The Origins of Political Science and the Problem of Socrates

Six Public Lectures by Leo Strauss

EDITED BY

DAVID BOLOTIN
St. John's College, Santa Fe

CHRISTOPHER BRUELL
Boston College

THOMAS L. PANGLE
University of Toronto

The following lectures are part of a series of lectures by the late Leo Strauss which *Interpretation* has undertaken to publish. The editors of these lectures for *Interpretation* have been able to obtain copies or transcripts of the lectures from various sources: none of the lectures was edited by Professor Strauss for the purposes of publication nor even left behind by him among his papers in a state that would have suggested a wish on his part that it be published posthumously. In order to underline this fact, the editors have decided to present them as they have found them, with the bare minimum of editorial changes.

These six lectures were delivered by Professor Strauss between October 27 and November 7, 1958, at the University of Chicago. They were available to the editors as copies of a mimeographed typescript, which was apparently based on a tape recording. The original typescript can be found in the Strauss archives at the University of Chicago. The typescript contains some handwritten additions and corrections, and although these are not in Professor Strauss's own hand, we are told by Professor Joseph Cropsey, who worked closely with Professor Strauss for many years and who is now his literary executor, that they might well have been made at his direction. Partly for this reason, and also because the revisions do seem to be improvements, we have chosen to present the revised version in the text, while indicating what the revisions were in footnotes. We have also indicated in the footnotes any editorial changes that we have made on our own (except for a few corrections of misspellings and a few small changes in punctua-

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tion, which we made without comment). We are grateful to Mr. Devin Stauffer for his secretarial assistance.

The last five of these six lectures were published previously, in a somewhat more heavily edited form, under the title "The Problem of Socrates: Five Lectures," in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, edited by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989 [© 1989 by The University of Chicago]), pp. 103–183.

Lecture Series: The Problem of Socrates

LEO STRAUSS

(OCTOBER 27, 1958)

I begin with a word of thanks to my colleague and friend Herman Pritchett. I feel much happier after he said these words because I feel less of an orphan. Otherwise I would have presented a series of public lectures entirely on my own responsibility, and I am glad that this responsibility is shared. I am also glad that the introduction implied that I am a bona fide political scientist, because quite a few passages of these lectures someone might think are[1] very marginal as far as political science is concerned, an opinion with which I do not agree.

By political science we understand such a study of political things as is not subject to any authority, nor simply a part of political activity or simply ancillary to political activity. Originally political science was identified with political philosophy. The distinction between political science and political philosophy is a consequence of the distinction between science in general and philosophy in general, and that distinction is of fairly recent date. Political philosophy or political science was originally the quest for the best regime or the best society, or the doctrine regarding the best regime or the best society, a pursuit which includes the study of all kinds of regimes.

The political philosopher was originally a man not engaged in political activity who attempted to speak about the best regime. If we seek, therefore, for the origins of political science, we merely have to identify the first man not engaged in political activity who attempted to speak about the best regime. No less a man than Aristotle himself informs us about that man. His name was Hippodamus from Miletus. Hippodamus's best regime had three chief characteristics. His citizen body consisted of three parts, the artisans, the farmers, and the fighters. The land belonging to his city consisted of three parts, the sacred, the common, and everyone's own. The laws too consisted only of three parts, laws regarding outrage, laws regarding damage, and laws regarding homicide. The scheme is distinguished by its apparent simplicity and clarity. But, as Aristotle observes, after having considered it, it involves much confusion. The confusion is caused by the desire for the utmost clarity and simplicity. Outstanding among the particulars which Hippodamus suggested is his proposal that those who invent something beneficial for the city should receive honors from that

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city. When examining this proposal, Aristotle brings out the fact that Hippodamus hadn't given thought to the tension between political stability and technological change. On the basis of some observations[2] we have made closer to home, we suspect the existence of a connection between Hippodamus's unbridled concern with clarity and simplicity and his unbridled concern with technological progress. His proposal as a whole seems to lead not only to confusion but to permanent confusion, or permanent revolution. The unusual strangeness of the thought induces Aristotle to give an unusually extensive account of the man who had fathered it. I quote, "He also invented the division of cities into planned parts and he cut up the harbor of Athens. In his other activity too he was led by ambition to be somewhat eccentric so that some thought he lived in too overdone a way. He attracted attention by the quantity and expensive adornment of his hair, and also by the adorned character of his cheap but warm[3] clothes which he wore not only in winter but in summer periods as well. And he wished to be known as learned in giving an account of nature as a whole." It looks as if a peculiar account of nature as a whole, an account which used the number three as the key to all things, enabled or compelled Hippodamus to build on it his triadic plan of the best city. It looks as if Hippodamus had applied a formula elaborated in a mathematical physics to political things in the hope thus to achieve the utmost clarity and simplicity. But in fact he arrives at utter confusion since he has not paid attention to the specific character of political things. He did not see that political things are in a class by themselves. Our search for the origin of political science has led to a mortifying and somewhat disappointing result. Hippodamus may have been the first political scientist; his thought[4] cannot have been the origin of political science or political philosophy. We may wonder whether this is not[5] a deserved punishment for the fact that we raised the question regarding the origin of political science without having raised the previous question as to why the inquiry into the origin of our science is relevant or necessary.

Every concern for the past which is more than idle curiosity is rooted in a dissatisfaction with the present. In the best case that dissatisfaction proceeds from the fact that no present is self-sufficient. Given the extreme rarity of wisdom, the wisdom of the wise men of any present needs for its support the wisdom of the wise men of the past. But the dissatisfaction with the present may have more peculiar or more distressing reasons than the general reason. Let us cast a glance at the present state of political science. What I am going to say is less concerned with what the majority of political scientists in fact do than with what the prevalent or at any rate most vocal methodology tells them to do. The majority of empirical political scientists, at least at the University of Chicago, are engaged in studies which are meaningful and useful from every methodological point of view. Political philosophy has been superseded by a non-philosophic political science, by a positivistic political science. That political science is scientific to the extent to which it can predict. According to the

positivistic view political philosophy is impossible. Yet the question raised by political philosophy remains alive. It retains the evidence which it naturally possesses. It will do no harm if we remind ourselves of that evidence.

All political action is concerned with either preservation or change. If it preserves it means to prevent a change for the worse; if it changes it means to bring about some betterment. Political action is then guided by considerations of better and worse, but one cannot think of better or worse without implying some thought of good or bad. All political action is then guided by some notion of good or bad. But these notions as they primarily appear have the character of opinion; they present themselves as unquestionable, but on reflection they prove to be questionable. As such, as opinions, they point to such thoughts[6] of good and bad as are no longer questionable, they point to knowledge of good and bad. Or more precisely they point to knowledge of the complete political good, i.e., of the essential character of the good society. If all political action points to the fundamental question of political philosophy, and if therefore the fundamental question of political philosophy retains its original evidence, political philosophy is a constant temptation for thinking men. Positivistic political science is certain that that fundamental question cannot be answered rationally, but only emotionally, that is to say, that it cannot be answered at all. Positivistic political science is therefore constantly endangered by both the urgent and the evident character of the fundamental question raised by political philosophy. It is therefore compelled to pay constant polemical or critical attention to political philosophy. The most elaborate form which that attention can take is a history of political philosophy as a detailed proof of the impossibility of political philosophy,—see Sabine,—in any manner or form. That history fulfills the function to show that political philosophy is impossible, or, more precisely, obsolete. Prior to the emergence of non-philosophic political science men justifiably dedicated themselves to political philosophy. Political philosophy was inevitable before the human mind had reached its present maturity. Political philosophy is then still for all practical purposes indispensable in the form of history of political philosophy. Or, in other words, political philosophy is superseded by history of political philosophy. Such a history would naturally begin at the beginning and therefore raise the question as to the identity of the first political philosopher. If it does its job with some degree of competence, it will begin with Hippodamus of Miletus and be satisfied with that beginning. One may, however, wonder whether this kind of history of political philosophy is of any value. If we know beforehand that the history of political philosophy is the history of a capital error, one lacks the necessary incentive for dedicated study. One has no reason for entering into the thought of the past with sympathy, eagerness, or respect, or for taking it seriously.

Above all the necessary and sufficient proof of the impossibility of political philosophy is provided not by the history of political science but by present day logic. Hence people begin to wonder whether an up to date training in political

science requires in any way the study, however perfunctory, of the history of political philosophy. They would argue as follows: The political scientist is concerned with the political scene of the present age, with a situation which is wholly unprecedented, which therefore calls for unprecedented solutions, not to say for an entirely new kind of politics, perhaps a judicious mixture of politics and psychoanalysis. Only a man contemporary with that wholly unprecedented situation can think intelligently about it. All thinkers of the past lacked the minimum requirement for speaking intelligently about what is the only concern of the political scientist, namely, the present political situation. Above all, all earlier political thought was fundamentally unscientific; it has the status of folklore; the less we know of it the better; let us therefore make a clean sweep. I do not believe that this step is advisable. It is quite true that we are confronted with an unprecedented political situation. Our political situation has nothing in common with any earlier political situation except that it is a political situation. The human race is still divided into a number of independent political societies which are separated from one another by unmistakable and sometimes formidable frontiers, and there is still a variety not only of societies and governments, but of kinds of governments. The distinct political societies have distinct and by no means necessarily harmonious interests. A difference of kinds of governments, and therefore of the spirit more or less effectively permeating the different societies, and therefore the image which these societies have of their future, makes harmony altogether impossible. The best one can hope for, from the point of view of our part of the globe, is uneasy coexistence. But one can only hope for it. In the decisive respect we are completely ignorant of the future. However unprecedented our political situation may be, it has this in common with all political situations of the past. In the most important respect political action is ignorant of the outcome. Our scientific political science is as incapable reliably to predict the outcome as the crudest mythology was. In former times people thought that the outcome of conflict is unpredictable because one cannot know in advance how long this or that outstanding man is going to live, or how the opposed armies will act in the test of battle. We have been brought to believe that chance can be controlled or does not seriously affect the broad issues of society. Yet the science which is said to have rendered possible this control of[7] chance has itself become the locus of chance. Man's fate depends now more than ever on science and technology, hence on discoveries and inventions, hence on events whose occurrence is by their very nature unpredictable. A simply unprecedented political situation would be a situation of vitally important political conflict whose outcome and its consequences could be predicted with perfect certainty. In other words, the victory of predicting political science would require the disappearance of vitally important political conflict, in a word, the disappearance of situations of political interest.

But let us assume that the positivistic notion of political science is entirely sound. We see already today when that science is still in its infancy that there is

a gulf between the political scientist's and the citizen's understanding of political things. They literally do not speak the same language. The more political science becomes scientific, the clearer becomes the fact that the perspective of the citizen and the perspective of the political scientist differ. It therefore becomes all the more necessary to understand the difference of perspective and to perform the transition from the primary perspective, the perspective of the citizen, to the secondary or derivative perspective, the perspective of the political scientist, not dogmatically and haphazardly, but in an orderly and responsible fashion. For this purpose one requires an articulate understanding of the citizen's perspective as such. Only thus can one understand the essential genesis of the perspective of the political scientist out of the perspective of the citizen. The safest empirical basis for such an inquiry is the study of the historical genesis of political science, or the study of the origin of political science. In this way we can see with our own eyes how political science emerged for the first time, and therefore, of course in a still primitive form, out of the pre-scientific understanding of political things. Positivistic political science did not emerge directly out of the citizen's understanding of political things. Positivistic political science came into being by virtue of a very complex transformation of modern political philosophy, and modern political philosophy in its turn emerged by virtue of a very complex transformation of classical political philosophy. An adequate understanding of positivistic political science, as distinguished from a mere use of that science, is not possible except through a study of the political writings of Plato and Aristotle, for these writings are the most important documents of the emergence of political science out of the pre-scientific understanding of political things. These writings of Plato and Aristotle are the most important documents of the origin of political science.

The most striking characteristic of positivistic political science is the distinction between facts and values. The distinction means that only questions of fact and no questions of value can be settled by science or by human reason in general. Any end which a man may pursue, is, before the tribunal of reason, as good as any other end. Or, before the tribunal of human reason, all ends are equal. Reason has its place in the choice of means for pre-supposed ends. The most important question, the question regarding the ends, does not lie within the province of reason at all. A bachelor without kith and kin who dedicates his whole life to the amassing of the largest possible amount of money, provided he goes about this pursuit in the most efficient way, leads as rational a life as the greatest benefactor of his country or of the human race. The denial of the possibility of rationality, distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate ends, leads naturally to the denial of the possibility of a common good. As a consequence, it becomes impossible to conceive of society as a genuine whole which is capable to act. Society is understood as a kind of receptacle, or a pool, within which individuals and groups act, or, society becomes the resultant of the actions of individuals and groups. In other words political society, which is

society *qua* acting, namely acting through its government or as government, appears as derivative from society. Hence political science becomes an appendage of sociology. Since a choice of ends is not and cannot be rational, all conduct is, strictly speaking, non-rational. Political science as well as any other science, is a study of non-rational behavior, but like any other science, political science is a rational study of non-rational behavior.

Let us then look at the rationality of the study. Scientific knowledge of political things is preceded by what is loosely called common sense knowledge of political things. From the point of view of positivistic political science common sense knowledge of political things is suspect prior to examination; i.e., prior to transformation into scientific knowledge, it has the status of folklore. This leads to the consequence that much toil and money must be invested in order to establish facts with which, to say the least, every sane adult is thoroughly familiar. But this is not all and not the most important point. According to the most extreme, but yet by no means uncharacteristic view, no scientific finding of any kind can be definitive. I quote: "Empirical propositions are one and all hypotheses; there are no final propositions." For common sense the proposition, "Hitler's regime was destroyed in 1945", is a final proposition, in no way subject to future revision or in no way a hypothesis. If propositions of this kind and nature must be understood as hypotheses requiring further and further testing, political science is compelled to become ever more empty and ever[8] more remote from what the citizen cannot help regarding as the important issues. Yet science cannot rest satisfied with establishing facts of its observation;[9] it consists in inductive reasoning, or it is concerned with prediction, or the discovery of causes. As regards causality, present-day positivism teaches that there can be no other justification for inductive reasoning than that it succeeds in practice. In other words, causal laws are no more than laws of probability. Probability statements are derived from frequencies observed and include the assumption that the same frequencies will hold approximately for the future. But this assumption has no rational basis. It is not based on any evident necessity; it is a mere assumption. There is no rational objection to the assumption that the universe will disappear any moment, not only into thin air, but into absolute nothingness, and that this happening will be a vanishing not only into nothing, but through nothing as well. What is true of the possible end of the world must apply to its beginning. Since the principle of causality has no evidence, nothing prevents us from assuming that the world has come into being out of nothing and through nothing. Not only has rationality disappeared from the behavior studied by the science, the rationality of that study itself has become radically problematical. All coherence has gone. Rationality may be thought to survive by virtue of the retention of the principle of contradiction as a principle of necessary and universal validity. But the status of this principle has become wholly obscure since it is neither empirical nor dependent on any agreement, convention, or logical construction. We are then entitled to say that

positivistic science in general[10] and therefore positivistic political science in particular are characterized by the abandonment of reason, or by the flight from reason. The flight from scientific reason which has been noted with some regret in certain quarters is the perfectly rational reply to the flight of science from reason. However this may be, the abandonment of reason, hitherto discussed, is only the weak, academic, not to say anemic reflection, but by no means an[11] uninteresting and unimportant reflection,[12] of a much broader and deeper process whose fundamental character we must try to indicate.

Present day positivism is logical positivism. With some justice it traces its origins to Hume. It deviates from Hume in two decisive respects. In the first place: deviating from Hume's teaching, it is a logical teaching, that is to say, it is not a psychological teaching. The supplement to the critique of reason in logical positivism is symbolic logic and theory of probability. In Hume that supplement is belief and natural instinct. The sole concern of logical positivism is a logical analysis of science. It has learned from Kant, the great critic of Hume, that the question of the validity of science is radically different from the question of its psychological genesis. Yet Kant was enabled to transcend psychology because he recognized what he called an *a priori*, let us say, act of pure reason. Hence science was for him the actualization of a potentiality natural to man. Logical positivism rejects the *a priori*. Therefore it cannot avoid becoming involved in psychology, for it is impossible to avoid the question, why science? On the basis of the positivistic premises, science must be understood as the activity of a certain kind or organism, as an activity fulfilling an important function in the life of this kind of organism. In brief, man is an organism, which cannot live, or live well, without being able to predict, and the most efficient form of prediction is science. This way of accounting for science has become extremely questionable. In the age of thermo-nuclear weapons the positive relation of science to human survival has lost all the apparent evidence which it formerly may have possessed. Furthermore, the high development of science requires industrial society;[9] the predominance of industrial societies renders ever more difficult the survival of underdeveloped societies, or pre-industrial societies. Who still dares to say that the development of these societies, that is to say their transformation, that is to say, the destruction of their traditional manner of living, is a necessary prerequisite for these people's living, or living well? Those people survived and sometimes lived happily without any science. While it becomes necessary to trace science to the needs of a certain kind of organism, it is impossible to do so. For to the extent to which science could be shown to have a necessary function for the life of man, one would in fact pass a rational value judgment on science, and rational value judgments are declared to be impossible by this same school of thought.

By this remark we touch on the second decisive respect in which present-day positivism deviates from Hume. Hume was still a political philosopher. He still taught that there are universally valid rules of justice, and that those rules may

properly be called natural law. This means from the point of view of his present day followers that his thought antedated the discovery of the significance of cultural diversity or of historical change. As everyone knows, the most popular argument for proving the impossibility of rational or universally valid value judgments is taken from the fact of such diversity and change. All present day thought is separated from Hume by what is sometimes called the discovery of history. The vulgar expression of this decisive change is the trite proposition: man does not think in a vacuum. All thought is said to be essentially dependent on the specific historical situation in which it occurs. This applies not only to the content of thought, but to its character as well. Human science itself must be understood as a historical phenomenon. It is essential not to man but to a certain historical type of man. Therefore the full understanding of science cannot be supplied by the logical analysis of science, or by psychology. The premises of science, or the essential character of science, as it is laid down by the logical analysis of science, owe their evidence, or meaningfulness, to history, since everything which can possibly become the object of thought is as such dependent on the structure of thought, or, if you wish, of logical constructs. The fundamental science will be a historical psychology. But this fundamental science cannot have its locus outside of history. It is itself historical. History must be conceived as a process which is in principle unfinishable and whose course is unpredictable. The historical process is not completed and it is not rational. Science in general and hence the fundamental science, which is historical psychology in particular, is located within the process. It depends on premises which are not evident to man as man but which are imposed on specific men, on specific historical types, by history.

The first man who drew this conclusion from the discovery of history was Nietzsche. He was therefore confronted with this basic difficulty. The fundamental science, historical psychology, claims as science to be objective, but owing to its radically historical character it cannot help being subjective. It is easy to say that Nietzsche never solved this problem. It is most important for us to note that he was distinguished from all his contemporaries by the fact that he saw an abyss where the others saw only a reason for self-complacency. He saw with unrivaled clarity the problem of the twentieth century, because he had diagnosed more clearly than anyone else, prior to the World Wars at any rate, the crisis of modernity. At the same time he realized that the necessary, although not the sufficient reason for the overcoming of this crisis, or for a human future, was a return to the origins. Nietzsche regarded modernity as a movement toward a goal, or the project of a goal, which might very well be reached, but only at the price of the most extreme degradation of man. He described that goal most forcefully in Zarathustra's speech on the Last Man. The Last Man is a man who has achieved happiness. His life is free from all suffering, misery, insoluble riddles, conflicts, and inequality, and therefore free from all great tasks, from all heroism, and from all dedication. The characteris-

tic proximate condition of this life is the availability of what we are entitled to call psychoanalysis and tranquilizers. Nietzsche believed that this life was the intended or unintended goal of anarchism, socialism, and communism, and that democracy and liberalism were only half-way houses on the road to communism. Man's possible humanity and greatness, he held, requires the perpetuity of conflict, of suffering; one must therefore reject the very desire for the redemption from these evils in this life, to say nothing of a next.

The modern project stands or falls by science, by the belief that science can in principle solve all riddles and loosen all fetters. Science being the activity of[13] reason *par excellence*, the modern project[14] appears as the final form of rationalism, of the belief in the unlimited power of reason and in the essentially beneficent character of reason. Rationalism is optimism. Optimism was originally the doctrine that the actual world is the best possible world because nothing exists of whose existence a sufficient reason cannot be given. Optimism became eventually the doctrine that the actual world can and will be transformed by man into the best imaginable world, the realm of freedom, freedom from oppressions, scarcity, ignorance, and egoism,—heaven on earth. The reaction to it calls itself pessimism, that is to say, the doctrine that the world is necessarily evil, that the essence of life is blind will, and that salvation consists in negating world or life. Politically speaking this meant that the reply to the atheism of the left, communism, was an atheism of the right, an unpolitical atheism with political implications, the pessimism of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's teacher. Schopenhauer's pessimism did not satisfy Nietzsche because Schopenhauer was compelled by his premises to understand the negating of life and world, or what he called saintliness, as a work or product of life and world. World and life cannot be negated legitimately if they are the cause of saintliness and salvation. Schopenhauer's pessimism did not satisfy Nietzsche for the further reason that the approaching crisis of the twentieth century seemed to call for a counter position which was no less militant, no less prepared to sacrifice everything for a glorious future, than communism in its way was. The passive pessimism of Schopenhauer had to give way to Nietzsche's active pessimism. It was in Nietzsche's thought that the attack on reason, of which the flight from reason is only a pale reflex, reached its most intransigent form.

Nietzsche first presented his thought in a book called *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*. This book is based on the premise that Greek culture is the highest of all cultures, and that Greek tragedy, the tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles, is the peak of that peak. The decay of tragedy begins with Euripides. Here we are confronted with a strange self contradiction in the traditional admiration for classical Greek antiquity. The tradition combines the highest admiration for Sophocles with the highest admiration for Socrates, for the tradition believed in the harmony of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Yet according to the clearest pieces of evidence, among which a Delphic Oracle is

not the least important, Socrates belongs together not with Sophocles, but with Euripides. There is a gulf, an unbridgeable gulf, between classical tragedy at its height and Socrates. Socrates did not understand classical tragedy. Socrates through his influence on Euripides and others destroyed classical tragedy. In order to achieve this supreme act of destruction, Socrates must have had a truly demonic power, he must have been a demi-god. Not his knowledge, but his instinct compelled him to regard knowledge and not instinct as the highest, to prefer the lucidity of knowledge and insight, the awakeness of criticism, and the precision of dialectics, to instinct, divining, and creativity. As a genius, and even the incarnation of critical thought, he is the non-mystic, and the non-artist *par excellence*. Socrates' praise of knowledge means that the whole is intelligible and that knowledge of the whole is the remedy for all evils, that virtue is knowledge and that the virtue which is knowledge is happiness. This optimism is the death of tragedy. Socrates is the proto-type and first ancestor of the theoretical man, of the man for whom science, the quest for truth, is not a job or a profession but a way of life, that which enables him to live and to die. Socrates is therefore not only the most problematic phenomenon of antiquity but "the one turning point and vortex in the history of mankind"

In shrill and youthful accents Nietzsche proclaims Socrates to be the originator of rationalism, or of the belief in reason, and to see in rationalism the most fateful strand in the history of mankind. We shall be less repelled by Nietzsche's partly indefensible statement if we make an assumption which Nietzsche fails to make and to which he does not even refer, but which Socrates made, the assumption that the thesis of the intelligibility of the whole means the following. To understand something means to understand it in the light of purpose. Rationalism is indeed optimism, if rationalism implies the assumption of the initial or final supremacy of the good. Rationalism is indeed optimism if rationalism demands a teleological understanding of the whole. There is good evidence for the assertion that Socrates originated philosophic teleology.

According to the tradition it was not Hippodamus from Miletus, but Socrates who founded political philosophy. In the words of Cicero, which have frequently been quoted, "Whereas philosophy prior to Socrates was concerned with numbers and motions and with whence all things came and where they go, Socrates was the first to call philosophy down from heaven and to place it in cities, and even to introduce it into the household, and to compel philosophy to inquire about life and manners and about good and bad." In other words, Socrates was the first to make the central theme of philosophy human action, that is to say, purposeful activity, and hence to understand purpose as a key to the whole.

I have tried to show why it has become necessary for us to study the origin of political science. This means, as appears now, that it is necessary for us to study the problem of Socrates. A few words in conclusion. The problem of Socrates is ultimately the question of the worth of the Socratic position. But it

is primarily a more technical question, a merely historical question. Socrates never wrote a line. We know Socrates only from four men who were more or less contemporary with him. Aristophanes's comedy the *Clouds*, Xenophon's Socratic writings, the Platonic dialogues, and a number of remarks by Aristotle are the chief and most important sources. Of these four sources Xenophon's Socratic writings appear at first glance the most important ones, because Xenophon is the only of these four men who was a contemporary of Socrates and at the same time the man who[15] has shown in deed that he was able and willing to write history, for Xenophon wrote the famous continuation of Thucydides' History. But I shall not in my discussion begin with an analysis of Xenophon, but I shall follow the chronological order, because the oldest statement on Socrates which we possess in completeness is Aristophanes's comedy, the *Clouds*, to which I will devote the next meeting.

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Of the four chief sources on which we depend if we wish to understand the thought of Socrates, Aristophanes's *Clouds* is the first in time. The first impression which anyone may receive of Socrates from the *Clouds* was expressed by Nietzsche in terms like these. Socrates belongs to the outstanding seducers of the people who are responsible for the loss of the old Marathonian virtue of body and soul, or for the dubious enlightenment which is accompanied by the decay of virtue of body and soul. Socrates is in fact the first and foremost sophist, the mirror and embodiment of all sophistic tendencies. This presentation of Socrates fits perfectly into the whole work of Aristophanes, the great reactionary who opposed with all means at his disposal all new-fangled things, be it the democracy, the Euripidean tragedy or the pursuit of Socrates. The point of view from which Aristophanes looks at contemporary life is that of justice, old-fashioned justice. Hence that novel phenomenon Socrates appears to him as a teacher of injustice and even of atheism. Aristophanes's Socrates is not only extremely evil but extremely foolish as well and hence utterly ridiculous. He meets his deserved fate: a former disciple whose son had been completely corrupted by Socrates burns down Socrates's thinktank, and it is only a lucky and ridiculous accident if Socrates and his disciples do not perish on that occasion; they deserve to perish. The *Clouds* are then an attack on Socrates. The Platonic Socrates, when defending himself against his official accusation, almost goes so far as to call the Aristophanean comedy an accusation of Socrates, the first accusation which became the model and the source of the second and final accusation. But even this expression may well appear to be too mild. Especially if the comedy is viewed in the light of its apparent consequences and of its wholly unfounded character, one must describe Aristophanes's action as a calumny. As Plato says in his *Apology*, he did none of the things which Aris-

tophanes attributed to him. In the *Clouds* Socrates appears as a sophist and a natural philosopher, whereas Socrates knew nothing of natural philosophy and was of course the sworn enemy of sophistry. And, finally, Aristophanes's comic treatment of Socrates, a treatment characterized by the utmost levity, must appear to be shocking to the highest degree if one looks forward to Socrates's tragic end.

To speak first of the striking dissimilarity between Aristophanes's Socrates and the true Socrates, i.e., the Socrates whom we know through Plato and Xenophon, there is Platonic and Xenophontic evidence to the effect that Socrates was not always the Socrates whom these disciples have celebrated. Plato's Socrates tells on the day of his death that he was concerned with natural philosophy in an amazing way and to an amazing degree when he was young. He does not give any dates, hence we do not know for how long this preoccupation with natural philosophy lasted—whether it did not last till close to the time at which the *Clouds* were conceived. As for Xenophon's Socrates, he was no longer young when he was already notorious as a man who was "measuring the air" or as a man resembling Aristophanes's Socrates, and had not yet raised the question of what a perfect gentleman is, i.e., the kind of question to which he seems to have dedicated himself entirely after his break with natural philosophy. It follows that it is not altogether the fault of Aristophanes if he did not present Socrates as the same kind of philosopher as did Plato and Xenophon. Besides, if Socrates had always been the Platonic or Xenophontic Socrates his selection by Aristophanes for one of his comedies would become hard to understand: Socrates would have been politically in the same camp as Aristophanes. And while a comic poet is perhaps compelled to caricature even his fellow partisans, the caricature must have some correspondence with the man to be caricatured. After we have begun to wonder whether there was not perhaps a little bit of fire where there was so much smoke, we go on and begin to wonder whether Aristophanes was after all an accuser, an enemy of Socrates. There is only one Platonic dialogue in which Aristophanes participates, the *Banquet*. The dialogue is presented as having taken place about seven years after the performance of the *Clouds*. The occasion was a banquet at the end of which only three men were still sober and awake, two of them being Aristophanes and Socrates. The three men were engaged in a friendly conversation ending in agreement about a subject than which none was more important to Aristophanes, the subject of comedy. The agreement was an agreement of Aristophanes to a thesis propounded by Socrates. In accordance with this is the Platonic Socrates's complicated and strange analysis, given in the *Philebus*, of the condition of the soul at comedies. In that analysis we discern the following strand. The condition of the soul at comedies is a mixture of the pleasure about the misfortunes of one's friends or about their innocuous overestimation of their wisdom with the pain of envy. Envy of what? The most natural explanation would seem to be envy of one's friend's[16] wisdom. The friend's wisdom may

not be as great as he believes and therefore he may be somewhat ridiculous, but his wisdom may be substantial enough to afford cause for envy. This analysis of comedy is monstrously inadequate as an analysis of comedy in general, but it makes sense as Socrates's explanation of one particular comedy, the comedy *par excellence*, the *Clouds*. In brief, on the basis of the Platonic evidence it is no more plausible to say that the *Clouds* are an accusation of Socrates than to say that they are a friendly warning addressed to Socrates—a warning informed by a mixture of admiration and envy of Socrates. This interpretation is perfectly compatible with the possibility that the primary object of Aristophanes's envy is not Socrates's wisdom but Socrates's complete independence of that popular applause on which the comic poet necessarily depends, or Socrates's perfect freedom. As in all cases of this kind, the differences of interpretation ultimately proceed less from the consideration or the neglect of this or that particular fact or passage, than from a primary and fundamental disagreement. In our case the fundamental disagreement concerns tragedy. According to the view which is now predominant, tragedy at its highest is truer and deeper than comedy at its highest, since life is essentially tragic. In the light of this assumption Socrates's fate appears to be simply tragic. On the basis of this assumption scholarship tends to see much more clearly the connection of the Platonic dialogues with tragedy than their connection with comedy. We need not go into the question whether this assumption is sound; we can be content with raising the question as to whether it was Plato's assumption. Plato was familiar with the assumption; the prejudice in favor of tragedy is not peculiar to modern times. No one was more aware than Plato of the fact that tragedy is the most deeply moving art. But from this, he held, it does not follow that tragedy is the deepest, or the highest art. He silently opposes the popular preference for tragedy. He suggests that the same man must be tragic and comic poet. When his Adeimantus had simply equated dramatic poetry with tragedy he makes his Socrates unobtrusively correct Adeimantus by imputing to Adeimantus the assertion that dramatic poetry embraces comedy as well. If we do not disregard the fact that the difference between tragedy and comedy corresponds somehow to the difference between weeping and laughing, we can bring out the issue involved in this way. One of the deepest students of Plato's *Republic* in modern times, Sir Thomas More, says in his *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*: ". . . to prove that this life is no laughing time, but rather the time of weeping, we find that our saviour himself wept twice or thrice, but never find we that he laughed so much as once. I will not swear that he never did, but at the leastwise he left us no example of it. But on the other side he left us an example of weeping." Of the Platonic and Xenophontic Socrates one can say exactly the opposite. Socrates laughed once, but never find we that he wept so much as once. He left us no example of weeping, but on the other side he left us an example of laughing. He left us many examples of his joking, and none of his indignation. His irony is a byword. He is not a tragic figure, but it is easy to see how he can

become a comic figure. The philosopher who falls into a ditch while observing the heavenly things or the philosopher who, having left the cave of ordinary life, returns to it and cannot find his way in it, is of course ridiculous, as Plato's Socrates himself points out. Viewed in the perspective of the non-philosophers, the philosopher is necessarily ridiculous, and viewed in the perspective of the philosopher the non-philosophers are necessarily ridiculous; the meeting of philosophers and non-philosophers is the natural theme of comedy. It is, as we shall see, the theme of the *Clouds*. It is then not altogether an accident that our oldest and hence most venerable source regarding Socrates is a comedy.

These remarks are merely made for the purpose of counteracting certain prejudices. The decision of the question under discussion can be expected only from the interpretation of the *Clouds* itself. Such an interpretation will be facilitated, to say the least, by a consideration of the Aristophanean comedy in general.

In glancing at modern interpretations of the Aristophanean comedies, one is struck by the preoccupation of modern scholars with the political background and the political meaning of the comedies. It is as if these scholars were about to forget, or had already forgotten, that they are dealing with comedies. When about to enter a place at which we are meant to laugh and to enjoy ourselves, we must first cross a picket line of black coated ushers exuding deadly and deadening seriousness. No doubt they unwittingly contribute to the effect of the comedies. Still, it is simpler to remember what Hegel has said about the Aristophanean comedies: "If one has not read Aristophanes one can hardly know how robustly and inordinately gay, of what beastlike contentment, man can be."

Hegel's statement reminds us of the obstacles which one has to overcome when reading the Aristophanean comedies. For if we desire to understand, to appreciate, and to love the Aristophanean comedy, it is necessary that we should first be repelled by it. The means which Aristophanes employs in order to make us laugh include gossip or slander, obscenity, parody and blasphemy. Through this ill-looking and ill-smelling mist we see free and sturdy rustics in their cups, good-natured, sizing up women, free or slave, as they size up cows and horses, in their best and gayest moments the fools of no one, be he god or wife or glorious captain, and yet less angry than amused at[17] having been fooled by them ever so often, loving the country and its old and tested ways, despising the new-fangled and rootless which shoots up for a day in the city and its boastful boosters; amazingly familiar with the beautiful so that they can enjoy every allusion to any of the many tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; and amazingly experienced in the beautiful so that they will not stand for any parody which is not in its way as perfect as the original. Men of such birth and build are the audience of Aristophanes or (which is the same for any non-contemptible poet) the best or authoritative part of his audience. The audience

to which Aristophanes appeals or which he conjured is the best democracy as Aristotle has described it: the democracy whose backbone is the rural population. Aristophanes makes us see this audience at its freest and gayest, from its crude and vulgar periphery to its center of sublime delicacy; we do not see it equally well, although we sense it strongly, in its bonds and bounds. We see only half of it, apparently its lower half, in fact its higher. We see only one half of humanity, apparently its lower half, in fact its higher. The other half is the preserve of tragedy. Comedy and tragedy together show us the whole of man, but in such a way that the comedy must be sensed in the tragedy and the tragedy in the comedy. Comedy which begins at the lowest low, [ascends to the highest height,][18] whereas tragedy dwells at the center. Aristophanes has compared the comic Muse or rather the Pegasus of the comic poet to a dung-beetle, a small and contemptible beast which is attracted by everything ill-smelling, which seems to combine conceit with utter remoteness from Aphrodite and the Graces—which, however, when it can be induced to arise from the earth, soars higher than the eagle of Zeus: it enables the comic poet to enter the world of the gods, to see with his own eyes the truth about the gods and to communicate this truth to his fellow mortals. Comedy rises higher than any other art. It transcends every other art; it transcends in particular tragedy. Since it transcends tragedy, it presupposes tragedy. The fact that it presupposes and transcends tragedy finds its expression in the parodies of tragedies which are so characteristic of the Aristophanean comedy. Comedy rises higher than tragedy. Only the comedy can present wise men as wise men, like Euripides and Socrates, men who as such transcend tragedy.

This is not to deny that the Aristophanean comedy abounds with what is ridiculous on the lowest level. But that comedy never presents as ridiculous[19] what only perverse men could find ridiculous. It keeps within the bounds of what is by nature ridiculous. There occur spankings but no torturings and killings. The genuinely fear-inspiring must be absent, and hence that which is most fear-inspiring, death, i.e., dying as distinguished from being dead in Hades. Therefore there must be absent also what is causing compassion. Also the truly noble. Whereas in Aristophanes's *Frogs* Aeschylus and Euripides are presented as engaged in violent name-calling, Sophocles remains silent throughout. The Aristophanean comedy while abounding with what is by nature ridiculous on the lowest level, always transcends this kind of the ridiculous; it never remains mere buffoonery. That which is by nature not ridiculous is not omitted; it comes to sight within the comedy. The Aristophanean comedy owes its depth and its worth to the presence within it of the solemn and the serious. We must try to find the proper expression for that regarding which Aristophanes is serious. The proper expression, i.e., the authentic expression, Aristophanes's own expression. Here a difficulty arises. In a drama, the author never speaks in his own name. The dramatic poet can express what he is driving at by the outcome of his play. Aristophanes avails himself of this simple possibility: he

makes those human beings or those causes victorious which in his view ought to be victorious, given the premises of the plot. For the triumph of the unpleasing and the defeat of the pleasing is incompatible with the required gratifying effect of the comedy. However this may be, a drama is a play; certain human beings, the actors, pretend to be other human beings, they speak and act in the way in which those other human beings would act. The dramatic effect requires that this play or pretending be consistently maintained. If this effect is disturbed because the actors cease to act their parts and become recognizable as actors in contradistinction to the characters they are meant to represent, or because the poet ceases to be invisible or inaudible except through his characters, this is annoying or ridiculous. Hence, whereas the destruction of the dramatic illusion is fatal to the tragic effect it may heighten the comic effect. Aristophanes is then able in his comedies to speak to the audience directly; his chorus or his characters may address not only one another but the audience as well. It is even possible that the hero of a comedy, e.g., Dicaiopolis in the *Acharnians*, reveals himself to be the comic poet himself. At any rate Aristophanes can use his chorus or his characters for stating to the audience and hence also to his readers his intention. Thus he tells us that it is his intention to make us laugh but not through buffoonery. He claims that he is a comic poet who has raised comedy to its perfection. But much as he is concerned with the ridiculous, he is no less concerned with the serious, with making men better by fighting on behalf of the city against its enemies and corruptors, by teaching what is good for the city or what is simply the best, and by saying what is just. Through his work, well-being and justice have become allies. He also makes a distinction between the wise element of his comedies and their ridiculous element: the former should appeal to the wise, the latter to the laughers. These *ipsissima verba poetae* compel us to wonder regarding the relation of justice and wisdom: are they identical or different? The problem is clearly expressed in the poet's claim that he made the just things a matter for comedy. However much the poet may succeed in reconciling the claims of the ridiculous on the one hand and the serious on the other, or of the ridiculous on the one hand and justice on the other, a fundamental tension must remain. In a word, justice as Aristophanes understands it consists in preserving or restoring the ancestral or the old. The quality of a comedy on the other hand depends very much on the inventiveness of the poet, on his conceits being novel. Aristophanes may have been an unqualified reactionary in political things; as a comic poet he was compelled to be a revolutionary.

While the tension between the ridiculous and the serious is essential to the Aristophanean comedy, the peculiar greatness of that comedy consists in its being the total comedy or in the fact that in that comedy the comical is all pervasive: the serious itself appears only in the guise of the ridiculous. This must be intelligently understood. Just as literally speaking there can be no complete falsehood, given the primacy of truth, there cannot be a ridiculous speech

of some length which does not contain serious passages, given the primacy of the serious. Within these inevitable limitations Aristophanes succeeds perfectly in integrating the serious or the just into the ridiculous. The comical delusion is never destroyed or even impaired. How does he achieve this feat?

It is easy to see how the castigation of the unjust can be achieved by ridicule. For showing up the sycophants, the demagogues, the over-zealous jurymen, the would-be heroic generals, the corrupting poets and sophists, it is obviously useful to make a judicious use of gossip or slander about the ridiculous looks and the ridiculous demeanor of the individuals in question. Furthermore, one can hold up a mirror to the prevailing bad habits by exaggerating them ridiculously, by presenting their unexpected and yet, if one may say so, logical consequences: for instance, by presenting an entirely new-fangled Athens, run by women, which is characterized by communism of property, women and children as the final form of extreme democracy; one can show how the complete equality of the communist order conflicts with the natural inequality between the young and beautiful and the old and ugly; how this natural inequality is corrected by a legal or conventional equality in accordance with which no youth can enjoy his girl before he has fulfilled the onerous duty of satisfying a most repulsive hag; the serious conclusion from this ridiculous scene is too obvious to be pointed out. The very fact that the injustice of the demagogues and the other types mentioned is publicly revealed shows how little clever those fellows are; it reveals their injustice as stupid and hence ridiculous. The ridicule is heightened by the fact that the ridiculed individuals are probably present in the audience. For the folly ridiculed by Aristophanes is contemporary folly. The contemporary vices are seen as vices in the light of the good old times, of the ancestral polity—in the perspective of the simple, brave, rural and pious victors of Marathon, of those who prefer Aeschylus to Euripides. Contemporary injustice might arouse indignation and not laughter if it were not presented as defeated with ease, as defeated by ridiculous means: as the war-like Greek manhood is defeated by their wives' abstinence from intercourse and the super-demagogue Cleon is defeated with his own means by the still baser sausage seller who is boosted by the upper class people, Cleon's mortal enemies. Yet how can one present the defeat of the unjust by ridiculous means without making ridiculous the victorious justice? Or, in other words, how can one present the just man without destroying the effect of the total comedy? Aristophanes solves this difficulty as follows. The victory of the just or the movement from the ridiculousness of contemporary political folly to ancient soundness is a movement toward the ridiculous of a different kind. The just man is a man who minds his own business, the opposite of a busybody, the man who loves the retired, quiet, private life. Living at home, on his farm, he enjoys the simple natural pleasures: food, drink and, last but by no means least, love. He enjoys these pleasures frankly. He gives his enjoyment a frank, a wholly unrestrained expression. He calls a spade a spade. If he does this as a

character on the stage, he says in public what cannot be said in public with propriety: he publishes that private which cannot with propriety be published; and this is ridiculous. Hence the victory of justice is comically presented as a movement from the ridiculousness of public folly to the ridiculous of the publication of the essentially private: of the improper utterance of things which everyone privately enjoys because they are by nature enjoyable.

A major theme, the first theme of the Aristophanean comedy, is then the tension between the city, the political community, and the family or the household. The bond of the family is love, and in the first place the love of husband and wife, legal *eros*. The love of the parents for the children appears most characteristically in the case of the mother who suffers most when her sons are sent into wars by the city. No such natural feelings bind mothers to the city. Thus one might think that the family should be the model for the city. In his *Assembly of Women* Aristophanes has shown the fantastic character of this thought; there he presents the city as transformed into a household, therefore lacking private property of the members and therefore ruled by women. Nevertheless the importance which Aristophanes assigns to the tension between family and city leads one to surmise that his critique is directed not only against the decayed city of his time but extends also to the healthy city or the ancestral polity. The hero of the *Acharnians*, Dicaiopolis, who is clearly identified with the poet himself, privately makes peace with the enemy of the city while everyone else is at war. He is persecuted for this act of high treason not only by the war party but precisely by his rustic neighbors who are wholly imbued with the old spirit of the Marathon fighters. Dicaiopolis makes a speech in his defense with his head on the executioner's block and while using devices which he had borrowed from Euripides;[9] he thus succeeds in splitting his persecutors into two parties and therewith in stopping the persecution; as a consequence he enjoys the pleasures of peace, the pleasures of farm life, while everyone else remains at war. It is only another way of expressing the same thought, if one says with Aristophanes that it was not, as Aeschylus and Euripides agree in the *Frogs*, the ancient Aeschylus, the political tragic poet *par excellence*, but the modern Euripides who gave her due to Aphrodite, for, as Socrates says in Plato's *Banquet*, Aphrodite is a goddess to whom together with Dionysus the Aristophanean comedy is wholly devoted. Incidentally, this agreement between Aristophanes and Euripides and this disagreement between Aristophanes and Aeschylus confirms our previous contention that Aristophanes was aware of the essentially novel or revolutionary character of his whole enterprise. The action of at least some of his comedies expresses this characteristic of Aristophanes's thought. In the *Knights*, the *Wasps*, the *Peace*,[20] the *Birds*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and the *Assembly of Women*, the restoration of soundness in politics is achieved by[21] ridiculous means—by radically novel means, by means which are incompatible with the end: the ancestral polity and its spirit. Aristophanes did, then, not have any delusions about the politically problematic character of his politi-

cal message. But to return to the argument at hand, the phenomenon in the light of which Aristophanes looks critically at the city as such is the family or the household. His comedies may be said to be one commentary on the sentence in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which reads: "Man is by nature a pairing animal rather than a political one, for the family is earlier and more necessary than the city, and the begetting and bearing of children is more common to all animals (sc. than living in herds)."

The two poles between which the Aristophanean comedy moves have hitherto appeared to be contemporary public folly on the one hand, and on the other the retired and easy life of the household as a life of enjoyment of the pleasures of the body. The transition from the one pole to the other is effected in the comedies by means which are ridiculous or wholly unprecedented or extreme. In the *Peace* the hero, Trygaeus, who is the comic poet himself in a thin disguise, succeeds in stopping the horrors of an insane, fratricidal war by ascending to heaven on the back of a dung-beetle. He believes that Zeus is responsible for the war and he wants to rebuke him for this unfriendly conduct. Having arrived in heaven, he finds out from Hermes that Zeus is responsible, not for the war itself, but for the continuation of the war: Zeus has put savage War in charge, War has interred Peace in a deep pit, and Zeus has made it a capital crime to disinter her. The hero bribes Hermes with threats and promises, the chief promise being that Hermes will become the highest god, into assisting him in disinterring Peace. Trygaeus, acting against the express command of the highest god, succeeds in disinterring Peace and thus brings peace to all of Hellas. He does nothing, of course, to perform his promise to Hermes. Hermes is superseded completely by Peace, who alone is worshipped. By rebelling against Zeus and the other gods, Trygaeus becomes the saviour. The just and pleasant life of ease and quiet cannot be brought about except by dethroning the gods. The same theme is treated from a somewhat different point of view in the *Wasps*. In that comedy a zealous old juryman is prevented by his sensible son, first through force and then through persuasion, from attending the sessions of the law court and from acting there unjustly. The son wishes his father to stay at home and thus not to hurt his fellow men, to feast and to enjoy the pleasures of refined, modern society. The son succeeds partly. The father is prevailed upon to stay away from the court and to go to a party. But he is not fit for refined enjoyments: he merely gets drunk, becomes entangled with a flute girl and enjoys himself in committing acts of assault and battery. His savage nature can be directed into different channels but it cannot be subdued. The father is not a typical juryman, the typical juryman being a poor fellow who depends for his livelihood on the pay which the jurymen received in Athens. He is extremely eager to attend the court because he loves to condemn people. He traces his inhuman desire to an injunction of the Delphic Oracle. When his son deceives him into acquitting a defendant, he is afraid of having committed a sin against the gods. What makes him savage is then his fear of the savagery of the

gods. It is surprising that the gods should be more punitive than men, for, as Trygaeus finds out when he had ascended to heaven, men appear to be less evil than they are when they are viewed from above, from the seat of the gods. The underlying notion of the savagery of the gods is nowhere contradicted in the *Wasps*. To make men somewhat more humane one must free them from the gods. As Plato's Aristophanes puts it in the *Banquet*, Eros is the most philanthropic god. The other gods are not characterized by love of men. In the *Thesmophoriazusae* the poet shows how Euripides is persecuted by the Athenian women because he had maligned women so much. There is no question as to the truth of what Euripides had said about the female sex; Aristophanes expresses the same view throughout his plays. But the women are a force to be reckoned with. To save himself, Euripides, who is said to be an atheist, commits an enormous act of sacrilege. It is not followed by any punishment. The only concession which he is compelled to make is that he must promise the women that he will no longer say nasty things about them. In contradistinction to the *Clouds*, the *Thesmophoriazusae* has a happy ending; a poet succeeds where the philosopher fails.

In the *Birds* we see two Athenians who have left their city because they are sick of lawsuits which they do not wish to pay, and are in search for a quiet, soft and happy city where a man does not have to be a busybody. Having arrived at the place where they expect to get the necessary information, one of the Athenians hits upon the thought of founding a city comprising all birds—a democratic world state. That city, he explains to the birds, will make the birds the rulers of all men and all gods, for all traffic between men and gods (the sacrifices) has to pass through the region in which the birds dwell. The proposal is adopted; the gods are starved into submission; the birds become the new gods; they take the place of the gods. The ruler of the birds is our clever Athenian. But he must make concessions to the universal democracy of the birds. The birds praise themselves as the true gods: they are the oldest and wisest of all beings; they are all-seeing, all-ruling and altogether friendly to men. Their life is altogether pleasant; what is "base by convention" among men is noble among the birds: desertion, abolition of slavery, and last but not least the beating of one's father. However, when a man who is given to beating his father wishes to join the city of the birds in order to be able to indulge his inclination with impunity—for the laws of the birds are said to permit the beating of one's father—he is told by the Athenian founder of the city of the birds that according to those laws the sons may not only not beat their fathers but must feed them when they are old. This is to say, it is possible to establish a universal democracy and hence universal happiness by dethroning the gods, provided one preserves the prohibition against beating one's father, provided one preserves the family. Eros, which inspires the generating of men, requires in the case of men the sacredness of the family. The family rather than the city

is natural. While the city of the birds is in the process of being founded, the Athenian founder is visited by five men: by a poet who receives a[22] gift, by a soothsayer, a supervisor and a seller of decrees or laws who are thrown out and spanked, and in the central place by the Athenian astronomer Meton, who wishes to "measure the air" The founder admires Meton as another Thales and loves him; but he warns him of the fact that the citizens will beat him, and he is in fact beaten up by the citizens—of course, the birds. The founder's admiration and love cannot protect the astronomer against the popular dislike. Even in the perfectly happy city, in the city which seems to be in every respect the city according to nature, one cannot be openly a student of nature.

Both obscenities and blasphemies consist in publicly saying things which cannot be said publicly with propriety. They are ridiculous and hence pleasing to the extent to which propriety is sensed as a burden, as something imposed, as something owing its dignity to imposition, to convention, to *nomos*. In the background of the Aristophanean comedy we discern the distinction between *nomos* and *physis*. Hitherto we have recognized the locus of nature in the family. But Aristophanes takes a further step. That step is indicated by the frequent non-indignant references to adultery as well as by facts like these: the hero of the *Birds* is a pederast, and the sensible son who corrects his foolish father to some extent in the *Wasps* uses force against his aged father. In brief, Aristophanes does not stop at the sacredness or naturalness of the family. One is tempted to say that his comedies celebrate the victory of nature, as it reveals itself in the pleasant, over convention or law, which is the locus of the noble and the just. Lest this be grossly misunderstood, one must add immediately two points. In the first place, if *nomos* is viewed in the light of nature, the Aristophanean comedy is based on knowledge of nature and therefore on consciousness of the sublime pleasures accompanying knowledge of nature. Above all, Aristophanes has no doubt as to the fact that nature, human nature, is in need of *nomos*. Aristophanes does not reject *nomos* but he attempts to bring to light its problematic and precarious status, its status in between the needs of the body and the needs of the mind, for if one does not understand the precarious status of *nomos*, one is bound to have unreasonable expectations from *nomos*.

The profoundest student of Aristophanes in modern times was Hegel. His interpretation of the Aristophanean comedy occurs in the section of the *Phenomenology of the Mind* which is entitled "Religion" in the subsection entitled "The Art-Religion" (the religion expressing itself completely by art). By the Art-Religion Hegel means the Greek religion, which he regarded as the highest religion outside of revealed religion. The Art-Religion finds its end and culmination, or it achieves full self-consciousness, in the Aristophanean comedy. In that comedy, Hegel says, "The individual consciousness having become certain of itself presents itself as the absolute power." Everything objective—the gods, the city, the family, justice—have become dissolved into the self-con-

sciousness or taken back into it. The comedy presents and celebrates the complete insubstantiality of everything alien to the self-consciousness, the complete freedom from fear of everything transcending the individual. The comedy celebrates the triumph of "the subjectivity in its infinite security." Man has made himself the complete master of everything which he formerly regarded as the substantial content of his knowledge or action. This victory of subjectivity is one of the most important symptoms of the corruption of Greece. For our present purpose it is not necessary to dwell on the fact that in his lectures on aesthetics Hegel does not consistently maintain this view. But we must note that what Hegel calls the triumph of subjectivity is achieved in the Aristophanean comedy only by virtue of the knowledge of nature, i.e., the opposite of self-consciousness. Let us then turn to Plato's interpretation of the Aristophanean comedy which we find in the speech he puts into the mouth of Aristophanes at the banquet. Only a few points can be mentioned here.

Aristophanes was supposed to make his speech in honor of Eros after Pausanias had made a pause. But Aristophanes got a hiccough—he did not possess perfect control of his body, or perfect self-control—and the physician Eryximachus had to take his place. Aristophanes proves to be interchangeable with a physician who was a student of nature in general. Aristophanes begins with the remark that men do not seem to have experienced the power of Eros, for if they had, they would build for him the greatest of temples and altars and bring him the greatest sacrifices, since Eros is the most philanthropic of all gods. He then tells the following story. In the olden times human nature was different from what it is now. Each human being consisted of two human beings; it had four hands, four[23] ears, etc. In this state men were of exceeding strength and pride so that they undertook to ascend to heaven in order to attack the gods. The gods did not know what to do, for they could not kill man, since by doing so they would deprive themselves of honors and sacrifices. Zeus discovered this way out: to weaken men by cutting them into two so that they became as they are now. After this incision, each half is longing for the other. This longing for the original unity, for a wholeness, is[24] *eros*. The original whole was either androgynous or male or female. Those present human beings who stem from original androgynes seek the opposite sex; an outstanding part of them are the adulterers. Those present human beings who stem from an original female are female homosexuals. Those present human beings who stem from an original male are male homosexuals; they are the best among the boys and youths because they are the most manly; they are born to become true statesmen. This is the story to which the Platonic Aristophanes appends an explanation of perfect propriety. But taken by itself the myth teaches that by virtue of *eros* man, and especially the best part of the male sex, will approach a condition in which they become[25] a serious danger to the gods. We record here the fact that the hero of the *Birds*, who succeeds in dethroning the gods and in

becoming the ruler of the universe through the birds, is the pederast Peisthetaerus.[26]

(OCTOBER 31, 1958)

. . . [we must] go back to the origins of rationalism, and therefore to Socrates. The oldest document regarding Socrates is Aristophanes's comedy, the *Clouds*. For an adequate understanding of the *Clouds* it is necessary to consider the Aristophanean comedy in general, or to understand the spirit of his comedy. I repeat a few points I made last time. Aristophanean comedy has a two-fold function, the function to make us laugh and to teach us justice. The function is to be ridiculous, and to be serious. Yet at the same time the Aristophanean comedy is the total comedy; the comical is all pervasive. Hence not only injustice, or contemporary public folly, but justice itself is presented in such a way as to afford opportunity to laugh. How does Aristophanes achieve this feat? The just life, as he sees it, is the retired life, life on the farm, enjoying the pleasures of farm life, enjoyment of the pleasures of the body, especially of love. These pleasures are given in the comedy a frank, unrestrained expression. The characters use the language of what, as I have learned through my frequent readings in the *American Journal of Sociology*, is called in this country the language of the stag party. The movement from the ridiculous of public folly to the praise of public soundness is therefore a movement from the ridiculous of public folly to the ridiculous of impropriety, not to say obscenity. If one analyzes this state of things one recognizes as the basis of Aristophanes's thought a polarity, the polarity of the *polis*, the city, and the family, and in this context the family appears to be more natural than the *polis*. The comedy may be said to be one whole appeal from the *polis* to the more natural family. In other words, Aristophanes presupposes the fundamental distinction between nature and law or convention. On the basis of this fundamental distinction he questions the family itself, not only the city. For instance, the beating of one's father, *the* crime from the point of view of the family, is presented as not absolutely wrong in one of the comedies, in the *Wasps*. Hence the more proper description of the fundamental polarity would be this: the conflict between the pleasant on the one hand and the just and noble on the other. Now this life of gaiety, peace, and enjoyment, the natural life, requires, according to Aristophanes's presentation, the successful revolt against the gods, for the gods are punitive and harsh. This comes out most clearly in the *Birds* and in the *Peace*. Here is a place for the famous blasphemies in Aristophanes.[27]

I concluded my general interpretation of the Aristophanean comedy by contrasting it with the interpretation given by the greatest mind who has devoted himself in modern times to Aristophanes, and that is Hegel. Hegel sees in the

Aristophanean comedy the triumph of subjectivity over everything objective and substantial, over the city, the family, morality, and the gods. The subject, the autonomous subject, recognizes itself as the origin of everything objective, and takes the objective back into itself. This does justice to almost everything in Aristophanes except to one thing of indeed decisive importance. The basis of this taking back, or however we call it, of this subjectivism, is in Aristophanes not the self-consciousness of the subject, but knowledge of nature, and the very opposite of self-consciousness. Aristophanes has brought this out most clearly in a scene in the *Birds* in which the founder of a natural city is confronted by an astronomer, a student of nature, and the founder of this city according to nature admires and loves that student of nature, but he cannot protect him against the enmity of the citizen body, or the populace. In this case the populace consists of birds, but the application to human beings does not require a very great effort of the intelligence or the imagination. The basis of Aristophanean comedy is knowledge of nature, and that means for the ancients philosophy. But philosophy is a problem, philosophy does not have a political or civic existence. Here is where the problem of the *Clouds* comes in, to which I turn now.

I repeat a few things which I said at the end of the last meeting. At the beginning of the *Clouds* it is dark. Strepsiades, the hero of the comedy, the man who causes Socrates's downfall, is lying on his couch and cannot find sleep. He longs for the day, for light in the literal sense. We may take this as a clue to the comedy. Socrates owes his downfall to a man who seeks light in the most literal sense, to a kind of Sancho Panza, to a rustic who has lost his bearings or has gone astray. It will do no great harm if this comparison suggests a similarity between Aristophanes's Socrates and Don Quixote. Strepsiades is not an embodiment of stern, old-fashioned justice, he is rather a crook. He is a simple rustic, a man of the common people who has married a patrician lady. The offspring of the marriage, their son Pheidippides, has inherited the expensive tastes of his mother's line. He is a passionate horseman. He has run his father into exorbitant debt. In order to get rid of his debts, Strepsiades had decided to send his spendthrift son to Socrates, the owner and manager of a thinktank, so that he might learn how to talk himself out of his debts at lawcourts. Strepsiades knows this much of Socrates, that Socrates talks about the heavens, and besides, teaches people for money how they can win every lawsuit, by fair means or foul. But although he lives next door, Strepsiades does not know Socrates's name, whereas his sophisticated son knows it as a matter of course. His son refuses to become Socrates's pupil. The elegant young horseman has nothing but contempt for Socrates and his companions, "those pale-faced and ill-dressed boasters and beggars", hence Strepsiades himself is compelled to become Socrates's pupil. Let us reflect for a moment about this situation, as it comes to sight right at the beginning of the *Clouds*. The common people know nothing of Socrates, not even his name. The patricians do know of Socrates, but they despise him as a ridiculous sort of beggar.

Socrates does not run any danger from the two most powerful sections of society. If Strepsiades had remained within his station, Socrates would never have gotten into trouble. Socrates does get into trouble through a certain inbetween type of man, who is not distinguished by honesty. Here we remind ourselves of the fact that the old juryman of the *Wasps*, who is such a savage condemner because he believes that the gods look askance at acquittals, is also socially an inbetween type. Needless to say that the demagogues too belong to the inbetween type. Strepsiades then sends his son to Socrates so that he might learn dishonest practices for him. Strepsiades is ultimately responsible for a possible corruption of his son, and yet this will not prevent him from making Socrates alone responsible.

A word about Socrates's thinktank or school. Misled by what the Platonic Socrates says in his apology addressed to the Athenian people about his spending all his time in the market place, some people think that the school house of Socrates is a pure or impure invention of Aristophanes. Yet there is Xenophontic evidence to the effect that Socrates used to sit together with his friends and to study with them the books of the wise men of old, and that he never ceased considering with them what each of the beings is. Given the fact that Socrates was the leader in these gatherings, and that the activities mentioned cannot well be engaged in in[28] the market-place, Xenophon tells us then in effect that Socrates was a teacher, if a perfect teacher. And a teacher has pupils, and the community of teachers and pupils, rather than the building, is a school.

Strepsiades enters then Socrates's thinktank in order to become his pupil. He is received by a pupil of Socrates. It takes considerable time before he meets Socrates. Socrates is not as easy of access as Euripides in a comparable scene in the *Acharnians*. The pupil tells Strepsiades that what is going on in the thinktank may not be divulged to anyone except to pupils. But Strepsiades's mere declaration that he intends to become a pupil induces the pupil to blurt out all the secrets he knows. Socrates's security arrangements are most inept. We learn through the pupil that Socrates and his pupils study mathematics and natural science. For example, they investigate how many feet of its own a flea can jump. They need not leave the tank in order to catch the flea. Then Strepsiades becomes aware of Socrates aloft, suspended in a basket, walking on air, and looking over the sun, or looking down on it. At Strepsiades's request, Socrates descends and learns of Strepsiades's desire to learn to talk himself out of his debts. Socrates initiates him immediately without having given a moment's thought to the question of pay. In fact, nowhere in the play, after Strepsiades has knocked at Socrates's door, do we find any reference to Socrates taking any pay for his teaching. Only once is there a very casual reference to some sort of gift which Strepsiades offers to Socrates out of gratitude. Socrates is not a sophist in Aristophanes. Socrates is no money maker, but a needy fellow, who makes his companions too needy and yet is insensitive to his and his companions' neediness. Socrates's first words addressed to Strepsiades had

been, "Why do you call me, you ephemeral one?" Socrates shows himself throughout as the despiser of everything ephemeral, and hence in particular of money. He is induced to converse with Strepsiades not by greed or vanity, but rather by a desire to talk, which is prompted[29] either by the desire to reduce the volume of stupidity in the world, or else by sheer enthusiasm for his pursuit.

Socrates teaches two things, natural science and rhetoric. The duality of natural science and rhetoric corresponds to a duality of principles. The first principle is aether, which is the original whirl or chaos, the highest cosmic principle, and the other principle is the clouds, which give understanding and power of speech, and inspire the choruses. The clouds correspond to rhetoric, since they can take any shape they like, or since they can imitate everything, or since they can reveal the nature of all things, and since at the same time they conceal the sky, they conceal the aether, or heaven, or the highest reality, for rhetoric is essentially both revealing and concealing. The clouds are the only gods recognized and worshipped by Socrates. They are worshipped by him as gods because they are the origin of the greatest benefit to men, whereas the highest cosmic principle, aether, is responsible for both good and evil. The clouds love lazy or inactive people and demand abstinence from bodily exercises. Socrates does not hesitate to make clear what he means by worshipping only the clouds. I quote, "Zeus does not exist." He demands from Strepsiades that he no longer recognize the gods worshipped by the city, and Strepsiades, mind you, complies with this request without any hesitation. The strange thing is that Socrates blurts out these shocking things before he has tested Strepsiades regarding his worthiness to hear of them and his ability to understand them. The Aristophanean Socrates is characterized by an amazing lack of *phronesis*, of practical wisdom or prudence. Still, since Strepsiades has no interest beyond cheating his creditors, Socrates limits himself to teaching him speech, grammar, *et cetera*. He does not even attempt to teach him natural science. But Strepsiades proves to be too stupid even for the lower or easier branch of knowledge. He is therefore compelled to force his son to become Socrates's pupil. He is particularly anxious that Socrates should teach Pheidippides the Unjust Speech, the Unjust Argument—Just and Unjust Argument are personified in the *Clouds*—Socrates merely replies that Pheidippides will hear both speeches, the Just Speech and the Unjust Speech. Socrates himself will be absent while the two speeches have their exchange. Socrates does not teach injustice, he merely exposes his pupils to the arguments between justice and injustice. He cannot be held responsible for the fact that justice cannot hold her own by argument against injustice.

The Unjust Speech denies the existence of right on the grounds that justice is not "with the gods." Zeus did not perish for having done violence to this father, but rather was rewarded for it. The Just Speech is unable to reply to this point. The Just Speech points out that[30] the Unjust Speech does harm to the city, while the city feeds the Unjust Speech. It praises old-fashioned temperance. The Un-

just Speech replies in the spirit of the Aristophanean comedy. It refers to the necessities of nature, which are stronger than the demands of temperance. It encourages people to make use of nature, that is to say, to regard nothing as base, for one cannot help being defeated by *eros* and by women. The proof is again supplied by the conduct of Zeus. In a word, the ancestral morality, *the* standard of the external Aristophanes, is contradicted by the ancestral theology on which it is based. At the end of the exchange the Just Speech admits its defeat, and deserts to the camp of the Unjust Speech.

Pheidippides learns the art of speaking. Trusting in his son's accomplishments, Strepsiades refuses to pay his debts, and, in addition, insults his creditors. He heaps ridicule on his former oaths regarding his debts and on the very gods. Then a controversy arises between father and son. The son despises Aeschylus and the father admires him. The son prefers Euripides, who, he says, is the wisest poet, and he quotes from Euripides a description of incest between brother and sister. Strepsiades is deeply shocked. The son goes so far as to beat his father, but he proves to his father's satisfaction, through the Just Speech, that he acts justly in beating his father. But then, when Pheidippides declares that he can also prove by the Unjust Speech that he is entitled to beat his mother, Strepsiades's patience snaps. Cursing himself and his dishonesty, he repents, turns passionately against Socrates and his school, recognizes the existence of Zeus and the other gods, and burns down Socrates's thinktank. He justifies this action as the punishment for the impiety of Socrates. But let us not forget that it was not Socrates's impiety or lessons, but Socrates's alleged teaching that a son may beat his own mother, which aroused Strepsiades's unquenchable ire, and brought about Socrates's downfall. If we wish to understand Aristophanes's case against Socrates, we must overcome our natural revulsion to this[31] kind of subject, and raise the question as to the particular significance of the permission to beat one's mother as distinguished from beating one's father. An indication is given by the fact that Strepsiades was already about to rebel when he heard of Euripides's presentation of incest between brother and sister. We shall express the underlying thought as follows. Granted that the family is more natural than the city, yet the family cannot be secure and flourish except by becoming a part of the city. The prohibition against incest compels the family to transcend itself, and, as it were, to expand into the city. The prohibition against incest is a quasi-natural bridge between the family and the city. By rebelling against the alleged outrageous teaching of Socrates, Strepsiades merely acts in the spirit of his love for his son, which has inspired his escapades into dishonesty. Given the delicate and complicated character of the relation between family and city, and ultimately between nature and convention, the gulf between the two poles can only be bridged if convention is consecrated by reference to the gods. For the reason I indicated, the gods cannot fulfill their function without harshness. Yet since the gods are not human beings and therefore cannot be bound by the laws to which they[32] subject

men—Hera is both Zeus's wife and sister—a great difficulty remains. Men must do what the gods tell them to do, but not[33] what the gods do. This is not altogether satisfactory for those who long with all their heart to imitate the gods.

It is necessary to consider the conduct of Socrates's goddesses, the Clouds. The Clouds do not express Socrates's sentiment regarding the non-existence of the other gods—very far from it. They present themselves as being on the friendliest terms with the other gods. But they listen silently to Socrates's denial of the existence of the other gods. They are highly pleased with Socrates's worshipping the Clouds. They congratulate Strepsiades on his desire for great wisdom and promise him perfect happiness, provided he has a good memory, indefatigable dedication to study, and extreme continence. And last but not least, if he honors the Clouds. They promise him in particular that he will surpass all Greeks in the art of public speaking, and certainly in that kind of public speaking which he needs in order to get rid of his debts. They hand him over to Socrates. When Strepsiades proves to be too dumb, they advise him to send his son to Socrates in his stead. While Strepsiades fetches Pheidippides they remind Socrates of their great generosity toward Socrates and advise him to take the fullest advantage of Strepsiades's willingness to do everything Socrates says. A change makes itself felt during the exchange between the Just Speech and the Unjust Speech. When the Just Speech praises the ancient system of education, the Marathonian system, they applaud. They never applaud the Unjust Speech. When Strepsiades scoffs at his creditors and insults them in every way, the Clouds express the direst warnings regarding Strepsiades's future fate, and especially as to what he may have to expect from his sophisticated son. After Strepsiades has come to his senses, and repented, the Clouds tell him that he got only what was coming to him because he had turned to dishonesty. Strepsiades replies, with some justice, that the Clouds had encouraged him. But the goddesses reply that it is their constant practice to guide men intent on evils into misfortune, so that they may learn to fear the gods. Needless to say, the Clouds do not raise a finger, if Clouds can raise a finger, in defense of Socrates and his thinktank. I suggest this explanation. The Clouds' only worshipper in Athens up to now is Socrates. Hence they favor him for the time being. They claim that they help the city more than all other gods, although they are the only gods which are not worshipped in Athens. There is this alternative before them. Either[34] Socrates, whom they favor as[35] their sole worshipper, becomes a success—the Clouds will be worshipped by the whole city—or Socrates fails—they will be instrumental, if only by permission, in his destruction. The Clouds[36] will be worshipped again by the whole city. If I may use a very vulgar expression, they are sitting pretty.

After Socrates has introduced the new divinities into the city they desert him when they see how unpopular he is bound to become. They change their position as soon as they see how the Strepsiades case, the test case, is developing.

Their conduct proves their divinity. They are wiser than Socrates. The Clouds are wise because they act with prudent regard to both Socrates's virtue and his vice. His virtue consists in his daring, his intrepidity, his non-conformity, which enables him not to worship the divinities worshipped by the city, and to worship new divinities worshipped by no one but himself. His vice is his lack of practical wisdom, or prudence. For it would be wrong to say of Aristophanes's Socrates that he is unjust. He is indifferent to justice. The fact that he does not rebuke Strepsiades for his dishonesty may very well mean that once you enter the life of business and action you have already made a decision to use dishonest means. Besides, it is by no means clear whether the creditors who sold Pheidippides the expensive horses and expensive chariots did not cheat him in the first place. And it is not Socrates's fault if the common view of justice, based as it is on mythology, is intellectually inferior to the open plea for injustice. If all men dedicated themselves to the pursuit to which the Aristophanean Socrates is dedicated, the study of nature, no one would have the slightest incentive for hurting anyone else. Yet, and this seems[37] to be the beginning to Socrates's error, not all men are capable to lead a life of contemplation. As a consequence of this grave oversight the Aristophanean Socrates is wholly unaware of the devastating effect[38] which his indifference to practical matters must have on the city, if non-theoretical men should become influenced by Socrates's sentiments. Socrates is unaware of the setting within which his thinktank exists. He lacks self-knowledge. His lack of prudence proceeds from his lack of self-knowledge. It is because of his lack of self-knowledge that he is so radically unpolitical. If one remembers the fact that the Aristophanean comedies are dedicated to the praises of Aphrodite and Dionysus, or to the praise of *eros*, one observes immediately, with great surprise, Socrates's complete immunity to wine and to love. The Aristophanean Socrates is altogether unerotic. It is for this reason that he is thoroughly amusic. However closely he may be linked with Euripides, there is a gulf between him and Euripides precisely because Socrates has nothing in common with the poetic Muse. As a necessary consequence of this, when Euripides is persecuted in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, he is capable to save himself, whereas when Socrates is persecuted in the *Clouds*, he has no means of defense. Socrates's pursuit, the precise study of nature and of rhetoric, is not a public power, whereas poetry is a public power. Aristophanes's comical presentation of Socrates is the most important statement of the case for poetry in that secular contest between poetry and philosophy of which Plato speaks at the beginning of the tenth book of the *Republic*.

Plato's *Republic* may be said to be the reply *par excellence* to Aristophanes. The political proposals of the *Republic* are based on the conceits underlying Aristophanes's *Assembly of Women*. The complete[39] communism, communism not only regarding property, but regarding women and children as well, is introduced in Plato's *Republic* with arguments literally taken from Aristophanes's *Assembly of Women*. There is this most important difference be-

tween the best city of the *Assembly of Women* and that of the *Republic*. Plato contends that complete communism requires as its[40] capstone or its foundation the rule of philosophy, about which Aristophanes is completely silent. This difference corresponds to a difference indicated in Plato's *Banquet*. According to Aristophanes the direction of *eros* is horizontal. According to Plato the direction of *eros* is vertical. While the *Republic* makes important use of the *Assembly of Women*, it is at least equally much directed against, and indebted to, the *Clouds*. Thrasymachus represents the Unjust Speech, and Socrates takes the place of the Just Speech. And the Just Speech is in Plato, of course, victorious. The chief interlocutors in the *Republic* are the erotic Glaucon and the musical Adeimantus. As for music, Socrates demands in the name of justice that the poet as free poet be expelled from the city. As for *eros*, the tyrant, injustice incarnate, is revealed to be *eros* incarnate. The Socrates of the *Republic* reveals his kinship with the unerotic and the amusic Socrates of the *Clouds*.

What, then, do we learn from Aristophanes regarding the origin of political science? Aristophanes presents Socrates in about the same light in which Aristotle presents Hippodamus from Miletus, as a student of nature as a whole who fails to understand the political things. The concern of philosophy leads beyond the city in spite, or because, of the fact that philosophy is concerned with rhetoric. Philosophy is unable to persuade the non-philosophers, or the common people, and hence philosophy is not a political power. Philosophy, in contradistinction to poetry, cannot charm the multitude. Because philosophy transcends the human and ephemeral, it is radically unpolitical, and therefore it is amusic and unerotic. It cannot teach the just things, whereas poetry can. Philosophy is then in need of being supplemented by a pursuit which is political because it is music and erotic, if philosophy is to become just. Philosophy lacks self-knowledge. Poetry is self-knowledge. Plato did not deny that there is a problem here. In the *Laws* his Athenian Stranger gives occasion to a political man to say to him, "Stranger, you hold our human race very cheap." To which the Stranger, the philosopher, replies, "Marvel not, but forgive me; for having looked away toward the god and having made the experience going with this, I said what I just said. But if you prefer, be it granted that our race is not despicable but worthy of some seriousness." The recognition by philosophy of the fact that the human race is worthy of some seriousness is the origin of political philosophy or political science. If this recognition is to be philosophic, however, this must mean that the political things, the merely human things, are of decisive importance for understanding nature as a whole. The philosopher who was the first to realize this was Socrates, the Socrates who emerged out of the Socrates of the *Clouds*. Of this Socrates we know through Xenophon and Plato. I shall speak first of the Xenophontic Socrates.

At first glance Xenophon's Socratic writings appear to be the most reliable source for establishing the character of the Socratic teaching. Among the four authors of the chief sources regarding Socrates, Xenophon alone combined the

two most important qualifications. He was an acquaintance of Socrates, and he has shown by deed that he was able and willing to be a historian. In spite of this, Xenophon's testimony does not enjoy in our time the respect it so patently deserves. The reason for this anomaly can be stated as follows. Xenophon is not very intelligent, not to say that he is a fool. He has the mind of a retired colonel rather than of a philosopher. He was much more attracted by dogs, horses, battles, and recollections of battles, than by the truth. John Burnet, one of the most outstanding scholars in this field, has stated this view in the most extreme form and therefore in a particularly enlightening form. Burnet contended that Xenophon did not know Socrates well, seeing that Xenophon himself practically says that he was a youth in 401, that is to say, when he had already left Athens for good and was with Cyrus in Asia Minor. Burnet suggests that Xenophon was attracted by Socrates, not on account of Socrates's wisdom or intelligence, but on account of Socrates's military reputation. The most obvious difficulty for this theory is the fact that we owe all our specific information about Socrates's military exploits to Plato, and even in the case of Plato the most detailed report is given by an intoxicated man. Xenophon barely alludes to these things. In his two lists of Socrates's virtues he does not even mention Socrates's military virtue, his courage, or manliness. He leaves it at an occasional reference to Socrates's having shown his justice, both in civil life and in campaigns. Besides, the term youth or young man, which is applied to Xenophon by an emissary of the Persian king, means in the context, "you clever young man." The term is used in order to counteract a remark which Xenophon had made. It cannot be used for fixing Xenophon's date of birth. The prejudice against Xenophon is based, not on a sober study of his writings, but on the fact that the prevailing notions of the greatness of a man and the greatness of an author do not leave room for the recognition of the specific greatness of the man and the author Xenophon. Romanticism, in all its forms, has rendered impossible the true understanding of Xenophon. As for Burnet in particular, his dissatisfaction with Xenophon had a special reason. He was uncommonly sensitive to the presence in Socrates's thought of natural science, and Xenophon flatly denies that Socrates had anything to do with natural science. While the modern criticism of Xenophon is of no value, its sheer power may incline us to reconsider our first impression. Despite the fact that Xenophon was a historian, this was an exaggeration. Xenophon wrote one historical work, the *Hellenica*, but his most extensive book, the *Education of Cyrus*, which presents itself as a historical book, is rightly regarded, and has always been regarded, as a work of fiction. Xenophon's achievement as a historian was only a part of his literary activity. In order to describe his literary activity as a whole it is wise to make use of a description which is sometimes found in the manuscripts of his writings. There he is sometimes called the Orator Xenophon. As for the close relationship between oratory and history in antiquity, it suffices to refer to Cicero's rhetorical writings. The expression, the Orator Xe-

nophon, means less that Xenophon was a public speaker but that he was a man who fully possessed the art of public speaking, or that one can learn that art by studying his writings. The expression means here less the art of Pericles or Demosthenes than the art of Isocrates. Anticipating the result of this lecture, I shall say that[41] Xenophon's rhetoric was Socratic rhetoric.

The art of public speaking exhibited in Xenophon's writing is an art of writing. Tradition tells us that Xenophon was a bashful man, a man of strong sense of shame. This description certainly fits the writer Xenophon, or Xenophon's art of writing. A man who possesses a strong sense of shame will refrain as much as possible from hearing, seeing, and speaking of the ugly, the evil, and the bad. To quote his own words, "It is noble and just and pious and more pleasant to remember the good things rather than the bad ones." For instance, Xenophon would prefer to say of a given town that it was big, rather than that it was big, deserted, and poor. But of a town in a good condition he would without any hesitation say that it was big, inhabited, and well-off. He would say of a given individual that he was brave and shrewd rather than that he was a brave and shrewd crook. He expects the reader of his praises to think as much of the virtues which he mentions as of those virtues about which he is silent because of their absence. Lest we be shocked by the fact that an abominable traitor was highly rewarded by the king who was benefited by the act of treason, Xenophon would suggest that that king had the traitor tortured to death throughout a whole year for his treason. But since Xenophon desires not only not to shock our feelings, but also to indicate the truth, he will add the remark that he cannot be certain that such a fitting retribution for the act of treason actually took place. He says this act is said to have taken place. Going a step further in the same direction, Xenophon would say of a man that his father is said to be X, but as for his mother there is agreement that she was Y. One of the reasons why he entitled his so-called *Expedition of Cyrus, Anabasis, Cyrus's Ascent*, is that the only part of the story which was happy as far as Cyrus was concerned was the ascent, the way up from the coast to the interior, as distinguished from the battle which took place after the completion of the ascent and which was most unhappy for Cyrus. These examples must here suffice for showing that Xenophon's maxim regarding the preferability of remembering the good things rather than the bad ones circumscribes what is now generally known as irony. The ironical is a kind of the ridiculous.

In one of Xenophon's Socratic writings Socrates describes the general opinion about himself in terms reminding of the *Clouds*. In some way Aristophanes is present in Xenophon's work. One of the most striking differences between[42] Xenophon's Socrates and Aristophanes's Socrates is that the former is urbane and patient, whereas the Aristophanean Socrates shows a complete lack of urbanity and even politeness, and also of patience. The only man whom Xenophon's Socrates ever addresses most impolitely is Xenophon himself. This occurs in the only conversation between Xenophon and Socrates which is re-

corded in Xenophon's Socratic writings. Xenophon's Socrates calls Xenophon, "You fool!", "You wretch!" That is to say, Xenophon's Socrates treats Xenophon, and only Xenophon, in the same way in which Aristophanes's Socrates treats Strepsiades. In the *Clouds* Pheidippides says in a dream to a friend, "Take the horse home when you have given him a good roll." In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* the interlocutor of Socrates says, "My slave takes the horse home when he has given him a good roll." The same meter. Could the interlocutor of Socrates in the *Oeconomicus*, the perfect gentleman Ischomachus, be Xenophon's substitute for Aristophanes's Pheidippides? Pheidippides comes to sight in the *Clouds* as Socrates's pupil in injustice. Ischomachus, however, is Socrates's teacher in justice, just as in Xenophon's work Xenophon takes[43] the place which in the *Clouds* was throughout occupied by Strepsiades. Through the use of ridiculous things Socrates is shown by Xenophon to be in harmony with respectability and with the city, and to contribute through his activities to civic or political excellence of the highest order. Xenophon's Socratic writings, one might dare to say, constitute a reply to Aristophanes's *Clouds* on the level of the *Clouds*, and with a most subtle use of the means of Aristophanes. We could use this observation as a clue to Xenophon's Socratic writings if we were not wholly averse to paradoxes. Let us rather turn to the most obvious, to the surface, and cling to it as much as we can.

Fifteen writings have come down to us as writings of Xenophon. Four of them are the Socratic writings, then there is the *Expedition of Cyrus*, the *Education of Cyrus*, the *Greek History*, or rather *Hellenica*, and the Minor Writings. The titles of some of these writings are strange. The title of the *Expedition of Cyrus*, the *Ascent of Cyrus*, fits only the first part of the work. The bulk of the work deals not with the ascent of Cyrus but with the descent of Xenophon, the[44] descent originated and organized by Xenophon of the Greek mercenaries who had followed Cyrus on his ascent. The title of the *Education of Cyrus* fits only the first book of the work. The bulk of the work deals not with Cyrus's education, but with the exploits of Cyrus after his education had been completed. The title of the largest of the Socratic writings, *Memorabilia* in the Latin translation, *Recollections*, is also somewhat strange. This strangeness was recognized by some editors as well as translators, who called the book *Memorabilia Socratis, Recollections of Socrates*, for the book is entirely devoted to what Xenophon remembered of Socrates. By calling the book *Recollections* simply, Xenophon indicated that his recollections simply, or his recollections *par excellence*, are not his recollections of his deeds in Asia Minor, which are recorded in the *Expedition of Cyrus*, but his recollections of Socrates. The name of Socrates occurs only in the title of one of his four Socratic writings, in the title of the *Apology of Socrates*, just as the name of Socrates occurs only in the title of one of Plato's works, again, the *Apology of Socrates*. The Socratic writings constitute, as it were, one pole of Xenophon's work. The other pole is constituted by the *Education of Cyrus*. A reference by

Xenophon's Socrates to Cyrus shows that Cyrus is not absent from Xenophon's Socratic writings. It could not be otherwise. Cyrus is presented by Xenophon as the model of a ruler, and especially of a captain. But Xenophon's Socrates possesses perfect command of the art of the captain, as Xenophon shows. And since according to a principle of both Xenophon's and Plato's Socrates the necessary and sufficient condition for being a perfect captain is one's possessing perfect command of the art of the captain, Xenophon's Socrates too is a perfect captain. On the other hand, Socrates is present in the three most extensive Xenophontic writings which are not devoted to Socrates, the *Hellenica*, the *Expedition of Cyrus*, and the *Education of Cyrus*. In each of these writings there occurs a single reference, explicit or allusive, to Socrates. The characteristic feature of Xenophon's work as a whole can be said to be the presence in it of the two poles, Cyrus and Socrates.

There is a radical difference between Cyrus and Socrates in spite of the fact that both are excellent captains, a difference which on reflection proves to be an opposition. Xenophon indicates this difference most simply by failing to mention courage, or military virtue, among the virtues of Socrates. Cyrus exercises, and Socrates does not exercise, the royal or political art, since Cyrus is eager to exercise it and Socrates does not wish to exercise it. Since there is, then, an opposition between Cyrus and Socrates, there is needed a link between Cyrus and Socrates. This link is Xenophon himself. Xenophon can be a link between Cyrus and Socrates because he is a pupil of Socrates and not of the sophists. Xenophon was induced to accompany Cyrus, the namesake of the great empire builder Cyrus, by his friend Proxenus, who had been a pupil of Gorgias, the famous teacher of rhetoric. Proxenus left the school of Gorgias in the belief that he was able to acquire a great name, great power, and great wealth by just and noble means alone. But he had the defect that he could rule only gentlemen, and was incapable to make himself feared by the soldiers, for he believed that praise and withholding praise sufficed for the governance of men. He did not appreciate the power of punishment, or of harshness. But Xenophon, the pupil of Socrates, was able to rule both gentlemen and those who were not gentlemen. He was as excellent at castigating the bad and base, and beating them, as he was at praising the good and the noble. Hence he could have become the sole commander of the Greek army if he had desired it. Hence he could seriously desire to become the founder of a city in Asia Minor. Xenophon shows by his deeds the radical difference between Socrates and the other wise men of his age. Socrates was the political educator *par excellence*. Socrates was the opposite of a mere speculator about the things in heaven and beneath the earth. Socrates, and not Gorgias, for example, was the political educator *par excellence* because he had recognized the power of that in man which is recalcitrant to reason and which therefore cannot be persuaded into submission, but must be beaten into it. Socrates understands the nature of political things, which are not simply rational. Therefore, the student of politics can

learn something important by observing the training of dogs and of horses. Therefore there exists a relation between Xenophon's Socratic writings and those of his minor writings which deal with dogs and horses. It is perfectly fitting, for more than one reason, that his writing on dogs, or rather on hunting with dogs, almost ends with a blame of the sophists, and a praise of the philosophers.

I must now turn to a more detailed analysis of the political teaching of Xenophon's Socrates, but we do not have the time for that. Therefore, I make a few remarks giving some conclusion to this lecture. There are four Socratic writings, the *Memorabilia*, the *Oeconomicus*, the *Banquet*, and the *Apology of Socrates*. Next time I will try to show that the *Memorabilia* are meant to be a presentation of Socrates's justice, that the three other Socratic writings present Socrates simply, without a limited regard to his justice. The *Oeconomicus* presents Socrates as a speaker, the *Banquet* presents Socrates as a doer, and the *Apology of Socrates* presents Socrates as a silent deliberator, or thinker. The literary principle of the *Memorabilia*, the largest of these four books, is to indicate the character of Socrates's true activity, but not to set it forth. If one considers these indications carefully, one comes to see that the Xenophontic Socrates did not limit himself to the study of the human things, but was concerned, as every other philosopher, with the whole, only he thought that the human things are the clue to the whole. For Xenophon's Socrates, as well as for the Platonic Socrates, the key for the understanding of the whole is the fact that the whole is characterized by what I shall call noetic heterogeneity. To state it more simply, by the fact that the whole consists of classes or kinds the character of which does not become fully clear through sense perception. It is for this reason that Socrates could become the founder of political philosophy, or political science. For political philosophy, or political science, is based on the premise that political things are in a class by themselves, that there is an essential difference between political things, and things which are not political. Or more specifically, that there is an essential difference between the common good and the private or sectional good. Socrates is the first philosopher who did justice to the claim of the political, the claim which is in fact raised by the *polis*, the political society. This means that he also realized the limitations of that claim. Hence he distinguished between two ways of life, the political life, and one which transcends the political life and which is the highest. Now while according to Xenophon and his Socrates the transpolitical life is higher in dignity than the political life, they did everything in their power to instill respect for the claims of the city and of political life and of everything connected with it. Moderation proves to be the characteristic quality of Socrates. Here as well as in other respects, recognition of the essential difference between the political and the non-political, or, more fundamentally, recognition of the existence of essential differences, or of noetic heterogeneity, appears as moderation as opposed to the madness of the philosophers preceding Socrates. But Socratic

moderation means also, and in a sense even primarily, the recognition of opinions which are not true but salutary to political life. Socrates, Xenophon says, did not separate from each other wisdom and moderation. The political is indeed not the highest, but it is the first, because it is the most urgent. It is related to philosophy as continence is related to virtue proper. It is the foundation, the indispensable condition. From here we can understand why Socrates could be presented in a popular presentation as having limited himself, his study, entirely to the human and political things. The human or political things are indeed the clue to all things, to the whole of nature, since they are the link or bond between the highest and the lowest, or since man is a microcosm, or since the human or political things and their correlatives are the form in which the highest principle . . [end of tape]

(NOVEMBER 3, 1958)

Plato's and Xenophon's presentation of Socrates can be understood, *can* be understood, as replies to Aristophanes's presentation of Socrates. Aristophanes's presentation is not a piece of buffoonery, but it goes to the root of the matter, not in spite, but because of the fact that it is a comedy. The *Clouds* read in conjunction with the other plays of Aristophanes, especially the *Birds* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, are one of the greatest documents of the contest between philosophy and poetry for supremacy. They are the greatest documents of the case for the supremacy of poetry. The Aristophanean comedy is based on the fundamental distinction between nature and convention. It is therefore based on philosophy. Philosophy, or the science of nature, or physiology in the Greek sense of the word, as represented by Socrates is allied with rhetoric. It recognizes two principles corresponding to the difference of natural science on the one hand and rhetoric on the other. These principles are Aether and the Clouds. Now in spite of this alliance with rhetoric, philosophy, the investigation of what is in heaven and beneath the earth, is radically unpolitical. It simply transcends the political. It is oblivious of man, or rather of human life, yet human life is its basis. Hence it does not understand itself. It lacks self-knowledge, therefore it lacks practical wisdom. Because it is unconcerned with human life it is unerotic and amusic. Philosophy must therefore be integrated into a whole which is ruled by poetry. Poetry is both the foundation and the capstone of wisdom within which philosophy finds its place, or through which philosophy is protected and at the same time perfected. The Xenophontic, and especially the Platonic, thesis asserts exactly the opposite. Philosophy, not indeed the physiology of the Aristophanean Socrates, but a certain psychology, Platonic psychology let us say, is both the foundation and the capstone of wisdom within which poetry finds its place or through which poetry becomes good. Socrates was eminently political. He was *the* philosopher of self-knowl-

edge, and therefore of practical wisdom. He was the erotician *par excellence*. This is the general reply of Plato and Xenophon to Aristophanes. Yet it remains a question whether Socrates was as music as the greatest poets. Perhaps it was only Plato who decided the contest between poetry and philosophy in favor of philosophy through the Platonic dialogue, the greatest of all works of art.

I shall speak first of Xenophon. The great theme of Xenophon may be said to be this. Socrates was *the* citizen, *the* statesman, *the* captain. Socrates was political as no philosopher ever was, nay as no statesman ever was. Yet Socrates is only one pole in Xenophon's thought. The other pole is Cyrus, be it the founder of the Persian Empire or the younger Cyrus whom Xenophon accompanied in his ascent to Asia Minor. The difference between Socrates and Cyrus indicates that while Socrates is profoundly political he was also something else. I stated last time what I believe to be characteristic of Xenophon's way of writing. To put it very colloquially and provisionally one can compare Xenophon's manner to that of Jane Austen, not to speak about the sad and terrible things—not exactly about match-making in Xenophon's case—but at any rate to remember the good things rather than the bad ones. It is preferable to speak of the good things rather than the bad ones, as Xenophon explicitly says. Now good is, however, here an ambiguous term. Good may mean to be what is truly good, or good may mean what is generally thought to be good. In the defense of Socrates especially by Xenophon, Xenophon is very anxious to show that Socrates was good according to the general notion of goodness, and that is perhaps not the deepest in Socrates as we shall see.

Now Xenophon's Socratic writings consist of four pieces, the *Memorabilia*, the *Oeconomicus*, the *Banquet*, and the *Apology of Socrates*. As for the *Memorabilia*, the largest of these books, it consists of two main parts, a short first part, in which Xenophon refutes the indictment of Socrates, and a much more extensive second part, in which Xenophon shows that Socrates greatly benefited everyone who came into contact with him. Just as Plato in his *Apology of Socrates*, Xenophon explicitly refrains from quoting the indictment with complete literalness. The indictment was to the effect that "Socrates commits an unjust act by not recognizing the gods which[45] the city recognizes, but introduces other divinities which are new. He also commits an unjust act by corrupting the young." By refuting the indictment, Xenophon shows that Socrates did not commit these unjust acts of the commission of which he was accused, nor any other unjust act. He proves that Socrates acted justly in the sense of legal justice. In the bulk of the *Memorabilia* Xenophon proves that Socrates greatly benefited everyone who came into contact with him. But to benefit one's fellow men is, according to Xenophon, identical with being just, although perhaps not with being merely legally just. Hence the purpose of the *Memorabilia* as a whole is to prove Socrates's justice, both legal and translegal.

The three other Socratic writings can then be expected to deal with Socrates simply without special regard to his justice, with his activity simply. Now the

activity of man consists, according to Xenophon, of speaking, doing, and thinking or deliberating. In accordance with this tri-partition, Xenophon has divided his three smaller Socratic writings, as can be seen from the openings of these writings. The *Oeconomicus* deals with Socrates's speaking, the *Banquet* with his deeds, and the *Apology of Socrates* with his silent deliberation. Two special remarks are indispensable at this point. The *Banquet* deals with the deeds not only of Socrates, but of a number of other gentlemen as well. Moreover, it deals with deeds not performed in earnest or with seriousness, but performed playfully. We are therefore entitled to look somewhere for Xenophon's presentation of deeds which gentlemen performed in earnest. I am inclined to believe that we have this presentation in his Greek history, the *Hellenica*. In accordance with this he treats his narratives of tyrants, which occur in the Greek history, and only the narratives of tyrants, as excursuses, that is to say, as parts not properly belonging to the work, for the tyrant is, of course, the opposite of a gentleman. Secondly, the *Memorabilia* on the one hand, and the three other Socratic writings on the other, fulfill fundamentally different functions. The *Memorabilia* established the justice of Socrates, the three others deal with Socrates simply. Now the *Apology of Socrates*, the last and shortest, is to a considerable extent a repetition of the last chapter of the *Memorabilia*. There are[46] a number of minor divergences of which some editors have tried to get rid by assimilating the text of the *Apology of Socrates* to the text of the last chapter of the *Memorabilia*, a dangerous undertaking since it is based on the complete disregard of the possibility that subtle stylistic differences, to say nothing of others, may be required by the two different purposes of the two writings. To illustrate this one may adduce the fact that certain sections of the *Hellenica* are used by Xenophon in his writing *Agesilaus*, with many minor stylistic changes. The differences between the *Agesilaus* and the corresponding sections of the *Hellenica* must be viewed in the light of the fact that the *Hellenica* is a history and the *Agesilaus* is a eulogy. And as every college boy knows, or should know, the style required for history differs from the style required for eulogy. And the editors also in this case correct the text of the *Agesilaus* because this simple idea did not occur to some of them.

The *Memorabilia*, to repeat, are devoted to the subject of Socrates's justice, and their first part to[47] Socrates's legal justice. The accuser had charged Socrates with corrupting the young. He had specified this somewhat vague charge by contending, among other things, that Socrates induced his companions to look down on the established laws, by saying to them that it is foolish to elect the magistrates of the city by lot. No one would choose a pilot, a builder, a flute-player by lot, and yet these kinds of people can not do any serious harm compared with the harm which the rulers of the city can do. By such speeches, the accuser said, Socrates induced his companions to look down with contempt on the established regime, that is to say, on the democracy, and made them men of violence. Xenophon goes out of his way to show that a man like Socrates was

bound to be opposed to the use of violence, but he does not even attempt to deny the charge that Socrates made his companions look down with contempt on the established regime and its accompaniment, the established laws. He does not deny this charge because he cannot deny it. Socrates was an outspoken critic of the Athenian democracy. If legal justice includes full loyalty to the established political order, Socrates's legal justice was deficient in a point of utmost importance. He was not unqualifiedly just then.

The accuser also referred to Socrates's relation with two of the most outstanding political criminals of the age, Critias the tyrant and Alcibiades. Xenophon shows that Socrates was in no way responsible for what these men did after they had left Socrates, whom they had left precisely because Socrates disapproved of their ways. In order to show the wickedness of Alcibiades in particular, Xenophon records many other things and among them the conversation which Alcibiades once had with his guardian, Pericles. Alcibiades asked Pericles, what is a law? Pericles fittingly defines law in such a way as to fit democratic law as such. Law is an enactment of the assembled multitude as to what should be done or not[48] be done. Alcibiades forces Pericles to grant that the enactments of the ruling few in an oligarchy or of a tyrant in a tyranny are equally law, and on the other hand that the law merely imposed by the rulers on the ruled, and therefore in particular a law merely imposed by the democratic majority on the minority is an act of violence rather than a law. A law owes its lawfulness, not to its democratic origin, but to its goodness. The democratic origin in itself is no better than the tyrannical origin. Xenophon's Socrates never raises the grave and dangerous question, what is a law. This question is raised only by Xenophon's young and rash Alcibiades. Yet the young and rash Alcibiades who raises this question in the style characteristic of Socrates had not yet left Socrates, but was still a companion of Socrates at the time he raised this Socratic question. The accuser also charged Socrates with frequently quoting the verses from the *Iliad* in which Odysseus is described as using different language when speaking to outstanding men on the one hand, and when speaking to men of the common people on the other. Xenophon does not even attempt to deny this charge.

Yet the first and most important part of the charge against Socrates concerns his alleged impiety. As Xenophon makes clear, the charge of impiety was graver than the charge of injustice, or of corrupting the young. Only "*some* Athenians" believed that Socrates corrupted the young, whereas "*the* Athenians" believed that Socrates was not sound as regards the gods. Yet Xenophon devotes more than three times as much space to proving that Socrates did not corrupt the young as to proving that Socrates was pious. In order to prove that Socrates was pious Xenophon mentions the fact that Socrates was sacrificing frequently and that he was relying on divination, especially on his "demonic thing". Lest there be any suspicion that Socrates acted differently in private than in public, he adds the remark that Socrates was always in the open, in

places[49] where he could meet the largest number of people. Still, a man may have no privacy of any kind, and yet have private thoughts. Xenophon adds, therefore, that Socrates was always in the open and talked almost constantly, yet no one ever heard him say anything impious. Immediately afterwards, however, he admits that Socrates's thought would not necessarily become known through what he said in the market place. There is one, and only one, universally known fact which according to Xenophon proves Socrates's piety. This is Socrates's conduct at the trial of the generals after the battle of the Arginusae, where Socrates alone upheld his sworn duty not to permit an illegal vote. It is clear that while this action proves Socrates's justice, it does not necessarily prove Socrates's piety in the sense of sincere belief in the existence of the gods worshipped by the city of Athens.

At the end of Xenophon's refutation of the indictment of Socrates, we have come to realize that Socrates's legal justice and his legal piety could not be proven, or that Socrates was not unqualifiedly just. This, however, is perfectly compatible with the fact that he possessed translegal justice, which consists in benefiting one's fellow men. Socrates benefited his fellow men to the highest degree by leading them to excellence or to virtue, that is to say, to that kind or degree of virtue of which the individual in question was capable. For the difference among men in this respect was crucially important to Socrates as he indicated by frequently quoting the Homeric verses in which Odysseus is presented as having conducted himself in an entirely different way when confronted with entirely different kinds of people. The bulk of the *Memorabilia* is meant to show how beneficent Socrates was. The fourth book of the *Memorabilia* is the only part of the work which can be said to present Socrates as a teacher rather than as an advisor or exhorter. The fourth book opens with the remark that Socrates helped those who spent their time with him not only by being serious but by joking as well, and that he did not approach all men in the same manner. He was naturally attracted by the good natures, that is to say, by the most gifted, who revealed themselves as such through the quickness with which they learned, through their memory, and through their desire for all worth-while subjects of learning. Not all men possess good natures. Xenophon enumerates some other human types. The greatest part of the fourth book is devoted to Socrates's conversations with the handsome Euthydemus, whose characteristic was, not natural gifts, but conceit. Xenophon refrains from presenting the teacher Socrates as engaged in conversation with first-rate men. Hence we do not learn from Xenophon how Socrates, who talked differently to different kinds of people, talked to first-rate men.

Socrates taught only by conversation. His art consisted in the art, or the skill, of conversation. The Greek word[50] for the skill of conversation is dialectics. As for Socrates's dialectics we learn from Xenophon that it was two-fold. When someone contradicted Socrates, Socrates brought back the subject matter to its basic presupposition, that is to say, he raised the question "what is?"

regarding the subject under discussion, and he answered with the participation of the contradictor. Thus the contradictor himself came to see the truth clearly. This we may say is the higher form of dialectics. But, Xenophon goes on, when Socrates discussed something on his own initiative, that is to say, when he talked to people who merely listened, he did not raise the question "what is" but proceeded through generally accepted opinions, and thus he produced agreement among the listeners to an extraordinary degree. This latter kind of dialectics, which leads to agreement as distinguished from truth, is the most important part of the political art. It is the art which Homer ascribes to Odysseus. Socrates applied the scientific kind of dialectics when he talked to contradictors, that is to say, to men capable to contradict intelligently, to people who are capable to go beyond the accepted opinions, or who possess good natures. Socrates applied the political or rhetorical dialectics in his conversations with the majority of people. Xenophon gives us hardly any specimen of Socrates's exhibiting the higher kind of dialectics. For it goes without saying that the mere use of the formula, "what is", does not yet guarantee that the question will be handled appropriately. If we want to find the serious thought of Socrates as Xenophon understood it we must translate Socrates's statements *ad hominem* into the form they would take if they were addressed to contradictors, or to men possessing good natures.

Xenophon is very sparing in his explicit praise of Socrates. And when he praises Socrates, he shrinks from using superlatives. The strongest expression which he ever uses in this connection is his statement that when he heard Socrates make a certain statement, "he seemed to me to be blessed." The statement of Socrates was to the effect that while others derived pleasure from horses, dogs, or birds, he derived pleasure from good friends, "together with my friends I[51] scan the treasures of the wise men of old which they have left behind in writing and if we see something good, we pick it out, and we regard it as a great gain when we become useful to one another." Of Socrates's studying with his friends the works of the wise men of old and of their selecting the best from them, Xenophon does not give us a single example. He draws our attention to what he regarded as Socrates's most praiseworthy activity, but he demands from a certain kind of his readers that they transform the intimation into clear knowledge. In the passage quoted Socrates speaks of his friends, or his good friends. We may say that Xenophon never records conversations between Socrates and his friends in the strict sense. Of course, "friends" is an ambiguous term. It may be applied to friends strictly speaking, as well as to mere acquaintances, and hence also to the intermediate forms of relationship. Seven chapters of the *Memorabilia* are devoted to the subject, Socrates and friendship. Xenophon records conversations between Socrates and acquaintances, interlocutors, and comrades of Socrates, but no conversation between Socrates and a friend of Socrates. The most instructive case is a conversation between Socrates and Crito. The wealthy Crito complains to Socrates about

being blackmailed by informers. Socrates draws Crito's attention to the fact that Crito, a landed gentleman, uses dogs to keep wolves away from his sheep. In the same way, he says, he should use the informers to keep other informers away from his property. Crito would, of course, have to make the arrangement worth-while to the protecting informer. Crito acts on Socrates's advice. They find a certain Archedemus who is excellent for this purpose; "Henceforth Archedemus was one of Crito's friends and was honored by the other friends of Crito." We have here a choice between saying that Crito did not belong to Socrates's friends, and saying that Socrates honored a useful informer. I suggest that we choose the former alternative.

The third book of the *Memorabilia* shows how Socrates dealt with those who long and strive for the fair or noble. It ascends from conversations of Socrates with anonymous individuals, via conversations with acquaintances, to a conversation with[52] Glaucon, the hero of Plato's *Republic*, the son of Ariston, to whom Socrates was benevolent for the sake of Charmides the son of Glaucon and for the sake of Plato. Immediately after the conversation with Glaucon, Xenophon records a conversation with Charmides, Charmides being one of the men for the sake of whom Socrates took an interest in Glaucon. We thus expect to be treated next to a conversation between Socrates and the other man for the sake of whom Socrates took an interest in Glaucon, this is to say, a conversation between Socrates and Plato. Instead we get a conversation between Socrates and another philosopher, Aristippus. Thereafter the descent begins, which leads us via outstanding craftsmen, a venal beauty, and a sickly youth, again to anonymous people. That is to say, Xenophon builds up the argument in such a way as to point toward a peak, to suggest a peak—anonymous people up to very close people and then again down to anonymous people. Xenophon suggests a peak of the third book, or, for that matter, of the whole work. He points to that peak, a conversation between Socrates and Plato, but he does not supply it. The peak is missing. This formula can be applied to Xenophon's Socratic writings as a whole. The highest does not become visible or audible, but it can be divined. The unsaid is more important than what is said. For the reader this means that he must be extremely attentive, or extremely careful.

Among all the passages in which Xenophon subtly alludes to Socrates's chief preoccupation, the most important one is that in which he says that Socrates "never ceased considering what each of the beings is." It appears from the context that this Socratic consideration is connected with distinguishing things according to their kinds or classes. But, to say the least, Xenophon gives very few examples of this constant preoccupation of Socrates. It is also hard to see how Socrates could constantly consider what each of the beings is, and, at the same time, constantly be in public places and almost constantly talk about subjects other than what each of the beings is. At any rate Socrates's constant preoccupation was the concern with "what is", with the essence of all things. It is true, the same Xenophon tells us also that Socrates limited his interest en-

tirely to the human things, but one must consider the context within which Xenophon makes the latter assertion. He asserts that Socrates did not discuss the nature of all things, or what the sophists call the cosmos, in order to prove that no one had ever heard Socrates say something impious or irreligious, for the study of nature was suspect as the presumptuous attempt to pry into the secrets of the gods. But I have already indicated what one has to think about the legal piety of Xenophon's Socrates. When asserting that Socrates limited his study to human things, Xenophon makes his Socrates wonder whether the students of nature, that is to say, the philosophers preceding Socrates, now called the pre-Socratics, did not realize that man cannot discover the truth regarding nature, for the various philosophers, says Socrates, contradict each other and behave like madmen. Some of them believe that being is one, but others that there are infinitely many beings. Some say that all things change, but others, that nothing changes. Some say that everything comes into being and perishes, but others say that nothing comes into being or perishes. The characterization of these contentions as mad permits us to see clearly which contentions about the whole Socrates regards as sound and sober, namely, that there is a finite number of beings, that there are some unchangeable and some changeable things, and that there are some things which do not come into being and perish. Xenophon's remark about Socrates's chief preoccupation permits us to render this implication more precise. While there are infinitely many things, there is only a finite number of kinds or classes of things, that is to say, of the beings which we intend when we raise the question "what is". Those kinds or classes, as distinguished from the individual things, are unchangeable and do not come into being or perish.

Socrates is distinguished from all philosophers who preceded him by the fact that he sees the core of the whole, or of nature, in noetic heterogeneity. The whole is not one, nor homogeneous, but heterogeneous. Yet the heterogeneity is not sensible heterogeneity, like the heterogeneity of the four elements, for example, but noetic heterogeneity, essential heterogeneity. It is for this reason that Socrates could become the [originator of][53] political science. Only if there is essential heterogeneity can there be an essential difference between political things, and things which are not political. The discovery of noetic heterogeneity permits one to let things be what they are, and takes away the compulsion to reduce essential differences to something common. The discovery of noetic heterogeneity means the vindication of what one could call common sense. Socrates called it a return from madness to sanity or sobriety, or, to use the Greek term, *sophrosyne*, which I would translate by moderation. Socrates discovered the paradoxical fact that, in a way, the most important truth is the most[54] obvious truth, or the truth of the surface. Furthermore, the fact that there is a variety of being, in the sense of kinds or classes, means that there cannot be a single total experience of being, whether that experience is understood mystically or romantically, the specifically romantic assertion being that feeling, or

sentiment, or a certain kind of sentiment, is this total experience. There is indeed mental vision, or perception, of this or that kind or pattern, but the many mental patterns, many mental perceptions, must be connected by *logismos*, by reasoning, by putting two and two together.

By recognizing the fact that the political is irreducible to the non-political, that the political is *sui generis*, Socrates does justice to the claim raised on behalf of the political, or by the political itself, namely by the political community, by the *polis*. The *polis* presents itself as exalted far above the household and the individual. Yet this does not necessarily mean that Socrates recognized the claim of the *polis* to be the highest simply, or, which amounts to the same thing, to be the authoritative interpreter of the highest simply, or to be beyond the peak. The judgment on the status of the political will depend on the result of the analysis of the political. Socrates's analysis of the political may be said to start from the phenomenon of law, for laws appear to be the specifically political phenomenon. The reason is this. The political appears to be the dominion of the most resplendent activity of adult freemen—and who is more resplendent than adult freemen?—and that which gives adult freemen as such their character, or that which limits them, is law, and law alone. Law means primarily the utterance of the assembled citizens which tells everyone, including the full citizens, what they ought to do and what they may not do, not until further notice, or for a given time, but forever. The well-being of the city, nay, its being, depends on law, on law-abidingness, or justice. Justice in this sense is the political virtue *par excellence*. Justice as law-abidingness comes to sight as a virtue by the consideration of the alternatives, which are force and law. It is with a view to law that the distinction between legitimacy and illegitimacy is primarily made. "Kingship is rule over willing human beings and in accordance with the laws of the city, whereas the rule over unwilling human beings and according to the will of the ruler is tyranny." This remark seems to apply only to monarchs, but Socrates goes on to say, "The regime in which the magistracies are filled from among those who complete the laws or the customs is aristocracy. The regime in which the magistracies are filled on the basis of property qualification is plutocracy. The regime in which the magistracies are filled from all is democracy." This may be thought to mean that republics too can be either royal or tyrannical, the decisive point being whether the rulers are limited by law or not. Yet there is this obvious difficulty, that the rulers who ought to be subject to the law are themselves the cause or the origin of the law, and the cause or origin of the law cannot as such be subject to the law—the famous problem of sovereignty in modern times. Still lawgivers cannot act arbitrarily. They are supposed to enact good laws. Hence we may have to make a distinction other than that between legitimate and illegitimate regimes. One may have to make a distinction between good regimes, as regimes most likely to produce good laws, and bad regimes, as regimes most likely to produce bad laws. If the quality enabling men to make good laws is wisdom, the good

regime will be the rule of the wise. In other words, the only sound title to rule is knowledge, not inheritance, nor election, nor force, nor fraud, but only knowledge of how to rule can make a man a king or a ruler. The man of the highest political wisdom is superior to any law, not only because he alone can be the origin of excellent laws, but likewise because he has a flexibility which laws however wise necessarily lack. The man of the highest political wisdom is a seeing law, whereas every law proper is blind to some extent. The justice of the true ruler cannot consist then in lawabidingness or in legal justice. He must be guided by translegal justice, by the habit of benefiting human beings, of helping them to become as good as possible, and to live as happily as possible. He must assign to everyone not necessarily what a possibly foolish law declares to be his, but what is good or fitting for him. To use a Xenophontic example, if a big boy owns a small coat and a small boy owns a big coat, we must take away the big coat from the small boy and give it to the big boy, and *vice versa*. That is to say, by questioning the ultimacy of law, we question also the ultimacy of legal property.

At the beginning of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* Socrates leads the argument from the view that the property of a man is the totality of his possessions, via the view that the property of a man is the totality of his useful possessions, or possessions useful to him, to the view that only that can be regarded as a man's property which he knows how to use, that is to say, how to use well. So heroin could not possibly be the property of a juvenile delinquent. We are thus brought up against the question as to whether unwise men can possess any property except under the strictest supervision of the wise. There is a simple formula expressing the view that the political art at its highest transcends law as such, namely, the thesis of Socrates that the political or royal art is identical with the economic art, that is to say, the art by means of which the father, husband, master rules his children, wife, and slaves. Neither Xenophon's Socrates nor Xenophon himself ever speaks of natural law, or natural right, *eo nomine*. But his Socrates once speaks of unwritten law. One example of unwritten law, that is to say, of laws which are self-enforcing since their transgression damages the transgressor without any human intervention, is the prohibition against incest between parents and children. As little as Plato's Socrates in the *Republic* does Xenophon's Socrates refer in this crucial context to the prohibition against incest between brothers and sisters.

Summarizing the analysis of the political given by Xenophon's Socrates, we may say that there is fundamental agreement between that analysis and the analysis given in the Platonic dialogues, especially the *Republic* and the *Statesman*, only Xenophon is much more laconic, reserved, or bashful than Plato. Now we have followed Xenophon's Socrates up to the point where the absolute rule of the wise appeared to be the only wise solution to the political problem. The wise would assign to every unwise man the thing which he is best fitted to use, and the work which he is best fitted to do. He would exercise his rule by

virtue of his wisdom, i.e., of the recognition of his wisdom by the unwise. He would sway the unwise by persuasion alone. But will the unwise be able to recognize the wisdom of the wise? Is there no limit to the persuasive power of the wise? Socrates, who lived what he thought, illustrates this difficulty by his relation to the city of Athens. Socrates failed to persuade the city of Athens of his goodness. He illustrates it in a more homely way by his relation to his wife Xanthippe. In Xenophon's *Banquet*, Socrates is asked by a companion why he did not educate Xanthippe, but had a wife who, of all the women present, past, and future, is probably the most difficult. Socrates replied that just as a man who wants to become good at handling horses will learn to handle the most spirited horse, for if he can handle such a horse he will be able to handle any horse, in the same way he, Socrates, desiring to live with human beings acquired Xanthippe, well knowing that if he could control her, he could easily get along with all other human beings. The utmost one could say is that Socrates succeeded somehow in living with Xanthippe;[9] he certainly did not succeed in educating her, or in ruling her by persuasion. When his son Lamprocles was angry with his mother because of the abominable things she had said to him out of her wild temper, Socrates talked to Lamprocles and silenced him. He did not even try to silence, to say nothing of appease, Xanthippe. If it is then impossible that the wise can rule the unwise by persuasion, and since it is equally impossible, considering the numerical relation of the wise and the unwise, that the wise should rule the unwise by force, one has to be satisfied with a very indirect rule of the wise. This indirect rule of the wise consists in the rule of laws, on the making of which the wise have had some influence. In other words, the unlimited rule of undiluted wisdom must be replaced by the rule of wisdom diluted by consent. Yet laws cannot be the rulers strictly speaking, they must be applied, interpreted, administered, and executed. The best solution of the political problem is then the rule of men who can best complete the laws, supplement the essential deficiency of the law. The completion of the laws is equity. The best solution of the political problem is then the regime in which power rests with the equitable, in Greek, the *epieikeis*, which means in Greek at the same time the better people, and this means for all practical purposes the landed gentry. Xenophon has given a sketch of what he regarded as the best regime in the first book of his *Education of Cyrus*, his political work *par excellence*. Xenophon tacitly claims that he has found the best regime in Persia, prior to the emergence of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire. The best regime is a greatly improved Sparta. Every free man is a citizen and has access to all offices, with the exception of hereditary kingship, under the condition that he has successfully attended the public schools, public schools in the American sense. The regime seems then to be a democracy. But, unfortunately, the poor need their young sons on their small farms, and therefore only the sons of the well-to-do are in a position to acquire the right to the holding of public office. The best regime is then an aristocracy disguised as democracy. The

principle animating this best regime comes to sight when Cyrus is about to destroy it, or to transform it into an absolute monarchy. Cyrus urges the gentlemen, the ruling class, to think no longer merely of decency, excellence, or virtue, but above all of the things which one can acquire through virtue, that is to say, of increasing their wealth. The principle of the best regime is then the cultivation of human excellence, as opposed to the increase of wealth.

As Xenophon indicates by presenting his utopia in a work of fiction, the *Education of Cyrus*, he does not believe that the best regime as he understood it ever was actual, and thence that it is likely ever to become actual, in spite of its being possible. Political life as it always was, and as it always will be, is more or less imperfect. For all practical purposes political greatness is generous and effective leadership in a tolerably good republic. The greatest example which Xenophon himself exhibits is that of the Spartan general, Dercylidas, the predecessor in Asia Minor of the somewhat pompous martinet, Agesilaus. People called Dercylidas Sisyphus with a view to his outstanding resourcefulness. He was once punished by the Spartan authorities for what they regarded as lack of discipline, and he always loved to be away from home. Xenophon indicates other compromise solutions which are important given the practical impossibility of the best regime. There is no question for him that the life most fitting a gentleman is that of administering one's wealth rather than increasing it, that is to say, one's inherited landed estate. But after his Socrates has set forth this view with all possible emphasis, he reports the divergent practice of an Athenian whose son was particularly well known as a gentleman. In the opinion of that gentleman[55] son the father was an enthusiastic lover of farming. He could not see a run down farm without buying it and making it flourish. When told this story by the son, Socrates asks, "Did your father keep all the farms which he cultivated, or did he sell them, when he could get much money?" The son replied, "He sold, by Zeus!" The compromise between the gentlemanly self-restraint regarding money, on the one hand, and greed on the other, or between farming and trade, is trading in farms. It is not necessary to discuss here the extreme concession to human frailty, which Xenophon considered, namely, beneficent tyranny. Generally speaking, by acting consistently on his literary principle of saying as little as possible about the highest, Xenophon was compelled or enabled, more than any other classic, to pave the way for Machiavelli, who, incidentally, generously acknowledged this debt. Only what in Xenophon had been a principle of writing became in Machiavelli a principle of thinking.

The crucial result of Socrates's analysis of the political, as Xenophon presents it, is that the political is essentially imperfect, the essence of the political being the dilution of wisdom by consent on the part of the unwise, or the dilution of wisdom by folly. Hence the claim of the political to be beyond the peak, or to be simply the highest, proves to be unfounded. Man's true excellence or virtue exists beyond the political, or is transpolitical. Xenophon's Soc-

rates is the representative of man's transpolitical excellence, whereas his Cyrus is the representative of that life which is highest if the principle characteristic of the political is adhered to and thought through. The polarity of Socrates and Cyrus corresponds to the fundamental tension between philosophy and the *polis*. Xenophon has presented the tension between the two ways of life, the political and the transpolitical most clearly in the *Oeconomicus*, which is his Socratic speech *par excellence*.

The *Oeconomicus* is a conversation between Socrates and Crito's son Critobulus, a young man who did not do too well. Socrates encourages Critobulus to dedicate himself to the management of the household, of which farming is a distinguished, if subordinate, part. Socrates acts as a teacher of the art of farming or of the art of managing the household in general. This contrasts with what he does when he is confronted with a young man eager to learn the art of a general. Xenophon's Socrates appears to possess the art of the general, but he declines to teach it, whereas he is perfectly willing to teach the peaceful art of farming. Socrates had acquired his command of the art of farming, not by farming, but by having had, once in his life, an extended conversation with a gentleman farmer called Ischomachus. He had learned that art in one sitting, which took place in the cloister of a temple in Athens, rather far away from any farm. His teaching of the art of farming consisted in transmitting to a young man a teaching which he had acquired in one day, in one sitting, just by listening. Yet, as has been indicated, what Socrates teaches is not merely the art of farming, but the whole economic art, or the art of managing the household, which includes above everything else the art of educating and managing one's wife, an art which Socrates had also learned at that single session with Ischomachus. More than this, what Socrates teaches young Critobulus is the way of life of the perfect gentleman, or perfect gentlemanship, a subject which comprises the economic art, and which was the primary and comprehensive theme regarding which Socrates consulted the gentleman farmer, Ischomachus, on the occasion of that single session once upon a time. Socrates did not learn perfect gentlemanship by thinking or by dialectics, but merely by listening, just as he transmits this art of gentlemanship to a young man who merely listens. Perfect gentlemanship is not a science, nor is it based on a science, but it is guided by opinions alone, by things which you understand fully by listening. In other words, no intellectual effort is required for grasping the principles of ordinary morality. Ordinary morality consists not in knowing, but in doing, whereas as regards the highest morality, the transpolitical morality, virtue is knowledge.

The first part of the teaching which Socrates transmits to Critobulus concerns, as I said, the education and management of one's wife. Ischomachus is very proud of the way in which he has educated his. He could not know at that time at which he gave Socrates his glowing report about the way in which he had educated his wife that in later years this woman would have a love affair with their son-in-law Callias, the son of Hipponicus, less than a year after

Callias had married their daughter, and that as a consequence of this Callias had Ischomachus's wife and Ischomachus's daughter together in his house, just as Pluto or Hades had Demeter and her daughter Persephone together in his house. He was, therefore, called Hades in Athens, and Plato's *Protagoras* is based in its setting on this story, the *Protagoras* taking place in the house of Callias, and there are quite a few allusions to the fact that we are there in Hades. But this only in passing. Now this is not merely a joke, but indicates the great problem of the relation between theory and practice, or between knowledge and virtue. Ischomachus teaches his wife—theory. What she will do is a different story. However this may be, the center of the *Oeconomicus* is occupied by a direct confrontation of the life of the perfect gentleman, Ischomachus, and the life of Socrates. The two ways of life are presented as incompatible. One most obvious difference between the two ways of life is that one must be well off, or, as Aristotle puts it, one must be properly equipped, in order to be a perfect gentleman, whereas Socrates was rather poor. Since these remarks occur in a work on economics, one must raise the question regarding the economic basis of Socrates's life, Socrates's means of support. The answer conveyed through the work is that Socrates did not have to worry since he had friends. There is this nice passage in which the question comes up that from all the preceding things it follows that friends are money, and the answer given is, "By Zeus, they are."

Yet while according to Xenophon and his Socrates the transpolitical life is higher in dignity than the political life, they did everything in their power to instill respect for the claims of the city, and of political life, and of everything connected with it. Here again moderation proves to be the characteristic quality of Socrates. We have shown before that recognition of the essential difference between the political and the non-political or, more generally, recognition of the existence of essential differences, or of noetic heterogeneity, appeared as moderation in opposition to the madness of the philosophers preceding Socrates. But Socratic moderation means also, and in a sense primarily, the recognition of opinions which are not true, but salutary to political life. Socrates, Xenophon says, did not separate from each other wisdom and moderation. The political is indeed not the highest, but it is first because it is the most urgent. It is related to philosophy as continence is related to virtue proper, it is the foundation, the indispensable condition. From here we can understand why Socrates could be presented as having limited his study entirely to human or political things. The human or political things are indeed the clue to all things, to the whole of nature, since they are the link or bond between the highest and the lowest, or since man is a microcosm, or since the human or political things, and their corollaries are the form in which the highest principles first come to sight, or, since the false estimate of human things is a fundamental and primary error. Philosophy is primarily political philosophy because philosophy is the ascent from the obvious, the most massive, the most urgent, to what is highest

in dignity. Philosophy is primarily political philosophy because political philosophy is required for protecting the inner sanctum of philosophy.

This lecture has been a bit longer than I would have wished, and also my plan has gone wrong for some other reasons, so I will devote the next lecture to the main thread of Plato's *Republic*, and the last one on Friday to the subject, Plato and the Poets. I think you have seen by now that this is an absolutely crucial subject for Plato, the relative relation or status of poetry and philosophy. One could venture to say that the alternative to philosophy, to Platonic philosophy, is not any other philosophy, be it that of the pre-Socratics or of Aristotle, or what-not, but poetry, and therefore we really deal with the crucial issue by raising the question of how Plato conceives of the relation between philosophy and poetry.

(NOVEMBER 5, 1958)

Among those who approach Plato in order to become enlightened by him about Socrates, it has become customary to pay the greatest attention to certain dialogues called the early dialogues, and especially to the *Apology of Socrates*. The *Apology of Socrates* may be said to be Socrates's own account, given on the most solemn occasion, of his way of life; and its solemnity may be thought to be increased by the fact that that account is a public account, an account given in public to the public *par excellence*, whereas Socrates's own account of his way of life which he gave on the day of his death in the *Phaedo* lacks the solemnity of the public, and, in addition, is Plato's own writing. This consideration, or any consideration of this kind, suffers from the defect that it expresses a plausible thought which cannot lay claim to be in conformity with Plato's thought. For we know the Platonic Socrates only through Plato. The *Apology of Socrates* is as much a Platonic writing as any other Platonic writing. The *Apology of Socrates* is even a Platonic dialogue, the dialogue of Socrates with the people of Athens. It is a Platonic work of art, and not a report. We must pass through Plato's thought in order to understand the thought of the Platonic Socrates. And Plato has presented his thought exclusively in works of art and not in treatises. What must one understand by a work of art? We remind ourselves of the story told in praise of the Greek painter that he painted grapes so perfectly that birds flew to peck at them. The man who told this story characterized the work of art by two features. It is an imitation of something, and the imitation creates the delusion that it is the thing imitated. The imitation is perfect if it makes one forget the delusion. The delusion consists in the disregard of something essential, the abstraction from something essential. Painted grapes cannot be eaten, to say nothing of the fact that they are not three-dimensional. But grapes are not painted for the sake of birds. The abstraction from something essential which characterizes the work of art serves

the purpose of bringing out something more essential, of heightening something more essential. In works like the Platonic dialogues abstraction is made in the first place from visibility. We merely hear people talk. We do not, strictly speaking, see them. And secondly abstraction is made from chance. Everything happening in the work is meaningful or necessary. The abstraction from the visible and the fortuitous serves the purpose of making us concentrate on the audible and the necessary, on the necessity of the speech, and in the speech.

The problem of the Platonic dialogue is, in a way, insoluble. There exists no Platonic utterance about the meaning of the Platonic dialogues. Still, Plato's Socrates gives us a most important hint, when he speaks of the essential defect of all writings. A writing, as distinguished from a wise speech, says the same things to all men. The essential defect of writings is inflexibility. Since Plato, in contradistinction to Socrates, did produce writings, one is entitled to assume that the Platonic dialogues are meant to be writings which are free from the essential defect of writings. They are writings which, if properly read, reveal themselves to possess the flexibility of speech, and they are properly read if the necessity of every part of them becomes clear. The Platonic dialogues do say, and they are meant to say, different things to different men. This thought, which can be developed in great detail without too great difficulty, has only one defect. At any rate, as it was stated it is based on the premise that Plato's Socrates is Plato's spokesman. Yet what entitles us to accept that premise? Socrates is not always Plato's spokesman. He is not Plato's spokesman in the *Timaeus*, the *Critias*, the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, the *Parmenides*, and the *Laws*. What does Plato signify by making Socrates a silent listener to other men's speeches? As long as we do not know this we cannot have clarity regarding Socrates's alleged spokesmanship. Certainly Plato never said that his Socrates is his spokesman. When speaking of dramas as distinguished from narratives his Socrates says that in a drama the author conceals himself, that is to say, the author does not say a word in his own name. And the Platonic dialogue is a sort of drama. In the case of Shakespeare, for instance, who would dare to say that according to Shakespeare life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing? Everyone would say that these are the words, not of Shakespeare, but of Macbeth, and no conclusion whatever can be drawn from the fact that Shakespeare wrote these words as to Shakespeare's holding the view expressed by these words. Perhaps one can even prove that Shakespeare did not hold the view by considering the character of the speaker and the situation of the speaker when he uttered them. Perhaps the action of the play refutes Macbeth's utterances. Perhaps the dramatic poet reveals his thought exclusively by the play as a whole, by the action, and not by speech, that is to say, the speeches of his characters. This much can we say safely, that the distinction between speeches and deeds, and the implication that the deeds are more trustworthy than the speeches, is basic for the understanding of works like the Platonic dialogues. The deeds are the clue to the meaning of

the speeches. More precisely, perhaps, the unthematic, that which is not in the center of attention of the speakers as speakers, is the clue to the thematic, to that which is in the center of attention of the speakers as speakers. No doubt it is paradoxical to say that an utterance of the Platonic Socrates is no more revealing of Plato's thought than the quoted utterance of Macbeth is of the thought of Shakespeare. Let us then retract this paradoxical suggestion, and let us take Plato's Socrates as Plato's spokesman. But this will be of no help, for Plato's Socrates is famous for his irony. To have a spokesman who is famous for his irony is tantamount to having no spokesman at all. Irony means primarily dissimulation. It comes to mean noble dissimulation. The superior man who is aware of his superiority is "ironical in his relations to the many," says Aristotle. That is to say, he does not let his inferiors feel their inferiority, or his superiority. He conceals his superiority. But if his superiority consists in wisdom, his noble dissimulation must consist in concealing his wisdom, that is to say, in presenting himself as less wise than he is, or in not saying what he knows. And given the fact that there is a great variety of types of unwisdom, his irony will consist in speaking differently to different kinds of people. Irony comes to mean to answer general questions differently when speaking to different kinds of people, as well as never answering, but always raising, questions.

The beginning of understanding of the Platonic dialogues is wonder. Wonder means here not merely admiration of beauty, but also and above all perplexity, recognition of the sphinx-like character of the Platonic dialogues. To begin with we have no other clue than the outward appearance which one must try to describe. To begin with the Platonic dialogue is one big question mark, and nothing else. But, fortunately, there are many Platonic dialogues. The very manyness and variety is an articulation of the theme, Platonic dialogue, and hence sheds some light. The student of the Platonic dialogues is in the position of a zoologist confronted by an unknown species, or rather genus, of animals. His first task is to classify in accordance with the most obvious, with the visible appearance. I mention three classifications which are evidently necessary. In the first place the distinction between Socratic and non-Socratic dialogues, as the distinction between dialogues in which Socrates conducts the conversation, and dialogues in which someone other than Socrates conducts the conversation. Secondly, the distinction between performed and narrated dialogues, the performed dialogues looking like dramas. In the case of the performed dialogues there is no bridge between the characters of the dialogue and the reader. In the narrated dialogues a participant in the dialogue gives an account of the conversation to a non-participant, and hence also to us, the reader. In a narrated dialogue the narrator, who may be Socrates himself, can tell us the reason why he said what he said to a participant, as well as his observations regarding the participants which he could not with propriety make to the participants. For instance, if the *Republic* were not a narrated dialogue, we could not know that at a given moment Thrasymachus was red in his face,

not because he was ashamed, but because he was hot from the day. In a narrated dialogue Socrates can make us into people who are in the know together with him, or even his accomplices. Thirdly, there is a distinction between voluntary and compulsory dialogues, voluntary dialogues being dialogues which Socrates spontaneously seeks, while compulsory dialogues are dialogues which Socrates cannot with propriety avoid.

If we look at Plato's *Apology of Socrates* from this point of view we see that this dialogue between Socrates and the Athenian people, or his accusers, is a performed and compulsory dialogue. Socrates did not spontaneously seek this conversation, nor does he tell us the reason why he says what he said, or his observations regarding the participants, which he could not with propriety make to the participants' face. We would have to turn to the *Gorgias*, for instance, in order to find an answer to the question regarding this background of the *Apology of Socrates*, where we find that Socrates explains that in his position as an accused he was in the position of a physician accused by the cook before a tribunal of children that he did not give them the nice candies which they would like to have, which he could not with propriety say of the Athenians in the *Apology of Socrates*. Accordingly we note that the way in which the Platonic Socrates presents himself in his performed and compulsory conversation with the Athenian people assembled, differs from the way in which the Platonic Socrates is presented by Plato in the dialogues as a whole. The *Apology of Socrates* makes us expect to find Socrates presented as engaged in conversations in[56] the market-place with anybody who just happened to be there. But the Platonic Socrates in deed, as distinguished from his compulsory self-presentation in public, is extremely selective. He talks with youths who are promising, sophists, rhetoricians, rhapsodes, or soothsayers, extremely rarely with retired generals or politicians, and still more rarely with ordinary citizens as such. He is famous, or ridiculed, for using the examples of shoemakers and other craftsmen, but in contradistinction to Xenophon's Socrates, the Platonic Socrates never has a discussion with a craftsman. He always speaks about shoemakers, but never with shoemakers. On the other hand we find him never engaged in a conversation with a man who is not clearly his inferior. He is silently present when Timaeus explains the cosmos, and he silently observes the Eleatic Stranger training Theaetetus or the young Socrates. It is true, in the *Parmenides* we find Socrates engaged in a conversation with Parmenides, but there Parmenides is clearly the superior, Socrates still being very young. To summarize, the Platonic Socrates, outside of the Platonic Socrates's self-presentation in his sole public speech, converses only with people who are not common people, who in one way or other belong to an elite, although never to the elite in the highest sense, with inbetween people. The Platonic dialogue refutes the Platonic Socrates's public self-presentation.

This observation induces us to pay the greatest attention, to begin with, to the *Republic*. The *Republic* is the only dialogue narrated by Socrates which is

compulsory. Socrates is compelled, not indeed by the Athenian *demos*, but by some young companion, to stay in the Piraeus, and this compulsory stay supplies the occasion for an extensive conversation on justice, in the course of which Socrates founds a perfectly just city, not in deed, but in speech. Before considering any Platonic dialogue, one must consider the fact that there are many Platonic dialogues, or that Plato's work consists of many dialogues because it imitates the manyness, the variety, the heterogeneity of being. The imitation is not a simple reproduction. The individual Platonic dialogue is not a chapter from the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* or from a system of philosophy, nor is it the product of an occasion, or the relic of a stage of Plato's development. The individual dialogue is characterized less by its subject matter than by the manner in which it treats the subject matter. Each dialogue treats its subject matter by means of a specific abstraction, and hence in a specific distortion. For instance, the *Euthyphro* deals with piety while being silent about the soul, or in abstraction from the phenomenon of the soul.

To understand a dialogue means, therefore, to recognize the principle guiding the specific abstraction which characterizes the dialogue in question. This principle is revealed primarily by the setting of the dialogue, time, place, characters, action. The discussion taking place in a dialogue is necessary primarily with a view to the character, not of the subject matter, but of the setting in which the dialogue takes place. It is reasonable to expect that the setting was chosen by Plato as most appropriate with a view to the subject matter, but on the other hand what Plato thought about the subject matter comes to our sight first through the medium of the setting. As for the setting of the *Republic*, the conversation takes place in the Piraeus, the harbor of Athens, the seat of Athens' naval and commercial power, in the house of a wealthy metic, on a day in which a new and strange religious procession took place for the first time. The surroundings are then at the opposite pole of old and patrician Athens, which lives in the spirit of the ancestral. The surroundings bespeak what in the light of the tradition would appear as political decay. Yet Piraeus had also another connotation. There are in the *Republic* ten companions, mentioned by name. Ten in the Piraeus. This is a reminder of the rule of the Thirty Tyrants, during which there were ten men in control of the Piraeus. We are thus reminded of the attempt, with which Plato was himself somehow connected, of putting down the democracy and restoring an oligarchic or aristocratic regime. Yet the characters of the *Republic* have nothing in common with the oligarchic reaction. The family of Cephalus, in whose house the conversation takes place, as well as Niceratus, were victims of the Thirty Tyrants. Just as the chief interlocutors in Plato's dialogue on courage are defeated generals, and the chief interlocutors in his dialogue on moderation are future tyrants, at any rate some of the individuals in his dialogue on justice are innocent victims of a rebellion made in the name of justice. The restoration which Socrates performs in the *Republic* is then not likely to be a political restoration, it rather

will be a restoration on a different plane. The spirit of this Socratic restoration is indicated by the fact that Socrates and the other participants, from uptown Athens, are kept in the Piraeus by the promise of a dinner, as well as of a torch race in honor of a goddess. But we hear nothing further about either the torch race or the dinner. Torch race and dinner are replaced by a conversation on justice. The feeding of the body is replaced by the feeding of the soul. The very extended conversation on justice constitutes in itself a training in self-control regarding the pleasures and even the needs of the body, or it constitutes an act of asceticism. When Thomas More wrote,[57] in the imitation of the *Republic*, his much less ascetic *Utopia*, he arranged that the description of his perfect commonwealth be given after luncheon.

The antagonist of Socrates in the *Republic* is Thrasymachus, the rhetorician. As becomes clear from a brief exchange between a follower of Thrasymachus and a follower of Socrates, by which the discussion between Thrasymachus and Socrates is interrupted, Thrasymachus starts from the quite unparadoxical view that the just is identical with the legal. Since what is legal or not depends in each case on the decision of the lawgiver or the government, the just is then identical with the will of the stronger. The manner in which Thrasymachus behaves—he forbids to say certain things, or forbids to give certain answers, and he demands a fine from Socrates for payment, for which Plato's brother vouches, just as Plato himself vouches for a payment of another kind demanded from Socrates on the day of his accusation—the manner in which Thrasymachus behaves reminds us of the behavior of the city of Athens towards Socrates. The thesis of Thrasymachus, that the just is the legal, is the thesis of the actual *polis*, which does not permit an appeal beyond its laws. In a sense Thrasymachus is the *polis*. He plays the *polis*. He is able to play the *polis* because he possesses the art of rhetoric. Socrates succeeds easily in crushing and in silencing Thrasymachus, but Thrasymachus continues to play a role in the *Republic* after he[58] has been silenced. At the beginning of the fifth book there occurs a scene which reminds us of the scene with which the *Republic* opens. In both scenes we have a deliberation ending in a decision, an imitation of the action of the city. But whereas in the first deliberation, or decision, Thrasymachus does not take part, he does take part in the second. By the beginning of the fifth book Thrasymachus has become a member of the city. The restoration of the city in speech includes the integration of Thrasymachus into the city. The restoration of justice on the new plane requires the help of Thrasymachus's art, the art of rhetoric.

In Aristophanes's *Clouds*, we may recall, Socrates had been responsible for the revelation of the weakness of the Just Speech. The Just Speech was weak because it was based principally on mythology, on the stories told about the gods. The gods, the alleged guardians of justice, were manifestly unjust. If Socrates is to show the strength of the Just Speech, and this is naturally his primary function in the *Republic*, he must therefore wholly divorce justice from

mythology, from all ancient hearsay or tradition. The Platonic Socrates shows, then, in deed the strength of the Just Speech, but he shows the strength of an entirely new, novel, unheard of, Just Speech. The Platonic Socrates transcends the generally accepted and impure notion of justice, according to which justice consists in giving to everyone what is his due, for what is a man's due is determined by custom, law, positive law, and there is no necessity that the positive law itself be just. What the positive law declares to be just is as such just merely by virtue of positing, of convention, therefore one must seek for what is just intrinsically, by nature. We must seek a social order which as such is intrinsically just, the *polis* which is in accordance with nature. Of such a city there is no example. It is wholly novel. It must be founded in order to be. In the *Republic* it is founded in speech.

Yet what guidance do we possess after we have been compelled to question the view that justice consists in giving everyone his due? According to the generally accepted view, justice is not merely the habit of giving everyone what is due to him, it is also meant to be beneficial. We shall then say that justice is the habit of giving to everyone what is good for him. According to Aristotle the first impression he received from the *Republic* is the philanthropic character of the scheme presented therein. If justice is the habit of giving to everyone what is good for him, justice is the preserve of the wise. For just as the physician alone knows what is truly good for the body of a man, only the wise man, the physician of the soul, knows what is truly good for the whole man. Furthermore, as the habit of giving to everyone what is good for him, justice is utterly selfless. It is selfless devotion to others, pure serving others, or serving the whole. Since in a just city everyone is supposed to be just in the sense that he be dedicated to the service of others, no one will think of himself, of his own happiness, of his own. Total communism, communism regarding property, women, and children, is merely the institutional expression of justice. But is the well-being of the whole not identical with the well-being of all its members? In other words, why is everyone to dedicate himself entirely to the *polis*? The answer is this. The good city is the necessary and sufficient condition for the highest excellence or virtue of each according to his capacity. The just city is a city in which being a good citizen is simply the same as being a good man. Everyone is to dedicate himself, not to the pursuit which is most pleasant or attractive to him, but to that which makes him as good a man as possible. Yet justice implies some reciprocity of giving and taking. The just city is then the city in which everyone does that which he is by nature fitted to do, and in which everyone receives that which is by nature good, not attractive or pleasant, for him. The just city is a perfectly rational society. Nothing is fair or noble, nothing even is sacred or holy, except what is useful for that city, that is to say, in the last resort, for the greatest possible perfection or virtue of each member. To mention only the most shocking and striking example, the family and the sacred prohibitions against incest between brothers and sisters must

give way to the demands of eugenics. The whole scheme presupposes on every point the absolute rule of the wise or of the philosophers. But how are the wise to find obedience on the part of the unwise? You see this is the same problem which we found in Xenophon. The obedience would not be forthcoming without the use of force. Therefore the few wise need the support of a fairly large number of loyal auxiliaries. But how can the wise secure the loyalty of the auxiliaries, who as such are not wise? The wise rule the auxiliaries by persuasion, and by persuasion alone. For in the good city the auxiliaries will not be hampered by the laws. Persuasion is not demonstration. The unwise, and especially the auxiliaries, are persuaded by means of a noble deception. Even the rational society, the society according to truth and nature, is not possible without a fundamental untruth.

That fundamental untruth consists of two parts. Its first part consists in the replacement of the earth as the common mother of all men, and therewith of the fraternity of all men, by a part of the earth, the land, the fatherland, the territory, or the fraternity of only the fellow citizens. The first part of the fundamental untruth consists then in assigning the natural status of the human species to a part of the human species, the citizens of a given city. The second part of the fundamental untruth consists in ascribing divine origin to the existing social hierarchy, or more generally stated, in identifying the existing social hierarchy[59] with the natural hierarchy; that is to say, even the *polis* according to nature is not simply natural, or even the most rational society is not simply rational. Hence the crucial importance for it of the art of persuasion. This difficulty recurs in an even sharper form when the question is raised as to how one can transform an actual *polis* into the best *polis*. This transformation would be wholly impossible if the citizens of an actual *polis*, that is to say, men who have not undergone the specific education prescribed in the *Republic* for the citizens of the best city—[60] this transformation would be wholly impossible if the citizens of an actual *polis* could not be persuaded to bow to the rule of the philosophers. The problem of the best city would be altogether insoluble if the multitude were not amenable to persuasion by the philosophers. It is in the context of the assertion that the multitude is persuadable by the philosophers, . . . (unclear) . . . ,[61] that Socrates declares that he and Thrasymachus just have become friends. Thrasymachus must be integrated into the best city because the best city is not possible without the art of Thrasymachus. To the best of my knowledge the only student of the *Republic* who has understood this crucial fact was Farabi, an Islamic philosopher who flourished around 900 and who was the founder of medieval Aristotelianism. According to Farabi the way of Socrates, which is appropriate only for the philosopher's[62] dealing with the elite, must be combined with the way of Thrasymachus, which is appropriate for the philosopher's[62] dealing with the multitude. The first reason why the noble delusion is required is the tension between the impossibility of a universal political society on the one hand—universal is meant here literally, embracing all human be-

ings—and the essential defect of the particular or closed political society on the other. The particular or closed political society conflicts with the natural fraternity of all men. Political society in one way or another draws an arbitrary line between man and man. Political society is essentially exclusive or harsh. The discussion of justice in the first book of the *Republic* may be said to culminate in the suggestion that the just man does not do any harm to anyone. Pursuing this line of thought we arrive at the conclusion that justice is universal beneficence. But this whole line of thought is dropped silently, yet not unnoticeably, in Socrates's strong speech on behalf of justice. The guardians of the just city are compared to dogs who are gentle to their acquaintances, or friends, and harsh to enemies, or strangers. In this way Plato makes his Socrates express the same view which Xenophon expresses by indicating that he, the pupil of Socrates, was as good at guiding gentlemen by praise as he was at beating the base into obedience. Both the Xenophontic and the Platonic Socrates have understood the essential limitation[63] of reason and of speech generally, and therewith the nature of political things.

As I have indicated, the action of the *Republic* consists in Socrates's first bringing[64] into the open his latent conflict with Thrasymachus, then in his silencing Thrasymachus, and finally in reconciling Thrasymachus by assigning to him an important, if subordinate, place in the best city. To express it somewhat differently, the action of the *Republic* turns around the strength and the weakness of rhetoric. We noticed that in the course of the conversation the expectation from rhetoric is greatly increased. To begin with it is only expected that the people who have already grown up in the best city and have been educated in its ways will believe in the noble lie. Later on it is expected that the people of an actual city can be persuaded of the need to submit to the rule of philosophers. Only on the basis of this expectation does it make sense to say that evils will not cease from the city if the philosophers do not become kings. That the philosophers can become kings depends on their ability to persuade the multitude of their ability to be kings. But at the end of this part of the *Republic*, which is its central part, the condition of political bliss is drastically reformulated. Political bliss will follow, not if the philosophers become kings, but when the philosophers have become kings and if they have rusticated everyone older than ten, and if they bring up the children without any influence whatever of the parents on the children. Socrates does not even try to show that the multitude can ever be persuaded to submit to the rule of the philosophers with the understanding that the philosophers will expel the multitude from the city and keep only the children in the city. The majority of men cannot be brought by persuasion alone to undergo what they regard as the greatest misery for the rest of their days so that all future generations will be blessed. There are absolute limits to persuasion, and therefore the best city as sketched in the *Republic* is not possible. The best city would be possible if a complete clean sweep could be made, yet there is always a powerful heritage which cannot be swept away

and whose power can only be broken by sustained effort of every individual by himself. The best city would be possible if all men could become philosophers, that is to say, if human nature were miraculously transformed.

Now the best city was founded in speech in order to prove the strength of the Just Speech. Hence it would seem to follow that not only the traditional just speech,[65] but the novel just speech[65] as well is weak, or that Aristophanes was right. The Platonic Socrates provides against this conclusion by conceiving of the justice of the city as being strictly parallel to the justice of the individual, and *vice versa*. Accordingly he defines justice as doing one's job, or rather as doing one's job well. A being is just if all its significant parts do their job well. In order to be truly just it is not necessary that a man should do well the job which he would have to fulfill in the perfectly just city. It suffices if the parts of his soul do their jobs well, if his reason is in control and his sub-rational powers obey his reason. But this is strictly possible only in the case of a man who has cultivated his reason properly, that it is to say, of the philosopher. Hence the philosopher, and only the philosopher, can be simply just, regardless of the quality of the city in which he lives, and *vice versa*, the non-philosopher will not be simply just regardless of the quality of the city in which he lives. Socrates speaks less of doing one's job well than simply of doing one's job, which has a common meaning of minding one's own business, not to be a busy-body, or to lead a retired life. To lead the just life means to lead a retired life, the retired life *par excellence*, the life of the philosopher. This is the manifest secret of the *Republic*. The justice of the individual is said to be written in small letters, but the justice of the city is in large letters. Justice is said to consist in minding one's business, that is to say, in not serving others. Obviously the best city does not serve other cities. It is self-sufficient. Justice is self-sufficiency, and hence philosophy. Justice thus understood is possible regardless of whether the best city is possible or not. Justice thus understood has the further advantage that the question as to whether it is choiceworthy for its own sake cannot arise. Whereas justice in the vulgar sense can well be a burden, the philosopher's minding his own business, that is to say, his philosophizing, is intrinsically pleasant. To exaggerate somewhat for the sake of clarity, in the best city the whole is happy, and no individual is happy, since the philosophers are burdened with the duties of administration. Outside of the city the philosophers as philosophers are happy. At this point we may begin to understand what the distinction between compulsory and voluntary dialogues means, and why the *Republic* is the only dialogue narrated by Socrates which is compulsory. But all this does not mean more than that the individual is capable of a perfection of which the city is not capable.

Political life derives its dignity from something which transcends political life. This essential limitation of the political can be understood in three different ways. According to Socrates the transpolitical to which the political owes its dignity is philosophy, or *theoria*, which, however, is accessible only to what

he calls good natures, to human beings who possess a certain natural equipment. According to the teaching of revelation the transpolitical is accessible through faith, which does not depend on specific natural presuppositions, but on divine grace or God's free election. According to liberalism the transpolitical consists in something which every human being possesses as well as any other human being. The classic expression of liberal thought is the view that political society exists above all for the sake of protecting the rights of man, the rights which every human being possesses regardless of his natural gifts as well as of his achievements, to say nothing of divine grace. To return to the argument of the *Republic*, by realizing the essential limitations of the political, one is indeed liberated from the charms of what we now would call political idealism, or what in the language of Socrates might have to be called the charm of the idols, the imaginative presentation of justice, with the understanding, however, that it is better not to be born than never to have felt that charm. (But the liberation from that charm will not weaken but strengthen the concern for political life, or political responsibility. Philosophy stands or falls by the city.) Hence Plato devoted his most extensive work, the *Laws*, which is *the*[66] political work of Plato, to politics. And the *Laws* present the best city which is possible for beings who are not gods nor sons of gods, whereas the *Republic* is his presentation, not of the best city, but, in the guise of such a presentation, his exposition of the *ratio rerum civilium*, of the essential character of political things, as Cicero has wisely said. This being so it is remarkable that the Platonic character who is the chief interlocutor in the *Laws* is not Socrates. In light of everything that has been said before, this fact forces us to raise the paradoxical question, is then not Aristophanes's presentation of Socrates in a decisive respect confirmed by Plato? This question can be answered without any paradoxes. The Platonic Socrates, as distinguished from the Aristophanean Socrates, is characterized by *phronesis*, by practical wisdom. He is so far from being blind to political things that he has realized their essential character, and that he acts consistently in accordance with this realization.

It is, then, of the essence of political things to be below that perfection of which the individual is capable. If the perfection of the individual is the ceiling which the city never reaches, what is the flooring beneath which the city cannot fall without becoming inhuman or degraded? The Platonic Socrates begins his discussion of these minimum requirements when he describes the first city, that city which Glaucon calls the city of pigs, but which Socrates calls the true city, the city which is nothing but city. This is a city which does nothing but satisfy the primary wants, the wants of the body, food, clothing, and shelter, and in which nothing good or evil that goes beyond these elementary things has yet emerged. It is a state of innocence, which, because it is innocent, is so easily lost, a state of dormancy, a state characterized, not by virtue, but by simplicity or good-naturedness, and by the absence of the need for government. In the moment the human faculty is developed, the need for government arises, for, to

say the least, there is no necessity whatever that the faculties should develop in the right direction. The need for government is identical with the need for restraint and the need for virtue. Virtue thus understood is required for the sake of living together, the flooring beneath which the city cannot fall without becoming degraded. It is serious concern for this kind of virtue, called by Plato popular or political virtue.[67] We may call it utilitarian virtue. Its rationale, or root, is the need of the city.

Yet there is another root of virtue and hence another kind of virtue, genuine virtue. The Socratic formula for genuine virtue is, virtue is knowledge. This is another manifest secret of the Platonic as well as of the Xenophontic Socrates. The formula means what it says. Virtue in the strict sense is nothing but knowledge or understanding, and vice in the strict sense is nothing but ignorance, of course knowledge or ignorance of the *akra physeos*, of the peaks of being. This virtue in the strict sense both presupposes and produces courage, moderation, and justice, the other virtues. If we may use the Aristotelian term, not Platonic term, moral virtue, we can state the view of the Platonic Socrates as follows. The moral virtues have two different roots. The ends for the sake of which they exist are the city on the one hand and the life of the mind on the other. To the extent to which the moral virtues are rooted only in the needs of society they are only popular or political virtues and they are acquired only by habituation. As such they have no solidity. A man who has lived in a well-ordered city in his former life as a good citizen participating in virtue by habituation and not by philosophy chooses the greatest tyranny for his next life, as Plato states towards the end of the *Republic*. Popular or political virtue is acquired by habituation in accordance with a reasoning or calculation, the starting point of which is the need for society or the needs of the body, whereas the philosopher is inclined to virtue and does not need a calculation for that. In our century Bergson has spoken of the two roots of morality, one of them being the city, the other being the open or universal society. What Bergson said about the first root is in fundamental agreement with the Socratic teaching. All the more striking is the disagreement regarding the second root. The place occupied in Socrates's thought by philosophy is occupied in Bergson's thought by the open and universal society inspired by a kind of mysticism.

Yet if morality has two radically different roots, how can there be a unity of morality, how can there be a unity of man, and how is it possible that the moral requirements of society on the one hand and the moral requirements of the life of the mind on the other agree completely, or at any rate to a considerable extent? The unity of man consists in the fact that he is that part of the whole which is open to the whole, or in Platonic language, that part of the whole which has seen the ideas of all things. Man's concern with his openness to the whole is the life of the mind. The dualism of being a part, and being open to the whole, and therefore in a sense being the whole itself, is man. Furthermore, society, and the whole simply, have this in common, that they are both wholes[68]

transcending the individual, inducing[69] the individual to rise above and beyond himself. All nobility consists in such rising above and beyond oneself, in such dedicating oneself to something greater than oneself. We shall tentatively say that the question of the unity of man is discussed in the *Republic* in the form of the question of the unity of the human soul. This implies the *Republic* abstracts from the body. Every dialogue, I suggest, is characterized by a specific abstraction from something most relevant to the subject matter discussed. The abstraction characteristic of the *Republic* is the abstraction from the body. The characteristic political proposal of the *Republic* is complete communism. But the body constitutes the absolute limit to communism, and man cannot strictly speaking share his body with anybody else, whereas he can well share his thoughts and desires with others. The same abstraction from the body can be observed in the discussion of the equality of men and women in the *Republic*, where the difference between men and women is treated as if it had the same status and significance as the difference between men who are baldheaded and men who are not baldheaded. The same intention is revealed by the provisions of the *Republic* regarding children. The blood relation between children and parents, this bodily relation, is to be rendered invisible. Also, and above all, the argument of the *Republic* as a whole is based on the parallelism of man, the individual, and the *polis*, but this parallelism between man and the *polis* is soon replaced by the parallelism between the individual's soul and the *polis*. The body is silently dropped. With the same connection belongs Plato's failure to provide for the dinner promised at the beginning of the conversation. Furthermore, we understand from here the fact that Socrates almost forgets to mention among the studies to be pursued by future philosophers the field of solid geometry, geometry of bodies. Last but not least, we mentioned the exaggeration of the rhetorical power of the philosophers, which is only the reverse side of the abstraction from the bodily power of the philosophers to force the non-philosophers. At any rate, the question of the unity of man is discussed in the *Republic* in the form of the question of the unity of the soul. The question arises because of the evident necessity to admit the essential difference between intelligence or reason on the one hand and the sub-rational powers of the soul on the other. The question of the unity of man thus becomes the question of the bond between the highest and the lowest in the human soul.

In the *Republic* Plato suggests a partition of the soul into three parts, reason, spiritedness, and desire. Of the two sub-rational parts spiritedness is the highest, or noblest, because it is essentially obedient to reason, whereas desire revolts against reason. To use the terms employed by Aristotle in his *Politics* in a kindred context, reason rules spiritedness politically or royally, by persuasion, whereas it rules desire despotically, by mere command. It appears, then, that spiritedness is the bond between the highest and the lowest in man, or that which gives man unity. We shall venture to say that the characteristically human, the human-all-too-human, is spiritedness. The word which is translated by spiritedness, *thymos* or *thymoeides*, has originally a much broader meaning,

and this meaning occurs also in the Platonic dialogues. We may say that spiritedness is a Greek equivalent of the biblical "heart." Especially in the *Republic* Plato prefers the narrow meaning by opposing spiritedness and desire, whereas desire, of course, belongs as much to *thymos* in the original sense, to the heart, as does spiritedness. To understand Plato's preference, especially in the *Republic*, we start from the fact that desire includes *eros*, erotic desire in the highest and lowest sense. Spiritedness in the sense of the *Republic* is radically distinguished from *eros*. It is[70] anerotic or anti-erotic.

By assigning to spiritedness a higher status than to desire Plato depreciates *eros*. This depreciation appears most clearly in two facts. When Plato indicates in the second book the needs for the satisfaction of which men live in society, he mentions food and drink but is silent about procreation. When he describes in the ninth book the tyrant he presents him as absolutely under the sway of *eros*, as *eros* incarnate. The tyrant, however, is injustice incarnate, or the incarnation of that which is destructive of the city. Spiritedness, we should then say, as opposed to *eros*, is meant to be the political passion. It is for this reason that Xenophon presents his Cyrus, the most successful of all rulers, as a thoroughly unerotic man. Yet how can this be understood? Unerotic spiritedness, the political passion, shows itself as a desire for victory, superiority, rule, honor, and glory. But is the[71] political passion not also, and even primarily, attachment to the *polis*, to the fatherland, and hence love? Is not the model of the guardian, or the citizen, the dog who loves his acquaintances or friends? But precisely this model shows that the guardian or citizen must also be harsh on the noncitizen or stranger. The political passion, then, cannot be understood merely as attachment. The harsh, exclusive element is equally essential to patriotism. This harshness is not essential to *eros* because two human beings can love one another without being harsh to others. This harshness is not essential to *eros*, but is supplied by spiritedness. There remains a greater difficulty. Spiritedness shows itself as desire for victory, superiority, rule, honor and glory. Is it then not also a kind of desire? With what right can it be distinguished from desire, or even opposed to it? The answer is implied in the traditional distinction between the concupiscible and the irascible, a distinction which is the outgrowth of the Platonic distinction between desire and spiritedness. But the Platonic distinction is not identical with the traditional distinction. I have spoken of the two-fold root of morality, the needs of society, which are ultimately the needs of the body, and the needs of the mind. To these two kinds of needs there correspond two kinds of desires. Desire is directed toward its good, the good simply, but spiritedness, of which anger is the most obvious form, is directed towards a goal as difficult to obtain. Spiritedness arises out of the desire proper being resisted or thwarted. Spiritedness is needed for overcoming the resistance to the satisfaction of the desire. Hence spiritedness is a desire for victory. Whereas *eros* is primarily the desire to generate human beings, spiritedness is the derivative willingness to kill and to be killed, to destroy human beings.

Being secondary in comparison with desire, spiritedness is in the service of

desire. It is essentially obedient while looking more masterful than anything else. But as such it does not know what it should obey, the higher or the lower. It bows to it knows not what. It divines something higher, it is *aidos*, reverence.[72] Yet *qua* essentially deferential it is of higher dignity than the bodily desires, which lack that deference. The spirited man is, as it were, always on the look-out, or on the search, for something for which he can sacrifice himself. He is prepared to sacrifice himself and everything else for anything. He is as anxious for honoring as he is for being honored. While being most passionately concerned with self-assertion, he is at the same time and in the same act most self-forgetting. Since spiritedness is undetermined as to the primary end, the goods of the body or the good of the mind, it is in a way independent of them, or oblivious . . . (tape being changed) . . .[73] *thymos*, the word for spiritedness, *thymos* does not have this outward pointedness which desire has. But this is purely etymological speculation, which I mention in passing. As such, spiritedness is neutral to the difference between the two kinds of objects of desire, the goods of the body, and the good of the mind. It is therefore radically ambiguous, and therefore it can be the root of the most radical confusion. Spiritedness thus understood is that which makes human beings interesting. It is therefore the theme of tragedy. Homer is the father of tragedy because his theme in the *Iliad* is the wrath of Achilles, and in the *Odyssey* the *thwarted*[74] return of Odysseus. Spiritedness is the region of ambiguity, a region in which the lower and the higher are bound together, where the lower is transfigured into the higher, and *vice versa*, without a possibility of a clear distinction between the two. It is the locus of morality in the ordinary sense of the term.

Philosophy is not spirited. When joining issue with the atheists in the tenth book of the *Laws*, the philosopher addresses them explicitly without spiritedness. Spiritedness must be subservient to philosophy, whereas desire, *eros*, in its highest form is philosophy. Here we touch on the point of the deepest agreement between Plato and Aristophanes. As desire for superiority, spiritedness becomes in the case of sensible men the desire for recognition by free men. It is therefore essentially related to political liberty, hence to law, and hence to justice. Similarly, as essentially deferential, it is a sense of shame, which as such bows primarily to the ancestral, the primary manifestation of the good. For both reasons it is essentially related to justice. Spiritedness in its normal form is a zeal for justice, or moral indignation. This is the reason why spiritedness is presented as the bond through which man is one, in Plato's dialogue on justice, the *Republic*. And the action of the *Republic* can be said to consist in first arousing spiritedness or the virtue belonging to it, that is to say, zeal dedicated to non-understood justice, that is, what we now mean by political idealism, and then in purging it. By understanding spiritedness we understand the fundamental ambiguity of moral indignation, which easily turns into vindictiveness or punitiveness. The ambiguity of spiritedness is not exhausted, however, by the ambiguity of moral indignation.[75] It shows itself most strikingly in

the shift from justified indignation to unjustified indignation. No one has stated this more directly than Shakespeare in Hamlet's soliloquy. Hamlet enumerates seven things which make life almost impossible to bear. Almost all of them are objects of moral indignation, the oppressor's wrong, and so on, but in the center he mentions the pangs of despised love. The justified indignation about injustice shifts insensibly into the unjustified indignation about unrequited love. This is perhaps the deepest secret of spiritedness and therefore at least one of the deepest secrets of Plato's *Republic*.

The *Republic* could not show the purification of spiritedness, that purification which consists in its submission to philosophy, without making spiritedness the center, the center of man. The world of the *Republic* is a world of spiritedness, unpurified and purified. In other words the *Republic* abstracts from *charis*, grace in the classic sense in which it is essentially akin to *eros*. The world of spiritedness is not the world of *charis* or *eros*. How these two worlds are related in Plato's view, whether they are not related as *charis* and *anangke*, as grace and compulsion, this question coincides with the question of the relation between the *Republic* and the *Banquet*, between the most compulsory and the most voluntary of the Platonic dialogues. But this question cannot be conveniently discussed today, nor, for that matter, in any lectures devoted to political science.

(NOVEMBER 7, 1958)

. . from the contemporary collapse of rationalism. This collapse induces us to consider the whole issue of rationalism. The first step in this inquiry, to the extent to which it is an empirical inquiry, is the question of the origin of rationalism. For a number of reasons this question can be identified with the problem of Socrates, or the problem of classical political philosophy in general. It is no doubt of the utmost importance to contrast classical political philosophy with the philosophic alternatives to it which are presented by modern political philosophy. But before one can do that one must have understood classical political philosophy by itself. I limit myself to the question concerning the character and claim of classical political philosophy, to the question concerning the problem which it tried to solve, concerning the obstacle it tried to overcome. That problem and that obstacle appeared clearly in Aristophanes's presentation of Socrates. Socrates is unpolitical because he lacks self-knowledge. He does not understand the political context within which philosophy exists. He is unaware of the essential difference between philosophy and the *polis*. He does not understand the political in its specific character. The reason for this is his being unerotic and amusic. To this accusation Xenophon and Plato give one and the same reply. Socrates is political and erotic. He understands the political in its non-rational character. He realizes the critical importance of *thymos*, of

spiritedness, as the bond between the philosophers and the multitude. He understood the political in its specific character. In fact, no one before him did. For he was the first to grasp the significance of the *idea*, of the fact that the whole is characterized by articulation into classes or kinds, whose character can be understood only by thought, and not by sense perception. Whatever we may think of the adequacy of this reply, in one point the reply is manifestly inadequate. It does not reply to the charge that Socrates was amusic.

According to a wide-spread view, the opposite, or the opponent of classical political philosophy is sophistry, the teaching and the practice of the Greek sophists. This view deserves the reputation which it enjoys. A single superficial reading of the first book of the *Republic*, of the *Gorgias*, or of the *Protagoras*, is sufficient for producing it. In the nineteenth century this view came to be understood as follows. Classical political philosophy is related to the sophists as German idealism, especially Hegel, is to the theorists of the French revolution, and in particular to the French *philosophes*. Both the adherents and enemies of the principles of 1789 have adhered, and still adhere, to this view. Liberals are inclined to favor the sophists and conservatives are inclined to favor classical political philosophy. The most up to date and hence most simplistic version of this view does no longer assert a merely proportional equality, but a simple equality. For the view that classical political philosophy is related to the sophists as German idealism is to the theorists of the French revolution implied that there is a fundamental difference between all classical thought and all modern thought, and therefore that there is only an analogy between modern liberalism and the sophistic doctrines. Now, however, we are told that the sophists simply were liberals or theorists of democracy. It is necessary to know this opinion and to examine it carefully, for it embodies the most powerful obstacle to an understanding of either classical political philosophy or of the sophists. But this is not the proper place for such an examination.

Here I limit myself to the following remarks. Plato's criticism of the sophists is directed less against the teaching peculiar to the sophists than against a specific way of life. He had in mind a phenomenon similar to that which is known to us by the name of the intellectuals, a most ambiguous phenomenon. For the name intellectual conceals the decisive difference between those who cultivate their intellect for its own sake, and those who do it for the sake of gain, power, or prestige. In other words, intellectual is a merely external description, a description good enough perhaps for certain bureaucratic purposes, say tax declarations. Intellectuals are men who earn their living by writing and reading, yet not by writing and reading tax declarations, for example, but something ill-defined. Intellectuals form a profession, but in all other professions there are standards allowing the profession to distinguish between, say, physicians and fake physicians. There exists no such possibility in the profession of intellectuals. One could perhaps say that the profession of intellectuals is distinguished from all other professions by the vagueness, as well as the

enormity, of its claims. Its ambiguity, born of confusion, increases confusion and therefore it is a menace not to morality, but to clarity.

To return to the sophists, in the very *Republic* Plato defends the sophists against the common charge that they are corruptors of the young. The young are corrupted, Plato says, not as the many charge, by the sophists, but by the many themselves who make that charge, or by the *polis* as it actually is and always will be. The sophists are mere imitators of the *polis* and of the politicians. Gorgias and Polus in the *Gorgias* and Thrasymachus in the *Republic* are not sophists but rhetoricians. Classical political philosophy is opposed not to another political philosophy, but to rhetoric, that is to say, to autonomous rhetoric, or to the view that the highest art, the political art, is rhetoric. This view was indeed based on a philosophy, but on a philosophy which excluded the possibility of political philosophy. Plato has given a clear sketch of this philosophy in the tenth book of the *Laws*. It started from the premise that the fundamental phenomena are bodies, whereas soul and mind are merely derivative. It arrived at the conclusion that justice, or right, is in no way natural or in accordance with nature, but is only by virtue of convention or of opinion. Hence in principle any convention, any opinion, or as they say today, any value system, is as good as any other. There is no nature, no truth, in this kind of thing, and therefore there cannot be a science of these things. The true art or science dealing with such matters is the art of influencing opinions with a view to one's interest, that is to say, the art of rhetoric. But in the *Republic* at any rate Plato speaks much less emphatically of the enmity between philosophy and rhetoric than of the enmity between philosophy and poetry. This enmity is so grave because the poets and not the rhetoricians or the sophists abuse the philosophers as "bitches barking at their master" The great alternative to classical political philosophy is poetry.

Let us state at the outset how in our opinion Plato settles the quarrel between philosophy and poetry. He emphasizes the need for the noble delusion, he therewith emphasizes the need for poetry. Philosophy as philosophy is unable to provide these noble delusions. Philosophy as philosophy is unable to persuade the non-philosophers or the multitude and to charm them. Philosophy needs then poetry as its supplement. Philosophy requires a ministerial poetry. This implies Plato quarrels only with autonomous poetry. If he is to convince us he must show that nothing which is admirable in poetry is lost if poetry is understood as ministerial. In the *Republic* Plato discusses poetry twice. The first discussion, in the second and third books, precedes the discussion of philosophy. The discussion is in more than one respect prephilosophic. The second discussion, in the tenth book, follows the discussion of philosophy. The first discussion takes place between Socrates and Adeimantus, whose characteristic is moderation or sobriety, not to say austerity, rather than courage and erotic desire, and who has shown a profound dissatisfaction with what the poets teach regarding justice. The second discussion takes place between Socrates and

Glaucon, whose characteristic is courage and erotic desire rather than sobriety or austerity. The second discussion of poetry promises to be infinitely more daring than the first. The prephilosophic discussion of poetry is identical with the discussion of the education of the non-philosophic soldiers. The first theme of that discussion is myth, or untrue speeches to be told to children. The makers of the myth are the poets. The poets are entirely unconcerned with whether their stories are fit to be told to children, that is to say, to immature human beings regardless of their age. The distinction between fit and unfit stories has therefore to be made by people other than the poets, by the political authorities, in the best case by the wise founders of the best city. The political authorities must be concerned with whether the stories are conducive to the goodness of men and citizens. They are not concerned, it seems, with their poetic qualities. As regards the poetic qualities the poets are likely to be better judges than the political authorities. The political authorities must supervise and censor the poets. In particular they must compel the poets to present the gods in such a way that the gods can be models of human and civic excellence. The presentation must be left to the poets. The task imposed on the poets is formidable. It suffices to think of Aphrodite as a model of civic excellence, not to say of a housewife. The founders of the city can lay down the outline, or the general principles of what Adeimantus calls theology. Socrates mentions two such principles. The gods must be presented as the cause only of good and not of evil. And the gods must be presented as simple, and as never deceiving. Adeimantus has no difficulty whatever to accept the first proposition, but he is somewhat perplexed by the second proposition. The reason for this appears later on in the same context. For it appears that the only noble motive for deceiving is that implied in the function of ruling. If the gods rule men how can they avoid the necessity of deceiving men for man's benefit? But the most striking rule laid down by Socrates is the prohibition against presenting the terrors of death and the suffering from the loss of a man's dearest. The poets are not permitted to state in public what they alone can state adequately when everyone else is made speechless through suffering, grief, or sorrow. They must write poetry on the principle that a good man, by virtue of his self-sufficiency, is not made miserable by the loss of his children, his brothers, or his friends. The poets may present the lamentations of inferior women and still more inferior men, so that the best part of the young generation will learn to despise lamentation.

Autonomous poetry gives expression to the passions by poetically imitating the passions, it consecrates the passions. The ministerial poetry on the other hand helps man in learning to control the passions. It is necessary to consider this contention also as a reply to Aristophanes. According to Aristophanes the poets are wise men who as such teach justice. Plato denies that claim. Poetry weakens the respect for right in the very act of teaching right. The poets present with sympathy and force the powers in man which make man act against right

and against propriety. Appealing to the claim raised by Aristophanes Plato demands that the poets be teachers of justice pure and simple, that they do not give their audience any relief, so to speak, from this salutary teaching. Poets must be nothing but the severe and austere servants of justice. Plato turns the tables on Aristophanes; he draws all the conclusions from Aristophanes's indictment of Euripides in the *Frogs* against Aristophanes. Especially convincing, or amusing, is the critique of comedy as such in the name of the *polis*, a critique which occupies the center of the respective discussions. The imitation of men who ridicule one another and use foul language against one another, whether they are sober or drunk, is not to be permitted in the just city. The levity fostered by comedy is bound to counteract any lessons of justice which the comedy may otherwise convey. All the devices of comedy,—slander, obscenity, blasphemy, and parody,—are explicitly or implicitly rejected by Plato.

In spite of or because of all this no doubt is left as to the necessity of poetry. Yet there is likewise no doubt left, and in fact it is explicitly stated, that the permitted poetry is rather austere and therefore less delightful than the best excluded poetry. We are expected to abandon something of great worth for the sake of justice. What we shall miss is most clearly stated in the discussion of the Homeric verse in which Achilles expresses his contempt for his chief, the king Agamemnon. Hearing such insults of rulers by subjects, Socrates says, "is not conducive to obedience at any rate". And he adds, "if it yields some other pleasure, this would in no way be surprising" Now what that other pleasure is appears from a brief consideration of the verse in question, which reads, "You drunkard, who possess the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer". The pleasure we derive from hearing this verse is two-fold. In the first place it is a most perfect insult which can be hurled against a king or a captain. He has the heart of a deer, he thinks only of flight. But a deer is a noble, graceful animal;[9] therefore he is compared to a dog, to the eyes of a dog, an ignoble, slavish, crawling expression. But a dog can attack and fight back;[9] therefore he is compared to a deer, which can only run away, and so on. It is a perfect circle. Secondly it is an insult hurled by a noble subject against an unworthy king. It expresses a noble feeling, the feeling of indignation, about the rule of unworthy men, about the oppression of born rulers by merely factual rulers. Socrates understandably[76] deplores that we should have to miss such gems. We shall have to miss above all, all tragedy and comedy, for, says Socrates, in the best city each man must dedicate himself entirely to one job, and the dramatic poet must imitate and hence, in a sense, be many different kinds of people. In particular no one must and can be both a comic and a tragic poet. This latter point is suggested by the same Socrates who, when he speaks, not to the puritan Adeimantus, but to a comic and a tragic poet, compels them to admit that the good comic poet is also a good tragic poet, and *vice versa*. It is suggested by this same Socrates, who demands that in the just city one kind of man, the highest kind according to him, must have two jobs, that of the philosopher and

that of the administrator, and who demands of all other men that they perform a single job, or mind their own business, but urges the comic poets[77] "not to mind their business, but to be serious." We are therefore not surprised to see that Socrates leaves an opening for another discussion, for a completely different discussion of poetry by saying, "We must obey our present argument until someone persuades us by another, more beautiful, argument." The necessity for such a re-opening of the discussion appears from the simple consideration that one cannot teach control of the passions if one does not know the passions, and one cannot convince other people of one's knowing the passions unless one is able to present, to imitate, or to express, the passions. In accordance with this Plato himself imitates the passions; even the meanest capacities can see this in the[78] case of Plato's presentation of Thrasymachus's anger in the first book of the *Republic*. Plato's deed contradicts his speech, or rather, it contradicts the speech of his Socrates, or to be still more precise, it contradicts the speech of Plato's Adeimantus. We are, then, in need of another argument, a more beautiful argument, regarding poetry. The first step in that argument is dictated by the most obvious flaw of the first argument, of the first round as it were, in the contest between Plato and the poets. In the first argument we were not told what poetry is. The crucial question, what is, was not even raised regarding poetry. Poetry came to sight as the making of myths, or untrue tales about gods, demons, heroes, and the things in Hades. As such, poetry was subjected to political control, to pruning in the name of justice or morality. Henceforth poetry must tell edifying stories rather than charming stories. But in the course of the argument it became unclear whether the canons with which poetry must comply in presenting the gods and the things in Hades consist of untrue or of true opinions about the gods and the things in Hades. One cannot leave it, then, at considering poetry from the point of view of the city, or of morality. The ultimate judgment on morality will depend on how poetry is related to truth.

The first discussion of poetry takes place at the earliest possible moment in the founding of the best city. The second, and in a sense final, discussion of poetry takes place after the completion of the political part of the *Republic*. For the political part of the *Republic* is not concluded, as some people seem to think, somewhere in the fifth book when the subject of philosophy comes to the fore. The discussion of philosophy in the *Republic* is a part of the political argument. Philosophy is introduced in the *Republic* as a mere means for establishing the good city. Hence Aristotle, the most competent interpreter of Plato that ever was, does not even refer to the rule of the philosophers in his summary and criticism of the *Republic*. The political part of the *Republic* ends at the end of the ninth book. At that place it has become perfectly clear that the best city as described before is not only impossible, but in a sense, even irrelevant. It makes no difference, Socrates says there, whether the best city, or justice presented in speech, exists, or will exist, on earth or in heaven, for it is certain that it can exist within the soul of the individual.

The great question which must still be settled concerns the possible rewards for justice and punishments for injustice, either during life or after death. The final discussion of poetry introduces the discussion of the rewards for justice and the punishment for injustice. At the beginning of the final discussion of poetry Socrates says that the necessity of rejecting especially dramatic poetry has in the meantime become so much clearer, for in the meantime the difference between the various kinds or forms of the soul has been brought out. By this he does not merely mean the exposition regarding the tripartite division of the soul into the reasoning, the spirited, and the desiring part. He means also, and above all, the various forms of badness of the soul, the timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, and tyrannical forms which had been discussed in the eighth and ninth books. Only after the philosophic analysis of both goodness and badness of the soul has been completed can the final discussion of poetry take place. For poetry is[79] concerned with the goodness and badness of the soul as much as is philosophy. Only now, in the second and final discussion of poetry, does Socrates raise the question, what is, regarding poetry, or more precisely, regarding imitation. Imitation, we learn, is the production of appearances which look like the original but are not the original. For example, a painted bed is not a bed in which one can sleep, like the bed made by the carpenter. Yet even the bed made by the carpenter is not the true bed. The true bed is the idea of the bed, the model with a view to which the carpenter makes visible and tangible beds. There are, then, three beds, the true bed, the bed in nature, which is made by god; the visible bed made by the carpenter; and the painted bed made by the painter. The painter does not reproduce the true proportions of the bed; he reproduces the bed as it appears perspectively. He imitates not the visible bed, but the phantasm of the bed. Imitation is then the reproduction of something which is at the third remove from nature or truth. It is the imitation of a phantasm of something which in its turn is modeled after the truth, or in imitation of the truth. Now in order to imitate the phantasm, the mere appearance, one does not have to know the original, the thing itself, truth. The poet, for example, who presents a general does not know the general in his generalship. He does not possess the art of the general.

Up to this point the poet is compared by Socrates to other makers or producers. Hence the relation of the poet to the philosopher remains obscure. Socrates replaces therefore the triad of makers, god, carpenter, painter, by the triad, user of the bed, carpenter, painter, and contends, generalizing from this, that the only one who possesses genuine knowledge, that is to say, the only one who can judge things from the point of view of goodness is a user, the man who does not make or produce at all. Hence we conclude poetry is at the third remove, not only from the truth, but from philosophy as well. The common craftsmen are superior in wisdom and understanding to the poets, or to quote from the *Phaedrus*, "Even the lovers of bodily toil or of gymnastic training are by far superior to the poets, for they are not concerned with mere phantasms at

any rate, that is to say with merely imagined things."[80] What does this extreme and absurd description and denigration of poetry signify? It cannot be simply absurd, for the men who listen to Socrates, or answer his somewhat leading questions, were as intelligent as I or most of you, and not one of them protests. Philosophy, it appears, is concerned with nature, that is to say, with the forms, or the ideas. Poetry, however, is said to imitate artifacts. Even the ideas are here presented as artifacts. The very summit and cause of the world of poetry, the ideas, consists of artifacts. For the poets do not possess knowledge of the nature of things. They imitate only opinions. They imitate opinions especially regarding virtue, or they imitate phantasms of virtue, and therefore also opinions about and phantasms of the divine. They imitate the human things as they appear in the light of opinion, of authoritative opinion. Or, to use a Platonic image, poetry lives in the world of artificiality because it entirely belongs to the cave, to the city. Poetry praises and blames what the city, what society, praises or blames. The city praises and blames what it has been taught to praise and blame by its legislator or founder. The legislator laid down the moral order of the city by looking at the idea of justice, just as a carpenter makes a bed by looking with his mind's eye at the model of a bed. The poet remains within the boundaries drawn by the legislator. He therefore imitates the legislator, who in his turn imitates in some way or another the idea of justice.

Nietzsche has perhaps unwittingly given a perfect interpretation of what Plato conveys. The artists, Nietzsche says, have at all times been the valets of a morality or a religion. But, as Nietzsche knew, for a valet there is no hero. If the poets are the valets of a morality, they are in the best position to know the defects which their master conceals in public and in daytime. The poets, that is to say, the decent ones among them, come indeed to sight as valets of the morality to which they are subject. In truth, however, they are the severest critics of any established morality or any established order. When Plato criticizes in the tenth book of the *Republic* the poets as imitators of imitators, he criticizes the poets as he had constituted them, as he himself had made them in his first critique of poetry in the second and third book of the *Republic*. For there he had subjected the poets to the city and its order against the nature of poetry. After he has completed the political part of the *Republic*, he takes away the last remaining part of the scaffolding by letting us divine the nature of poetry.

This interpretation of the teaching of the *Republic* regarding poetry is confirmed by the teaching conveyed through Plato's *Laws*. In the thematic discussion of poetry in the second book of the *Republic* it is made clear that poetry is necessarily subject to political or moral control. The legislator must persuade or compel the poets to present only good men, to teach that only the good are happy, and only the bad are miserable. But in the *Laws* where an old Athenian tries to convince an old Spartan and an old Cretan of the desirable character of wine drinking it is made clearer than in the *Republic* that morality is not the

only criterion with which poetry must comply. There are standards of poetic excellence which must also be considered. Grace or pleasure in their way are as important as morality, and of this element the poets themselves are the best judges. That is to say, Plato did not favor ill written pious tracts. The relation between legislator and poet is entirely reversed, however, in a later discussion in the *Laws*, in the fourth book, where the problem of legislation in the strict and narrow sense comes to the fore. The first question here is, how should the legislator state his laws? Should he state them simply as mere commands, relying entirely on compulsion and force, or should he state the law doubly, that is to say, both as mere commands and justifying them by a prooemium or a prelude which persuades men of the wisdom of the laws? The double statement is much to be preferred. Yet this doubleness or duplicity is not sufficient, for the audience to be persuaded is not homogeneous or uniform. Very roughly, every audience consists of an intelligent and[81] an unintelligent part. The prelude to the law must therefore fulfill a dual function. It must persuade the intelligent on the one hand and the unintelligent on the other. Yet intelligent people are sometimes persuaded by different arguments than unintelligent people, and the difference may very well go so far as to become a contradiction. The author of a prelude must then be a man of great versatility and flexibility. He must be a man who has learned to speak differently to different kinds of people and who shows his competence in this respect by his ability to make different kinds of people speak differently. This man cannot be the legislator as legislator, for the province of the legislator is simple and unambiguous speech, saying the same thing to all.

Who then is the man who can write the proper prelude? Plato introduces the discussion of preludes by making his spokesman address the legislator "on behalf of the poets." He refers first to the ancient myth according to which the poets speak through inspiration and hence do not know what they say. But then he goes on to say that the irrationality of the poet consists, not in ignorance of what he says, but in self-contradiction. Since the poet imitates human beings, he creates characters of contradictory moods who contradict one another, and in this way—in this way—[82]he contradicts himself without knowing which of the contradictory statements is true and which is false. The philosopher goes on to identify himself with the poet. The poet does not truly contradict himself. He speaks ambiguously by impersonating contradictory characters, so that one cannot know which, if any, of the characters through which he speaks comes closest to what he thinks. The legislator on the other hand must speak unambiguously and simply. But this is no easy matter. The legislator wishes, for example, that funerals be moderate, but what is a moderate funeral depends very much on the means of the people to be buried, whether they are rich or poor or of moderate means. Each station has its peculiar dignity. No one appreciates that peculiar dignity better than the poet, who can praise with equal felicity the tomb of excessive grandeur, the simple tomb, and the modestly

adorned tomb because the poet knows best and interprets best the moods of the rich, the poor, and the inbetween people. If the legislator wishes then to legislate intelligently on human things he must understand the human things, and he is helped in acquiring that understanding by sitting at the feet of the poets, for the poets, we may add, understand the human things not only as they appear in the light of the law, or established morality, but as they are in themselves. The poet rather than the legislator knows men's souls. Since it is the poet who teaches the legislator, the poet is so far from being the valet of a theology or of a morality that he is rather the creator of them. According to Herodotus, Homer and Hesiod created what we would call Greek religion. Plato has expressed this thought as clearly as he could in his simile of the cave. The cave-dwellers, that is to say, we humans, see nothing, that is to say, nothing higher, than shadows of artifacts, especially of reproductions of men and other living beings moving around on high. We do not see the human beings who make and carry these artifacts. But as is shown clearly by Plato's demand for the noble delusion, he himself is far from disapproving altogether of the poet's activity. In principle the poets do exactly the same thing as Plato himself.

The discussion of poetry in the *Laws* leads us to realize that according to Plato the poets possess genuine knowledge of the soul, and therefore that poetry is *psychologia kai psychagogia*, understanding of the soul and guiding of the soul, just as philosophy itself, more precisely, just as Platonic philosophy itself, for not every philosophy is psychology in the Platonic sense. The necessary although not sufficient condition for philosophy being psychology in the Platonic sense is that the soul is not regarded as derivative from body or as secondary in relation to the body. A materialistic philosophy is indeed radically different from poetry. It would need poetry, understanding of the life of the soul as we know it as human beings, only in the form of a dubious sentimental supplement. We see this clearly today when poetry appears as the only refuge from a psychology and a sociology which are unable to articulate human life in its fullness and depth because they are constitutionally ignorant of the difference between the noble and the base, for that psychology and that sociology are[83] of materialistic origin. Platonic philosophy on the other hand, which regards the soul as the primary phenomenon and the body as derivative, has the same subject matter as poetry. This cannot be literally true of course, for philosophy is concerned with the whole, with all things, and not everything is soul, the soul of man. Philosophy is necessarily also concerned with that which is not soul, with body and number and the relation of the soul to these other things. But Plato characteristically entrusts the treatment of that other thing to the stranger Timaeus, who presents cosmology, a mathematical physics, as a likely tale. The core, or the *arche*, the initiating principle of Platonic philosophy is the doctrine of the soul, and this core, or *arche*, is identical with the theme of poetry. Yet is it not obvious that even Platonic philosophy treats its subject in an entirely different manner than does poetry?[84] The poet sets forth his vision of

the soul, he does not try to prove that vision or to refute alternative visions. His organ is a vision with the mind's eye, *nous*, not reasoning, *logismos*. Therefore poetry expresses itself in poems, epic, dramatic, or lyric, whereas philosophy expresses itself in treatises. In the treatise proper names do not occur except accidentally. Treatises are "impersonal." They are not lifeless, but what lives in them, or what dies in them, what undergoes various kinds of fate in treatises is not human beings but *logoi*, assertions with their accompanying reasoning. Plato refers frequently to this life and fate of the *logoi* most clearly perhaps in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates expresses the fear that his *logoi*, let us say his assertions, might die, that is to say, prove to be refutable. Yet the primary theme of the *Phaedo* is not the death of Socrates's *logoi* but the death of Socrates himself. More generally stated, it is not true that Platonic philosophy expresses itself in the form of treatises. Platonic philosophy is incompatible with the form of the treatise. It expresses itself in the form of the dialogue, of a kind of drama, of imitation. Not only is the subject matter of poetry the same as that of the fundamental part of Platonic philosophy, likewise the treatment is fundamentally of the same character in both cases. Neither the Platonic dialogue nor the poetic work is autonomous, both are ministerial, both serve to lead men to the understanding of the human soul.

But is this not a preposterous assertion? Did we not admit that the poet sets forth his vision of the human[85] soul without supporting reasoning and without refuting alternative visions, whereas Plato does nothing, so to speak, except to present his supporting reasoning and to refute alternative visions? Homer's vision of the soul strikingly differs, so it seems, from Dante's, and both poets' visions strikingly differ again from Shakespeare's. The very question as to which vision is the most adequate cannot be raised, let alone answered, in the element of poetry. However, the reasoning is in Plato's dialogues integrated into the human drama. The reasoning is frequently, not to say always, faulty, deliberately faulty, as it should be within an imitation of human life. And on the other hand with what right can one say that Shakespeare, Dante, and Homer were not able to support their visions of the human soul by reasoning? They did not set forth that reasoning, surely. Nor did Plato. Plato indicates that Homer's poems contain hidden, unexpressed thoughts. These thoughts include Homer's reasoning. Furthermore, we must say that every human phenomenon has its two sides, a poetic and a non-poetic side. For example, love has its poetic and its medical side. Philosophy alone will consider both. But this is obviously not true. Think of the way in which Goethe presented in the *Faust* the two sides of love by contrasting Faust's and Mephistopheles's remarks on Faust's love for Gretchen. Poetry does justice to the two sides of life by splitting itself, as it were, into tragedy and comedy, and precisely Plato says that the true poet is both a tragic and a comic poet. Finally, philosophy is said to appeal only to our understanding, not to our passion,[86] whereas poetry works primarily on our passion.[86] This would be true if philosophy were entirely a science like mathe-

matics. But philosophy in the Platonic sense is a solution and in fact *the* solution to *the* human problem, the problem of happiness. Philosophy is therefore not merely a teaching, but a way of life. Therefore the presentation of philosophy is meant to affect and in fact affects our whole being, just as poetry and perhaps more than poetry. In the words of Plato, "We ourselves to the best of our power are the authors of the tragedy which is at once the fairest and the best."

Is there then no difference whatever between Platonic philosophy and poetry, or rather between the Platonic dialogue and other poetry? Other poetry, or what we ordinarily mean by poetry simply, does not imitate, Plato says in the tenth book of the *Republic*, the sensible and quiet or reposed character, but it prefers the multicolored and complicated characters which as such are more interesting and therefore the natural themes of poetry. The theme of poetry is not the simply good man or the good life. But is there a simply good man? Will the good man not feel grief at the loss of his son, for instance? Will he not be torn between his grief and his duty and hence be two-fold and not simple? Socrates says, "When left alone I believe he will dare to utter many things which he would be ashamed of if another would hear them, and he will do many things which he would not consent to have another see him doing." That which the good man cannot help feeling, but which he conceals from others, is the major theme of poetry. Poetry expresses with adequacy and with propriety what the non-poet cannot express adequately and with propriety. Poetry legitimately brings to light what the law forbids to bring to light. Poetry alone gives us relief from our deepest suffering just as it deepens our happiness. Yet we must understand the expression, the good man, not only in the common sense but also and above all in the Platonic sense. Virtue is knowledge. The good man in the Platonic sense is the philosopher. It goes without saying that the philosopher is not an individual like myself or like other professors of political philosophy or of philosophy *tout court* or *tout long*.

Plato means then by saying that poetry does not present the good man and the good life that poetry does not present the philosopher, the thinker and the life of thought. I quote from the *Phaedrus*, "The superheavenly place has not yet been praised and will never be properly praised by any of the poets here," that is to say, by any of the poets in the ordinary and narrow sense. But is not the poet too a thinker? And does not poetry present also the poet as poet, for example Hesiod in his *Works and Days*, Dante, and Shakespeare in his *Tempest*, to say nothing of Aristophanes. Still, it is not essential to poetry that it should present the poet. And while Plato presents the life of thought in order to instill his readers with love of the life of thought, or to call them to the philosophic life, poetry does not present poetry in order to induce its hearers to become themselves poets. But be this as it may, poetry as poetry presents men inferior to the philosopher and ways of life inferior to the philosophic life. Poetry presents ways of life characterized by a fundamental choice which ex-

cludes[87] philosophy as the solution to the human problem, the problem of happiness. For according to Plato as well as to Aristotle, to the extent to which the human problem cannot be solved by political means it can be solved only by philosophy, by and through the philosophic way of life. Plato too presents men who are not good or who are then bad, but he does this only to present all the more clearly the character of the good men, and this is his chief theme. Poetry, however, presents only such human beings for whom the philosophic life is not a possibility. From Plato's point of view the life which is not philosophic is either obviously incapable of solving the human problem or else it does solve the human problem in a wholly inadequate or in an absurd manner. In the first case it is the theme of tragedy. In the second case it is a theme of comedy. From here we may understand why it is according to nature that philosophy delegate to poetry a ministerial function, a function which philosophy itself cannot fulfill. Poetry presents human life as human life appears if it is not seen to be directed toward philosophy. Autonomous poetry presents non-philosophic life as autonomous. Yet by articulating the cardinal problem of human life as it comes to sight within the non-philosophic life, poetry prepares for the philosophic life. Poetry is legitimate only as ministerial to the Platonic dialogue which in its turn is ministerial to the life of understanding. Autonomous poetry is blind in the decisive respect. It lives in the element of imagination and of passion, of passionate images, of passion expressing itself in images which arouse passion and yet modify passion. It ennobles passion and purifies passion. But autonomous poetry does not know the end for the sake of which the purification of passion is required.

NOTES

1. "are" substituted by editors for "that this is" of the ms.
2. "observations" substituted by editors for "of the reasons" of the ms.
3. "warm" substituted by editors for "well worn" of the ms. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1267b26.
4. "thought" substituted by editors for "though" of the ms.
5. "not" inserted by hand above the line.
6. "thoughts" substituted by editors for "thought" of the ms.
7. The words "science which is said to have rendered possible this control of" have been added by hand at the bottom of the page, with an asterisk above the line indicating their proper place in the text.
8. "ever" substituted by editors for "every" of the ms.
9. Semicolon substituted by editors for comma of the ms.
10. "in general" inserted by hand above the line.
11. "an" inserted by hand above the line.
12. "reflection" inserted by hand above the line.
13. The word "the" after "of" has been removed by the editors.
14. "project" substituted by editors for "product" of the ms.
15. "who" added by editors.
16. "friend's" substituted by editors for "friends" of the ms.
17. "at" substituted by editors for "as" of the ms.

18. The words "ascends to the highest height," have been added by the editors to remedy an apparent lacuna in the ms., though there is no visible sign of anything being missing.
19. The word "but" after "ridiculous" has been removed by the editors.
20. "*Peace*" substituted by editors for "*Bees*" of the ms.
21. "is achieved by" substituted by editors for "the chief" of the ms.
22. "a" substituted by editors for "the" of the ms.
23. "four" inserted by hand to fill a lacuna in the ms.
24. The word "this" after "is" has been removed by the editors.
25. "become" substituted by editors for "became" of the ms.
26. "the pederast Peisthetaerus" inserted by hand at the end of the paragraph.
27. This sentence has been inserted by hand at the end of the paragraph.
28. "in" substituted by editors for "on" of the ms.
29. The word "by" after "prompted" has been removed by the editors.
30. "that" substituted by editors for "the" of the ms.
31. "this" substituted by editors for "his" of the ms.
32. "they" substituted by editors for "the" of the ms.
33. This word "not" has been crossed out by hand in the ms. and the words "themselves do not" have been inserted by hand after the following words "what the gods"
34. The word "the" after "Either" has been removed by the editors.
35. "as" substituted by editors for "is" of the ms.
36. "Clouds" inserted by hand above the line to replace "gods" which has been crossed out.
37. "seems" substituted by editors for "seem" of the ms.
38. The word "to" after "effect" has been removed by the editors.
39. "complete" substituted by editors for "compete" of the ms.
40. "its" substituted by editors for "it" of the ms.
41. "that" substituted by editors for "hat" of the ms.
42. "between" substituted by editors for "in" of the ms.
43. "takes" substituted by editors for "take" of the ms.
44. "Xenophon, the" substituted by editors for "Xenophon. The" of the ms.
45. "which" inserted by hand above the line.
46. "are" substituted by editors for "is" of the ms.
47. "to" substituted by editors for "with" of the ms.
48. The word "to" after "not" has been removed by the editors.
49. "places" substituted by editors for "place" of the ms.
50. "word" substituted by editors for "words" of the ms.
51. "I" substituted by editors for "I'll" of the ms.
52. "with" substituted by editors for "of" of the ms.
53. The words "originator of" have been added by the editors to fill a lacuna in the ms., which has room for some words that are impossible to read.
54. "most" inserted by hand above the line.
55. "gentleman" substituted by editors for "gentleman's" of the ms.
56. "in" substituted by editors for "on" of the ms.
57. Comma added by editors.
58. "he" substituted by editors for "has" of the ms.
59. The words "or more generally stated, in identifying the existing social hierarchy" have been added by hand at the bottom of the page, with an asterisk above the line indicating their proper place in the text.
60. Dash substituted by editors for comma of the ms.
61. " (unclear) ," is what appears here in the ms.
62. "philosopher's" substituted by editors for "philosophers" of the ms.
63. "limitation" substituted by editors for "imitation" of the ms.
64. "bringing" substituted by editors for "bring" of the ms.
65. "speech" inserted by hand above the line. Also, the previous word was originally written as "justice", but the final "ice" has been crossed out by hand.

66. The word "*the*" has been underlined by the editors.

67. There seems to be a lacuna at the end of this sentence in the ms., though there is no visible sign of anything being missing.

68. "wholes" substituted by editors for "whole" of the ms.

69. "inducing" substituted by editors for "in using" of the ms.

70. The word "an" after "is" has been removed by the editors.

71. "the" substituted by editors for "a" of the ms.

72. "reverence" substituted by editors for "reverent" of the ms.

73. " (tape being changed) " is what appears here in the ms. In the omitted section, Professor Strauss was probably speaking of desire, or *epithymia* as contrasted with spiritedness, or *thymos*.

74. The word "*thwarted*" has been underlined by the editors.

75. The words "which easily turns into vindictiveness or punitiveness. The ambiguity of spiritedness is not exhausted, however, by the ambiguity of moral indignation." have been added by hand at the bottom of the page, with an asterisk above the line indicating their proper place in the text.

76. "understandably" substituted by editors for "understandingly" of the ms.

77. "poets" substituted by editors for "poet," of the ms.

78. "the" added by editors.

79. The word "as" after "is" has been removed by the editors.

80. The word "things" (followed by a period and a quotation mark) has been added by hand at the end of the line.

81. "and" substituted by editors for "or" of the ms.

82. Dashes substituted by editors for commas of the ms.

83. "are" substituted by editors for "is" of the ms.

84. Question mark substituted by editors for period of the ms.

85. "human" inserted by hand above the line.

86. The manuscript has "passions," with the final "s" crossed out by hand.

87. "excludes" substituted by editors for "excluded" of the ms.