean, of course you can say: How can love of easy learning be corrupting? How can good memory be corrupting? That is also necessary. But[92] since the dialogue deals, however, chiefly with justice we must say: How can justice corrupt? Yes? What would you say, Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken: That justice would be too much concern[ed] with appearances, giving things to individuals, and would detract from the things that really are, the nature of things.

LS: Yes, but is he here thinking not only for how it corrupts the philosopher in his specifically philosophic activity? He thinks of corrupting also in the political. I think what Plato has in mind is this: take a man, a truly just man, dedicated to justice, full of zeal for justice. Can this not lead to blindness, to partisanship? It happens often enough.[93] Well, one case, a classic case which has been discussed more than once: in Dante's *Comedy*, when Dante goes down to hell and he enters it full of compassion for these poor people, Francesca da Rimini and other people whom he sees, and then at a certain stage (I believe in the seventh Canto) he is for the first time angry that he uses the rudder of that boat to prevent one of these poor souls[94] from coming into the boat. And who is that? I exaggerate a bit, and I'm speaking from memory: an abominable tyrant, a wealthy Florentine who had done terrible things.[xxxiii] Nothing is more unblameable than the hatred of tyrants. After all, they are criminals on a much larger scale than any gangster in our neighborhood is, and yet, if[95] his disapproval becomes morally untempered—moral indignation, hatred—it is the most innocent corruption, but it's a corruption if only because it blinds.[96]

Student: There's an element of self-righteousness involved in that.

LS: Could also be, yes. But surely—yes, yes, one could say that, but[97] they were not so much concerned with this kind of biblical purity, the Greeks. Well, Dante of course was not literally a Greek, but still [he thought that] the blinding justice can blind people. Therefore it must be tempered, say, by wisdom and this kind of thing. But it is a quite remarkable passage. Now he comes and develops at great length—that is a very delicate

[xxxiii] Dante, *Divine Comedy* (Inferno), Canto 8. Francesca da Rimini appears in Canto 5.

question and which is treated with the utmost delicacy here, as you can see. Well, he comes to the question which is easier to handle: the obvious[ly] corrupted. Who are the[98] [corrupters]? Well, according to the common view, the sophists. You know these[99] [kinds] [. . .] of power intellectual. These are the sophists. I think that's not unfair to either side. I mean men who live on their wisdom.[100] Or is this an unfair—I mean, I haven't read this, the long discussion of intellectuals which was made last year. There was a discussion; in one of the journals there was a questionnaire.[xxxiv] I have not come around to reading it. But it is because it is difficult to say what an intellectual is, and so but one can say that what Plato means by a sophist is what is now called an intellectual. Now[101] the answer of Socrates is: That's nonsense. The sophists are poor fish. The true corrupters are who?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but that is simply too narrow. The *polis*: the *polis* [is the main corruptor].[xxxv] Yes? The result is again the same. If the philosophers are useless or harmful, it is not the fault of the philosophers. It's the fault of the cities. Let us read[102] [493c]; that is the passage regarding necessity, where he describes[xxxvi]—[4]93c, toward the end of that long speech, or read roughly the second part of the speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"knowing nothing in reality about which of these opinions and desires is honourable or base, good or evil, just or unjust, but should apply all these terms to the judgements of the great beast, calling the things that pleased it good, and the things that vexed it bad, having no other account to render of them, but should call what is necessary just and honourable, never having observed how great is the real difference between the necessary and the good, and being incapable of explaining it to another." (493c)

LS: Yes. That is a very mysterious passage.[103] I mean, that [the corruptor] is really the *polis* and not merely the *demos* appears from the following consideration: What are the basic premises of any *polis* apart from the *polis* ruled by the philosophers? They are necessarily opinions—necessary, can never be moved. The fundamental agreement consists of opinions, and these opinions claim to be the truth and it is not permitted to question them. Not permitted to question them. And this is moral.[xxxvii] So that is regarded as noble, just, or good, what the society thinks is good, and that is true not only of democratic societies but of the monarchic and oligarchic societies of course as well. But why this other point, that[104] these people identify [the] just things with the necessary? What can he mean by that? I mean, there are necessities. No one denies that, but—pardon?

[xxxiv] It is likely that one of the articles Strauss is referring to is Seymour Martin Lipset, "American Intellectuals: Their Politics and Status," *Daedalus* 88 (1959): 460-86, which reports the results of related surveys conducted by NORC.
[xxxv] Plato *Republic* 492a1-e1.
[xxxvi] The transcriber notes that Mr. Reinken clarifies the textual reference.
[xxxvii] In the transcript: "moral (?)"

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, it has something to do with that, [but] not quite. But when you read, for example, in the *Laws*, 757d and e and other passages, you would see this: there he presents two principles of justice. One is geometric justice: to each what belongs to him according to his rank; giving unequal things to unequal people.[105] That is the only sound principle . . . but then there is another one which is necessary and which says: simple equality without any regard to rank. That is the concession to the power of the many, a necessity, a compulsion. That's in Greek the same word. That, I think, is what he means. The true principle of justice is abandoned in favor of the crude principle of simple equality. That is at least, I think, part of the story.[106] So there are these many dangers. The city corrupts the philosophers.[107] How come there are some people who are preserved? You mentioned this in your paper, in 496a, the first longer speech in 496. Mr. Reinken? Do you have it?

Mr. Reinken: "There is a very small remnant, then—"?

LS: Yes. Read it.

Mr. Reinken:
"There is a very small remnant, then, Adeimantus," I said, "of those who consort worthily with philosophy, some well-born and well-bred nature, it may be, held in check by exile, and so in the absence of corrupters remaining true to philosophy, as its quality bids, or it may happen that a great soul born in a little town scorns and disregards its parochial affairs; and a small group perhaps might by natural affinity be drawn to it from some other arts which they justly disdain—"

LS: "From some other art," yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and the bridle of our companion Theages also might operate as a restraint. For in the case of Theages all other conditions were at hand for his backsliding from philosophy, but his sickly habit of body keeping him out of politics holds him back. My own case, the divine sign, is hardly worth mentioning—for I suppose it has happened to few or none before me." (496a-c)

LS: Yes. That is the enumeration: five cases of how people, philosophers, are preserved in spite of the universal corruption. By the way, this whole argument is a beautiful commentary on what Aristotle says: "Our nature is enslaved in many ways."[xxxviii] The development of the best in us is possible only with the very greatest difficulty, but in some cases good luck can be helpful. And he gives five examples of good luck. For example, someone is sick, like Theages. Socrates's case, the demonic thing—not "divine"[xxxix]—the demonic thing is of course[108] a very special case of which there is perhaps no parallel, as he says. And there were five, and now look at this. If you take a

[xxxviii] Aristotle *Metaphysics* 982b29-31. See Strauss, *City and Man*, 42.
[xxxix] As Shorey translates.

healthy man,[109] a citizen of a large city, so to say, the normal case, and also normal because he does not have that demonic sign: What is his only hope of salvation? Very funny. Yes?

Student: Ostracism.

LS: No, no. That's exile.

Student: To be reared up in another art.

LS: Sure. You see, that's the point which I mentioned all the time, the importance of the arts. He has some art, some lowly art. That saves him, so important are the arts. But of course he must be intelligent not to see that this lowly art which he practices, maybe shoemaking, is not something very grand, and[110] he must seek[111] the art of arts on the basis of his experience[112]. So important are these arts for Plato, and especially here in the *Republic*. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: May I suggest a simpler—no, not a simpler word, but it is really a very complicated word but a lazy, convenient word: "rationality." He[113] knows what he is doing; he can give an account of it. He depends much less on chance than a peasant, for example, would depend [on it], and he has really a complete control of this little sphere. He has an image of rationality. In this sphere of his workshop, when he is making the shoes, he knows everything in his field. That's something. I mean, while it is in other respects uninteresting and yet it is, in a way, a model of what philosophy wishes to be: the whole. I mean, the goal would be to have such a perfect understanding of the whole as the shoemaker has of the shoes. This is an illustration which is worth considering, as is shown by the fact [that] when Aristotle, in the fundamental reflections of the second book of the *Physics*, when he explains what nature is, he uses the model of the art (I mean, of any art) and what cause means in the case of art gives him the key to what cause means in the understanding of natural things.[xl][114] And then he[xli] says in the sequel: What can a man do in—given the corruption, to endure the corruption? A philosopher, what can he do? And the answer is: absolute abstention from politics. Only [. . .] and in this connection in 496d6 the phrase occurs: he will keep quiet and mind his own business. Here the word "minding his own business" is used in the ordinary sense: leading a retired life. And the paradoxy of the *Republic* is that this formula for leading a retired life becomes in the *Republic* the definition of justice. In other words, the public activity is in the *Republic* called the private activity, or vice versa. That is the great paradoxy of the book, and one can say that all the difficulties[115] reside in that.

Now in conclusion about this, in defending philosophy against Adeimantus's charge, Socrates has in fact proven the incompatibility of philosophy and politics. It is not merely the present corruption. For example, on page 53 Shorey translates, "there is nothing, if I

[xl] Aristotle *Physics* 193a30-b22, 195a29-b30.
[xli] Socrates.

may say so, sound or right in any present politics." "Present" is Shorey's wholly uncalled-for addition. I mean, if "present" means at any time, at any place where Plato's perfect commonwealth doesn't exist, if he means that then it would be justifiable, although it is still [misleading].[xlii] Now what then is the solution? The harmony between philosophy and the *polis* is possible only in the best *polis*. Only in the best polis: 497b7.

And now a new argument begins which we will discuss next time. Can any *polis*—any *polis*, even the best—afford laying its hands on philosophy without getting destroyed? This is then the connection of the argument. First, hitherto we have seen the *polis* endangers philosophy. Now he will show that philosophy endangers the *polis*. That's the new argument of the next part, and[116] the final conclusion will be [that] the true *polis* will not endanger philosophy and philosophy will not endanger the true *polis*, because the rulers in the true *polis* are the philosophers. So[117] the first condition of every stable *polis*, that the ruling element has an interest in the preservation of the polity, is fulfilled. Now whether that is not a terrific joke we must see; but you see, Plato did not lose his common sense[118]. That we will see. How philosophy endangers the *polis* is of course in a way much more interesting. I mean, that society—well, the principle is not stated clearly here, but one can easily discern it. Why is [there] this situation? I said it before: the *polis* rests on opinion, and philosophy destroys opinion. That's the difficulty. Philosophy questions opinion. That alone is sufficient to—you see, you must not think of the way in which we have become habituated to look at the question: that in a true, rational, liberal society all opinions are questioned all the time. You know, the marketplace of ideas, and where the good idea is bound to win, this kind of thing. That was of course wholly alien to Plato, because even such a *polis* rests of course on an ultimate opinion. Rests on it. And the proof is this: that absolute tolerance, tolerance for every opinion, is impossible. I mean, it can be demanded on paper, but it is in fact impossible.

Now let us try to [bring] up this point in the context of the whole work. How did philosophy come in here altogether? How did it come it? Do you remember?

Student: . . . how this ideal *polis* could come to be.

LS: Yes, but that was not the immediate context. I mean, that was the question which—

Student: It came in in connection with war.

LS: War. Limitation of warfare, limitation of warfare. And this limitation of warfare discussion took the place of the discussion of the possibility of communism regarding women and children, and we saw there, incidentally, this paradoxy: the war which brings about potentially communism of women and children—you know, the war widows and so on—reveals the absurdity of the equality of the sexes. The equality of the sexes, the possibility of which had been proven, allegedly, proves to be impossible while the not-proven communism of children and women, regarding women and children, is being discussed. Now the limitation of war, tacitly questioned by Glaucon, leads now to a very radical repetition of this demand for the limitation of warfare in the demand for the rule

[xlii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

of the philosophers.[xliii] *Polis* and war belong together, and that is another respect for the radical difference between the *polis* and philosophy.

Now this great theme, *polis*–war, is in a tension with the other great theme of the *Republic*, the arts, which as such point to the art of arts, to philosophy. In the first city, in the city without war, there were the arts—not all arts, but the fundamental arts, as you remember. The arts as arts are the rational form of human cooperation: the shoemaker produces the shoes more for others than for himself. Art and war are in this sense opposite, and that there is an art of war is an interesting paradoxy, but that doesn't come in on the first level of the argument. War means overpowering by force and fraud or by persuasion. That has[119] nothing to do with this cooperation. Now[120] the simple observation: if we compare Plato's *Republic* with any actual *polis*, we see that the characteristic feature of Plato's *Republic* is not war. You have war in Plato's *Republic*, of course, but you have war also in every city. The preponderance of the spirit of art is the characteristic feature of Plato's *Republic*. In [this] they are in tension, and what Plato does in the foreground, first, after the collapse of the city of pigs, is to bring about what we can call a synthesis of art and war[121]—you know, they have the arts and they get in addition an art of the soldiers.[xliv] This synthesis of art and war in [the dialogue], up to book 5 roughly, foreshadows the synthesis of philosophy and the city in the central book of the *Republic*. It seems to me that the art–war antithesis offers the key to the *Republic*, and I believe one could show this also by going into the details. I remind you only of one point, the proof: the only peculiar institution of the *Republic* whose possibility was allegedly proven, namely, the equality of the sexes. You remember the possibility of communism of property and of communism of women and children was never proven. Now what is the central argument proving the equality of the sexes? That the he-physician and the she-physician, as far as their art is concerned it is irrelevant whether the artisan is male or female.[xlv] That they are of different sex, that they have different bodies is irrelevant.

Art and what art stands for, that is, I think, the great theme of the *Republic*; and this is the way in which Plato leads in the *Republic* to philosophy. A warning is necessary. Plato leads up to philosophy also from entirely different phenomena, and that is not the only access to philosophy but it is, in a way, [in the] grandest Platonic work, it is the access. I give you two examples. In the *Phaedo* philosophy is presented as the art of learning to die, so death is the starting point.[xlvi] In the *Banquet* philosophy is presented as the highest form of *eros*.[xlvii] You know? I mean, *eros* has nothing to do with art—love, desire, longing,[122] of which there are *n* forms—but if one understands the meaning of *eros*, even of the lowest form, one sees that its completion and fulfillment is philosophy, and the *Republic* . . . Well, is there any point you would like to raise?

Student: [Inaudible question comparing today's assignment with the *Banquet*][xlviii]

[xliii] Plato *Republic* 466d6-473e5.
[xliv] 372d4ff.
[xlv] 454d1ff.
[xlvi] *Phaedo* 64a4-6.
[xlvii] *Symposium* 204a1ff.
[xlviii] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Yes, that is no question, but the question is: What is its relative status? And[123] in the *Republic* not the philosopher but the tyrant is called *eros* incarnate, later on in the eighth or ninth book.[xlix] And that is surely[124] the point. Plato cannot simply abstract from *eros*. I mean, he cannot speak of philosophy in any way without understanding it as love of wisdom, love of the truth. That is true, but nevertheless there is no connection—no, I tell you about something. There is no connection, granted that philosophy is necessarily *eros* of the truth, but the *eros* of the truth has in the *Republic* no connection with the ordinary *eros*. That is absolutely crucial, because what induces the philosopher in the perfect city to take care of his fellow men? Pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Compulsion[125], not *eros*. There is no human affection as such here. So surely that means the *Republic* is characterized, as I have said once before, by the demotion of *eros*, and there is another point which I should mention. I forgot that when he speaks of these five ways in which in the corrupt world philosophic natures nevertheless become philosophers, he makes the central example the man who has a lowly art, and then he mentions also Socrates. He mentions himself, and Socrates has the demonic things. There is nothing said of an art. Socrates becomes a philosopher, and that is a good example of it as it should be. Socrates becomes a philosopher in Athens, not exiled, not sick, and what the other examples are, and not possessing an art.

Student: [. . .]

LS: His father.[126] But he clearly takes this case as one different from the others. Yes, but what is that demonic thing? And that is a long question, and Shorey knows all, but I believe one can show through an argument that the demonic thing ascribed to Socrates[127], the empirical phenomenon, is what some people would call today charismatic personality, a magnetic personality. The best Platonic formula [for the] equivalent would be an erotic nature. Socrates says so from time to time, that he knows nothing except the erotic things.[l] You know? But[128] the fact that he is intensely attracted by people possessing good natures: this being attracted [to] and attracting them, that is the erotic character of Socrates. And there is of course no question why should Socrates be concerned with other human beings. He doesn't have to be constrained, compelled: his *eros* drives him there.

I don't know whether I didn't lose my way in this long speech, but what I was trying to show was simply that[129] in the *Republic* Socrates abstracts from his own erotic nature and a true understanding of, say, in the first place, of nature itself would of course require that we would understand that very complex relation of such a phenomenon as *eros* on the one hand, and of the arts on the other. I believe as a general rule that every Platonic dialogue abstracts from something of the utmost importance for the subject matter under discussion, and therefore the strangeness. That points truly to what I explained last time about the impossibility underlying every Aristophanean comedy.[130] You know, if you

[xlix] *Republic* 572d8-575a8 (in the ninth book). See Strauss, *City and Man*, 133.
[l] Plato *Symposium* 177d7-8, *Theages* 128b1-4.

abstract from something essential to the subject, what you get is something impossible, obviously; and in this sense every Platonic dialogue presents something [that is] impossible and yet for this very reason most instructive. You know? Plato never presented his analysis of the human soul, and hence also of the political things, the deeper analysis, in a treatise like Hobbes. He never did that. It is always presented, say, by Socrates in conversation with these-and-these people and with a view to the needs of these-and-these people, i.e., always one-sidedly. And it is a task for the understanding of a dialogue to overcome these very suggestive but one-sided pictures to get the all-around picture as Plato has in mind. Well, some people would say: Why did he go through this trouble? Why not do what John Stuart Mill did, and so many others, and set forth in a straightforward, simple manner? But perhaps he thought we would understand him better if we would have to work it out to a considerable part for ourselves and not get it [so simply from him] . . . Yes. But I'm sorry it's so late. Next time, second half of book 6.

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[1] Deleted "you know."
[2] Deleted "and that you –."
[3] Deleted "what does –."
[4] Deleted "that."
[5] Deleted "you know."
[6] Deleted "danger that we – a."
[7] Deleted "know that –."
[8] Deleted "I mean."
[9] Deleted "mean –."
[10] Deleted "because – or I should say some unnatural example –."
[11] Deleted "have – you."
[12] Deleted "may be – this."
[13] Deleted "Socrates –."
[14] Delted "do not, yes I."
[15] Deleted "– yes, I believe."
[16] Deleted "that."
[17] Deleted "When –."
[18] Deleted "but."
[19] Changed from "Near – right at the beginning of the sixth book he says – he raises – makes again – no, at the end of Book V, I'm sorry."
[20] Deleted "These –."
[21] Deleted "Without – and I would like."
[22] Deleted "sensible—I mean is not"
[23] Deleted "and then."
[24] Deleted "in applications."
[25] Deleted "how –."
[26] Deleted "is not or it hasn't."
[27] Deleted "is –."
[28] Deleted "contrary to, you know."
[29] Deleted "– this however means."
[30] Deleted "be –."
[31] Deleted "must they – why."
[32] Deleted "the truth necessary – of.'
[33] Deleted "that suggests"
[34] Deleted "I think that would – would it not be –."
[35] Deleted "– doubts."
[36] Deleted "someone"
[37] Deleted "– from –."
[38] Deleted "– which is the virtue opposite to freedom –."

[39] Deleted "which are –."
[40] Deleted "although –."
[41] Deleted "That is not –."
[42] Deleted "we must –."
[43] Deleted "with a view to –."
[44] Deleted "how –."
[45] Deleted "this is."
[46] Deleted "It is."
[47] Deleted "says – he."
[48] Deleted "That Socrates – by the way, the –."
[49] Deleted "– yes, that has other –."
[50] Deleted "there is."
[51] Deleted "What is –."
[52] Deleted "is it compared – how."
[53] Deleted "They almost sit –."
[54] Deleted "traced what he called the intellectual to the—and"
[55] Deleted "is the same like grandeur, grand."
[56] Changed from "Yes, friendly and – a friend as well as kinsman – it goes together – of these four things."
[57] Deleted "separate."
[58] Changed from "How do you – now let me see: memory, quick learner, grandeur, wittiness or gracefulness – these are four."
[59] Deleted "and that is."
[60] Deleted "and, yes sure."
[61] Deleted "how can—that."
[62] Deleted "he compares."
[63] Deleted "And how, you must have, he."
[64] Deleted "well you know how to make."
[65] Deleted "yes is this –."
[66] Deleted "he –."
[67] Deleted "is –."
[68] Moved "my name would occur"
[69] Deleted "you –."
[70] Deleted "Now –."
[71] Deleted "Yes, but that is – we must – all right…."
[72] Deleted "– you know – but."
[73] Deleted "– yes, that is –."
[74] Deleted "As long as one is – that is."
[75] Deleted "– yes – which I think I would – I think can be shown in other too, but that's surely. Changed from "Now – so the question – we come – have now prepared an answer to the question."
[76] Deleted "that the."
[77] Deleted "made."
[78] Deleted "is –.'
[79] Deleted "is not –."
[80] Deleted "then –.'
[81] Deleted "how –."
[82] Deleted "to do with – nothing."
[83] Deleted "the art – no, is."
[84] Deleted "corrupted."
[85] Deleted "there are –."
[86] Deleted "justice (corrects himself) – love of."
[87] Deleted "he."
[88] Deleted "he."
[89] Deleted "we – he speaks.'
[90] Deleted "here in –."
[91] Deleted "How can –."
[92] Deleted "the most –."

[93] Deleted "I mean –."
[94] Deleted "to come."
[95] Deleted "he becomes, if his –."
[96] Deleted "to the extent to which it is corrupt."
[97] Deleted "that is not—I mean, you know."
[98] Deleted "corrupted."
[99] Deleted "– I mean, these – the of.'
[100] Changed from "Or is this an unfair – I mean, I haven't read this – the long discussion of intellectuals which was made in the last year. There was a discussion – there is – in one of the journals there was a questionnaire."
[101] Deleted "– and."
[102] Deleted "439c (sic)."
[103] Changed from "I mean, on the one – well, what he says is this – you see, that it is really the polis and not merely the demos – appears from the following consideration: what is – what are the basic premises of any polis apart from the polis ruled by the philosophers?"
[104] Deleted "they, say that."
[105] Deleted ". But then there is also that –."
[106] Deleted "Now."
[107] Changed from "How are the philosophers – how come there are some people who are preserved."
[108] Deleted "– that's."
[109] Deleted "not –."
[110] Deleted "must – must, as it were –."
[111] Deleted "for."
[112] Deleted "or – so important are."
[113] Deleted "can – he."
[114] Changed from "Now he develops, then – and then he says in the sequel what can a man do in – given the corruption, to endure the corruption – a philosopher."
[115] Deleted "are –."
[116] Deleted "now then – and."
[117] Deleted "you have – you know."
[118] Deleted "yes – in making this . Now –.'
[119] Deleted "not overpowered – that has."
[120] Deleted "if we look – the."
[121] Deleted "of art."
[122] Deleted "and the highest."
[123] Deleted "if you – I mean, not –."
[124] Deleted "– one – that is."
[125] Deleted "a clear."
[126] Deleted "And – yes – no, no."
[127] Deleted "and – by the way which – the empirical phenomenon."
[128] Deleted "in – that his intensely –."
[129] Deleted "I think that confirms it only."
[130] Deleted "There is a fundamental –."

Session 11: November 7, 1961
Book 6, part 2: Philosopher and *Polis*

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —you know, I mean your paper must be intelligible.[i1] You refer to these two passages and what Plato says here, that the highest form of knowledge is one in which you do not touch sense perception or opinion for one moment. You have this passage in mind, of course.

Student: Yes.

LS: Yes. All right. So in other words, something like Hegel's system.[2] It was not easy to follow you. That is the reason why I interrupted, but go on.[ii]

It was not very clear. Now you made a few points which are very good; for example, when you said about the divided line [that it] is a proportion and therefore that constitutes an act of justice on Plato's part, and one could perhaps say it is perhaps the most striking act of justice in the *Republic*.[iii] Perhaps. Secondly, you also were surely right when you said thinking has always begun what one can never thus begin. That I think is also what Plato means, but of course[3] Plato says that speech must have a beginning and an end. You know? That is nevertheless possible, and I could use this as a friendly criticism of your paper, that you just jump into the familiar things.[4] . . . I mean the simile of the divided line, without leading us up to it in the way in which it is done here. But the point where I cannot follow you is this. You spoke of language frequently. Plato we may almost say never speaks of language. Of course, he does [speak of speech][iv] but that would only prove what I say. Plato is concerned with "speech," not "language." The difference is absolutely crucial, because the language is always this or that language: Greek or Persian or English, whatever it may be; but speech, the speech is human. The difference between speech and language is the difference between Plato and what one may call modern historicism, because language is always this or that language; and for Plato that is a relatively uninteresting question, that the same thing is called, say, [*trapeza*][v] by the Greeks and "table" in English, and by some other words in other languages. That is for him fundamentally uninteresting, [mere] convention.[5]

So when you speak of language, you surely transcend the Platonic question, but if you say there is always speech—before we begin to speak, even as little children, there is speech already there, i.e., an articulation of the whole, and this is ultimately due to the fundamental harmony between the human mind and the whole, that would probably come

[i] Strauss responds to a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcriber notes that this exchange was an interruption in the student's reading of his or her paper. The recording resumes after the student finishes reading.
[iii] Plato *Republic* 509d6-511e5.
[iv] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[v] The transcript has a blank space here.

closer to what Plato means than anything we could say, anything else you could say. That is surely true. But[6] we will take up these questions to the extent to which we can take them up, later. Only one point: you said something about Plato's silence about natural things in the . . .

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well, there he speaks also of enemies and friends.[vi] In other words, he speaks only of animals, animals' natural right.[7] And he must have his reason for that, that these are natural things. But that is a minor [point],[vii] although I believe not entirely accidental. But let me take up first[8] a point in your argument in which I sense the following contention, but I'm not sure whether you meant that. In your discussion of the divided line—I presuppose now for argument's sake that you have read the divided line—I'm sorry, that you were concerned with the relation of the divided line and the good or the idea of the good, and that you noticed that the idea of the good does not occur in the divided line and that created a difficulty for you. Is this correct?

Student: There was no difficulty at all.

LS: Why not?

Student: Well, the line doesn't point anywhere. In the sense that it is mounting to the good, the direction where the good is is not indicated in any way by the line. It is simply where you go to see the ideas.

LS: Yes, but is not the idea of the good beyond the ideas, so if you know where the ideas are, you know the direction toward the idea of the good?

Student: Well, why do you introduce this word "beyond"?

LS: Exactly what Plato says: "beyond being," "beyond ideas."[viii]

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but one thing seems to be clear, that the idea of the good is higher than the ideas. Now? Well, then we . . . let us postpone it then until we come to that. Now you began your statement with a general reflection along these lines: here in this, in a way highest, part of the *Republic* images are used. As a matter of fact, Plato uses three images: first, the sun; then the divided line; and the third, the cave, which comes at the beginning of book 7. And here there are images, and "images" means of course no philosophic cogency, as you put it. Where to draw the line where Plato speaks strictly and where he speaks loosely, you could say, or differently—[9]I mean, can the line be drawn? Let us take another example to which you also refer. There are myths in the Platonic

[vi] The transcriber notes that an inaudible exchange follows.
[vii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[viii] 508e1-509b10.

dialogues. For example, at the end of the tenth book we will come across a myth, yes, but who says that it is a "myth"?[ix] We have a certain notion of what myths are, and then we call certain passages, certain descriptions, mythical. That is of course not good. I mean, strictly we can speak of myths to begin with only when the speaker says it is a myth. For example, at the end of the *Gorgias* there is a famous myth, very seemingly, and Socrates says explicitly to the interlocutor, Callicles: "It is not a myth, although you believe it is a myth. That is a *logos*, a serious cogent speech, and not a myth."[x]

Now this is of course very pedantic, but to begin with that's the best we can do, and we would have to raise—I mean, if we call a certain story, a certain account, a "myth" [10]against Plato's denial or silence, we would have to lay a foundation. What we know is only that Socrates talks here to certain human beings, and we can by careful consideration see what kind of human being they are. I mean, are they professors of philosophy in the present-day sense of the term, or maybe in the sense in which such beings emerged already shortly after Plato's time? Or are they young gentlemen who have acquired some knowledge, some skills? For example, Glaucon obviously knew something of geometry.[11] Of course there are some clear indications in the Platonic dialogues as to what would constitute a genuine apodictic argument, and we can measure by that standard all arguments occurring, and we can frequently see that there are arguments regarded as entirely persuasive by everyone present which are not persuasive but which are surely not convincing, demonstrative. And that's the only way in which we can go on. And here[12] Socrates says explicitly: he doesn't know the idea of the good, but he somehow divines it.[xi] Now if this is so, what he says about it cannot possibly be perfectly lucid and can only be stated in a vague, suggestive way. That is what he does, and of course these suggestions have to be read very carefully[13] to see what we can find out of it. And perhaps we can state it somewhat more precisely than it is stated, not because we are more intelligent than Glaucon and Adeimantus, but because we have had some help. You see, Glaucon and Adeimantus haven't read the other dialogues. We have read the other dialogues, and in addition we have also perhaps read Aristotle and some other men who help us a bit in understanding Plato. That's the only way to proceed, and not—Shorey of course is a very great sinner. I looked at some of his notes. He says: "Here Plato speaks as a poet, and here he speaks as a logician and metaphysician." Now there is neither logic nor metaphysics in Plato. And as for poetry, we have to consider the fact that the poets are treated very badly in this book. So to apply the term "poetic" to Plato without having laid a foundation for it is a very great sin, and therefore we must really begin from scratch.[14] The text is not always [clear],[xii] especially in this section, and most of you have to rely entirely on the translation, but we must go our way.

Now let us then turn to the context, but I thank you. I mean, I was pleased with your paper, but I do not entirely agree; and we have a real divergence, it seems, regarding the idea of the good. I hope we have time enough to discuss it. Now the context. Last time we have seen the discussion of how the *polis* endangers philosophy, and then in 497d

[ix] 614b2ff.
[x] *Gorgia*s 523a1-2.
[xi] *Republic* 506b2ff.
[xii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

Socrates turns to the question of how philosophy endangers the *polis*. How do people now take up philosophy, is the question, and that's a wrong way, that they endanger the *polis*. Answer: When they are very young. And in addition, they take up the most difficult part: that which has to do with speeches, whatever that may mean. That is not [clear],[xiii] as is immediately evident.[15] This part dealing with speeches is particularly grave, and they begin very young and then it ruins [them]. This is not developed here. It is developed much later in the seventh book, and he or she who gives his report about the seventh book should reconsider that. The conclusion, [in no way developed], is[16] that full dedication to philosophy, and that means of course especially what deals with speeches, [should begin] only after one has concluded one's political and military life. Only then. Now what does this mean? On the basis of what we read in the seventh book, we must say after [the age of] fifty; 'til then, some preliminary studies but no dedication to philosophy.[xiv] In other words, philosophy is to be treated in the good city as the priests are treated in Aristotle's good city. When you are young, you are a soldier. If you are out of active service, you are still available for reserve duty, and then when you are older you become an administrator or statesman; and when you are beyond that age of the useful active type, then you become a priest.[xv] And similarly in Plato: then you become a philosopher. Now this will be modified in[17] book 7, as you will then see, but[18] why is it modified there? Because there a much more detailed discussion of the misuse of philosophy by young people is given. Here there is no indication, so we postpone that.

Now this fact, you see, the speeches—it is not developed, what that means. It is so vague that it may very well include rhetoric as well, and thereupon Adeimantus says[19]: Thrasymachus here will not like it, that there will be no young people who will deal with speeches. To which Socrates replies (that is in 498 c to d): "Don't broil us; we have just become friends, while we have never been enemies." Now that is, I think, an important lesson for a certain crude interpretation of the *Republic* in which Socrates appears to be as the enemy of Thrasymachus. Socrates's pure virtue and Thrasymachus's wholly impure vice: it's not as simple as that. I mean, I don't question the purity of Socrates, but I question that Thrasymachus is so entirely impure. However this may be, they now have become friends, and friends is a strong word. Friends does not merely mean "hale fellow, well met." Why have they just now become friends? Answer: On the basis of what we have observed regarding Thrasymachus in book 1, where Thrasymachus is or plays the *polis*, because Socrates is now taking the side of the *polis*, and says: That people dislike political philosophy is perfectly justified, because as people handle philosophy now it is detrimental to the *polis*. This theme is pursued in the sequel, because in the sequel what Socrates is doing is to show that philosophy is not intrinsically harmful to the *polis*, i.e., he persuades the *polis*, that's to say the *demos*, the many, that philosophy is a fine thing.[20] Yes, but what does persuading the many mean? What is that persuasion if done skillfully? How do you call the art of persuasion, may I ask? Pardon?

Student: Rhetoric.

[xiii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xiv] 537d7-540c2.
[xv] Aristotle *Politics* 1329a27-34.

LS: Yes, and especially popular rhetoric. That means Thrasymachus's art. Socrates uses here Thrasymachus's art, which does not necessarily mean that he uses the special techniques of Thrasymachus. Socrates vindicates the *demos* against the enormous prejudices of Adeimantus, you know, who would [not] stand the rabble, the riff raff, and Socrates [says]: That's absurd; if you are gentle and nice you can persuade them that philosophers are really good men.[xvi] Yes, but that is not a mere incident: that is the center of the *Republic*, because the issue with which we are concerned and which one must never forget when dealing also with high falutin' things [is] the question of the possibility. Possibility. You remember? The question was the possibility of communism regarding women and children; [it] was not proved and it was simply asserted [that] everything depends on the possibility of the philosophers becoming kings.[xvii] Yes, but what does it mean? One must be specific. You have a philosopher; you have a philosopher, and let us assume—and say a perfect philosopher, and somehow he is willing to rule. But that is an entirely one-sided proposition if the citizens don't want to be ruled by him, so the citizens must be persuaded to accept him generally. If it is possible to persuade the *demos* of the usefulness of the rule of philosophers, then the rule of philosophers is possible; and if this persuasion is impossible, then the rule of philosophers is impossible. It depends absolutely on that. If you say, "Well, the multitude will be coerced by our beautiful super-Spartan guardians," they too have to[21] be persuaded: they are not philosophers.

So that is in a way the center of the *Republic*: Can the multitude be persuaded? And of course they must be persuaded by philosophers, the only people who truly see the necessity of the rule of philosophy. The philosopher therefore must possess not only the strict philosophic art, which Plato calls dialectics; he must also possess the rhetorical art. That people are distrustful of what Socrates says, Socrates admits is perfectly plausible. Socrates is not angry with them, because they have never seen a perfect man ruling in a city—perfect man meaning here a philosopher. How can a perfect man expect them to believe that it is not just pie in the sky? It would be absurd. Therefore one must persuade them. In this connection, the central statement of 473, evils will not cease in the cities nor even in the human race generally if the philosophers do not become kings, is restated [in] 499b to c. Mr. Reinken, do you have it? It's the speech beginning at the end of 499a. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"For this cause and foreseeing this, we then despite our fears declared under compulsion of the truth that neither city nor polity nor man either will ever be perfected until some chance compels this—"

LS: "Before," "before." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:

[xvi] 499d10ff.
[xvii] 466c6-d9, 471c2-473e5.

"before[xviii] some chance compels this uncorrupted remnant of philosophers, who now bear the stigma of uselessness, to take charge of the state whether they wish it or not, and constrains the citizens to obey them, or else before by some divine inspiration a genuine passion for true philosophy takes possession—"

LS: "A genuine *eros*." Yes? I mean, the Greek word is "*eros*" here. Let us[22] keep it for certain reasons. Yes? Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"either of the sons of the men now in power and sovereignty or of themselves. To affirm that either or both of these things cannot possibly come to pass is, I say, quite unreasonable. Only in that case could we be justly ridiculed as uttering things as futile as day-dreams are." (499a-c)

LS: So in other words,[23] the possibility must be proven, and we cannot leave it at the mere assertion we have heard before that it is in fact impossible. Only an approximation is possible. The possibility of [the] rule of philosophers must be proven, that's clear. But he changes it now. He says[24] no longer "if the philosophers have become kings," but "before the philosophers have become kings," which prepares the later restatement that another very important condition is to be fulfilled. It is not enough if the philosophers become kings, as we shall see later, it is also necessary that the philosophers have the power to rusticate the whole community older than ten. But we postpone that for later.[xix]

Another point which is very important: the philosophers[25] must be compelled by some accident or whatever it may be. But then he says, when he speaks of the kings and the sons of kings,[26] a genuine *eros* for genuine philosophy must fall into that. Here you have an opposition of *eros* and *ananke*, of "desire" and "compulsion." Philosophy is genuine only if it is—the philosophic life is genuine only if it is loved, if it is desired; but the political life is for the philosopher only compulsion. That is the great question, and the great question of course is therefore not only how to persuade the multitude to let themselves be ruled by philosophers, but also how to compel the philosophers. Persuasion won't do: how to compel them to take care of the political life. And let us read the next speech also.

Mr. Reinken:
"If, then, the best philosophical natures have ever been constrained to take charge of the state—"

LS: Yes. You see also: compelled, compelled again. Without compulsion it will never be. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"in infinite time past, or now are in some barbaric region far beyond our ken, or shall hereafter be, we are prepared to maintain our contention that the constitution we have

[xviii] In the original: "until."
[xix] 540d1-541b1.

described has been, is, or will be realized when this philosophic Muse has taken control of the state."

LS: Yes, literally "when this Muse." "Philosophic" is [an] addition by Shorey. Yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"It is not a thing impossible to happen, nor are we speaking of impossibilities. That it is difficult we too admit." (499c-d)

LS: Yes. You see here this very point: [it depends entirely on] compulsion.[27] It might have happened; [that] this compulsion is possible is here asserted. Of course it is not shown truly that such a compulsion is possible, but it is here asserted and we—for the time being, as good children—we accept Socrates's word for that. Whether it has happened in the past: no records of that, no records of it. In the future? Of the future we cannot know anything. At the present time we could observe it directly, you know? Can you rely on reports? But look around us. We are in Athens. Do the philosophers rule in Athens? Do they rule in Sparta? Do they rule in Corinth? No. Well, they could rule in some barbaric place among non-Greeks, and that he says "in some barbaric place" I believe means this. If philosophy would emerge and become ruling in some foreign tribe, by this very fact the foreign tribe would cease to be barbaric, and only the place[28] where they live would be barbaric.

Now the question to which he turns now then is—and that is of the utmost importance because it prepares the whole theme about the idea of the good: What is a philosopher expected to do? In a way, we know it: to rule. But it will now be stated in more specific terms in 500c. 500c?

Mr. Reinken:
"For surely, Adeimantus, the man whose mind is truly fixed on eternal realities has no leisure to turn his eyes downward upon the petty affairs of men, and so engaging in strife with them to be filled with envy and hate—"

LS: You see, that explains why the philosophers can only be compelled to do that. They are completely taken up with this, in this contemplation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"but he fixes his gaze upon the things of the eternal and unchanging order, and seeing that they neither wrong nor are wronged by one another, but all abide in harmony as reason bids, he will endeavour to imitate them and, as far as may be, to fashion himself in their likeness and assimilate himself to them."

LS: [29]In other words, this world—perhaps [Shorey] was right—I don't strictly speaking speak of a world but [of] these things which are always are in perfect order, and therefore by contemplating them he assimilates himself to them. He becomes himself [. . .] free from the roots of injustice. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Or do you think it possible not to imitate the things to which anyone attaches himself with admiration?" "Impossible," he said. "Then the lover of wisdom associating with the divine order will himself become orderly and divine in the measure permitted to men. But calumny is plentiful everywhere." "Yes, truly." "If, then," I said, "some compulsion is laid upon him to practice stamping on the plastic matter—"

LS: Note the repetition: "compulsion" is needed. So he really lives in the contemplation of these perfectly beautiful and orderly things and nothing—even momentarily he would never give up this perfectly blissful activity, but some compulsion is required. And then?

Mr. Reinken:
"compulsion is laid upon him to practice stamping on the plastic matter of human nature—"

LS: Yes, that is incorrect: "what he sees there to print into the characters of human beings both privately and publicly." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and not merely to mould and fashion himself, do you think he will prove a poor craftsman of sobriety and justice and all forms of ordinary civic virtue?" (500c-d)

LS: Yes, but "vulgar virtue." Why "civic virtue"? So in other words, the[30] specific activity of the philosopher will be in the first place that he will now become a craftsman of vulgar virtue. Here the philosopher too becomes a craftsman. You remember this point[31] [that] we discussed frequently: the *Republic* is a community of craftsmen. Soldiers were craftsmen of freedom, the philosophers are craftsmen of virtue.[xx] The clear distinction, not uninteresting. Yes?

Student: Is this the first time that "civic virtue" is called "vulgar virtue"?

LS: I don't remember now. I don't have the references here, but it occurs frequently in the Platonic dialogues.[32] Oh yes, sure, sure it occurred. When he spoke of the four virtues in book 4,[33] he said, "Is this moderation?" "Is this moderation?" The interlocutor [says] yes, but [Socrates says], Add "vulgar."[xxi] Oh yes. Sure, because the true virtue is inseparable from philosophy in the same individual according to Plato, therefore any virtue of a nonphilosopher cannot be genuine virtue. Incidentally, that is also the answer to the question of Mr. Butterworth which I postponed all the time. He said that I spoke of Plato's first city in the *Republic* as being constituted without thought as to virtue. Doesn't this bypass to a certain extent the implicit idea of innocent virtue—you mean of these simple south sea islanders, yes? Men who could pass their time singing praise to the gods must be virtuous to a certain extent, surely. I mean, virtue has many meanings. There are many levels of virtue, but[34] this innocence which is very charming is not genuine virtue, and I think that is not so hard to understand. Kant, who was very different in all these

[xx] 395b8-c3.
[xxi] Possibly a reference to 442c10-e2. See also 430b2-c6.

matters from Plato, also said this. Innocence is a wonderful thing; the trouble is, it's so easily lost. [xxii] You know? They have no temptations there, and it is so sheltered.[35] Genuine virtue requires something like principles. You know? Conscious principles. They are absent. They are just nice people.

Student: Is there any way to distinguish the exercise that this kind of virtue requires as against the type of thing that I'm referring to by this inner spirit of goodness—

LS: Oh, well. Well, what would you do—

Student: Disciplined as against—

LS: Well, I address this question to the class. What would be the clear difference between such innocence and genuine virtue from Socrates's or Plato's point of view?

Student: They wouldn't dare go down 63rd Street.

LS: They wouldn't know of any 63rd Street.

Student: Intellectual virtues.

LS: Yes. [A] small thing. They couldn't give an account of why they acted as they did. Yes? Now that is of course true also of the perfect gentleman, although to a lesser degree because [. . .] a certain articulateness regarding principles is required. So[36] the philosophers are also craftsmen, and this theme will be taken up later on in this book; and I warn you already now, in the tenth book, in the first part of the tenth book when poetry is treated, the ideas themselves are presented as products of craftsmanship and the god is the craftsman.[xxiii] So that I think goes, too, but this only in anticipation. Now where were we now? Can you read on?

Mr. Reinken: "'By no means,' he said."

LS: Well we have to go on. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But if the multitude become aware that what we are saying of the philosopher is true, will they still be harsh with philosophers, and will they distrust our statement that no city could ever be blessed unless its lineaments were traced by artists who used the heavenly model?" "They will not be harsh," he said, "if they perceive that." (500d-e)

LS: "The divine model." That's "the divine model." We must be careful. Yes? By the way, you see this theme: to appease, to tame the multitude and to liberate it from its antipathy to philosophy. That is the overall subject here. Good. So that is the next point

[xxii] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. M. Gregor and J. Timmerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20 [4:405].
[xxiii] Plato *Republic* 596a5ff.

then. The philosophers have to be—they become craftsmen of vulgar virtue by making a blueprint, a blueprint in imitation of a divine model. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But tell me, what is the manner of that sketch you have in mind?" "They will take the city and the characters of men, as they might a tablet, and first wipe it clean—no easy task. But at any rate you know that this would be their first point of difference from ordinary reformers, that they would refuse to take in hand either individual or state or to legislate before they either received a clean slate or themselves made it clean." (501a)

LS: Again, so you see that is the second condition. It is not sufficient that the philosophers become rulers, kings. They also must first have a cleansing, complete cleansing. That will later on be developed. That means the expulsion, the rustication of everyone who has been brought up in the old manners of life. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And they would be right," he said. "And thereafter, do you not think that they would sketch the figure of the constitution?"

LS: [37]Thereafter. Yes? Thereafter, after the cleansing. Good. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And then, I take it, in the course of the work they would glance frequently—"

LS: Note the sequence: first the cleansing, then the sketch, and then the next step. These are subsequent steps.

Mr. Reinken:
"they would glance frequently in either direction, at justice, beauty, sobriety and the like as they are in the nature of things, and alternately at that which they were trying to reproduce in mankind, mingling and blending from various pursuits that hue of the flesh, so to speak, deriving their judgment from that likeness of humanity which Homer too called when it appeared in men the image and likeness of God." (501a-b)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. That is very hard to understand; also the text is extremely difficult. But that is one of the very few references in Plato, but therefore by no means negligible, to natural right: they look to that which is by nature right and noble and marvelous and all the other such like things. They look to that, and then they look to something else, toward[38] those other things among human beings. At any rate, one thing is clear. The other thing to which they look is not the natural right. There is something else, and they make a mixture of what is by nature right and of some other right.[39] That happens, however, only after they have made the outline or the schema of the regime and the relation; in other words, the scheme, the outline is not the same. The clear question and the very difficult question is how the scheme, the outline of the regime—we must assume of the best regime—[is] related to what is by nature just.[40] Very well, that is not developed here, but does it mean that what they will actually establish in the community

will be a compromise between the perfect scheme which is identical with what is by nature right and what is possible in its particular community? I do not know. It's surely a very important question. Well, these are then the chief activities of the philosopher, the chief political activities, and they must be known and in a way presented to the future subjects of the philosopher, so that they know what they are letting themselves in for and so that they can be persuaded to accept the rule of the philosophers. Now in 502a, Socrates has concluded his proof of the possibility that the many can be tamed, and then a new theme is indicated in 502a at the beginning.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let us assume, then" said I, "that they are won over to this view."

LS: That? I didn't hear it.

Mr. Reinken:
"that they are won over to this view."

LS: Yes, "that they have become persuaded," yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Will anyone contend that there is no chance that the offspring of kings and rulers will be born with the philosophic nature?" "Not one," he said. "And can anyone prove that if so born they must necessarily be corrupted?" (502a)

LS: Yes, but what does this transition mean? That's very strange. He speaks here only of the case that sons of kings become philosophers. What about the other case, that people who are philosophers should become kings? Is it not strange? The question is really this. After we have known that the many can be persuaded to accept philosophers, that other question arises: Will the philosophers be willing to be rulers or kings? Therefore Socrates takes the sons of kings who might become philosophers, i.e., people who are already under the compulsion to rule. You see, the difficulty doesn't arise under these conditions. Yes, we cannot go into everything here.

Now what is the next great theme from this point on?[41] Fundamentally, we can say we have seen what the nature of the philosopher is. That we have seen already in book 5. And then we have seen discussed the great tension between philosophy and the *polis*, and this problem, this tension has been overcome, at least in speech. Whether it is possible to overcome it in deed is another matter.

Now the great question which comes now of course is the education of the philosophers. After all, just as in the case of the soldiers, you will remember, we had first to raise the question: What is their nature?[xxiv] And we had this great difficulty: How can they be savage and gentle at the same time? That seemed to be incompatible, and then we made this beautiful discovery that we have the solution to this problem at our doorstep: every dog, at least every normal dog who is nice to his acquaintances and nasty to strangers.

[xxiv] 374d8ff.

That shows that the combination is possible. And then after this was settled, we had to discuss how they are to be trained, educated. Here also. But Socrates repeats here first the difficulty created by the nature of the philosophers, and that has something to do with the difficulty we had in the case of the soldiers or dogs. Let us read that. It's 503b; the last speech in 503b.

Mr. Reinken: "But we affirmed that—"

LS: No, the last speech: "understand that[42] you will have few of them as you might expect." Yes? "For the nature."

Mr. Reinken:
"Do you not think, then, that such a blend will be a rare thing?" "Of course." "They must, then, be tested in the toils and fears and pleasures of which we then spoke, and we have also now to speak of a point we then passed by, that we must exercise them in many studies, watching them to see—" (503d)

LS: Where are you? Where are you?

Mr. Reinken: I'm at 503d.

LS: No, no: b. Read—

Mr. Reinken: b?

LS: Yes, at the end, the last speech in b. "Understand that there will be few of them, as you might expect": few philosophers.

Mr. Reinken:
"Note, then, that they will naturally be few, for the different components of the nature which we have said their education presupposed rarely consent to grow in one; but for the most part these qualities are found apart."

LS: You remember this difficulty that we discussed last time: that the philosophic nature is a very difficult one because each[43] [part] is a danger. And we discussed that he mentions courage, moderation, but he says all others, i.e., also justice. We discussed at the end of the last meeting. Now he develops this theme a bit further. Yes?[44]

Mr. Reinken:
"Facility in learning, memory, sagacity, quickness of apprehension and their accompaniments, and youthful spirit and magnificence in soul are qualities, you know, that are rarely combined in human nature with a disposition to live orderly, quiet, and stable lives; but such men, by reason of their quickness, are driven about just as chance directs them, and all steadfastness is gone out of them." "You speak truly," he said. "And on the other hand, the steadfast and stable temperaments, whom one could rather trust in use, and who in war are not easily moved and aroused to fear, are apt to act in the same

way when confronted with studies. They are not easily aroused, learn with difficulty, as if benumbed, and are filled with sleep and yawning when an intellectual task is set them." "It is so," he said. "But we affirmed that a man must partake of both temperaments in due and fair combination or else participate in neither the highest education nor in honours nor in rule." (503b-d)

LS: Now let us stop here. In other words, what he has in mind is this. There are two types of human qualities. One is called—let us call it "quickness," easily moved; and the other is "reliability," hard to move. Ya? Hard to move. In other words, one could say the highest quality of the intellect requires this quickness; and on the other hand, all moral virtue has to do with this steadiness, sturdiness, unwillingness or inability to change. And how can you get people who have these together, who will have become quick, willing to change where one should never change? And on the other hand, those who are steady and sturdy, how will they acquire that quickness, the radical denial of premises hitherto held if the premises prove to be untenable theoretically? That's hard. That's an illustration of the difficulty. Now the next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"Do you not think, then, that such a blend will be a rare thing?" "Of course." "They must, then, be tested in the toils and fears and pleasures of which we then spoke, and we have also now to speak of a point we then passed by, that we must exercise them in many studies, watching them to see whether their nature is capable of enduring the greatest and most difficult studies or whether it will faint and flinch as men flinch in the trials and contests of the body." "That is certainly the right way of looking at it," he said. "But what do you understand by the greatest studies?" (503e-504a)

LS: Yes. That's the point. The greatest tests, or greatest parts of learning . . . and here is where this famous discussion of the idea of the good begins.[45] I'm sorry we don't have the time. Socrates links it up, to begin with, with the fact that our discussion regarding the soul and its parts was very incomplete and[46] omitted so many things, and therefore you would not understand[47] what Socrates is going to say because we have not deepened enough our study of the soul. But still, since they insist on an answer to the question "What is the highest peak of learning?" Socrates tells them: It is the idea of the good. But that is only a matter of information. Socrates does not lead up to it in—you know, after all, these are people who are extremely curious. Think of the situation: they are sitting the whole night and hear the most fantastic story they have ever heard, and now they hear of something of which they have never heard before. There is a piece of learning which is the highest after these things we have gone through: communism, communism of women [and children], equality of the sexes. Well, that must be another fantastic thing we have never heard before. They are eager to know.

Now Socrates is willing to oblige them, but of course he cannot show anything, because there is no foundation laid and therefore it is impossible to expect here a cogent argument. Nevertheless, I believe we can discern a few points.[48] By the way, it is very important that at a given moment here Adeimantus, who has been the interlocutor, is willing to be satisfied with a very general remark; and then Glaucon, who is much more

quick than the steady Adeimantus, pushes Socrates on. And then we get those extraordinary revelations later on which, as they stand here, are just bare assertions, barely intelligible in their verbal meaning and yet somehow they are seriously meant.[xxv] But that is—[it is] hard to find that. Now a few points only which we have to consider. In 505a3 and b to c. Now what he says is—well, read 505a. I think that's the simplest.

Mr. Reinken:
"For you have heard that the greatest thing to learn is the idea of good by reference to which—"

LS: "You have often heard."

Mr. Reinken:
"You have often heard."

LS: Yes. Yes, that the greatest piece of learning is the idea of the good. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"by reference to which just things and all the rest become useful and beneficial. And now I am almost sure you know that this is what I am going to speak of and to say further that we have no adequate knowledge of it. And if we do not know it, then, even if without the knowledge of this we should know all other things never so well, you are aware that it would avail us nothing, just as no possession either is of any avail without the possession of the good. Or do you think there is any profit in possessing everything except that which is good, or in understanding all things else apart from the good while understanding and knowing nothing that is fair and good?" "No, by Zeus, I do not," he said. (505a-b)

LS: Now let us stop here one moment. You see, Socrates says: You have often heard it. "Often heard it." I read to you a note from Shorey: "Plato assumed that the reader will understand that the unavailing quest for 'the good' in the earlier dialogues is an anticipation of the idea of the good."[xxvi] I confess that this is—I mean, we can be frank and clear, because Shorey died a long time ago after a great and [long][xxvii] career. I regard this technically as an absurd remark. Technically an absurd remark. Does Socrates speak to readers of the dialogue? He speaks to Adeimantus and Glaucon. How does he know that they have read the dialogues? And in addition, where is there any reference to the idea of the good in the earlier or later dialogues? Nowhere. That is a very worthy ironic remark: "You have often heard that." In the sense in which he speaks now, he has—no one had every heard of it, but in a crude sense, indeed everyone [had]. We all have always heard of it. We only have to understand it: How does Adeimantus understand it, and not what the philologists or modern commentators try to find out? That[49] is clear.

[xxv] 506d2ff.
[xxvi] Plato, *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 2, 86.
[xxvii] The transcript has a blank space here.

Now how does Adeimantus understand it in the sequel? And Socrates—no, well, Socrates explains it to him. There are two kinds of people: some people say the good is knowledge, and other people say the good is pleasure. This[50] roughly contains all possible opinions. That he knows, and here is not yet any connection of the idea of the good with these broad so-called metaphysical questions. We come to that later. Very simple: If we want to lead our lives intelligently as individuals or as members of a city, we have to know what the good is. Of course we have to know, and regarding the good there is this—that has been often said by all sensible people. How can we settle the question of whether this course of action is to be taken or whether to adopt this or that law if we do not know what we are aiming at ultimately, what we regard as human happiness? Everyone knows this question, whether in this form, that is relatively [. . .] but everyone knows this question, and the key problem is, in ordinary life: Is the good knowledge or is the good pleasure? And Socrates shows then in the sequel that both answers which recommend themselves to different possible kinds of people are not tenable as stated, so you really don't know what is the good, and all the time we preferred something to something else, i.e., believed to know that we know the good. That's the first point.

A little bit later in 505d to 506a—we cannot read these passages now—a statement is made which shows[51] [clearly that] the good things are higher than the just and noble things. Common experience again. I mean, there are quite a few people who are perfectly satisfied with doing only what is apparently just. You know? In other words, he's cheating. Well, we know that. And false tax declarations . . . and they don't mind that. But[52] if they want to get a jewel, they want to get the genuine jewel and not imitations. Regarding the good or what they regard as the good, everyone wants the genuine and not the imitation, but regarding the just or noble things, many are perfectly satisfied with imitations. That is not so important to them. And that is of course again an absolutely common experience we had when we read the first book and[53] the beginning of the second book. It does make sense to raise the question: Is justice good? Now if this is so, that to which we refer ultimately is the good and not justice; therefore the good is higher than the just. Enlarge it: Speak not only of justice, speak of morality, i.e., meaning that, what Socrates means here by the noble things. Whether the noble things are good is a question which can be raised. It is in fact discussed in the Platonic dialogues, not only here. Therefore the good is the highest point of view, you could say. Up to this point there is no difficulty, and it is borne out not by the earlier dialogues but by what is going on everywhere, and it is also going on in the very *Republic*.

Now [at] this point, shortly thereafter Glaucon causes Socrates to go on, and then of course the discussion takes a very different turn. And here Socrates now links up this question of the highest piece of learning, the idea of the good, with the so-called doctrine of ideas. And what does this mean? We have already found a specimen of that at the end of book 5 and already in book 6, and we have seen how terribly difficult that is; and it is infinitely better to admit to oneself "I don't know what a Platonic idea is" than to say dogmatically, as Shorey [does, that] ideas are concepts. What is a concept, by the way? Is this so evident?[54] In addition, a concept would seem to be something in the human mind, whereas the idea is something toward which the human mind is directed which is a so-

called object of the human mind. The good is—what would be a simple example? What would you think? Let us take the just things: this is a just man, that is a just law, this is an unjust measure, and so on and so on. In all these cases, we speak of justice and injustice, and yet in a way, while there are innumerable cases where we speak of just things or unjust things, in a way it is the same thing which we mean: justice, justice itself. Justice itself. What is that? That would be the idea of justice, that to which we tacitly refer whenever speak of any just things. Whether this is the best example, although it is here preferred, is another matter; whether the best example would not be dogs and cats, that's a long question.

We may leave this open, but [there is] one key point[55] which is essential. What is the relation of the idea, of any idea in Plato's terms, to the other things . . . to each thing at a time? What is the simple relation between these two? Very obvious . . . Well, there are many things and one idea of the thing, says Plato. That is[56] the case. But on the other hand, but once we have seen that and we know nothing, know [nothing] about it, but we know that there are many ideas, we get the same difficulty again: the many.[57] Is this just a chaotic thing, innumerable ideas as there are innumerable things? There are people who say—I think Shorey had something to do with them—that there are ideas of "everything," meaning whenever we use a term not a proper name—for example, like Socrates—there is no idea of Socrates; but whenever we use a proper name like dog, cat, justice, or whatever, or whenever we use a number as a name, there is an idea of it. But that leads to the consequence that there is an idea of the second undersecretary of the garbage collectors' union. It's not a proper name. In other words, it becomes a mere idiotic duplication. That is surely not what Plato can have meant. There must be some principle which rules the ideas, as each idea rules the things constituted by the idea in question. That is necessary. I mean, in other words, the question involved is the unity, the unity which for common sense is established by heaven, heaven comprising everything. But[58] this commonsense unity is indeed destroyed for Plato. Heaven is already there dissolved by the advent of the human mind, and it is still more dissolved today by modern science, but that is only a difference of degree. You can't stop with heaven. What's the unity? The unity must be a unity of those unities, of those classes which we manifestly must assume; and that is called by Plato here, or by Socrates, I should rather say, in the *Republic* for certain reasons, [that] is called the idea of the good.[59] Now if, however, it is the unity, the unifying thing—the joke: Where is our unity?[xxviii]—it must also face here another condition. Let us take here an idea. I mean the ideas, any idea and all ideas. There is something which is distinguished from them, not only the individual things . . . say, the dog. Hence the idea of the dog . . . There is also something which he calls intellection revealed in acts . . . and all the ideas would not include the acts of intellection[xxix] —I'm sure we are also a part of the whole. Therefore, the idea of the good must be the cause, as it were, of the ideas as well as of cognition. The idea of the good must be related to the ideas on the one hand and to cognition on the other, as the sun is related to the visible things on the one hand and sight, seeing, on the other. This question surely is adumbrated here, the unity of the whole. The unity of the whole, and that is surely a mere sketch and not a—it is only an indication of the way, of the direction in which Plato saw this unity,

[xxviii] Possibly a reference to *Parmenides* 129c2-130a2, 130e4-132b2.
[xxix] The tape was changed at this point.

as distinguished from other philosophers. For example, he didn't see it, say, in water or in the four elements and their relations, or in a simply homogenous one, as Parmenides did, and in others.[xxx] It serves as the most general sketch of what Plato meant.

One more point, very generally: this question exists in identically the same form for Aristotle. Now what is Aristotle's solution?[60] I mean, we do not now go into the complicated version, but what is the massive answer that Aristotle gives regarding the unifying thing in the whole which unifies everything? Pardon? You know the answer. You know the answer; I don't know your name. You know the answer. What does Aristotle say?

Student: [. . .]

LS: No . . . in concepts can you really find everything, I mean, and in a way be responsible for everything? No. Aristotle calls it the *nous*, "the intellect," or god. And what is the characteristic of the *nous*, the characteristic of that *nous* ruling everything? The intellect intellecting itself. The intellect intellecting itself. That is[61] of course from Aristotle's point of view also the good, the highest.[62] But the *nous* intellecting itself can be called "god" and it is called by Aristotle "god."[xxxi] The idea of the good is surely not even in that limited way "personal" as the Aristotelian *nous* is. That is the question. No, but there are suggestions, and many interpreters have understood the idea of the good and say that's god. But [we are not] not going into the question that the word god is not so simply available to the Greeks as it is to us, because perhaps it, [that is, the idea of the good], is a god.

Now as a matter of fact, such a suggestion is made here.[63] He [says that he is unable to] tell what the idea of the good is. He compares the idea of the good—he says: I can't tell what the idea of the good is; I can only give you an *ekgones*, an "offspring," offspring of the idea, and that offspring is the sun.[xxxii] Ya? The sun. And now an offspring; and there is some reference to the father. On one occasion he speaks of the father, meaning the idea of the good. So now the father—that's of course the idea of the good itself—has generated the son, and the question is: Who is that? We would have to know who the son is. The son is of course a well-known god, Helios. But there is a connection, not so easy as it was formerly assumed but still clear enough, between Helios and a very famous god with a proper name (Helios is not a proper name in the Greek): Apollo. Why Apollo? Who is the father of Apollo? Zeus. So in other words, there is even here a fine suggestion: the idea of the good is Zeus, the highest god.[64] That is a long question, whether the idea of the good is Zeus or whether it is a radically "impersonal" god. That's a long question but the question which is necessitated by what [we] have[65] in Plato.

One last point. Plato uses the term "idea of the good" as "the good" synonymously here. He speaks already of it in a way . . . the good, not adding "the good itself," but simply the good. That has also to be considered, and I believe one could, at least one should consider

[xxx] See Aristotle *Metaphysics* 983b19-984b7.
[xxxi] 1074b15-35.
[xxxii] Plato *Republic* 506d6ff.

this possibility: that the idea of the good is in a way not an idea. Now look, if you have this, the idea of the good, and this is said to be the cause of the ideas, then there are the sensible things which are in a way caused by the idea of the good but not wholly intelligible. Why should there be many dogs imitating the dog itself? There must perhaps be another principle. Therefore, how can idea be the cause of the intelligible as well as the sensible things? Perhaps this can be only if it is not simply an idea. That's another question which is contained in that. And now—because we have to mention this at least to give a very rough sketch of the question—then what Socrates means he illustrates also by another simile which is akin to that but not identical, and that is the one about which Mr. [. . .] has spoken. This is the divided line, in 509d to the end of the book, and here he establishes the proportion in order to make clear what he's driving at.[66] Now[67] he makes this division.[xxxiii] He makes this division of a line into four parts, and the only thing which is important here is the proportion; and this is the sensible or visible world; and this is the noetic, intellectual. And each is subdivided according to the same principle: the imitation, we can say, and the genuine.[68] In the visible they are called—how did you call them, Mr. [. . .]?

Student: "Conjecture."

LS: "Conjecture," that's one. Yes, but it has of course also the other meaning of imagery. Yes? Imagery . . . So the images, we could say; and here let us call that sense perception. Sense perception. And here we have what is called in the text "reasoning"—we all know that; and here we have intellection. This is the division . . . Now what does this mean? Sense perception has to do with[69] what we now call all real things, meaning dogs and cats and tables and cigarettes and objects—human beings too, ya? And this has to do only with images; for example, the shadow cast by human beings belongs here. Reasoning has to do most visibly with what mathematicians have to do, but expressed much beyond that.[70] Reasoning comprises all human thinking, which goes down; for example, in mathematics you start from axioms, postulates and so on, and you go down to theorems, and so on and so on. All reasoning—but that means of course all our human thinking—consists of that to some extent. We always make assumptions. Ya? [We] always do that in any political speech or whatever it may be, and draw inferences from that. All ordinary human thought is reasoning, but it is particularly visible in mathematics, particularly clear, lucid, in mathematics. Intellection is that, when we—it is a very bad sentence, but[71] [. . .] intellection takes place when what is assumed in ordinary reasoning becomes the theme. In ordinary reasoning we assume that we know what justice is, but then we may also make justice our theme. That is what he means. Today it means, I believe, [thinking] by philosophers, still. Yes? Philosophers. And also, for example, we make dog a theme and not merely look at the stomach of a dog or whatever we might be interested in. This is intellection.

Now these however have an inner structure: that is highest and is meant to be an ascent.[xxxiv] Here we have to do with hypotheses, although it is not in the narrow sense . . . assumptions which are unexamined. Here we go up to principles which is in no

[xxxiii] Strauss writes on the blackboard during this discussion.
[xxxiv] Presumably Strauss refers to the drawing on the blackboard.

way assumed, which is in no way assumed. Differently stated, which would be absolutely evident that no assumptions are made—and what Plato sketches here and nowhere else; I mean surely nowhere else with such an emphasis—is the possibility of the highest order of human knowledge, in which we feel only the purely intellectual things. In mathematics, according to Plato, we never do, because we always have to draw,[72] to figure, to add, subtract, which is always integers, and money, or whatever it [might be], sensible things. Here we deal with the merely noetic and never leave the sphere of the noetic. What Plato in a way anticipated is the modern notion most clearly developed by Hegel of the philosophic sextant, which is radically nonempirical or, as it was said at that time, absolutely *a priori*. He sketches that, but his sketches are only here; and there is some evidence that Plato did not regard it as possible. In other words,[73] the *Republic* is a utopia, not only politically, which everyone would admit, but it is a utopia even philosophically, which shows what philosophy in a way is driving at but can never achieve.[xxxv]

Now let us assume that this is true. What would follow?[74] I mean, in other words, that we never have full knowledge, complete knowledge of the whole. Then we have never full knowledge of the parts, because[75] a part as part is fully understood [only] if it is understood as part of the whole. The whole must be understood. That we have, in a way, partial knowledge is of course clear. The shoemaker has in his way complete knowledge of the shoe which he produces, but he also makes assumptions, hypotheses, which he can no longer justify; for example, that it is good to wear shoes; ultimately, that it is good to protect [one's feet], that health is a good thing, that life is a good thing.[76] Not every shoemaker begins to think about these questions. You know? And[77] all partial knowledge is also opinion. It is shot through with opinion. By the way, "opinion" is the other word which Plato applies to this sphere: "opinion" or "the visible." Yes, but if this is so, if we never fully transcend opinion, what is the best we have of the available? Here,[xxxvi] what is the best we have? I mean, what do we know of the whole if this is not fully available, if [complete knowledge of the whole is][xxxvii] not truly available? Shall I venture an answer? Yes?

Student: Well, is it that we have only an abstract concept of the whole as a geometrist?[xxxviii]

[xxxv] See Leo Strauss, "On a New Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy," *Social Research* 13:3 (1946), 362 n49: "The *Republic*, one could say, is deliberately 'utopian,' not merely regarding politics but likewise regarding philosophy: the citizens and rulers that it envisages are 'gods' or 'sons of gods' (*Laws*, 739 d6). But whereas the political utopia cannot guide political action (except in the vague sense of 'inspiring' it), the philosophic utopia can and must guide philosophic 'action.' In other words, whereas there are no examples of a genuine 'political order' (compare *Statesman* 293 c5-7), there are a number of examples of genuine philosophers."

[xxxvi] Presumably Strauss refers to the drawing on the blackboard.

[xxxvii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

[xxxviii] The transcriber notes that "several parts of the preceding and following remarks were inaudible. They are transcribed to the extent possible with omissions indicated by ellipses."

LS: Well . . . Plato speaks of a divine sense. Well, how shall I state it? What is our ordinary access to the whole? Yes?

Student: A reasoning method.

LS: Yes, well, that . . .

Student: You probably don't want to use the word dialectic, but—

LS: Yes, the dialectic is a long . . .

Student: Sense perception?

LS: Yes, sense perception. I mean, I know that there are dogs, and I know that there are human beings, which is the most interesting case because the question of the soul, of even the human soul, was the starting point of this whole enormous digression. Yes, true; but in what sense do we know . . . Surely he's alive; we have seen him. That's quite true and[78] by no means meaningless. But[79] we do not fully understand yet, because that could be had only here, but the manner of this knowledge—of the "awareness" is probably a better word, because it is vaguer and broader[80]—how is this called in this schema at the end of book 6? . . . What does he say?

Student: Belief.

LS: Well, belief, and Shorey says this must not be mistaken for religious faith.[xxxix] I entirely agree with that.[81] I would translate it [by "reliance"], because "belief" is also so vague. We rely on[82] [the notion] that the whole is open, and[83] this reliance can never be dispensed with. We can never replace the reliance by perfect knowledge in the form of a Hegelian or other system. That is, I think, an important part of what Plato means. By the way, there was one other thinker who restated this question of reliance in his way, and that was David Hume.[xl] He calls it "belief," and I think [in] the book by Santayana, which I never read, he says something of . . . What is the title of the book?

Student: *Animal Faith*.[xli]

LS: *Animal Faith* must have something to do with that, but that I think is an important point in Plato. Therefore . . . we can never leave—not only the nonphilosopher, but even the philosopher can never leave the fundamental reliance. And there are two Platonic works which present in a way, in the form of a marvelous caricature, a movement only among intellectual beings, only among ideas, and these are the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*, in which Socrates only listens. It was very interesting. And one sees all the time that no step is made in this movement from one idea to another except by looking at sensibly

[xxxix] Plato *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 2, 117, note e.
[xl] See David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), 1.36-7; *Enquiry concerning human understanding* (1748), secs. 4-5.
[xli] George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923).

perceived things. In other words, this thing in the modern sense is absolutely impossible from Plato's point of view. Yes?

Student: [Inaudible question comparing Plato and Descartes][xlii]

LS: Well, but the point is this. The question concerns to what extent are the things as [known]. . . by the mathematician or by the craftsman in general of the same fundamental importance as the things, or at least the parts of things which we know by sense perception. And I believe [that I should make] a necessary but a most obvious remark: that one kind of beings—terribly important for every human being, and especially for philosophers—cannot be made by art, cannot be made by art: human beings, and of course also dogs and cats. In other words, the natural beings. And I believe what Aristotle has in mind by this remark that Plato allows . . . only ideas of natural beings has very much to do with that. [xliii] That Plato gives this enumeration, or Socrates, [and] mentions only artifacts plus animate things, [but] not even plants and not the elements . . . water, fire, air and earth, may very well have to do with the fact that Plato regarded the inanimate as in a way not truly being and only meant the souls. And that links up beautifully with something else: What does it mean to have souls in the sense in which plants and brutes have souls also? That means striving for something, tending, striving. But what is it that each being, man or brute or plant, desires? What is that? We have one [answer]; he says it here in our section.

Student: The ideas?

LS: No. The good. Oh, no. Well, ideas. How can a dog—no, the good; his doggish good. Sure, but still the good,[84] which is the highest theme of learning beyond everything else, is at the same time that which is active in every one of us every moment, and even in every living thing. All beings tend toward that which man alone could think of knowing. It is the universal principle of all being because it is the universal principle of all life, and if you say there are inanimate things which have also to be accounted for, then we would have to study the *Timaeus*, where Socrates doesn't speak, but someone else,[xliv] but I imagine the *Timaeus* would confirm that. The soul is that which gives being to everything, so that even the inanimate can only be understood in the light of the animate. This is, I believe, very roughly what Plato simply says here. And the question is, of course, which we cannot solve: Why does this [account][xlv] and this whole digression (which it is, in a way) occur in the *Republic* and not in other dialogues of the same grandeur, like the *Banquet* or the *Phaedo*, for example? That is an important question, but one point I think is clear here. What appears immediately in the context is that the good or the idea of the good is beyond the just.[85] Since at first glance for every decent human being the most important thing is justice, and here we are to be given in a way a full sketch of what justice is, we must surely get an inkling of what is higher than justice. And that is done here, and stated in the simplest terms [so] that everyone can recognize it,

[xlii] As noted by the transcriber.
[xliii] Aristotle *Metaphysics* 991b5-8, 1070a10-21.
[xliv] That is, Timaeus.
[xlv] The transcript has a blank space here.

namely, that the good is higher than the just. And that this is a sensible proposition appears from the very central fact that it is possible to raise the question: Is justice good? The whole dialogue tries to do it. Now if this is a possible question, then[86] the good is higher than justice. It is that[87] [with] reference to which we judge of whether the just life is better than unjust life. Yes?

Student: I have two questions. One is: Isn't Thrasymachus the one who raised the question whether justice and the good—he says justice is an advantage, and Socrates agrees [that it is] an advantage, but before that it had not come up in this sense, the question of the good.[xlvi]

LS: Yes, but it is implied in the first example, the restoring of the gun to the man who has become a madman hitherto.[xlvii]

Same Student: I see your point.

LS: Yes? In other words, we modify the specific rules of justice because we assume that justice is not only restoring things to their rightful owner, but that it is also good. Now if there is a conflict between restoring things to their rightful owner and the action being good, then we do not restore the things to their rightful owner, so that that is always implied. That is one of our things [through] which we smell, which we divine that justice is good. But divining is of course not knowledge, and what Plato is trying to do is to show us how many very profound changes in our lives would be required to make it tolerably clear; and you know the terrible things which he says: communism, and based on this point which is not altogether [un]connected to that: How can giving or leaving to a man his private property be universally good, given the fact of the gross misuse of private property by playboys and other dubious creatures? And therefore that's at least a serious question. I mean, you can still say—and Plato would, I believe, ultimately agree with you—it is a lesser evil to have playboys than to have incompetent vicious clowns as your rulers. I mean playboys as members of the community misusing their property than to be subject to certain vicious clowns, which is a very solid argument, I believe, for practical purposes, but a lesser evil is not the same thing as the perfectly good. You know? That's so important.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but Cephalus—all right. I don't want to go—I mean, it's also because I do not remember enough, but I think Socrates is rather pushing him toward that question. The question is simply[88]: Are you pleased with being a wealthy man? In this connection it comes up, and Socrates turns very quickly at giving the question his reported different turn. I mean, it is not simply Cephalus, but Cephalus is, of course,[89] [like] every human being who is tolerably decent, also concerned with justice. Surely that is true.

[xlvi] Plato *Republic* 339a5-b5.
[xlvii] 331c1-d1.

Student: You made the remark that for Aristotle there is a parallel to Plato's idea of the good, namely, the intellect intellecting itself. And this was confusing to me, the way in which you traced it here, that the good, as you said, was the uniting or [. . .] of the person—let me see, the intellecting and the ideas—

LS: Oh, there is only a middle step.[90] I mean, Aristotle mentions that somewhere in *On the Soul*, that the *nous*, the "intellect," is "the place of the ideas."[xlviii]

Student: I want to ask you,[91] does he mean the whole by this?

LS: [92]"The place of the ideas" [is] the *nous*. Therefore the *nous* contains the ideas.

Student: Is it the same as the great circle?

LS: Yes, but only the difference: in Aristotle it is clearly called the *nous*, whereas in Plato it is called beyond the *nous*. You know? Beyond the distinction between the *nous* and what the *nous* intellects.

Student: What is the active intellect? I thought the active intellect—

LS: Oh God, let us not go into that.

Student: Nothing to do with this.

LS: That is a very complicated question.[93] I was comparing only what at first glance appears to be the peak of the Aristotelian teaching and the peak of the Platonic teaching, and otherwise we[94] must stick to the *Republic* and—yes?

Student: Will we be able to discuss the question previously as to why—as to the possibilities[95] Plato [wanted] one thing and then he switched to . . .

LS: Yes. Well, I believe it was brought up, but I mean it is simply the question: Why did Plato write as he did? Ya? Generally. Yes, I think we discussed that, I believe more than once, but I do not remember now where. I believe I opened this course with a very general discussion of a Platonic dialogue, or am I mistaken? No? I did not? Pardon?

Student: Referring to the *Phaedrus*.

LS: Yes. Yes, that must have been a part of it.[96] You see, the point is this[97]—I mean we must be careful. We always speak of Plato, but strictly speaking we never hear Plato but always someone else. Why did Plato write dialogues? Why did he not write, as some people did before his time, books on nature? Someone else wrote a book with the title *Truth*.[xlix] The truth. Plato wrote books, say, *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*—I mean, books, the titles are as unrevealing as *Anna Karenina* or *Madame Bovary*. What do you know of

[xlviii] Aristotle *De Anima (On Soul)* 429a27-30.
[xlix] See Diogenes Laertius 9.22 on Parmenides.

Anna Karenina if you know only the title? And here in the Platonic book titles, with very few exceptions, like the *Republic*, you know absolutely nothing of what is going on in the dialogue. Why did he do that? Why did he act as novelists today, or tragic poets? You know also Agamemnon; well, then you know of course already a story of Agamemnon; whereas in the case of *Anna Karenina* you wouldn't know anything of the story before. Why did he write that way? That's the clearer question.

Now[98] in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates discusses writing and he asserts [that] writings are a very dubious invention. They are of course a great help for memory, as every one of us know[s], and especially those of us who have ever written something [that was] published. You know, then you can easily look [it] up and that is a help for memory, but fundamentally it's really a very doubtful invention, Socrates says. But Socrates's thesis was consistent: he did not write. Plato, however, wrote books. I make this suggestion which seems to be reasonable: that Plato thought that his books are writings free from the defects of writing. Yes? Now the defect of writing as stated there is that a writing[99] doesn't know when to speak and when to be silent, meaning this: If someone writes a book and publishes it, then it is equally accessible to all who possess this very humble art of reading,[100] you know really in the simplest sense, what you learn in the first two or three years of elementary school. And[101] that, Plato says, is not good: books should[102] have the same adaptability to the individual readers as a conversation has.[l] You know? In a conversation, we can address individuals according to their characters or abilities, even moods. [103]Conversation can be flexible, and a man who possesses the art of conversation—that's the primary meaning of the word dialectic, the art of conversation—can adapt himself, can make himself intelligible to each according to his peculiar nature and preparation. Plato's dialogues are meant to be as adaptable to the individual reader as Socrates's own conversations. That's the point. In other words, everyone can be benefited from a Platonic dialogue.[104] It has a bettering, improving, humanizing effect on everyone and it has a more subtle effect, a truly teaching effect—you know, not merely indoctrinating, but teaching, making him think—on those who are willing to think.[105]

Therefore I think it is almost necessary that there should not be a single legitimate argument—you know, a legitimate syllogism—in the whole Platonic work, which is probably an exaggeration, but because those who are helped best by being edified in the ordinary sense of the term will be edified. There is no vicious teaching anywhere in the *Republic*. Yes? No vicious teaching. What the people say today, some people, that Plato boosts fascism and communism, is absolute nonsense.[li] He never does. He always makes it perfectly clear that only philosophers can rule, and not gangsters and maniacs like Stalin, Hitler, and such people. He makes it absolutely clear. I mean, that is a grossly unfair interpretation of that. Plato has nowhere a vicious teaching, but also in other matters, in matters of [or] practices of business, of sex, or whatever have you, Plato is always decent. Even according to rather severe Victorian standards, he is rather decent, with the exception of this passage where Shorey says: That is guardhouse conversation.[lii]

[l] Plato *Phaedrus* 275d4-276a7.
[li] See, e.g., Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945).
[lii] Plato *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 1, 489, note d.

You remember, when he speaks about sex in war. But I must say, sex in war is, I believe, a subject which cannot be treated in any Victorian lady's [presence] . . . anyway.[106]

So Plato is truly decent, and yet there are depths below depths. I mean, there are very great complications, of which you can become aware even when looking at a TV lesson or so. There are deeper difficulties, and[107] those who are able to see them and to handle them properly will receive guidance from Plato for that. There are *n* levels of understanding Plato, *n* levels. Now you can say that is true of every book, but the difference is this: that in Plato's works the multiplicity of meanings and levels is intended. They are so contrived as to convey different lessons to different people—different people, and not merely accidentally so, as every book of course would do.[108] Is this some answer to your question? Well, I will show it the other way around. Socrates could have said, or Plato at any rate could have said much more about what he calls here the good or the idea of the good, there is no question about that. But to whom could he say it? To whom could he say it?

Student: Well, it's meant on all levels. He could have said more—

LS: Yes. I will give you another sign. Strictly speaking, teaching of the highest things is possible only for certain [kinds][liii] of people, say [. . .] with necessary natural qualifications and after proper training, and training not merely intellectual but also moral. In other words, people must have this strange combination of utmost flexibility in thought with utmost inflexibility in their conduct. You have seen this . . . Now this man can be called in the strict sense[109] equal to Plato, not because he is so gifted as Plato was, but who in their actual understanding, you know, of this particular point, understands it exactly as Plato meant it, just as there are many arguments that younger students who are properly prepared understand a demonstration as well as the greatest mathematical genius. Now these are equals, then. If you look at the Platonic dialogues, there is never a dialogue between equals. Never. There is always a dialogue between—such men like Timaeus in the *Timaeus* and the Eleatic Stranger in the *Statesman* and *Sophist* are in this sense surely the equals of Socrates, but there is no conversation between Socrates and Timaeus; there is no conversation between Socrates and the Eleatic Stranger. Socrates listens when[110] the Eleatic Stranger does certain things and when Timaeus gives this long speech about the universe. And the proof[111] is the apparent exception. There is one dialogue where Socrates meets his equals and they have a discussion: that's the dialogue *Parmenides*. Well, Parmenides himself and his favorite pupil Zeno . . . but that is just the other way around, because at that time Socrates is very young, is very young. Parmenides is his superior. There is no dialogue between equals, and that is a sign—therefore the task of interpretation can be stated as this: one has understood a Platonic dialogue—I mean, I don't know whether anyone can say this on any level, but . . . if one has transformed this into this, if you have become in this sense, in this inner sense, [Socrates's equal], it means that you understand that cogent reasoning behind the merely persuasive reasoning which you find.

[liii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

Yes, that is a very long question, I know that; and the only[112] way in which these general remarks can become meaningful is to practice reading together, and then one becomes—I mean, even if you have the ordinary assumption that Plato, if I may use the German idiomatic expression, Plato too "cooked with water," which means, well, that he was not infallible. Or as Horace put it, "Why should Plato also not nod from time to time?"[liv] Sure, why not? But you see then so many cases where you thought he was nodding—Shorey finds this very frequently—then you see he didn't nod.[113] The seeming slip was . . . That is the case, for example, in today's reading, where Socrates says (I translate it literally) "as thou said"—I mean second person singular—and he talks to Adeimantus, and it was never said by Adeimantus but by Glaucon. Now Socrates is always presented as a man of perfect memory. I mean this quality of the philosopher, that he must have a very good memory, is exemplified by Socrates, who can have a six-hour conversation now and can repeat it verbatim immediately afterward . . . This kind of thing.[114] [Shorey] thinks Plato just forgets that this was Glaucon. I'm sure he did not, but he wanted to show something by it, namely, that the question raised by Glaucon at that time is answered now, so that the whole attack on Socrates, one from Glaucon's side and the other one from Adeimantus's side, is now completely taken care of by this proof of the possibility of the just city: the proof consisting in the fact that the many are persuadable. You know? And if the many can be persuaded to accept the philosopher as the ruler, what else is necessary? Even today? Let us assume someone is running for president and the platform—[lv]

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[1] Deleted "I mean, what you."
[2] Deleted "Now let us go first – I mean."
[3] Deleted "that you can –."
[4] Deleted "–you know…I mean."
[5] Changed from "There is a great – so when you speak of language you surely transcend the Platonic question but if you say there is always speech."
[6] Deleted "I do not want to –."
[7] Changed from "And that is – he must have his reason for that – that these are natural things."
[8] Deleted "there was."
[9] Deleted "yes, that's the."
[10] Deleted "we would have."
[11] Deleted "– and we must see, we must simply see how –."
[12] Deleted "this explicit –."
[13] Deleted "and."
[14] Deleted "and we are –."
[15] Changed from "That this part dealing with speeches is particularly grave and they begin very young and then it ruins."
[16] Deleted "– the thing," Moved "is in no way developed ."
[17] Deleted "the book of – in."
[18] Deleted "is it – but.'
[19] Deleted "our –.'
[20] Deleted "and that is of –."
[21] Deleted "get –."
[22] Deleted "– I think we should."

[liv] Horace *Ars Poetica* 358-360. Horace is speaking of Homer, not Plato.
[lv] The transcriber notes that "at this point the tape became inaudible because of what appears to have been a defect in the original recording equipment. The final fifteen minutes, approximately, of the discussion period are therefore not transcribed."

[23] Deleted "it is not –."
[24] Deleted "not – he says."
[25] Deleted "are –."
[26] Deleted "a true eros for –."
[27] Deleted "depends entirely. It has –."
[28] Deleted "would be –."
[29] Changed from "In other words, this world – or this – perhaps was right – I don't strictly speaking – speak of a world, but this – these things which are always are in perfect order and therefore he becomes – by contemplating them he assimilates himself to them. He becomes himself free from the roots of injustice."
[30] Deleted "philosopher – the."
[31] Deleted "I –."
[32] Changed from "The – oh yes, sure, when he spoke of the – sure it occurred. When he spoke of the four virtues in Book IV, or was it – in Book IV – you know, then he said is this, is this moderation – is this moderation, the interlocutor – yes, but add vulgar."
[33] Deleted "or was it—in book 4, you know, then."
[34] Deleted "in."
[35] Deleted "and that is –."
[36] Deleted "– but this – so."
[37] Changed from "Thereafter. Yes? Thereafter. After the cleansing. Good. Yes, after the . Yes?"
[38] Deleted "those things, toward those other things, the"
[39] Changed from "That is – this happens, however only after they have made the outline or the scheme, the outline is not the same – what – the clear question and the very difficult question is how is the scheme, the outline of the regime – we must assume of the best regime – related to what is by nature just?"
[40] Deleted "Does this –."
[41] Deleted "We have –."
[42] Deleted "they will, of course –."
[43] Deleted "pert."
[44] Deleted: "Student: "Excuse me. I'm not feeling very well." LS: Oh, I'm sorry. Sure. Go on Mr. Reinken."
[45] Deleted "Because Socrates – yes, we can't –."
[46] Deleted "we would have – and therefore we."
[47] Deleted "why –."
[48] Changed from "I remember – by the way, it is very important that at a given moment here Adeimantus, who has been the interlocutor, is willing to be (257) satisfied – you know – with a very general remark.'
[49] Deleted "becomes –."
[50] Deleted "is a rough –."
[51] Deleted "the clarity."
[52] Deleted "they –."
[53] Deleted "– or at."
[54] Deleted "that we – and."
[55] Deleted "we must."
[56] Deleted "– that is."
[57] Deleted "Must there not – is this a –."
[58] Deleted "there is – but."
[59] Changed from "Now, if however it is the unity – the unifying thing – the joke, where is our unity."
[60] Deleted "What is for –."
[61] Deleted "the – and that is."
[62] Deleted "It is interesting –."
[63] Changed from "He compares the idea of the good – he says I can't tell you – I can't tell what the idea of the good is."
[64] Changed from "That is – I mean, that is a long question, whether the idea of the good is Zeus or whether it is a radically "impersonal" god – that's a long question, but the question which is necessitated but – by what have we in Plato."
[65] Deleted "we."
[66] Deleted "(This is really a great nuisance – oh, here it is)."
[67] Deleted "are –."

[68] Deleted "visible, and."
[69] Deleted "all –."
[70] Changed from "Reasoning is all – reasoning comprises all human thinking which is – which goes down."
[71] Deleted "to."
[72] Deleted "– you know –."
[73] Deleted "Plato – differently stated."
[74] Deleted "What –."
[75] Deleted "no –."
[76] Deleted "This is –."
[77] Deleted "– so that.'
[78] Deleted "it might not be –."
[79] Deleted "do we –."
[80] Deleted "is, how does"
[81] Changed from "I would translate it to, because belief is also so vague – I would translate it by reliance, reliance."
[82] Deleted "that – that this is the –.'
[83] Deleted "that is the –."
[84] Deleted "and therefore – you see, the good."
[85] Deleted "and this is – and."
[86] Deleted "justice –."
[87] Deleted "which."
[88] Deleted "why do you".
[89] Deleted "as."
[90] Deleted "What is the –."
[91] Deleted "– is this –."
[92] Changed from "The place of the ideas. The place – the nous. Therefore the nous is that – the nous contains the ideas."
[93] Deleted "but only the last –."
[94] Deleted "cannot – we."
[95] Deleted "wanted."
[96]Deleted "Yes, well the question."
[97] Deleted "Socrates, I mean we must be careful"
[98] Deleted "there is –."
[99] Deleted "speaks."
[100] Deleted "You know, of – merely it means"
[101] Deleted "Plato."
[102] Deleted "be."
[103] Deleted "we can –."
[104] Deleted "There is a –."
[105] Changed from "that therefore I think it is almost necessary that there should not be a single legitimate argument – you know – a legitimate syllogism – in the whole Platonic work, which is probably an exaggeration, but – you know – because those who are helped best by being edified in the ordinary sense of the term will be edified."
[106] Deleted "and that is –."
[107] Deleted "they –."
[108] Deleted "Do you –."
[109] Deleted "in the strict sense."
[110] Deleted "the Athenian – when."
[111] Deleted "is that there is – the proof."
[112] Deleted "thing –."
[113] Deleted "That was very – this slip –."
[114] Deleted "So then, this kind of thing; yes, he."

Session 12: November 15, 1961
Book 7: The Cave

Leo Strauss: That was a very satisfactory paper, and if I may say so the best paper you have given in my classes ever.[i] Now you made quite a few points which are very good, or at least very interesting. For example, what you said about a possible parallelism between the five mathematical disciplines and the five kinds of objects of [knowledge][ii] and that is—on one occasion you spoke of the [. . .] "becoming" but I cannot hold you responsible for the translation . . . [iii]

You spoke at the beginning of your paper of the fact that the body is an obstacle to philosophy. This is, of course, however—from the point of view of the *Republic* the body is also the obstacle to the *polis*, because if the *polis* means the most perfect union, that which collectivizes, socializes everyone, that which cannot be socialized is the body. I mean, think of the example of the headache or a fever which no one would share with you, and if you're a god, your feelings can be shared. But if this is so, if the body is the obstacle, then the perfect solution of the philosophic and political problem is the overcoming of the body, let us say the abstraction from the body. And that is indeed a theme of the *Republic* as a whole, [as] indicated in the action: they are promised a dinner and never get it . . . and what we said about the end of moderation or temperance goes well with this because, as you know, moderation is precisely the control of desires of the body.[1] But assuming however that the abstraction from the body can be made only in speech and never in deed, then both the political and the philosophic solutions are utopian. You know? Because we never get rid of the body, and[2] then we are impervious to complete socialization; and for the same reason also we are impervious to the pure truth.

By the way, when[3] [Socrates] comes to speak of solid geometry, the only mathematical discipline which deals with bodies, whereas astronomy deals with bodies in motion, but bodies as bodies are in a way the theme of solid geometry, and Socrates forgets solid geometry and doesn't speak of [it but rather of] astronomy. We forget that, and that is ordinarily taken as a kind of reference to the fact which is based partly on the text, that solid geometry was not sufficiently developed as a mathematical discipline in Plato's time.[iv] I believe there is also a deeper reason. The forgetting of the body is the crucial element of the whole movement of the *Republic*. Now when you spoke of the simile of

[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[iii] The transcriber notes: "The tape was recorded in such fashion as to render audibility quite fragmentary. An effort will be made to transcribe to the degree possible. This is more the case toward the beginning than later."
[iv] Plato *Republic* 527d1-528e1.

the cave you said something about these carriers of images or statues.[v] I did not quite understand[4] what you said.

Student: Well, since they carry opinions or beliefs, I assumed that they were people like the priests and the rulers and the fathers.

LS: Yes,[5] I believe one can state it a bit more exactly, but I believe you were moving in the right direction. Then you raised the question: Is there knowledge of the good? And you seemed to say no, there is only vision; and you took vision as synonymous with the [imagination].[vi] Now[6] vision is not that, and I would say the prima facie evidence in the seventh book is entirely in favor of the view that knowledge of the good is possible, but we would have to think more about it and see whether . . . because according to the official thesis, the best *polis* is possible only if the rulers possess knowledge or vision of the idea of the good. If this cannot be obtained, then we have to reconsider the whole thing. There are other reasons why we might have to reconsider it, but this would surely be the most massive, and you believe that there is no knowledge of the good but you have not proven that. And the last point which you made—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, there are[7] certain remarks, that is true. Now the last point which I would like to make regarding your paper is what you said about Glaucon's character, and that is of course very important, because in a way Glaucon is the most important personage in the *Republic*. You know, all these fundamental considerations are addressed to Glaucon, and Glaucon was the one who had come down to the Piraeus with Socrates—you know, the others were already there. You said rightly that Glaucon stands between the two groups: the nonphilosophers and the philosophers. That, I think, is correct, but I believe you in the details . . .

But before we turn to the seventh book I would like to give a very summary reply to Mr. Butterworth's query. The query is very long,[8] almost a whole page single-spaced, and I must reduce it to what I believe is the nerve of the whole thing. Now what you say has to do with the question of dogmatism and skepticism, yes? Do you recognize what you said?

Student: [. . .]

LS: All right. However, I believe that is convenient. Now I think I can[9] show in the most easy manner what the issue is. I can also give you two names: Plato and Descartes. That you recognize. All right. According to the traditional view, and the traditional view brought to us by people of very low caliber—you know, Diogenes [Laertius] and other mere transmitters of thinkers—there are two kinds of philosophers in classical antiquity, dogmatists and skeptics, and that is a very simple and crude distinction.[vii] The dogmatists

[v] 514b8-515a3.
[vi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[vii] Diogenes Laertius 1.16.

are the people who make assertions about God, the world, the soul, whatever it may be; and all the famous names are of course dogmatist: Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics and the Epicureans and so on. Then, however, there are people who[10] do not make assertions. They abstain from judging, and they are called skeptics, of which there are also a variety of schools.

So now the[11] first question we would have to raise is: What about Plato in particular, since we are concerned with him and since our concern with him may have something to do [with] that issue of dogmatism and skepticism? There is a very profound remark by Pascal . . . "We know too little to be dogmatists and we know too much to be skeptics."[viii] I think that was the best word ever said about the subject, and it seems to me [Plato would agree] . . . I don't think that Pascal knew that, but that is so.[12] That can always be shown because every skeptical argument presupposes knowledge. If a skeptic argues against the reliability of our vision, yes, of our sight, he will never use arguments taken from hearing. Why? Because he knows that sight is not hearing, and so on. There is never a skepticism which doesn't contain knowledge, just as there can never be a lie which does not contain some truth. If someone says we are now sitting in the dark and we are all dogs . . . which is a manifest lie, as you know, but it contains lots of truth. Well, there are dogs, and dogs bark, and so on and so on . . . So[13] a simple skepticism is impossible. So in this sense, I mean if we take Callicles's view of the very wise remark about the human situation, we can say that Plato knew that[ix] . . . At any rate, from an external point of view, to come back to that, we can say that up to 1600 the history of philosophy was the history of dogmatic schools who were chiefly in control, and at the margin there were skeptics: the mummers, as Kant called them,[14] people who do not settle something as dogmatics did. And now that would seem to be a sign that something is fundamentally wrong with philosophy.[x] If skepticism persists, then the dogmatists have not made their point or any of the points.

This we can say gave rise to a very powerful conceit of Descartes. He said something is wrong with philosophy. The skeptics [have] got a point, and that has never been properly met. Otherwise they would no longer [persist].[xi] How to go about it? Let us start from the[15] least sanguine and the most terrible premise, that the skeptics are right, so that knowledge is not possible, and let us take the most extreme skeptical position, absolute skepticism. And then Descartes says: I can show on that basis, extreme skepticism, I can discover an unqualified truth, and that truth which appears at the bottom of skepticism, that is the absolute. And that was the famous "I think; I am."[xii] And Descartes's doctrine can therefore be described as a dogmatism based on the most radical skepticism, and what Descartes did in his [. . .] way is, I think, a sign of what happens in modern philosophy altogether. That would lead us, of course, very far, but I will give you one

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[viii] Pascal, *Pensées* (ed. Brunschvicg), fr. 434. See *Leo Strauss on Plato's Symposium*, ed. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4-5; Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, Revised and Enlarged (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), 209-210.

[ix] Possibly a reference to Plato *Gorgias* 484b1-5.

[x] See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A756-769 B784-797, especially A 761, B 789.

[xi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

[xii] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, I-II; see also *Discourse on Method*, IV.

illustration. Can you know the world? Can we know the world? Yes, the dogmatists assume that we can know the world; in other words, that there is a fundamental harmony between the human mind and the whole. Can we know it, or how much of it can we all know of it? All kinds of questions [arise]. Yes, but we can say that is hard to answer, but one thing we can say: whatever is can possibly become an object of knowledge, must fit the conditions of human life. Similarly, everything must go through this, like the sieve, and then it becomes a condition of human knowledge.[16] And the second great point: we can know the sieve. We can know the sieve.[17] It is very doubtful whether we can know what it is in itself, but we can know the sieve; and therefore we can know what is possibly knowable. Something of this kind happened in Greek empiricism and in [Kant] . . . you know? Here, implied in this notion that knowledge of the world has to be replaced by knowledge of the sieve, that is taken to be knowledge; and this implies a distinction, at least a dogmatic distinction between a possible object of knowledge, a so-called phenomenon, and the thing in itself, which as such is not knowable. [xiii]

Now you spoke here later on[18] in your paper, in your statement about Max Weber—yes, Max Weber, that is a derivative from derivatives, we can say. Now that comes partly from Kant, simply from Kant, but a very modified Kantianism, and[19] you can say knowledge of the things as they are in the old and primary sense doesn't exist for Weber. What you have, according to Weber, are data, sense data, and they have to be organized, ordered. That is entirely the work of the human mind.[20] Say, certain times, if I may say: we recognize patterns, and they mean something. But strictly speaking we do not recognize patterns according to Weber, we impose patterns. According to Weber and others . . . Now I cannot go into that, but may I ask you to read a few pages at the end of the second chapter of my *Natural Right and History*, where I speak about Weber's notion of reality [and its] structure.[xiv] I think this is the point. But the main point is this, in modern times, I would say what is characteristic of modern times is dogmatism based on skepticism, and a modification of that, which I cannot now underline, is the now-prevailing notion of science. Our science, in the sense of the present, is neither dogmatic, nor the truth, nor skeptic. I mean, science doesn't say knowledge is impossible. It is something in between, and therefore the most famous modern book on the Greek skeptics by a very respectable French scholar of the last generation, Brochard,[xv] I think, if I'm not mistaken,[21] concludes with such a statement: that the whole issue of skepticism–dogmatism has been settled by modern science, which is beyond that antithesis. But it is beyond that antithesis[22] not in the same way in which Pascal's statement is. I mean, that Pascal said that we know too much to be skeptics and too little to be dogmatists, that could also be said by the representatives of modern science, but those would mean it very differently. Now these are very long questions which I can only allude to, and I'm sorry. We must now turn to the seventh book. I'm sorry. I can't do anything now, but it may be a bit of help.

Student: Can I just say one thing?

[xiii] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* Bxxvi-xxxi, B45 A30, B305-315 A249-256.
[xiv] Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 76-80.
[xv] Victor Brochard, author of *The Greek Skeptics* (1887).

LS: Yes. Yes, sure.

Student: [23]I have already looked at your second chapter of *Natural Right and History*, and this was the reason I posed the question, because it seems to be that if we are going to be left up in the air as far as Plato . . . leaves us up in the air as to whether the fourth segment of this four-segmented line is actually existent, then there is no reason for us to hold any animosity towards somebody like Weber, who also holds us up in the air about . . .

LS: I mean, Weber is much more dogmatic than Plato, much more.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, in his whole notion—that is underlying this whole doctrine[24] that modern science is ultimately the model of method. I mean this kind of thing. [25]Plato has doubts about many things of which we don't know, there's certainly no question of this; but I would say, by the way, another indication of this: you must make a distinction. A given doctrine in Plato, say, as presented by the divided line, may be provisional from Plato's point of view in the sense that he knew better.[26] I mean, in other words, [it] has to be given a much more exact statement of what he says there. You know? The question concerns now not what we immediately read, which is always provisional or rhetorical, but the question ultimately concerns what Plato has ultimately in mind and what the [dialogue][xvi] says only after a very long study, whether there such a question would be [answered].[xvii] But I would say I do not claim to have understood Plato.[27] I have read someone, a classical scholar once wrote to say this means not to have understood Plato's mind. Well, who can claim they have understood Plato's mind? But[28] on the basis of what I have understood,[29] I do not believe that Plato had a developed system in this way, in the way in which there is a Hegelian system. He[30] had certainties, without any question, and one of them is, for example, that which he presented in all his books, that philosophy is the most important thing. That's a very big certainty, and the great question is: How could there be a certainty regarding the aim of human life, i.e., a part of the whole, without full clarity about the whole? That's the great question. I cannot go into that, but we have to work and do our best. There is no one around who[31] can possibly hand the things down to us. I mean, what can be done in the case of a man like Socrates is that he occasionally in conversation, to satisfy a very great curiosity, can hand down certain [doctrines][xviii] but they are then not adequately transmitted nor adequately understood. The main work has to be each individual's work.

Student: Would you say, then, on the basis of your understanding of Plato, taken *in toto*, that you think he does believe in [wisdom][xix] or in understanding of the whole, or would you say that you have very great doubts beyond—

[xvi] The transcript has ellipses here.
[xvii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xviii] The transcript indicates something inaudible here.
[xix] The transcript indicates something inaudible here.

LS: No! [32]To speak with a proper caution, I think that Socrates means it when he says no human being is wise. Yes, we cannot be more than lovers of wisdom, i.e., philosophers.[33] At least I see nothing which contradicts that, and the difference between Plato and Kant, and any other modern who takes a similar view like Kant, would be this. Kant said: Let me always make a picture of the phenomenal world, [apart from] the thing in itself . . . This world is according to Kant accessible. That's the world as we understand it. This is in principle susceptible of perfect lucidity, but only in an infinite cosmos.[34] But this is a sphere of potential perfect clarity. This [on the other hand] is a sphere of perfect obscurity.[xx] Plato says that a distinction is impossible.[35] Where we find our way reasonably well, say, with potentially perfect clarity, obscurity enters here; and on the other hand, there is nothing regarding which there is complete obscurity. This Plato expresses by a favorite way: he "divines." Yes? He "divines." Now if you divine something, you know of it, you have an awareness of it. Therefore[36] whatever the good or the idea of the good may mean, say, the highest from which everything else is to be understood, we divine it. That's some awareness, but that awareness can be up to the vanishing point, you know, and can be expanded.[37] Therefore Kant could prove that only in this sphere is there potentially perfect clarity, and in that [other] sphere there is complete obscurity. Kant could have a final doctrine of the limitations of human knowledge, and one can say[38] that this "epistemology" is the absolute and final doctrine. You know?

Well, little improvements, but fundamentally that's finished. Plato, I think, does not have such a doctrine, because there is no such line which can be drawn. In a very simple way, of course, you have it: the shoemaker, the art. If he is a competent fellow, he has perfect knowledge in this sphere. But[39] immediately the question comes up: What's the whole thing for? And protection of feet, health, human life is good? The shoemaker can't say anything. And even in other matters, I mean, for example, the material. He knows, of course, this leather is good for that condition and that wood is good for shoes to be used in other conditions, but he doesn't know the material fully. A certain amount of analysis which could be made by a chemist or so would never be made by the shoemaker as shoemaker: always ignorance. The sphere of knowledge which we have is always shot through with ignorance, and not with the kind of ignorance where you can say with certainty [that] an infinite progress of science would relieve it.[40] For Plato there is some unredeemable obscurity which cannot be fixed, because if it could be fixed then we would have the theory of the limitations of knowledge which would take the place of the substantive, say, metaphysical problems, which is not the case in Plato. I'm sorry. We must now turn [to book 7] without any further discussion.

Now the simile of the cave, this famous simile at the beginning of the seventh book—and this is the third and last simile—indicating the highest object of learning, called the good or the idea of the good. The divided line is the central simile. All three similes: the sun, the divided line, and the cave suggest that there are as it were two worlds, the sensible and the intellectual world. He speaks, for example, [of] the sensible and intellectual place,[xxi] but the word "world" is never used in this sense that there are two worlds. In

[xx] Strauss might be gesturing to a drawing on the board here.
[xxi] Plato *Republic* 517a8-b6.

fact, there is only one world. If there were two worlds, there would be a world without body. Yes? There would be a nonbodily world and a bodily world, but there is only one world, and therefore there is no world without body. Yet in this world, this one world,[41] there is a fundamental dualism. There are two ways of life opposed to each other. There is one world, but two ways of life: the philosophic and the nonphilosophic.[42] We can abstract from the body in various ways, but that is always an abstraction. This abstraction is, however, essential to the *Republic*, and there is a very simple proof of it. At the beginning it was said we must look at the *polis* in order to see justice writ large, so there is a parallelism between the *polis* and the individual human being; but when it is carried through we see there is a parallelism between the *polis* and the soul of the individual.[xxii] This is the clearest case of abstraction from the body. Yes? The soul of the human individual, to say nothing of the fact that not all powers of the soul enter: only spiritedness, desire, and reason. And what about memory and the other things?

Now the simile of the cave we can use for convenience sake with respect of the two worlds. The world of sense perception in contradistinction to the world of intellection—the world is treated here as a world of conjecture, as Mr. Jackson said last time, or the world of imagery, image-making. The world in which we live, that's clear, is presented in the simile of the cave as a world of shadow and imagery, [43]so that the world in which we [don't] live can be presented as the intellectual world. That is simple—apparently the simple answer to the question of what this simile means, but there are certain difficulties. This world, in other words, the visible world, the world in which we live—the world, as we say—is the cave. And there is a detailed description of it, each part of which would need the closest attention. I'm interested in only one point. There is a wall, a little wall around it, and what do they see? What do the cave dwellers see? The cave dwellers are us. What do we see according to the simile of the cave? Only shadows, but shadows of what? Rabbi Weiss?

Rabbi Weiss: Images of—

LS: Of what?

Rabbi Weiss: Of—well, he says, I can think of animals, of humans—

LS: No, not precise enough.

Student: Artifacts.

LS: Only of artifacts.[xxiii] Only of artifacts, but the only nonartifacts of which they have any vision are human beings, i.e., the cave dwellers see their own shadows and they see the shadows of the artifacts carried around that little wall. That is very strange. The difficulty is this: How can the real world, as we call it, the sensible world be compared to a thoroughly artificial world, a man-made world, and which only because it is man-made includes also not man-made human beings, but no other non-man-made things? Do you

[xxii] 368e2-369b4, 434d6-435c6, 440e2-441a4.
[xxiii] 514a1-515c3.

see the point? I mean, if they would only see shadows or other natural images, there would be no difficulty, because what he does is he says if you take the proportion of the divided line, say, the intellect to reasoning equal to sense perception to imagery, shadows, and whatnot;[xxiv] now he says the intellectual world we may compare to the sensible world. To the sensible world. And then we produce in this proportion: the sensible world may now be compared to the world of imagery, so that we can say the enumeration of the cave dweller's world to the sensible world reflects the enumeration of the sensible world to the intelligible, the intellectual world. But why the addition of the artifacts? Why is the world, our world as we ordinarily understand it, a thoroughly artificial world where the only nonartificial things are the human beings? That is the question. For us today who have gone through a certain good or bad epistemological sophistication, this thought is perhaps easier to understand than it would have been in some other time. To put it briefly, it is impossible for man to possess pure sense perception. It is impossible.[44] I mean, there is always [going to be] interpretation. I see something and I say: It's a dog. Now you laugh about [it]—well, the dog is such a convenient example, preferred by Plato himself, so we are perfectly justified, but if you have another Plato favorite, well, I'm willing to use it also.

Student: [. . .]

LS: All right, being a cat; and so that's a cat. But cat, that is no longer mere sense perception because then I apply, as they would say today, the concept cat to what I see. In Platonic language it would be: I see that this cat participates in catness. That is not—a brute is not able to say that. So every human sense perception, what we ordinarily call sense perception always involves interpretation, and it can be either true interpretation or false interpretation. The true interpretation is that which is according to nature. The false interpretation is that according to some convention, through some artifact. Either we see what we see in the light of nature,[45] or we see it necessarily in the light of some artifacts, of some merely human establishment, and therefore the[46] prephilosophic world, the world of the senses, the merely sensible world is the world of false interpretations, of merely many, many interpretations of artifacts—the artifacts in the light of which we see everything conceal, above all, the carriers. I'm using now the simile, the carriers. We don't see them because we see only the shadows of the artifacts, and the artifacts conceal of course still more: the artificers, the artisans. Who made these things which are carried around we cannot possibly know. We don't even see who carries them around. In a word, prephilosophic man lives in a radically artificial world. He lives in a world made by human art, by the human art of interpretation. Prephilosophic man lives in a world of *techne*.

That is the point, and that I think we must link up with what we have said all the time about the perfect *polis* of the *Republic* being a city of artisans. We understand it now somewhat better. Every city, every human society, is an artificial world,[47] because its bond, that which makes it a city, is an artifact. In the Platonic city, in the best city, this is radically changed, because art becomes now the function of every citizen. Every citizen is here an artisan and that is not so in the other cities, but in the ordinary cities every

[xxiv] 509d1ff.

citizen is a beneficiary of the art which created these, as they would say today, these basic symbols, the basic conventions, the basic definitions, however they call it. In the ordinary city, everyone is the beneficiary of a fundamental art, but in the Platonic city every man is also an artisan himself, maybe in a very [modest][xxv] way: shoemaker, carpenter, and so on and so on. But the arts as actually used are forms of understanding, and therefore they point to the art of arts, which would be that art which understands the nonartificial, the non-made-made: nature, of course in the Platonic sense of nature.

Now then he describes in the simile of the cave—I cannot possibly speak of everything—they are chainees, inmates. They must be unchained. An implication is [that] no one can unchain himself. There must be someone who is no longer chained, who has been outside of the cave, who comes down and unchains them; and this unchaining[48] is followed by compulsion. People like the light in the cave. They are accustomed to it, and they hate the thought of having to go out of this customary, familiar world. That is again very strange. There is no natural desire of the cave dwellers to get out of the cave. In other words, there is no *eros*, no longing for the truth, which is of course not true from Plato's point of view. It is another example of[49] a thing which I have mentioned before, the abstraction from *eros* which characterizes the *Republic* in various ways, which[50] cannot be carried through consistently, but which is carried through[51] as much as possible. Now this escape[xxvi] goes then—[52]the various stages were reported by Rabbi Weiss, [so] I don't have to go into that. The last stage is seeing the sun itself in daylight, and the sun itself stands of course for the idea of the good. That's the last. Now we must read here a passage, 516b9. We can begin even before: "and finally, I believe." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And so, finally, I suppose, he would be able to look upon the sun itself and see its true nature, not by reflections in water or phantasms of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place."

LS: You see he applies here the expressions ordinarily used of the ideas, to the visible things, the sun "in itself" . . . Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Necessarily," he said. "And at this point he would infer and conclude that this it is that provides the seasons and the courses of the year and presides over all things in the visible region, and is in some sort the cause of all these things that they had seen." "Obviously," he said, "that would be the next step." (516b-c)

LS: Now let us stop here. You see, that's very interesting. It seems that the vision of the idea of the good is the last step, but we learn now that's not true. There is a further step. That's the last step, and this last step is not intellection, mental perception by itself, but inference, or to use the word he used, reasoning [. . .] reasoning, not mental perception. The realization that the sun is the cause of everything—and that is a decisive thing. If you know only the idea of the good and do not know that it is the cause of everything, you do

[xxv] The transcript indicates something inaudible here.
[xxvi] In the transcript: "escape (?)"

not know the idea of the good properly; you have only one idea among many.[53] That it is the ground of everything, that you don't notice by just looking at it, if there were such a simple thing in itself; but the decisive step, the culminating step is the strip of reasoning as distinguished from mere intellection. In other words, from Plato's point of view there is never in any broader consideration pure intellection. There is always reasoning also. This, I believe, is the difference between Plato and all mysticism. Mysticism proper[54] would never allow such a crucial place to reasoning. Mysticism, you can say, is the belief that some intellection, some awarenesses are sufficient for the decisive truth. For Plato that doesn't exist. For Plato this intellection, these awarenesses, which he does not deny, have their full meaning, receive their full meaning only in a context of reasoning. Now let me see.

Student: Isn't this where the return to the cave begins in advance of compulsion?

LS: Begins?

Student: Yes. The return of the philosopher to the cave is mentioned to Glaucon.[xxvii] Compulsion is mentioned; [it] does not carry through to the end of the business of the philosopher returning to the cave, but it is said where the return begins, and it begins before Socrates needs to tell Glaucon that compulsion is necessary.

LS: You mean which compulsion? There are two compulsions, the compulsion to get out of the cave and the compulsion to return to the cave. Which do you mean?

Student: I thought you meant the compulsion to return.

LS: And you said—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Are you referring to the passage we have now read? That is not the return to the cave.

Student: Doesn't it start the return?

LS: In a way, yes; but still, is there not a great difference between this reasoning outside of the cave about the highest outside of the cave and the other things outside of the cave, and the return to the cave? It is a descent in a sense, that is true, but it is not the descent into the cave.

Student: I have another point.

LS: Yes?

Student: That the difference between the things and what is outside is not entirely . . .

[xxvii] See 516e3ff.

LS: Yes, but still,[55] you made what to me is too sudden a transition from the simile to the things themselves. I mean, you must[56] be able to state it in terms of the simile, and according to the simile you cannot possibly see the things at the same time in the light of the sun or of the fire. If you are in the cave, you have only the fire. If you are outside the cave, you have only [. . .][xxviii] say, the sun. You can—that is incompatible. What you can see in the light of the sun you cannot see in the light of the fire, and vice versa. You cannot see the shadows in the cave in the light of the sun. If you mean to say there are things which are invisible in the light of the sun which nevertheless are, you have a strong point, if you mean that, but I don't know whether you mean that.

Student: [. . .]

LS: I see. Now you mention [it], that's true. That's a very good point. But other things are really very different because—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, good.[57] Men know always man, but they see him either in the light of the derivative fire or they see him in the light of the sun, and only the latter is a true understanding. That is good . . .

Student: [. . .]

LS: Oh, I see.

Student: But men don't see man in the cave.

LS: They see only the shadows. The shadows.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes . . . what you said is [. . .] correct. I granted too much. Strictly speaking, of course, in the cave they don't see man but they see the shadows. So we have to come back to the original assertion: what is seen in the cave is not seen outside of the cave and vice versa.

Student: This was to begin with. But don't the philosophers—

LS: Yes, when he remembers only and doesn't see it. Oh, that is an entirely different thing. You mean the man who has lived outside of the cave, then returning in[to] it, knows certain things which[58] the cave dwellers, mere cave dwellers, never knew. That is true. But while he lives in the cave he cannot actually see them . . . Is there not a difference between actually—pardon?

[xxviii] The transcript has a lengthy blank space here.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, the second time, sure. But[59] the strict hypothesis is simply [that] while he is in the cave he does not see the things outside of the cave, but he remembers.

Student: Do the men in the cave have vision of the men around them? I thought they were chained . . . so that they only had visions of their own shadows.

LS: Yes, yes. Sure.

Student: [Inaudible follow-up question to clarify the relationship among the cave dwellers][xxix]

LS: They speak. They speak—

Student: The thing is, they don't ever see shadows of other men in the cave.

LS: Oh, yes. Sure. That is simple. They see shadows of the other—[xxx] Now let us see. As for the meaning of the simile, 517a8, that is the conclusion of the long speech of Socrates. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"This image then, dear Glaucon, we must apply as a whole to all that has been said, likening the region revealed through sight to the habitation of the prison, and the light of the fire in it to the power of the sun. And if you assume that the ascent and the contemplation of the things above is the soul's ascension to the intelligible region, you will not miss my surmise, since that is what you desire to hear. But God knows whether—"

LS: Literally, "my hope," "my expectation"; not "surmise." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But God knows whether it is true. But, at any rate, my dream as it appears to me is that in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and that when seen it must needs point us to the conclusion that this—"

LS: No, no: "after it is seen it is necessary to reason," yes? "To reason." After the vision, just as before. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"it is necessary to reason that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is

[xxix] As noted by the transcriber.
[xxx] The transcriber notes that a brief inaudible exchange follows.

to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this." "I concur," he said, "so far as I am able." "Come then—" (517a-c)

LS: No, let us stop here one moment. Now there is a great question which comes up here, and let us be as prudent as Glaucon is and say, "I believe with you," meaning, "I have no knowledge," of course.[60] Socrates suspects that he saw in that, "Well, I'm willing to suspect together with you as far as I can." Yes? And let us leave it at that, but one question is surely necessary at this point without going into any deeper questions. Granting that the idea of the good is the cause of all right and noble things, but what is the cause of the wrong and base things? Is this not a necessary question? [. . .] [This] is of course not even alluded [to] here in the *Republic*, but of course the question is discussed, for example, in the tenth book of Plato's *Laws* explicitly.[xxxi] You see how very imperfect this discussion is and how much we must think of, of which Glaucon didn't think. But we shouldn't despise Glaucon, because Glaucon is only listening, and we all know how little we can possibly take up in a conversation on wholly strange subjects to which we listen for the first time.[61] I mean, we are at a great advantage compared with Glaucon, and therefore we shouldn't be unreasonably proud if we are better . . .

At any rate, this whole presentation leads to[62] a new view of education. Education is a turning around of the whole soul.[xxxii] It is the same soul. By the way, that is the question of Mr. Butterworth and the [question][xxxiii] of Mr. Reinken. This fellow sitting in the cave and then going out of it: I thought for a moment you meant the question, "How does he know that he is the same man?" Well, he didn't mean that, but—no, no, I know—still there is, in other words, some awareness of what they call personal identity. Yes? That you meant. So it's the same man who is inside the cave and outside of the cave, but we have seen before there is only one world, in fact, there are not two worlds. So the cave and outside of the cave: this is the same world differently seen; the same world, only differently seen, differently understood. And therefore what is needed is only that it's not a new soul, but that the same soul acquires a different direction. We may even say it undergoes a conversion to another way of life. There is only one world, one soul, but opposite directions of the same soul.

Now let us go on. We have to omit very much in this very long and difficult book.[63] Let us turn now [to 518d9]. May I say one more word? The whole simile of the cave is introduced with the remark that if we want to understand what education is we have to[64] view man's situation along the lines of the simile of the cave. The education[65] means a transformation of cave dwellers into people who live in the light of the sun. That's the meaning. That of course must be properly understood, because we are not cave dwellers in the ordinary sense of the term but we live in a way in a cave. What is that cave? That will become gradually clear. Now will you read that speech?

Mr. Reinken:

[xxxi] See *Laws* 899d5ff.
[xxxii] *Republic* 518b6-d8.
[xxxiii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

"Then the other so-called virtues of the soul do seem akin to those of the body. For it is true that where they do not pre-exist, they are afterwards created by habit and practice. But the excellence of thought, it seems, is certainly of a more divine quality, a thing that never loses its potency, but, according to the direction of its conversion, becomes useful and beneficent, or, again, useless and harmful. Have you never observed in those who are popularly spoken of as bad, but smart men, how keen is the vision of the little soul, how quick it is to discern the things that interest it, a proof that it is not a poor vision which it has, but one forcibly enlisted in the service of evil, so that the sharper its sight the more mischief it accomplishes?" (518d-519a)

LS: Yes. Do you see? We have mentioned [. . .] this before: a distinction between kinds of virtue. Now here one kind of virtue is called[66] [virtue], the other so-called virtues.[67] [Those] are the vulgar virtues of which we have seen before. These vulgar virtues are acquired by habituation and practice. Well, for example, by habitual abstention from ceding to temptation, you become a moderate man. I mean, the newborn baby has not yet acquired that habit, but gradually, if he is well bred, he will acquire it by doing. So to say, stupidly doing it all over again, day in, day out, you acquire a habit. There is nothing particularly intellectual about that. That is the meaning of habit. The child is told, "One doesn't do that," and, well, some children obey immediately but very few. Most of them need some additional push, and perhaps a continuous push; but by gradually doing only things which ought to be done this becomes a habit—or as it was called, "second nature," as if he couldn't do differently. But[68] there is another more divine virtue in man, and that is[69] frequently called in Plato *phronēsis*, which means "prudence" [or] "practical wisdom"[xxxiv] —here [*phronēsis* is] used also for the highest wisdom, for reasons which can be here not discussed in the moment. Now this little virtue is not acquired by habit or training. It is somehow inborn, but it is susceptible of taking two radically different directions. It can become, if developed in the wrong way, what Shorey says: "smartness." It really is the same word: "wisdom," [or *sophia* in Greek]. Well, in the sense of cleverness, but in the sense—the same [. . .] And it can also take a radically different form, and then it becomes true wisdom, true truth, and this depends according to Plato [on its object]: if it is directed toward things which come into being and perish, then it becomes worldly wisdom, smartness, shrewdness, cleverness, but if it is directed toward things which are always and unchangeable it becomes true wisdom.

But note an important implication here. Only a minority of men can have this more divine thing, misused or well used. Yes? The other virtues are of a different kind and they can be acquired by almost everyone. And this throws light back on the education of the guardians in book[s] 2 and 3.[70] [The] musical education described there was only moral education, only moral education, meaning the acquiring of certain habits by the proper practice in the sense of harmony and the love of the beautiful as described there. Yes, but this was not a training or rather giving direction to the intellectual part of man; to the extent to which this was implied in the telling of stories, this was only subservient to the formation of character. Now here we return to the central question very shortly afterward, in 519b7. In other words, omit the next speech and then go on.

[xxxiv] The tape was changed at this point.

Mr. Reinken:
[71]"Well, then," said I, "is not this also likely and a necessary consequence of what has been said, that neither could men who are uneducated and inexperienced in truth ever adequately preside over a state, nor could those who had been permitted to linger on to the end in the pursuit of culture—the one because they have no single aim and purpose in life to which all their actions, public and private, must be directed, and the others, because they will not voluntarily engage in action, believing that while still living they have been transported to the Islands of the Blest."

LS: Go on further.

Mr. Reinken:
"It is the duty of us, the founders, then," said I, "to compel the best natures to attain the knowledge which we pronounced the greatest, and to win to the vision of the good, to scale that ascent, and when they have reached the heights and taken an adequate view, we must not allow what is now permitted." "What is that?" "That they should linger there," I said, "and refuse to go down again among those bondsmen and share their labours and honours, whether they are of less or of greater worth." "Do you mean to say that we must do them this wrong, and compel them to live an inferior life when the better is in their power?" "You have again forgotten, my friend," said I, "that the law is not concerned with the special happiness of any class in the state, but is trying to produce this condition in the city as a whole, harmonizing and adapting the citizens to one another by persuasion and compulsion, and requiring them to impart to one another any benefit which they are severally able to bestow upon the community, and that it itself creates such men in the state, not that it may allow each to take what course pleases him, but with a view to using them for the binding together of the commonwealth." (519b-520a)

LS: You see, now here he returns to the central question: the rule of philosophers. The philosophers are absolutely disinclined to go back to the cave because they live in the Island of the Blest in [the] company of the most beautiful things, of things of immortal, imperishable beauty. And then to go back to this[72]—under no circumstance is it perfectly beautiful, but in addition, [there are] mostly boring administrative duties. Only compulsion can effect that, and therefore now Glaucon raises the question, after he has seen that the philosophic life is in itself higher than the political life[73]: Is it not grossly unfair to compel these people? And Socrates says: No, we[74] do not commit any act of injustice. And we must read the sequel to get out of it the full meaning.

Mr. Reinken:
"True," he said, "I did forget it." "Observe, then, Glaucon," said I, "that we shall not be wronging, either, the philosophers who arise among us, but that we can justify our action when we constrain them to take charge of the other citizens and be their guardians."

LS: You see, the emphasis is on compulsion all the time, and there is no question that it is a compulsion. It is only a question: Is it rightful or wrong[ful] compulsion? And Socrates says it's a justified compulsion. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"For we will say to them that it is natural that men of similar quality who spring up in other cities should not share in the labours there. For they grow up spontaneously from no volition of the government in the several states, and it is justice that the self-grown, indebted to none for its breeding, should not be zealous either to pay to anyone the price of its nurture." (520a-b)

LS: One second. Do you remember another Platonic dialogue where this very same question is discussed, the duty to the city for upbringing?

Student: The *Crito*.

LS: *Crito*, exactly. And what's the answer in the *Crito*?

Student: Well, he says if it provided an education—

LS: Socrates[75] owes his upbringing to the *polis*. He owes even his birth to the *polis*, because his parents married on the basis of the laws of marriage established in Athens. He owes his being and his upbringing to Athens and to the laws of Athens, and therefore he has to die in obedience to the laws.[xxxv] But we learn now that the most important upbringing of Socrates was not owed to the city of Athens. This is completely disregarded in the *Crito* and creates for the careful reader of the *Crito*, even on the basis of the *Crito* itself, a very great difficulty.[76] You could solve this difficulty provisionally as follows, say: Socrates never felt that he was obliged to go into politics because he did not owe his best to the *polis*. Here these people owe their best to the *polis*. They are sent by the *polis* into the best university in the world,[77] and not merely by foundations to whom they have to apply again and again in very boring and nauseating applications,[78] but once they are known to be good they get it as a matter of course and get all the other benefits, which of course will not[79] here consist in particularly luxurious living and such things, but perfect freedom to develop their best. They[80] owe their very best to the help of the city, and therefore[81] it's perfectly fair that they pay the city for that in the proper manner, and the proper manner is that they should do what no one else can do, namely, rule the city. Let us look at that.

Mr. Reinken:
"But you we have engendered for yourselves and the rest of the city to be, as it were, king-bees and leaders in the hive. You have received a better and more complete education than the others, and you are more capable of sharing both ways of life. Down you must go then, each in his turn, to the habitation of the others and accustom yourselves to the observation of the obscure things there." (520b-c)

LS: You see, the obscure things cannot be seen outside of the cave—mind you, cannot be seen. I mean, the obscure things, the dark things, can only be seen in their action, but without the sun they would vanish . . .

[xxxv] *Crito* 50a6-51c5.

Student: By fire.

LS: Pardon?

Student: By the light of the fire.

LS: Yes, sure. Sure, fire. They cannot be seen in the light of the sun. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"For once habituated you will discern them infinitely better than the dwellers there, and you will know what each of the 'idols' is and wherefore it is a semblance, because you have seen the reality of the beautiful, the just and the good. So our city will be governed by us and you with waking minds, and not, as most cities now which are inhabited and ruled darkly as in a dream by men who fight one another for shadows and wrangle for office as if that were a great good, when the truth is that the city in which those who are to rule are least eager to hold office must needs be best administered and most free from dissension, and the state that gets the contrary type of ruler will be the opposite of this." (520c-d)

LS: Yes. I think that is a very clear statement. In passing, I mention that they rule in turn, and that means there must be more than one philosopher available.[82] You remember the distinction at the end of book 4: it may be a kingship, where only one rules, or an aristocracy, where more than one rules.[xxxvi][83] [So the rule of the philosophers] cannot be a kingship. That's interesting as a subdivision of the question "Is the best regime possible?" The best regime as a kingship is not possible because he has to [rule][xxxvii] all the time. That will also come out later on.

Now after these general—now the question has long been settled. One great difficulty which we had all the time—well, there were two difficulties: Will the multitude accept the philosophers as rulers, and will the philosophers be prepared to rule? And now we have given an answer. Under what conditions will the philosophers be willing to rule? Well, if their whole philosophic life has had the full blessing of the city from the very beginning, the city is a kind of father and mother to them and has treated them best in the most important respects: the plain duty of gratitude. But you must also not forget the alternative[84] implication. In any city other than the best, there are no such duties on the part of the philosophers. There are duties, but much more limited ones. For example, the duty to die. Sure.[85] But is that truly the supreme sacrifice? That's the question. In a certain sense it surely is, but not simply, because it could be the supreme sacrifice simply only if life were the greatest good, and [this is] a demonstrably false assertion. Demonstrably false. Now then, after—yes?

Student: [86]Well, in [cities] other than the just city, after the philosopher has seen the idea of justice and known that each part is to contribute to the whole in the best city, wouldn't he by virtue of this be willing to give up his personal happiness and—

[xxxvi] *Republic* 445d3-6.
[xxxvii] The transcript indicates something inaudible here.

LS: But I mean every one of us, however wealthy or otherwise favored by chance we may be, has to do a lot of unpleasant things in his life. Is this[87] proposition in need of a proof? Good. So the question is, therefore, only the lesser evil, and what Socrates says [is that] the minimum of evil for a philosopher would be in the city ruled by philosophers, where the only thing[88] the philosophers have to do is, after having been the favorite children of the *polis* for some time, that they should as it were help their aged parents for some [time].[xxxviii] You know? And especially think [about] whatever has happened to the philosophers—or would you say the philosophers in a tolerably nice ordinary *polis* are better off than [in] a [just][xxxix] *polis*? Perhaps. I mean, it would need also some reasoning.

Student: Then wouldn't they be willing to govern after seeing the idea of justice?

LS: No, no that's a premise of the argument.[89] The whole argument is [that] there would be no difficulty if the sight of the idea of the good would act as an incentive to the descent into the cave. There would be no question.[90] But the premise of the argument is that the life of contemplation is perfect bliss, and who wants to get out of a state of perfect bliss? That's the premise. I mean, unless you would say: "Well, but then Plato—[he would] find it boring and would like to have some other occupation for [his time],[xl] like perhaps grading examination papers," or whatever. Pardon? "Or throwing your weight around." Pardon? Yes, but[91] these are not questions for philosophers.

Student: Isn't it true that the[92] premise rests here again on the abstraction from *eros*?

LS: Yes, that is correct. In other words, you mean to say that the philosopher, as Socrates puts it I think in the *Crito*, doesn't stem from a rock or an oak tree,[xli] i.e., he has [a] love [for] generation. The Greeks had a nasty expression for that. They called them "the necessary ones," with a double meaning of *anankaioi*.[xlii] You know, which "necessity" has at any rate [a relation to the desires for happiness and][xliii] where body is[93] [attached] to them. Yes? Good. That is very good, but the trouble is, in the *Republic* you don't have this powerful attachment to your father, your mother, your brother, because everyone is your father, everyone is your mother, everyone is your brother. You see? What Aristotle says about it [is] that is a kind of dilution of love: if everyone is your brother, you don't love him as strongly as your own two or three or four, perhaps only one, brother.[xliv]

Student: May I raise another question?

LS: Yes.

[xxxviii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xxxix] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xl] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xli] See *Apology of Socrates* 34d1-7.
[xlii] See Epicurus *Letter to Menoeceus* in Diogenes Laertius 10.127-128.
[xliii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xliv] Aristotle *Politics* 1262b14-24.

Same student: The nature of this constraint. Back in 519d, which is the point where we were at the beginning of this long passage we're at here, there's one particular thing which sort of caught in my mind as we've been going through the book, which is that[94] there are certain points and only certain points where Socrates uses the expression "It is our duty as the founders" to do such and such. There's only about four or five of them or something, and I've been looking to see whether there's anything special. And I was wondering whether the constraint—the interesting thing there is that not only the founders, these philosophers, are under constraint to go back into the cave, but the founders are under constraint to send them back.

LS: Yes, yes.

Same student: And I was wondering whether, again, this doesn't point to—but this is no longer constraint.

LS: No, no. Of course.

Same student: That's going right back to the first principle of the [. . .] line of argument that it is inevitable logically, that the philosophers, because they have been defined in such a way and which is the way that they're sorting out the city on the basis of special skills, qualifications, natures, that therefore logically neither Socrates and his friends who are carrying on the discussion nor the philosophers that they're talking about have any alternative but to rule. The philosophers must in this sense rule.

LS: I do not quite get what [you mean].[95] What I dimly see here in this passage to which you refer is only the question of the beginning. The perfect *polis* is not in existence. It is now founded, at present, while the conversation is going on. They are the founders. They found it only in speech now, but we can disregard for the time being the difference between in speech and in deed. You know, as in children's games, there we play the founders, and disregard that [we are not founders].[96] "We are not the rulers," that is the implication, "we are only the founders." [97]Or let me put it this way: the founders are the rulers for the time being. I mean, the[98] constituent assembly is at the same time the first legislative assembly, if I may use another simile. The founders are the first rulers, but they have therefore to take care of the second generation of rulers, and therefore the first products of the new education who will rule have to be sent down and educated[99] by the founders. Is this not the point?

Same Student: This is not quite what I was –

LS: No, I know, but –

Same Student: . . . I wonder if I can put it more clearly. That they started off, let's say, a long while ago after the end of book 4, the question of who the rulers were was not really raised at all. There were the guardians, but the actual rulers are to the guardians what [. . .]

LS: All right.

Same Student: Now in looking for the various arts which are to form this city, you've got to find the art of the ruler, but[100] in [books] 5 and 6 and so on we've been going through this. It is therefore not only not surprising but it is almost logically necessary that having found, identified the rulers in terms of the premises from which we started, therefore they must rule.

LS: Yes?

Same Student: [101]I'm interested in looking at this not[102] exactly in the sense of a concrete legislating situation, but in terms of drawing out from certain admittedly abstracted premises certain necessary conclusions. I think there's a web of geometry, as you might say—

LS: Yes. Yes, sure, that is true, but I would say that for this we would not need such a long argument as you presented, namely, we would only need this: only the philosophers are qualified to rule, only people who have seen the ideas. Yes? But the very seeing of the ideas disinclines the philosophers from going down, from ruling. That's the concrete problem. And therefore it follows indeed, as you put it, logically, since they don't wish to go down they have to be compelled to go down. And who can possibly exercise that compulsion? Only the government can, the rulers can. But in the first stage, in the first generation there is not yet a government other than the founders; therefore they must be sent down by the founders, that is to say, Socrates, Glaucon, and everyone else who wishes to regard himself as a co-founder. Do you see what I mean? I mean, your principle is absolutely sound. That is true of every Platonic dialogue: there is an amazing logicality, but the premises are impossible. I exaggerate a bit. Yes?[103] And by realizing why they are impossible we see the true nature of the situation, the true nature of the problem.

Student: Could I ally this to another problem at the end of this, which is the[104] question of them owing the price of their nurture to the city. This is another element in the compulsion. I couldn't help being reminded there of—I think there [is a][xlv] question at the beginning [of book 4], what a miserable time they're going to have in that the city belongs to them,[xlvi] but now the fact you find is they belong to the city and this, again—I tend to see this as that they are in a sort of a logical niche in the geometrical scheme . . .

LS: Yes, but—all right, regarding this particular point, this point we raise now. What is this? The situation is radically changed from the beginning of book 4 to now, because at that time they[105] were the fellows in arms and who had the weapons. They owned the city, and why should they [not] be willing to[106] enjoy themselves? And now the question is completely changed, because this kind of enjoyment of which they spoke there—you know, having a good time and perhaps also throwing one's weight around and bossing the others—these things are completely excluded because they have now serious people,

[xlv] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xlvi] Plato *Republic* 419a1-10.

philosophers. And therefore the question is not how to prevent them from misusing their rule, but how to get them into ruling in the first place. Do you see that? The moral education of Glaucon and the others has advanced from the beginning of book 4 to book 7; therefore the question is now different. This you must not forget. In other words, while it is true that there are certain premises from which conclusions are drawn, the premises change if the men change. The premise at book 4 was the ordinary human beings who, if they have the power, would they—yes, well, how can they use that power for having a good time? But now the premise is [that the] human beings who have no interest in power and who have to be forced to get an interest, and use this force—the question is, therefore, who is going to apply the force? And the answer can, it seems to me, only be in the first stage the founders, because there is not yet a government. Good. Yes?

Student: Just a comment. A little bit before, you were talking about necessary desires or necessary wants, and I think that—aren't necessary desires in the *Republic* limited from that first statement by Cephalus, when he said [he] talked about the other things which old men—

LS: Yes, let us postpone this to book 9, where the question comes up explicitly.

Student: May I ask: A minute before this you said something which I couldn't hear altogether about the supreme sacrifice, namely, death or something. Was there any reference in what you were saying at that time to the fact that going down into the cave is somehow[107] related to going down into Hades?[xlvii]

LS: No, but that is implied. If that is the Island of the Blessed, to leave that, an absolutely blessed condition, is of course a supreme sacrifice because that life, the sacrifice of life would be the supreme sacrifice if you supposed that life strictly understood as such is the highest good—which is demonstrably wrong, because life can be very miserable so [that in ending it] you do not bring the supreme sacrifice. I mean, that doesn't mean that the ordinary parlance of dying for the country as the supreme sacrifice does not make sense; it is only not unqualifiedly true.

Same Student: Then I'd like to make one last remark, because it is as good here as anywhere.

LS: Well, that's your judgment. All right.

Same Student: Or it's as bad here as anywhere. I'm stuck with the thought, the distinction between the two ways of life, the philosophic way of life and the non-philosophic way of life. Isn't there . . . in the sixth book . . . the possibility of understanding it [108]according to the two different ways of life, namely, that—well, let me say someone like Glaucon . . . he would have what I would call a gentleman's understanding or on the level—

[xlvii] 516c4-e2.

LS: Yes. All right. There are various gentlemen's understandings, you know, but all right, in a general way it's true.

Same Student: So he's a responsible man: he goes back down and does what he should do in the city. He attends to these things and he does something more than simply listen to conversations. He also is directed toward philosophy.

LS: He becomes a better man on that very day. Sure.

Same Student: But isn't it—isn't there also a philosophic understanding of these questions . . . the highest level of philosophical understanding is a return to the cave and then—

LS: Yes, how do you mean that?

Same Student: I don't know. That's the problem.

LS: Well, you could perhaps say this, that if we take—say, the cave dwellers see only their shadows. The ultimate task is to have a philosophic understanding of the—[Inaudible interruption to clarify the meaning of shadows in the cave][xlviii] No,[109] I mean, the shadows of these artifacts.

Student: Yes, I know that but I—

LS: And to have a full understanding of what these shadows of artifacts are. You see, the cave dweller thinks the shadows of artifacts are the real things, but to see them as shadows of artifacts—that is, in a way, the last question. But I'm sorry, we must now go on because we have so little time. This is all[110] preparatory to the question, What is the right education for the philosopher kings? And there is one general statement made in 522b to c. We can now no longer read it, unfortunately.[111] This toward which they are to be brought transcends all arts, i.e., it is not properly called any more an art, so our city of artisans is to be ruled by men who are no longer artisans, who can only provisionally be called artisans, and[112] the reason is that every art is special and the philosophers are non-specialists. As he puts it later, the "dialectician"—that's his word for the philosopher here—is the synoptic man, the man who overlooks the whole, and therefore he cannot be an artisan anymore.[xlix]

And then he speaks of the various arts which they have to discuss. In the first place, he mentions arithmetic, and the reasoning given here is this: we must make a distinction between things which are ambiguous and things which are not ambiguous on the level of ordinary understanding, and he prefers the things which are ambiguous on the level of ordinary understanding. For example—I will take Plato's example: the finger is wholly unambiguous.[l] I mean, there can be no serious doubt.[113] This does not call for reasoning,

[xlviii] As noted by the transcriber.
[xlix] 531d7-535a2.
[l] 523c4ff.

it is clear: the finger. But if I say that it's thin, then that is not simply true; there are other people who have thinner fingers, and compared with a match it is very thick, so all these qualities which we ascribe to things are ambiguous. If I say big, it is relatively big, but from another point of view it's also small. So all these qualities, let us roughly say, this kind of qualities—and the same applies, of course, also to good, bad, and just—there is always a certain relativity. The things for which we use nouns, ordinary nouns, like finger, dog, bird, do not have this ambiguity, and[114] [therefore] preference is given to qualities over and above things with a view to the pedagogic function. Finger or dog: that does not manifestly lead on every level to difficulties. Great, small, hard, soft leads to difficulties on every level, because you see immediately, in a moment's reflection, this is not simply—that [what] you call hard, it is not simply hard. You can also call it soft. But you cannot say for a dog and cat: This is a dog from one point of view, but in another context it becomes a cat. The dog stays a dog and the cat stays a cat.

Now the great question here to which I can only refer—is it not true?—is this: Is this merely a pedagogic preference for the quality, or it is more than that? That I think is crucial for the understanding of Plato's doctrine of ideas, because according to the ordinary presentation given in the dialogue, the ideas are much more ideas of qualities than of things. But perhaps this is truly only pedagogic, and ideas would be in the first case ideas of things. That's a great question. It has to do with the following difficulty, with the following broader question: the qualities in themselves lead to separate ideas, to ideas separate from things, because everything hard you find here is not absolutely hard. If you want to find hardness unqualified, you have to go beyond all hardness that you can perceive with your senses, and the same applies to all other qualities. But what about the dog? Do you not find the perfect dog or cat here? You know, you do not have the necessity to transcend the sensible world to get the perfect form in the case of things or beings, as you find in the case of qualities.

Let me try to state it somewhat differently. The[115] most ordinary word used by Plato for ideas is the word *eidos, eidos*, which means literally, as I say, something like "looks" of a thing or the "shape" of a thing. But [it] means then also, and very importantly, a "class" of things, and in particular also the natural classes of things: dogs, cats, and so on, classes which prove to be natural by the simple fact of procreation. Dogs generate dogs; cats generate cats—so we have our two animals together. You see, that is a very great question [to] which[116] I would only tremble to suggest a solution, but I must only say that one must read this: what is stated here proves only a certain pedagogical superiority of the ideas relating to qualities as compared with the ideas relating to beings. It does not prove a simple superiority.

Now Rabbi Weiss has said a few things about Glaucon, where his position [in society is]. Now he is a gentleman, that is here are gentlemen . . . but surely a nice man. But what we learn here is that he has some understanding of mathematics. You know, he is relatively very informed about mathematics. And the people who read this as a kind of philosophic publication of Plato—you know that, the most recent contribution of Professor Plato to the discussion and forget the thematic character of the thing—simply say [that] Plato tells us here something about the state of research in mathematics at the time. I think we have

to be a little bit more intelligent and say that's Glaucon who says that, and we learn about Glaucon that he has a decent mathematical preparation, which is not something which every gentleman has.[117] Well, it seems to me that this passage, 524d to 528a, shows what Rabbi Weiss said it shows. Glaucon belongs neither to the philosophers, to the philosophers unqualifiedly, nor to the gentleman unqualified, and perhaps his being, in a way, a mathematician expresses in an indirect way this in-between position.

Now if we look at this whole educational program, there is something very strange about it. It consists only of mathematical disciplines,[118] plus dialectics. Dialectics means in itself the art of conversation, but it's used here for knowledge of the unchangeable ideas. Is this not strange? I mean, this seventh book, the [educational program],[li] is so well known, and I believe every one of us has read it in a very early age at least once, and perhaps more, [so] that we take that for granted—"Of course, that's the education program of Plato"—and we don't take a distance from it and say: "How strange!" If someone would say all higher education consists in mathematics plus doctrine of ideas—I mean, I don't want to go into objections which would be raised today—you must have also, how is it called, adjustment; I don't want to go into [that], or history, which Plato would of course reject for other reasons—but is it not even strange from precisely[119] Plato's point of view? Is there not a subject absolutely absent, a subject of the greatest importance for Plato[120]? What do you say to that? I mean, what is lacking here?

Student: Physics?

LS: Yes,[121] one can say that, but that is not clear enough, because that is not such a clear Platonic term, physics. But an immense subject of Plato is not here. Well, I will remind you[122] [of the discussion of] the idea of the good. Here are the ideas, and then there is something else which precedes the ideas which Plato calls the *nous*, say, the mind. And[123] the idea of the good is what makes possible both ideas and knowledge of the ideas, i.e., mind. Now the mind is connected with something else. May I ask with what? I mean, with what is the mind connected? The mind doesn't float.

Student: The body.

LS: Yes, but in between, in between.

Student: The soul.

LS: The soul, and what a subject for Plato. Where do they learn something about the soul? I read to you from the end of the first book of the *Laws*. "'This, then: the discovery of the natures and habits of the souls will prove one of the things most useful to that art whose task is to treat them [namely, the natures of the souls—LS] and that art is, I suppose, as we will say, the political art. Is it not so?' 'Certainly.'"[lii]

[li] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[lii] *Laws* 650b5-10.

The political art is the art dealing with the natures of the souls, because there are various kinds of souls, natures of souls, as we learn in every page of the *Republic*. Yes? The various types of human beings. Is this not a most important subject of what Plato would call philosophy? Let me state it differently. The philosophers must be rhetoricians, surely; they must be able to persuade the nonphilosophers, but how is persuasion as an art possible except on the basis of a thorough knowledge of the soul and the various kinds of souls? Read the *Phaedrus* if you don't believe me. Where is that here? Where is this? Does this find a place?

Student: Could the ideas, the ideas of noetic heterogeneity be the same thing as the different kinds of souls?

LS: [124]Yes, but what is the soul in general according to Plato's doctrine? I mean, if we can speak of that, what you would find in every textbook? Self-moving. There are all kinds of movements, and the one fundamental movement is the self-moving from which all other forms of motion are derivative[125]. But what is moving, even self-moving, is by definition not something unchangeable, i.e., not moving in any way. I state the difficulty on the most superficial level, but it must be stated there. It's very strange.[126] But let me state the question differently. There is also a simple answer to the question, "What is the soul of the soul?" "What is the essence of the soul?"And I think one can say that according to Plato [it] is *eros*, the desire for something. Yes? For completion, for being entire. And the abstraction from *eros*, I believe, is one of the principles of the *Republic* and therefore also in a certain way an abstraction from the soul.

And there are a few more points which I would at least allude to. In 536b to c, we find an interesting example, and Socrates is reminded of something—I forgot what it was. What was that? Yes, well, how philosophers are now treated by the cities, or something of this kind. In this connection it is shown that Socrates is free from anger. Another man would be angry if he sees how the[127] cities treat the philosophers. Socrates is free from anger. That is terribly important, because anger means spiritedness—you know, this great quality of the guardians, the soldiers. Socrates is free from it. That is also one of the key themes of Plato. In this connection, a change is made. You know in the original version, in 498b to c, dialectics, philosophy was assigned to the old men, and as I said,[128] the philosophers are like the priests in Aristotle's scheme: you know, when they are no longer good for military and political service then they can devote the evening of their lives to this other form of priesthood which is philosophy. [liii]

Now this is now radically changed, because in the first case he spoke of how philosophy must be studied in order to be at peace with the present cities. There it is necessary to keep everyone younger than fifty away from philosophy, but in this perfect city one must be[129] more sensible, because when people are fifty and beyond they are no longer as able to learn as they are when they are younger, so they must study philosophy at a much earlier age. In the sequel, he describes the effect of dialectics in the case of young people, younger than thirty. In other words—and that is a remarkable discussion [of] how philosophy affects people now, young people now, and that is the reason why the *polis* is

[liii] Aristotle *Politics* 1329a27-34.

up in arms against philosophy. And that is a marvelous section, at the end of 537 to the beginning of 539. In brief, it is this. These boys are brought up—and we are speaking now of the nice boys who come of course from nice families, and they know very well what is the proper and decent thing to do, and they know this for every situation. And they respect tradition, as we would say: as Plato puts it, the ancestral things, the paternal things, and now they learn through some other fellow, probably older than they, that the fact that something is ancestral does not yet make it good. You know? And there is always a possibility, and a genuine possibility, regarding every[thing] ancestral, to say, "Well, [its goodness] is [not] evident. You can do it also in a different way and it is as good or perhaps better than [the way] they were here." And[130] when they are shaken in their belief in the ancestral and have not yet found the true, then they are very corruptible, and many are corrupted. That is the situation, and this danger will be avoided in the perfect republic, because then they must be thirty and have already well-established habits so that no harm will come to them.

But this conflict between the ancestral and the true is the basis of the conflict between philosophy and the *polis*. Aristotle in the second book of the *Politics* has a slightly different but in substance identical consideration, where he says we[131] human beings seek not the ancestral but the good.[liv] The ancestral may be relatively good, but the point of view is surely different. When you say "the ancestral," you say merely the factual question, what is regarded as ancestral; but the good[132] must be discovered, must be found by the individual. And the distinction between the ancestral and the good, I think one can say, is for all practical purposes the philosophic distinction by virtue of which philosophy as philosophy comes into being.

There is another passage in 539e3 which I mention only because it confirms what has already been said before. The cave is the city. [That] they must go down to the cave means they must go down to political life. [The] cave is the city. The knowledge of political things which they need in addition to knowledge of the ideas is only experienced here—only experienced. In other words, this kind of thing of which he speaks in the passage of the *Laws* which I read, a scientific knowledge of the various kinds of souls, is here disregarded. They must get "empirical" knowledge, not in the sense in which the word "empirical" is used now, but a kind of knowledge which you acquire by practice. You live together with these other fellows, and you see this one must be treated gently and the other must be treated more roughly, and this type of thing, so that you find your way—I mean, the kind of knowledge which any clever and reasonably intelligent politician would get by mere political activity. There is no place here for this knowledge of the soul which is neither identical with the doctrine of ideas nor with mere experience, of which he speaks here. Well, and the philosophers—I come now to the end—the philosophers will of course be treated properly for the great sacrifice they bring, and [they get] the greatest external reward[133]: they will be deified, literally deified by the *polis* unless the Pythia, the Delphic god, doesn't want such high honors and then they will only be regarded as divine [men], not as gods. But the city as city[134] would deify them because they do such a lot for the *polis*.[lv]

[liv] 1269a3-4.
[lv] Plato *Republic* 540b7-c2.

The book ends with a restatement of the conditions of possibility. How is the best city possible? We formerly have said if the philosophers become kings and the kings become philosophers. Now it is modified: when the philosophers have become kings, if the philosophers expel everyone older than ten from the city. In other words, the thing becomes much more complicated and much more [difficult]. After we have proven the possibility, had disposed of all objections, Plato pulls a new [coal] out of this inexhaustible iron and he says now that they must have an absolute power which no *polis* ever would give them. One little point, in 541a6. Perhaps you read that to us, Mr. Reinken.

Mr. Reinken:
"This is the speediest and easiest way in which such a city and constitution as we have portrayed could be established and prosper and bring most benefit to the people among whom it arises." "Much the easiest," he said— (541a-b)

LS: [135]Yes, well, "the people"—the Greek word here is *ethnos*: "tribe," "nation,"[136] which is used by Plato in the *Republic* rather loosely. For example, he speaks of a nation of, say, crooks or this kind of thing, any kind of people. [137]But it can also be understood, [and everyone must make up their own mind on this, to] really [mean] a nation, and then it would imply that in whichever nation the philosophers become kings or the kings become philosophers, that nation will be happy. The crucial implication: it does not have to be Greek. Wherever that happens, they would be happy. And I think there is more evidence for that assertion that the *polis* is not essentially Greek. Glaucon says it is Greek, of course, because he—you know, in this passage in the fifth book when Socrates asks him, "Will the city you were founding be a Greek city?" and he says, "Of course,"[lvi] naturally, because they are Greeks and it will be a Greek city. But that it is possible only among Greeks is never said by Plato, and I think here there is even an indication that it is in no way essential, because it is a human problem and therefore in principle soluble among any human beings.[lvii] In principle. In fact, it is another matter. In fact, it is even—regarding this most beautiful solution of all human problems, it is even doubtful whether it is possible under any [circumstances] among any human beings. Good.

It is very late, but this was also a very difficult and long book. Next time we will here—hitherto we haven't had any troubles and I should like—Mr. Miller. Oh yes, I know you will be there. Well, I should not conjure evil spirits by playing with the possibility that someone might not be here.

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[1] Deleted "I believe it is also – yes."
[2] Deleted "we never get rid – we never get rid of the body and."
[3] Deleted "he."
[4] Deleted "you."
[5] Deleted "that –."
[6] Deleted "– well."

[lvi] Plato *Republic* 470e4-6.
[lvii] Apparently a reference to 499c7-d6.

[7] Deleted "certain – there are."
[8] Deleted "– a whole page, single space or."
[9] Deleted "most –.'
[10] Deleted "are – who."
[11] Deleted "fact – now the."
[12] Moved "Plato – we know too much to be skeptics."
[13] Deleted "there is –."
[14] Deleted "– you know –."
[15] Deleted "most – the."
[16] Deleted "If I know the sieve –."
[17] Deleted "We cannot know –."
[18] Deleted "of –."
[19] Deleted "for Weber – yes."
[20] Deleted "We do not recognize."
[21] Deleted "it."
[22] Deleted "in –."
[23] Deleted "The thing I was trying to get at by."
[24] Deleted "of –."
[25] Deleted "much more"
[26] Changed from "I mean, that – in other words, that has to be given a much more exact statement of what he says there."
[27] Changed from "That is – I have read someone –a classical scholar once wrote, to say this means not to have understood Plato's mind."
[28] Deleted "– so, but.'
[29] Deleted "would say it is – I."
[30] Deleted "has certain – he.'
[31] Deleted "hands –."
[32] Deleted "I mean, well, to be –."
[33] Changed from "I think that – at least I see nothing which contradicts that and – you see, the difference between Plato and Kant would – and any other modern who takes a similar view like Kant – would be this: Kant said – I mean, I – let me always make a picture of that: the phenomenal world; the thing in itself."
[34] Deleted "Here –."
[35] Changed from "In – where we find our way reasonably well, say with potentially perfect clarity – obscurity enters here."
[36] Deleted "there is –."
[37] Changed "There is – therefore, Kant could prove that only in this sphere is there perfect – is there potentially perfect clarity, and in that sphere there is complete obscurity."
[38] Deleted "– one can say."
[39] Deleted "in a very – you know – but."
[40] Deleted "That, I think, is not –."
[41] Deleted "– and that is –."
[42] Changed from "The body never – we can abstract from the body in all kinds – in various ways, but that is always an abstraction."
[43] Deleted "and in order."
[44] Changed from "I mean, we always – there is always interpretation going to be."
[45] Deleted "– then we are – see if it is –."
[46] Deleted "world of – the."
[47] Deleted "an artificial –is an artificial world."
[48] Deleted "requires."
[49] Deleted "what – of."
[50] Deleted "is, of course, not –."
[51] Deleted "in –."
[52] Deleted "they see first."
[53] Deleted "Why should it – that.'
[54] Deleted "is –."
[55] Deleted "– I mean."

[56] Deleted "try –."
[57] Deleted "But man is – in other words – that is a good point. In other words, we have."
[58] Deleted "he – which."
[59] Deleted "isn't it –."
[60] Deleted "You, you –."
[61] Deleted "We –.'
[62] Deleted "the conclusion that – to."
[63] Deleted "518d9 –."
[64] Deleted "look, to."
[65] Deleted "consists –.'
[66] Deleted "the so-called virtues.'
[67] Deleted "That is –.'
[68] Deleted "that is not – but."
[69] Deleted "called here from its – reasonably."
[70] Deleted "This was – this.'
[71] Deleted "That's practically c."
[72] Deleted "surely not perfectly."
[73] Deleted "he says he has seen that now."
[74] Deleted "do not act – we."
[75] Moved "yes." Deleted "must –."
[76] Deleted "How – I mean, you know, these – of course."
[77] Deleted "– you know –."
[78] Deleted "but they get it –."
[79] Deleted "be.'
[80] Deleted "owe – then they owe – they."
[81] Deleted "they must –.'
[82] Deleted "The king.'
[83] Deleted "It cannot be a kingship. It.'
[84] Deleted "the.'
[85] Changed from "Yes, but is that the – is this truly the most – the supreme sacrifice."
[86] Changed "Well, in other cities than the just city after the philosopher has seen the idea of justice an known that each part is to contribute to the whole in the best city, wouldn't he, by virtue of this, be willing to give up his personal happiness and –. "
[87] Deleted "in need of – this."
[88] Deleted "what."
[89] Deleted "Say, this life –."
[90] Deleted "That would be."
[91] Deleted "that –."
[92] Deleted "failure – that the."
[93] Deleted "attachment."
[94] Deleted "when –."
[95] Deleted "– I mean, I see this –.'
[96] Deleted "So what do – who will do that? We will be – we are not the rulers. That is the implication."
[97] Deleted "and then—but in the first stage we do not yet."
[98] Deleted "founders are the –let me say, the."
[99] Deleted "and sent down."
[100] Deleted "we've now gone –."
[101] Deleted "This is – this is – again."
[102] Deleted "in –."
[103] Changed from 'That is – and by realizing why they are impossible we see the true nature of the situation – new nature of the problem."
[104] Deleted "self – the."
[105] Deleted "– surely they."
[106] Deleted "– not to."
[107] Deleted "– is."
[108] Deleted "in these two"

[109] Deleted "what you –."
[110] Deleted "– was."
[111] Deleted "Is this now –."
[112] Deleted "that's."
[113] Deleted "He doesn't –."
[114] Deleted "that is – that –." Moved "therefore." Deleted "– yes."
[115] Deleted "word –."
[116] Deleted "I don't – would only – where."
[117] Deleted "In this passage in 527d – perhaps we should – well, we cannot read all this."
[118] Deleted "only."
[119] Deleted "say, from."
[120] Deleted "not a subject of discussion."
[121] Deleted "physics you can – but –."
[122] Deleted "– at the simile of the – no."
[123] Deleted "the mind is however – yes and."
[124]Changed from "Yes, but what is the soul according – the soul in general according to Plato's doctrine – I mean, if we can speak of that – I mean, the stories, what you would find in every text book?"
[125] Deleted "from that."
[126] Changed from "Now, but what – we – now let me state the question differently – what – there is also a simple answer to the question. What is – what is the soul of the soul?"
[127] Deleted "philosophers – the."
[128] Deleted "they are –."
[129] Deleted "more – can be.'
[130] Deleted "this – in –."
[131] Deleted "seek – we."
[132] Deleted "cannot be – good."
[133] Deleted "they get."
[134] Deleted "would make."
[135] Changed from "Yes, well that – yes, the people. No, that's all I want. The people –."
[136] Deleted "and."
[1] Deleted "I'm."

Session 13: November 17, 1961
Book 8: The Regimes

Leo Strauss: I must say[1] [that] this class embarrasses me a bit, because there was not a single paper that I can give a grade less than B, and I will acquire the reputation of being an easy grader. My only hope is that from the last papers there is one. I must say I'm not so[2] vicious as to [hope I give low grades] . . .

Now you raised[3] many questions, but I will limit myself now only to a few things.[i] I think you made clear very well that in one sense the character receives the beliefs[ii] and [in one sense it is] the other way around. And there was one point where I did not quite follow you, namely, the transition from aristocracy to timocracy on the level of the individual. Yes?[iii] You have a Socratic father. You said he is not described as a philosopher,[4] and I think that is perfectly correct, but that is easily intelligible, and the question of—you find it out right at the beginning of your paper that books 5 to 7 are a digression. Therefore it is possible to limit the argument in such a way as not to mention philosophy at all, and then the best *polis*, and also the best man would be subphilosophic—the ordinary gentleman. And you said then for some reason which was not quite clear to me,[5] [that] this best man is a man like Glaucon. What is your answer to this question?

Student: It would be proper to say that they both have the character of a gentleman.

LS: No, that wouldn't make sense. Yes, I see what you mean.

Student: In other words, they both differ from the timocratic man in the direction of the gentleman.

LS: That—or the philosopher.

Student: Yes.

LS: Yes, that is correct, and did you not say also Socrates omits the gentleman, or did I misunderstand you?

Student: Well, there's no mention of the gentleman in the five characters unless you would, I mean—

LS: Oh, I see. Yes.

Student: Nor the list of regimes. There's no regime of gentlemen.

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[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper (Mr. Miller), read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] In the transcript: "beliefs (?)"
[iii] Plato *Republic* 549c2-550b8.

LS: [6][But] why? Because the true gentleman is whom?

Student: The philosopher.

LS: Sure. But that is perfectly correct. This intermediate being, the gentleman who is not a philosopher—Aristotle's key subject in the *Ethics*—is omitted because[7] the gentleman in the Aristotelian sense is a man of moral virtue, who has only practical wisdom and no other intellectual virtue, so[8] the core of the gentleman is moderation. Now there is no moral virtue in Plato. Hence, there cannot be the subphilosophic gentleman in Plato's doctrine. Sure. Absolutely necessary. Now I see we understand one another. There is only one[9] little flaw in what you said, and that was the expression "a logical solution." How would you express it in better language?

Student: Well, I should have said "it follows from."

LS: Or [. . .] Yes. Okay. That is one of the bad habits we have acquired in the last fifty years.

Student: I want to ask: he mentioned that there are no laws in the best regime.

LS: That is a minor speculation, but[10] [it] can be disregarded. I mean, one must learn this from Plato, that we must not be pedantic and not always require a strict formulation.[11] You mean there are constant references to the laws which they lay down.

Student: I thought that the guardians were the guardians of the laws as well as of the state.

LS: Yes. Yes, but these are very few laws.[12] There are certain basic things: no private property among the guardians, and certain basic laws regarding procreation, upbringing of children, yes? This is true. I mean, in that sense, to that extent there are laws, but there are[n't] any laws except these fundamental laws of the land; and in every case there is a possibility of deviation according to the discretion of the rulers. For example, let us take a case: a boy from the lower classes who would prove to be unusually gifted when he is already ten. I think the rulers would not necessarily be prevented from promoting him to the upper class. [13]He would have to go through brainwashing [so] that he forgets his low parents. Yes? You know? Because he might then in the meantime have acquired some affection for this father and this mother, which is absolutely incompatible with the good society. This is clear. In other words, you must understand this intelligently, but that it is ultimately rule of living intelligence as distinguished from frozen intelligence, i.e., letter of the law, that's clear.

Student: [Inaudible question comparing Plato's *Republic* and his *Laws*][iv]

[iv] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Well, there are no guardians in the *Laws*. There are the citizens. In the *Laws* you have[14] a citizen body: the men of property, small or large, they are propertied men, and who are at the same time the soldiers, the protectors. They have above themselves only the laws. That's my first statement. It[15] needs some revision. And of course in this case, there is truly the letter of the law ruling, but even there Plato is afraid of having frozen intelligence ruling, and therefore he has an institution which he calls the nocturnal council—you know, gray eminences somewhere—and they will take care of the necessary deviations. [v] Surely rule of laws is in the *Laws* the first premise. And for practical purposes, of course, Plato's opinion under any circumstances—I had a long discussion of that with you (yes, of all people) in my office. Now let us turn right to the beginning; and we have the beginning and Mr. Miller nicely brought it out that it is a summary. But the summary is slightly more strange than Mr. Miller said. It is true, the equality of the sexes is in the middle. Yes, but the equality of the sexes is not clearly stated. There our friend Shorey misled you. He said, "and also that the pursuits of men and women must be the same," but[16] [Plato] does not say "of men and women," [so that] is Shorey's addition . . . It is a very broad interpretation, but it isn't there.[vi][17] There is a good explanation, by the way. You said books 5 to 7 are a digression. Where does the equality of men and women come up? Book 5, whereas the community of property and of women and children are mentioned before. So Socrates is somewhat more careful than the translator. And did you not also say that it appears here that the communism regarding the women and children is not limited to the upper classes . . .

Student: I'd say there is no mention of a restriction.

LS: Very [good]. Yes, and I think that's very important. Very important. And I believe that the reason for that is [this].[18] Aristotle says in the *Politics* [that] Plato has left it undecided,[vii] and then they come and jump at him and they say: But Plato has said it there that the communism is limited only to the upper class. Yes, but Aristotle did a bit more than merely read what is written at first glance. He must have thought a bit about it, and if you think of this case to which I alluded before, of that young boy who is gifted and is discovered only when he is ten or maybe fifteen—we have known such cases, you know: boys who were very mediocre in the first class in school and then [at] thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, they showed that they are particularly—that they possessed a good nature, as Plato would say. So this must be provided for, of course. Now how can it be provided for if the children of the lower classes know their parents and become attached to them? This early attachment cannot be corrected unless they too don't know their fathers and mothers, i.e., unless the communism regarding wives and children is universal, and you cannot very well have the communism regarding wives and children without having communism regarding property, so that it's at least—. Aristotle is very wise when he says it is undecided. It is not simply decided. Now[19] here he makes this statement that books 5 to 7 are an excursus. Glaucon says this, yes? Surely Plato, as distinguished from Glaucon, is very anxious to make the theme again that philosophy came in as a means [to the just

[v] *Laws* 951c6-953e4, 960e9-968b2.
[vi] *Republic* 543a1-6.
[vii] Aristotle *Politics* 1264a32-b6, 1264b26-1265a1.

city] or in connection with the possibility question.[viii] You remember that. That of course is a bit blurred by Glaucon's simple reply. That philosophy came in—you know, if you read this passage in 543c4 to 6: that's Glaucon's answer. Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken:
"But now that we have finished this topic let us recall the point at which we entered on the digression that has brought us here, so that we may proceed on our way again by the same path."

LS: Yes. [20]That's what Socrates says. You see Socrates says, "We have made a digression," and where the digression began is not said by Socrates. That's said by Glaucon, and Glaucon says the digression began at the beginning of book 5, but Socrates could very well have meant the digression starts when philosophy came up, i.e., toward the end of book 5.[21] Glaucon decides it in one way, but the question can also be answered in a different way, namely, that the digression began with the introduction of philosophy, and that was the question of possibility. You remember? The possibility of the best polity. And[22] then the situation would look somewhat different.

Now then he begins to speak of the four chief classes of regimes—classes, in Greek *eidē*, the plural of *eidos*, ordinarily translated by "idea." You see here a very clear case where *eidos*, "idea," means a "class" and not something separate.[ix] And these four chief classes of regimes[23] [corresponds][x] to four classes of human beings, or rather four classes of characters of human beings. Now does this follow?[24] Let us assume that this division of regimes are divided here—I will repeat [. . .] aristocracy, or kingship; timocracy, derived[25] according to this statement here from the Greek word *timē*, honor: the rule of honor as distinguished from virtue. Here the virtue is virtue; here the virtue is honor. But there is a little joke in it, because "timocracy" meant in more ordinary language the rule of a citizen body on the basis of property qualification, derived from the Greek word *timōma*. That was[26] the point. The third is oligarchy: wealth. The fourth is democracy: freedom. And the fifth is tyranny—well, I think we shall call that license. Yes? Perhaps you have a different word now. And now, just as [. . .] we have here these four or five, say, five regimes, there must be five types of characters: five and only five. Let me explain this, but Plato makes it abundantly clear that there are many more sorts of regimes, but he says [that] they are subdivisions. They are not interesting. [There are] five main divisions. Does this follow, that if there are five kinds of regimes, there must be five and no more kinds of characters? Does this follow? Pardon?

Student: No, couldn't you have regimes? If you took three kinds of characters and mixed them and ranked them in ordinary ways, you'd get many possible arrangements, and it's not *a priori* clear that some of them would not produce fundamentally different things.

[viii] *Republic* 471c4-473e5.
[ix] 544c1-e2.
[x] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

LS: Yes, that is very well, except that I think no argument can be entertained by us which is not supported by a single example. You know what I mean? We are not mathematicians; we need examples.

Student: Well, working with just very moderate men who wish power, moderate men who don't wish power, and licentious men, you can derive, partly according to the proportions, a Prussian Hegelian virtuous state, a prison barracks, which is something quite different—

LS: Yes. Well, if that is it, then you would say[27] there are more chief kinds of regimes. But the question is, granting for argument's sake that these are the chief kinds of regimes, does it follow that there must[28] also be a corresponding number of chief kinds of characters? That's the question. Surely, if you have a regime called the garrison state, then there will be a character, the garrison man character. That is clear.

Student: Are you asking if two of these regimes—

LS: No . . . we assume that this is a reasonable[29] [list][xi] of the chief kinds of regimes, and Plato or Socrates says: Hence there must be also five[30] chief kinds of human characters. The question is of some importance, because what Socrates does is in perfect agreement with the principle of the *Republic*, namely, correspondence between *polis*, city, and the individual, and we would have to consider that. Now if one would say, for example, [that] Aristotle makes in the *Rhetoric* the distinction between[31] various characters—the young, the middle aged, and the old—a typical difference of characters is of some importance. [xii] No place for that here. What could Socrates say? I suppose that's particularly irrelevant. You have it in all regimes, but still it is humanly relevant, isn't it? I mean, in other words, there is an important distinction of kinds of characters which is not covered by this. There is a coordination of the human and the political which is the principle of the *Republic*, but this coordination is now modified to some extent. The human is here narrowed, [which] makes us disregard certain differences. You cannot follow me?

Student: I thought you were going in one way and you went another.

LS: All right.[32] Well, that, I think, is the question which we have, because this simple coordination as here emphatically established surely[33] is in need of some consideration. But that will come up in another way very soon. Now let us look at a seemingly casual remark[34] at the end of 545a. It is the first speech of Socrates in 545. We need only the last half of that statement, where he links up our present investigation about the various defective regimes with the overall issue of the *Republic*.

Mr. Reinken:
"Must we not, then, next after this, survey the inferior types, the man who is contentious and covetous of honour, corresponding to the Laconian constitution, and the oligarchical

[xi] In the transcript: "edition (?)"
[xii] Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1388b32-1390b13.

man in turn, and the democratic and the tyrant, in order that, after observing the most unjust of all, we may oppose him to the most just, and complete our inquiry as to the relation of pure justice and pure injustice in respect of the happiness and unhappiness of the possessor, so that we may either follow the counsel of Thrasymachus and pursue injustice or the present argument and pursue justice?" (545a-b)

LS: Yes. Here Socrates reminds us of the overall issue of the *Republic* and brings in again the name of that wicked fellow, Thrasymachus. And what he says about Thrasymachus is in a way more shocking than anything else said before: that Thrasymachus simply is a lover of injustice. But[35] what was the last remark before that about Thrasymachus?

Student: They're friends.[xiii]

LS: Yes. How strange. That's grist on the mill of Mr. Miller, yes? What do you say? Grist on your mill. I mean, the pun is wholly unintentional. Do you see why? That Socrates is a friend of a lover of injustice. What is injustice incarnate?

Student: The disobedience of the laws.

LS: Pardon? No, no, no, no. The tyrant. Yes, sure, that's the point you made. You know? By the way, what you said[36] toward the end of your paper is perfectly justifiable on the grounds of scriptural orthodoxy without any monkey business of any kind, because in the *Laws* it is explicitly said: the best regime discussed there would be most easily established if the legislator had at his disposal a young tyrant.[xiv] You remember that? So that is surely defensible. Now then he begins the investigation of the various bad regimes and[37] there is first an explicit principle of investigation: first the regime, and then the individual, in 545b to c. Incidentally, will this be rigorously preserved: first the regime, then the men—in the sequel?

Student: You mean in book 8?

LS: Yes. I[38] speak only of book 8. That you have first the regime, say, the emergence of oligarchy, then the emergence of the oligarchic individual; democratic regime, the democratic individual; tyrannical regime, tyrannical individual. Does he do that with perfect clarity in all cases? Well, I raise this only as a question, but it is something to watch. Then[39] he states next what we can call an implicit principle of investigation: 545c8 to 9. The regimes or the individuals have come into being out of one another. That is by no means self-evident. Could there not have been the fourth regime—I mean, after a thing like a state of nature, say, a democracy or an oligarchy? How do we know? It's[40] [a supposition], isn't it, that we should say the various defective [regimes are preceded by the best regime]? Could there not be[41] one of the bad regimes at the beginning? Don't forget that we have a specimen there. The city of pigs in the *Republic* preceded our founding the best regime proper. It wasn't the rule of philosophers, nothing of the kind.

[xiii] Plato *Republic* 498c9-d4.
[xiv] *Laws* 709d10-711a3.

Yes? In other words, differently stated, the order of genesis follows the order of rank—I mean, the highest first, and then the next[42] [highest], and so on and so on. That is[43] a very tall order. It implies that the highest is the first, or to make it still clearer, the highest is the oldest. The[44] old equation of the good and the old is used here in its most radical form: the best is the oldest. That is a wholly uncalled-for premise of the following investigation. Yes?

Student: Isn't it possible to maintain that Socrates starts to show the degeneration of regimes with the best, because this is the most difficult to show? . . . If the best can decay, then of course all others can in some sense.

LS: Sure, that is the next step. But[45] proceeding step by step we must say there is no reason to assume that what is intrinsically highest must be the origin of the lower. Yes? And I would say there is plenty of evidence in Plato elsewhere surely that he did not believe that the best is the first. You must not forget, we—after all, a major question throughout has been: Is the best regime possible? [46]The very opposite is now asserted in the most emphatic sense: the best regime must be possible. There could not have been any defective regime if the best regime had not been first. Yes, let me first—Mr. Butterworth. Yes?

Mr. Butterworth: But hadn't he, at the beginning of book 2, built us up from the simple state of nature to the best regime which exists now as stated at the end of book 7? And instead of starting all over at point *x*, this should be continuous and goes back down.

LS: Yes, but he asserts here something[47] [that] is very different. If he would say, "I regard it as convenient" to look at it in the way he does there—but he says [something to the] effect that, "That has happened." The regime—and Aristotle's criticism of Plato at the end of book 5 of the *Politics* is absolutely sensible.[xv] There is no necessity for that. There could very well be a tyranny developing out of an oligarchy. Why not? And a democracy [could] come out of a tyranny; all kinds of combinations are possible. I mean, that doesn't do away with the fact, which is also empirically correct, that we have some evidence, I mean some broad evidence that such a thing, roughly such a thing, happened. Let us forget about Greece and look at medieval modern Europe. First we had kingship, a moderated, somewhat limited medieval kingship; and then[48] we get absolute monarchy of the sixteenth, seventeenth century, which one could call from a certain point of view tyrannical;[xvi] and then we get something like oligarchy. Yes? Walpole[xvii] and such people, and corresponding people in France in the nineteenth century. And then we get democracy, and then we get some forms of tyranny in some places—you know, like fascism or communism. In other words, I mean there is a very broad plausibility in making such a scheme. Now in this [scheme] you had[49] first ancestral kingship. Then you

[xv] Aristotle *Politics* 1316a1-b27.
[xvi] The transcriber notes: "Latter clause refers to absolute monarchy"
[xvii] Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), first Earl of Orford. Whig politician who served as Secretary at War and as First Lord of the Treasury. Traditionally regarded as the first Prime Minister of Great Britain.

got what? Then these kings were expelled. What is the precise form? You had a kind—pardon?

Student: In Rome, with the Tartars?

LS: Yes. Then you [had], [50]all right, expulsion of the kings. Then you get aristocracy in the crude sense of the word.

Student: Yes, especially warlike.

LS: Yes. And then you get gradually a development into democracy, but in between you have also, in Rome less pronounced, a decemvirate. In Athens [the process is] much clearer, Pisistratus and his sons: tyranny before democracy. You can say oligarchy, tyranny, democracy. Yes, I mean, there are certain broad—there is a certain vague schema which you can discern also in the history of Western Europe later, which Plato did not know of, of course. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, yes, sure.[51] All right, we can take this up now. Plato refers at a certain time near the beginning to Hesiod's scheme. You know, there are five ages in Hesiod,[xviii] and that is much more permanent than we have [here]: the Golden Age, the beginning, aristocracy, and then you have a decay. Then you have—what is next? First you have the silver age, and then you have the bronze age, and then what comes next? Number four? The age of heroes. And then you have the iron age, [the age of] tyranny. Yes, but the difference is this, that in Hesiod you have [a] line—in other words, the fourth is in a way as high as the first. I mean,[52] is there any parallelism to that in Plato?

Student: In this case, it would be the age of democracy [is] the same as the age of heroes.

LS: Yes, but is there any suggestion in Plato that in a way the fourth age, i.e., democracy, is as high as the first?

Student: [. . .]

LS: That's different. There is no coordination with Hesiod. That's different. Pardon?

Student: If the *polis* allows all kinds of people, then it allows philosophers.

LS: Exactly. The only regime of the deficient regimes which has philosophers, which necessarily has philosophers, is the democratic regime.[xix] Sure. That is the great complication. Differently stated (we will see that later), the critique of democracy, the most savage critique of democracy which was ever written, is much overdone from

[xviii] Plato *Republic* 546d8-547a5; Hesiod *Works and Days*, 106-201.
[xix] Plato *Republic* 561c6-d2.

Plato's own point of view. And we must see why it is the case. Yes? And in [the][xx] course [of this discussion], in the description of the bad regime, with whom does Socrates converse when speaking about the bad regimes?

Student: Oh, with Adeimantus.

LS: Adeimantus. So nowhere Glaucon. This is of some importance.

Student: Yes, but I point out they switch just after the timocracy, just as in the ascent they had switched.

LS: Yes. Then as soon as the defective regimes, the lower subject, becomes the theme, Glaucon is abandoned in favor of Adeimantus.[xxi] The highest themes[53] [appear] especially in book 7. In book 6, when there is a discussion of the[54] relation of the actual cities to philosophy—the unsolved question—that's also [with] Adeimantus.[xxii] Yes, that is the general tendency.

Student: But it is not explicitly said that philosophers could live in the other regimes.

LS: No, no, [55]but it is said explicitly that in a democracy you find all characters . . .

Student: . . . that the one character responds to each regime. The philosophic character, in a way, is beyond all regimes.

LS: No, no, no. I mean, you must not be a radical at the wrong times, in the wrong places. Here we have the simple schema. Yes? We have to be good boys and accept it. And here we say aristocracy, rule of virtue. Virtue, however, full virtue is philosophy, and therefore aristocracy is the rule of philosophers. Virtue here means philosophy.

Student: But you mentioned the fact that they talk about this man who is a gentleman and not—

LS: Yes, but that is the point: they start a discussion of the regimes and of the individuals and men in the regime, and the individuals[56] are not living under the regime in question. That [individual] can be [living][xxiii] under any regime. I mean, the best man lives—this is explicitly said—under a bad regime.[xxiv] Is this so difficult?

Student: Well, I got lost for a moment—

[xx] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xxi] 548d8ff.
[xxii] 487b1-506d1.
[xxiii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xxiv] 549b9-550b8.

LS: Yes, but this is the simple thing. Here there is, as it were, a sequence of regimes; here, the sequence of individual characters. There is no coordination, no necessary coordination, between the individual men and any specific regime.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, and the mere fact that he has a wife and his own son proves that it wouldn't be the best regime.

Student: . . . [In] book 1 . . . He tried to show that you couldn't get away from philosophy except by chance . . . whereas the other schemes, the other characters, bear the seeds of their own destruction.

LS: I'm afraid that's even true of the best regime, as Mr. Miller pointed out, following Plato. There is a seed of corruption in the best regime.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no. It is undeniable that Plato says that everything which has come into being will perish again.[xxv]

Student: But is that by its own seed of corruption, or simply bad luck?

LS: No, no,[57] what has come into being necessarily perishes, because[58] the fact that it has come into being means it belongs to the sphere of coming into being and therefore also [of] perishing. Do you know of anything which has come into being which has not perished or is not manifestly perishable?

Student: [. . .]

LS: No,[59] just as there is no *perpetuum mobile*, there is no device for preventing the actual perishing of anything perishable. You can delay it, but it will perish.

Student: I grant [that]; I'm not denying that it will perish—

LS: Yes, but it has, therefore—

Student: Philosophy doesn't go out and shoot itself, whereas . . . the oligarchy does.

LS: Well, let us then wait. That's a very good question, and let us see what he says about that. Yes, let us proceed step by step. What he clearly says [is] that even the best has the root of degeneration in itself, in itself. This is stated very generally in 545c9 to d4, which is also one of the asserted principles which would need a long discussion. Read it

[xxv] 546a1-3.

perhaps, Mr. Reinken: "Let us say, then"— "let us try to say in which way a timocracy."[xxvi]

Mr. Reinken:
"would arise out of an aristocracy. Or is this the simple and unvarying rule—"

LS: Oh no, God. "Or is the following simple," simple. That's a word which has many meanings[60], as we shall see later. It is not simple. I mean, yes, you can say no distinctions are needed and no qualifications are needed. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"is the following the simple rule, that in every form of government revolution takes its start from the ruling class itself, when dissension arises in that, but so long as it is at one with itself, however small it be, innovation is impossible?" (545c-d)

LS: Yes, and Glaucon agrees.[61] Yes, but we have to say maybe Glaucon agreed [hastily]. The question which Socrates poses to him permits more than one answer. Perhaps that is not so. I mean, are all regimes destroyed by their own degeneracy? I mean, if we do not—our experience is too limited. It is wise to read book 5 of Aristotle's *Politics*, where he gives the various causes, and he gives quite a few cases in which a regime is destroyed not by the degeneracy of the ruling class.[62] For example, what can happen is that an originally very weak *demos*—people excluded from the government—become more numerous in the course of years.[63] Foreign workers are coming in, and what was originally a tiny minority becomes[64] numerically the majority, and gradually they may acquire property and become also more respectable and so on. So even if the upper class remains as virtuous as it was, [that] won't help it. There is also the possibility of foreign subjugation and a foreign enemy simply taking care of the virtuous ruling class—you know, "liquidating it" is a fashionable expression. And then you have another change of regime, and so on and so on.

So[65] in the sequel he gives a poetic account—also called a "tragic" account, because tragedy is in a way the most poetic poetry—of the genesis of timocracy out of aristocracy, and in this connection, there is this famous discussion of the nuptial number.[xxvii] In other words, he[66] gives you the specific reason for which you are looking: Why does the best regime, which is so perfect and so immune to any corruption, as we know, yet susceptible of corruption? And the answer is: Well,[67] you only have to look at the mechanism of the best regime. How[68] [does] the virtuous class [remain] in control? By being properly refreshed from generation to generation.[69] Virtuous men [always] come up. Well, founders can guarantee [that] because we are virtuous—you remember that from last time: [70]we will select the proper people in the next generation, but will they [then] select the right ones. We don't know yet,[71] but assuming that they are very bright and conscientious, we may assume that. We cannot be certain of it. Let's be fair; let's give[72] Socrates the best rope to hang himself with. There will still be this question: Can

[xxvi] In the Shorey translation: 'Come, then," said I, "let us try to tell in what way timocracy would arise"
[xxvii] 545d5-547a5.

they not make an honest error, and one of these very bright boys they bring up and breed for rulership proves to be a bad egg? [This] can happen; [it] cannot be excluded. So he will go through all the motions of education, both moral and intellectual, but remains fundamentally unconvinced: an Alcibiades-like fellow. And[73] what he will do, we can imagine. Now[74] how is this error possible? And Plato gives a mystical formulation for that. He says they will miss the[75] right nuptial number. I am not able to interpret that, but I know someone who knows (a) mathematics, and (b) Greek mathematics in addition,[xxviii] and he assured me, and I give it for what it is worth, that it is absolutely an impossible number. [It] cannot be figured out. I cannot decide that. I mean, I submit this only and—pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, well there is an enormous literature on the subject. I simply know much too little to trace it to that. Now even assuming that it is a possible number,[76] they are able to misapply it in the individual case.[77] We know, however, another problem from the very beginning, at least from books 6 and 7. The best regime is possible only if the idea of the good is adequately known, and we have been bothering about this question. Is the idea of the good adequately knowable? A great question. I would not regard it as impossible that the statement of the nuptial number is a kind of restatement of the question of the idea of the good. This may sound strange, but it sounds strange only if one assumes that one knows what's the idea of the good. But if the idea of the good is something like the principle of the universe, the understanding of which would enable one to guide one's own life as well as the life of one's community well,[78] it could very well come down also to such specific questions as what the proper rules of mating are. [It] could include that. But I must leave this open.

Now let us see a few individual passages which are of some interest, in 547e when he describes the timocratic man.[79] The descriptions in themselves are not so difficult to understand, although the details create all kinds of problems. Let us read that, 547e.

Mr. Reinken:
"But in its fear to admit clever men to office, since the men it has of this kind are no longer simple and strenuous but of mixed strain, and in its inclining rather to the more high-spirited and simple-minded type, who—" (547e)

LS: Why this, "the more simple ones"? You see, in one way they are no longer simple. In another way, they are simple. You see here the ambiguity of "simple." Simple may mean dedicated to the one thing needful. That's a kind of simplicity. There are no complications; we know what we want. This is the highest good: simple dedication to that. But simple can also mean unsophisticated, yes? Crude. And that surely is a different thing. You see, in Greek [it is] the same word, what exists in one case—simple enough, simple minded. That only with a view [to] when Socrates says before: Is it simple?[xxix]

[xxviii] No doubt Jacob Klein, Strauss's friend and author of *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*, translated by Eva Brann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).
[xxix] 545c8-d3.

Yes, that rule. In what way simple: simplistic or truly evident and clear? That's a great question. And the description of the timocratic man, where these are, how shall I say[80], country low nobility would be a parallel. Yes? Squires, squire-type of fellow: nice people, good hunters, reliable men, but nonintellectual in every sense, and that is not altogether good. In the sequel it is made clear that the timocracy, this Sparta, Spartan-type [of city], is characterized by the preponderance of spiritedness as distinguished from reason. Therefore they are lovers of victory and lovers of honor. This is important for the understanding of what spiritedness means. You see, spiritedness, the primary phenomenon is what we know all as anger. What does anger have to do with love of victory and love of honor? How would you say that?

Student: Anger in the sense of indignation, perhaps, or—

LS: In other words, the anger might be directed against human beings, firstly; and then we fight, and fight leads to victory on one side or the other. And therefore the[81] man who wins is looked up to. Yes?[82] That may suffice for the time being. Then shortly thereafter there is a transition to the timocratic individual, and in this connection the character of Glaucon is described, in 548d7. We might read that because that is terribly important, because in a way Glaucon is the most important personage in the book and this is the explicit statement about him. Yes. Now what about a man who corresponds to this regime, namely, timocracy? And Adeimantus gives an answer here.

Mr. Reinken:
"What, then, is the man that corresponds to this constitution? What is his origin and what his nature?" "I fancy," Adeimantus said, "that he comes rather close to Glaucon here in point of contentiousness."[xxx]

LS: Yes, or "love of victory."[83] Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Perhaps," said I, "in that, but I do not think their natures are alike in the following respects." "In what?" "He will have to be somewhat self-willed and lacking in culture, yet a lover of music and fond of listening to talk and speeches, though by no means himself a rhetorician—" (548d-e)

LS: Stop here. This nice squire, well—in perfect health, good on horseback and so on, likes to listen to music, [84]but in a deeper sense he is not music[al]. But one thing is clear: he is much better in fighting than in talking. He[85] doesn't possess the art of speaking. Glaucon possesses the art of speaking. Now does this ring any bells?

Student: Thrasymachus?

LS: Sure. I mean, you know, at first glance Glaucon is the most important personage in the play, but on deeper reflection Thrasymachus comes out as very important.[86] We see now, we have it straight now from Socrates's mouth, if not from Plato's mouth, that

[xxx] The ellipses here appear in the transcript.

Thrasymachus and Glaucon have something in common. They are both rhetorical men, men possessing the art of speaking. Yes?

Student: What about the art of music?

LS: Pardon?

Student: Is Glaucon a musical man? In what sense is Glaucon a musical man?

LS: Yes, Glaucon is a musical man. Well, you know, even in the literal sense he was[87] an expert about music in the narrower sense. Yes, sure. Oh, he had some understanding of it.[88] He was not an expert like Damon, but he understood something—more than Socrates, at any rate.[xxxi] Socrates asks him, and—yes?

Student: He has certain poetical strains. I found this.

LS: Pardon?

Student: Glaucon has a certain poetical quality.

LS: Oh yes, sure. Glaucon is in a way more gifted than Thrasymachus is, but Thrasymachus is also older and has thought about certain things about which Glaucon has not sufficiently thought. I cannot take that up now. Yes. Now[89] then there comes a real beauty in 549c to e, the genesis of the timocratic man: Plato's parallel to the story of Eve. Yes? The fall. The fall, and the woman brings about the fall. It's fantastic. It's really amazing because there cannot be any historical connection between the Bible and Plato. Yes, but another point which is of course wholly alien to the Bible and very relevant to Plato: this account—you know, these women whispering to one another, and this has terrific effects, that is surely not a tragic account. You know? The genesis of timocracy was tragic. Yes? Explicitly called a "tragic" account.[xxxii] Here we have a comical account, and that is no accident because, generally speaking, the private is comical and the public is serious. I mean, that needs modification, but to begin with that is so. Everything which is private is comic[90].

And then in the next stage—we must make quite some jump—in 553c or so the oligarchic man as distinguished from the timocratic man gives free rein to the desire. The desire. You remember that? Here we have freedom in control; here we have spiritedness; here we have desire in control. There is something fishy, isn't it? We have three parts of the soul and five regimes. It's not funny? What shall we do with the democratic and timocratic man? How does he solve this question?

Student: He splits desire into three parts.

LS: Yes. The first division is which?

[xxxi] 398e1, 400a2-c5.
[xxxii] 545d5-e3.

Student: Necessary and not necessary.

LS: So necessary desires and non-necessary desires. Good. And he will have to make another subdivision to account for the tyrant, so that we have, in other words, in these three regimes the same psychological principle: preponderance of desire. These three, yes. That can have great implications into which we cannot now go, but then it is made clear. Let us turn to 556c8. That is, I believe, the first occurrence of this problem: 556c8. Mr. Reinken? I mean, this is the situation in an oligarchy. Note that the men of wealth, the men who—hitherto they seemed to be very low fellows compared to the squires, even to the squires, but still more of course to the philosophers. These are the money grabbing fellows, you know, the moneybags, and now they—that effect that he describes. Read this passage.

Mr. Reinken:
"And when, thus conditioned, the rulers and the ruled are brought together on the march, in wayfaring, or in some other common undertaking, either a religious festival, or a campaign, or as shipmates or fellow-soldiers or, for that matter, in actual battle, and observe one another, then the poor are not in the least scorned by the rich, but on the contrary, do you not suppose it often happens that when a lean, sinewy, sunburnt pauper is stationed in battle beside a rich man bred in the shade, and burdened with superfluous flesh, and sees him panting and helpless—do you not suppose he will think that such fellows keep their wealth by the cowardice of the poor, and that when the latter are together in private, one will pass the word to another 'our men are good for nothing'?" (556c-e)

LS: Yes, well, a better translation would be *hombres*, you see, because "men" doesn't have the force of the Greek word used here. Yes? Somewhat standing for it, I use [it to translate]: "our *hombres* were [good for] nothing." Yes? Because a man in an emphatic sense is of course a wealthy man. I mean, that is as true today as it was in olden times. Pardon?

Student: Nineteenth-century English—

LS: Yes, even today, when you speak of an *hombre* in any emphatic sense, he is a propertied man, just as[91] the father,[92] [*patēr*,] is the propertied father. Otherwise he has not that power over his children which a father should have.[93] Locke has analyzed this very beautifully. You remember that? In the chapter "Of Property," I think it is. How does he put it? Well, that the father, after the children are grown up, does not have any more natural tie on their obedience, but he has a tie via the property. And Locke, who is [a] master of understatement, says it is not a small tie. [xxxiii] So the *hombre* is of course a wealthy man. He[xxxiv] should not have[94] used the word "pauper" here. *Penēs* in Greek is not "pauper"; that would be[95] a different Greek word. [Rather], "the poor." [The] poor are of course as such respectable people; they are not beggars. Now you see here, that's very

[xxxiii] John Locke, *Second Treatise*, chapter 6 ("Of Paternal Power"), secs. 72-73.
[xxxiv] That is, the translator, Shorey.

interesting. Here we have a confrontation of the rich and the poor, and in this context the poor appear to be much nicer people. You know? No, that we must consider. Remember the beautiful description of the craftsman in the third book, who is not a valetudinarian. He simply goes to the physician and says: "Well, can I work again after a short treatment?" And if the physician said: "No, you will be laid up for the rest of [your] life," then rather doggish—whereas the wealthy man would live on pills and on other things of this kind. So the poor men, in this sense they are respectable fellows in their way.[xxxv] [96]But anticipating later developments, in which regime are the poor in control?

Student: In democracy.

LS: In democracy, and that is one of the biggest hoaxes practiced in the *Republic*, you know, that the democratic man as presented there is not the poor. These are they, how shall I say, the deserters from their class. You know? How do you call this kind of people? I mean—

Student: *Déclassé*?

LS: Yes, *déclassé* nobility, you can say. Or the playboys, you know, a certain kind of playboy who played in politics, and see they have no chance—black sheep of the family who haven't got a chance in the old regime and therefore become demagogues. That's the democratic man as found in the *Republic*.[97] There are later indications to this effect, but they are played down. The true democratic man almost disappears in the *Republic*, so that it is a literally distorted picture. We will have to come back to this later.

Now this was the passage. I think one can say that there is a certain difficulty here[98]. I formerly said there is a static genesis of democracy, but the difficulty is rather this, I think. There is an account of the genesis of democratic man which precedes the account of the genesis of democracy; and then there follows the official account of the genesis of democratic man, and this is done[99] [in order] to conceal the true democratic man. The democratic man must be the son of an oligarchic father.[xxxvi] —[He] can only be a kind of spendthrift son of the wealthy father, but[100] the democratic man is not the descendant from an oligarchic father. Do you see that? The ordinary, say, the craftsman or poor farmer, he is not the degenerate son of an oligarchic father. He is not the son of an oligarchic father at all, and this fiction that the democratic man, the typical representative of democracy, must be the degenerate son of an oligarchic father, that disturbs, that ruins the whole picture. In the other cases, it works; in the transition from aristocracy to timocracy to oligarchy it works, but not in the case of democracy, unless you say—which has some relevance but which is of course not simply true—that the typically democratic man is the demagogue who deserted his class, as some people thought F. D. Roosevelt, you know, [was such a man] in this country.[101][xxxvii] But even if you look at the famous

[xxxv] Plato *Republic* 406a5-407b7.
[xxxvi] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxvii] Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) was president of the United States from 1933 to 1945. The son of a well-to-do businessman, James Roosevelt, Franklin attended Groton School,

Athenian demagogues: it would be true of Pericles; it would not be true of Cleon, of course. You know? Cleon came from the lower class, artisan [class]. And that[102] distorts the whole picture.

Student: Could I ask a question, Mr. Strauss?

LS: Yes.

Student: In the *Banquet* . . . you know, the rich and poor, poverty, generate *eros*.[xxxviii]

LS: Yes. Yes?

Student: The least that can be said is that the scheme there is different than it is here, because after all—I mean, *eros* is praised in the *Banquet*, whereas *eros* is generated here in a democracy—

LS: Oh, I see. In the tyrant.[xxxix] Yes, that is true. Yes, yes. That would be a consequence. I could not unravel that at such a short notice. Do you have a solution?

Student: I can't think of any.

LS: All right. Perhaps we take it up next time when we come to the passage.

Student: About *eros*.

LS: Yes.

Student: Yes.

LS: Good.

Student: Can I ask—

LS: Yes, Mr. Seltzer?

Mr. Seltzer: It seems that while timocracy arose out of the degeneration of aristocracy, and while this degeneration of timocracy led to oligarchy, when he talks of the genesis of the timocratic man, that comes from the family of a good man in a badly governed state, and the genesis of the oligarchic man is from a democratic state.

LS: From a democratic?

Harvard University, and law school at Columbia University. He was a fifth cousin of President Theodore Roosevelt.

[xxxviii] *Symposium* 203a9-d8.

[xxxix] *Republic* 572d8ff.

Mr. Seltzer: Yes. He says that the—[xl]

LS: No, there may be something. I mean, there are all kinds of pitfalls. Which passage do you have in mind?

Mr. Seltzer: 550d.

LS: 550d.

Student: Shorey translates it, "Then, is not the first thing to speak of how democracy passes over into this?"

LS: Into oligarchy.

Student: Yes. The Greek says "timocracy."

LS: No, *timarchia*. That's meant as "timocracy."

Student: Well, that doesn't—the other question then would be that there is a disjunction in the sense that the aristocracy degenerates into the timocracy, but the timocratic man arises not from the family of—

LS: Yes, sure. That we know. That we know. No, but[103] I simply don't remember now the data. The data is not available to me, as the social scientist would say. This is[104] the question. In this case, in this first transition from the aristocratic man to the timocratic man, we know that the aristocratic man is not a member of an aristocratic regime but of some bad regime which is not defined. We should observe: Are there any specifications as to the regime in which the timocratic man lives, who gives birth as it were to the oligarchic man? And the same in all [the] other cases. That has to be done carefully. I haven't done it. That would surely be interesting, but the main result is clear. The simple coordination of regimes and individuals does not quite work, and that is only a reminder of the general thing we [have] know[n] a long time: that this coordination is a playful premise of the *Republic*. And the clearest proof I believe is this: that it is evidently sound to say that the spirited element should rule over the element of desire in the *polis*, namely, that the soldiers, the people protecting the country, dedicating their lives to it, should have a higher status than those concerned only with their self-interest. That makes sense. But it does not equally make sense to say that in the individual the element of anger is as such superior to the element of desire? My simple example: the child desires a doll or whatever it is. That's desire. And then he or she doesn't get the doll, and then he or she becomes angry. This anger is, in a way, morally lower than the original desire, so therefore[105] one cannot speak possibly of a universal, an essential superiority of anger to desire. But in the political context it makes sense. Yes?

[xl] The transcriber notes the following: "The reference is to 550d2, page 261 of the Shorey translation, volume 2. At this point several students call attention to the fact that this is a misprint, i.e. democracy should read timocracy."

Student: You use the word anger, but is there no other term to use for this?

LS: Yes,[106] anger is surely too narrow, because it comprises many more things.[107] But anger is, how shall I say, the basic phenomenon of which we think.

Student: Would there be another way to put it? Some idea such as natural ardency?

LS: Yes, but why should this be so simply superior?

Student: In order that one—the thing is, I'm not sure that I'd be true to Plato in saying that one reason why this might be so simply superior is in this respect a man would then be keeping with his—

LS: Yes, but that doesn't work, and I will give you a simple external proof: that in the other dialogues where Plato speaks of this kind of thing, especially in the *Phaedrus*, the charioteer is reason; and two horses, a noble and a base horse. They are not distinguished along the lines of anger and desire but of noble desire, base desire.[xli] That—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, yes.[108] That has to do with the fact that in the political context, the political passion, you can say, is anger or spiritedness. And the proof is—I mean, what is it when we would start from our experience? The political passion we call patriotism. Yes? I mean, as passion; there can also be a dispassionate patriotism, but as passion it's patriotism. And[109] in this country we would say: Well, this is classically presented by, say, the American Legion. [xlii] Yes? I say this without making any value judgment whatever, really. The[110] Athenians called it the Marathon fighters. Marathon fighters. The Acharnians—there is a comedy of Aristophanes about them.[xliii] What is their passion? Anger. Anger because the love of the country is of course there, but it becomes fully effective only when you have someone who fights. Yes? To fight; and therefore it necessarily has this warlike, angry element in it, and that is I think a great theme already of Aristophanes and [one that is] taken up by Plato. This anger element is essential to the political community. Therefore the dogs, you know, the dogs with their double quality: gentle to their friends and harsh on their enemies—yes, on the strangers and opponents.[xliv]

Student: There's no way of letting this word lie for some time, that—

LS: Yes. Well, what Plato does in the *Republic* is that he tries to find a direct psychological base for it, i.e., one power of the soul which strictly corresponds to this patriotic thing, and that of course doesn't work. But in a crude sense—I mean, for crude

[xli] *Phaedrus* 246a3-256e2.
[xlii] The American Legion is an American war veterans' organization founded in 1919.
[xliii] Aristophanes *Acharnians.*
[xliv] Plato *Republic* 375a2-376a10.

purposes it does make sense as is shown here. Yes? The soldiers, patriotic soldier element in the soul: that you can say is the practical meaning of[111] [this aspect of] the *Republic*, but that is not a sufficiently profound psychology. It is crude, politically good psychology, but not more than that.

Student: How can you relate this to the steadfastness and earnestness which is needed in the potential guardian in his studies? He has just spoken of this in book 7: steadfastness.[xlv]

LS: Yes, but steadfastness is not identical with that, but—well, I would try to answer your question in a different way. Desire[112] is the lowest here. Now, but desire has of course many strata, just as the anger or spiritedness has many strata, and *eros* is one form of desire. I mean,[113] every desire is *eros*, as is said in the *Banquet.*[xlvi] Now *eros*, while it can be very—you know, say, a perverse desire for something, not necessarily sexual; and then on the highest level you have the philosophic *eros*. So *eros* extends from the lowest to the highest. But spiritedness, even if it is higher than *eros*, than desire on some levels, doesn't reach as high. The philosopher is free from *thymos*, but he necessarily has *eros*. So the supplement to the *Republic* is the *Banquet*—you know, Plato's *Banquet*—and one must read both works in the light which they shed on one another to get what Plato is aiming at. Yes, and the description of democracy as we mentioned before: there are all characters, all characters. And that means in one way—that is of course a clear proof of the fact that there is no one-to-one relation of the regimes and characters. Yes? Do you see that point? If you have all characters in a single regime and that is[114] an essential characteristic of that single regime, then there is not a one-to-one relation of one regime and one kind of character; and it implies of course that philosophy is possible. And this passage—I think you referred to it very wisely, that's 557d. Let us read that. That is a very important passage indeed. I mean, that should perhaps be printed as a motto for a history of political philosophy: 557d4 to 9.

Mr. Reinken:
"Because, owing to this license, it includes all kinds, and it seems likely that anyone who wishes to organize a state—"

LS: Yes, all right, organize, "to establish a *polis*." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"to establish a *polis* as we were just now doing, must find his way to a democratic—"

LS: Must! "It is necessary," "necessary." Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and select the model that pleases him, as if in a bazaar of constitutions, and after making his choice, establish his own." (557d)

[xlv] See 535a6-c4.
[xlvi] *Symposium* 204e2-205d8.

LS: Yes. You see, the task of the political philosopher—as we can say, to discover the best regime—is practicable only in a democracy. It is gradually qualified by "it seems," but on the other hand it is very strongly said, "it is necessary." And it is not an accident that political philosophy emerged in a democracy. You know? Socrates knew what he was doing. And when we find later in Aristotle's *Politics* the first definition of the citizen in the third book of the *Politics* is a democratic definition,[xlvii] that is not a mere accident. The problem arises clearly in a democracy, which does not mean of course that democracy is the best regime, but it is the starting point for political reflection. Now let us just read only the beginning of the next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"And the freedom from all compulsion to hold office in such—"

LS: Yes. You see it is necessary to go into a democracy in order to do their job and that there is no necessity to rule in the democratic *polis*. You know, the other thing which the [rule of the] philosopher calls for: he must not be compelled to rule. There is no compulsion. In a timocracy, say, Sparta, if he belongs to the upper class and they see [that] he is a man who is really helpful, they will of course compel him and send him to Thrace or to Messinae, or wherever they need some bright guy. In Athens, you can simply say, "I'm not interested in politics," and stay at home, so that in a way democracy, of all regimes presented, all regimes which are actual, which have ever been actual, democracy is most favorable to philosophy. That they knew. I mean, they were not so ungrateful as some modern interpreters.

But on the other hand, they were not, how shall I say, they were not bribed by their gratitude. You know, that is also an example of how justice can corrupt a man, if out of gratitude he identifies his benefactor with a good man. The benefactor is not necessarily a good man, as you can easily see. Someone may enable you to study at the University of Chicago or in any other place and may be a very wicked man, but he is your benefactor. Now[115] one of the first steps of sophistication is that one learns to distinguish between the benefactor and the good man, so if democracy is in a way the benefactor of philosophy, that does not yet mean that it is perfect. That is here. Yes, we discussed this distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires. That is—if we had the time we would read it, in 558d to 559c, and there is only a very interesting change in the mood here. You remember, up to the oligarchic section where we still looked up to timocracy. You know? These red-cheeked squires of few words and good in action, in action proper especially, in battle; and then we—these old moneybags, yes? You remember? And now when we come to democracy, these old moneybags appear in a new light, in a much more favorable light, and[116] perhaps we should really have a look at it, 558d8. Yes. Do you have it? Mr.—

Mr. Reinken: 558b?

LS: D, d, 558d.

[xlvii] Aristotle *Politics* 1275a22-33.

Mr. Reinken:
"And in order not to argue in the dark, shall we first define our distinction between necessary and unnecessary appetites?" "Let us do so." "Well, then, desires that we cannot divert or suppress may be properly called necessary, and likewise those whose satisfaction is beneficial to us, may they not? For our nature compels us to seek their satisfaction. Is not that so?" "Most assuredly." "Then we shall rightly use the word 'necessary' of them?" "Rightly." "And what of the desires from which a man could free himself by discipline from youth up, and whose presence in the soul does no good and in some cases harm? Should we not fairly call all such unnecessary?" (558d-559a)

LS: Yes, go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Fairly indeed." "Let us select an example of either kind, so that we may apprehend the type." "Let us do so." "Would not the desire of eating to keep in health and condition and the appetite for mere bread and relishes be necessary?" "I think so." "The appetite for bread is necessary in both respects, in that it is beneficial and in that if it fails we die." "Yes." "And the desire for relishes, so far as it conduces to fitness?" "By all means." "And should we not rightly pronounce unnecessary the appetite that exceeds these and seeks other varieties of food, and that by correction and training from youth up can be got rid of in most cases and is harmful to the body and a hindrance to the soul's attainment of intelligence and sobriety?" "Nay, most rightly." "And may we not call the one group the spendthrift desires and the other the profitable, because they help production?" (559a-c)

LS: Yes, that is too weakly translated: "the moneymaking." In other words, the identification of the necessary desires with the moneymaking desires, that is a maximum adaptation to the oligarchic "mentality." And there is no question that gradually, if you read it with a bit of care, you see Plato in a way identifies himself with these stern, thrifty fellows who have self-control, very much self-control, if only because they want to get rich or to preserve their wealth. But if one doesn't have too high expectations of what many people are capable of, this is not too bad; and in a way they are really the center of the *polis*, you know, these sturdy money-conscious men. Shorey, at the point, translates [it] by "capitalistic," which[117] shouldn't be used; that has entirely different meanings.

Incidentally, we see also here from the distinction between necessary and unnecessary desires that the democratic men proper, i.e., the poor, are not likely to indulge their unnecessary desires to any considerable degree. Surely they may get drunk and this kind of thing, but on the whole they[118] are likely to limit themselves to necessary desires. That is also to be kept in mind in order to understand Plato's critique of democracy properly. When he describes the soul of the democratic man in 560c to 561a, he uses political language to an amazing degree. All that what is going on in the soul is described in political terms. I think he is not truly describing an individual here, a democratic man proper, namely, the lower-class man, but rather a certain kind of demagogue.[119] And now it comes out gradually—you see how complicated the thing is—in 561a6 following that the democratic man, who had appeared originally as licentiousness incarnate, is not so bad. He does not entirely surrender to the unnecessary desires but gives equal freedom to

both, to the necessary and to the unnecessary. In other words, he is a liberal. He does not take a definite stand either for—he says everything as an equal right. Yes, and then the long description of how democracy destroys itself. Let us [read that], in 563c2.

Mr. Megati: May I ask a question before we go any further?

LS: One moment. One moment, Mr. Megati.[120] I am always glad if I find in such books which seem to be perfectly outside of the field of political science, and even outside of the Division of the Social Sciences, a reference to our province here. On page 307, in note g, I found a quotation from Lasswell. That is in itself worthy of comment, I believe. Yes? And[121] [Lasswell makes] one of his characteristic remarks, because Plato makes some remarks that also the parental relations are adversely affected by democracy. You know, the children who call their parents by their first names: you must have heard of such occurrences and so on. And here he says: "The spirit of equality [Lasswell teaches us—LS] is alleged to have diminished the respect children owe to parents and the young to the old. This was noted by Plato in Athens. But surely the family relations depend much more on the social, structural and religious ideas of a race than on forms of government."

I don't know when Lasswell wrote that, because no date is given, [but it appears] in *Methods of Social Science*, edited by Stuart Rice.[xlviii] That must have been in the twenties, I believe, one of his earlier publications, because later on he came under the influence of the people who spoke of the democratic personality, and then surely—you know, then it was clear that[122] democracy affects also parental relations; I mean, if you are a democratic personality you will be democratic to your children too. You know? And the very term "democratic personality" points to democracy, i.e., a form of government. So[123] we observe here an approximation of the later Lasswell to Plato. Yes, I think it is a rare occurrence. For this reason—

Student: It seems that in a sense all of the institutions of the best regime are somehow echoes in the democracy. The philosophers are present, there's a tendency toward the dissolution of the family, and then he comments on the next page that the women—

LS: Yes,[124] that I think we should read. That's a real beauty, 563b. The first speech in 563b. Mr. Reinken?

Mr. Reinken:
"And the climax of popular liberty, my friend," I said, "is attained in such a city when the purchased slaves, male and female, are no less free than the owners who paid for them."

LS: Yes. Go on.

Mr. Reinken:

[xlviii] *Methods in Social Science. A Case Book*, ed. Stuart A. Rice (University of Chicago Press, 1931).

"And I almost forgot to mention the spirit of freedom and equal rights in the relation of men to women and women to men."

LS: Yes. You see, and we had acknowledged the equality of the two sexes throughout the book.[125] But Socrates almost forgot to mention it. Now, next point.

Mr. Reinken:
"Shall we not, then," said he, "in Aeschylean phrase, say 'whatever rises to our lips'?'" (563b-c)

LS: You see—you know he, [that is, Adeimantus], likes to quote poets. We have seen this from the beginning. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Certainly," I said, "so I will. Without experience of it no one would believe how much freer the very beasts subject to men are in such a city than elsewhere. The dogs literally verify the adage and 'like their mistresses become.'"

LS: Yes, the dogs are here used in the feminine. Yes? The bitches. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And likewise the horses and asses are wont to hold on their way with the utmost freedom and dignity, bumping into everyone who meets them and who does not step aside. And so all things everywhere are just bursting with the spirit of liberty." "It is my own dream you are telling me," he said: "for it often happens to me when I go to the country." (563c-d)

LS: In other words, not in the city where this—

Student: May I—

LS: Yes, let us stop here.

Student: A textual comment—

LS: Yes?

Student: He uses the word *agron*, which means—

LS: *Agron* of course means "the fields." Yes?

Same student: "The fields," yes, rather than *chōra*, which I think is legitimate.

LS: Yes,[126] but the ordinary distinction—[xlix]

[xlix] The transcriber notes that there was a "series of fragmentary remarks regarding this point."

Yes, but I would say, as far as I know, the common description, when you go out of the city [is that] you say *eis agron* and not *eis chōran*. Yes? The distinction between the *chōra* and the *astu*, the town proper, I think, would not so[127] naturally come here. We have one classical scholar here, Mr. Jacksted. Is not that most natural to say here "the field," *agros*? Yes.[128] But the point here is I think this.[129] You see, Socrates says "I almost forgot the equality of men and women," and then Adeimantus says, who—Adeimantus is very much opposed to democracy. You must see that. I mean, he is truly an oligarchic type much more, and he says: "Well, tell us about it." And Socrates doesn't say a word in the sequel about the equality of men and women, but the equality of man and beast. [Is that] not funny? Yes, because Socrates cannot possibly blame the equality of the sexes in democracy after he has made such a main point of that equality in the[130] [fifth] book, you know,[131] so that is a very funny thing.

Yes, there is[132] another note of Shorey which I found helpful in page—no, no, I mean the other also was helpful because it taught us something about political science. On page 319, note g, which is to a passage in the text. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Note the difference of tone—"

LS: Yes. Now let us first read what is in the text; otherwise we won't understand the note.

Mr. Reinken:
"And is it not true that in like manner a leader of the people who, getting control of a docile mob—" (565e)

LS: Yes. Note?

Mr. Reinken:
"Note the difference of tone from 502b."

LS: Yes, that is very silent, but I mean he might have elaborated this a bit more. You know,[133] whenever he finds a man writing in the *Journal of Psychology* something which reminds vaguely of Plato, he quotes him at length and here [laughter]—no, that's true. Mr. Grene[l] explained this to me, by the way, as follows, this practice of Shorey['s]. [134]I just traced it to a very common human failing called lack of discernment, not to say stupidity, but David Grene told me that I'm mistaken. He was a very shrewd man, Shorey, and at that time it was very important in the Midwest to convince the trustees and what the trustees stand for that the humanities are not something entirely irrelevant, but they have very much to do with the most up-to-date thinking. And therefore he quoted all the most modern thought as still influenced by Plato, and every writer, however insignificant or insipid who reminds of Plato came in as a witness to convince the trustees of the University of Chicago of how relevant it is that they have a classics department. I

[l] David Grene (1913-2002), professor of classics at the University of Chicago, 1937-2002, and co-founder of the Committee of Social Thought.

do not know whether Mr. Grene did not overstate it or whether I'm not now overstating what Mr. Grene told me, but it is a good story, at any rate.[135] But to come back to the serious point, what was the context, the difference of tone? That's really important. You know[136] the tone changes because the situation has changed. Now what was the situation in this neighborhood of 502?

Student: The philosopher who sways the people—

LS: Yes. So in other words, the philosopher in 502—in the other neighborhood, [it] had to be proven that the philosopher can persuade the multitude, the *demos*, and this was necessary in order to prove that the best regime is possible; so that was by no means an accidental thing, and therefore the case for the *demos* had to be overstated.[li] They proved to be much more docile than they in fact are, and therefore there is absolute need for correcting this overstatement, this wrong picture, by an equally wrong picture in the other direction, and that is the presentation of democracy as it is given here. I mean, not that it doesn't contain an element of truth in Plato's opinion, but it is overstated. I mean especially this anarchy of animals[137] in the fields outside of Athens, which goes much too far. Yes, this passage to which Mr. Miller referred about the quotation from Euripides, yes? This is 568a to d—a8, I'm sorry. Perhaps we read this statement, 568a8. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Not for nothing," said I, "is tragedy in general esteemed wise, and Euripides beyond other tragedians." "Why, pray?" "Because among other utterances of pregnant thought he said, 'Tyrants are wise by converse with the wise.' He meant evidently that these associates of the tyrant are the wise." "Yes, he and the other poets," he said, "call the tyrant's power 'likest God's' and praise it in many other ways." "Wherefore," said I, "being wise as they are, the poets of tragedy will pardon us and those whose politics resemble ours for not admitting them into our polity, since they hymn the praises of tyranny."

LS: Yes, go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"I think," he said, "that the subtle minds among them will pardon us." "But going about to other cities, I fancy, collecting crowds and hiring fine, loud, persuasive voices, they draw the polities towards tyrannies or democracies." "Yes, indeed." "And, further, they are paid and honored for this, chiefly, as is to be expected, by tyrants, and secondly by democracy. But the higher they go, breasting constitution hill, the more their honour fails, as it were from lack of breath unable to proceed." "Quite so." (568a-d)

LS: In other words, if they would go to Sparta—yes, that's the next step: out; and our super-Sparta, still more out. Yes, and this is explicitly said to be a digression.[lii] Yes? A digression, and[138] in a good writer there are no digressions proper. That may be digression in a, well, in a crude way, but it must have some meaning. Now one point I

[li] See Plato *Republic* 501e2-502c8..
[lii] 568d4.

think, is clear—I believe it is clear, however difficult that is in other respects—the issue of poetry. Is it settled as far as the present conversation is concerned? Well, is there anyone among you who has read the whole *Republic* or remembers it? Pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: It comes up again in the tenth book, and with a vengeance. I mean, compared with the criticism of poetry in book 10, the remarks in book 2 and 3 are child's play. So we are already prepared for that, and that is an important reminder, I believe. Now we have learned in addition that the poets are favorites [of] the lower regimes, the most inferior regimes: they're hired. You know? And there is something to that. After all, the poets—compare the fate of the poets, the great Athenian poets, with that of Socrates or other philosophers who lived in Athens, Anaxagoras[liii] and so on, and the poets were really much more favorites of the *polis*.[139] I mean, a nasty man would say there was a kind of competition between Plato and the poets or Socrates and the poets—you know, philosophy maltreated by the *polis* and the poets very highly honored, and the *polis* is to be remodeled entirely so that the *polis* will be in perfect harmony with philosophy and in perfect disharmony with the poets. That is the result here. Yes?

Student: Could another point be[140] [added] to that by the fact that Plato very often misquotes the poets? For instance, here in this text our edition says that the first citation is not Euripides, but Sophocles.

LS: Which? The tyrants[141] are wise by being together with wise men?

Student: Yes.

LS: No, but I thought—let me see that—

Student: Note d on page 328: "The line is also attributed to Sophocles."

LS: Where does he say that? In d, note d?

Student: Note d, page 328.

LS: Yes, but I would say that is not quite sufficient to prove that. You know, I mean, after all, the other attributers might be wrong. That I do not know, but as for the first statement, this is plainly ironical and cannot be used by the admirers of Euripides. That's hard to say because in one way all statements are ironical, and so—yes?

Student: The thing is that not having gone through and culled all the references, but many times you find him either sewing together the various verses or else—

[liii] The Athenians accused and convicted Anaxagoras of impiety. Thanks to Pericles, he barely won release from prison and fled the city. See Plutarch *Pericles* 32, *Nicias* 23; Diogenes Laertius 2.12-14.

LS: Yes, but[142] one has to lay a proper foundation. I mean, for example, if he quotes Homer there might have been a different reading, but if you have the same reading of the Homer passage in some Platonic dialogue and a change in another dialogue, then we know we have the same Homer text as he had, and that it must be explained. Yes? We must be careful about that, surely, and to say here he quotes from memory, i.e., Plato was careless in writing, that I don't believe.

Student: I'm not trying—

LS: Yes, yes. I know.

Student: You see my point? I was trying—

LS: Yes, sure.

Student: Does he show this scorn for poets by—

LS: No, I don't believe so. I mean, the scorn for the poets is not as great as the tenth book of the *Republic* would make us suspect. Here you see, by the way, also the necessity of studying the *Banquet* in addition to the *Republic* and as a supplement to the *Republic*. In the *Banquet* the men occupying the highest position, wisdom, next to Socrates, are two poets, a tragic and a comic poet,[liv] and[143] there is much more evidence of it. I mean, the demotion of poetry in the *Republic* goes beyond any parallel anywhere in Plato. Plato was absolutely in favor of censorship for political reasons; that's of course not a demotion of poetry. Yes? Yes, sure. I mean, there is a higher standard[144] as far as the *polis* is concerned, but that[145] doesn't mean that the *polis* is simply higher than poetry; it only means that within its sphere the *polis* is entitled to draw a line between what can be exhibited and what cannot be exhibited, but that is not the highest consideration. In the *Laws*, I think when one reads it carefully one sees—there is a discussion of poetry there, first in the second book and later on [in various] references, that while in one respect the poet must listen to the legislator—I mean, if the legislator tells him, "No Lady Chatterley style," he must obey, but in another respect the legislator must listen to the poet because the legislator as legislator does not necessarily have that understanding of the natures and characters of man which is the province of the poet.[lv]

Student: But in the *Apology* he couldn't give that answer.

LS: Yes, but the *Apology* is the most popular statement, of course, of Socrates. You know? I mean, the *Apology* is a dialogue, as is said there, and of course a compulsory dialogue, if you know what I mean. [lvi] I mean,[146] Socrates didn't enjoy having that. You know? It was imposed on him; and secondly, it was the only conversation recorded between Socrates and the city of Athens as a whole.[147] Socrates himself gave the commentary on the *Apology* in the *Gorgias* when he described how a wise man would act

[liv] Agathon and Aristophanes.
[lv] Consider *Laws* 656c1ff., 719a7ff
[lvi] *Apology of Socrates* 37a4-7.

if accused by the *demos* of improprieties of one kind, and he says that's very simple: he is in the situation of a physician who is accused by children of being un-nice to them, whereas the cook gives them all the candies, you know, and they like the cook, and then there comes this wicked physician with his pills and with his cutting.[lvii][148] They hate him, and he of course can never explain to these children what is truly going on, because they wouldn't understand it. That is, crudely stated, what is going on in the *Apology*. That cannot be used. No. That doesn't mean that one mustn't read the *Apology* most carefully, but I think a most careful reading of the *Apology* would only confirm that. [149]The true competitors of Plato are not the sophists, because they are simply inferior, nor the statesmen or legislators, but the poets.[150] That can be proven very simply, because what are the poets dealing with? Well, we take this up when we come to the tenth book. They have, in a way, the same subject as Plato has and [they are] the only ones who do that. Mr. Faulkner?

Mr. Faulkner: [. . .]

LS: Yes. I don't know whether[151] there is a more direct connection, but when Plato uses the word "tragic" it invariably means,[152] [on the surface], wrong and erring in the direction of bombast. Yes? Bombastic. For example, in the *Meno*[153] a definition of colors is given,[154] first on the basis of Empedocles, if I remember well, and Socrates says that's a "tragic" definition. And that means "high-sounding" and wrong, wrong in the way of high-soundingness.[lviii] That's always used in this sense, but that of course doesn't settle the question of what Plato thought of tragedy. It only is an opening for a big question, and I think one can say that if you take the two forms of[155] the drama, tragedy and comedy, there is a slight edge in favor of comedy in Plato, but that is by no means so simple, because in the *Banquet*, the man—I mean, there is a[156] [sequence] of speeches, you know, culminating in Socrates's speech. The one immediately preceding Socrates is the tragic poet, and he only is preceded by the comic poet.[157] Agathon [is] a tragic poet somehow akin in his form to Euripides, by the way. And that is a long question; I mean, of course one could say perhaps this external sequence is not decisive. Aristophanes's speech is the central speech of the *Banquet*, and that might be the most important. That[158] would always require a very long study, you know, and we cannot—we would first have to find out what is tragedy according to Plato. We cannot ascribe to Plato Aristotle's definition of tragedy, at least not without having laid a foundation for that.[lix] And Plato speaks only of the immense popularity of tragedy very emphatically at least in the *Laws*, and also in another place which most people think is spurious, but he doesn't develop clearly what is tragedy in contradistinction to comedy;[lx] a few allusions which are not sufficient on the surface of it . . .

Student: Could you suggest something about what Plato means—what it means that Socrates invokes the Muses when he starts talking about . . .

[lvii] *Gorgias* 521c7-522c3.
[lviii] *Meno* 76a8-e9.
[lix] See Aristotle *Poetics* 1448a16-18, 1449b20-1451a15.
[lx] Plato *Laws* 658d1-4, *Minos* 321a4-5.

LS: Yes. Well, that means it is poetic. Yes? That means it is poetic. Pardon? Yes, all right, what do the Muses do? They inspire. Yes? In other words,[159] it surely means he cannot give an account by his own resources: he needs some inspiration. How did Homer know which ships and which groups of people all came to Troy, in the second book of the *Iliad*? How did he know? He wasn't present, so he calls on the Muses.[lxi]

Student: Yes, but if the Muses were actually speaking at the funeral . . .

LS: Yes. No, but this awkwardness happens also in Homer, for example.[160] Well, perhaps you could say he calls on the Muses, and then you sing so-and-so, and then the Muse sings. But I don't believe that. I believe Homer made it. Would you also share this belief?

Same Student: That Homer did the actual writing?

LS: Yes. No, I think also the invention or so, the speeches or so. I mean, he was not a typist or a secretary of the Muses.

Student: Yes, that's how he portrays himself.

LS: Pardon?

Student: That's how he portrays himself.

LS: Who?

Student: Homer. Well, Socrates also . . .

LS: Yes, sure, but Socrates doesn't do this ordinarily. He does this when he comes to a subject where he cannot possible have knowledge. He wasn't present, was he? After all, the most simple explanation of why inspiration is needed is because you were not present. Homer wasn't present. [This is] more clearly developed, by the way, in Hesiod. When Hesiod describes farming in his *Works and Days*—and he was a farmer, he tells people how to farm, which days are propitious, and so on and so on, but when he comes to sailing, another way of earning one's livelihood, he has to call on the Muses because he wasn't a sailor.[lxii] The Muses tell you what you—I mean, music knowledge, knowledge coming from the Muses, is knowledge not available either to man as man or to this particular man. That's simple. Socrates doesn't know. In other words, the question would be: Why does he call on the Muses here and nowhere else, at least in the *Republic*? Yes? That's the question. Apparently that is the most difficult question, to see the origin of the decay. Yes? The origin of decay. But this implies[161] that we know that the best regime was present at the beginning, i.e., there was a golden age in the highest sense of the term. You know?[162] You mentioned the *Statesman*. In the *Statesman*, where the myth of a golden age is used, it is left open whether that is a golden age.[163] I mean they had everything in abundance, but whether they were happy people or not, the Eleatic Stranger

[lxi] *Republic* 545d5-e3, 547a6-b1; Homer *Iliad* 2.484-493
[lxii] This section, known as the Nautilia, is in Hesiod *Works and Days* 618-94.

says: I don't know, because I do not know whether they philosophized or not.[lxiii] So that's very dubious whether that was truly the golden age. But here we have perfection, true perfection, at the beginning. How can we know that? Only [from] someone who was an eyewitness of the beginning, and the Muses, the daughter[s] of Zeus, surely were. Is it not perfectly logical? I mean, is it not an absolutely necessary conclusion if you grant certain premises? Pardon? How can you know about the beginning? I mean, let us take[164] [an] infinitely more solemn statement, the first chapter of *Genesis*. Who wrote that? Who wrote that? The traditional view is God wrote it, and that is of course perfectly[165] sound reasoning. Who can describe the creation of the world? No human being can, because no human being could have been present; and therefore the traditional assertion that this was written under divine inspiration is, I think, an indispensable one given the premises. We are no longer accustomed to this way of thinking, but in its way, it is of course as strict as anything here.

The interesting question, to repeat, is I believe here: Why are the Muses invoked here and nowhere else in the *Republic*? And I believe I have given an answer: [166]What human reason can do, the utmost it can do, is to prove the possibility of the best regime. The actuality could be proven only if we have documents from the recorded past, say, somewhere in Crete. All right, let's go to Crete, what they do in the *Laws*. But the assertion that it was actual at the beginning, in the remote beginnings of the human race, cannot be known except through the Muses. I mean, there could be stories, myths, but that is not called a myth.

Student: [Inaudible remark regarding the nuptial number][lxiv]

LS: [167]Yes, [what you say] does reinforce it. I simply was oblivious of that at the moment, that the natural number is part of the music account.

Student: Well, how much of the sequel is attributed to the Muses?

LS: Oh, then Socrates—this is ordinary conversation, as you see. Once you know that the best regime was the original regime, then it follows that all other regimes are degenerations of it; and the order of the degeneration, that Socrates establishes by his own reasoning. If the best was at the beginning, it makes sense to say that the second best came at the second place, the third best in the third place, and the lowest last.

Student: And this is clear from the text, that the Muses aren't singing the whole thing.

LS: I think that is clear from the text, yes, because there are certain principles which Socrates establishes; for example, that one-to-one correspondence of polity and regime, and the principle that every regime decays only through a decay of the ruling part, these are established in the conversation. Oh yes. Yes, that is a good question. I mean, there is a parallel—I never thought of that—it is a parallel question to the question which we discussed[168] on a former occasion: How to tell a myth, a Platonic myth, from a Platonic

[lxiii] Plato *Statesman* 271c8-272d4.
[lxiv] As noted by the transcriber.

logos? And the safe thing is, of course, not to follow one's own impressions, but when Plato says it is a myth, or Socrates [says] it is a myth, they mean that. You know? The *Republic* of course is called frequently a myth in the *Republic*. What they are doing is telling a myth. He says that frequently, just as in the *Laws* he says [it] very frequently.[169] In this particular course I have not stressed this point because we would never find an end to any meeting if we would stress every important point, but in a former course, I remember, then that was one of the themes of the course: What is the cognitive status of the *Republic* according to Plato—according to Socrates? and where the question of myth became of course crucial. You know? Yes. But that's the last question.

Same Student: At two points, in book 6 and here in book 8, Socrates . . . would seem to indicate a belief in eternal return, eternal recurrence . . .

LS: [170]Yes, "seems," as you wisely say, because it seems to be one development. Yes? One, a single one. It seems to be a single one.

Same Student: A single what?

LS: Single development . . .

Same Student: . . . when he's talking about what the Muses say about life, he says life is a series of circles and—

LS: Oh, then—

Same Student: —comings and goings, and then in book 6 when he's talking about the sun image, there's also another instance which would seem to be a reference once again to eternal recurrence, and in wondered if you can tie this up with—

LS: Is there? I doubt that. I mean,[171] that Plato knew something of this notion of eternal return is clear, but whether these things to which you refer are proofs of it, I doubt it. I think you would find it more clearly in the third book of the *Laws*.[lxv] Good. So next, we will have book 9 . . . Mr. Sachs?

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[1] Deleted "I'm."
[2] Deleted "much – so."
[3] Deleted "quite a few questions. I mean."
[4] Deleted "but –."
[5] Deleted "he isn't –.'
[6] Deleted "Yes, because –."
[7] Deleted "– yes but the reason is clear – because."
[8] Deleted "his core –."
[9] Deleted "– I found only one."
[10] Deleted "only –."
[11] Deleted "because constantly –."
[12] Deleted "and can ultimately living intelligence use – you know that how the laws – I mean, for example, what is it?"

[lxv] See *Laws* 676a1-c5.

[13] Deleted "they would only have to."
[14] Deleted "what – you have."
[15] Deleted "must –."
[16] Deleted "he."
[17] Changed from "It is of some – and can you – there is a good explanation possible, by the way. Where does – you said Books V-VII are – is a digression. Where is – where does the equality of women – men and women – come up?"
[18] Deleted "– the reason for that is that –."
[19] Deleted "he makes this –."
[20] Deleted "In other words, this—this—no"
[21] Deleted "and in that – and that –."
[22] Deleted "this."
[23] Deleted "comes."
[24] Changed from "If we have four – admitted – let us assume that this division of regimes are divided here – I will repeat the." ."
[25] Deleted "from."
[26] Deleted "this – was."
[27] Deleted "oh no, that is – then you would say."
[28] Deleted "be the chief – there must."
[29] Deleted "edition (?)."
[30] Deleted "kinds."
[31] Deleted "– of."
[32] Changed from "Can you – well that is, I think – is the question which we have because this simple coordination as here emphatically established surely has need – is in need of some, some consideration."
[33] Deleted "has need."
[34] Deleted "in –."
[35] Deleted "you –."
[36] Deleted "is –."
[37] Deleted "he had –."
[38] Deleted "mean – well only – I."
[39] Deleted "there is –."
[40] Deleted "an imposition."
[41] Deleted "the first—."
[42] Deleted "low, next low."
[43] Deleted "the – is."
[44] Deleted "best – and the."
[45] Deleted "primarily – I mean, going.'
[46] Deleted "and that is now."
[47] Deleted "– it."
[48] Deleted "– what did we get then…and then."
[49] Deleted "this: you had."
[50] Deleted "take the."
[51] Deleted "Oh, yes, there is no – in other words –."
[52] Deleted "that –."
[53] Deleted "in Books IV and VII, are – no."
[54] Deleted "present, the."
[55] Deleted "but there is a—but that."
[56] Deleted "do not –."
[57] Deleted "the perish –."
[58] Deleted "there is no, I mean."
[59] Deleted "that is – there is no –."
[60] Deleted "the word simple."
[61] Changed from "Yes, but we have to say maybe Glaucon agreed – the question, which Socrates proves to him, which permits more than one answer as a question."
[62] Changed from "For example, there can – what can happen is that an originally very weak demos – yes – people excluded from the government – become more numerous in the course of years. ."

[63] Deleted "They –."
[64] Deleted "a very – becomes."
[65] Deleted "this, now, and then."
[66] Deleted "explains – he."
[67] Deleted "how –."
[68] Deleted "remains."
[69] Deleted ". Always."
[70] Deleted "but we will take care that."
[71] Deleted "and –."
[72] Deleted "– let us give."
[73] Deleted "he will do –."
[74] Deleted "this – but – yes."
[75] Deleted "natural – the."
[76] Deleted "it can –."
[77] Deleted "I suggest only."
[78] Deleted "that –."
[79] Deleted "– because."
[80] Deleted "that kind of people are very—from our recollection."
[81] Deleted "– yes, and the.'
[82] Deleted "So that is a kind of – so – yes. "
[83] Deleted "Yes? Love of victory."
[84] Deleted "he has."
[85] Deleted "is not – he."
[86] Deleted "Now –."
[87] Deleted "a man who was called – he was."
[88] Deleted "but."
[89] Deleted "– and then, of course – yes, now."
[90] Deleted "and – yes."
[91] Deleted "– you know, as the father, pahaxnos (?)."
[92] Deleted "phanaxnos (?)"
[93] Deleted "this –."
[94] Deleted "translated –."
[95] Deleted "– that would be."
[96] Deleted "and here, now."
[97] Deleted "whereas here we have."
[98] Deleted "which one can."
[99] Deleted "for the purpose." Moved "in order." Deleted "to show."
[100] Deleted "what about –."
[101] Deleted "this – or – but."
[102] De;eted "is – that."
[103] Deleted "the question which –."
[104] Deleted "– namely, this is."
[105] Deleted "a universal superiority of –."
[106] Deleted "it is –."
[107] Changed from "I mean – but anger is – how shall I say – the basic, the family phenomenon of which we think."
[108] Changed from "There is – that is – that has to do with the fact that in the political context, the political passion, you can say, is anger or is spiritedness."
[109] Deleted "who—what are the, when we speak of."
[110] Deleted "Greeks called it, the."
[111] Deleted "that in."
[112] Deleted "– yes, desire."
[113] Deleted "in the – you can say eros –."
[114] Deleted "essential."
[115] Deleted "– and.'
[116] Deleted "that –."

[117] Deleted "is –.'
[118] Deleted "cannot – they.'
[119] Changed from "And it – now it comes out gradually – you see how complicated the thing is – in 561a6, following, that the democratic man who had appeared originally as licentiousness incarnate is not so bad."
[120] Deleted "There is a nice –."
[121] Deleted "very –."
[122] Deleted "it affects also –."
[123] Deleted "he has –."
[124] Deleted "– no, that I wanted –."
[125] Deleted "Now –."
[126] Deleted "– no, that –."
[127] Deleted "as."
[128] Deleted "No, I think there is no –."
[129] Changed from "You see, Socrates says, and I almost forgot the equality of men and women, and then Adeimantus says who – Adeimantus is very much opposed to democracy."
[130] Deleted "third."
[131] Deleted "and here –."
[132] Deleted "one more – there is."
[133] Deleted "he has been very –."
[134] Deleted "I found it."
[135] Deleted "Now what was –."
[136] Deleted "that's the –."
[137] Deleted "– you know –."
[138] Deleted "yes of course there are."
[139] Deleted "The –."
[140] Deleted "adduced."
[141] Deleted "are wise by being together with the – the tyrants."
[142] Deleted "you –."
[143] Deleted "that – and."
[144] Deleted "that – for –."
[145] Deleted "has nothing to do – that."
[146] Deleted "he –."
[147] Deleted "and that is not – and."
[148] Deleted "– you know."
[149] Deleted "that the poets are"
[150] Deleted "They are – ."
[151] Deleted "this more direct –."
[152] Deleted "something like – on the surface it means – yes –."
[153] Deleted "there is a passage – the Meno gives – is Socrates' – I forgot now –."
[154] Deleted "I think, by –."
[155] Deleted "of tragedy, of—I'm sorry."
[156] Deleted "sequel."
[157] Deleted "and –."
[158] Deleted "is – and there is – that is long –."
[159] Deleted "he cannot –."
[160] Deleted "I mean."
[161] Deleted "however – implies."
[162] Deleted "When he – someone –."
[163] Deleted "He –."
[164] Deleted "most – a much –.'
[165] Deleted "– I mean, perfectly."
[166] Deleted "because this is—I mean."
[167] Changed from "That I – yes – no, it does reinforce it, what you say."
[168] Deleted "– mentioned."
[169] Deleted "We have."
[170] Deleted "It's of course –."

[171] Deleted "I –."

Session 14: November 21, 1961
Book 9: The Tyrant; Philosopher and *Polis*

Leo Strauss: Now you made this point, that the question which Glaucon had raised at the beginning of the second book is settled, is answered by the end of book 9.[i]

Student: I think so.

LS: Well, what was the question, and what is the answer?

Student: Well, the question is: Is justice more profitable or better than injustice, and is the—well, related to that, [is the] just life better than the unjust life?

LS: Is this a precise enough formulation of Glaucon's commission given to Socrates?

Student: Perhaps not. I can't—

LS: [1]You remember the list of the points which Glaucon made. What did he say? I mean, surely justice should be proven to be superior to injustice, but that[2] is too general because everyone, all decent people say a just life is preferable to an unjust life. But they—yes?

Student: Wasn't he to show how justice compared with injustice? In other words, Glaucon puts forth the idea that the just man was [. . .] in misfortune and ignored by the—

LS: All right. Can you make this part of the precise question of Glaucon?

Student: Justice is good differentiated from any reward . . .

LS: So in other words, justice going together with misery. Justice going together with misery must be preferable to injustice going together with external happiness.[ii] Is this proven at the end of book 9?

Student: I don't know that it's proven. It certainly is mentioned.

LS: Is there a clear mention, any mention to the misery of the justice? Any reference?

Student: No, I think there isn't. The only reference is to whether or not the—[3]I believe there is a reference as to whether or not the unjust man is known to be unjust, and I think the reference is made—

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[i] Strauss comments on Mr. Sachs's paper, read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 360e1-362c8.

LS: So that would be a considerable difference, you know? Now another point. Throughout the book, throughout the work the parallelism between the individual and the city was crucial, and the end of book 9 says the good city is nowhere on earth, and perhaps it will never be there.[iii] It would seem more certain that it is in heaven. But what about the good man? [4]Does he exist on earth, or can he exist on earth?

Student: There's a possibility.

LS: Yes, sure. It's not denied. So this also is an important [point]. There were two very minor things which Mr. Sachs said. You said that Aristotle says in book 1 of the *Politics* that the *polis* comes into being for the sake of life, and it is for the sake of the good life. If my memory is correct, it's in book 3 that he says that. I mean, are you sure that it is in book 1?

Student: There is a statement to that effect in book 1. I think I will reread it again.

LS: I don't remember that it is said in book 1, but it is implied there.[iv] That is minor. What did you say about Cephalus and his old age and *eros*, and what the relevance of that is for the ninth book?

Student: Well, there is a clear reference to love as a tyrant in regard—

LS: And how. Yes, yes.

Student: In the ninth book. And—

LS: But not to Cephalus.

Student: But Cephalus had stated that he had gotten rid of that tyrant in old age.[v] When one gets rid of a tyrant, he is in a more just condition . . . perhaps.

LS: Yes, but that—yes, sure, but you seem to see something more worth[y] in it: what light that throws on book 9, or on the subject of book 9. Did you not suggest something—that was very strange, that tyranny is somehow the old age of the *polis*?

Student: No, no. No, my comment was that there is a development, that Socrates shows a development, a degradation—

LS: Yes, sure. It would be very funny if in the case of the individual *eros* is weakest in old age, but in the *polis* the opposite would be true. That would also lead to a breakdown of the analogy, of the parallelism, because if you assume, and literally I think you are correct because the best *polis* is at the beginning[5]—the statement of the Muses at the beginning of book 8; and then tyranny is the latest, that's the old age of the *polis*; and if

[iii] 591e1-592b6.
[iv] See Aristotle *Politics* 1252b27-30, 1280a31-40, 1280b31-1281a2.
[v] Plato *Republic* 573b6-575a8, 329b6-d6.

eros is most powerful in the old age of the *polis* and not the most powerful in the old age of the individual, that's another example of the breakdown of the parallelism between the individual and the *polis*. Yes, good. Now let us then turn to book—Mr. Megati, what's so funny about that? Do you think the parallelism holds water in every respect?

Mr. Megati: [. . .]

LS: I see. Yes, it seems so. And by the way, we shall not meet of course next Thursday because of Thanksgiving, and so Mr. Morrison, your paper will be due next Tuesday and then Mr. Snowiss on next Thursday. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, shall we take that up when we come to the passage? Remind me of it, in case I forget it. Yes. Now let us begin. The difficulty that Socrates faces at the beginning of the ninth book is this: there is a clear tripartition of the soul, and a partition into five of the various regimes, and he has to coordinate that. Now here we have reason, and here we have spiritedness, and here we have desire. Reason corresponds to aristocracy or kingship, and spiritedness corresponds to timocracy, and what happens then? This must cover three regimes: oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. That's the difficulty, yes? The only thing to do is to introduce a partition of desires. That was already begun in book 8: we had there a distinction into necessary desires and unnecessary desires.[vi] Necessary desires are [characteristic of][vii] the oligarchs, you know, the moneybags not spending anything superfluous, and the democrats, spenders. It is a very topical political subject . . . Yes, but what remains for our old friend the tyrant? I mean, what can you be after—I mean necessary desires and unnecessary desires. Well, there was a suggestion that the democrat is not as bad: he makes a compromise between the necessary and the—you know, one day he is very thrifty and the next day he is dissolute, and then [all over] again. But here another solution is suggested. What are the desires which make the tyrant a tyrant, Mr. Sachs?

Mr. Sachs: Lawless desires?[6]

LS: Yes, lawless.[viii][7] Yes, lawless. That of course makes democracy again better. You see, democracy has still lawful desires. You know? Just as oligarchy appeared in a better light when we came to democracy, you remember, these terribly—these moneybags appeared as virtue incarnate compared with these dissolute democrats; and now when we come to the tyrant, even the democrats appear as lawless people. Yes. Yes, that is true. Now what are these lawless desires characteristic of the tyrant? What are they? I mean, examples are the life of such discussion.

Student: The leading one would be lust.

[vi] 558d4-561b5.
[vii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[viii] 571a7-c1.

LS: Yes, but there are all kinds of lust.

Student: Yes, well, in the sense of love—

LS: Yes, but lust—well, that is undeniable, but let us deduce it. What are the examples given, the extreme examples, the illuminating examples? Pardon?

Student: Temple robbing comes fifth in the list of nine.

LS: I see. That's interesting. I didn't know that. [Laughter] Thank you. But I see, for example, that he abstains from no kind of food, which in plain English means cannibalism, and then—incest and cannibalism, I believe are at least, or would you say temple robbing is worse for your people [laughter] than cannibalism or incest?

Student: Well, if you're a temple treasurer.

LS: So in other words, it would be an interesting question: Why did Plato put temple robbing in the middle? Yes?

Student: Well, at one time it convulsed the city.

LS: Yes. No, but I don't have an answer to that question[8]; but offhand, cannibalism and incest, I think, are more brilliant examples. Now you will see, if you look at the description of the tyrant here in 571b to d, I think you will see[9] the tyrant has no restraining force in himself. There is no reference to spiritedness, the allegedly restraining force. That doesn't seem to be active in the tyrant. The tyrant is characterized—he is farthest removed not only from reason but also from spiritedness. You know? He is a man who has surrendered completely to desire and even to the lowest kind of desire, a beast creeping in the gutter: incest. Yes, but if we use our heads and think a bit[10] [about] tyrants, even of the very bad and evil tyrants whom we have almost seen with our eyes, like Hitler and Stalin and so, can you say that they are characterized by complete absence of spiritedness? Pardon?

Student: Not even Hitler.

LS: No, I think common sense would say that they got plenty—yes, however perverted. So there is perhaps here a difficulty, an interesting difficulty. We spoke of that before, whether the psychology of the *Republic*—reason, spiritedness, desire—can be taken as the last word of Plato. But a consequence of that: once Plato adopted this scheme, this hierarchy, he had to say the tyrant is of course completely free from spiritedness, and that, I think, may be true of heirs of tyrants more than of the original tyrants. Yes? And by the way, there is another point—yes?

Student: Can this be applied in the sense of honor or duty . . .

LS: Yes, then this only pushes the question back: With what right is this ascribed to spiritedness in contradistinction to desire? [11]There are quite a few passages about spiritedness here to which we turn later. Now let us perhaps read 572b10 following.

Mr. Reinken:
"Now recall our characterization of the democratic man. His development was determined by his education from youth under a thrifty father who approved only the acquisitive appetites and disapproved the unnecessary ones whose object is entertainment and display. Is not that so?" "Yes." "And by association with more sophisticated men—" (572b-c)

LS: Now let us stop here for one moment. [12]The irony is here hidden, because he speaks here of "play" and beautifying cosmetics, as it were, but Plato frequently uses "play" and "education" punningly as [the Greek words are similar],[ix] and that I think we must [consider]—you see, necessary desires. The desires for the higher things are of course also desires for unnecessary things, for things not needed for mere life. The aristocratic and timocratic man would of course indulge in non-necessary desires. [13]And this shows again that desire is not the lowest, lower than spiritedness, but rather, on the contrary, only what kind of desire. That is a deliberate limitation of Plato's psychology here. Incidentally, the city of pigs can be said to be limited to the necessary desires. You remember, before Glaucon gets his luxury in it, it's a city of necessary desires, and that is also the defect of the city of pigs, that it is precisely limited to the necessary desires.[x] The higher desires are absent from it. But here in the eighth book and at the beginning of the ninth, which is the city of the necessary desires?

Student: Oligarchy.

LS: Oligarchy. Is this possible to entertain, the crazy notion that there is some hidden connection between the city of pigs and the oligarchic city? What did he say of the city of pigs, and what's the strongest statement in favor of the city of pigs occurring in the *Republic*?

Student: [. . .]

LS: It is that. "The healthy city" and "the true city," and even in one passage, "the city."[xi] Is it possible to say that the oligarchic city is the true city?

Student: [Inaudible][xii]

[ix] The Greek word for "play" is *paidia* and the Greek word for "education" is *paideia*.
[x] See 369b5-d12, 372c2-373e1.
[xi] 372e6-7, 374a4-5. See also 433a2-6.
[xii] The transcriber notes that "at this point the recording equipment began to function defectively and it was not noticed by the operator. Therefore the remainder of the first side of the tape, approximately forty minutes, is only barely audible. An effort will be made to transcribe it to the extent possible, with omissions indicated by ellipses or blank spaces. When the tape was

LS: Yes, that is . . . but still, who are the [ones][xiii] ruling in the oligarchic city?

Student: [. . .]

LS: And the other . . . [ones who later] rule the city?

Student: The poor.

LS: [. . .]

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, that is a great question, whether . . . very crudely, politically, whether you can have something much better from Plato's point of view than an oligarchic city. That is a question. You see, for the very simple reason: because virtue cannot be so well defined legally. You know, sooner or later the arrangements for holding office, that could be spelled out in legal terms. Now if you say "virtue," well, what does it mean? It is easy to say no poets come in. That you can easily say, but that doesn't guarantee virtue. But property qualifications can be set up beautifully in legal terms, you know? And it is interesting that Aristotle accuses Plato's *Laws* of being too oligarchic for his taste, but that's only some object of possible speculation.[xiv] In the *Seventh Letter*, Plato occasionally says that "I did advise these people about very important matters . . . virtue[14] . . . but as well . . . money.[xv] The *Seventh Letter* has much commonsense wisdom, as well as or greater even than here in the *Republic*.

But now the key theme in the sequel, when he speaks about the tyrant, is his madness and his similarity with *eros*. And also he's a drunk man.[xvi] But the emphasis is surely on *eros*. I have here at least five references where he is compared to *eros*. That is absolutely crucial. In the context of the *Republic*, *eros* incarnate is the tyrant, and that—if you can . . . the lawless desires, of which he mentions incest, from the point of view of mere sexual desire that is of course not opposed to incest as such. Yes? That's clear. You know *eros* as *eros* does not make the difference; something else makes the difference, and therefore the theme of incest is lost and gradually [turns][xvii] into something else.[15]

We cannot read everything. There is only one more point at which we should look, in 574b, the end, to the sequel. The last speech in 574b.

Mr. Reinken:

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reversed, the malfunctioning of the equipment simultaneously corrected itself so that the second side of the tape is clearly audible. We will note later on the point at which this occurred."

[xiii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

[xiv] Aristotle *Politics* 1265b26-1266a30.

[xv] See Plato *Seventh Letter* 331a5-333a5, 334c4-335c1, 336c1-337e4.

[xvi] In the transcript: "a drunk man (?)."

[xvii] The transcript has ellipses here.

"Nay, Adeimantus, in heaven's name—"

LS: "By Zeus." "By Zeus."

Mr. Reinken:
"by Zeus, do you suppose that, for the sake of a newly found girl friend[xviii] bound to him by no necessary tie—"

LS: Yes, or literally "the not-necessary." But not-necessary means also—it is also not properly. Yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"such a one would strike the dear mother, his by necessity and from his birth? Or for the sake of a blooming new-found boyfriend[xix] not necessary to his life—"

LS: Yes, "not necessary" is all he says. "His life" is Shorey. Yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"he would rain blows upon the aged father past his prime, closest of his kin and oldest of his friends? And would he subject them to these new favorites if he brought them under the same roof?" "Yes, by Zeus," he said. "A most blessed lot it seems to be," said I, "to be the parent of a tyrant son." "It does indeed," he said. (574b-c)

LS: Yes, now does—in other words, one of the many [. . .] parallels, visibly, of the tyrant is what? He mentions [it] here.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but beating his parents, the great theme in Aristophanes's *Clouds*, where the pupil of Socrates beats his own father and he proves by reasons which he must have gotten from that wicked Socrates that this is legitimate; and the simple reasoning that the only natural title to rule is wisdom, wisdom alone.[xx] Now if the son is wise and the father is unwise, then the son is of course the ruler of the father; and ruling includes the possibility of coercion, and coercion may include physical coercion, as we say, and that is hard to distinguish from beating. You know? That you can observe in every arrest made anywhere in the world. [16]But the tyrant is absolutely—doesn't recognize the most natural piety, filial piety, but that—why does he say here in this particular context—you know, both Socrates and Adeimantus swear here. Did you see that?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, ["by Zeus"]—in other words, the tyrant behaves like Zeus. Sure. That is here indicated well and shows on the one hand how bad these old stories are, but on the other

[xviii] In original: "*belle amie*."
[xix] In original: "*bel ami*."
[xx] Aristophanes *Clouds* 1321-1439.

hand that they may have some sense, rightly interpreted.[xxi] That would presuppose that Zeus is wiser than Kronos, and that would require a long investigation, of course. In 576b, at the end there: here we have reached almost the end of the discussion of the bad regimes, and then the bad men, and therewith almost the end of the full presentation of justice on the one hand, and injustice on the other. The full presentation means we have seen the just man and the just regime both fully developed, and the unjust man and the unjust regime perfectly developed.

At this point, Glaucon takes over. The whole discussion of the bad regimes was in conversation with Adeimantus, the more pedestrian of the two men. It is necessary to return to Glaucon, as Mr. Sachs has seen, because he was the one who set the whole thing moving in the first place by being dissatisfied with the city of pigs, and then by being—no, before, by being dissatisfied with Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus and demanding that the whole issue be opened from scratch.[xxii] So Glaucon must be satisfied more than anyone else, and therefore he takes over. Now we will reach the decision that the tyrannical city is the worst and most miserable city, and the royal city the best and happiest, until 576e. And now we turn to the two opposite individuals, two opposite men, and here[17] we have the kingly man and then the tyrannical man. Who is the kingly man? The just man. The tyrant? The unjust man. Who is happier? Whose life is preferable? The preliminary question in 577a—will you read that, please?

Mr. Reinken:
"And would it not also be a fair challenge," said I, "to ask you to accept as the only proper judge of the two men the one who is able in thought to enter with understanding into the very soul and temper of a man, and who is not like a child viewing him from the outside, overawed by the tyrants' great attendance, and the pomp and circumstance which they assume in the eyes of the world, but is able to see through it all? And what if I should assume, then, that the man to whom we ought all to listen is he who has this capacity of judgement and who has lived under the same roof with a tyrant and has witnessed his conduct in his own home and observed in person his dealings with his intimates in each instance where he would best be seen stripped of his vesture of tragedy, and who had likewise observed his behaviour in the hazards of his public life—and if we should ask the man who has seen all this to be the messenger to report on the happiness or misery of the tyrant as compared with other men?"

LS: Yes, read the answer. What is the answer?

Mr. Reinken:
"That also would be a most just challenge." (577a-b)

LS: In other words, who is competent to judge of who is most miserable, the royal man or the tyrannical man? What is the answer?

Mr. Reinken: He [who] has lived with tyrants: the tyrannical man.

[xxi] Hesiod *Theogony* 453-506.
[xxii] Plato *Republic* 372c2ff., 357a1ff.

LS: Well, well. He says that the intimate of—yes, the man who has lived intimately with tyrants. Will you read what Mr. Shorey says on this point? [18]Because it is not only Shorey.

Mr. Reinken:
"It is an easy conjecture that Plato is thinking of himself and Dionysius I."[xxiii]

LS: What do you say to that? I mean, taking it seriously and—truly taking it seriously.

Student: How long did Plato spend with Dionysius?

LS: [19]That's not the primary question. That would come—I mean, after you accepted Shorey's assertion as basically sound, then you would have to go into that detail. But is it basically sound or unsound? What does he presuppose?

Student: That this is Plato and not Socrates.

LS: Exactly. Exactly. In other words, what he implies is that Plato is a very great blunderer, that Plato cannot write a drama, cannot stay in character. I put it to you that [way]. Yes?

Student: Oh, I see.

LS: Do you see?

Student: That's Socrates

LS: I mean, sure, Socrates is speaking. Never forget that. I mean, you can say, as Mr. Sachs said in a very dangerous way, we have the impression that here particularly Plato speaks. If you try to establish that impression, I believe you will never succeed in that. I mean, there are impressions which can be established; for example, that a certain book is particularly rich in similes, you can say. That you can establish by simple statistics and other kinds of impressions, but this impression that Plato as it were lifts the mask, how can you establish that? I believe that is not a sound method. [20]So Socrates is speaking. Did Socrates live intimately with tyrants? Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: [He lived intimately] with *eros*. Yes, that is a very good point, but you must also admit that it is metaphoric, and that would mean that *eros* is not only not virtue, it is not parallel—which is admittedly the case, but also absolutely miserable. You know, that *eros* is absolutely miserable.

Student: [. . .]

[xxiii] Plato *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 2, 357 note d.

LS: [21]In this context, Socrates would have to show that *eros* is absolutely miserable, and that's hard to prove. You know there is some evidence within that *eros* is not miserable; I mean, there are some Greek plays in which—for example, in Euripides's *Helen* it is presented that the women who are in a very bad situation say the only splendor in their lives is *eros*.[xxiv]

Student: [. . .]

LS: Here in the context. In the context, you have to prove that the tyrannical life is the most miserable, the tyrant's life is the most miserable. Now if [that is] parallel with *eros*, *eros* would have to be miserable. Does it not follow? That's the context here.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Still, as I say, it is hard to say that *eros* is a tyrant simply, because a tyrant has also to be a certain kind of human being. But did Socrates live intimately with tyrants?[xxv]

Then that was after the *Republic*, after this conversation.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, that is absolutely correct. I mean, he knew Critias and Charmides and Alcibiades, and that was, for a man of his sagacity, sufficient. Whether they were so very miserable in every respect, that is of course a question, yes? I mean, what were these people? Let us read the next speech, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"Shall we, then, make believe," said I, "that we are of those who are thus able to judge and who have ere now lived with tyrants, so that we may have someone to answer our question?" "By all means." (577b)

LS: So in other words, we have now not merely to assume that Socrates is competent on the basis of intimate life with tyrants, but even young Glaucon. You see, that is important to consider. [22]The question of competence is explicitly raised. More simply, the first question is: How unhappy is the tyrant? This question can only be settled by people who have seen that he is miserable, no other men than that. Now if Socrates and Glaucon together lack the competence, then the following judgment is not competent. Let us keep this in mind. I say this not out of any love for tyranny or[23] because I believe that Plato wanted to recommend tyranny, but simply [so] that we get at what Plato is really driving at. It will become gradually clear. No one present meets the condition of being a

[xxiv] Possibly a reference to Helen's words addressed to Aphrodite in Euripides *Helen* 1105-6: "you are in other respects by nature the sweetest of gods for human beings."
[xxv] The transcriber notes that there was an "inaudible exchange followed by a remark regarding the government of The Thirty [Tyrants]."

competent judge of tyrannical life. How then will they find a substitute for a direct experience? 577c1, where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"Come, then," said I, "examine it thus. Recall the general likeness between the city and the man, and then observe in turn what happens to each of them." "What things?" he said. "In the first place," said I, "will you call the state governed by a tyrant free or enslaved, speaking of it as a state?" "Utterly enslaved," he said. "And yet you see in it masters and freemen." "I see," he said, "a small portion of such, but the entirety, so to speak, and the best part of it, is shamefully and wretchedly enslaved." "If, then," I said, "the man resembles the state, must not the same proportion obtain in him, and his soul teem with boundless servility and illiberality, the best and most reasonable parts of it being enslaved, while a small part, the worst and most frenzied, plays the despot?" "Inevitably," he said. "Then will you say that such a soul is enslaved or free?" "Enslaved, I should suppose." "Again, does not the enslaved and tyrannized city least of all do what it really wishes?" "Decidedly so." (577c-d)

LS: Yes, and so on. In other words, the parallelism between the *polis* and the individual takes the place of the direct experience. You see, in other words, [24]Socrates and Glaucon don't know of how tyrants live, but they know that there is a parallelism between the *polis* and the individual, and they know that a tyrannically-ruled city is the worst kind of city, most miserable as a *polis*; and hence this similarity proves that the tyrant is the most unhappy individual. [25]It depends all on the validity of this parallelism. We are not yet at the end. Go on, then.[26]

Mr. Reinken:
"Then the tyrannized soul—to speak of the soul as a whole—also will least of all do what it wishes, but being always perforce driven and drawn by the gadfly of desire it will be full of confusion and repentance." "Of course." "And must the tyrannized city be rich or poor?" "Poor." "Then the tyrant soul also must of necessity always be needy and suffer from unfulfilled desire." "So it is," he said.

LS: You see here the defective parallelism between the tyrant and the *polis*. The tyrannically-ruled *polis* is poorer than a free *polis* would be; hence the tyrant is poor. Yes. Now that was, one can say, axiomatic, that the tyrant is wealthy. Tyrants are always wealthy. I mean, this can be empirically proven. How do they live? [27]I have no doubt that Khrushchev lives at least as well as Governor Rockefeller,[xxvi] for example. I mean, if he has any desire for some fancy thing, whether it's clothing, or food, or whatever it may be, you can be sure he will get it. Yes? And if he wants to travel in the most luxurious manner, he can do that. [28][Those] are simple indications of wealth. So tyrants are wealthy; there's no question. Socrates knows that, of course, and did you see what he does here? He doesn't say the tyrant is[n't] wealthy: the soul, "the tyrant [soul]" is poor. The soul is poor. So the parallelism, that only reinforces the old story: there is no parallelism between the *polis* and the individual, but [there is] between the *polis* and the

[xxvi] Nelson Rockefeller (1908-1979), member of the wealthy Rockefeller family, served as governor of New York from 1959 to 1973.

soul of the individual. He abstracts, in the case of the soul, from the body. He abstracts from the body and that is one of the key premises of the *Republic*, indicated by the action: they don't get dinner. That's the practical abstraction from the body. Good. Yes, go on here, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"And again, must not such a city, as well as such a man—"

LS: Oh no, I'm sorry. I made a mistake. At c; begin at c, 578c. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Perhaps you will regard the one I am about to name as still more wretched." "What one?" "The one," said I, "who, being of tyrannical temper, does not live out his life in private station but is so unfortunate that by some unhappy chance he is enabled to become an actual tyrant." "I infer from what has already been said," he replied, "that you speak truly."

LS: Let us stop here. You see here the character of the argument: From what is said before, I draw this conclusion. He doesn't know directly from experience and therefore the conclusion depends of course on the quality of the premises. [29]Now how does he go on then at this point?

Mr. Reinken:
"Yes," said I, "but it is not enough to suppose such things. We must examine them thoroughly by reason and an argument—"

LS: You see, Socrates indicates how lousy the argument was up to this point. Yes? Forgive this strong expression, but we must not, out of false reverence for Plato, deprive ourselves of the greatest benefit we can get from Plato. This we get only if we see the defectiveness of the argument. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"and an argument such as this. For our inquiry concerns the greatest of all things, the good life or the bad life." "Quite right," he replied. "Consider, then, if there is anything in what I say. For I think we must get a notion of the matter from these examples." "From which?" "From individual wealthy private citizens in our states who possess many slaves. For these resemble the tyrant in being rulers over many, only the tyrant's numbers are greater." "Yes, they are." "You are aware, then, that they are unafraid and do not fear their slaves?" "What should they fear?" "Nothing," I said; "but do you perceive the reason why?" "Yes, because the entire state is ready to defend each citizen." (578c-e)

LS: Yes. And now he makes an experiment in thought: Let us take the slave owner out of the *polis*, set him down somewhere where these other—his fellow citizens—cannot help him against his slaves, and in what a misery he would be there. He would be completely at the mercy of the slaves. This is the situation of the tyrant. Now what would be needed of course would be to see: Is this simile—it is of course not the same case—is the simile

adequate? And one would have to take into consideration the differences. [30]He and his wife and children are now alone with fifty slaves, able-bodied men, and absolutely at the mercy of them, like some people in the Congo from time to time . . . that is the life of a tyrant. The question is: Is the tyrant as isolated?

Student: [. . .]

LS: The slaves who elected him, yes. So in other words, what is the question here? If we would analyze that properly, I believe we would come to the great question, which would even be applicable to the slaveowner among his slaves on that island: What about the power of persuasion? We have heard fantastic stories about the power of persuasion in book 6. You remember the philosopher could persuade the multitude that they let themselves be ruled by him and let themselves be expelled from the city, because the philosopher wants [31]to educate the young children completely from scratch.[xxvii] Why could not a very clever slaveowner in such a situation persuade the slaves that he had to do that because it was the law of the city? You know: Now we are all free men, and we are all equal, and we just elect a leader; and they, on the basis of this beautiful speech, they elect him the leader, and surely they will not be—[32]he won't have the power he had before, but he will be safe. That's feasible. This would be one of the many questions which one would have to raise. At any rate, the key point: not a single example of any tyrant is given. And similes are given: no examples, no empirical proof. That's very strange. [33]What knowledge of tyrants can we presuppose these people had? I mean, not Thrasymachus, who was from a foreign city, but these young Athenians . . . what knowledge of tyrants can we suppose they had?

Student: Does Solon count? Hadn't Pisistratus and Solon already ruled in Athens?

LS: Yes. Well, Solon was not a tyrant. Pisistratus, you mean, and Hipparchus and so, sure. Were they notorious in Athens[34] as men who had a very miserable life? What was the common story about the Athenian tyrants? That was after all not—about a hundred years before the conversation took place.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No. God. Well, in a way; Pisistratus introduced a woman and brought her in as a kind of goddess, and it was regarded as a very stupid maneuver of his. [35]But what was the current view? Well, there was in the first place the official democratic view that they were wicked people, and the tyrannicide[s], Aristogeiton and Harmodius, were regarded as heroes by the Athenians. But there was also another version, which said that this was a very crude popular view. For example, Thucydides presents the more sober view, and Socrates himself, in the *Hipparchus*—which of course Mr. Shorey would never allow to be written by Plato. But at any rate, there were surely two schools of thought regarding this, but[36] it was not universally admitted in Athens that Pisistratus and Hipparchus led a

[xxvii] See Plato *Republic* 499c7-502a4.

particularly miserable life.[xxviii] [37]There was no basis for this assertion; therefore all the more would we need a proof of it, but this proof is not given. This proof is not given. Now the parallel assertion in 580a at the end.

Mr. Reinken:
"And in addition, shall we not further attribute to him all that we spoke of before, and say that he must needs be, and by reason of his rule, come to be still more than he was, envious, faithless, unjust, friendless, impious, a vessel and host to[xxix] all iniquity, and so in consequence be himself most unhappy and make all about him so?" "No man of sense will gainsay that," he said. "Come then," said I, "now at last, even as the judge of the last instance pronounces, so do you declare who in your opinion is first in happiness and who second, and similarly judge the others, all five in succession, the royal, the timocratic, the oligarchic, the democratic, and the tyrannical man." "Nay," he said, "the decision is easy. For as if they were choruses I judge them in the order of their entrance, and so rank them in respect of virtue and vice, happiness and its contrary." "Shall we hire a herald, then," said I, "or shall I myself make proclamation that the son of Ariston pronounced the best man and the most righteous to be the happiest, and that he is the one who is the most kingly and a king over himself; and declared that the most evil and most unjust is the most unhappy, who again is the man who, having the most of the tyrannical temper in himself, becomes most of a tyrant over himself and over the state?" "Let it have been so proclaimed by you," he said. "Shall I add the clause 'alike whether their character is known to all men and gods or is not known'?" "Add that to the proclamation," he said. "Very good," said I; "this, then, would be one of our proofs, but examine this second one and see if there is anything in it." (580a-d)

LS: So now[38] the first proof is given without any—I mean, we see that the proof[39] does not live up to the standards of a demonstration. I think that's safe to say. It is particularly interesting to see the complete absence of any empirical proof, and this would not require any hard study because they had the tyrants at their doorstep—not Critias, that would be wrong; that was after that time, you know, the Thirty Tyrants, but the three, especially Pisistratus and Hipparchus. And the reason is clear: not because Socrates didn't think of them, but they would not be so manifest proofs that these Athenian tyrants were more unhappy than, for example, Nicias before Syracuse (you know, in Sicily), a very nice and pious man with a terrible end.[xxx] It is not manifestly and so easy to grant that Nicias's fate was preferable to the fate of Pisistratus. That would need a much longer argument than is given here. Yes?

Student: . . . am I right that Plato and Glaucon were brothers?

LS: Yes, that's I think the generally accepted view. Yes, I see no reason to doubt it.

[xxviii] Herodotus 1.59-64, 5.55-56, 6.123; Thucydides 6.53-59; Plato *Hipparchus* 228b4-229d7; Aristotle *Regime of the Athenians* 14-19.
[xxix] In the Shorey translation: "nurse of"; "host to" is from Shorey's note. See Plato *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 2, 367 note f.
[xxx] Thucydides 7.86.

Student: [Inaudible remark referring to the phrase "the son of Ariston" in the passage read above][xxxi]

LS: Yes. Well, here[40]—oh, I see, you think . . . that's Plato, but in the context—

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, well, I think it is more reasonable to—although it is in need of explanation why he says "the son of Ariston," it is true, but still, at the first level it is clearly Glaucon who is meant. Now it is so important because Glaucon, you remember, was the one who, while liking justice, was impressed by the wicked argument of Thrasymachus and others, and now [41]Socrates proclaims to the whole city in the name of Glaucon that Glaucon has been completely convinced of the superiority of justice.[xxxii] Now that is the first proof, then. Yes, but one can only say the proof consists in plausible analogy from a fictitious case. The fictitious case here [is] the case of this slaveowner who is suddenly with his slave in the sea. One could perhaps say it is like the case of the unjust man who can make himself invisible in Glaucon's speech. In other words, Glaucon—now how does one call that, Glaucon's fiction of the perfect just man who is regarded as a perfectly unjust man, you remember, and suffers all the [misery] . . . [To] that Socrates replies in kind. Socrates gives him the example of that slaveowner with his slaves. That is in a way Socrates's answer to—Socrates's fiction is the reply to Glaucon's fiction. It is not a genuine proof, though someone else wanted—who was that? Mr.—yes?

Student: Is there a pun on Ariston . . .

LS: Yes. Well, it was a historical fact, I think, that—or rather I should say a fact, recorded fact, that the father's name, Plato's father's name, was Ariston. Well, there is connection, yes. Surely Ariston is somehow derivative from *aristoi*, which means "the best." And[42] this Plato liked . . . we kind of prove, for example, Socrates's mother was called Phaenarete [. . .] yes, "virtue coming into sight," coming into light. And Socrates's father's name is derived from *sophrosyne* somehow, from "moderation." Well, no wonder that the son of Sophroniscus and Phaenarete should be such a virtuous man; and that Plato's father's name had something to do with the best man is surely no accident.[xxxiii]

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, sure. Sure, naturally. By the way, I would like to say . . . the accusers of Socrates, one of them is called (who is singled out in the *Apology of Socrates*) Meletus, and that has something to do with "caretaker" . . . and Socrates uses that: "You caretakers care so much for the city that you have accused me"[xxxiv] . . . And many other puns occur.

[xxxi] As noted by the transcriber.
[xxxii] Plato *Republic* 358b1-d6.
[xxxiii] *Theatetus* 149a1-2, *Laches* 180d4-181a1.
[xxxiv] *Apology of Socrates* 24c4-8.

I do not know why this is done here, but I believe it has something surely to do with the solemnity of the occasion.

Now your great apprehension that the case where justice might be weak has been completely disposed of. Yes? We are now absolutely . . . are not unqualifiedly on the side of justice and here we laid it down . . . proclaiming it. If you later on should try to play around with tyranny, you have to go back on your own word . . . That, I would say, seems to be [at] the best more on the surface of the thing. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: But then he mentions—he quotes both Glaucon and Adeimantus. But that was a [line], you know, which he quoted from a poet; and perhaps the poet was Critias—you know, this wicked man who became later on a tyrant, which would make it a bit more complicated.[xxxv]

Now let us turn then to the second proof. There are altogether three proofs, and I mentioned on more than one occasion that what is in the middle is particularly interesting. Mr. Sachs said, with quite a few commentators and with some evidence on the surface, that the third proof is so to speak the biggest proof [. . .] the biggest, he didn't say—it's not your word, I know. But I believe the second proof is the most interesting. Now this proof is relatively short, beginning here where we left off and ending in 583b. [43]Unfortunately we cannot read the whole thing. What is the character of this proof? It is easier to see what it is than what it is not. Do you understand what I mean? I mean if something is not mentioned, you can't see it there. You see? But it is sometimes so important to see what is not mentioned, what is not than what is. Now the peculiarity of the second proof is that it doesn't deal with the tyrant. Let me have one more look. I am not sure . . . Pardon?

Student: [Inaudible remark regarding the democratic man][xxxvi]

LS: Yes, I believe the tyrant is not even mentioned here, but he surely plays no role as such. And why? I gave the reason before: you know, the disproportion between tripartition of the soul and the partition into five of the regimes. And he does not deal here with the subdivisions; therefore the second proof deals only with the highest man, the timocratic man, and the men three, four, five taken together, so the central proof doesn't convince anything about the particular misery of the tyrant. It is a misery common to the oligarchic man, the democratic man, and the tyrannical man. That's striking, and that's the central proof.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, I would like to continue that if you permit, yes. Good. Now let us see. This proof proves only the superiority of the man who loves wisdom to the man who loves

[xxxv] *Republic* 580c6-7.
[xxxvi] As noted by the transcriber.

honor or victory, and of both of them to the man who loves money or gain—any gain-lover, tyrant or non-tyrant. If the tyrant should happen to be a lover of glory or victory—it could happen—then he would be superior to number three. Very interesting. But that is by no means all. By the way, if we could dare to go out of the pages of the *Republic* and even out of the pages of Plato altogether, there is a very famous classic statement on the [character] of tyranny by a contemporary of Plato, also a student of Socrates, pupil of Socrates, and that is Xenophon's short dialogue *Hiero*. What does a wise man, Simonides, say there about the motivation of the tyrant? Mr. Kendrick?

Mr. Kendrick: *Eros*.

LS: No, no.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but still what comes about as the characteristic, the sole[xxxvii] statement about what makes men tyrants: honor.[xxxviii] Honor, victory, this kind of thing. Sure. But someone could say we cannot draw any conclusion from what Simonides says in Xenophon . . . to what Plato thought. But let us look at 581e, at the end, the last speech in e.[44] No, we can also read the speech before. I believe that's better. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And what," said I, "are we to suppose the philosopher thinks of the other pleasures compared with the delight of knowing the truth and the reality, and being always occupied with that while he learns? Will he not think them far removed from true pleasure, and call them literally the pleasures of necessity, since he would have no use for them if necessity were not laid upon him?" "We may be sure of that," he said. "Since, then, there is contention between the several types of pleasure and the lives themselves, not merely as to which is the more honourable or the more base, or the worse or the better, but which is actually the more pleasurable or free from pain, how could we determine which of them speaks most truly?" "In faith, I cannot tell," he said. (581e-582a)

LS: Yes, what is the type that you said, Mr. Sachs? Who is most competent to judge, the lover of wisdom, the lover of honor, and the lover of bodily things and wealth in general? Who is most competent to judge which is the highest pleasure?

Student:[xxxix] The lover of wisdom.

LS: Why?

Student: Because he has the ability of being able to experience the pleasures of the others, but they cannot experience the pleasure of wisdom.

[xxxvii] In the transcript: "sole (?)"
[xxxviii] Xenophon *Hiero* 7. 1-10.
[xxxix] Presumably Mr. Sachs.

LS: So in other words, he knows all three kinds of pleasures and the others do not, and therefore he is the most competent. Yes. And therefore it is decided in favor of the philosopher, the lover of wisdom. But from what point of view is the philosophic life preferable to the life dedicated to victory and the life dedicated to wealth? From what point of view here?

Student: Pleasure.

LS: Pleasure. Now you remember the commission which Glaucon gave to Socrates.[xl] There was no reference to pleasure, and especially 583b—yes, at the beginning of 583b, this proof—

Mr. Reinken:
"And so the last place belongs to the lover of gain, as it seems."

LS: Yes, and the next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"That, then, would be two points in succession and two victories for the just man over the unjust."

LS: Yes, but[45] regarding what kind of man did the second proof show that he is superior to the unjust man?

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no, not a word about that. How is the—I mean, there was no reference to the just man in this whole proof except by implication. Of whom is the second—

Student: Philosophers.

LS: The philosopher! So the second argument, the central argument, proves that the life of the philosopher is superior to the life of the nonphilosopher, and the life of the lover of glory is superior to the life of the lover of wealth. The tyrant as tyrant is out. If the tyrant should happen to be as least as much a lover of glory or superiority as a lover of wealth, he would be in the second position and not in the third position. That's an amazing thing, an absolutely amazing thing. And now we come to the third proof, which is introduced with great—with trumpets, as you will see when you read the beginning.[xli]

Mr. Reinken:

[xl] Plato *Republic* 360e1-362c8.
[xli] The tape was changed at this point. The transcriber notes that "beginning at this point the recording equipment functioned normally and the transcription can be made from a clearly audible tape."

"And now for the third in the Olympian fashion to the saviour and to Olympian Zeus—observe that other pleasure than that of the intelligence is not altogether even real or pure, but is a kind of scene-painting, as I seem to have heard from some wise man; and yet this would be the greatest and most decisive overthrow." (583b)

LS: Yes. Now—good. All right, "would be." But you see also that Socrates in a way disassociates himself from this argument—in a way. He says: "As I have heard from some wise man." I think Shorey, who knows everything, has also a solution to that. Yes? What does he say?

Mr. Reinken: It would seem to be a young student of Socrates: Plato himself.[xlii]

LS: Ah ha. Yes. Well, you can say anything, but that is of course not—I don't dare to answer that question. The first question would be—before I would dream of doing that, I would say: Why does Socrates say he has heard it from some wise man, which he didn't say in the argument number two or in number one? Why does he say that? I do not know.

Now the argument here deals with pleasure again, but from another point of view: purity of pleasures. The highest pleasures are the purest pleasures, and then what it is up to is that the purest pleasures are those of the just man[46]. So it is not the bigness, greatness, quantity of pleasures, but the purity of pleasures. Therefore this requires an analysis of pleasure as ordinarily understood, and then people would say, of course: A tyrant leads the most pleasant life: he has all the food and drink and what not, what a man could have in all comfort, all the pleasures. Are these genuine pleasures? That's the question which is raised, and the point from which he starts is roughly this: that these pleasures are all related essentially to pain. For example, the pleasure of eating is related to the pain of hunger. If this pain does not precede eating, it's not pleasant; and therefore these pleasures are not pure. But there is one kind of pleasure—one example is given in 584b of pure pleasures—where the absence is in no way painful, and these are the pleasures of smell. For some reason they are singled out. Yes? I mean, it is a question. Why does he not give the pleasure of sounds and sights, which would seem to have the same character, that we do not have this kind of pain of hunger, like hunger or thirst, and yet we find them pleasant? The pleasure of smells is here taken as an example of a pure pleasure. You smell roses or other flowers, that is assumed; and if the roses are absent, you are not pained by it as you are pained if you are hungry and have no food. It's a pure pleasure. The key point which we must remember is of course pleasure of the senses, and in the later argument the pleasures of the senses are completely disregarded.

Now he uses in the sequel the following schema: the top and the bottom and the middle. Now when a man is pleased when he eats, then it means in this schema that he has ascended here from emptiness, from painful emptiness to filling: pleasure. But this is

[xlii] Here is Shorey's note on the passage (Plato *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey, vol. 2, 381 note e): "One of Plato's evasions. Cf. *What Plato Said*, p. 513, on *Meno* 81 A, *Phileb*. 44 B. Wilamowitz, *Platon*, ii. p. 266 misses the point and says that by the wise man Plato means himself."

absolutely relative, remains relative to the starting point, and the thesis is the true virtues are here, and the man who knows only the pleasures of filling, of satisfaction of needs, doesn't ever taste the genuine pleasures. This is the general scheme which he uses here, which leads to quite a few questions. 585d, end, if you would read that.

Mr. Reinken:
"Then is not that which is fulfilled of what more truly is, and which itself more truly is, more truly filled and satisfied than that which being itself less real is filled with more unreal things?" "Of course." (585d)

LS: Go on. I meant the next speech.

Mr. Reinken: "If, then, to be . . ." [Laughter] I am very happy. I think I know why he said "smells."

LS: Namely?

Mr. Reinken: You mentioned smell yourself. They smell the dinner coming in, and for a hungry man there's no pain like smelling a dinner you're not going to get.

LS: Perhaps you're right. I don't know. Yes, I mean empirically you're right. Oh yes, I know that too. Go on. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"If, then, to be filled with what befits nature is pleasure, then that which is more really filled with real things would more really and truly cause us to enjoy a true pleasure, while that which partakes of the less truly existent would be less truly and surely filled and would partake of a less trustworthy and less true pleasure." (585d-e)

LS: [47]Yes, there is another point which is new. In the first place, he starts from the body, from the filling of the body and also the emptying of the body, and it would imply that the emptying is simply painful. And that is not true, I think. Good. But we will not go into that. And then he goes over from the filling of the body to the filling of the soul, learning; and whereas the body is filled with perishable things, surely, [48]the soul is filled, it learns, with things which are always, imperishable things. And therefore the pleasure is lasting and genuine. This is the pattern of this argument. [49]And the key, the principle issue is the notion of pure pleasure, and that pure pleasure—not the quantity of pleasure, but the quality of purity determines the preferability.

There is a statement on this subject of great importance historically in Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*:

"Socrates placing felicity in an equal and constant peace of mind [pure pleasures—LS] and the sophist [in this case Callicles—LS] in much desiring and much enjoying,[50] they fell from argument to ill words: the sophist saying that Socrates' felicity was the felicity of a block or a stone; and Socrates saying that the sophist's felicity was the felicity of one

who had the itch, who did nothing but itch and scratch [you know, pain and pleasure of scratching—LS]. And both these opinions do not want their supports. [And then he goes on—LS]: [For] can it be doubted, [but] that there are there some who take more pleasure in enjoying pleasures than some other, and yet, nevertheless, are[51] [less] troubled with the loss or leaving of them? . . . [And] it seemeth to me that most of the doctrines of the philosophers are more fearful and cautionary than the nature of the things requires."[xliii]

The upshot is pleasures with pepper: the pepper of desire and fear and uncertainty makes the pleasures as a whole bigger and more desirable than the pure pleasures like smelling roses—roses, not steaks—of which Socrates spoke. And this is, I believe, a key passage, because the notion of pure pleasures is developed first in the Platonic dialogues and then later by the Epicureans. That's also pure pleasures, that kind of hedonism is the basis for a very ascetic morality. Yes? And the Baconian is for a very expansive morality, and that has infinite consequences, the most famous of which is called political economy. That comes from Bacon. You know? If pleasures—and we think today, when we hear "hedonism" we have in mind this modern hedonism first preached up by Bacon and [which is] in practice of course coeval with man; but that a philosopher should say this, the first who preached that as far as I know is Bacon.

The point which Socrates makes here: all pleasures of the vulgar are mixed pleasures, not pure pleasures. Only the philosopher knows pure pleasure. In 586c there is a passage which we should read because it is now applied also to the spirited element of the soul.

Mr. Reinken:
"So, again, must not the like hold of the high-spirited element, whenever a man succeeds in satisfying that part of his nature—his covetousness of honour by envy, his love of victory by violence, his ill-temper by indulgence in anger—" (586c)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. Now he says here[52] "his violence by love of honor," and "his spiritedness": here we have of course the word "spiritedness," "because of *duskolia*." That is something like hard to please, being discontented, being intractable, being savage. That is the line of that. [53]That is a very informative passage about this central part of the soul, spiritedness, that it is linked up here with this fundamental grumpiness, waspishness. "Waspishness" would perhaps be the best word—the title of a comedy by Aristophanes.[xliv] In other words, the mood of the citizen concerned with his country and up in arms against the enemy. It is *duskolia*, a condition of anger, of discontentedness leading to savagery.

Student: Could I ask a question?

LS: Yes, please. Please.

Student: [. . .]

[xliii] Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, book 2.21.4. See Plato *Gorgias* 491e5-494e8.
[xliv] Aristophanes *Wasps*.

LS: Yes, sure, and also the well-known experience that learning can be painful. Yes, sure. I mean, there are all kinds of great questions there, and therefore the question cannot be settled on the basis of mere pleasure [but] only in this way: that as the argument is given in the second proof, that the pleasures of understanding, they are very great. I mean, if you understand something, the clarity is some very gratifying and enjoyable thing, and people who know all three kinds of pleasures, the pleasures of eating, drinking and so on, and even of moneymaking, and the pleasures of superiority, victory, and the pleasures of understanding itself: if they say, "We rate these last highest, and the two others are incompetent to judge because they don't know them truly," to which judge are you going to appeal?

Student: Empirically, this is a very curious touch—there are some very curious assumptions there because are there no philosophers who suddenly decided, who had come to the end of the road and tasted all three and then said on the basis of what we've found out of all three: I'm going back to, say, a, or say, b, or whatever it may be.

LS: Offhand, only one name occurs to me. I mean, you are speaking now of—

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, [. . .] never was a philosopher, but a countryman of yours who turned away from philosophy after having dedicated his youth to philosophy, and that is David Hume. Or would you disagree with me, Mr. Miller?

Mr. Miller: I would disagree.

LS: You would not agree?

Mr. Miller: I would disagree.

LS: I see. All right. Then you see, I don't know a single example. Pardon?

Student: [xlv]Most of the interpreters would agree that his later works aren't too philosophical, but it would seem to me this is an error of interpretation of philosophy.

LS: I see. Good. And I think I know your argument in detail from the statement you gave me some time ago. I am willing to admit that the case is open. I do not think—for example, you find frequently that someone who is, say, a professor of philosophy and proves to have very great administrative abilities; and then his college or university is in great financial troubles and then he is pressured into becoming a president or administrator of some sort. That happens. And then [54]you can say he enjoys this wonderful feeling of having his fingers in so many pies, you know, and more than philosophy, but then I would say he has decayed some, a kind of premature senility.

Student: But Plato is surely an ambiguous fellow himself.

[xlv] Probably Mr. Miller again.

LS: Yes, in a way. Yes, although not as wicked as Macaulay presented him.[xlvi] No, surely Bacon liked all three kinds of pleasure, there is no question. Sure. That is a very great question, and this argument which was brought up in book 1 and which seemed so merely ridiculous, you know, the artisan strictly understood: you remember, for example, the physician who never makes a mistake and who is[55] as artisan in no way concerned with any remuneration.[xlvii] Whether this is so silly if applied to the philosopher, that is a great question. In other words, whether the philosopher strictly understood is not truly a very virtuous man, as Socrates always asserted, and whether the famous examples to the contrary do not—I mean, they would not detract from the fact that Bacon was an extremely gifted man. No one could possibly deny that, but that there was something very unphilosophic in his whole makeup in spite of the great philosophic powers which he possessed: you know, a corrupted philosopher, not because he took bribes (that is perhaps not so important, you know, I mean given the usages of that time, the early seventeenth century) but in a deeper sense. That's a great question. I haven't seen many philosophers, but I would say, in the few cases where I was sure they were philosophers, it so happened that they were extremely decent men and incorruptible. Yes?

Student: I would like to open this discussion a little bit.

LS: Yes?

Same student: In a complicated way, maybe, but in the chapter on "What is Ascetic Ideals,"[xlviii] Nietzsche gives a particular example of Schopenhauer, and here is a man who is pursued by erotic desires, and he is—

LS: Yes, but that is—

Same student: [He] gets great satisfaction in that sense. The movement for beauty is in a way an aesthetic movement . . . Do you accept that so far?

LS: Yes. Well, I mean, I don't know whether Schopenhauer is a very good example, but all right.

Same student: Yes. Well, I don't know how I can get to the merit. I would say that this is a—if Nietzsche is right on this basis, this is a satisfaction of—an escape from pain, one which is quieted at this stage . . .

[xlvi] Strauss might be referring to Macaulay's discussion of Plato in comparison to Francis Bacon in his review of *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England. A New Edition*, by Basil Montagu, 16 vols. (London: 1825-1834)," titled "Lord Bacon," in *Miscellaneous Works of Lord Macaulay*, edited by Lady Trevelyan, vol. 2, *Critical and Historical Essays* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880), 330-458.

[xlvii] Plato *Republic* 340d1ff.

[xlviii] Friedrich Nietzsche, "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?" *The Genealogy of Morals*, Third Essay (1887).

LS: No, I tell you why I am opposed to this question. Then we would have to open the whole question whether Nietzsche's psychological analyses are fundamentally sound. They are surely incompatible with Plato's analysis, because there is no *eros* strictly speaking in Nietzsche: there's a will to power, which is something entirely different. It is the same phenomenon and a radically different interpreter. Now let me—I'm sorry . . . and let us leave this whole question open and keep an open mind to the possibility of wicked philosophers. Yes? Good. We have to examine it; we cannot take Socrates's word for it. Socrates quietly said, ironically and unironically, that virtue is knowledge or knowledge is virtue. There is no question about it. And I think he meant it also literally, not in this simple sense as it is sometimes presented very beautifully by Xenophon, that if a man knows what the law of his country says, he is by this very fact a lawabiding and hence a just man.[xlix] That is of course an ironical and very amusing presentation. It would be very easy for all of us to be just if it were this way . . . We have to leave this other—although the decision depends absolutely on this question. Socrates proves the supremacy of the just man only in the case of the philosopher. You must not forget that. That becomes clear also in the third proof, by the way.

We have to say something about the end of the ninth book because that is so very important for the book as a whole, but most visibly important. Let us begin at 591c. Do you have that?

Mr. Reinken:
"Then the wise man will bend all his endeavours to this end throughout his life; he will, to begin with, prize the studies that will give this quality to his soul and disprize the others." "Clearly," he said.

LS: The other things, meaning things other than studies, yes? Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And then," I said, "he not only will not abandon the habit and nurture of his body to the brutish and irrational pleasure and live with his face set in that direction, but he will not even make health his chief aim, nor give the first place to the ways of becoming strong or healthy or beautiful unless these things are likely to bring with them soberness of spirit, but he will always be found attuning the harmonies of his body for the sake of the concord in his soul." (591c-d)

LS: In other words, if he thinks that the preoccupation with his bodily excellence creates any difficulties to the excellence of the soul, he will sacrifice it. Yes? But to the extent to which they are useful he will cultivate them. It's very clear. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"By all means," he replied, "if he is to be a true musician."

LS: "Truly musical." Yes?

[xlix] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.4.12-13.

Mr. Reinken:
"And will he not deal likewise with the ordering and harmonizing of his possessions? He will not let himself be dazzled by the felicitations of the multitude and pile up the mass of his wealth without measure, involving himself in measureless ills." "No, I think not," he said. "He will rather," I said, "keep his eye fixed on the constitution in his soul, and taking care and watching lest he disturb anything there either by excess or deficiency of wealth, will so steer his course and add to or detract from his health on this principle, so far as it may be." (591d-e)

LS: Yes. Now what does this mean in practical terms? What would be the rule that you would follow regarding wealth or property? Surely he will not engage in a life of infinite acquisition, that's clear. But what is the alternative, the extreme opposite of that?

Student: It wouldn't be "Live in Franciscan poverty."

LS: No! Very important. Not poverty, except—but of course Socrates was not so terribly poor, although he said—

Student: He had friends.

LS: He lived in—yes, the friends. And also, after all, the Greek word for poor does not mean a beggar in any way; it means simply that[56] he would have had to work. That's a poor man. But of course, if you have such friends as Socrates had, you don't have to work. That's another matter. So that is important. You saw the right point. Plato does not say he would live in evangelical poverty. He would not; a mean between wealth and poverty. Very important. Now we come to the other great object of human desires: honors.

Mr. Reinken:
"And in the matter of honors and office too this will be his guiding principle: He will gladly take part in and enjoy those which he thinks will make him a better man, but in public and private life he will shun those that may overthrow the established habit of his soul." (591e-592a)

LS: Let us stop here. Now what is the rule regarding honors? I mean, the case of wealth we have seen: a mean between wealth and poverty, because wealth, great wealth is a great burden, obviously, and poverty is—I mean, great poverty is also a great nuisance [for the] same reason. But what about honors, what's the rule?

Student: Honors are sort of self-education.

LS: Yes, I believe you—

Same student: But he won't rule for the benefit of others—

LS: You have understood it very well. That's indeed the point: self-improvement is the only motive for desire for honors—self-improvement, just as in the case that self-improvement is the motive for his economic policy, what he does regarding wealth and poverty. Is [it] not amazing? Yes, he goes into politics when he thinks it is good for his soul to go into politics. Yes?

Student: This is still a just man, is it not?

LS: Yes, of course.

Same student: Didn't we at one point establish, on a weak basis perhaps, but nevertheless establish justice . . . to some extent a charitable outlook for one's neighbors? I do not bring this into any biblical sense of the word charity, but at any rate, care for—

LS: Yes, that is perhaps then reconsidered. If it means—if what you call charity, which is of course not a Platonic word, if you mean by that gentleness—pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but perhaps—no, gentleness meaning the aversion to inflicting pain, and especially unnecessary pain, on others. Surely the good man or the philosopher is gentle. He cannot be savage, he cannot be a fanatic.

Student: I have the context: you're thinking of the point where the rulers of the best state will tell the philosophers to go down after fifteen years of philosophy . . .

LS: Yes, but how was this called there? I mean, how was this described, [57]how do the rulers bring [it] about that he goes down? Coercion.[l] Coercion. So in other words, we are speaking now of what he does of his own free will. As far as his own free will is concerned, he is only concerned with his improvement, self-improvement.

Student: [li]The thing I was driving at isn't part of self-improvement. Picking up somebody who is lying in your path instead of walking over them, would [that not] be part of this? The man who will not take the task of leading somebody else because it doesn't lead to his self-improvement wouldn't—

LS: Yes. Well, this is a delicate case. I mean, in this case I suppose that is almost the same as gentleness to helping. You must not forget this point: in this great argument with Polemarchus in the first book, Socrates proves that the just man doesn't harm anyone, because to harm people means to make them worse, just as dogs; and just as the sensible man would treat dogs nicely, otherwise they would become savage, he would not do this with his fellow man.[lii] That was his tough assertion. So he will not harm anyone, but it was never said that he will help everyone. That was the charge made by Cicero against

[l] See Plato *Republic* 539e2-540c2.
[li] Evidently Mr. Reinken, as becomes clear at the end of Strauss's ensuing remarks.
[lii] 335b2-d13.

Plato somewhere in the *Republic*, if I remember well, Cicero's *Republic*, that Plato didn't provide for this positive beneficence.[liii] That he said.

Now this—I'm sure that since Plato was a very decent man, as we can see on every page, we can be sure he did not mean this in any indecent way, but he surely didn't put any emphasis on this beneficence. Duty, without question; but duty means always the necessary, the imposed. Ya? The imposed. The other thing, [and] that I have explained on another occasion, is shown beautifully in the dialogues. There are voluntary dialogues and compulsory dialogues. When Socrates goes—the clearest example which occurs to me is the *Charmides*, [at] the beginning. Socrates comes back from war—duty, of course, duty—and then he goes to the gymnasium where Charmides and other gifted young men are and he relaxes. He is pleased; it is nice to talk to these people. Yes? Good. But when he has a conversation with Euthyphron, for example—a great bore, you can say—that is duty because one has to be polite. Yes? In the *Republic*, that is complicated. We have seen there was a long story: Was he kept there by force or was he kept there by persuasion? Well, the persuasion given at the beginning is of course of no use, because they don't go to the torch race, you will remember, and they don't get the dinner. But they get other pleasures there. Good. So the key point which is here and which Mr. Reinken has discerned—I'm very glad for that—is self-improvement is the motive, and that is amazing. Now what does Glaucon answer to that proposal, what he has said?

Mr. Reinken:
"Then, if that is his chief concern," he said, "he will not willingly take part in politics."

LS: Yes, he will not willingly take part in politics because—Glaucon makes this very simple inference—because there is no manifest connection between going into politics and self-improvement. Good. Now, and what does Socrates say?

Mr. Reinken:
"Yes, by the dog," said I, "in his own city he certainly will, yet perhaps not in the city of his birth, except in some providential conjuncture." (592a)

LS: Yes. Well, "if some divine chance should come in." You see, Socrates seems to be more political than Glaucon. Glaucon seems to have gone beyond the[58] [line][liv] by saying he will not go willingly into politics, and Socrates says: "By Zeus, he will go into politics in his own city, at any rate." Yes? "In his own city." And[59] one would of course think in Athens, for example, and he rules that out. This "own city" is not the fatherland. In the fatherland, he will do it only under some compulsion, now politely called some divine chance. Yes? So now what is this own city if it is not the fatherland? That is the great difficulty here. And what does Glaucon say?

Mr. Reinken:

[liii] See Cicero *Republic* 1.2-3, 1.9-11, but also 1.27-29.
[liv] In the transcript: "sign (?)"

"I understand," he said; "you mean the city whose establishment we have described, the city whose home is in words;[lv] for I think that it can be found nowhere on earth." (592a-b)

LS: Yes. No, "in words" is of course an impossible translation. "In speeches." In speeches. I mean, "in words": What are words? In speeches, in reasonings, [60]established by others. [61]Glaucon has now taken a very antipolitical stand. Yes? In the preceding speech and now again Socrates says: In his city, but perhaps not—"perhaps," by the way—not in his fatherland. And Glaucon says: Oh yes, in this city which is only in speeches, for where else would it be? And instead of "where else" he uses a more specific expression: "nowhere on earth." Nowhere on earth. [62][That] means in effect that he will never go into politics, because if it is only in speeches, he can go into politics only in speeches, i.e., not in deed. That is, in plain English, he will not go into politics. And now what does Socrates then say after this remark?

Mr. Reinken:
"Well," said I, "perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it—"

LS: You see—do you see what happened? Glaucon used a somewhat wrong expression, for him. He should have said this speech exists—this city is laid down in speeches, but nowhere is it in deed. Instead he said, "nowhere is it on earth." This gives Socrates the opening for saying: "Perhaps it is in heaven." Now what does that mean here, "in heaven"? Socrates doesn't say it is in heaven, but a model of it is perhaps established in heaven. What could that be? I mean, you must not be misguided by biblical analogies, the heavenly city, but[63] what does he mean by that?

Student: The planets and stars?

LS: Yes, the heavenly bodies and their order. That order—[64]after all, you can also call it a *polis*, because it is a group of things consisting of many, and which form an ordered whole [and which are] to that extent a *polis*. And this cosmic order is perhaps a model of—by looking at which we can build up, edify—you know, edify in the literal sense means of course to build a house. We build ourselves up, we edify ourselves, by looking at that image of a perfect order, the heaven, the starred heaven. That is what Socrates—no, how does he go on?

Mr. Reinken:
"for him who wishes to contemplate it and so beholding to constitute himself its citizen. But it makes no difference whether it exists now or ever will come into being. The politics of the city only will be his and of none other."

LS: You know that Socrates is now very—yes? The last speech of Glaucon.

Mr. Reinken:

[lv] In original: "in the ideal"

"That seems probable," he said. (592b)

LS: Yes. Ah ha. So in other words, no participation in politics, says Socrates now, in any other city under any condition except in the best regime. That's the last word of Socrates. So the practical result of the inquiry for the best political order is nonparticipation in politics for all practical purposes. That's clearly the end of the story, and as Socrates says, [65]it doesn't make any difference whether it is somewhere or will be. Yes? It should make a great difference, because then he could go into politics, but because he is concerned with his self-improvement decisively it is under no crucial terms and of very great importance whether he should go into politics even in the best *polis*. That's the end of it. I think it is in perfect agreement with that interpretation according to which the best *polis* of the *Republic* is not possible. But now someone raised—oh, Mr. Butterworth, what was your question?

Mr. Butterworth: I think it has been answered in this interpretation. At the beginning of the course it seemed that we denied the possibility of the image, the idea, of the city existing . . . Now then it seems that we would say this does exist, the idea, even though—

LS: Yes, that is a great question. On the contrary. I mean, why does he have to refer to a model perhaps being, and [being] visible in heaven if the best city is an idea, something visible only to the mind's eye and therefore not visible in heaven? Why does he have to refer to it?

Mr. Butterworth: Well, my thought was that we can have no inkling of what the best possible city could be if there were no such model.

LS: Yes, but did we ever refer—I mean, there was a reference to the usefulness of astronomical studies, but did astronomical observations of any kind play any role in the establishing of the city in speech? None whatever.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but that was a simile. The perfect statesman was compared to a pilot having a perfect knowledge of astronomy, but[66] no knowledge of the heavenly bodies was used in any way for the building up of the best city.[lvi]

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, Plato uses—Plato has a word when he speaks half poetically about the place of the ideas. Do you know he says that in the *Phaedrus*? In a "super-heavenly" place.[lvii] I mean, if he wants to use spatial expressions, he says "in a place above heaven," not in heaven. What is in heaven belongs simply to the visible being.

[lvi] Plato *Republic* 488a1-489a7.
[lvii] *Phaedrus* 247c3-e2.

Now I think it is of the essence of the Platonic best polity, both here and in the *Laws*—and in Aristotle's *Politics* too—that this thing, the best regime, is only in speeches. If I may use such an awful word, its "ontological" character is to be only in speeches. Even if as the best polity of the *Laws* and of Aristotle's *Politics* it is capable of being also in deed, that is not of its essence; that is accidental. It may come into being, but it is not of its essence to be in deed: it is of its essence to be in speech. It seems to me that this is the ancient model of what we call now an "ideal." The perfection of man is not an "ideal," because the perfection of man is something toward which man is ordered by his nature and which is possible. [67]Some men become perfect as far as human perfection is meant, but the perfect city is essentially a blueprint; and what happened in modern times, I believe, is that the so-called moral ideals, meaning the goal for the individual, takes on the character which in Plato and Aristotle the best *polis* had. The classic document of this is Spinoza's *Ethics*, book 4, preface, where Spinoza describes the ontological character of the end of man, of human perfection, and[68] here you see beautifully what happened. Spinoza rejects teleology: there are no natural ends, but we humans are so constituted that we must order our lives and we must think therefore of the end toward which we are going to build ourselves up. That is necessary. I mean, Spinoza had not yet come to the refinement of present-day social science, where you don't have to do anything about it; you got your values by the very fact that you are a human being, just as today everyone has a personality whether he has done anything about it or not, whereas originally a personality meant something which is the end result of a very long and arduous process of self-education. But today every beachcomber, of course, and perhaps even more than anyone else, has a personality. Yes? We know that now.

Now, and Spinoza[69] made it clear that[70] while there are no natural ends, we must make such an end: we must figure it out. We—and to use a term which is now so common—we must project it: the free project of man. Free not in the sense in which it is used now, meaning that there is no reasoning and figuring out involved. When the existentialists speak of projects[71] there is no reference to figuring out, as I'm sure you know, but in these older times when reason was still in higher regard, the least that was expected is that you figure it out sensibly—figure it out. But still[72] it is as little directly supported by nature as the best *polis* in Plato or Aristotle. It has certain [basis],[lviii] a point on which it is based, yes? Pardon?

Student: Foundations.

LS: Yes, foundations, something of this [kind]. Foundations somehow in nature, but in itself it is not natural. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no. I'm arguing now on the premise that[73] the official thesis of the *Republic* is that it's possible. Sure.

Student: It is possible.

[lviii] The transcript has a blank space here.

LS: Yes, sure. I mean, in any general discussion one has to start from the explicit assertion that it is possible, and in a deeper study one would have to go into the question: Is it in fact possible?

Student: And Spinoza's projection?

LS: Yes, is also meant to be possible, sure. That is already a more radical statement of the issue in Kant, where the ideals cannot be reached; but in Kant on the other hand, the ideal is of course in Kant also [an] ideal of reason. Yes? Ideal of reason, and [it] has no relation to nature, no relation to nature; but it is an ideal of reason and that's to say it is more than merely figured out. That's the difference here. Yes?

Student: Would it be fair to ask . . . how is it that the tyrant differs so much here from his counterpart in the *Laws*?

LS: From his?

Student: Counterpart in the *Laws*.

LS: Yes. Well, [74]Plato's doctrine of the tyrant, that is a very, very long question, and you can say that the surface teaching of Plato is that it's a very simple teaching in favor of rule of laws, and therefore against tyranny as a grave disease of the body politic. It's straightforward, clear. But when he goes deeper, difficulties arise and[75] —[take] the simple case, Athenian tyrants. They have a very bad reputation in the democracy, but people who thought more about it and simply did not accept every myth of the democracy—for example, Thucydides—said: Well, they were by no means so bad; there were gross exaggerations made and they were[76], well, men with certain merits and qualities. There's a discussion in Thucydides to this effect, and there is also in Plato's *Hipparchus* a discussion.[lix]

Now here in the *Republic* he talks primarily about two noble young gifted Athenians, very [77]well bred but also endangered by their standing, by the opportunities going with that standing, and that seems to have been a rather common thing among these most advantageously-placed young Athenians of any spirit. For example, there is a beautiful dialogue, *Theages*, which is also regarded as spurious now for some silly reasons, and there is a young Athenian who comes to Socrates and wants to be together with Socrates—I mean, you know, there was no school where you [went]—to be together to talk to him. And Socrates is eager to find out why precisely that the son of a very respectable upstate gentleman, in this case—I mean, outside of Athens, you know, in the inland—[wants to meet him].[78] He finds out after a very few steps that what this young Theages wants is to become the tyrant of Athens. I mean, very skin deep beneath the surface there is a desire to have the maximum of power and to do what he likes with the *polis*. Well, he is very young, but still; and so something has to be [done].[lx] In Glaucon

[lix] Thucydides 6.53-59; Plato *Hipparchus* 228b4-229d7.
[lx] *Theages* 124e1ff. The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

and Adeimantus, that there are all kinds of things going on within you could see from the eloquent speech Glaucon made—I mean, he protests a trifle too much there: "I don't believe these things; I only say [what] some people say, but I don't know what to say against them." So in other words, what he had been told as a very young child[79] is no longer believable to him. And Socrates talks to these people in a way which—I mean, no monkey business: You have to be lawabiding citizens, and that's all there is to it; and you should even purge yourself of this silly pontifical ambition, which Glaucon probably had at that time.

I read yesterday the conversation in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* between Socrates and Glaucon.[lxi] You have heard of that. But in the *Laws* he talks to two men around seventy, old men; I mean, men who are no longer in danger of doing silly things. You know? [80]I mean they are old, they are not senile; and if they were senile you could say they [can't do][lxii] anything. That would be unimportant. So they are old men and beyond the dangerous years, and serious men concerned with the well-being of their communities and with the order of these communities; and there in this discussion he says quite rightly: What would be the best way of having a top *polis*? I mean, assuming there is a man of great intelligence who could lay down a code for that? Answer: If there were an individual of absolute power who simply would ram that perfect code down the citizens' throats. Yes? This is a very bad simile, but you know what I mean. He can simply get it done. But even there he takes great precautions. The Athenian Stranger, the hero there, doesn't say that. He has a fictitious dialogue with that legislator, and he asks the legislator: "What would you regard as an optimum condition for a speedy adoption of your code?" And then he says: "Give me a young tyrant."[lxiii] You see? So even here there is a certain academic element about it. You know? All right. In the *Phaedrus*, there is a description—a list, a hierarchic order of nine types of life.[lxiv] Nine types. And at the top is political philosopher—I don't remember it now, but I'm almost—

Student: The bottom is the political man?

LS: Pardon:

Student: Isn't the bottom the political life?

LS: No, the lowest, number nine, is the tyrant. Yes, but in this case, there is a double list: you can be all these things, good or bad. [81]In other words, here is an admission of the possibility of a good tyrant, but a good tyrant would still be lower than a good poet or a good musician or whatever the other things are. But there is a good tyrant. Aristotle would never say there is a good tyrant. He says the tyrant can at best be half-wicked. [82]You know, Aristotle is like Jane Austen: never any impropriety, but—no, that is true. You never find any impropriety in Aristotle. Plato has certain delicate improprieties from time to time, and that is one of them. No, but look, if you read the *Seventh Letter*, there

[lxi] Xenophon *Memorabilia* 3. 6
[lxii] The transcript has a blank space here.
[lxiii] *Laws* 709d10-711d4.
[lxiv] *Phaedrus* 248c2-e5.

was a tyrant in Syracuse; a tyranny was established there and Plato tried to convince that fellow—an unworthy fellow fundamentally, Dionysius—to be a bit more sensible both in his own interest to make his rule more stable and more lasting, and of course chiefly in the interest of the Greeks of Sicily. He failed deplorably, but he thought it is his duty to do so. People would say: "Well, you talk, and then[83] you don't like[84] [to travel by sea] from Athens to Syracuse. What a coward you are, and what a bad reputation will philosophy get through that cowardice." And compelled by this argument taken from decency, Plato went, but he didn't achieve anything, you know.[lxv]

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but one thing given another, sure he did. I mean, do you think a man of self-respect will behave in a disgraceful manner? He did so, but the question is still the consideration of decency and the opposite of disgrace is still a consideration of a compulsory kind, as distinguished from the purely voluntary thing, voluntary in the radical sense: where your soul goes out to, spontaneously. Yes?

Student: Would Aristotle's action in spending so much time with the young Alexander—that he might have been—

LS: Yes, Alexander was a—oh, you are not—

Student: Wasn't he a young tyrant?

LS: Of course not. He was a legitimate king. How can you—

Student: He might have been a legitimate king of Macedon, but he certainly wasn't a legitimate king of Persia or Athens.

LS: Excuse me, but what—you have so wrong notions. If he wins, conquers countries in war, then you don't recognize that? I mean, there were no United Nations at that time. [85]You can say all these things are hypocrisy—and there is an element of hypocrisy, I wouldn't deny that—but it[86] was not mere hypocrisy, because there were truly mitigating, restraining things. I mean, that the Romans had this beautiful line and they said Rome is a perfectly just empire, you know; the Romans were very severe men, in a way more severe than the Spartans, at least in their good times . . . and later on, when they became rich they became unbearable, but[87] in their early age they were only unbearable because of their severity but not because of corruption and this kind of thing. And what did they say? They earned their empire in a perfectly legitimate manner. Very simply, [88]they didn't conquer other people's countries or cities. They had their allies, and[89] the allies were attacked, and they had to come to their help, and they defeated the enemies of the allies. And of course these were very wicked men, these assailants of the allies, and so they took the country after the defeat. And they couldn't help it if at the end of it all their allies were surrounded by conquered cities of their enemies, and so the allies were simply subjects of the Romans this way. You know, if you are surrounded on all sides by a

[lxv] See *Seventh Letter* 328d2ff.

certain power, you are subject to that power. Do you know that axiom of foreign politics? I think in my textbook of foreign politics it will be one of the axioms. Yes.[90]

And Cicero, who was an intelligent man, presents in a way this myth of Rome as a perfectly just empire for the edification of his fellow men, because it is true [that] it does not make men better to believe that they are very wicked. That was at least the opinion of classical antiquity.[lxvi] Well, of course, if you have biblical beliefs in repentance and the possibility of repentance and also institutions for that, this is another story, but that was not available in classical antiquity. If you think reasonably well of yourself, that's good for you. [91]I have stated this better on other occasions; the proper formulation doesn't occur to me [now]. [92]To think of oneself as an evil man—and of course not think of any possibility of getting rid of these evil things, that is the implication—is not good. And if the Romans believe in their justice, that will act occasionally as a restraint. In given situations, they can be dissuaded from doing something indecent by saying: Look, Romans don't do that, they never did. And even if they did on some occasions, this kind of thing plays a certain role. I mean, it is not the most savory part of human nature, but it is not altogether negligible. And I think—yes, Cicero, as I say, in his *Republic* takes this overall line: Rome became great in the absolutely just manner by defending the allies or resisting unjust attack on herself, of course. And yet when he gives—when you read the detailed account of the emergence of the Roman empire, I think in the second book of the *Republic*, unfortunately fragmentary, but still you can see, if you read that, quite a few things which are brought out which were not so absolutely just. And of course the Romans had also other things which would shock you—most of us, or all of us, even—which they regarded as perfectly okay and which would be regarded as utterly hypocritical. There is this beautiful story from the Samnite Wars.[lxvii] What was that? I mean, they used their own sacred law. Do you remember this story? Machiavelli uses it so nicely in [his *Discourses* on] *Livy*.[lxviii] I forgot now what it was. Well, they wanted to get out a of a peace which was very favourable to the Romans, and then they brought about the situation by some real trick: a Roman ambassador did something which led to the consequence that one of these Samnites, I believe, had a—

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no, he beat him or something of this kind, and then he said: The peace is broken. So, but it was deliberately broken by them, and in order to comply with a very severe religious law of the Romans regarding peace and war. You know,[93] the old wars were in a way holy wars. Yes? I forgot that now. Yes, surely this is so, but the question is simply: If the amenities and the hypocrisies going with them are completely disregarded—completely, I mean, that would be the consequence of that—wouldn't man be better off? I have observed this in my own very limited experience in the difference between Germany and England. I hope, Mr. Morrison, you permit that story.[lxix] And the Germans

[lxvi] See Cicero *Republic* 2.2ff.; *De Officiis* 2.26-29.
[lxvii] The Samnite Wars (343-290 BC) were fought by the Roman Republic in its effort to expand into what is now Italy.
[lxviii] Livy 9.8-12; Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, book 3, chapters 41-42.
[lxix] Mr. Morrison is British.

always said the British are very hypocritical; and André Siegfried,[lxx] a famous European, French political scientist once told this story because continentals can't understand the British and this country. And that the British were indignant about a French measure—oh yes, the French marched into the Ruhr in 1923 because of an alleged—you know, the Germans—what was the matter? The Germans hadn't paid, or whatever it was, and the British were absolutely indignant by this one single-handed and wholly illegal action of the French, and then Siegfried explained—he had a very good knowledge of British history—gave the Englishmen clear examples where Britain had done exactly the same thing, and then the Englishmen said . . .[lxxi]

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[1] What does Glaucon—well."
[2] Deleted "is not."
[3] Deleted "there is a."
[4] Deleted "is he."
[5] Deleted "you know?"
[6] Deleted "LS: Pardon? Mr. Sachs: Lawless—."
[7] Deleted "Yes, he uses even a."
[8] Deleted "but it would."
[9] Deleted "that there is."
[10] Deleted "of."
[11] Deleted "That's only the question—we come—."
[12] Deleted "You see here also the—yes, this is of course."
[13] Deleted "That is."
[14] Deleted "or."
[15] Deleted "So he, he is—yes."
[16] Deleted "So now."
[17] Deleted "the question—yes, we have, so."
[18] Deleted "No, that is."
[19] Deleted "No. Yes, no."
[20] Deleted "So we have."
[21] Deleted "If he is, I mean."
[22] Deleted "The competence is here."
[23] Deleted "out of."
[24] Deleted "they don't know of."
[25] Deleted "that—you know."
[26] Deleted "Now this you can—all right, go on."
[27] Deleted "I think they."
[28] Deleted "So that, that."
[29] Deleted "That—we would have to."
[30] Deleted "For example, what would be—I mean, he is now."
[31] Deleted "to rule."
[32] Deleted "well, he may not."
[33] Deleted "What is, I mean."
[34] Deleted "as very miserable."
[35] Deleted "no, that."
[36] Deleted "there was no."
[37] Deleted "I mean, that is."
[38] Deleted "we are through."
[39] Deleted "is."

[lxx] André Siegfried (1875-1959), professor at Collège de France and a member of the French Academy. Author of *Tableau des États-Unis* (1954) and *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui* (1927).
[lxxi] The transcriber notes that the tape ended here.

[40] Deleted "no, here it is."
[41] Deleted "Glaucon."
[42] Deleted "therefore."
[43] Deleted "Yes, now what is the precise."
[44] Deleted "Pardon? 581e. Yes, the last speech there."
[45] Deleted "who."
[46] Deleted "and the just man."
[47] Deleted "Yes, now this, yes."
[48] Deleted "the body can be."
[49] Deleted "Now, and it is, yes."
[50] Deleted "and then."
[51] Deleted "yet."
[52] Deleted "his love, his envy because of love of victory, violence—no, love of honor, his victory by."
[53] Deleted "Here is."
[54] Deleted "what, you know."
[55] Deleted "in no."
[56] Deleted "he could not."
[57] Deleted "yes, but how was it, what do the rulers."
[58] Deleted "sign."
[59] Deleted "that, one would think."
[60] Deleted "here, what we, yes."
[61] Deleted "So Glaucon comes back again—you know, there is."
[62] Deleted "And it can only—yes, and that is."
[63] Deleted "what does it."
[64] Deleted "this is."
[65] Deleted "it doesn't—he says even."
[66] Deleted "not, I mean, the."
[67] Deleted "I mean which."
[68] Deleted "that."
[69] Deleted "makes this clear."
[70] Deleted "this is something."
[71] Deleted "they don't mean."
[72] Deleted "it has the same."
[73] Deleted "it is."
[74] Deleted "that, you see, that is a."
[75] Deleted "and that, for example, that."
[76] Deleted "quite."
[77] Deleted "brought up."
[78] Deleted "and when."
[79] Deleted "does no longer."
[80] Deleted "Well, no, they are not."
[81] Deleted "You have a good."
[82] Deleted "He cannot."
[83] Deleted "you are."
[84] Deleted "that to travel of the sea transportation."
[85] Deleted "And that is, I mean, that is."
[86] Deleted "is not mere."
[87] Deleted "when they."
[88] Deleted "I mean."
[89] Deleted "yes, and they, I mean."
[90] Deleted "so that is, of course."
[91] Deleted "that was the general."
[92] Deleted "But there was—this certain."
[93] Deleted "they were very."

Session 15: November 28, 1961
Book 10: Poetry

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —and it was very thoughtful. You began with the question of the very root of the problem of poetry as presented in book 10, and that the verdict on poetry there must be understood as the verdict in the light of philosophy.[i] Therefore, one has to understand what philosophy is, what the problem of philosophy is, in order to see why this is necessarily connected with the problem of poetry. And[1] if I understood you correctly, the key point was here all philosophic. All philosophy as speech is imitations of what philosophy is concerned with, and this is the root of the similarity and dissimilarity of philosophy and poetry. That was the point, and this was a very good and helpful beginning, and you have made many remarks which were very impressive.

I mention only one point. It is not quite clear where Plato speaks of—surely, he means everything that we understand by art, but in certain sections the emphasis is entirely on tragic poetry, and then the key example is painting rather than any poetry. And then, as the emphatic remarks about Homer show, poetry as such is still the theme. There is a certain difficulty here. Now[2] when you spoke of the painting, you pointed out that Socrates presented himself as the painter—it's in book 6—if not himself, at any rate the actual founder.[ii] That is not so important. And here you said the philosopher is also a poet.

Now here of course there is a minor point, a point which has to be considered. What he describes there in book 6 is the political philosopher, you would have to say, not the philosopher. That would affect it.[3] You brought out very clearly the very close kinship between philosophy and poetry in Plato's opinion. No human pursuit, one could say, is in Plato's view as close to philosophy as poetry, and yet there is also a radical difference. Now when you spoke of that difference—I will bring out the point where I most clearly disagree with you and take up the other points later. When you spoke of tragedy, that in a way what Plato is doing is the true tragedy, you quoted a passage from the *Laws*: the true tragedy, and where you describe now the relation of the true tragedy to the tragedy proper, if one can make this distinction, with what everyone calls tragedy.[iii] Then you referred to what tragedy originally meant. You spoke of the ritual origin of tragedy as tragedy—a religious act, as it were, and then you said: Well,[4] in Athens in Plato's time this was no longer so visible. That had withered away, I believe you said.

Student: The underlying basis had; not necessarily the external forms had been changed, but they had, I think to some extent . . . the basic beliefs, sort of . . . religion.

LS: In other words, it was no longer some celebration of a god or hero.

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[i] Strauss comments on a student's paper (probably Mr. Morrison), read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] Plato *Republic* 500d10-501c9.
[iii] *Laws* 817b1-5.

Student: Well,[5] can I make a comparison between Christmas nowadays—

LS: Yes, sure. Yes, I understood you. No, no, that doesn't affect it. I mean, what I find wrong with your point is not affected by that, and therefore this failed, this broke down; and therefore, or with a view to that the new "tragedy" emerged, say, the Platonic dialogue. Yes, well, there is something wrong with this kind of interpretation, and I will state it on the lowest level, on the level of—how did he call them?—the new peoples, namely, this: Does Plato make a distinction between the original tragedy and the decayed tragedy, as he does make a distinction from time to time between the older statesmen, say, up to the Persian Wars, and the statesmen of his own time? You know? In other words, Plato admittedly speaks of a decay of the *polis*; does he speak of a decay of tragedy?

Student: [6]I would say not.

LS: Yes, because even if—

Student: . . . tragedians in this book at all.

LS: No, but even if he does—for example, if the present-day classical scholar would say that Agathon, the tragic poet presented in the *Banquet*, this[7] marks the decline even from Euripides, to say nothing of Sophocles and Aeschylus, [but] there is no Platonic suggestion to this effect. Yes? In the *Banquet*—

Student: No. Then perhaps he has to—

LS: [8]Well, I would say this: one should try . . . to understand Plato's thought as Plato meant it. If we have very reliable extraneous information either from other books or from diggings—you know [. . .] are now[9] diggings—we have no right to impute this knowledge to Plato. It is conceivable that these [discoveries]—for example, what we know now about the contributions of the various cities to the Athenian League, that they didn't know anything about [them from] Thucydides. You know? Now if we know something about something which[10] would be much more interesting to Plato, about the[11] origin of tragedy and its religious ritual origin, did Plato know that? Aristotle wrote a kind of history of tragedy in his *Poetics*.[iv] The emphasis is not very strong on these matters, and rather the picture is this way: whatever these origins may have been, they were very low, and tragedy[12] [became] what it was only in the classical period, you know, when these origins were no longer decisive.[13] I mean, I call this kind of explanation "historicist" explanation, and[14] this is not meant as a special criticism of your statement but I have to use every opportunity to bring home some elementary verities, and if they occur in class they are much more convenient than if they [occur elsewhere], to quote writers. Merely to try to understand the thought of a man in the light of something which by its very nature is less knowable and less known than the thought of the author can be [questionable].

[iv] Aristotle *Poetics* 1448b24-1449a30.

I give you another—in case I have to make this clear. There are people who, when they read Machiavelli, for example, say: "Well, the first thing we know about Machiavelli is that he lived in the Renaissance." And we know of course what the Renaissance is: Burkhardt[v] wrote about it and quite a few men. Today every textbook has a chapter on the Renaissance, and then we know what the Renaissance is; and then we read Machiavelli in the light of the Renaissance. Now this "Renaissance," this concept of "Renaissance" is a composite made by modern scholars on the basis of books, paintings, sculptures, and other documents produced, say, between 1400 and 1500. Whether this thing existed for Machiavelli at all is a question which can be answered only by studying Machiavelli. Then you will find that people[15]—he refers to the fact that people dig up old statues and admire them. You know?[vi] And this, if you call that the rebirth of antiquity, all right, but it's not more than that [that] you can [say]. That would be a start. Do you see this? Good. But that was the only fundamental point where I differed. I believe[16] this procedure here had one effect on your paper as a whole—which, to repeat, I liked very much indeed—and that is the difference between poetry and philosophy, what became less clear than the similarity or identity of philosophy and poetry. Can you state in one or two sentences what, in your opinion, the difference between poetry and philosophy according to Plato is?

Same Student: Well, I think you've basically got to look at the—in the second half of the book, I think, at the psychological level in the various—this is the first place to look—in the nature of the parts of the souls, as he puts it, to which they refer, particularly the fact that philosophy, unlike poetry, has what you would [call] analytical procedures. It has access to the misery to correct the delusion. This is—and he tends to stress that, as you might say, trying to produce order out of chaos instead of—whereas this is the most important thing. Also, I think the philosopher, in writing, in actually writing his dramas or in making his poetry, does so [produce order out of chaos]; and being a philosopher he does have knowledge of the forms and the higher modes of the things of the soul. This is an assumption, I think, that you've got to make, which the poet *qua* poet doesn't necessarily have at all and that his, [the philosopher's], models therefore will be in a sense better imitations of what has to be done than the poet's would be.

LS: I see.

Student: These are the two main things by which—

LS: Yes. That makes sense, and here you can surely quote chapter and verse, you know? But we know also, and you have given us a good example, a very good example of that, that the mere quoting of chapter and verse never solves this question, yes?[17] Let us now first have a coherent discussion of the first half of book 10, and then perhaps Mr. Morrison, you take up your point by giving a criticism of the interpretation which I would suggest. Is this all right? Good.

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[v] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860).
[vi] Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, book I, preface.

Now let us look first at the most general thing regarding the context. The description of the perfect man and the perfect *polis* was concluded at the end of book 7. Book[s] 8 and 9 present the imperfect cities and the imperfect men; that means a descent has begun, and I would say offhand this descent continues until the end of the book. This is not surprising, because the general [movement] of a Platonic work is ascent–descent, and there are of course—the peak does not necessarily lie here. It may also have this form, this [. . .] form, and conceivably even this form.[vii] That depends, but there is generally speaking ascent followed by descent, and this is[18] [confirmed] externally by the fact that if we read quite simply, poetry is presented as something, while very resplendent and enjoyable, but a real menace . . . poetry is something defective. And in the second half we will get a myth which by its nature—we have to see whether it is truly a myth, but I'm speaking now only of first impressions—which as myth is of course inferior to the *logos*, the truth about the soul and the *polis* which has been given.

In addition, the argument of book[s] 8 and 9 was still necessary for solving the fundamental issue, [19]the just or unjust life, because for deciding the issue you had to have a complete picture of the perfectly just man and the perfectly unjust man, but the perfectly unjust man came to light only with the tyrant in book 9. And so the argument[20] which started at the beginning of book 2 is concluded at the end of book 9, and one can say just as book 1 was the prelude to the whole thing, book 10 is a kind of epilogue. The argument opened through Glaucon's long speech in beginning of book[21] [2] is concluded at the end of book 9. And the subject, very surprisingly, here, the first subject of book 10 is poetry. Now why? Why? The question of the right life has been decided at the end of book 9[22] in this more emphatic form: the right life is the philosophic life and not the political life.[23] We read this last time.

But now I deviate from Plato, from what Plato explicitly says: the life of wisdom is the right life. But there are two kinds of wisdom, and they are philosophy and poetry; and the question which is still open is, then, What kind of wisdom? Because the question of poetry has not yet been settled. Why has it not been settled in book[s] 2 and 3? What was the general outcome of the discussion of poetry in book[s] 2 to 3? What would you say? Yes?

Student: Well, what it lacks—the two elements comparing with this, what it lacks are, first of all, the so to speak philosophical connection with the forms, and this kind of thing; and secondly, the tripartite partition of the soul.

LS: Yes, but[24] what was the point of view from which poetry was judged in book[s] 2 and 3?

Student: Its effect on education, in education.

Different student: The political.

[vii] It is possible that Strauss is writing on the blackboard here.

LS: Political, yes. And now we have learned in book 9 that the political point of view is insufficient.[25] Poetry was—I exaggerate a bit—condemned in the name of the *polis*, but now the *polis* is condemned and poetry raises again its ugly head, and we have to face that issue. Yes? In dramatic terms, poetry has been discussed in a conversation with Adeimantus chiefly in book[s] 2 and 3. Now we have the Glauconic discussion. And the difference between the two men, as we have gradually seen, is this: Adeimantus is an austere moderate man given to temperance, [who] has something in common with a stern oligarch; Glaucon is a much more daring individual, and therefore the most daring thing, the doctrine of the good and so on, is[26] most fully developed in the Glaucon sections. So we have a much more daring, a much more radical discussion of poetry in book 10.[27] So then I think we should start from this point. Also this: What was the immediate context? You said education [was the context] in which poetry was discussed in book[s] 2 and 3, but more specifically, what part of education?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Taste. Yes, what kind of taste? . . . I mean, the very first kind of taste.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, I didn't mean that. At the very beginning: untrue stories. Untrue stories. And then this is developed: which stories are to be told about gods and about Hades and so on, and the principle is accepted that untrue stories must be told, but then in the course of the argument it becomes somewhat unclear. Are these stories true or untrue? That becomes unclear, but the starting point was untrue stories.[viii] Now what has to be said about the gods according to the theology of book 2? You know, what Homer says about the gods is absolutely a disgrace; we have to tell another kind of stories about gods. But how are the gods to be presented, in one formula? The gods must not be presented, for example, as fighting with one another, because this is a bad model: then they, the young, think that fights within a family[28] [are] a good thing, and fight against one's own father and all this kind of thing. So the gods must be presented as what? Positively. Pardon?

Student: Harmonious, just.

LS: Yes. They must be presented as possessing all the virtues. They must be presented as models of moral and political excellence. That's implied. It is not easy in all cases, for example, how to present Aphrodite. As a good housewife would be a rather tall order, but in the case of others it can be done. Now what was the model for moral and political excellence in the whole play, as I almost said? We reached a somewhat more precise definition of excellence. What is justice according to the key formula of the *Republic*? What is it? Well, that every one of you knows at a first reading. What is justice according to—

Student: It means doing your own business.

[viii] Plato *Republic* 377a1ff.

LS: Yes, one man, one job. Differently stated, the artisan is the model, and therefore[29] if he presents the god at the beginning of book 10 as the artisan of artisans—the artisan who makes the highest things, the ideas—that is in a way a conclusion from the whole argument.[ix] The gods are models of moral and political excellence, but the moral and political excellence is modeled itself on artisanship. Therefore, the final conclusion is the god as a super-artisan, the artisan of ideas. This is only another point where the connection between the preceding argument is, I think, very clear. But still, Plato gives an explicit reason why he takes up poetry. Shall we read that, the first two speeches in book 10?

Mr. Reinken:
"And truly," I said, "many other considerations assure me that we were entirely right in our organization of the state, and especially, I think, in the matter of poetry." "What about it?" he said.

LS: You see the absolute abruptness of the turn to poetry. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"In refusing to admit at all so much of it as is imitative; for that it is certainly not to be received is, I think, still more plainly apparent now that we have distinguished the several parts of the soul." (595a-b)

LS: Yes. So in other words, what was needed for a more advanced discussion of poetry is the distinction of the various kinds of the soul. But what can he mean by that? When were the various kinds of the soul discussed in book[s] 8 and 9. What kinds of soul were discussed in book[s] 8 and 9?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Ah ha. Very good. In other words, the parts of the soul, the kinds of soul are not here by any chance the reasoning, the spirited, and the appetitive parts which we had discussed much earlier, but the bad types. So we know now all types, all kinds of souls: the royal soul, the tyrannical soul, and the intermediate souls. Only then can we take up the problem of poetry, and that is the first indication of what Mr. Morrison pointed out: the theme of poetry[30] [is] the various kinds of soul. This however is the most important subject also of philosophy, and here the two forms of wisdom compete. [They] compete. That's the conflict. Now let us turn then to the argument beginning—we cannot, unfortunately, read everything—in 596a5 to 9, I mean the second speech in 596, where Socrates[31] begins to lay the foundation[32] [for] his accusation of poetry. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Shall we, then, start the inquiry at this point by our customary procedure? We are in the habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name. Do you not understand?" "I do." (596a)

[ix] 596a5-597d8.

LS: Do you see? Now that is very interesting; that is a very sweeping statement about the so-called doctrine of ideas. Yes? Whenever we have many things to which we apply the same word, the same name, then in these cases we assume that there is a single form or idea. For example, lectern. Yes? Lectern: this lectern, many lecterns; we have all kinds of lecterns. There must be an idea of lectern. I don't want to use my dog again, so let us take for a change a [. . .]: yes: one [. . .], another [. . .], and so on. There must be an idea of the [. . .] or grief—that is grief. I mean, let us assume that this word grief would [. . .] so there are—and so on and so on, and then there must be an idea of grief. Good. It is a particularly simplistic and in a way wholly unintelligible doctrine, but let us leave it at that.

Now Glaucon: Does Glaucon know the doctrine of ideas? That is of some importance for the understanding of the dramatic [character] of the *Republic*. Socrates speaks of the accustomed method, accustomed way of procedure, and that is—yes, we are accustomed. Who these "we" are is not said. Socrates is surely one of them, but whether Glaucon is one of them is absolutely unclear. I would say the statement in fact excludes that Glaucon belongs to them, because if he knew it, if he was an initiate, Socrates wouldn't have to say: Do you understand? Glaucon understands it immediately at first hearing, but it is extremely simple to understand this assertion, of course, without being able to judge of it. That's another matter, but the mere assertion [is that] whenever we have a multiplicity of things called by the same name, then we speak of one class. The Greek word used here, *eidos*, means also "class" and not merely "idea" in a very technical sense, so there is no difficulty. And now then here he introduces—go on, Mr. Reinken, where you left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"In the present case, then, let us take any multiplicity you please; for example, there are many couches and tables." "Of course." "But these utensils imply, I suppose, only two ideas or forms, one of a couch and one of a table." "Yes." "And are we not also in the habit of saying that the craftsman who produces either of them fixes his eyes on the idea or form, and so makes in the one case the couches and in the other the tables that we use, and similarly of other things? For surely no craftsman makes the idea itself. How could he?" "By no means." (595b-c)

LS: You see again what Glaucon assents to is only something very limited: that no craftsman makes the idea with a view to which all craftsmen, say, all carpenters, make tables. Yes? The key point is of course that here the example of ideas[33] are artifacts, but this is perfectly in accordance with the spirit of the whole work, the key role of art and artisans. I mean, if art is the key to the *polis*, and the *polis* is the most important theme—in a way the key, the *polis* itself the key to everything—then artifacts also should be the key to all being. That would follow. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But now consider what name you would give to this craftsman." "What one?" "Him who makes all the things that all handicraftsmen severally produce." "A truly clever and wondrous man you tell of." "Ah, but wait, and you will say so indeed, for this same handicraftsman is not only able to make all implements, but he produces all plants and

animals, including himself, and thereto earth and heaven and the gods and all things in heaven and in Hades under the earth." "A most marvelous sophist," he said. (595c-d)

LS: Yes. So here he—in other words, after having brought up the subject of the models of the artisans, of the craftsmen, and the craftsman himself, he[34] begins now to lead up to the subject [of] imitation, imitators of craftsmen. This implies they are not craftsmen themselves, and[35] the imitator, the universal imitator, is here called a sophist. That is parallel to another passage in Plato. We must keep this in mind. And the thought suggested here, although not yet developed, is that the artist, as we would say, and especially the poet, is that universal imitator. Let us first read a few more passages. We cannot possibly read everything. In 597b5, the result of this curious discussion.

Mr. Reinken: B or d?

LS: B. b, yes, 597b.

Mr. Reinken:
"We must not be surprised, then, if this too is only a dim adumbration in comparison with reality." "No, we must not." "Shall we, then, use these very examples in our quest for the true nature of this imitator?" "If you please," he said. "We get, then, these three couches, one, that in nature, which, I take it, we would say that God produces, or who else?" "No one, I think." "And then there was one which the carpenter made." "Yes," he said. "And one which the painter. Is not that so?" "So be it." "The painter, then, the cabinet-maker, and God, there are these three presiding over three kinds of couches." "Yes, three." (597b)

LS: Yes. Now let us keep this in mind, because this is underlying the rest of the argument. Here is the idea, let us say, of the bed. Here is the [bed], and here is the painted bed, [a] representation, and all three [. . .] beds are made. That is simply asserted; the bed is obviously made by the artisan; the imitation of the bed is made by the painter or poet. And from the analogy we conclude that the idea of the bed has also been made, and it could not have been made except by the god. I say *the* god because our usage—we speak of God on the basis of the biblical tradition—cannot be imputed to Plato. That Plato uses[36] the Greek word for gods, *theos*, without article, it may as well mean "a god."

By the way, Locke in a strange way reintroduced this usage when he[37] [says that] there is a god in various passages in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* . . . This is of course a crucial question, whether the ideas also have been made. It is developed now in the sequel, in c to d, that the god is the creator of the ideas. This creates a great difficulty, and you will see immediately why we are not aware of that. The god is also a craftsman. Now in the *Timaeus* there is presented a craftsman who made the visible universe, but he is supposed to look at the ideas in creating the universe.[x] Here we have a craftsman who creates not only the visible universe but the models of the visible universe: the ideas.

[x] *Timaeus* 28a6-29d3, 39e6-40a7, 46c7-d1, 48e2-49a3.

Now this leads to a very great difficulty: every rational action, and surely every rational production, requires that the actor looks at a model. If there is no model at which he looks, rational action is impossible. This question is discussed most obviously in the *Euthyphron*, the dialogue *Euthyphron*, the theme of which is piety, and where the two [definitions][xi] are discussed. [38]Let us say this: that is just which the gods will. Now do the gods will the just because it is intrinsically just, or are the just things just by divine imposition, by mere divine decree? The latter leads to absurdities which are sketched there. The alternative is that the gods wish the just because the just is just in itself, i.e., because the just is intrinsically just. They look at the just which is not of their own making.[xii] The difficulty is obscured for us today because in later times, especially in the Church Fathers, it is assumed that the ideas are ideas in the divine mind, and then—of course according to this interpretation the biblical God creates the world without looking at anything above him: the creative act is[39] absolutely in God himself, the model is in God himself. The model is God, you can say. But in the Platonic doctrine of ideas, where there are not ideas in the divine mind, the mind is something different from the ideas. The question is: Are the ideas subordinate to god? And then god[40] or the gods would not have any model at which to look at: the action would be entirely arbitrary and would lead to chaos. But if the action of the gods is reasonable and should lead to order, then there must be something at which the gods look; and therefore the presentation in the *Phaedrus*, for example, [where] the gods' life consists in turning, in moving around the ideas. [xiii] They look at the ideas very close[ly] and without any hindrance, whereas men look at the ideas from a very great distance and with many hindrances. The gods are superior to men as knowers, not as makers. They are as little makers of the ideas as are men. Here the view is presented that the gods are the creators of the ideas, but this is dropped. This suggestion of the gods as creators of ideas is dropped in the sequel, and Mr. Morrison has pointed out . . . This remains in the sequel: [god is] the artisan and the painter or poet. But will you remind us, Mr. Morrison, what takes the place of gods?

Mr. Morrison: The user.

LS: The user. That will come later, but there is an intermediate thing here. Now let us first read it so that we could see that this is based on some evidence in 597d toward the end.

Mr. Reinken:
"And what of the carpenter? Shall we not call him the creator of a couch?" "Yes." "Shall we also say that the painter is the creator and maker of that sort of thing?" "By no means." "What will you say he is in relation to the couch?" "This," said he, "seems to me the most reasonable designation for him, that he is the imitator of the thing which those others produce." "Very good," said I: "the producer of the product three removes from nature you call the imitator?" (597d-e)

[xi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xii] *Euthyphro* 10a1-11b5.
[xiii] *Phaedrus* 247c3-248a1.

LS: By the way, this I didn't emphasize, and it should be most strongly emphasized. Here in this connection—and that is, I think, in correspondence with the deepest intentions of Plato—the ideas are called the natures. The chair, or whatever it is, is not a nature, the idea is the nature. To that extent, it remains true that Platonic philosophy is as much natural philosophy, then, as any so-called pre-Socratic philosophy, only nature is found in the forms, the ideas and not, say, in water or in fire or atoms. Good. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"three removes from nature you call the imitator?" "By all means," he said. "This, then, will apply to the maker of tragedies also, if he is an imitator and is in his nature three removes from the king and the truth, as are all other imitators." "It would seem so." "We are in agreement, then, about the imitator."

LS: Yes, let us stop here. Now[41] [who] does he call now the highest? The imitator, the painter or poet, and then above him the artisan. And who is at the top? The king. Now this is the transition to the user. The king could still mean the god: Zeus, the king. But it could also mean our old acquaintance here, the perfectly just man, the philosopher. That's the transition. Now[42] we have seen so much about the king in books 7 to 9. Now what was the schema there? Will you remind us? Kings, and what comes then, second?

Student: General?

LS: General, no. Timocrat, surely. Then?

Student: Oligarchy, then democracy. We have five.

LS: And we have here only three, however. Here we had five, a difficulty which we have encountered more than once. Now a simple suggestion would be this. The king is the king; the artisan would correspond to the timocrat; and the painter or poet to the three lowest regimes. And there are quite a few suggestions you could remember that poetry—the poetry, the Art with a capital A—corresponds to the three lowest regimes, and without making a distinction between oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny, just as there was no distinction made in the second proof regarding the unhappiness of the tyrant. I hope you remember this important event. The common formula for these men is the lovers of gain. The lovers of gain. Here is the lover of wisdom, the lover of victory, and the lovers of gain. Now Plato called at the very beginning the imitator the "sophist," meaning the man who is concerned apparently with wisdom [but] in fact with gain, so you see the debunking of poetry is present here everywhere.

Now the next point which he makes in 598a following is, speaking again of the painter—by the way, an adequate interpretation would of course be compelled to give full account of each change from the painter to the tragic poet to the poet in general, and so on. I cannot do that; I simply don't know. But it would have to be done. He speaks here now in 598a following of the painter and what he does. The painter is not an imitator of the chair, Socrates says; then he would still be respected because chairs, after all, *are* in a way. He imitates only the appearance of the chairs, the perspective errors [that] enter all

into the painting. Yes? So in fact the imitator would be the fourth after the king. Here you would have king, philosopher; the artisans, the strict imitator, say—no, not even the photographer. What would that be? The man who—pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Perhaps something of this kind. Now what would that—

Student: He'd make wood duplicates.

LS: Yes, yes. Very good. Toys. Yes, a toy table which looks exactly like a table. [43]So the exact imitators, and then the imitator proper. And then we have a nice correspondence which I like: king, timocrat, oligarch, and the poet would come [with] the democracy; and that is very intelligible to us, that the artist would correspond to democracy and not to any other regime. Why would this make sense?

Student: Well, this is where he flourishes. This is where he gets his—

LS: Yes. That is simply empirically true, but apart from that. I mean the reason for that, the reason for that sympathy between democracy and art.

Student: He's playing up to these—the [. . .] factions.

LS: Yes. In other words, the opinions of the many. Democracy is the regime in which the opinions of the many are determined, but art obeys, imitates the opinions of the many. Hence, art [lives off][xiv] of the democracy. The poet imitates imitations of artifacts, we could say, but let us leave it at the more civilized statement: the poets imitate artifacts. That is the key assertion: the poets imitate artifacts. That is the key assertion which we must try to understand. And therefore the poet's claim to know, to understand, is absolutely absurd. He understands less than any carpenter or any cobbler does. Here we have a beautiful link with the *Apology*. Socrates visited, examined, the statesmen, the poets, and the ordinary craftsmen. The only people among whom he found knowledge were the craftsmen.[xv] Absolutely the same here. Now, but what does this absurd assertion, mean—obviously absurd? I mean, think of [the] example of painters. It is preposterous to say it is easier to make a good picture of a horse—no, horse is of course not a proper example, but a good picture of, say, a room, than to make the room itself.[44] A good painter could conceivably make a first-rate painting of a room[45] [in] a shorter time than a carpenter could make the furniture. Yes? That[46] may be the case, but we always say that it requires a deeper understanding, a form of understanding, to paint a room well than to make it. What is this absurdity about? What is the serious meaning of this absurdity? 599b, at the beginning. Yes, the first speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"Friend Homer, if you are not at the third remove—"

[xiv] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xv] *Apology of Socrates* 22c9-d4.

LS: No, no,[47] the speech before. 599b.

Mr. Reinken:
"But, I take it, if he had genuine knowledge of the things he imitates he would far rather devote himself to real things than to the imitation of them, and would endeavour to leave after him many noble deeds and works as memorials of himself, and would be more eager to be the theme of praise than the praiser." "I think so," he said; "for there is no parity in the honor and the gain."

LS: Yes. Well, of course this would not entirely apply to every form of art, because a painter of an artifact could conceivably get higher honors than the maker of the artifact. But there were certain arts where the artisans would acquire greater honor than the imitator. For example, if[48] a man wins a victory in an important battle, he will surely get much greater honor than if he would only write a poem on that victory, even if it is a good poem. Yes? Is this not so? But the general's art is, as we know, still a subordinate art. Subordinate to which art?

Student: Rule.

LS: Political art. And the political art in a way can also be said to be subordinate to a still higher art, the highest of these arts. Well?

Student: What is just?

LS: Pardon?

Student: To say what is just?

LS: In a way, yes, but there is a name for that.

Student: The philosopher.

LS: No, no, in between; the architectonic art.

Student: Legislative.

LS: Legislative art—legislative, and how this is related to philosophy we can leave open here. Now how does he go on? 599b at the end.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let us not, then, demand a reckoning from Homer or any other of the poets on other matters by asking them, if any one of them was a physician and not merely an imitator of a physician's talk, what men any poet, old or new, is reported to have restored to health as Asclepius did, or what disciples of the medical art—" (599b-c)

LS: Well, that's also a good example. Yes. Can a poet who gives a beautiful description of a physician heal anyone? Well, if you read the story of Dr. Arrowsmith by Sinclair Lewis[xvi] about a [medical] research[er][49]—well, obviously Sinclair Lewis never did any medical research in his life. He is an imitator of a medical research man. Well, is he not in a way much inferior to a medical research man? And yet from another point of view he's obviously superior to him. That's the difficulty which he's discussing here. Yes? Good.

Student: There's a more trivial example of that in *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*[xvii]—

LS: I do not know that—

Student: By James Thurber.

LS: No, I don't know—

Student: Where he—one of his daydreams, of Walter Mitty['s], was that he was a great surgeon in the operating room, and he has all the patter about, you know: "Nurse, hand me this," and [he] goes into everything else in detail . . . this is—I can't explain it, but anybody who knows Walter Mitty—

LS: Yes. Yes, and the element—well, not only the make-believe, but also the swindle. It would somehow create for a simple human being the impression that he knows everything about it. Yes, and can you take this here for some time quite seriously. Now go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"as Asclepius did his descendants; and let us dismiss the other arts and not question them about them; but concerning the greatest and finest things of which Homer undertakes to speak, wars and generalship and the administration of cities and the education of men, it surely is fair to question him and ask, 'Friend Homer, if you are not at the third remove from the truth and reality in human excellence, being merely that creator of phantoms whom we defined—'"

LS: Yes. Well, literally "the artisan," "the craftsman of phantoms." This term occurs again. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"'whom we defined as the imitator, but if you are even in the second place and were capable of knowing what pursuits make men better or worse in private or public life, tell us what city was better governed owing to you, even as Lacedaemon was because of Lycurgus, and many other cities great and small because of other legislators. But what city credits you with having been a good legislator and having benefited them? Italy and Sicily say this of Charondas and we of Solon. But who says it of you?' Will he be able to

[xvi] Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith* (1925).
[xvii] James Thurber (1894-1961) wrote the short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (1939).

name any?" "I think not," said Glaucon; "at any rate none is mentioned even by the Homerids themselves." (599d-e)

LS: Now let us stop here, please. Now the poet is the imitator of craftsmen, but the highest of all crafts is the legislative craft. Perhaps we forget about all other crafts and concentrate on the legislative craft, and then we may understand that. The poet is the imitator of legislators. That, I believe, is the root of Plato's assertion; and Mr. Morrison, you were aware of that? Yes, I know that. The legislators in their turn are imitators of justice itself. That we have seen before in book 5. They look at justice itself, and then they make a compromise, strike a compromise between justice itself and what can be done here and now.[xviii] But the poor poet imitates only the imitation. He doesn't have any inkling of the idea of justice. He doesn't even understand the other part of the legislative art.

Now there is a very remarkable axiom. The most ruthless enemy of Plato—by whom I do not mean Popper[xix] but someone who really[50] understood something of the issues—that was Nietzsche, and Nietzsche makes without any reference to Plato the remark, in his critique of such men like Richard Wagner but others [too], and he says the poets have always been the valets of a morality or religion.[xx] That is what Plato says in his more noble way of putting it. [That] the poets are imitators of craftsmen means the poets merely repeat, render, persuade of what the legislator, the original legislator, has laid down. They are in the service of the conventions of a given society. That is[51] the extreme of Plato's attack. He will change the picture.

And one can state this also by thinking of Nietzsche's neat formulation: "the poets are the valets of a morality." There is a famous saying of Hegel. In the eighteenth century, some clever Frenchman had said: "For the valet, there is no hero." Well, obviously: he sees how he undresses,[52] and conceivably has unpaid bills, and I don't know what else. And Hegel gave the very sound reply to that: "For the valet there is no hero, not because a hero is not a hero but because a valet is a valet"—which settles the issue, I think, completely, and also a certain kind of historiography.[xxi] But to come back to the French saying, the poet is the valet of a morality, but for the valet there is no hero. Now if the poet is the valet of a morality, then he in a way is not impressed by his hero and that is the[53] secret underground reasoning which will come up in the sequel. But first we have[54] to read the complete and final debunking of poetry in 600e4, the transition to 601a.

Mr. Reinken:
"Shall we, then, lay it down that all the poetic tribe, beginning with Homer, are imitators of images of excellence and of the other things that they 'create,' and do not lay hold on

[xviii] Apparently a reference to Plato *Republic* 500d10-c2 (in book 6). See Strauss, *City and Man*, 135-136.
[xix] Karl Popper (1902-1994), author of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945). The subtitle of the first of this two-volume work is *The Spell of Plato*.
[xx] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, aphorism 1.
[xxi] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford University Press, 1977), 404. (PdG437)

truth? but, as we were just now saying, the painter will fashion, himself knowing nothing of the cobbler's art, what appears to be a cobbler to him and likewise to those who know nothing but judge only by forms and colors?" (600e-601a)

LS: In other words, you know, he looks like a cobbler. That he can do. You see him in a workshop making shoes, but he would be absolutely unable even to repair a shoe, yes? This absurdity. That swindle. Now go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"And similarly, I suppose, we shall say that the poet himself, knowing nothing but how to imitate, lays on with words and phrases the colours of the several arts in such fashion that others equally ignorant, who see things only through words, will deem his words most excellent, whether he speak in rhythm, metre and harmony about cobbling or generalship or anything whatever. So mighty is the spell that these adornments naturally exercises; though when they are stripped bare of their musical colouring and taken by themselves, I think you know what sort of a showing these sayings of the poets make. For you, I believe, have observed them." "I have," he said. (601a-b)

LS: Yes. Let us stop here. Now at this point a new consideration begins. [55]Now the end of this argument was [that] the poet is an imitator of craftsmen, i.e., of the legislator. That's the only craftsman of any interest here. And now a new consideration begins at this point. Will you read it first? A little bit later, but go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let us not, then, leave it half said but consider it fully." "Speak on," he said. "The painter, we say, will paint both reins and a bit." "Yes." "But the maker will be the cobbler and the smith." "Certainly." "Does the painter, then, know the proper quality of reins and bit? Or does not even the maker, the cobbler and the smith, know that, but only the man who understands the use of these things, the horseman?" "Most true." "And shall we not say that the same holds true of everything?" "What do you mean?" "That there are some three arts concerned with everything, the user's art, the maker's and the imitator's." "Yes." "Now do not the excellence, the beauty, the rightness of every implement, living thing, and action refer solely to the use for which each is made or by nature adapted?" "That is so." "It quite necessarily follows, then, that the user of anything is the one who knows most of it by experience, and that he reports to the maker the good or bad effects in use of the thing he uses." (601c-d)

LS: Now this word here, the "maker," is in Greek the same word as the "poet" . . . So that he is raised one level. You know? And that cannot well be brought out in the English translation. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"As, for example, the flute-player reports to the flute-maker which flutes respond and serve rightly in flute-playing, and will order the kind that must be made, and the other will obey and serve him."

LS: Yes, literally, will have faith, will have trust. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"will trust and serve him." "Of course." "The one, then, possessing knowledge, reports about the goodness or the badness of the flutes, and the other, believing, will make them." "Yes." "Then in respect of the same implement the maker will have right belief about its excellence and defects from association with the man who knows[xxii] but the user will have true knowledge." (601e-602a)

LS: Yes. Let us stop here for one moment. So a new consideration begins, and in this new consideration the god or king is replaced by the user. Yes? Now what does this contribute to the previous discussion? What does the substitution of the user for the god mean? Yes?

Student: Well, it's not making things.

LS: Yes, but[56] let us see how the argument started. The carpenter makes a bed, and for this he needs an idea of the bed, it was said; and here the idea can only have been made by a god. And now he introduces the use as the highest. How does this affect the ideas?

Student: May I?

LS: Yes, please.

Student: Well this, it seems to me, is to find out if there—well, the business of whether there are ideas or not corresponding to these particular arts.

LS: Yes, or to artifacts, of artifacts.

Student: Of artifacts, because if there aren't ideas, then obviously god's got to go, because there's nothing—

LS: At least from this point of view. Yes, but more specifically—I mean, we have the craftsman looking up to an idea. How does the consideration of the user dispose of this looking up?

Student: Presumably that he would come and talk to the man and say: Now is this a good one, or is this not?

LS: In other words, the need of the user. Say we like to sleep not on hard stone; [this] induces us to figure out something called a "bed," and this figuring out is a sufficient explanation of the "idea" at which the carpenter looks. Yes? So[57] this particular interpretation of the doctrine of ideas according to which there are ideas of artifacts is

[xxii] The tape was changed at this point. The remainder of the passage from the Shorey translation has been supplied.

disposed of in this manner. Yes, but it applies also [to] something else: Who is the user,[58] the ultimate user?

Student: I would say the legislator—

LS: Well, let us return to our arts—but in a way, the other arts are not so important—the legislative art. And we have here—where is that schema?[xxiii]—the poet, the artisan, and the user. Here is the poet. The artisan is the legislator. Who is the user in the highest sense?

Student: Ultimately God is, because he created the ideas.

LS: Yes, but that's been disposed of. That has been disposed of by the substitution of the user, and the god would not use, i.e., for himself.

Student: The just man?

Different student: . . . He knows . . . the person who knows what the thing is for.

LS: Yes, but truly, who is that in the highest sense?

Student: In a sense, the city.

LS: Yes, but[59] there are individuals in the city. The city as such doesn't know; only citizens know.

Student: Well, only some citizens know.

LS: Who?

Student: The philosophers.

LS: Ah ha. So in other words,[60] we have now reached another point. The user of poetry is the philosopher. He is of course also the user of the legislator, but he is decisively also the user for poetry. That implies now that poetry has some use. The vindication—I mean, we have heard, seen first the criticism or the debunking of poetry, and now we are turning around, and [we] see what can be the use of poetry, and the first answer given is [that] only if poetry is subordinated to philosophy can it be respectable. And of course what this use is, is not yet made clear.

Student: [Inaudible question to the effect of clarifying where the philosopher as user stands on the hierarchy][xxiv]

[xxiii] Strauss might be referring to a drawing on the blackboard.
[xxiv] As noted by the transcriber.

LS: Yes, now[61] this hierarchy is not yet affected, but we see now that the poet [62]can be a man who listens to the philosopher, just as the bridle maker listens to the man who has the craft of horsemanship. Yes?[63] If he does this, then he can become respectable, and the ambiguity here is this: that he calls the artisan also the poet, [the maker].[xxv] Then it means perhaps there can be a direct communication between the philosopher and the poet, and they do not need the legislator as an intermediary. But take an example of three arts: horsemanship, bridle maker, and can there be someone inferior who takes orders from the bridle maker? Does anyone of you know about bridle making?

Student: Well, the smith.

LS: All right.

Student: The tanner.

LS: The tanner, all right. Then we have that. There is a possible relation between the smith and the horseman directly. Yes? At any rate, we are now turning around to a vindication of poetry. Under what conditions is poetry acceptable? And that is if the poet listens directly to the philosopher and serves directly philosophy. Differently stated, autonomous poetry is condemned; ministerial poetry is possible, but it must be ministerial to philosophy, and in what sense? That remains to be seen.

Student: [Inaudible question to the effect of whether this already came up in books 2 and 3][xxvi]

LS: Yes, but[64] then the point of view was still merely political. Yes, that is now[65] somewhat changed. Now let us read. In the sequel it was made clear the poet must have faith in the user. The poet must have faith in the philosopher, and then he can do it—and must have orders from him. In the sequel it is made clear (we cannot read that now) that the poet merely follows popular opinions. We have already seen this before. To follow popular opinion and to follow the legislator is not different, because the ordinary legislator of course is not guided by philosophy, and therefore it can only be popular opinion. Now a new point is made again in 603b5.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let us not, then, trust solely to the plausible analogy from painting, but let us approach in turn that part of the mind to which mimetic poetry appeals and see whether it is the inferior or the nobly serious part."

LS: Now where? At the end, at the transition from 603d to 603e: "but what we omitted then, we must go through now."

Mr. Reinken:

[xxv] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xxvi] As noted by the transcriber.

"[66]in our former discussion we were sufficiently agreed that our soul at any one moment teems with countless such self-contradictions." "Rightly," he said. "Yes, rightly," said I; "but what we then omitted must now, I think, be set forth."

LS: So in other words, here is an explicit reference to an innovation. There we must always listen. You know? The specific contribution of the discussion of book 10[67] here explicitly appears. Now, yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"When a good and reasonable man," said I, "experiences such a stroke of fortune as the loss of a son or anything else that he holds most dear, we said, I believe, then too, that he will bear it more easily than the other sort." "Assuredly." "But now let us consider this: Will he feel no pain—"

LS: Yes, well "now" is very important. Now, at this moment. You know, not now in the sense when we say [. . .] Now, at this moment, let us consider the following point. This is a new point. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But now let us consider this: Will he feel no pain, or, since that is impossible, shall we say that he will in some sort be moderate in his grief?" "That," he said, "is rather the truth." "Tell me now this about him—"

LS: Yes, now again emphasized: at this moment. Yes? One could almost say "now for the first time," to make this quite clear. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Do you think he will be more likely to resist and fight against his grief when he is observed by his equals or when he is in solitude alone by himself?" "He will be much more restrained," he said, "when he is on view." "But when left alone, I fancy, he will permit himself many utterances which, if heard by another, would put him to shame, and will do many things which he would not consent to have another see him doing." "So it is," he said. "Now is it not reason and law that exhorts him to resist, while that which urges him to give way to his grief is the bare feeling itself?" "True." "And where there are—" (604a-b)

LS: The "feeling" is the modern translation. Literally translated, the "suffering," the "affection," how you are affected.

Mr. Reinken:
"And where there are two opposite impulses in a man at the same time about the same thing we say that there must needs be two things in him." "Of course." "And is not the one prepared to follow the guidance of the law as the law leads and directs?" "How so?" "The law, I suppose, declares that it is best to keep quiet as far as possible in calamity and not to chafe and repine, because we cannot know what is really good and evil in such things and it advantages us nothing to take them hard, and nothing in mortal life is

worthy of great concern, and our grieving checks the very thing we need to come to our aid as quickly as possible in such case." "What thing," he said, "do you mean?" "To deliberate," I said, "about what has happened to us, and as it were in the fall of the dice, to determine the movements of our affairs with reference to the numbers that turn up, in the way that reason indicates would be the best, and, instead of stumbling like children, clapping one's hands to the stricken spot and wasting the time in wailing, ever to accustom the soul to devote itself at once to the curing of the hurt and the raising up of what has fallen, banishing threnody by therapy." (604b-d)

LS: Now let us stop here, although it would be very much worth reading [on] here, but we[68] don't have sufficient time. What is the new point, the great point which[69] comes out here, which has not been said before? The context, to repeat, is a vindication of poetry—I mean, after this extreme demotion of poetry. What does the poet tell us?

Student: About suffering?

LS: Yes, but there is one key word, I believe, which was used there.

Student: Would it be about the weaknesses related to suffering?

LS: Yes, sure, weaknesses, but there is one great difference: the noble character.

Student: He lays him bare—

LS: Ah ha. He lays bare the secret of the noble character: what he does when he is alone. Does this ring a bell? Being alone, being invisible.

Student: Gyges.

LS: Yes, Glaucon's simile. In other words, poetry lays bare the secrets of men; in the first place, the terrible, the shameful secrets. And this is of course the opposite, and therefore poetry brings out that side of man which is discouraged by what?

Student: Society.

LS: Yes, but that is not a Platonic term.

Student: By being in company with other people, is what he says.

LS: Yes, by the law. Reason and/or law. There are things which the law refuses not only to encourage but which it in a way refuses to see and which the poet sees. Now is the law which is blind to these things, to the lawlessness in man, is such a law a good law which is merely blind to it [and] just dictates the thing, dictates the lawful action without an understanding of the lawless resistance to it, a good law? Must the legislator now know about the resistances?

Student: Surely.

LS: Who teaches him? The poet. The poet. From this point of view, the order is reversed. In book 2 to 3 the poet simply sits at the feet of the legislators. The legislator tells him what to present and what not to present in all cases. But now we see the other side of the picture. In the original legislation the legislator would have to listen to the poet, who reveals to him the nature of man, the nature of the human soul, the various kinds of souls, so that he can legislate better. So from this point of view poetry is now the second and not the third, and the legislator is the third. That comes out, by the way, very clearly in the discussion of poetry in the *Laws*, [xxvii][70] in a way more clearly than here. Now you had a point, Mr. Megati, or did I answer it?

Mr. Megati: I've forgotten it.

LS: I see. Well, then, it cannot have been very important if you forget it this way. Yes? So the poets imitate, as was made clear before in the passage preceding the one we read, the poet imitates passionate men, men affected by anger, by desire, by whatever else it may be. But if one does not know these affections, one cannot legislate for men. However repressive legislation might be, it cannot be—it cannot repress, law, without knowing what it is going to repress. 605b, he has a long speech. We'll begin at the point where b begins. 605b: begin at the beginning of b.

Mr. Reinken:
"And so we may at last say that we should be justified in not admitting him into a well-ordered state, because he stimulates and fosters this element in the soul, and by strengthening it tends to destroy the rational part, just as when in a state one puts bad men in power and turns the city over to them and ruins the better sort. Precisely in the same manner we shall say that the mimetic poet sets up in each individual soul a vicious constitution by fashioning phantoms far removed from reality, and by currying favour with the senseless element that cannot distinguish the greater from the less, but calls the same thing now one, now the other." (605b-c)

LS: Here it comes quite clear what this kinship between poetry and democracy is. Poetry makes ruling the lower elements. It brings them out into the open. It gives them a voice, and that is why it is both bad and good: bad if it remains uncontrolled, good because it makes the . . . Do you remember the passage in the third book or in the fourth book, the difference between the physician and the judge?[71] The physician should have suffered from all kinds of diseases; that makes him a better physician. But the judge must not have suffered from all kinds of diseases of the soul, because then he would be a very bad judge. But he must know these diseases of the soul.[xxviii] Who reveals these diseases to him best, most effectively? The poet. And there is of course the other point: that these desires and fears and apprehensions which must be suppressed must find an innocent release. Again, that is done by poetry. Go on, Mr. Reinken, where you left off.

[xxvii] See Plato *Laws* 656c1ff., 719a7ff.
[xxviii] *Republic* 408c5-409e3.

Mr. Reinken:
"But we have not yet brought our chief accusation against it."

LS: So now we must listen particularly carefully.[72] You see that externally the debunking or demotion of poetry goes on and on, but there is also a counter movement to that underway. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"Its power to corrupt, with rare exceptions, even the better sort is surely the chief cause for alarm." "How could it be otherwise, if it really does that?" "Listen and reflect. I think you know that the very best of us, when we hear Homer or some other of the makers of tragedy imitating one of the heroes who is in grief, and is delivering a long tirade in his lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon ourselves and accompany the representation with sympathy and eagerness, and we praise as an excellent poet the one who most strongly affects us in this way." (605c-d)

LS: Yes. Now what is that, this most important charge against poetry? I mean, what is this terrible evil produced then?

Student: It makes us sympathize with lamentations.

LS: Yes, it makes us compassionate and eager[73]—yes, we are compassionate and yet we enjoy the compassion. Yes? That's a very complicated thing. Does it make us truly compassionate, or does it make us only—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, as one could say.[74] But this is not yet the full answer. Let us go on.

Mr. Reinken:
"I do[75] know it, of course." "But when in our own lives some affliction comes to us, you are also aware that we plume ourselves upon the opposite, on our ability to remain calm and endure, in the belief that this is the conduct of a man, and what we were praising in the theatre that of a woman." "I do note that."

LS: Yes, now this word which he translates "we plume ourselves" is very—a certain pretense is destroyed by poetry. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"I do note that." "Do you think, then," said I, "that this praise is rightfully bestowed when, contemplating a character that we would not accept but would be ashamed of in ourselves, we do not abominate it but take pleasure and approve?" "No, by Zeus," he said, "it does not seem reasonable." "Oh yes," said I, "if you would consider it in this way." "In what way?" "If you would reflect that the part of the soul that in the former case, in our own misfortunes, was forcibly restrained, and that has hungered for tears and a good cry and satisfaction, because it is its nature to desire these things—" (605e-606a)

LS: Yes, now watch that. There are certain natural desires in men which are repressed against nature. That means by force, by violence, yes? They are not the highest in men, but they are natural.[76] Poetry does justice to the lower part of our nature. It is a lower part, but it requires—it has a just demand to be heard. The release—we cannot find the release in action. That would lead to [chaos][xxix] but there must be a vicarious release, and that is what poetry supplies. If you would think back to this example we read in the second book, this poetic utterance especially quoted of Homer: when Achilles hurls insults at Agamemnon and calls him, "You man who has the heart of a deer and the eyes of a dog," yes?[xxx] That should never be said by any subject to a government, by any citizen to the president of the United States, for example. Never. And yet is it not good that this feeling of a superior subject against an unworthy ruler is not called [forth], is not evoked, and if the people are not reminded that such situations exist, although one should be infinitely careful regarding their doing of the just? That is only another example of the same thing. Yes, read the next speech please. Hitherto we have spoken about the desired cries. Now the next point. Yes, next speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"Does not the same principle apply to the laughable, namely, that if in comic representations, or for that matter in private talk, you take intense pleasure in buffooneries that you would blush to practice yourself, and do not detest them as base, you are doing the same thing as in the case of the pathetic? For here again what your reason, for fear of the reputation of buffoonery, restrained in yourself when it fain would play the clown, you release in turn, and so, fostering its youthful impudence, let yourself go so far that often ere you are aware you become yourself a comedian in private." (606c-d)

LS: Yes. Well, I will mention only in passing the clear juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy in fact. Tragedy: pity. Comedy: laughing. That is in a way trivial, but it is good to remind ourselves of this simple formula of the difference of these two forms of dramatic art. But the point which he makes here [is that] we refrain from these things because we are afraid of [acquiring] the reputation of [a] comedian, for example. Fear of [one's] reputation. "Reputation" is the same word as "opinion" in Greek, *doxa*. The poet transcends the sphere of opinion. He[77] makes his characters do things which a decent man would not do, and yet we learn something about the nature of man. Let us read only one more passage, at the end of—well, the last speech, 606e to 607a. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"when you meet encomiasts of Homer who tell us that this poet has been the educator of Hellas, and that for the conduct and refinement of human life he is worthy of our study and devotion, and that we should order our entire lives by the guidance of this poet, we must love and salute them as doing the best they can, and concede to them that Homer is the most poetic of poets and the first of tragedians, but we must know the truth, that we

[xxix] The transcript has a blank space here.
[xxx] *Republic* 389e12-390a7 (in book 3).

can admit no poetry into our city save only hymns to the gods and the praises of good men."

LS: Well, we discussed that—you know, that the difference between the fully-developed city and the city of pigs. In the city of pigs, there are only hymns to the gods and no praise of the virtuous.[xxxi] That is because there are no good men, no men of excellence, in the first city. But now the next point.

Mr. Reinken:
"For if you grant admission to the honeyed muse in lyric or epic, pleasure and pain will be lords of your city instead of law and that which shall from time to time have approved itself to the general reason as the best." (607a)

LS: Yes, that is a bit free: "instead of law and of that *logos* which at each time had appeared to be the best." What rules societies in fact is law and/or a certain reasoning which at a given time had seemed to be the best. What in fact rules is never simply an unqualifiedly right reason. Therefore—that is the true justification of poetry—poetry reminds us of what the actually ruling reason, i.e., the law, need[s to hide] conceals, and therefore it is truer than the legislators. The poets, we may say, bring out the nature of man in contradistinction[78] [to] what received opinion asserts to be the nature of man.[79] So poetry is then truth, and if the question, yes: What is the difference between poetry and philosophy? That is the great question. Now if we, as Mr. Morrison pointed out very well, if we say: Well, the [80][philosophers] present the truth nakedly, say, in treatises, and the poets write these stories, dramatic or nondramatic, and that is, philosophy gives us the naked truth and poetry gives us the truth wrapped in something else. That is surely not Plato's opinion, because Plato didn't write treatises; he just wrote dialogues. And so the question is still open: What is the difference between poetry and philosophy? But the question can be answered on two levels and must be answered on two levels. First, general[ly], and[81] [secondly], in this more specific form: What is the difference between the Platonic dialogue and any other poetry . . . any other poetry?

Student: It's static. I mean it's inert . . .

LS: Static is—

Student: Static is the wrong word.

LS: Yes, sure, because people change.

Student: Yes, people do change, but you wouldn't call it really that extraordinary.

LS: Yes, but can there not be very unnoisy action which is much more important than the noisy? For example, it is surely much more impressive for a simple man if one individual hurls insults to another and finally even kills him. Nothing can be more exciting. But if someone who comes into a discussion with a very high opinion of himself, say,

[xxxi] 372b7-8.

Protagoras, and then this man comes out tame, is much less—I mean, Socrates didn't jump at Protagoras and did not insult him in a coarse manner and so on there, and yet are not these subtle changes in a man the most profound changes? Very simply, if I may remind you of this everyday occurrence, especially in Chicago: If a man kills, he may not have undergone any change whatever. Yes? [He remains] the same man, especially if he has killed very suddenly. So that is a very great incision in his life, to kill, but there is no change in his soul, you know? His soul simply does not act in him, but there is no change. But in a very quiet conversation sometimes a single word, sometimes even silence—someone, X says something to Y. Again, let us take a very trivial case. Someone proposes to a woman that he would like to marry her, and she doesn't say anything, doesn't say a word, and this can make [a change][xxxii] in the life of the individual. Yes? So only to liberate ourselves from very gross deceptions, to which I'm sure no one of you is exposed, but we must not be ashamed to bring out these most elementary experiences, just as we learn from Plato when he uses these gross examples, like perspectivic distortion, for example. Now what is that—so the fact that there is no murder, no excessive laughter, no scandal of any kind in a Platonic dialogue, that doesn't mean that the changes are not very profound [that are] going on.

Student: Would the difficulty not be—I'm thinking here—I mean, if this wouldn't make a good book for a musical, you can put it that way, there's not enough action in a physical sense. And also there's this point: it's too far away from the experience of very many people. This is something that comes back—

LS: Yes, but one can all turn this against you and say that these are fireworks which impress only children—I mean, [82]when you take the best novels. Unfortunately what is called the best modern novel, *War and Peace*, is very rich in action, yes, so I don't have a good example there. But there is a lot of action there; constantly, you know, back and forth.

Student: Doesn't this bear out the point? How many people read Jane Austen? That it is not the sort of thing that people can understand.

[Inaudible exchange to the effect that while Jane Austen's works were read in former ages, it was by a small segment of the population, but that popular success is not the measure of a novelist's worth.][xxxiii]

LS: Yes, but is this an unqualified recommendation?

Student: No.

LS: I see. So in other words, the mass success is no criterion. One could rightly say Plato is simply right in his point on poetry. Yes?

[xxxii] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xxxiii] As noted by the transcriber.

Student: This seems to be the only poetry that would reflect on the speech by philosophers.

LS: Yes, then you agree entirely with Plato . . . In its ministerial capacity, limited to a certain segment, poetry is all right.[83] Since we took up this question: What is the difference between the Platonic dialogue and any other poetical dialogue?

Student: Would it be possible to limit it to a subject matter . . .

LS: Yes, you can say, but what is the subject matter of the Platonic—

Student: The subject matter of the Platonic dialogue is, for example, based on the tripartite division of the soul, with the going up to something intelligible, whereas poetry would be going down to a feeling.

LS: One could say that, but it is a bit too sophisticated for my taste.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but that is very—should be very strange, that the sophisticated should be gross. I would not be surprised, but it is—what did you wish to say?

Student: I have in mind that the Platonic dialogue is appealing to reason, and the mind and poetry is appealing to emotion—

LS: Yes, that is true, but how can we spell it out a bit more? Now I will proceed in this way, and[84] one should try, if possible, to answer like a child. Now what is the subject matter, crude and not sophisticated, of the Platonic dialogues? I believe one can answer that question: Socrates. Yes? Not Achilles nor Odysseus, but Socrates. And Socrates was neither a notorious fighter like Achilles nor was he a traveler, a large-scale traveler like Odysseus; he just stayed in Athens most of the time except if the city sent him on a campaign, and then he went out. And Socrates—yes, Socrates. And of course it presents Socrates not as a sculpture would, but alive, speaking. It presents the life of Socrates, even the death of Socrates, you might say; but the life of Socrates is chiefly speaking, speaking about certain subjects. And this is the point which we must not entirely forget about, that he doesn't ordinarily talk about gossip and so but about special subjects. But still, speech [is] the life of Socrates; and the life of Socrates would seem to be presented as a model, a model human life, and this model human life is called by Plato sometimes, with very simple expressions, the life of a good man. And is that not what Plato says here somewhere? Do you remember? The good man's life is not, in a crude sense of the word, exciting. I mean, these terrific storms of passion are absent there,[85] whereas poetry presents lives[86] where the storms, various kinds of storms, are there. [87]Poetry never presents the good life. A tall order [and] not literally true; there are some notable exceptions, but still that is the main point. Let me state it more cautiously: Poetry as poetry does not present the good life. It may perhaps present it in a certain [. . .] sense, but not essentially.

Student: Could I make a point here?

LS: Yes.

Student: There's a specific tie-in here. I think I mentioned that there were two cues that were taken up. One of them is a general point, but one of the two is the fact that when they come to the end, in book 3 or whatever it is, of talking about what they're going to say about the gods . . . what they're going to allow them to say about Achilles and the demigods and people like that, there then comes the statement—they say, "Well, all we've got now to talk about is what we're going to allow them to say about men." At this point, Socrates chops it off and says: "Oh no, we can't discuss that because we haven't decided what kind of good men there are yet."[xxxiv]

LS: Yes.

Student: Now when we've reached this stage, in the meantime we found out that in a sense only the philosopher is a good man, and so this is how this point is taken up, by implication, in this book—

LS: Yes, that is quite correct. Yes, but that was [a] very relevant remark regarding our overall theme today. It was not immediately relevant to our present subject.

Student: I thought it was because you were talking about dramas and, I think, the good man, and that poetry doesn't show the good man, so what can we allow poets to do?

LS: Good. Yes, I'm sorry. Yes, that is right. So Plato presents the good man in action, and since this action is of course mostly with less-good men, the less-good men also come in. But they come in only as affected, more or less, by the good man, and the good man himself is the theme. Yes, but what[88] are, then, the less-good men? That doesn't mean of course that they are wicked or hoodlums and so on and so on. Every nonphilosopher is not a good man. Plato sensed, in effect, that the solution of the human problem is philosophy. The philosopher is the man who as such has solved the human problem. The nonphilosophers have not solved the human problem, and there are two ways in which this can be[89] shown: (a) the failure of their project of life, and that is done in the grandest scale by tragedy, and there is also another possibility: that they get an inept solution to the human problem, an inept solution which for the time being works: that's comedy. But you do not ever see in poetry the solution to the human problem.

Now[90] this would need a much longer development, but unfortunately our time is limited. I would say this: I think that the great poets, and at least some of the greatest poets whom Plato knew to be out of ear[shot] of [their audience][xxxv] speakers. The poets knew that, and I think the sign of this in tragedy is the distinction between the actors and the chorus. The chorus are fundamentally bystanders who make comments on them, and they are

[xxxiv] 392a3-c5.

[xxxv] The transcript has a blank space here.

ordinary people; regardless of whether they are men or women, they are ordinary people, and they make—of course in the most beautiful language, but their comment is in a way below the level of the actors. I mean, the chorus in the *Antigone*, for example, are not as impressive human beings as Antigone is, or in any other tragedy. But[91] the chorus is in a crude way wiser than the actors are; you know, what they say are all very wise things: "Be moderate." Ismene is much more sensible than Antigone is in the *Antigone*, and yet Antigone is swayed by something which is more awe-inspiring than what is going on in Ismene or the chorus and so on.

Well, to make this long story short, the divergence between the actor level, tragic hero level and the chorus level points to an interpretation which is never given. That is the poet himself, say, Sophocles. Sophocles never speaks. Sophocles shows you the actors' speeches and the chorus' speeches. Both sets of speeches do not reveal the full story. The most important thing remains unsaid, but it[92] can be said if you have understood the tragedy as a whole, if you have understood it better than the actors and the chorus have understood it, and what the actors and chorus say leads you to the deeper understanding. But Sophocles, the poet, has that understanding, i.e., the poet presents unwise human beings in their reaction, but he himself is a wise man. You see? The difference would then be this, that the Platonic dialogue in contradistinction to all poetry presents a wise man on the stage all the time . . . The poet in principle does not do that. He presents only unwise men, but the poet is from this point of view as wise as Plato, only for some reasons he doesn't present wise men.

Well, there are some qualifications needed. For example, in comedy the wise man can be presented. The wise man cannot be a tragic hero: impossible. Socrates is not a tragic hero. That is a very modern interpretation. But Socrates or something like Socrates can very well be a comic hero. Think only of Socrates's Xanthippe. You have [the stuff][xxxvi] of a comedy immediately, yes? It can be done, and therefore you find presentations of wise men; for example, when Aristophanes presents Euripides on the stage, that means that a wise man presents a wise man in a comical situation, because the relation of the wise man to the unwise man is a comical relation, naturally. There are bound to be misunderstandings of some kind or other referred to in the *Republic*. You know, when he[93] comes down in the cave full of that light, he makes himself ridiculous, just as when they try to get out of the cave they also make themselves ridiculous.[xxxvii] So that is the point, and in noncomical presentations the clearest case of a presentation of a wise man of which I can think is Shakespeare's *Tempest*, but [the] *Tempest* is surely not a tragedy proper. I mean, it is possible, but it is not of the essence of tragedy. The *Tempest* is probably Shakespeare's most Platonic play, I believe, at least—even on the surface. Yes?

Student: Would it be an unfair question to ask here if there really is a solution ever presented by Plato?

LS: Sure. Socrates's life is a blessed life—I mean, not only apparently blessed.

[xxxvi] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.
[xxxvii] 517d4-518b5.

Student: It is nevertheless a mysterious life.

LS: Yes, well, why should bliss be non-mysterious? I mean, that is a notion of certain manipulators today . . .[xxxviii] But Plato surely presents Socrates's life as a blessed life, and blessed because of what he does. And his deeds, very strangely, are chiefly speeches. You know, that is also against a certain childish view that the most extraordinary things are deeds: deeds, not speeches. In certain contexts that makes absolute sense. If someone makes[94] [speeches] about the loss of American prestige by bad foreign policies, then we would of course say that only deeds can correct that, but in a broader sense, in a deeper sense, [95]the speeches may be more important than the deeds.

Now this much about the difference between the Platonic dialogue and all other poetry; and this, to repeat, is compatible with the fact that the poets are as wise as Plato, but that Plato for one reason or the other said: I will do this seemingly unpoetic thing, namely, present the perfect life, the model life, the good life. And yet the wisdom wouldn't have to be different for this reason. But now, therefore, we have to raise the question: If the poets in the highest sense know the soul of man as well as Plato did, what reason does Plato have except professional competition, bias, to prefer philosophy to poetry? What is the substantive difference?

Student: One thing occurs to me: the poets do not have the souls of philosophers because they say the same thing to all souls, or at least they do not say different things to different souls.

LS: Oh, they do, without any question.

Same Student: Not deliberately, I say.

LS: No, deliberately. There is no question. I mean, the great poets do that; there is no question. No, no. I think the difference [is something that] we have [heard] very clearly, because the point was made by Mr. Morrison in his paper, but I wish him to bring it up now emphatically and in isolation, as it were, so that we all see it.

Student: [xxxix]I'm not quite certain which point you're referring to, but this is the difference between wise—

LS: I mean, assuming, granting for argument's sake—that is a quite cautious way—that the great poets are as wise regarding the souls of men as Plato is, and that the difference between the Platonic dialogue and poetry does not in itself lead to the fundamental difference between poetry and philosophy, what then is the fundamental difference between philosophy and poetry?

Student: That philosophy could perhaps—the philosopher could perhaps give a *logos* of the soul, whereas—

[xxxviii] The transcriber notes here: "About two inaudible sentences."
[xxxix] Presumably Mr. Morrison.

LS: Yes, that we do not know. I mean, we must really beware of that notion, [96]which in a crude way is suggested by Plato more than once, that the poets have a kind of divine inspiration and don't know what they do. How do we know that? I mean,[97] we have no possibility of cross-examining Sophocles, but we have the possibility of cross-examining to some extent Aristophanes, because Aristophanes speaks in his own name in the comedies. You know? Therefore you can go on, and after having studied Aristophanes for some time, I think that Aristophanes had a perfectly lucid account and an amazingly intelligent account of what he was doing, of what Euripides was doing, and this I'm sure Euripides also had. They could give that account without any borrowings on their part from professional philosophers . . . Now[98] the case of Dante would be entirely different, because Dante was a first-rate philosopher in his own name, as we know from his other short writings, and partly even from *The Divine Comedy*, and so you could say Dante is not a good example. But[99] if we think of the Greek tragic poets,[100] [such as] Homer [and Hesiod],[101] in the case of Hesiod, who is, you know, almost as old as Homer, [there] are amazingly clear remarks, and that these are stated in very poetic language does not exclude the possibility that they could not also have said it in a pedestrian way. I think that means to beg the question. Yes?

Student: Isn't this exactly the point, that they could not—Sophocles, for instance, probably could not have given, written a treatise on the soul? He could only write plays. That would be a kind of difference.

LS: I don't know. I really don't know. I believe that we succumb here to a kind of professional bias.[102] I cannot judge of the poetry of T. S. Eliot for the simple reason that I have never read it, but occasionally I read an article of Eliot's on higher education in a periodical [called *Measure*] which was published by the University of Chicago.[xl] I must say I found this very unintelligent and lacking in wisdom, and yet I hear that Eliot is a great poet. People tell me that. And now there may be great poets, for all I know, who are not wise people, i.e., who can, as it were caught by the Muse, say marvelously wise things, but if they are on their own feet [they] can't speak; and I know there is a clear notion of the poet, also in our age, that accounts for that. But I am not entirely satisfied that this is universally true, and especially that it is true on the highest level.

Student: [103]I would agree with you. I don't think this is so, but in looking for a reason Plato might have given for making a thing of this kind, surely the answer is somewhere in the area of their being able to strip themselves of their meter and their rhymes and so on—

LS: That can—[we] would have every modern novelist for that. I mean, every modern novelist does.

Student: Well, Plato didn't have modern novelists.

[xl] Strauss is probably referring to Eliot's articles that were published in three successive issues of *The New English Weekly* and appeared in revised form as *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948).

LS: Yes, but he sketched[104] that. You remember at the beginning, when he[105] speaks of the beginning of the *Iliad* and gives the prose versions of that in order to do away with all spurious classes, which meter and the other[xli] . . . That can easily be done and[106] Aristophanes in a way does it all the time. It is part of his [presentation][xlii] of tragedy—you know, when the most grand tragic scenes appear . . . in a low context. I mean, every one of us can do that[107], to strip a poem of the spurious element and to bring out the genuine human message. And then of course one must understand the connection also between this substance and the form,[108] [as well as] the form alone. We know how little that is: if someone has very grand verses and when you begin to think about the whole, try to translate it into another language, you see that it is absolutely bound up with certain sound effects possible only in this particular language. No, I am looking for something much more simple. Yes?

Student: Well, the poets deal with that which is particular.

LS: Yes, but as Mr. Morrison made very well clear, when the poet presents Agamemnon he does not mean this particular king of Sparta married to this particular woman, but he brings out the general possibility, the type indicated by "Agamemnon."

Student: [. . .]

LS: I'm sure that this is not true . . . I have such a bad memory for these things. I began to read a novel by Henry James. I forgot which it was. I was unable to finish it.[109] That is not a value judgment, but[110] by pure accident I couldn't continue reading. And I was struck by the beautiful effect which he achieves by giving first a certain interpretation of a given situation which seemed to be perfectly convincing, and then a more intelligent or deeper human being comes in, and the situation looks entirely different. The hierarchy of human beings, of souls, was perfectly understood by that man, at least to that extent. That I don't believe.

Student: . . . Is it possible that—again, going back to the horseman—that the philosopher sort of may claim to have some idea of the end of the human soul which is what he's talking about, the purpose, where the thing is always tending. This gives him some kind of an absolute standard of judgment.

LS: Yes, but why should Sophocles, the even-tempered Sophocles, as he was called, not have known that the highest human possibility is wisdom, understanding? I believe the poets, the great poets, knew that. Yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: *Eros* is the life of Socrates as well as that of Helen.

[xli] See Plato *Republic* 393c11-394b1.
[xlii] The transcript has a blank space here.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. No, but one could say they show only a lower kind of *eros*, an *eros*[111] [doomed] to failure, but they don't show the true *eros*, the *eros* which [is the life of][xliii] Socrates.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, but that doesn't mean that the poet doesn't know that other *eros*; that's the point.

Student: But the poet himself can work with *eros* in the audience in a different way.

LS: Yes, there is no question, but that doesn't mean that Plato could not have written tragedies or comedies if he wanted . . .[xliv]

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[1] Deleted "you put –."
[2] Deleted "in—and."
[3] Deleted "It was not –."
[4] Deleted "this –."
[5] Deleted "it was about –."
[6] Deleted "I'd say –."
[7] Deleted "is."
[8] Changed from "No, you see – no."
[9] Deleted "to."
[10] Deleted "was much more—it."
[11] Deleted "about the development."
[12] Deleted "because."
[13] Deleted "This I call –.'
[14] Deleted "I mean."
[15] Deleted "in making."
[16] Deleted "And this – If you call that the rebirth of antiquity, all right, but it's not more than that you can – that would be a start."
[17] Deleted "Now I suggest –.'
[18] Deleted "conformed."
[19] Deleted "the good."
[20] Deleted "of Book –."
[21] Deleted "I (sic) –."
[22] Deleted "and – at the end of Book IX."
[23] Deleted "That was the –."
[24] Deleted "still, something – I mean."
[25] Deleted "The –."
[26] Deleted "fully developed – is."
[27] Deleted "Now –."
[28] Deleted "is."
[29] Deleted "I think we are –."
[30] Deleted "are."
[31] Deleted "lays –."
[32] Deleted "about."

[xliii] The transcript indicates that there is something inaudible here.
[xliv] The audio tape ends here.

[33] Deleted "examples of ideas, are artifacts."
[34] Deleted "speaks also now."
[35] Deleted "there – he is called here –."
[36] Deleted "gods –."
[37] Deleted "speaks –."
[38] Deleted "are the gods"
[39] Deleted "– does not – is."
[40] Deleted "would not –."
[41] Deleted "how."
[42] Deleted "what – but what is applied is for one moment –."
[43] Deleted "And then."
[44] Deleted "Either you can –."
[45] Deleted "at."
[46] Deleted "is probably –."
[47] Deleted "that is –."
[48] Deleted "someone wins –."
[49] Moved "medical." Deleted "man."
[50] Deleted "well."
[51] Deleted "a very."
[52] Deleted "– you know –.'
[53] Deleted "sudden, the."
[54] Deleted "to look."
[55] Deleted "So we have reached the end of."
[56] Deleted "we had this –."
[57] Deleted "we –."
[58] Deleted "who is the ultimate user."
[59] Deleted "city –."
[60] Deleted "now we –."
[61] Deleted "that – no."
[62] Deleted "must."
[63] Deleted "He can be – and."
[64] Changed from "– yes, then – no."
[65] Deleted "– is now."
[66] Changed from "we were sufficiently agreed that our former discussion –."
[67] Deleted "is –."
[68] Deleted "have – we."
[69] Deleted "is –."
[70] Deleted "more –."
[71] Deleted "The judge must not himself – no."
[72] Deleted "This was –."
[73] Deleted "yes, so that."
[74] Deleted "Now –."
[75] Deleted "not."
[76] Deleted "They – you see, there were – this – poetry – we can stop here."
[77] Deleted "does the things which one cannot – he."
[78] Deleted "of."
[79] Deleted "So."
[80] Deleted "poets."
[81] Deleted "(b)."
[82] Deleted "the most."
[83] Deleted "but – no, what – let us –."
[84] Deleted "I will –."
[85] Deleted "and –."
[86] Deleted "which – where the storms, various kinds of storms, are there."
[87] Deleted "But this has—so in other words, never give this statement."
[88] Deleted "is – what."

[89] Deleted "done."
[90] Deleted "I would say – well."
[91] Deleted "there is an – but."
[92] Deleted "is – it."
[93] Deleted "says – when he."
[94] Deleted "deeds."
[95] Deleted "that."
[96] Deleted "that, I mean."
[97] Deleted "Sophocles –."
[98] Deleted "– I mean.'
[99] Deleted "let us take –."
[100] Deleted "even of."
[101] Changed from "I do not believe that they could – and in the case of Hesiod, there are – who is, you know, almost as old as Homer – these are amazingly clear remarks, and that these are stated in very poetic language does not exclude the possibility that they could not also have said it in a pedestrian way. I think that – I think is – means to beg the question."
[102] Changed from "and I have no doubt that there are people – cannot judge of the poetry of T.S. Eliot, for the simple reason that I have never read it, but I – occasionally I read an article of Eliot on higher education which – in a periodical which was published by the University of Chicago which I – called Measure."
[103] Changed from "But would it not be so – I would – I mean, I can't – I would agree with you. I don't think this is so, but in looking for a reason why – looking for a sort of – within Plato, what reason Plato might have given for making a thing of this kind, surely it is connected with this – is somewhere – the answer is somewhere in the area of their being able to strip themselves of their metre and their rhymes and so on – ."
[104] Deleted "– no, but he sketched."
[105] Deleted "says."
[106] Changed from "every – I mean, and."
[107] Deleted "get rid of these –."
[108] Deleted "but –."
[109] Deleted "not –."
[110] Deleted "purely –."
[111] Deleted "due."

Session 16: November 30, 1961
Book 10: The Myth

Leo Strauss: You have made a few very excellent remarks, and on the other hand it was very hard to follow the argument as a whole.[i] You know, there were quite a few speculations which you added, which, I mean, is perfectly all right. I would like to make a few points . . .[ii] You said Socrates volunteers: he goes beyond the commission imposed on him by Glaucon and Adeimantus. Why does he do that? The facts are reliable, but what is the explanation? That I didn't understand.

Student: The contention was that the discussion beginning in book 2 right up through book 9 became detached from reality, and this was in a sense a return to reality.

LS: That is a very good point. I mean, properly interpreted. But what is the specific basis for this assertion?

Student: Taking the myth of Gyges as the basis, in a sense, for the whole of the discussion on books 2 through 9, and to show that we cannot base a political system, a regime, upon the assumption of invisibility. The fact of intrinsic justice, but that rewards for justice are necessary and do induce the—

LS: Yes, this is stated more simply. I see you are right, because it is explicitly said here that the position underlying the story of Gyges is impossible.[iii] That was not said there[1], that this is impossible that someone could be internally just and appear altogether as unjust to everyone. That's impossible. Yes.[2] I'm satisfied with your—very much so. Now Glaucon, you say, doesn't believe in immortality, and you said that is due to the fact that he is young, perhaps, but you were somewhat hesitant. You did not remember at this moment that Cephalus had said that when people are young they are[3] very distrustful of these stories, and when they get old they take them more seriously.[iv] Can you answer that? But this is along the lines of—you attempt to link up all the time book 10 and book 1. That was, I think, central.[4] I understand now what you mean by the socializing effect of punishment . . . I mean, in other words, the socializing effect is due to the fact—generally speaking, that this impossible premise of simply invisible justice is brought out. I think now that is cleared up. I believe that Mr. Morrison has something in mind about the last part, the transition to the last part.

Mr. Morrison: Well, only something small. The part that we were looking at last time about[5] what it was that would distinguish the poet—the philosopher's claim to wisdom from the poet's . . . these philosophers, unlike the poets, have knowledge of the cosmos

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[i] Strauss's responds to a student's paper (probably Mr. Snowiss), read at the beginning of the session. The reading was not recorded.
[ii] The transcriber notes that the next several sentences are almost entirely inaudible.
[iii] Plato *Republic* 612a8-614a4.
[iv] 330d4-331a1.

and studied man not just as man but in relation to the totality, and this was in a sense the crucial distinction between the philosopher and the poet and their claim to wisdom; and this in a way leads on to the second half of the book—

LS: Yes. Yes, that is surely true. One could[6] perhaps state it as follows; I mean,[7] keeping more to the letter [of the argument]. The key point becomes immortality of the soul. The immortality of the soul must be demonstrated, and demonstration as such is admittedly not poetic. I mean, a poet might use a demonstration, but not *qua* poet. Yes? One could put it this way. Surely you find here in 608b to c a very sudden transition from poetry to the greatest rewards for virtue. Somehow this doctrine of the greatest rewards for virtue is likely to be something which poetry cannot teach us, but which philosopher must teach. Now let us begin there: 608c5 . . .

Mr. Reinken:
"What great thing," said I, "could there be in a little time? For surely the whole time from the boy to the old man would be small compared with all time." "Nay, it is nothing," he said. "What then? Do you think that an immortal thing ought to be seriously concerned for such a little time, and not rather for all time?" "I think so," he said; "but what is this that you have in mind?" (608c-d)

LS: Now let us stop here for a moment. So "the whole time," "the whole time," that is the new consideration. This term occurs, by the way, also at the beginning of book 3 of the *Laws* when Socrates, or the Athenian Stranger, rather, speaks of the cataclysms.[v] I mean that there are seeming periods of civilization and always new beginnings infinitely often, as he does not say but as he means. This is[8] the theme, and one can perhaps say that considerations of the whole cosmic order, that's the [theme] with which poetry as poetry cannot be concerned. Now the theme as [it] is stated almost immediately afterward is that our soul is immortal. Observe the singular, which may be of some importance.

Now one reflection: the immortality of the soul [is] alluded to here; and it was surely not a theme in the bulk of the *Republic*. It is the theme of one Platonic dialogue. Which? I'm not sure quite a few of you know that. *Phaedo.*[9] In the *Phaedrus* it is only a part of a large argument, but in the *Phaedo* the immortal[ity of the soul] is the theme. And the situation there is [that] Socrates is about to die. And one can perhaps say[10] from one point of view the *Republic* and *Phaedo* are at opposite poles. In the *Republic* on the whole the solution to the human problem is found in this world, in this life: there will be cessation of all evil if the philosophers become kings. Cessation of all evils in this life.[vi] And the *Phaedo* is based on the premise that the cessation of evils can only take place in [the] afterlife.[vii] If there is another life, there is less interest in this life, in the *polis*. This fact has been shown on a very grand scale in the modern development. Unfortunately, I forgot to[11] bring a book with me. Permit me one moment, because I should read this passage to you—[viii]

[v] *Laws* 676a8ff.
[vi] *Republic* 473c1-e5.
[vii] See *Phaedo* 66b1-67c4, 82d9-84b4.
[viii] The transcriber notes that there was a "brief recess."

I hope I find it now. I'm very sorry that I caused this [delay]. Yes, I find that the translator omitted the key passage here. Yes[12], he omitted it. What I have in mind is a passage in Kant's *Idea for a Universal History*, ninth principle, and there is an omission in the middle, and I'm sure it's the passage which I mean. What Kant is speaking about is this, that is, one of the first sketches of a philosophy of history, and a philosophy of history is a parallel to the postulate, what Kant calls the postulate of the immortality of the soul. In proportion as the concern with the immortality of the soul, i.e., with the solution of the human problem in another life, receded, the concern with a this-worldly solution of the human problem, i.e., with a philosophy of history, arose.[ix] Now there is no philosophy of history in Plato, but there is a political philosophy; and the *Republic*, at first glance the most important work of Plato on political philosophy, presents in the bulk of the work a this-worldly solution to the human problem, and therefore it is in contrast to the *Phaedo*. Nevertheless, at the end of the book this issue of the immortality of the soul, i.e., of the nonpolitical solution to the human problem, comes in; nonpolitical and yet a solution to the problem for every human being and not only for philosophers, at least at first glance.

Now how does he prove the immortality of the soul? The principle is this: every kind of being has its congenital good which preserves it and its congenital evil which makes it bad and, in the extreme, destroys it. Now in the case of the body that congenital evil is illness and in the extreme case leads to death. But what is the congenital evil of the soul? Well, the simplest formula which is used here which comprises everything of importance [is], yes, injustice. But injustice obviously is not fatal. Hence, the soul is immortal. That is the argument. Now what is insufficient in this argument? Let us turn to 609d at the end.

Mr. Reinken:
"it is unreasonable to suppose that the vice of something else destroys a thing while its own does not."

LS: [13]The vice of the soul is injustice, but injustice does not strictly speaking destroy the soul; and an alien evil, say, the congenital evil of a tree or of a house, cannot possibly destroy the soul, the soul not being a house or a tree. That is the argument. Go on here at this point.

Mr. Reinken:
"Yes, unreasonable." "For observe, Glaucon," said I, "that we do not think it proper to say of the body either that it is destroyed by the badness of foods themselves, whether it be staleness or rottenness or whatever it is; but when the badness of the foods themselves engenders in the body the defect of body, then we shall say that it is destroyed *owing* to these foods, but *by* its own vice, which is disease. But the body being one thing and the

[ix] A plan of nature "opens up the comforting prospect of a future in which we are shown from afar how the human race eventually works its way upward to a situation in which all the germs implanted by nature can be developed fully, and in which each man's destiny can be fulfilled here on earth." Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," Ninth Proposition, in *Kant, Political Writings*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 52-53.

foods something else, we shall never expect the body to be destroyed by their badness, that is by an alien evil that has not produced in it the evil that belongs to it by nature." "You are entirely right," he replied. (609d-610a)

LS: Yes. Now what characteristic does he call on there? I mean, what is the point?

Student: The soul can't be destroyed.

LS: Yes, but still we are also concerned with what the defect of this argument is. What is the inborn or congenital evil of the body? Socrates says it is not the poisonous character of a certain food, because that—if this wouldn't work on a congenital evil of the body, it wouldn't have this effect, as you can see by the fact that some food which is poisonous for other beings is not poisonous for man. What is the congenital evil of the human body?

Student: Death and disease.

LS: Yes, but the root of that. Why can we die? Why can we—

Student*:* We don't have immortality.

LS: More generally—a more general word: corruptibility. Yes? So the corruptibility, that is the point. But[14] let us analyze this a bit further. What is corruptible? What kinds of beings are corrupted?

Student: Complex ones?

LS: Yes. I mean, an absolutely simple being would not be destructible. So[15] therefore, in order to make the proof stick Plato would have to prove that the soul is absolutely simple and/or—that is a long question—that the soul is independent of the body, has been independent of the body, i.e., is a substance, to use the traditional post-Platonic term, by itself. These proofs are never given here, and therefore this is not a proof.[16] The defect of the proof, we can also say, is this:[17] he simply takes for granted that the badness of the soul is injustice. But not every soul is unjust. Therefore injustice is not the basic badness of the soul which would apply to every soul. He does not discuss the possibility that the basic badness of the soul is its corruptibility; that is to say, its dependence on the body. This issue is never faced.

Now this is developed then on the surface. I want to proceed as follows. If the body is bad in the extreme it ceases to be . . . but if the soul is bad in the sense of unjust, it does not cease to be. Injustice is not fatal to the soul as disease is to the body, and injustice surely is not fatal to the body. This might lead one to the conclusion that disease is the graver evil than injustice. Yes? 610c6, the last speech in 610c.

Mr. Reinken:
"But if anyone," said I, "dares to come to grips with the argument and say, in order to avoid being forced to admit the soul's immortality, that a dying man does become more

wicked and unjust, we will postulate that, if what he says is true, injustice must be fatal to its possessor as if it were a disease, and that those who catch it die because it kills them by its own inherent nature, those who have most of it quickest, and those who have less more slowly, and not, as now in fact happens, that the unjust die owing to this but by the action of others who inflict the penalty." (610c-d)

LS: Yes. [18]In other words, injustice is not in itself fatal, but it can be made fatal in the form of capital punishment. But what is capital punishment? Capital punishment is fatal to the body. Why is this a reasonable punishment, i.e., why is it a compensation for the badness of the soul? This must become a great difficulty on this basis, yes? In the sequel he makes clear that the soul is in no way impaired as soul by injustice. We don't have to read that; we have to make a selection. Let us go on in 611a, the first complete speech there.

Mr. Reinken:
"Let this, then," I said, "be assumed to be so. But if it is so, you will observe that these souls must always be the same."

LS: Let us assume. Let it be so, namely, that the soul is immortal. Yes?[19] That's the whole proof which we have heard. The specific badness of the soul is injustice, but injustice is not fatal; hence, the soul can never perish. In other words, the great issues would be the simplicity of the soul and the relation of the soul to the body. This is not even faced here. So this argument is a very neat one. Now let us see what further conclusions he draws from the alleged proof.

Mr. Reinken:
"these souls must always be the same. For if none perishes they could not, I suppose, become fewer nor yet more numerous. For if any class of immortal things increased you are aware that its increase would come from the mortal and all things would end by becoming immortal." (611a)

LS: Yes. So if the soul is immortal, the number of the souls is always the same, for the number cannot be diminished by death because it is admittedly immortal. Nor can the number be increased by coming into being, for—that's the implication—if it would come into being as an immortal thing, it would come into being out of mortal things; and then if that is possible, all mortal things could conceivably become immortal, and that is implicitly rejected as an impossibility. But what he means is that any coming into being would guarantee the mortality of the soul. What comes into being will necessarily perish. Did we ever hear something to this effect? Pardon?

Student: The Muses declared this.

LS: Yes, exactly. Yes, in which connection? Let us not be so elliptical.

Student: The best regime.

LS: Everything which has come into being must perish again, and therefore[20] if the soul is to be immortal it cannot have come into being.[x] Yes. Now let us go one where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"You say truly." "But," said I, "we must not suppose this, for reason will not suffer it; nor yet must we think that in its truest nature the soul is the kind of thing that teems with infinite diversity and unlikeness and contradiction in and with itself." "How am I to understand that?" he said. "It is not easy." Said I, "for a thing to be immortal that is composed of many elements not put together in the best way, as now appeared to us to be the case with the soul." (611a-b)

LS: So you see, you have here an allusion to the question of simplicity. In other words, the soul must be absolutely simple; then it is incorruptible. But we know from what we have seen in the *Republic* that the soul is not unqualifiedly simple. Yes? This was the point which you have seen. Yes, let us read the next speech, the somewhat long speech.

Mr. Reinken:
"Well, then, that the soul is immortal our recent argument and our other proofs would constrain us to admit. But to know—"

LS: Yes, not "our other." "The other" ones. I mean, the other ones which are surely not given here, and the present speech surely would not be a conclusion. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"But to know its true nature we must view it not marred by communion with the body and other miseries as we now contemplate it, but consider adequately in the light of reason what it is when it is purified, and then you will find it to be a far more beautiful thing—"

LS: Yes. Reason means here literally reasoning, figuring out. It's not a matter of intuition. We must figure out how the soul in its purity is. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"a far more beautiful thing and will more clearly distinguish justice and injustice and all the matters that we have now discussed. But though we have stated the truth of its present appearance, its condition as we have now contemplated it resembles that of the sea-god Glaucus whose first nature can hardly be made out by those who catch glimpses of him, because the original members of his body are broken off and mutilated and crushed and in every way marred by the waves, and other parts have attached themselves to him, accretions of shells and sea-weed and rocks, so that he is more like any wild creature than what he was by nature—even such, I say, is our vision of the soul marred by countless evils. But we must look elsewhere, Glaucon." (611c-d)

[x] Plato *Republic* 545d5-546a3

LS: Yes. Now here in this point you see, at the beginning of this[21], he has proved the immortality of the soul; but in order to see how the soul in truth is or, in other words, what the nature of the soul as soul is, that would require some figuring which surely has not yet been done. Does this kind of argument remind you of something? We have proven that the soul is immortal, but we have not yet looked at the nature of the soul.

Student: Justice.

LS: Yes, can you say one more word, not to be too elliptical?

Student: Do you address yourself to me or the class?

LS: Whoever is more—let's not waste time. Mr. Faulkner?

Mr. Faulkner: Just as we figured out in the beginning in the discussion with Thrasymachus that—

LS: Yes, well it is a very massive point. At the end of book 1, Socrates has proven that justice is better than injustice,[22] and they don't know what justice is. They do not know the nature of [the soul]—it's exactly the same thing, only here it happens almost at the end of the book so we cannot do anything to correct it.[xi] You see?

Student: There's an objection possible concerning the fact that the soul, in order to be purified, must have been at one point trammeled with something that wasn't of purity; therefore that the soul is not unity, it is a composite.

LS: Yes, well, in other words, its compositeness could be due to something like a fall. That's what you—

Student: Yes.

LS: Yes, sure, [23]we are not now concerned anymore with the defects of the proof, we are concerned with another consideration: that we do not know yet—and nothing is said in the future in the rest of the book [that] will remedy that defect—we do not know yet the nature of the soul, and yet the immortality of the soul has been proved. That doesn't follow. And this is, I say, a mistake which was already made regarding justice at the beginning of book 1, but regarding justice the difficulty has been settled because in the meantime we know what the nature of justice is, or do we not? What is justice? How did we establish the nature of justice?

Student: The best regime was discussed.

LS: Pardon?

Student: The relation to the three-part soul.

[xi] 354a12-c3.

LS: Soul, sure. Well, naturally. So our whole argument is now called into question again. More specifically, it is now made clear that the psychology of the *Republic*, this doctrine of the tripartition, whatever element of truth it contains, is not an adequate doctrine of the soul, of the nature of the soul. We have observed before, looking at the *Republic* as a whole, that the *Republic* in a way abstracts from the body and it abstracts from *eros*. Now *eros*, one can dare to say, [is] the soul of the soul[24]. The soul is essentially *eros*. The conclusion is that the *Republic* also abstracts from the soul properly understood, namely, from the nature of the soul. And one can say it abstracts from the nature of the soul because it abstracts from the body. You cannot understand the simple except in opposition to the composite, the body. Both studies are not made.[25] This question of the nature of the soul is now given a slightly different turn that doesn't come out very well in the translation: the ancient nature of the soul, meaning the soul as it was prior to its becoming so multiple and complex, or as the soul was by nature. This corresponds exactly to the primacy of the best regime as stated in the beginning of book 8, and where the Muses give their account.[xii] 612a, the end of this speech: the true nature. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And then one might see whether in its [true][xiii] nature it is manifold or single in its simplicity, or what is the truth about it and how. But for the present we have, I think, fairly well described its sufferings and the forms it assumes in this human life of ours." (612a)

LS: Namely, where it is manifold, has many shapes, many forms. So at the end of this whole argument the whole question of the nature of the soul is left entirely open. Here we turn then to the last subject of the book, and these are the external rewards of justice. Now quite superficially looked at, he has proven the immortality of the soul and then the question is: [What] would then be the rewards and punishments corresponding to the immortality of the soul, i.e., external rewards and/or external punishments? Let us read 612c, the last speech in c. That's the point which was mentioned very forcefully by Mr. Snowiss but maybe we should read it nevertheless.

Mr. Reinken:
"I granted to you that the just man should seem and be thought to be unjust and the unjust just; for you thought that, even if the concealment of these things from gods and men was an impossibility in fact, nevertheless it ought to be conceded for the sake of the argument, in order that the decision might be made between absolute justice and absolute injustice. Or do you not remember?" "It would be unjust of me," he said, "if I did not." (612c-d)

LS: Yes, now let us stop here. I would like to address to you this question: Was the impossibility of deceiving gods and men regarding one's injustice admitted, as is here said? Well, I reread the passages superficially and therefore I might have made a mistake, but my mind tells me that it was never conceded: it was taken as a possibility. So the premise of the whole discussion is an impossibility. And that is the impression you had,

[xii] 545d5ff.
[xiii] In Shorey translation: "real"

Mr. Snowiss. In this profound sense, I think, the *Republic* is a comedy, if it is true that every comedy, classical comedy, Aristophanean comedy, is based on a fundamental impossibility.[26] In 613d there is a reference to that, if I remember well. No, this reference is not correct. No. Well, let us go on where we left off. Where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"It would be unjust of me," he said, "if I did not." "Well, then, now that they have been compared and judged, I demand back from you in behalf of justice the repute that she in fact enjoys from gods and men, and I ask—"

LS: The regard, the reputation: these are the external rewards. Yes?[27]

Mr. Reinken:
"and I ask that we admit that she is thus esteemed in order that she may gather in the prizes which she wins from the seeming and bestows on her possessors, since she has been proved to bestow the blessings that come from the reality and not to deceive those who truly seek and win her." "That is a just demand," he said. "Then," said I, "will not the first of these restorations be that the gods certainly are not unaware of the true character of each of the two, the just and the unjust?" "We will restore that," he said. "And if they are not concealed, the one will be dear to the gods and the other hateful to them, as we agreed in the beginning." "That is so." "And shall we not agree that all things that come from the gods work together for the best for him that is dear to the gods, apart from the inevitable evil caused by sin in a former life?" "By all means." (612d-613a)

LS: Now let us [ask]: What does this remark imply? So it is now proven that the gods protect, reward, however you call it, the just. What does this imply, without going into any details of the argument? I will restate my question by putting the emphasis differently. It has *now* been proven: now, i.e., in book 10 as distinguished form the bulk of the argument,[28] up to book 9 inclusively. The argument in favor of justice[29] until book 9 inclusively is not based on any divine reward, any consideration of any divine reward, although there were references to it; but the fact that this is now stated as a new argument proves that. Let us read the sequel, where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"By all means." "This, then, must be our conviction about the just man, that whether he fall into poverty or disease or any other supposed evil, for him all these things will finally prove good, both in life and in death. For by the gods assuredly that man will never be neglected who is willing and eager to be righteous, and by the practice of virtue to be likened unto god so far as that is possible for man." "It is reasonable," he said, "that such a one should not be neglected by his like." "And must we not think the opposite of the unjust man?" "Most emphatically." "Such then are the prizes of victory which the gods bestow upon the just." "So I think, at any rate," he said. (613a-b)

LS: So that is the whole argument about rewards from the gods, rewards and punishments form the gods. Do you notice anything here? After all, we have to consider the just and the unjust, the rewards and the punishments.

Student: Doesn't this tie in with the fact that the gods are only to be the producers of good things?

LS: Oh, in one way, that was stated in book 2: insofar as punishment may lead to betterment.[xiv] Yes? Betterment. No, that's not the point, but the point which strikes one is the very perfunctory character of the reference to punishment as distinguished from rewards. Now in the sequel he speaks of the rewards by men of the just and the punishments by men of the unjust, and the next speech, say, about ten lines—deals with human rewards; and what these rewards are we have seen: he can marry into the best families in the city, and so on and so on. And then in the next speech, which is equally long, the human punishments. So in the case of human compensation he is as emphatic regarding punishments as regards rewards. In speaking of the divine compensation he is much briefer; he is more laconic regarding punishments than regarding rewards. 613e6, i.e., almost at the beginning of 614.

Mr. Reinken:
"Suppose yourself to have heard from me a repetition of all that they suffer—"

LS: No, excuse me—where we left off before. There is one point. I did not find it. What about—

Mr. Reinken: But what does he receive from men?[xv]

LS: Yes.

Mr. Reinken:
"Is not this the case, if we are now to present the reality?"

LS: Yes, well, reality, "if we must state what is." Now that has something to do with what you meant, with the neglect of reality before. Yes, I'm sorry. Now turn to the beginning of 614.

Mr. Reinken:
"Such then while he lives are the prizes, the wages, and the gifts that the just man receives from gods and men in addition to those blessings which justice herself bestowed." "And right fair and abiding rewards," he said. (614a)

LS: Yes, you see here he speaks only of the rewards of the just by gods and men in this life. And then he turns immediately after to what the just and unjust may expect after death. That begins only here, and this is called at the very end of the book a myth; therefore we are entitled to call it a myth, not [only] if we have the impression that it's a myth; that's not good enough.[xvi] Good. Here there is nothing said in the statement of the

[xiv] 379c2-7.
[xv] Mr. Reinken paraphrases here, in order to locate the passage.
[xvi] 621b8.

problem in 614a5 following, that what the just or unjust may expect after death from gods or men: this is still open, whether these rewards and punishments after death are not, so to say, automatic without being inflicted. In the sequel, 614 to 15, he describes the sufferings of the unjust and the delights of the just after death. There is one passage which we should read, 616; it was the point which was made by Mr. Snowiss. I believe we can improve a bit on it. 616a4 to b1—well, after this speech about the tyrant Ardiaeus. Yes? I mean, he is speaking now of a very unjust man. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And then, though many and manifold dread things had befallen them, this fear exceeded all—lest each one should hear the voice when he tried to go up, and each went up most gladly when it had kept silence. And the judgements and penalties were somewhat after this manner, and the blessings were their counterparts." (616a-b)

LS: You see here the turning around a long development of the case and very great brevity regarding the delights after death. Yes, there is a point which I cannot easily find. Perhaps Mr. Snowiss knows where that is, when he speaks of this severe punishment for those who committed very unjust actions in betraying the city. Do you have that? Do you know where [it is]? Unfortunately, I didn't make a note of that.

Mr. Snowiss: 615b.

LS: Yes. Now can you read it?

Mr. Snowiss:
"that this was the length of human life the punishment might be ten times the crime; as for example that if anyone had been the cause of many deaths or had betrayed cities and armies and reduced them to slavery, or had been participant in any other iniquity—" (615b)

LS: Yes. Now let us stop here. What does this mean?[30] To what [cities] does "cities reduced to slavery" [refer]? Their own cities.

Student: Pardon me?

LS: Their own cities.

Student: No, this is the conquering general, because later he speaks about people who betray their cities.

LS: Yes.[31] Betrayal of a city means one's own city; otherwise we wouldn't call the man a traitor. But what about enslaving, does this also refer to one's own city or to allied cities or to any city?

Student: In my translation it says "his fellow citizens," so I would say—

LS: Yes,[32] that is not clear, by no means. "If they have betrayed cities or armies and have thrown them into slavery." It is[33] by no means certain. There is—lest we might think [that] we impute to Plato a wholly un-Greek thought—there is a tragedy by Euripides, *The Trojan Woman*, where the enslaving of and the destruction of Troy and the enslavement of the women is regarded as a very terrible action of the Greeks. So that was prior to Plato.[34] This thought was known to Plato, and it would have very grave consequences, you know. You remember the statement about the limitations of warfare in book 5, that Greek cities should not be enslaved, but barbaric cities, sure; but that was much more the emphasis of Glaucon than the emphasis of Socrates.[xvii] Now in this story at the end of the book, of course the man who tells the story is not a Greek. You must not forget that. The examples later on given are Greek examples, but this is man as man; that's not Greeks as Greeks.[xviii] That is of some interest in connection with this broad issue. Here also there is no reference in this whole section about the gods inflicting the punishment. We come now to this story of the choice of lives after death. Let us read this speech, the great speech addressed to the disembodied souls in this situation. 617d6.

Mr. Reinken:
"This is the word of Lachesis, the maiden daughter of Necessity, 'Souls that live for a day, now is the beginning of another cycle of mortal generation where birth is the beacon of death. No divinity shall cast lots for you, but you shall choose your own deity. Let him to whom falls the first lot first select a life to which he shall cleave of necessity. But virtue has no master over her, and each shall have more or less of her as he honours her or does her despite. The blame is his who chooses: God is blameless.'" (617d-e)

LS: Yes. So that is important. The blame is too narrow, "the responsibility is of the chooser." In other words, everyone is responsible for the original choice he has made. Now[35] the souls are here not quite immortal, but ephemeral. Well, one could say there is no necessary contradiction, because they,[36] in a way, become new souls. They choose a new life after a long period of a thousand years in heaven or hell. Everyone chooses his way of life. In fact, everyone chooses his nature. Chooses his nature. Throughout the *Republic* it was always understood that there are many natures: some are by nature fit for that, and others are by nature fit for that, for higher and lower things. These natures were taken as imposed on man, on the individual. Now we hear a story that everyone has chosen his nature. So for example, if only a few people can be truly just according to the teaching of the *Republic*, if to be truly just means to be a philosopher and that depends on a certain nature, that would mean the majority of men cannot be truly just because they do not have a nature fit for acquiring true justice, and hence one would say they cannot be blamed. They just cannot help being[37] [less] than perfectly just. And here he corrects this in a way which seems to be more compatible with our ordinary moral feelings, since we are responsible for the imperfections of our natures because we ourselves [choose], each one of us, this nature. Now he[38] describes the various kinds of choices made. Unfortunately, we cannot read everything; let us begin in 619b7.

Mr. Reinken:

[xvii] 469b8-c7.
[xviii] 614b2-4.

"'Let not the foremost in the choice be heedless nor the last be discouraged.' When the prophet had thus spoken he said that the drawer of the first lot at once sprang to seize—"

LS: So in other words, actually everyone chooses a lot. The choice of[39] one's nature in the next incarnation takes the character of choosing a lot. Yes? A lot. And there are enough lots around somehow—say, of good ways of life—so that no one will be prevented from choosing; theoretically all could choose a good life, it would seem, yes? Otherwise there would be some unfairness. That's not made very clear. Let us[40] [first read] this statement, which is of the utmost importance.

Mr. Reinken:
"the drawer of the first lot at once sprang to seize the greatest tyranny, and that in his folly and greed he chose it without sufficient examination, and failed to observe that it involved the fate of eating his own children, and other horrors, and that when he inspected it at leisure he beat his breast and bewailed his choice, not abiding by the forewarning of the prophet. For he did not blame himself for his woes, but fortune and the gods and anything except himself. He was one of those who had come down from heaven, a man who had lived in a well-ordered polity in his former existence, participating in virtue by habit and not by philosophy—" (619b-d)

LS: In other words, he had only "popular" or "vulgar" virtue; that's what Aristotle calls "moral" virtue. The reward for his moral virtue was that he[41] went to heaven, not to hell; but since this is no solid virtue and since, as we shall see in the sequel, the easy life in heaven corrupts men—that's what Plato says—therefore the result is that he makes this grossly irrational choice. Yes? Go on; a few more sentences.

Mr. Reinken:
"and one may perhaps say that a majority of those who were thus caught were of the company that had come from heaven, inasmuch as they were unexercised in suffering." (619d)

LS: "In[42] [toils]," yes. In other words, the soft life in heaven. You know, both the absence of philosophy and the softness of the life in heaven combined make him a future tyrant. I mean, so radical is the assertion of the *Republic* regarding justice. Without philosophy, no genuine virtue. I think we can—the point: also the life in heaven, yes, but if this statement about the life in heaven is correct, what follows? If this easy life of rewards in heaven corrupts the soul, what is the conclusion?

Student: The rewards are unjust.

LS: Yes, or—

Student: They're not settled.

LS: Yes, but—

Student: It's an elevator: one time you're up and one time you're down.

LS: No, no. You stay there for the duration.

Student: No, but then the next time you come down and choose a bad life so that you go to Hades, and then you come back up.

LS: Yes, but something else is in that: the human soul needs effort to be good. [It] needs effort. As it is put in the *Statesman*, if there were an age of Kronos, where man had all the amenities of life and in addition could also understand the language of animals, birds, and so on and so on, so that he had access to knowledge which is now impossible for man, it would be a wonderful thing; and yet in a sense we don't know how the men used it. If they spent their leisure, their infinite leisure for telling each other stories, idle gossipy stories, then it was not a good state; but if they used it for philosophizing, then it was all right. [xix]

And now what comes out in the context is again this: if there are no arts, the [. . .] arts, there will be no philosophy, but why are the arts needed? The needs of the body. More generally stated, what is underlying this whole argument is that the human soul needs a body. This is not the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in the ordinary sense, but it is a doctrine of incarnation, of transmigration of the souls [. . .] as it is called. The soul, the human soul, cannot be a soul without the body. I mean, in other words, the immortality doctrine[43] does not mean the immortality of the disembodied soul. That is[44] everywhere . . . Yes?

Student: [A question referring to 619e][xx]

LS: What are you reading now, the sequel?

Student: The turn from 619d to e.

LS: Yes, will you read? Will you begin to read again? I couldn't follow you.[45] We must read this. Yes.

Mr. Reinken:
"For which reason also there was an interchange of good and evil for most of the souls, as well as because of the chances of the lot. Yet if at each return to the life of this world a man loved wisdom sanely, and the lot of his choice did not fall out among the last, we may venture to affirm, from what was reported thence, that not only will he be happy here but that the path of his journey thither and the return to this world will not be underground and rough but smooth and through the heavens." (619d-e)

LS: So in other words, after this demotion of heaven in the preceding passage, the softness, he restores the ordinary view of heaven here.

[xix] Plato *Statesman* 272b8-272d4.
[xx] As noted by the transcriber.

Student: Remember the time in book whatever it is, [book] 6, where he's talking[46] [of] Thrasymachus, he says that—I never could understand that passage, but that he says this thing about [how] it's good to get in a bit of practice in doing philosophy, because you will need it in the afterlife.[xxi] Maybe the only way to survive in heaven is to spend your time [here] . . . in philosophizing.

LS: [47]Yes, in other words, without certain resistances. Yes. Well, there is some empirical proof for this assertion—I mean, for part of it. If a society is perfectly happy, which you can say, you would never grant the possibility of that; but in the ordinary sense, if a society has solved fundamentally its problems and another society is in the grips of fundamental difficulties, which condition is more conducive to philosophy? What would you say?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes, I believe so. Now I have an argument for which I apologize in advance to Mr. Morrison, but I believe that if philosophy—in the seventeenth and to some extent in the eighteenth century, one can very well say England was a leading country in philosophy and science in Europe. Then it shifted to the continent, and I think it had to do with the fact that the British had solved their problems. And there are two dates: 1740, Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature*, [and] 1745, the Second Pretender. The Second Pretender meant the last attempt to restore the *ancien régime*. Yes?[48] You know what I mean by *ancien régimes*: the Stuarts really, and Archbishop Laud and everything going with that. And the new regime was that of Cromwell and to some extent also that of William of Orange.[49][xxii] I mean, while William of Orange was a kinsman of the Stuart, but he was not in fact any more a Stuart ruler, [a] ruler of [the] Stuart type. That which has been presented in English history, the absolute monarchy (or almost), the old monarch, they would say, and the Church; and [then] the new monarchy and the Bank of England. Of course the new monarchy was also allied, as we all know, with Nonconformism,[xxiii] but on the political level it became clearer in this opposition—you know, Bank of England and the national debt and all these other newfangled things which came from that. In England that was settled by the eighteenth century. In Europe there began a kind of settlement in the French Revolution[50] and all its consequences for the rest of continental

[xxi] *Republic* 498c9-d4.

[xxii] The Stuart period of English history (1603 to 1714) began when James VI of Scotland inherited the throne and became James I of England. The Stuart reign came to an end with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when Mary Stuart, daughter of James II, and her husband William of Orange became joint rulers of England. Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England during the Interregnum, 1653-58 (the Interregnum lasted from 1649 to 1660). Henry Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I, was executed in 1645, during the English Civil War (1642-1651). Charles I was executed in 1649. The Second Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, was the grandson of James II. His rebellion in 1745 was crushed in 1746, effectively ending the Stuart cause.

[xxiii] A reference to the Protestants who did not "conform" to the established Church of England and who were granted freedom of worship by the Act of Toleration (1688).

Europe. You know, the attempt to establish a new regime on the basis of the old regime: this was never as successful on the continent as it was in England, never, because up to the present day you still observe this conflict between the generals[xxiv]—the general *par excellence*, I mean de Gaulle; you still have the relics of this fight, the last fight, in the Dreyfus affair,[xxv] you know, and going back to the French Revolution. And in Germany you had it in a way in a much more terrifying form, and God knows whether Adenauer[xxvi] is the last word of that. But at any rate, I believe there is some connection between that.

Now the Greeks, the classic [Greeks] had a very simple example at their doorstep. Which city—there were two types, Athens and Sparta: Which had solved its problem to the satisfaction of every citizen of that city and which had not solved it? Sparta, as Thucydides, as sober Thucydides says, has never had a violent change of the regime nor tyranny.[xxvii] —and especially the change of the regime, but then, that's true. So Athens, which never solved the problem sufficiently, at least not until[51] sometime after the Peloponnesian War, if one can say that was a solution, was the home of philosophy. And in Sparta there was absolutely no place for such a study, absolutely no place for that. And so[52] Plato applies it here, as it were, to heaven—you know, this point of view: if the conditions are too favorable, if there are no resistances, men will not make the efforts. Yes?

Student: There's another point characteristic of—related to what you've been saying coming out of our text, which is what Socrates says: If our time to choose doesn't fall upon us relaxed then we can be guaranteed of having some sort of a happy existence. It seems to me that this implies that chance has at least equally as great a position as—

LS: Free choice.

Student: Rational choice.

LS: Yes, that is what he says now himself. Yes,[53] all right. But if we restate that now, free choice was said to be absolutely in control, i.e., *physis*, the "nature" of man, is entirely his own choice; but if this is now to be qualified, we are back where we were: that we have our natures without having chosen them. Yes? We will get some further evidence for this.

Student: You spoke about the necessity of societies having philosophers not having solved[54] [their problems]. What about the individual? How would this reflect on the philosopher or would be philosopher? Perhaps he must be immersed in politics.

[xxiv] Apparently a reference to the "Generals' Putsch" of April 1961, an attempted coup d'état by four retired French army generals against French President (General) Charles de Gaulle to prevent him from allowing Algerian self-determination.
[xxv] Alfred Dreyfus, a young Jewish artillery captain in the French army, was falsely accused in 1894 of selling military secrets to the Germans. He was convicted of treason.
[xxvi] Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), 1949-63.
[xxvii] Thucydides 1.18.1. The tape was changed at this point.

LS: In a way he is, necessarily. In a way. That does not necessarily mean that he has to go into politics because [he is] a member of the society.

Student: [Inaudible question referring to the notion that the artisan is a stimulant of philosophy][xxviii]

LS: Yes, but no pragmatistic conclusions. Yes, no pragmatism, but as Socrates says in this passage where he [asks] how can there be a philosopher in the present corruption . . . and then he mentions—the most important example, for some reason, is that the man who practices an art, a lowly and a very dull art, and yet comes to despise that art—you remember that?—that was presented there as the best [case] where as long as he still practices this art he cannot think, but as a preparation for that, sure.[xxix]

Student: Then, again, perhaps the soft life of leisure can be survived if one has philosophy first. In other words, it's that the linking of the two—

LS: Yes,[55] that is possible, but for other men—no, not for other men, only for philosophers; and therefore the merely moral men who deserved heaven will then according to this description be corrupted by heaven. That is here. Now we come now to[56] [what is] in a way the most difficult part of the thing, and that is a description of the many choices. Mr. Reinken, will you read the rest? Where we left off.

Mr. Reinken:
"He said it was a strange, pitiful, and ridiculous spectacle, as the choice was determined for the most part by the habits of their former lives."

LS: Pitiful and ridiculous: tragic and comic. Yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:[57]
"He saw the soul that had been Orpheus', he said, selecting the life of a swan, because from hatred of the tribe of women, owing to his death at their hands, it was unwilling to be conceived and born of a woman. He saw the soul of Thamyras choosing the life of a nightingale; and he saw a swan changing to the choice of the life of man, and similarly other musical animals." (620a-b)

LS: "Other music animals," yes. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"The soul that drew the twentieth lot chose the life of a lion; it was the soul of Ajax, the son of Telamon, which, because it remembered the adjudication of the arms of Achilles, was unwilling to become a man. The next, the soul of Agamemnon, likewise from hatred of the human race because of its sufferings, substituted the life of an eagle. Drawing one of the middle lots the soul of Atalanta caught sight of the great honours attached to an

[xxviii] As noted by the transcriber.
[xxix] Plato *Republic* 496a11-b6

athlete's life and could not pass them by but snatched at them. After her, he said, he saw the soul of Epeius, the son of Panopeus, entering into the nature of an arts and crafts woman. Far off in the rear he saw the soul of the buffoon Thersites clothing itself in the body of an ape." (620b-c)

LS: Yes, the man who makes laughter. It is not the case that he is a buffoon. Yes?

Mr. Reinken:
"And it fell out that the soul of Odysseus drew the last lot of all and came to make its choice, and, from memory of its former toils having flung away ambition, went about for a long time in quest of the life of an ordinary citizen who minded his own business, and with difficulty found it lying in some corner disregarded by the others, and upon seeing it said that it would have done the same had it drawn the first lot, and chose it gladly. And in like manner, of the other beasts some entered into men and into one another, the unjust into wild creatures, the just transformed to tame, and there was every kind of mixture and combination." (620c-d)

LS: Yes. Let's stop. Now what do you make of that story? It abounds with difficulties. I mean, there is a certain order, apparently,[58] [but] to what extent is there an order? Well, the last mentioned by name makes the wisest choice. From this point of view, one could expect an ascent. That is one. But let us see a bit. And then there is a strange thing which is very disconcerting. We get number twenty and also, from the context, number twenty-one: these are Ajax and Agamemnon. But then we [get][xxx] somewhere in the middle, Atalanta, and then among the later ones, Thersites; and Odysseus is surely the last. It is impossible, I believe, to figure out how many. Twenty-one is surely not in the middle. This must be a number higher than twenty-one, but which, is very hard to say. It's anybody's guess. Now what kind—the only order which one can discern is a most external and stupid thing. If you look at the names and job, write them down, you see the last is Odysseus and the first is Orpheus. What do they have in common?

Student: The first letter.

LS: Exactly. And then go back: Who is second from the last?

Student: Thersites.

LS: And the second? The beginning?

Student: Thamyras.

LS: Thamyras. So "Th." And then you see the third through fifth all begin with A: Ajax, Agamemnon, Atalanta—but Epieus, that doesn't fit in; so that is not very attractive. In other words, there is an order, some order, and a relatively far-reaching order regarding the mere names: the mere names, [that is to say], the merely conventional. Yet there is nevertheless something like an ascent,[59] [and] the difficulty is caused by this fact. Here

[xxx] The transcript indicates that something is inaudible here.

you have the previous life, and here you have the next life, say, singer: What does—swan, yes? Now if you disregard that and take into consideration only the human lives whether in the preceding or following; I mean, for example, if you take in the case of Orpheus, singer, swan. Forget about swan. And if someone—Thersites, monkey. Yes? Forget about monkey. Look only at the human lives. You get this order: singer, a fighter, a general, an athlete, a man of arts and crafts, a comic poet, I would almost say, and a wise man. [60]Some order could perhaps be discerned. Now then if you look at the motives: first, a hater of the female sex, then the musical birds who become human beings, the musical animals become human beings; I would say love of human race, then hatred of the human race. Then ambition, and then freedom from ambition. There is also something like an order that's discernible here. That leads to a very new question.

Student: What is ambition?

LS: Pardon?

Student: Who is ambitious?

LS: Odysseus is free from ambition.

Student: Who is ambitious?

LS: Atalanta, if I remember well. Yes? Let me see. But I'm not sure. Let me see. Yes.[61] So there[62] are certain principles of order discernible. But if we look at this list—I mean, love of human race, hatred of human race, ambition, freedom from ambition—[63]that would be elegant if the freedom from ambition would somehow correspond to hatred of the human race. How is this possible? I mean, how would one have to state that[64] so that it would make sense? Pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. That would also answer the question [of] how this whole thing can be connected with the theme of the whole book, namely, justice. That is perhaps one point one would have to consider. It begins with the hatred of women, and the only man who chooses the life of a woman chooses art or craft. Only one woman is mentioned here as choosing, but what does he say about her?

Student: She chooses the life of an athlete.

LS: Yes. Let us read this sentence about Atalanta.

Mr. Reinken:
"Drawing one of the middle lots the soul of Atalanta caught sight of the great honours attached to an athlete's life and could not pass them by but snatched at them." (620b)

LS: Could not pass them by. This choice—pardon?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. All right. Plato probably thought of similar things. They were not entirely unknown to him, as you will remember from book 8 when he spoke of the corruption of the best man's son. Yes? The mother started that, which is of course not universally true, as Aristotle said.[xxxi] But[65] still she is singled out by the mere fact that she is [the] only woman mentioned. She does not choose her sex. This is the point. The mythical thing is the perfectly free choice: there is no such choice. There is a necessity, and that comes out very clearly at the end. You know? If the[66] unjust men become savage animals and the just men, gentle or tame animals, that's not choice. They have formed this character and then they cannot help acting accordingly. But there is something else to be considered.[67] How does it come [about] that Odysseus is so supremely wise? He has learned from experience, yes? Experience. But this experience was a thousand years ago. Yes?

Student: As I think about it, thinking of him, the most famous thing was he was trying to get home to Penelope—thinking of women again.

LS: Yes. Yes, not only to Penelope: to home. Ithaca. But no, no, here, look at the situation.

Student: But we were told in the *Odyssey* that after he was dead, he had spoken to Achilles, and Achilles had warned him about choosing the glorious life.

LS: Yes, but[68] Odysseus was very much alive at the time. Odysseus was very much alive. Achilles. Yes, yes, in the tenth book.[xxxii] That is correct.

Student: [. . .]

LS: [69]Surely Plato chose Odysseus for good reasons, but let us be very practical and empirical. A thousand years ago he went through these famous sufferings—you know, persecuted by Poseidon and all these other things—and then where did he spend the intermediate thousand years, may I ask? Pardon?

Student: It doesn't say here.

LS: No, no. He doesn't say that. We must figure that out. Perhaps not in heaven. Perhaps these bad experiences were both in his former life and after, and that wouldn't be surprising because Odysseus was also known in one tradition as a very unjust man, the man who murdered Palamedes—Palamedes, who then was compared, after Socrates's death, to Socrates, you know, because of his justice.[xxxiii] So in other words, Odysseus had

[xxxi] 549b9-550b8; Aristotle *Politics* 1315b40-1316a17.
[xxxii] Homer *Odyssey* 11.488-491.
[xxxiii] Hyginus *Fabulae* 105; Virgil *Aeneid* 2.79-88; Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 26; Plato *Apology of Socrates* 41b1-4.

learned his lesson underground, whereas this[70] merely moral man from a well-ordered city had not learned a lesson through the soft life in heaven.

Student: [. . .]

LS: No, no, no.

Student: [Inaudible continuation of previous remark][xxxiv]

LS: Yes, but there is a reference to this. Let me see. Yes: "out of memory of his former toils." Now these "former toils"[71] can include the toils after death, because in the thousand years in heaven he might have forgotten these former toils.[xxxv] And especially, as I say, there is a tradition of Odysseus's injustice as well.[72] Now let us—

Students: [Series of inaudible remarks][xxxvi]

LS: Yes, but he is not mentioned by name: an entirely different case. That is a special case of special importance and separated from these eight here. But perhaps—no, I think one cannot do that in such Platonic enumeration—from my experience—that you can simply add unnamed people to the named ones. But let me just experiment. If this would be nine, then the fifth would be the middle, and that would be Ajax, who chooses the lion; and that is number twenty, the only one whose number is given. But he is surely not in the middle because—I don't know. Maybe.

Student: Atalanta is still in the middle, the middle lots, and three follow her. Three follow her.

LS: No, I think[73] in a way the most strange is Epeius, the builder of the Trojan horse. Why is he so singled out? In a way, he is the one responsible for siege, for the taking of Troy, for the destruction of Troy. That might have something to do with that theme of bestial treatment of conquered enemies. I don't know that. There is one point more which I think we must read and that is toward the end, in 621c. The last paragraph.

Mr. Reinken: 621c.

LS: Yes. "And thus, Glaucon, the myth has been saved, and did not perish." Do you have it? Do you see?

Mr. Reinken:
"And so, Glaucon, the tale was saved—"

LS: Yes, tale—in Greek here, "myth." So it is clearly a myth. I mean, we know it straight from the horse's mouth. Yes?

[xxxiv] As noted by the transcriber.
[xxxv] *Republic* 620c5.
[xxxvi] As noted by the transcriber.

Mr. Reinken:
"as the saying is, and was not lost. And it will save us if we believe it, and we shall safely cross the River of Lethe, and keep our soul unspotted from the world. But if we are guided by me—"

LS: Yes, why does he change the verb? "But if we obey me," [not] "if[74] we obey the myth." "But if we obey me." That corresponds strictly. There is a distinction and even an opposition between [Socrates and the myth], an opposition indicated by the "but" between the myth and Socrates. Now what does he say?

Mr. Reinken:
"But if we obey me we shall believe that the soul is immortal and capable of enduring all extremes of good and evil, and so we shall hold ever to the upward way and pursue righteousness with wisdom always and ever, that we may be dear to ourselves and to the gods both during our sojourn here and when we receive our reward, as the victors in the games go about to gather in theirs. And thus both here and in that journey of a thousand years, whereof I have told you, we shall fare well." (621b-d)

LS: Yes, "which we have discussed," "which we have gone through" . . . but I note only this strange juxtaposition and even opposition between the myth and Socrates, which again is dropped at the end because he incorporates part of the myth in his own story, but the emphasis is not—[this is] no longer a myth. Yes, Mr. Megati?

Mr. Megati: The whole emphasis upon necessity, about needing the experiences and difficulties in order to make a good choice—[in] all this emphasis upon necessity and on caution, I wonder what happens to *eros*. You know?

LS: Yes, that is not a doctrine of universal determination. There is nothing of this kind. That is nothing like that.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well, that is not chosen by Socrates, the demonic thing. That he had by his—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes. Well, I mean you must not jump from the myth to non-myth in this unprincipled manner. You know that you would have to rewrite the myth in non-mythical language and then compare, or you would have to translate the story of the *daimonia* into mythical language, and then indeed it would follow that Socrates has, by an incredible act of wisdom by far surpassing that of Odysseus, chosen the *daimonia*. Is that what you mean?

Student: [. . .]

LS: Well,[75] if you translate the *daimonia* into mythical language, it would mean that Socrates raises an exorbitant claim regarding his practical wisdom, his choosing.

Student: Do you know of any myths that have been written?

LS: No, of course not, but I try to do rationally what you did not do rationally. No, no. Of course not. Yes, but it is more helpful to translate the myth into non-mythical language. Men have various natures, which can be influenced in various ways by their own actions and by the actions of others, but there are specific limits. For example, if you have someone who is wholly ungifted musically but he[76] or his parents are very wealthy and they can hire not only the best musicians but also the best musical pedagogues, and he is given musical instruction day in, day out from very early youth, he would surely be in the end result more musical than he otherwise would be. Yes? But he would still be probably less musical than a very gifted boy, musically gifted, who did not have any rich parents and any special pedagogue, highly gifted pedagogue. This is an example which—you can do the same with mathematics or with any other gift.

Student: Then you[77] remind me of another question, about Polemarchus: that he was said to be Cephalus's "heir," which is the same word for[78] ["lot"].[xxxvii] And then there's also a discussion about Cephalus, of the difference in their names. One is a dissolver . . . and the other, Cephalus, built up . . .

LS: Oh, I see, that the grandson resembles the grandfather.

Student: This is his lot he is setting up.

LS: Yes, well,[79] of course, as far as the names are concerned, that is simply due to convention. The newborn son is called after the grandfather, not after the father. Yes? Because the names are practically identical: Lysanius and—I forgot what the name of the other was—you know, the "dissolver."[xxxviii] Yes. And the beauty here is that the names in this particular case correspond to the character. He's called "dissolver" and he is a wastrel. Yes? That's nice. That happens from time to time. [80]Sometimes names are very meaningful, but you must admit that's always accidental, that the name fits a man. I mean that—or do you seriously doubt that?

Student: No, no.

LS: But as regards a genuine similarity due to inheritance, that exists; but we know also—and many knew before Mendel[xxxix]—that this doesn't work so easily. You see, I mean, for example, if a very beautiful man marries a very beautiful woman and both [are]

[xxxvii] 331d8.

[xxxviii] Cephalus is named after his grandfather, who was also named Cephalus. Cephalus's father was Lysanius (330a7-b7).

[xxxix] Gregor Mendel (1822-1884), Czech Augustinian friar and plant scientist, conducted studies that showed principles of inherited characteristics that are the basis of the modern science of genetics.

also very intelligent, they may get a very ugly and stupid child. You know? Therefore—that was always known prior to Mendel, so this doesn't work so easily. What are you driving at? I mean, what has this to do with the fact that every child born has specific nature, specific gifts, or lack of these? I mean, is this not a universally-known fact? I believe even today in the questionnaires, do they not have a rubric about this? They wouldn't call it natures, but I'm sure they have a [word]—capacities—pardon?

Student: Talents?

LS: Talents, yes, or something [like that]. I never saw such a questionnaire.

Student: Aptitudes.

LS: Aptitudes, yes. And do they make a distinction between native aptitudes and acquired aptitudes?

Student: Some firms believe only in native aptitudes.

LS: Yes. I see. Yes. Yes, but[81] let us not do that now. What are you driving at? I mean, let us not miss the main point. The main point is this, and the really important point: that people are born with different gifts. [That] cannot be questioned. From our modern point of view, present-day point of view, the question is: Can this not be changed in the long run by eugenics and I know not what? Also by social improvement; you know, that plays of course a very great role. The notion was much less "[it is] nature" than people ordinarily assume. Circumstances, environment, social conditions are much more important than people generally admitted, and therefore social improvement will bring about a much fairer distribution of gifts. That's one point. But this was not the question in former times; this came up roughly in the eighteenth century and is with us since that time. Sure. But in the olden times, and of course still today, the interesting question is this: What does the question of natural gifts have to do with the moral–political question of merit? Someone who was a very moderate man—also not entirely unwilling from time to time to shock ordinary notions, namely, Goethe—once spoke of inborn merits,[xl82] [yet] strictly speaking, merits must be acquired. But what he meant is, for example, if someone is a man or a woman of singular grace and this grace is inborn, no special efforts were needed to develop it, and yet is it not as wonderful a thing as many virtues which surely are due to training, habituation, effort? Do you see the moral question? That men are praised or blamed for qualities which they have not acquired: the great question. Is there not a difficulty here? Yes, but to make it more precise: we make a distinction between—even Aristotle makes distinction this up to a point—things for which we are genuinely praised or blamed where the merit or demerit is ours, and qualities, good or bad qualities for which no one is blamed or praised because it's not meritorius or demeritorius. For example, if someone is a musical genius, that's not a merit[83], [so] strictly speaking,

[xl] Possibly a reference to Goethe, *Meister's Lehrjare* (*Sämtliche Werke*, Tempel-Klassicker), II 87-88 and *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Sämtliche Werke*, Tempel-Klassicker), vol. 244-45. See Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 190-191.

according to the usage followed by Aristotle in one set of passages, we cannot say we praise him. We admire him. Good.

Now the question is this: the sphere which is undoubtedly the sphere of merit and demerit and to some extent of rewards and punishments is what we now call morality, justice in the widest Greek sense of the word. Everyone can become just or unjust as he freely chooses. Yes? That is what Aristotle teaches in the *Ethics*,[84] a teaching which[85] has been accepted by many people up to the present day.[xli] This is the point where Plato differs. Yes, yes, but it's very important that we must not swallow, [86]I mean, suppress the most important implication. That's the point. Now if justice depends—not the content, of course, but the degree of justice of which a human being is capable depends on nature, the difference of natures,[87] [then] you[88] imply already that there are human beings who are unjust without being able to be just. I mean, I don't speak now of morons and this kind of thing, because one could say they are not from the very beginning able to be strictly speaking just. That's the question. And if one expresses this [in a way that is] closer to Aristotle's language, according to Aristotle moral virtue is inseparable from prudence, from practical wisdom. Now[89] can all men be prudent? If some men, or perhaps many men, cannot be prudent, they cannot be morally virtuous: it follows necessarily from Aristotle's principle. Now can all men be prudent? The answer given on the basis of Aristotle, although not on the basis of what Aristotle himself says, would be this: Yes, only there are various kinds of prudence. For example, someone is very unintelligent but for this very reason he can be modest, at any rate. He can defer to others. And we all know people, nice people, who are not able to make decisions and know it and defer to others. It's possible. Yes?

Now the interesting question, by the way, is this. We can imagine a society, let us assume a small society, in which no one is prudent. There is one great contemporary thinker who has developed this theme throughout his life. I'm referring to P. G. Wodehouse. When you take Bertie Wooster (you know Bertie Wooster) and he regards Jeeves as prudence incarnate. You know Jeeves, his butler.[xlii] If you don't know these personages you really should know them. It's an interesting [situation]. And if you watch Jeeves—this is marvelous—you see he is extremely imprudent. I mean, the solution to the problem, for example, of Bertie's marrying[90] [is] extremely complicated and[91] in no way prudent. And there is no prudent man around. Now you can say that is a comic writer who imagines an extreme situation which can never take place, but still we have to think about that.[92] If you say goodness, morality consists merely in a good intention, merely in the good intention, then you can perhaps get rid of the requirement of prudence altogether. But if it is not necessary only to will the good in general, but also specifically, concretely, where judgment is required, then the question of intelligence becomes morally relevant. This problem is much clearer in Plato than it is in Aristotle, and I think that has very much to do with[93] [the question] whether the natures are morally relevant. If one says they are, then the extreme conclusion would be indicated by the words of Goethe. Then you would

[xli] Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109b30-1115a3.

[xlii] P. G. Wodehouse (1881-1975), English writer; he created the very popular characters Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves, who appear in numerous stories and novels, including *My Man Jeeves* (1919).

have to speak of inborn merits. That is, I think, the case. Or would you agree with my analysis of—

Students: [Series of inaudible remarks][xliii]

LS: Yes,[94] you know quite well the fact to which I refer, although it would be somewhat out of place to mention it in class. There can be two people being extremely impractical, and in this sense lacking prudence. Yes? But it is almost certain that their imprudence and their imprudent suggestions differ, so that one vetoes the imprudent proposals of [one or] the other, some[95] tolerably reasonable result could follow. That's one way in which one could solve it. Shall we assemble again next Tuesday, same time, and I will try to give a summary of the nerve of the *Republic* as I see it as of now? Good.

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[1] Deleted "It was not –that this."
[2] Deleted "There is –."
[3] Deleted "not – are."
[4] Deleted "Now, then."
[5] Deleted "the –.'
[6] Deleted "say – one could."
[7] Deleted "more –."
[8] Deleted "along"
[9] Deleted "*Phaedo*."
[10] Deleted "the *Republic* is –.'
[11] Deleted "take –.'
[12] Deleted "it is – yes."
[13] Deleted "Does it."
[14] Deleted "what."
[15] Deleted "the soul –."
[16] Deleted "What –."
[17] Changed from "he does not – he simply takes for granted that there is a badness of the – that the badness of the soul is injustice. "
[18] Deleted "here."
[19] Deleted "That he says –."
[20] Deleted "the soul –."
[21] Deleted "he reaches this."
[22] Changed from "at the beginning of this he reaches this."
[23] Deleted "and surely you cannot prove."
[24] Deleted "if one may say."
[25] Changed from "This is now – this question of the nature of the soul is now – is here given a slightly different turn."
[26] Deleted "There is –."
[27] Deleted "External rewards. Yes?"
[28] Changed from "Books –."
[29] Deleted "form –."
[30] Changed from "To what does cities, had reduced cities to slavery – what – I mean, what cities?"
[31] Deleted "– no, I mean, here – betrayal of the city means, of course –."
[32] Deleted "– no, that is not –."
[33] Changed from "not –."
[34] Changed from "Plato – this thought was known to Plato and that – it would have very grave consequences."

[xliii] As noted by the transcriber.

[35] Changed from "where you see here."
[36] Deleted "are addressed – because they."
[37] Deleted "more."
[38] Deleted "tells then this."
[39] Deleted "nature takes – of."
[40] Deleted "see what this first –."
[41] Deleted "came –."
[42] Deleted "tolerance."
[43] Deleted "means – means –."
[44] Deleted "of – and that is."
[45] Deleted "This we –."
[46] Deleted "to."
[47] Changed from "Yes, in other words, without the – yes, without certain resistances. Yes, well, there is a very – I mean, there is some empirical proof for this assertion; I mean, for part of it."
[48] Deleted "I mean –."
[49] Deleted "although this was – but."
[50] Deleted "where they tried – with –."
[51] Deleted "after the."
[52] Deleted "there is – that is, I think – no."
[53] Deleted "but –."
[54] Deleted "them."
[55] Deleted "that is – that is – yes. Yes, yes. That is possible."
[56] Deleted "the –."
[57] Deleted ""'He saw the soul that had been Orpheus', he said…'" No, no. You forgot something: "for they chose" – "generally speaking, they chose according to the custom from former life." Did you read that? I'm sorry. Yes.:'"
[58] Deleted "because –."
[59] Deleted "if you see – and that, you see – if you – there are –."
[60] Deleted "That's a bit, a bit—there is."
[61] Deleted "Yes."
[62] Deleted "is – there."
[63] Deleted "That would be – that."
[64] Deleted "in order to let it –."
[65] Deleted "– so – but."
[66] Deleted "unjust people – yes – the."
[67] Changed from "Why –."
[68] Deleted "not of –."
[69] Changed from "Yes. No, no. That is – surely Plato chose Odysseus for good reasons, but let us – no, but let us be very practical and empirical."
[70] Changed from "moral –."
[71] Changed from "is –."
[72] Deleted "And – yes –."
[73] Deleted "the most –."
[74] Deleted "– here –."
[75] Deleted "it would be – would it not be – no, I mean, I you translate it into –."
[76] Deleted "is – he."
[77] Deleted "raise – you."
[78] Deleted "life."
[79] Changed from "it –."
[80] Deleted "oh yes, there are"
[81] Deleted "what are you – but."
[82] Deleted "by which, in other words, I mean you know that"
[83] Deleted "and yet – yet – yes, and."
[84] Deleted "which is –."
[85] Deleted "is –."
[86] Deleted "and you know what I mean, yes?"

[87] Deleted "the."
[88] Deleted "reach also."
[89] Deleted "is prudence –."
[90] Deleted "– you know – are."
[91] Deleted "not –."
[92] Deleted "We have to – what is – you see, that is a good – I mean."
[93] Deleted "that. You know."
[94] Deleted "well, I mean, I don't wish –.'
[95] Deleted "tolerable, reasonable result –."

Session 17: December 5, 1961
Concluding Discussion

Leo Strauss: [In progress] —followed by a free-for-all, if so desired. Now we have made the tacit assumption that it is important to understand Plato's *Republic*. It would be necessary to go into that assumption, and very important things might come to light, but one cannot discuss all questions at the same time, so we leave it at the assumption here. Now when we mean to understand Plato's *Republic*, we mean to understand it in the first place as Plato meant it.[1] We may be able to make a use of it which would make Plato turn in his grave afterward, but this cannot be done intelligently if we do not know first how he meant it. And if we try seriously to do that, then we must observe certain elementary rules of prudence. And I do not now go into the question of the translations, although you will see that I'm indirectly speaking of the question of translation. In our orientation we use all kinds of terms and apply them to Plato. Well, the crudest term would be, for example, such a concept as "state" in contradistinction[2] [to] "the city," and similar things, but also such words which we use as a matter of course, like "logic" and "metaphysics" and "aesthetics" and what have you, without going into the question whether this thing ever entered the horizon of Plato. [3]We get into all kinds of simple problems and become oblivious of the genuine problems if we use this kind of terms. That cannot be emphasized too strongly, and the unrhetorical manner in which I state it, and the uninspired manner in which I state it must not deceive you about the crucial importance of that point.

But we come now to another question which is connected with this. We take it for granted that the *Republic*, among other Platonic works, contains Plato's political teaching, and here we have to make some preliminary considerations. Plato never speaks. There are certain letters from Plato which have come down to us, and in these letters Plato speaks in his own name. These letters are generally regarded as spurious, at least the majority of them, and for convenience sake I will forget about them here. Now since Plato never speaks, never says anything in his own name, we cannot know what Plato thought. I believe I used sometime [earlier] the example from *Macbeth*, which is an extreme example: "Life is a tale told by an idiot." If someone would say, "That's Shakespeare's opinion of life," everyone would say that is by no means certain because Shakespeare doesn't say it, Macbeth says it. And to begin with, we must say everything which occurs in any Platonic dialogue has the status of this saying of Macbeth. But someone would say: That's absolutely childish, stupid, because everyone knows Plato has spokesmen. Of course, if such a nasty fellow like Thrasymachus says something, says, "Justice is the advantage of the stronger," then we know that Plato didn't mean [it] because Thrasymachus is not Plato's spokesman. But when Socrates speaks, sure we know.[4] But still that is not so simple, because Plato uses different spokesmen in different dialogues. If I take only the three manifestly political dialogues: the *Statesman*, the chief speaker is the Eleatic Stranger[5], not Socrates; and in the *Laws*, [it is] the Athenian Stranger, a third individual. Why did Plato choose a variety of spokesmen? He never says anything about it. Anything we might say is guesswork. So if we do not know why Plato

uses a variety of spokesmen, we do not know strictly speaking what is it to be a Platonic spokesman. [i]

But more simply, let us grant that Socrates is the chief spokesman, which one cannot seriously deny. [Then] we are confronted with a new difficulty, because one of the main characteristics of Socrates is his irony, and we are confronted with this fact: that Plato never says a word in his own name, and his chief spokesman is notorious for his irony. What can we possibly know about them? Now let us reflect for one moment what irony means, and let us forget about all these sophistications, perhaps pseudo-sophistications, which the word "irony" has undergone in modern times. Originally it means dissimulation, dissembling, but a dissembling of a certain kind. For example, if a man dissembles his poverty by playing the rich man, that's not irony, but if a rich man dissembles his wealth and[6] [pretends] to be poor, that is a kind of irony. So irony, in other words, means a special dissimulation: the dissimulation of one's advantages, superiorities, assets. In the next step, it means noble dissimulation. Socrates says the man of perfect virtue, the magnanimous man, is "ironical" toward the many.[ii] He is frank; he is fundamentally a frank man. A frank man. That is part of his nobility, frankness. But when speaking to the many he is ironical. What does that mean? He does not rub in his superiority. This irony is primarily the dissimulation of virtue out of urbanity.

Now in the most interesting case it means of course the dissimulation of the[7] highest of the virtues: wisdom. Yes, but what does it mean, to dissemble one's wisdom? That means to present oneself as less wise than a man is, but how can you do that in practice? Since the wisdom of a man is recognizable only from what he says, from the wisdom of what he says, he will say things less wise than [the things that] he thinks.[8] It means the holding back of one's wise opinions, the concealing of oneself. And from this it follows that, since people are so different, that the wise man, the man who is of course as such also magnanimous, will speak differently to different people. Therefore, occasionally in a Platonic dialogue, Socrates says [that] someone asked a question by him said: To this guy I would give [this] answer[9], to other people, I would give that answer. And Socrates says he spoke very ironically.[iii] This was of course in irony as well . . . but ironically means to speak differently to different people. I will have to come back to that later, because one could easily dispose of what I said now by very simple and powerful argument, namely, that Socrates is called in the Platonic dialogues ironical only by his enemies or in criticism of Socrates.[iv] [10]Socrates never says: I am ironical. Well, you could say: How could you possibly expect that? But let us be a literalistic as possible.

No one can deny—and I come now back to the question—that one cannot possibly try to understand Plato's teaching, if there is such a teaching, by considering merely the

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[i] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 5.5.26-28; Plato *Republic* 338c1-2. For this whole discussion of how to read Plato, see Strauss, *City and Man*, 50-62.

[ii] Apparently Strauss means to refer here to Aristotle, not Socrates. See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1124b29-31 (and also Strauss, *City and Man*, 51).

[iii] Plato *Lovers* 133d8-e1.

[iv] *Republic* 337a3-7; *Symposium* 216e2-5; 218d5-6; *Gorgias* 489e1; *Apology of Socrates* 37e3-38a8.

content, say, for example, the argument leading up to a result like the result at the end of the first book of the *Republic*: the just life is more advantageous than the unjust life. Now this is a relatively simple case, because here we are told immediately by Socrates himself that this is not an argument, because the argument was based on ignorance of what justice is.[v] And at the end of the *Republic* we get this repeated on the largest scale: the immortality of the soul has been demonstrated without previous knowledge of what the soul is, and that of course has an infinite effect backward since the whole argument of the *Republic* is based on knowledge of the soul. You remember the parallelism between the city and the soul.[11] It is now admitted that we do not have knowledge of what the soul is at the end of the *Republic*, and hence the whole teaching must be reconsidered again.[vi] But there are other dialogues, or passages in the *Republic*, for example, in which this kind of difficulties do not occur.

At any rate, it is necessary not only to consider the content but also the form of Plato's teaching. Why did Plato write dialogues? Why did he never write treatises, if we call treatises statements, coherent and orderly statements on[12] a general subject? I mean, not [on something particular, like the] Peloponnesian War, [but a subject] like war, for example, as Aristotle writes a book. Why did he not do that? Now if we are willing to be not quite strict and simply say: Well, let us look [and see] whether someone in the dialogues says something about the subject—of course never Plato himself—we are particularly attracted by the dialogue *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates speaks about writings. The thesis[13] can be simply summarized for our purposes: the invention of writings is not altogether salutary. It has also a very bad effect, and the bad effect is in the decisive respect greater than the good effects which it has. Writings are harmful. The only proper way of speaking about matters is to speak orally, to converse, not to write. From this one could draw one conclusion: that if Plato—Socrates of course was consistent: he never wrote; but Plato, who could be assumed to have agreed with Socrates, did write. The simple solution of this difficulty would seem to be to say that the Platonic dialogues are writings free from the defects of writings. What does that mean? What are the defects of writings? I will limit myself to a single statement in the *Phaedrus*: Writings say the same thing to everyone.[vii] Yes?[14]

Now Plato or Socrates knew of course that in one sense that is not true. I mean the simple story which we hear all the time, that a Shakespearean play is understood very differently by different people, but this is an accidental variety of understanding.[15] Well, Shakespeare is not, first of all, the best example, but if anyone of us writes something, any social scientist, then of course he means to be understood by everyone exactly the same way. That's the famous objectivity of science. When Kant writes his *Critique of Pure Reason*—you can even rise as high [as that]—he meant to say the same thing to everyone, and that's the ordinary thing,[16] and yet there are *n* different kinds of interpretations to which one could say: That's accidental. But Kant did not write it with a view to being understood differently by different people. But Plato wrote with the intention of being understood differently by different people. A Platonic dialogue says

[v] *Republic* 354a12-c3.
[vi] 611b9-612a5.
[vii] *Phaedrus* 264b7-c5.

intentionally different things to different people, but that must also be understood in the light of what we hear from Plato about man and men. Plato knew that there is a great variety of human beings, and we have found many references to this fact.

But this was not understood, I'm sorry to say, by Plato in a democratic manner, that there are *n* types, personality types—would this be the proper expression? Yes. But Plato understood this variety as hierarchically ordered. You know he did not deny, of course, that there are sometimes *n* personality types on one level, but the most interesting thing is that there is a hierarchy, and somehow leading to a top possibility, and that would be the one[17] whose understanding would be adequate. And what we would have to try is to understand the Platonic dialogues, not as the most simple-minded contemporary of Socrates would have understood it, but if we[18] are capable of that, exactly as Plato himself meant it.

Now how is this possible? And what can we do with this very general remark in a practical way? We get[19] [some] information about this from the very same dialogue by Plato, namely, the *Phaedrus*. In a somewhat different context, but in a related context, Socrates speaks there of what characterizes a good speech, a good speech in general, and in particular a good written speech. A written speech. And the word he uses there is—I mean, he says some very simple things which everyone would admit; for example, a proper speech must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and other things which are no longer taught, I understand, in American high schools but which should be taught. But he goes of course much beyond that, and what is that? And here he uses a phrase which literally translated—no, not translated, but almost literally repeated—means "logographic necessity," the necessity which ought to govern the writing of speeches, the writing of books, of anything. And he compares the perfect speech, written speech, to a perfect animal. In an animal—disregarding now certain modern findings about [the] appendix and other things—in an animal every part is necessary for the being or well-being of the animal: stomach, liver, and[20] [so on]. And that is a necessity there:[21] every part is necessary—I mean [in the] body—speaking in the truest way.[viii] The same applies when we speak of writings: every part is necessary. More radically and clearly stated: every part, however small, is necessary; it must be so as it is, and [it] must be at that place. For example, Socrates in the *Republic*—you remember when he[22] brings in solid geometry, it does not quite come in in its place. He forgets it. [ix] Well, why does Plato—I mean, that is of course impossible, that Plato should have written down the whole thing and said: Oh, I forgot geometry, and then for the sake of liveliness, you know, to give it the air of a genuine conversation, I make Socrates pretend he had forgotten it. I suppose there are writers who do this kind of thing, but it is safe to assume that Plato did not do it; and therefore this is a question: Why the pretense at forgetting solid geometry? And in this case I believe everyone would admit that it's necessary to raise the question, this particular question, but there are others.

Yes,[23] we have acted, more or less, as well as our powers permitted, on this principle, to raise each time the question. For example, why does the dialogue take place at this

[viii] 264b7-c5.
[ix] *Republic* 527d1-528e1.

particular house? And why is this section discussed with Glaucon, and another subject discussed with Adeimantus? And why does Thrasymachus first behave like a savage beast, but after about an hour's time he is tame like a lamb? This is as important to understand if one wants to understand the *Republic* as to see, which is much easier to see, that a certain reasoning is faulty. I mean, the rules—to see that a given argument is faulty: that is given, I think, to every human being who is not of subnormal intelligence. Yes?[24] Well, let us take a simple example. All men are mortal; Blackie is a dog; hence, Blackie is mortal. Well, no one would fall for that a single moment. Some of the Platonic arguments are not much better than that, and so that is easy to see; but to see[25] what exactly is it which induces Thrasymachus, who was savagery itself, from one moment to the other to become mild is much more difficult, because we are not told. We are not told; we have to figure it out, and the procedure is clear. We have to observe the exact point: Where does the change take place? On page 50, let us say, he is still savage; on page 55 he is already mild. In between, the change must have occurred, and we have to read these five pages again and again until we know what has happened. Now, as I said, we acted consistently upon that, and while it is possible to give certain general rules which are helpful,[26] the application of these rules always[27] [requires] judgment. It cannot be done mechanically. If I may remind you of the most simple case, what is in the center is most important in any enumeration, but that doesn't tell you important from what point of view. It doesn't have to be the simply most important; it may be the [most] important from this or that point of view. There you have to think. Otherwise it would be extremely simple; then you could proceed mechanically like an objective examination. Good.

But let us again say, as someone can say and turn my weapon against me: "Yes, well, what did you do? You said what Socrates says in the *Phaedrus*, and this is something [that is] not the words of Plato. You make your own old mistake by using Macbeth's sayings[28] and imputing that to Shakespeare. That was [said by] Socrates,[29] [who is] entirely a character of Plato. How can you impute that to Plato?" All right. Let us meet the issue on this ground, and I think it's necessary to do that, and then we have to return to a very simple admission which is very easy to make for people who are young in age or[30] have retained a certain youth, namely, to say: We don't know. I don't know. Much better than to pretend to know, because then you come very soon into the embarrassing situation where[31] someone will find out that you don't know, and you know what happens then, and it is even more embarrassing outside of examinations than in examinations, for there you get your punishment on the spot and you forget it, but if it happens to you on other occasions, more embarrassing.

Now what does it mean? The Platonic dialogue: we don't know what it is. Let us say it is an enigma, a riddle, and that's all we know. Now[32] how do we proceed if we are confronted with riddles in general, because if this is a sound procedure which we ordinarily observe when we're confronted with riddles, then we are on safe ground. Plato cannot object to that in any way or else he is irrational and then we won't read him. Now how do we proceed? Well, I suppose we take cognizance of what is undeniably there? For example, you are confronted with a beast—not necessarily microscopic—which you haven't seen, which no zoologist has ever seen. What do you do? I suppose you indicate its size, its color, and other very obvious surface characteristics, and there you are. That

we have to do. Now if we do that, we make first this observation: there is more than one Platonic dialogue. Forgive me for proceeding in this very elementary way, but I believe we must be sure of our steps. Now let me make a psychological experiment. You enter a class and there is nothing on the blackboard. You must imagine this away here, except this. [LS writes a question mark on the blackboard] We can only shrug our shoulders. Let us change it: two question marks. Something: two. Because a single question mark could also stand for five trillion question marks, obviously. Two? Specified.

Now Plato wrote[33] only—I disregard all modern scholarship—thirty-five dialogues. Thirty-five, that's something. In other words, we are confronted not with one enigma but with thirty-five. Perhaps this is a beginning, for what does this mean? We can classify—classify, because second inspection shows they are different dialogues. They are different. I will mention some later. Classify. We can compare; for example, we can note that there is a dialogue of amazing length, the *Laws,* and then there are other dialogues of amazing brevity. It's true. Everyone knows that. I don't know that—I am aware of that fact, but I think we should not[34] be snobbish. We should not be patronizing regarding the obvious things, we should take them seriously. We can compare, we can classify. But that means already we can reason. Since I have heard that my pronunciation of certain English words is so bad, and when I say reason some people think I am speaking of recent and vice versa, so I say r-e-a-s-o-n. We can reason.

Now what do we find, starting again entirely from the surface? Each dialogue has a title. There are thirty-five titles. There is a certain question of the titles into which I will not go. The title is ordinarily, say, here in our case, *Politeia*, *Republic,* or About the Just. Every title has such an alternative title; these alternative titles are now regarded as later additions, and that's perfectly possible. I don't know. So I limit myself entirely to the main titles: we have thirty-five titles and we can arrange, we can divide them.[35] Most of the titles are simply proper names and therefore at first glance they are as revealing as the titles *Anna Karenina* or *Madame Bovary* of the two modern works concerned. If you hear—well, of course we are all so learned, but if you hear *Crito* or *Euthydemos* or *Theaetatus,* these are names, even if they should be very famous names so that any contemporary of Plato would say, "Well, Theaetatus, of course, the famous mathematician"; "Crito, of course, this famous old friend of Socrates," that is not entirely convincing because other people can have had the same names. You know? I could imagine a novelist writing a book with the title *Eisenhower* and it is not Eisenhower at all, it is some haberdasher in Missouri. Is this impossible? I mean, is this impossible? I could imagine very nice effects from such a—good. [Much laughter] So I say that if the titles are proper names, that is not revealing, but there[36] are a few revealing titles at first glance. For example, there is a title called *Statesman*, the *Statesman*. Well, that indicates the subject matter. There are altogether four such obviously revealing titles: the *Republic*, *Laws*, *Sophist,* and *Statesman*; and if you look at this whole series and the titles, you see that whatever this man was concerned with, the only titles which reveal something are *Republic, Laws, Sophist,* and *Statesman*. You see, this man had obviously an interest in political matters: that's the only thing which appeared at first glance. I don't believe that this is irrelevant. The name of Socrates occurs only in a single title, and considering the fact that Socrates is said to be the key spokesman or the chief spokesman of Plato, that's

important: only in *The Apology of Socrates*. Well, by the way, it is ordinarily called *The Apology*, [but] I think one should always add, for the record, *The Apology of Socrates* to remind oneself of that.

Now people can say: Well, of course; that Socrates should appear only in that title, *Apology of Socrates*, is perfectly natural. It is not so natural.[37] God knows what title Plato could have chosen. We have a contemporary parallel: Xenophon—Plato's equal, as he was called by Milton, [x] maybe in the sense of contemporary, in the older meaning of—maybe also in a somewhat loftier sense. Xenophon also wrote four Socratic writings. The name Socrates occurs only in his *Apology of Socrates*. He wrote a book which contains his recollections of Socrates; he called it only *Recollections*. It is very misleading, because the recollections of Xenophon would seem to be much more the story of his terrific exploits in Asia Minor which are given in the *Anabasis, Ascent of Cyrus*. That's the title, *Ascent of Cyrus*, but it is, as a matter of fact, the ascent of Xenophon. So I think it is not an accident.

Now let me come to a very special point.[38] The *Apology* is called by Socrates himself a dialogue.[xi] It is his dialogue, his sole dialogue with the city of Athens. It is a one-sided dialogue, that's quite true. So it is not quite[39]—there is only a brief dialogue with the accuser in between.[xii] Technically it is merely a forensic speech, but in this most solemn dialogue, the only dialogue of Socrates with the city of Athens, he gives to the city an account of his way of life. And there he says what he is doing, with what kind of people he is in the habit of conversing; of special importance, there are the craftsmen, the artisans, the politicians, and the poets.[xiii] Now if we look at the Platonic dialogues, at the thirty-four other dialogues, we are amazed to see that there is no dialogue with an artisan proper. There is no dialogue with an artisan proper. There is hardly a dialogue with a poet: at the end of the *Banquet* there is, but the dialogue is not reported; it is only said that Socrates and two poets talked together and what the chief result was, but the dialogue is not reported. And, which I find most interesting, it is very rare to find a dialogue between Socrates and an active Athenian politician. You find quite a few dialogues with potential Athenian politicians, with young men who want to go into politics: Callicles, this famous man in the *Gorgias*, is about to enter politics [but is] not yet in politics. There are some exceptions: surely Anytos in the *Meno*, and Nicias and Laches in the *Laches*, and Theages in the *Theages* are notable exceptions, but it would be hard to find another one. So that is strange.

Now what does it mean for our question?[40] We never hear Plato, but we want to[41] get something which is without any question Plato. May I state it differently? Let us start from the absurd premise—which is absurd because it runs counter to our notions, but it is not simply refutable—that all dialogues are verbatim reports of conversations. Could be. But then I would say[42], still the titles are surely Plato's. When Socrates told him a

[x] John Milton, "Defends his Character, and Describes his Youthful Studies," in *The Poetry of Milton's Prose* (London: J. L. Cox, 1827), 78.
[xi] Plato *Apology of Socrates* 37a4-7.
[xii] 24c4-28a1.
[xiii] 21b9-22e5.

conversation or he was present at a conversation, that wouldn't supply the title. That the *Gorgias* is called *Gorgias* is at a first glance wholly unintelligible, and there are other examples of this kind. So the titles present Plato. And now we have a second point: the selection of dialogues. We can[43] demonstrate that there is a selection, because Socrates tells us in the *Apology* what kind of conversations he had, and of these conversations, we find no, so to say, no trace in the Platonic dialogues: no conversation with artisans, no conversations with poets, hardly conversation with active politicians. I mention one special case. One of the friends of Socrates was Plato. That is [something that] Socrates also makes quite clear in the *Apology*.[xiv] There's not a single conversation between Socrates and Plato in the dialogues. Now this is absolutely impossible, to assume that Socrates never conversed with Plato. And this simple thing proves that Plato,[44] to say the very least, selected, and this selection is surely Plato's.

I mean, do you see what I'm trying to do? Not begging questions and be like a good child. I mean, a good child is a child which doesn't lie and only says what it sees. There is another [consideration]. Starting from the surface, when you open the book you see that some dialogues look like this, whenever you open [them][45]: there is Socrates and, say, Euthydemos:

Socrates:
Euthydemos:

And that's, by the way, an ironical thing. And then there are examples in which this does not occur. What I'm driving at: there are dialogues which look like a drama; the names of the speakers are mentioned and so. And then there are dialogues which look like a novel. The *Republic*: Socrates tells a story. You know? There is no dramatic—Cornford, I believe, in one of the more recent translations did that, he made it dramatic in this quite external sense.[xv] We are not speaking of dramatic in any sophisticated sense here, looking like a drama or not looking like it. I would suggest these terms: there are dialogues which are narrated, like the *Republic*, and that is a minority of cases; and there are dialogues which are performed. No one narrates it. That's also a very obvious statement. Now this clearly was also Plato's own choice, that he made the *Republic* a narrated dialogue and the *Gorgias* a performed dialogue. I mean . . . [that] is clear.

Now[46] we are confronted with a very striking thing. I must ask you to follow this rambling of mine now because it is really, I believe, a way which we are supposed to go; because of one thing we can be sure, if we can be sure of anything: that Plato would like to have serious readers, careful readers, thinking about it. [47]We must always make assumptions, naturally; no thought is possible without assumptions. But we must not make unnecessary assumptions. [48]Let us look then at this distinction between performed and narrated. Here we could say, almost say [that] Plato permits us, a single time, a glimpse into his own workshop. There is a Platonic dialogue in which[49] it is given to us to see how a narrated dialogue is transformed into a performed dialogue. Needless to say, Plato doesn't write a preface, but some character of his says: I have heard Socrates tell

[xiv] 33c8-34b1, 38b6-9.
[xv] Francis Macdonald Cornford (1874-1943) was an English classical scholar and translator.

this story, this conversation, and I wrote, jotted it down immediately when I came home because he knew that was terribly important, to keep a verbatim report. And he must have had quite a memory, that he could do that.[xvi]

But this, by the way, is possible. There is one example known to me, and I would be interested if you know any other of a genuine dialogue—I mean, a genuine [dialogue], not one which, as we most cautiously assume,[50] was made by a poet, a man like Plato, but a genuine verbatim reported dialogue. And that was a conversation by Lessing, a famous German critic and poet of the eighteenth century, and Jacobi, a younger man who also rose to high fame in later times,[xvii] about Spinoza.[xviii] That was the subject. This created at that time a very big scandal, but much more importantly,[51] [it] contributed very much to the character of the German idealism after Kant, as I cannot now show. But this was really so, that a man who hadn't spoken to Lessing met him, had conversations, went home afterward, wrote it down; and the friends of Lessing who knew Lessing very well knew that this was genuine, because only Lessing could speak that way.[52] I mean, this is a marvel. It is helpful for [the] understanding of Plato. I wonder whether there is another example of this kind in any other literature. I know no other. Yes?

Student: Banks wrote the dialogues of Whitehead.[xix]

LS: Who did that?

Student: Banks.

LS: Oh, he did the same? Going home, I mean, not in his presence.

Student: He would talk with Whitehead and then go home and write down what he would say.

LS: And verbatim?

Student: Yes. Well, it was as near as he could recall.

LS: No, well that's—yes?

Student: Boswell has the reputation of doing pretty well with Johnson.[xx]

[xvi] *Theatetus* 142c8-143c5.
[xvii] Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819) was a German philosopher. Strauss wrote his dissertation on Jacobi, *The Problem of Knowledge in the Philosophical Doctrine of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi* (1921).
[xviii] The conversation took place in 1780. See *The Spinoza conversation between Lessing and Jacobi. Text with Excerpts from the Ensuing Controversy*, trans. G. Vallée, J. B. Lawson, and C. G. Chappel (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988).
[xix] Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947).
[xx] James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson* (1785), and *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791).

LS: Yes, sure enough.

Student: That is, for accuracy.

LS: Yes. But these were rather more, in the case of Boswell, utterances by Johnson, not dialogues. All right. But I believe for Plato, that's quite amazing, that this is possible. I must say of myself [that] I would be utterly incapable to write down a conversation after—of some man, I mean verbatim, after it has occurred—and where we have now this beautiful invention which perhaps makes it superfluous. [LS gestures toward the tape recorder.]

So now we come back. Now this man, his name isn't for the moment important, is present at a conversation between Socrates—no! Socrates tells him of a conversation he had with a certain individual, and then he goes home and writes it down verbatim. And then in doing that, he says: Well, I found it clumsy to say "and then I"; in this case, Socrates, "said"; "[I] asked him"; "and then he replied." That was very clumsy, [so] make it in this simply manner: I say "Socrates" and I say here, say, "Theaetetus." I introduce now the name Theaetetus. This story is told at the beginning of the dialogue called *Theaetetus*. So we see here the transformation, and that of course is itself very interesting, why this is made at the beginning of the *Theaetetus*, this remark. Why is it made by this particular individual? And I have a guess ready. I believe the man who made this remark was a pedantic man, and I believe the beauty is that he is the representative of a so-called philosophic school whose basic vice would be described from Plato's point of view as pedantic, the so-called Megaric school. I cannot now go into that possibility. Good.

Now this man, Euclides is his name—Euclid, [53]that is of course a famous mathematician. This man says: I omitted this, "he says," "I replied," "he—" and so on. You know, "he says," "I replied." He says, "I omitted that which was between the speeches." That which was between the speeches. The very same expression, "that which was," omitting "that which is between the speeches," occurs in our *Republic* in book 3 when Socrates tries to explain to Adeimantus[54] the difference between epic poetry and dramatic poetry.[xxi] [55]In a drama this appears: that between the speeches is omitted, i.e., Sophocles doesn't say "then Ismene said," "thereupon Antigone replied." That between the speeches is cut out; only the characters speak. The author, and Plato—I'm sorry, Socrates, says in such things, in dramas, the author conceals himself completely.[xxii] In a drama the author conceals himself completely. This does not mean that he conceals his identity; I mean, everyone knows that *Antigone* was written by Sophocles, and everyone knows that the *Republic* was written by Plato. But what does he conceal? Not his identity: he conceals his thoughts. His thoughts come out only[56] as reflected in the drama in the play.

Let us look back for a moment at the *Macbeth* example. Before, let me summarize one point. We have almost authentic proof, a proof which everyone except the extremist pedant would regard as a proof, that the Platonic dialogues have the character of

[xxi] Plato *Republic* 393b7-8.
[xxii] 392e2-394c6.

dramas—I mean, please disregard all sophisticated doctrines about dramatic poetry. Drama is simply a writing in which characters other than the author speak and the author never speaks in his own name. In this sense, all Platonic dialogues are dramas. They must be read as dramas in this sense. Now let us look at *Macbeth*, the statement, "Life is a tale told by an idiot." I believe that we could reach agreement on the fact that this is not only a statement of Macbeth, but it is a statement of Macbeth in a certain situation; and if we look at that situation and look at what went before and came after, we see this statement about life, [a] tale by an idiot, is meaningless if said by a man who has violated the law of life. Forgive me this very sweeping assertion, but I believe that something of this kind is rather obvious in the *Macbeth*. He himself has made life meaningless by his murder in the first act. Now this is of course not meant as an interpretation of *Macbeth*, but only of this particular passage.

Now this same thing[57] is only the "how" of what is involved. What do we do here? We view the utterance of a character—nice or un-nice, intelligent or stupid, male or female, old or young—we view the utterance of any character in the light of the action. And that means to understand that as the author meant it. Macbeth meant it literally the moment he said it, sure; but Shakespeare did not mean it actually. That appears in the context of the whole. The Greeks have a simple distinction which has very much to do with this question: the speeches—in a drama everything is of course speech . . . and then they distinguished something, the alternative to speeches, they call "deeds." "Deeds," simplest translation of the word [*erga*]. It means also "works," but let us say "deeds." Now the deeds: we must understand the speeches in light of the deeds, not the deed in the light of the speeches. There is something to that too, but the fundamental understanding is of this way. Now what does this mean? One kind is the action; for example, such a simple thing that they don't get the dinner in the *Republic*, that they do not see the torch race in honor of this new goddess, but [they] talk and talk.[xxiii] They are feasted with talk, not with food. And of course this in itself is a mere brute fact, and we must think about it; and it is not very difficult to see that fasting—they fast—is an act of temperance and moderation, and the *Republic* has very much to do with inculcating moderation.

But that is a relatively simple example. The action[58] [is] what one can call the setting, meaning the time, place, characters of the people, where [one] speaks—what and when, and so on. Now this other meaning of deeds, of [facts],[xxiv] which is also important, it was a saying that deeds are more trustworthy, more reliable, than speeches. Well, you all know that means if someone preaches all the time against smoking—take this example, say, a physician—but smokes himself; the patient who is annoyed by the physician might very well say: Your deeds are much more convincing than your speeches. We do that all the time, and we say it is much more important what the deeds are: the deeds are more trustworthy[59] than the speeches. Deeds[60] means here almost the same as what we mean by facts. When they speak in the *Republic* about the equality of the sexes, there are certain statements made—one statement [is] especially impressive: that the difference between male and female is as irrelevant as that between a bald-headed and a not-bald-

[xxiii] 328a1-9.
[xxiv] See Strauss, *City and Man*, 59-60.

headed man.[xxv] With all due respect for the oracle speaking there, we must say: Well, it doesn't seem to be quite true. [61]Socrates himself is compelled to admit that generally speaking the men are stronger than the women—to say nothing of the important difference regarding procreation—stronger, and [62]the question is of importance because of men and women regarding war, where strength in the body is terribly important.[xxvi] We must keep this in mind.

The difficulty of course here is clear [63]and not too difficult to avoid. For example, there may be a fact of utmost importance for the argument which was unknown to Plato, which could not have been known to Plato, say, something which could be known after the discovery of telescopy and so on. Yes, sure . . . and the simple way of proceeding is to read the other Platonic dialogues and see what he says about the same fact, kind of fact, there. Perhaps even in the *Republic* itself we find different statements about any of these controversial facts. So[64] if we consider the deeds in both senses, then we understand the dialogue, and the result can be described as follows: we make a two-dimensional thing into that three-dimensional thing as it was meant by Plato. A whole dimension in depth comes to sight which is not visible on the surface; but the point is that this depth opens itself to us only if we are extremely careful regarding the surface. All the openings to the depth are in the surface—otherwise Plato would cheat, and well, that is of course already my speculation: that he doesn't cheat, so we can disregard it.

Another point which I would like to mention here which follows from that immediately is that[65] in any Platonic dialogue everything is necessary: everything, every word.[66] I cannot comply with that demand, but I don't regard my defects as good for setting up standard—I mean, the various ways in which a man may[67] agree, and the Greeks had an amazing variety of such expressions which all mean, fundamentally, "yes." And I would say it would be important to consider these differences, but I believe[68] this would require a very laborious statistical preparation which sooner or later, I believe, people will make. But more interesting, a more interesting conclusion: If everything is necessary, everything, this means [that] in a Platonic dialogue there is no accident, there is no chance. If someone coughs at a certain moment, has a hiccup, or laughs at something, that's necessary. There's no chance. This,[69] I think, is the core of the fictitious character of every Platonic dialogue, the core of it, because in real life, as we say, chance plays a very great role. Someone laughs, may laugh in a class, not about a more or less poor joke of the professor but because he is thinking of a very funny scene on Midway which he observed and remembers.[70] You know? That has nothing to it, and if it were mentioned in a report about the dialogue it would be utterly misleading, because it is not laughing at [something in] the dialogue but about something which no one could possibly know.

So in every sense there is no chance. This is *the* noble fiction on which the Platonic dialogue rests, and I believe every work of art of the highest order. I add one more point, although I forgot to bring with me the book which I would need for substantiating it. When, in this passage in the third book of the *Republic* to which I referred, when Socrates with great laboriousness explains the difference between drama and epic poetry, then

[xxv] 454c1-e5.
[xxvi] 455d6-e2.

when he [comes] upon Adeimantus [saying], when Socrates is speaking about that, "Oh you mean tragedy." And Socrates, more or less in the same context, says, "Yes, and comedy."[xxvii] That is Socrates's addition. The severe, austere Adeimantus, who, if I remember well, doesn't laugh a single time, whereas Glaucon does laugh and Cephalus laughs[xxviii]—he doesn't think of comedy but Socrates does. I believe that this point calls for some comment because it is of great importance. Our difficulties in understanding Plato are due not only to our own laziness, lack of intelligence, and the other vices from which we may suffer—at least I own that I suffer from them—but it may also be due to facts which have nothing to do with any individual's defects. We are in the grip of powers which direct our understanding in such a way as to close us to Plato. For example, an absolutely convinced social science positivist, and[71] perhaps also a natural science positivist has no access to Plato. He must make a terrific effort to find any sense of it, and[72] all of you must have read statements about Plato made by such people which show this abysmal incomprehension. But positivism—in fairness, positivism[73] is not the only thing of this kind. There is even something of[74] infinitely greater respectability and relevance, because no one is supposed to go to Carnap or Reichenbach or Popper[xxix] for finding out the precepts [advocated] by Plato. Yes? I believe [so]. But the Platonic tradition, the tradition of men dedicated to the loftiest messages of Plato, this is an important danger; this tradition of Plato, of Platonism, we know relatively little of it, of the early Platonism, say, up to two centuries after Plato. There we have only reports, you know, no documents.[xxx]

[. . .] but that is much later. One branch of the Platonic tradition, and in a way the most important branch, is the Christian Platonism, and one of the greatest Plato scholars of our century, John Burnet, I think can—and Dean Inge[xxxi] also, are perhaps the most powerful representatives of that [branch] in our century. They take Plato seriously. They do not have this silly contempt, but they nevertheless in a decisive respect do not see Plato as Plato was, and not for superficial or bad reasons. Therefore we must be particularly grateful to a Christian saint who has indicated for us in the most concise and beautiful way the difference between Plato and Christianity or the Bible, with the Old Testament of course included there; and this was Sir Thomas More: Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*, as you know.[xxxii] He coined the very word "utopia," and this is a marvelous imitation of Plato. The message, on the surface, is entirely different, but I will only mention one point which shows you how well he understood the *Republic*. More's *Utopia* is the opposite of austere. You know, in Plato there is a Spartan severity: black suits, as it were.[75] In More there is much grace and pleasure. Plato's *Republic* takes the place of a

[xxvii] 394b3-c5.
[xxviii] 398c7, 451b2, 331d9.
[xxix] Rudolf Carnap (1891-1970), Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953), and Karl Popper (1902-1994) were all associated with the Vienna Circle, a loosely unified group of philosophers and scientists who accepted and advanced the principles of logical positivism.
[xxx] The tape was changed at this point.
[xxxi] William Ralph Inge (1860-1954), Anglican priest, was appointed Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1911.
[xxxii] Sir Thomas More (1478-1535). *Utopia* was published in 1516 in Latin, and in English in 1551.

dinner; More's *Utopia* is presented after dinner. In other words, you see the beautiful correspondence of the external and the internal. Now these are people who have eaten well and they have a nice—what they call now an optimistic view of the good society.[xxxiii] Now More died, as you know, a victim of the tyranny of Henry VIII. I say tyranny, speaking from the point of view of Sir Thomas More. I know that—

Mr. Morrison: [. . .]

LS: Well, I don't know where you stand, and I don't wish to interfere in foreign affairs. Now when he was in jail, prison, he wrote a book—[that] was much later, that was in 1534, if I remember well, *Dialogue on Comfort and Tribulation*. [76]He was a very witty man, as you probably know. When he was on the scaffold and something went wrong with his beautiful beard—and it looked as if the executioner would cut off the beard from his head, whereas his duty was merely to sever the head from the rest of the body—and then he said: "At least the beard could not have committed treason." So even in this moment he did not let down. Now he makes this remark—I'm sorry, I must quote from memory—that this life is not a laughing time but a time for weeping, [as] Jesus indicates by the fact that he never laughed. He wept once or twice, but he never laughed. And then More in his way says: "I would not swear that he never laughed, but at the leastwise he left us no example of it, but he left us examples of weeping." The last sentence is a literal quote.[xxxiv]

Now this is, I think, an admissible statement, because I'm sure that this deep knower of Plato and classical literature knew when writing [this] that exactly the opposite is true of Socrates, whether he would take Xenophon's Socrates or Plato's Socrates. [xxxv] This Socrates laughs only once . . . In other words, a tiny bias in favor of laughing versus a tiny bias in favor of weeping. You see, what is common is the equanimity, not laughing and not weeping all the time. Very rare; [77]it is only infinitesimal but [a] decisive difference. That's it. Incidentally, Xenophon's example, which I remember more easily because it is briefer, is this. When Socrates was condemned to death, a very sentimental pupil or friend of his, Apollodorus, said, "How terrible, Socrates, that you have been unjustly condemned." Thereupon Socrates said, "Would you prefer it if I had been justly condemned?" Then he laughed: the only time.[xxxvi] Good.

But now let us come back to the main point. This slight bias in favor of laughing means, if we express it in forms of literary [genres], a slight bias in favor of comedy as distinguished from tragedy. I'm willing to admit—in the vacation mood, to make a bargain and say equal: equal recognition of tragedy and comedy. I don't believe this is right, but just in order not to get into an unnecessary fight. If you look at the Plato literature in all countries whose language I can read, the references to tragedy abound; the references to comedy are in great disgrace. There is, I remember, an article by an

[xxxiii] Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Clarence H. Miller, 2nd ed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 81.
[xxxiv] *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation* (1553), chapter 13.
[xxxv] Plato *Phaedo* 84d8, 115c5; Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 28.
[xxxvi] Xenophon *Apology of Socrates to the Jury* 28.

Austrian scholar, Theodore Somberg, which was perhaps published in this country. No, I'm not clear about Gomberg or Somberg, what is the real name? But do you know that, Mr. Jacksted? You are supposed to know such things.

Student: [. . .]

LS: [. . .] thank you. Very good. Thank you. [. . .] I believe it was in an American journal, because it came also to this country, in which he collects a number of evidences which are quite interesting but which are of course not complete. Now[78], to bring this to a conclusion, it seems to me that the Aristophanean comedies—the only classical comedies which are available to us in full, at least to the extent to which they have been preserved—are of decisive importance for a deeper understanding of Plato. And I mentioned this on some occasion in the course, that the core of every Aristophanean comedy is something impossible, and that all the other ridiculousnesses derive from the ridiculous character of that central impossibility on which the whole thing is based. I think that is also of very great importance for the understanding of the *Republic* in particular.[79]

Now we can do one of two things. We can have a discussion now[80] [or] I could say something about the *Republic* in particular. I myself would prefer at least a brief discussion for the simple reason that, well, I would like to see whether I got my points across, and also, I mean, at the end of the course one can be entirely frank: I have been tired. Yes, Mr. Seltzer?

Mr. Seltzer: When you referred to the dialogues, thirty-five,[81] is there evidence that there were more dialogues that have been destroyed?

LS: There is no evidence whatever that there were any other dialogues. There is evidence that there were more dialogues which were spurious. They are included in the manuscript, and you would also find them in the good editions as spurious. There are quite a few dialogues which are now generally held to be spurious. You know? Quite a few. But[82] I don't believe in that, and the reason is very simple. [83]All the ["proofs"], that's the way in which they call—all assertions that a given dialogue is spurious are based on [. . .] on a certain understanding of Plato. As one of these men stated quite frankly: This and this could not be said by anyone who has understood Plato's mind. You know?[84] It is nowhere the case that Plato would, in one of the so-called spurious dialogues, mention a grandchild of Alexander the Great, which would be physically impossible for Plato to know. Yes? I mean, needless to say that even such atrocious things do not by themselves prove that the work is spurious, but particular things might be in themselves. But [there is] nothing of that sort. The only purely philological things are that they say a certain term never occurs elsewhere in classical Greek and is, rather, very common in the second century. But[85] can we have a complete knowledge of terms in use at that time? How many things have been lost? Perhaps it was a coinage by some poet, or perhaps it was a dialect, a momentary fad in a certain part of the—God knows . . . I would say it is safer to assume that all the dialogues which have come down to us as genuine are genuine, and these are thirty-five.

Student: Well, would you regard as important an argument that said that your argument here this afternoon depends upon the assumption that there were no other Platonic dialogues that were lost?

LS: No. No. I mean, it doesn't depend on it, but how can we speak about the wholly unknown, like the Kantian thing-in-itself? Yes? [It] can't be done. No, no. But in addition, one could say, and this is a merely factual . . . there is no evidence for that. The only thing which is reported is that Plato gave a lecture, the famous lecture On the Good, and[86] there are some fragments are somehow preserved. But this is of course not a dialogue and I disregard that entirely . . .[xxxvii] Yes?

Student: You sort of avoided the question I wanted to ask concerning the letters. I think it's in the *Seventh Letter* where Plato speaks about the art of writing,[xxxviii] and you mentioned in your exposition that there was an objection one could make to you using the *Phaedrus*. Socrates speaks in the *Phaedrus* about writing—[87][and] you [are] violating your own terms. But by the inclusion of the letters, do you not exempt yourself then?

LS: [88]Well, all right, then I would have to change the argument a bit. But the trouble is—all right, but not everyone grants today the genuine character of the *Seventh Letter*. There are quite a few very highly respected scholars who doubt it, and I think it is simpler to start from the dialogues. But you can accuse me of having transgressed that canon by[89] speaking of thirty-five dialogues, because I know of no one except myself who would[90] start from the premise that all thirty-five dialogues are genuine.

Student: I wasn't trying to . . . I was trying to see if there is a way out by the use of the letters . . .

LS: Yes. Well, to put it very simply, the *Seventh Letter* is as terribly difficult to understand and as little simple as any Platonic dialogue; and [that] you believe that this is a straight off-the-cuff statement dashed off by Plato and for everyone, equally accessible to everyone, while he runs is absurd. But it is such a complicated thing. I mean, the mere fact that there are—I don't remember now the details, but there are large stretches where Plato and Dion (Dion, yes?) are identified: "we," "we." And then there are stretches where there are different [pronouns]. In other words, Plato presents himself to a considerable extent there as just an ally of Dion and not as himself.

Student: How about the contention that he's breaking his oath and that he's writing about what he should not write [about]?

LS: Yes, but these were private letters. If you write a letter to Mr. —, to your nearest friend or at least to this individual—maybe your nearest enemy, but to this individual—then you do not transgress the rule which forbids [you] to speak in the same way to all.

[xxxvii] The transcriber notes: "Most of two sentences inaudible."
[xxxviii] Plato *Seventh Letter* 341c4-342a1.

Do you see that? The letter is the writing which comes closest to an ordered conversation. Yes . . . Yes?

Student: If it's a private letter, how come it's harder to understand than a dialogue?

LS: Pardon?

Student: If it's a private letter, why didn't he just say what he had to say? I mean, he knew who he was saying it to.

LS: Yes, sure. But then I think on reflection you will see, even reading only the *Seventh Letter*, that what he says there about writing would apply to any writing, even to letters. I mean, in other words, the ironical distinctions.

Student: But why is—

LS: An ironical distinction. The letters are as easy and difficult of access as—but if you take a wholly meaningless letter, you know, "I forgot my socks," and this kind of thing, [91]of course the meaning of these letters appears only if you take the letters as a whole. And for example, you observe this fact: the most interesting letters are not written to everyone. The letter to us, you can say, is absolutely boring.

Student: Suppose he writes a letter to some politician and he means to be edifying. Well, why can't he be simply edifying, and without going beyond the level of edification . . .

LS: Well, I mean, if you are an [. . .] he won't satisfy you. Plato was known in antiquity for his love of tone. He never took anything—I mean, he never dashed off anything.

Student: Well, then there's more to this business of a pact than what you said before, because apparently he was also doing this just for the heck of it, something like that. I mean, you enjoy this kind of fun more than simply because it's expedient to hide.

LS: Yes, the line is very difficult to draw. Socrates is said to have cursed him who separated for the first time the noble from the expedient.[xxxix] Yes? I mean, in a crude way the distinction can be made, but when you look deeper you see even in the *Republic* justice is to be praised absolutely for its own sake without any regard to expediency, but when he begins the specific discussion in the second book, he starts from the needs of men.[xl] And[92] you can start from the loftiest point of view, [but] you will have to take into consideration the lower things. And you can start from the lower things,[93] [but] you will be compelled to go up to the highest. If someone behaves decently because of the policeman at the corner and for no other reason, and if he does this consistently for a long time, he becomes indistinguishable from a man who[94] obeys the law for its own sake[95]. The distinctions are necessary, but[96] we do not mean incompatibilities. Mr. Megati?

[xxxix] Cicero *Laws* 1.33.
[xl] Plato *Republic* 369b5ff.

Mr. Megati: I have a question I'm almost ashamed of.

LS: These are really the best questions.

Mr. Megati: What does the silence of Thrasymachus mean toward the end of the dialogue?

LS: Well, this silence, you must understand, begins in a way with[97] book 2. Yes? You know what he says[98] in the beginning of book 5, when they have a conspiracy[99] [against Socrates].[xli] [That] must be contrasted with the beginning of the dialogue, and then it appears that now the *polis*—I mean the *polis* there, you know, the small *polis* in their [group] includes now Thrasymachus, so that between the end of book 1 and the beginning of book 5 Thrasymachus has become a member of this *polis*, i.e., it is understood that he occupies a function, and that is the best which could happen to him, that he would occupy a respectable function in the just city. Rhetoric is—well, properly understood, properly supervised by Socrates—is necessary. And the precise point why he breaks down in book 1, if we can call this a breakdown, because you must see that he is of course not convinced by the argument occurring toward the end of the first book: You know, he says, "I want to oblige you; don't be feasted, Socrates, with my assents." And up to a point he argues, and really disagrees and argues, but Socrates is much better than him. And I think the particular beauty is this magnificent example [of the shepherd] by which he defeats Socrates, but [to] which Socrates retorts; and that is Socrates's assertion: Well, no, Thrasymachus is a great man compared with Socrates. That one must admit. His thesis[100]—I mean, [he] ruins himself: he says the artisan in the strict sense, and the ruler in the strict sense, is infallible. You remember that? Is infallible. And now Socrates says: But if you take the artisan or ruler in the strict sense, you must also say that the artisan has no concern whatever with his own advantage. The shoemaker as shoemaker makes shoes for others, [and] only accidentally for himself. That he gets money for that is absolutely irrelevant to him as shoemaker. This is another art, the art of moneymaking, which every artisan also engages in, but that is not the shoemaker in the strict sense. And then, of course, if the artisan in the strict sense is infallible and absolutely selfless, what can—you know, that licks him completely. Then ruling can only be ruling to the advantage of the ruled, the assumption being that ruling is an art.[xlii]

And then Thrasymachus comes up with his beautiful example. He says: Socrates, you babe in the woods, do you believe that the rulers serve for the benefit of the ruled? Take this simple classic example. The rulers are called shepherds of the people. Now what do shepherds do with the sheep? Do they serve the sheep? In a way, of course: they feed them. But why? With a view to these juicy lamb chops. So in other words, ruling means to rule to the advantage of the ruler. And then Socrates says: I dot a few[101] [i's]. Yes? But look carefully[102]; you must make a distinction: the shepherd doesn't get the juicy lamb chops. The shepherd doesn't get them, except by permission of the owner.[xliii] They are made for the owner. So we have now this interesting situation: master, shepherd, and

[xli] 450a5-b4.
[xlii] 340d2-342e11.
[xliii] 343a1ff.

sheep. Yes? . . . Well, here Thrasymachus forces this from Socrates, and Socrates makes him see, as in a mirror, his own imitation. The masters are the rulers: the *demos*, the tyrant, or whatever it is. The shepherd is Thrasymachus. Now look at Thrasymachus. He wants his justice, [the] good of the stronger, by hook or by crook. He would never find employers if it were known. Do you see? So in other words, he shows here by his own profession that justice is good. I mean,[103] take an image of the shepherds. They don't have the juiciest lamb chops unless they steal. That they can do, but then they are crooks . . . That they can do, but if they are found out, they can never really enjoy their injustice: [104]some one of them can tell, can squeal. [105]This is a very important part of the story, that Thrasymachus is reminded of his own position. And then he says later on, "I don't wish to get into troubles with those here." You know, there were others, [and] after all, he wants to have pupils, customers.[xliv] Of course, theoretically it's still possible to say that tyranny might be the most profitable business, because once you are a tyrant you are in control of everything. You know, Khrushchev doesn't hire anyone for travels . . . You know that? Anyone who has to apply for such things will appreciate[106] how one would behave if you write your own ticket in every respect.[107] I mean, writing your own ticket is particularly appropriate on the subject. Pardon?

Student: [Question as to whether the conclusion regarding Thrasymachus is that he does not move toward philosophy, toward becoming a philosopher][xlv]

LS: Yes, but it means, of course—yes, sure. That means—

Student: [. . .]

LS: Yes,[108] surely, but we must make here a distinction. The perfect rhetorician, the rhetorician of the highest order, would be a philosopher: Phaedrus.[xlvi] That's clear. But there can be ministerial rhetoricians, just as there are ministerial poets and so on, just as Gorgias is in a way a ministerial rhetorician, or Socrates asks him to become one. That, I believe, is the action of the *Gorgias*. And Gorgias declines, as becomes clear from the *Meno*, because there we learn what Gorgias did afterward, and he never—[he] refused to become an employee of Socrates[xlvii] . . . And Thrasymachus, that I believe is the chief [example]. And I believe one could show that there is an interesting parallel, and I say this without any disrespect, between Thrasymachus and the present-day social scientist, I mean according to the strict doctrine observed. You know? I mean the strict doctrine. You know, the value-free social scientist who is—his values are supplied to him by the society or by the government, and theoretically he would[109] be as able to show Khrushchev how to communize the world as to [show] President Kennedy how to prevent the communization of the world. Yes? I hope there cannot be any doubt about it. As social scientist, he cannot be loyal to any regime—I mean, as a human being, of course, but not as a social scientist. But that creates a difficulty. That creates a difficulty,

[xliv] 352b3-4.
[xlv] As noted by the transcriber.
[xlvi] See *Phaedrus* 269e1-270ac2, 276e4-277c6.
[xlvii] Possibly a reference to *Meno* 70a5-71a1.

and I believe these rather silly popular notions of the eggheads have here a tiny atom of theoretical truth.[110]

Now let us take this seriously.[111] I mean, I'm speaking now only of intellectually honest people. Now if a man holds this position, it is his duty to make clear on every occasion that the case for liberal democracy is not a bit stronger than the case for communism or fascism. He must do that, because otherwise there are objective value judgments, and that could ruin the whole position. Do you see that? I'm not joking in any way. It's necessary for him. I mean, that this is all buried in the general thesis—all values are of equal rank, or however it is called, or there is no rational decision of value questions possible—must not prevent us from enumerating it, from making out what it means. Now if this is suddenly said, I mean in this bald form, to, say, intelligent but not scientific citizens, I would like to observe the reaction.[112] This is the basic function of social science, as it must be because it concerns the basic question. I believe that the problem of Thrasymachus is—of course, he was not a social scientist; he was an artisan of the art of persuasion, but the absolute indifference to the difference, to the qualitative difference of regimes, is the same. And also this nasty teaching, you know: There is no justice. And Socrates shows him: Well, here you fight your own position for one moment. Don't abstract from yourself. Know yourself. Yes. I mean, this golden word of the god in Delphi, "Know thyself," can also be stated "Do not abstract from yourself," which makes it very ugly, but in some respects clearer. Is this not familiar to you? No, all right.

Then let me at least make one point as a reminder . . . because the key point as it has come to my attention in this term, which means very little but which—since I have never seen it before I was particularly struck by that,[113] and that has to do with the Thrasymachus point, this notion which emerges in the discussion between Socrates and Thrasymachus that the artisan in the strict sense is infallible, i.e., does his work invariably well and is utterly selfless, [which] means that art is justice. And this is only a specification of the well-known statement of Socrates: virtue is knowledge. And this, I believe, is one of a very few pillars which hold [up] the edifice of the *Republic*.

And[114] then this point which I believe I did not make clear enough in the class is this. Now in the Thrasymachus section, there is one thing very striking in one passage that was very deep, where he says every *techne*, every art, is perfect and does not need any other art for its perfection.[xlviii] You remember that? Now this means all arts are equal. All arts are equal. Each is in itself perfect. There is no hierarchy of art. And yet we cannot leave it at that chaos. There must be something which holds them together.[115] We need an art of arts, a universal art, and what is the universal art on the basis of Thrasymachus, that which accompanies every art?

Student: The art of pay.

LS: Pay. Yes, moneymaking, the moneymaking art.[xlix116] And now the *Republic* corrects that radically. The moneymaking art cannot possibly be the ruling art. There is a

[xlviii] *Republic* 342a1-b8.
[xlix] 345e5-346d9.

hierarchy of arts. You remember, they summed up [in] book 10: bridle maker—well, say smith, bridle maker, horseman.[l] And then how did we go from the horseman? Who control[s][117], who gives orders to the horseman? The general. And who gives orders to the general? Yes, the statesman. And who guides the statesman?

Student: The legislator.

LS: And who guides the legislator? He does. So in other words, the art theme which comes up for the first time in the Polemarchus section[li] but very powerfully in the Thrasymachus section leads to this, by this straight-up, simple "logic," to the philosopher. And then we are in the midst of things, because what about philosophy and the *polis*? You know this great problem: How can they be brought into harmony? If they diverge, how can they be brought to converge? And in this connection the statement occurs that Socrates and Thrasymachus have become friends.[lii] The convergence between philosophy and politics can be brought about by art, in principle, by the art of persuasion. The persuader—of course not the philosophers have to be persuaded but the multitude has to be persuaded, and that is exactly what such people as Thrasymachus were concerned with; only whereas Thrasymachus is now teaching anyone just to be politically successful—to win the next election, as we would say, or to change popular opinion in favor of government, for instance, and this kind of thing—Socrates asks Thrasymachus: Use your very great rhetorical powers for taming the multitude in favor of philosophy. That would be the proper use of the rhetorical art, and there is no indication that Thrasymachus did it, but I think it less clear that he failed to do it than in the case of Gorgias, because[118] we have the clear evidence of the *Meno* that Gorgias didn't take that advice.

So I believe one can say that this, what I sketched, is the nerve. From art—well, ultimate needs, the basic needs; the arts; the hierarchy of arts culminating in the legislative art, and beyond in philosophy, and then the question [of] philosophy and the *polis*. I think that is the comprehensive thesis of the *Republic*, which includes the theme philosophy and poetry because—that is already a decision, that the art guiding the legislative art is philosophy. We would have to say the highest wisdom, and whether this highest wisdom is philosophy[119] [or] poetry, that is precisely the question. I believe that covers all. Of course there are infinite details which could not be simply deduced from this . . . that goes without saying. Well, one more question and then—yes?

Student: [. . .]

LS: A tyrant who can be fooled regarding such massive things like lamb chops will not keep his tyranny for a single day. So, by the way, you are quite right. The problem which faces Machiavelli in *The Prince* is comparable to Thrasymachus's [problem], but Machiavelli is in a way much more simple. He says: Why, certainly. He is clearer on that

[l] 601c6-602a1
[li] 332c5ff.
[lii] 498c9-d4.

occasion. Lorenzo should look down and see the importance . . .[liii] Machiavelli gives you an indication somewhere in the preface—and there I could not present at the moment that you will have to hope that you will be listened to, and that this great prince would much more enjoy receiving a very beautiful Arabian horse than this exposition. Well, but the problem is the same: how to persuade the ruler. Whether the ruler is one-headed or many-headed, that is very . . . you know. In order to be successful in a democracy one doesn't have to be a [. . .] but you have to be a great public speaker. Well, that is not the universal rule. We know that, and President Eisenhower—I think he himself [would not] claim to be a great public speaker himself, but they have to touch ground. You know?

Student: . . . whether or not this very fact that it has been shown to us later, and also the possibility does not then refute Socrates's refutation of Thrasymachus.

LS: Oh God. This means you didn't get the point. It shows absolutely that this man, say, the advisor, has to be of course absolutely trustworthy. He has to be just. I mean, that this is a very dubious justice insofar as he must be trustworthy in the perpetration of most unjust actions is true, but this applies also to other[s], to citizens who are compelled to obey laws which may be of less than perfect justice. I mean, it's more extreme, but it's in principle the same problem. But the point which Socrates simply makes is [that] it is impossible—well, Socrates develops this, alludes to that: Of course, even the tyrant must in a way be just, in the way in which Al Capone was just to—you know, if someone took a special risk, he had to give him a greater stake than [he gave] to those who took less risk. This is not all to this low, solid, and disgraceful consideration that no human cooperation on the lowest level is possible without some fairness: this is a must.

Student: [. . .]

LS: Oh sure, sure,[120] but *ad hominem* and with a view to this particular individual, Thrasymachus, who says: Justice is just plain silliness—but when he's the tyrant. Yes. And of course the question, I mean, if one would have to argue it strictly: Let us admit for argument's sake that the political society is a gang of robbers—you know, merely collective selfishness without any regard for justice, but among themselves they would have to be tolerably fair, otherwise the thing wouldn't work. And therefore then the question arises: What makes it impossible to leave it at collective selfishness? You know, what they vulgarly call power politics. I mean, you have to have a certain inner order with some crude degree of fairness, but then let's just fall over the others and take the hides from them. Yes? Which is an extreme—this is Al Capone.[121] The difference, of course, is clear. Even such a state exists in broad daylight, as the saying goes; it is recognized in international law, and no gang of gangsters is recognized even in municipal law, although it may be recognized by municipal authority.[122] Why is this a defective *polis*, defective as a *polis*, which acts on this principle? That is of course the question, and one point, one discussion is clear: that in the perfect—in the *polis* described in the *Republic* (I mentioned this), these people do not behave like gangsters, wholly disregarding their foreign relations, because they don't spend the booty in the way in which the gangsters do. Socrates has proved explicitly . . . Yes? You remember? That is

[liii] The transcriber notes: "About two inaudible sentences"

one point which is explicitly made. You know that these guys who have the guns learn [123]and in addition they get an education which makes them averse to all crude things [124]so that they are filled with love of the beautiful, as it is called.[liv125] In other words, even disregarding all foreign relations, because they acquire a certain character they are not a gang of robbers. And the problem which remains somewhat in the dark—you have seen that in book 5 regarding the Greeks and barbarians, you know, where there is a slight divergence between Socrates and Glaucon, Glaucon insisting that they fight against barbarians, no holds barred.[lv] You remember that? Good.

So we leave it at that. I wish you a pleasant vacation.

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[1] Changed from "If we can –."
[2] Deleted "from."
[3] Deleted "and if we call."
[4] Deleted "It is –."
[5] Deleted "he's called."
[6] Deleted "plays."
[7] Deleted "most – of the."
[8] Deleted "He will not say –."
[9] Deleted "the"; "to that."
[10] Deleted "what –."
[11] Deleted "The whole – ."
[12] Deleted "a subject of – on."
[13] Deleted "is in –."
[14] Deleted "If written –."
[15] Deleted "This does not mean –."
[16] Deleted "but –."
[17] Deleted "which would –."
[18] Deleted "can make – if we."
[19] Deleted "an."
[20] Deleted "– I mean, body, speaking in the truest way. So –."
[21] Deleted "It must be –.'
[22] Deleted "leads."
[23] Deleted "– well."
[24] Deleted "I mean, if someone –."
[25] Changed from "why –."
[26] Deleted "yet."
[27] Moved "requires."
[28] Deleted "for –."
[29] Deleted "an."
[30] Deleted "in –."
[31] Deleted "you know, that."
[32] Deleted "– and."
[33] Changed from "not only."
[34] Deleted "we should do."
[35] Deleted "There are certain titles –."
[36] Deleted "are – there."
[37] Changed from "I could – God knows what title could – Plato could have chosen."
[38] Changed from "In the *Apology,* Socrates – the *Apology* is called in – by Socrates himself, a dialogue."

[liv] 401b1-403c8.
[lv] 469b5-471e5.

[39] Deleted "in other words, it is the."
[40] Deleted "In order – what we want to find is – we never hear Plato."
[41] Deleted "see – we want to."
[42] Deleted "there is –."
[43] Deleted "prove that – we can."
[44] Deleted "in the least –."
[45] Deleted "it."
[46] Deleted "here is – now."
[47] Deleted "which would – I mean."
[48] Deleted "if we –."
[49] Deleted "we –."
[50] Deleted "which."
[51] Deleted "that began the – a new –."
[52] Changed from "I mean, this is an – a marvel. I mean, it is helpful for understanding of Plato."
[53] Deleted "like you had."
[54] Deleted "what."
[55] Deleted "in dramatic."
[56] Deleted "reflectedly."
[57] Deleted "– we must – what – what – I'm now – this."
[58] Deleted "– what is –."
[59] Deleted "more."
[60] Deleted "can –."
[61] Deleted "and he"
[62] Deleted "that—since."
[63] Deleted "and which."
[64] Deleted "we have to consider –."
[65] Deleted "if a Platonic dialogue is –."
[66] Deleted "That, in a way, is—I mean."
[67] Deleted "say."
[68] Deleted "one –."
[69] Deleted "is in the – this."
[70] Deleted "this."
[71] Deleted "probably – and."
[72] Deleted "you –."
[73] Deleted "must not –."
[74] Deleted "much –."
[75] Deleted "Nothing –."
[76] Deleted "and there."
[77] Deleted "but."
[78] Changed from "– and I would – well."
[79] Deleted "So, now – yes."
[80] Deleted "and we –."
[81] Changed from "do we have –."
[82] Deleted "believe – I."
[83] Deleted "There is no"
[84] Changed from "Have you ever – well – yes – you know, it is nowhere the case that Plato would, in one of the so-called spurious dialogues – Plato would mention a grandchild of Alexander the Great. You know? Which would be physically impossible for Plato to know."
[85] Deleted "I – we simply can say what – I mean, do we have –."
[86] Deleted "but here, I mean."
[87] Deleted "as."
[88] Deleted "You mean to say – well."
[89] Deleted "taking."
[90] Deleted "say that."
[91] Deleted "even these can."
[92] Deleted "the separation is of –."

[93] Deleted "and."
[94] Deleted "does it who."
[95] Deleted "and this kind of thing."
[96] Deleted "the distinction –."
[97] Deleted "the beginning of book 1—no."
[98] Deleted "his only, after having, if I remember well."
[99] Deleted "you know this part, and where Socrates, which."
[100] Deleted "he makes, he denies that."
[101] Deleted "t's."
[102] Deleted "– what would –."
[103] Deleted "if – you – well."
[104] Deleted "they always have"
[105] Deleted "And here, that is the point, Thrasymachus, that I don't say—I don't believe it and that."
[106] Deleted "how – or to give an account of that – will appreciate."
[107] Deleted: "I mean, I use the word."
[108] Deleted "well we –."
[109] Deleted "of course necessarily."
[110] Deleted "You see –."
[111] Deleted "If –."
[112] Deleted "That."
[113] Changed from "and that is."
[114] Deleted "it has – it leads immediately – and then this."
[115] Deleted "and which is –."
[116] Deleted "That is the – yes."
[117] Deleted "led."
[118] Deleted "because in the Gorgias."
[119] Deleted "and."
[120] Deleted "Yes – no, but that – sure."
[121] Deleted "Why cannot – in other words – well."
[122] Deleted "But what is—why—why must—I mean."
[123] Deleted "so"
[124] Deleted "you know? And."
[125] Deleted "So – but."