APOCRYPHAL PLATO

◆

THE PROBLEMATIC OF THE SUBJECT IN PLATO'S MIMETOLOGY

A STUDY OF FOUR PLATONIC DIALOGUES

◆

Evangelos Kritikakos

December 2003

Statement of Authorship

This thesis does not contain any material which has been accepted for the award of any other

degree or diploma in any university or institution; nor, to the best of my knowledge and

belief, does it contain any material previously published or written by another person, except

when due reference is made in the text.

Evangelos Kritikakos

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the support and guidance given to me by my supervisor, Pavlos Andronikos. I would also like to thank my previous supervisor, Gerald Fitzgerald, for his invaluable comments and advice. Moreover I would like to thank him for his encouragement and the comprehensive interest he has shown in my work over many years. A special thanks is due to Joanne Ligouris for her tireless efforts in the production of the final document and her invaluable feedback. Moreover I would like to thank my parents, family and close friends for their patience and support. I would also like to acknowledge the feedback and advice provided by Greg Gardiner in the course of this thesis.

Abstract

Apocryphal Plato: The Problematic of the Subject in Plato's Mimetology

This thesis considers how the problematic of the subject relates to certain problems which are inherent in Plato's conception of mimesis. A careful study of Plato's mimetology reveals that the boundaries between original and copy, presentation and representation are never entirely unequivocal. His mimetology involves an understanding of mimesis within an eidetic relation, that is, Plato sees mimesis only in terms of it being a representation or a copy of the intelligible eidos. Plato however is unable to sustain such a conception of mimesis, and I try to illustrate in this thesis how the heterogeneous and equivocal nature of mimesis is inextricably bound to the "mimetician", that is, the mimetic subject.

In addition this thesis attempts to elucidate how mimesis can be eidetically determined when it accounts for the visual arts. However when the thesis proceeds to an examination of the literary arts a paradox emerges in the way Plato accounts for the mimetic subject's linguistic practice, the subject's logos in general. In Plato's understanding the most pernicious form of logos is that which resorts to formal mimetic traits, and the poetic, rhapsodic and sophistic subjects' linguistic practice presents a fundamental perversion of truth. Essentially the logos or discourse of the subject disrupts the relationship of adequation that Plato tries to sustain in his mimetology. Mimetic logoi undermine the original and the copy in a deceptive way, and it is for this reason that Plato is critical of the mimesis that involves apocryphy and dissimulation, because it leads to the deconstitution and withdrawal of the subject in his/her mimetic deliveries.

The problematic of the subject is principally tied to an effect that inevitably reveals the mimetic paradox. The subject's mimetic logos involves the proliferation of meaning which supplants the eidos as truth—as it no longer refers to it—and as a consequence it involves a subjectal deconstitution and withdrawal. This thesis seeks to follow the manner in which Plato constitutes the subject and conceives subjectivity by banishing mimesis altogether or establishing its homoiological sense, in order to overcome the problematic of the subject and to ensure it works in the service of truth.

In the four Platonic dialogues considered in this thesis– *Republic, Ion, Cratylus, Sophist* – I examine Plato's understanding of mimesis and his decision to ensure the proper constitution of the subject and its logos. The thesis concludes by situating this exploration of Plato's treatment of mimesis in relation to the Platonic constructs of subjectivity, and by highlighting the way this treatment is inevitably undermined by the possibilities opened up by mimesis itself. Mimesis ultimately remains equivocal and an aporia of sorts because Plato's mimetology concerns itself only with representation and falls short of addressing directly the *subject* of representation.

Table of Contents

Chapter Four: Mimetology

SECTION II: *Ion*

Chapter Five: The Question of *Hermeneia*

Chapter Six: Rhapsodic Hermeneutics

SECTION III: *Cratylus*

Chapter Seven: Orthonomatologies

Chapter Eight: Poetic Etymologies

Chapter Nine: Onomastic Mimesis

SECTION 1V: *Sophist*

Chapter Ten: The Sophist as *Aporon Eidos*

Chapter Eleven: The Caesura within Discourse

Chapter Twelve: Doubling Mimesis

Appendix

Know how to imitate the tongues of all men and their clattering speech
πάντον δ'ἀνθρῶπων φώνη καί κρεμβαλιάστυν μιμεῖσθίσασιν

Delian Hymn to Apollo 163

Chapter One

Introduction:

Plato's Mimetology

"No work of mine exists on such philosophic topics, and none ever will,

for there is no way of putting them into words like other studies

[ουκουν ἐμόν γε περὶ αὐτῶν ἔστι σύγγραμμα οὐδε μήποτε

γένηται· ῥητὸν γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐστὶν ὡς ἄλλα μαθήματα]."

Seventh Epistle 341c4-6

1.1 The Platonic Schema of Mimesis

Within the history of scholarship on Plato, which inadvertedly implies the history of

Platonism; the question of mimesis presents itself *ab initio*.[1] Mimesis remains a

fundamentally unresolved idea in terms of its meaning, its concept as well as its manifest

discursive determinations insofar as it implicates so many other aspects of Plato's dialogues.

If there has been a fundamental lack in the treatment of mimesis within the tradition of studies

---

[1] In many respects the question of representation as it is presented in the history of philosophy manifests itself as a primary issue since Kant. The Kantian manifestation of the problem of representation in many respects incipiently informs this study as the distinction between presentation (*Darstellung*) which relates to sensibly present objects, or the objectively real and representation (*Vorstellung*) which refers to objects that exist separately from any sensible or supposedly "objective" presentation is treated as problematic, even as it becomes the basis of Kant's treatment of cognition in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See Helfer 1996.

on Plato, even as scholars have attempted to tackle the question head on, the lack presupposes a delimiting effect of the potential of mimesis and the problems it generates. This delimiting factor has much to do with the manner of approach to the problem which is almost always oriented toward philological concerns, determining its etymology, its origins and its first appearance in the literature. This ultimately underscores the epistemological motivations which fundamentally re-inscribe mimesis to the Platonic schema where everything presents itself as something other or as something else; a copy, a reproduction and more commonly a representation.

I embark on this study knowing too well the shortfalls of approaching Plato's treatment of mimesis in such a restrictive fashion and thus I return to a consideration of the Platonic schema of mimesis beyond its restrictive, though legitimate, philological delimitations. In the four chosen dialogues, what left an impression upon me was that the question of mimesis presupposes something altogether ignored by scholars and through the work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, I endeavor to properly address this discursive lacuna by attending to the question of mimesis in the context of a broader and more challenging problem. The problematic of the subject, that is, the subject of representation and as it presents itself inversely the representation of the subject, is openly addressed. It is by investigating the relationship between mimesis and subjectivity that I hope to shed light on the idea of *subjectal*[2] representation as it appears in Plato as loss, as withdrawal, as apocryphy; as the ultimate descent into the world of shadows and as the famous allegory of the cave in the *Republic* illustrates, it also promises a new constitution of the subject, as Plato attempts to devise the roadmap for the ascension and subsequent redemption of the subject.

Certainly the work of Lacoue-Labarthe and Jacques Derrida guides and in many respects influences my approach to the four chosen dialogues which I will be investigating in this thesis. One question I will return to time and again is in what way this subjectal loss or apocryphal withdrawal occurs in Plato. I will consider how this loss within mimesis manifests

---

[2] See Derrida 1994: 275. I here follow Derrida when using the noun "subject" in its adjectival form.

itself and in what way does it challenge or critically undermine the Platonic schema of mimesis.

However it is imperative to ask before considering the idea of mimesis in relation to the problematic of the subject, what is the Platonic schema of mimesis? What encompasses this logos on mimesis, what orients its conceptual and ontological orientations? The Platonic schema of mimesis implies a particular conception of mimesis that is not at all contrary to the schema that many scholars orient their own work on mimesis. It is fundamentally the *eidetic* orientation of mimesis that sustains the mimetology, it is by understanding mimesis in terms of the *eidos* that Plato is able to ingeniously engineer a criticism of mimesis.

Because a thoroughgoing examination of the history of mimesis in Western philosophy and literature is not possible here, as it is outside the scope of my thetic deliberations, I will be confining the question to Plato's writings. It is nonetheless important to reiterate that the question of mimesis is continuously confronted by all philosophical writing.[2] However it has never preoccupied any philosopher more than Plato, at least not until Immanuel Kant's appraisal of the problem in the first *Critique*. The ambit of the problematic is confined to Plato's work in an integral way, as it is so rigorously tied to his conception of the *eidos*, or what is known discursively as the "theory of forms".[3] Mimesis essentially is

---

[2] Walter Benjamin succinctly summed up the philosophical exigency of the question concerning mimesis that "it is characteristic of philosophical writing that it must continually confront the question of representation." Benjamin 1998: 27.

[3] As a momentary digression, I would like to highlight that it is not intended in this thesis nor is its primary objective, to elucidate the "theory" in its contradictory and versional differences. The scope of this thesis does not allow for such an investigation, suffice to say that my understanding of the "theory of forms" will remain consistent to the idea of it being έν ίδέαν thus singular and one, and most fundamentally a transcendental concept, thus remaining consistent to its metaphysical postulations. Aristotle argued that the Platonic eidos is developed in his theory as non-sensible, separated (transcendental) forms. See Aristotle's comments in *Metaph.* 987 a32-b10; 1078 b12-1079 a4; 1086 a37- b11. That the eidos is "unchanging" see Plato *Phaed.* 78 c10-e4; *Rep.* 495 a10-b3; 508 d4-9; 518 e8-9; 525 b5-6; 534 a2-3. For a more detailed discussion on the "theory of forms" see Irwin 1999 and Ross 1951.

understood in relation to truth or the eidos. It is understood as the representation of "what is", and thus it is held by the ontological question in such a way that it proffers a formalization of the question of truth. To achieve this Plato has mimetic practices in general delimited to a repetition of a prior presentation. What is of interest for Plato is that, if his philosophical system (and subsequently his mimetology which holds this system together) is to work, then the logical priority of the eidos has to be maintained and consolidated within this schema. In sustaining the eidetic determination of mimesis Plato redresses one of the most foreboding issues that permeates the literary tradition he comes out of; the issue concerning the singularity of beings, the fixed conception of the human subject as one and singular, not only in relation to the "self" but also, in relation to the engagement of things mediated in the world.

1.2 The Delimitation of Mimesis in Plato's Mimetology

The main argument linking mimesis and subjectivity and the problems it proposes to the mimetology at issue, requires us first and foremost to consider in what way the delimitation of mimesis is stimulated within an elaborate mimetological undertaking in Plato's dialogues. Certainly one aspect of Plato's mimetology that has, in many respects, delimited previous studies on Plato's concept of mimesis is that it has been approached precisely as concept. Though in its delimitation mimesis can be broached conceptually it is only possible because it is oriented towards Plato's conception of the eidos. Any delimitation of mimesis as concept is only made possible by ensuring an eidetic orientation is consolidated. Before considering some of the most notable readings of mimesis in the literature on Plato's concept of mimesis, I would like to consider how the mimetology presents itself schematically and thus consider the exemplary theoretical position it takes within Plato's philosophy. Before considering the effect of this schematic delimitation of mimesis, I would like to first quote Jacques Derrida's formalization of Plato's concept of mimesis:

"1. Mimesis produces the thing's double. If the double is faithful and perfectly like, no qualitative difference separates it from the model. Three consequences of this: (a) The double- the imitator- is nothing, is worth nothing in itself. (b) Since the imitator's value comes only from its model, the imitator is good when the model is good, and bad when the model is bad. In itself it is neutral and transparent. (c) If mimesis is nothing and worth nothing in itself, then it is nothing in value and being- it is in itself negative. Therefore it is an evil: to imitate is bad in itself and not just when what is imitated is bad. 2. Whether like or unlike, the imitator is something, since mimesis and likeness do exist. Therefore this non-being does 'exist' in some way (*The Sophist*). Hence: (a) in adding to the model, the imitator comes as a supplement and ceases to be a nothing or a nonvalue. (b) In adding to the 'existing' model, the imitator is not the same thing, and even if the resemblance were absolute, the resemblance is never absolute (*The Cratylus*). And hence never absolutely true. (c) As a supplement that can take the model's place but never its equal, the imitator is in essence inferior even at the moment it replaces the model and is thus 'promoted'. This schema (two propositions and six possible consequences) forms a kind of logical machine; it programs the prototypes of all the propositions inscribed in Plato's discourse as well as those of the whole tradition. According to a complex but implacable law, this machine deals out all the clichés of criticism to come."[4]

What is of interest in the Platonic schema which Derrida describes as a kind of "logical machine", is that this schema of mimesis can only be maintained if one apprehends mimesis or mimetic practices in view of the eidos or originary idea or model. It furthermore shows that

---

[4] Derrida 1981a: 187, n.14.

the Platonic schema fails to account for mimetic practices in general, so it is predictable that all subsequent doctrines of mimesis (and indeed Plato's own) will in some sense always be escaping its terms. Plato's own discourse, the very structure of his dialogical discourse, escapes the hold of this logical machine. Moreover it escapes the pertinence or authority of the eidos. The Platonic schema is disrupted by the potentialities of mimesis. The logical "mimetic" machine cannot contain the potentialities of reference, be it as reference to "idea" in the *Republic*, "other texts" in the *Ion*, "linguistic references" in the *Cratylus* or in the most profound ontological questioning, "being in general" in the *Sophist*. What I want to contest in this thesis is that the potential of mimesis can thwart the truth or any proper referral to the truth. As a consequence what eventuates in the dialogues considered in this thesis is that the Platonic schema, the "logical machine" ultimately showcases the alluring possibilities of the differential structure of mimesis. This is certainly a climatic moment in the *Sophist* where the proliferation of mimesis suggests that in the *eidolon* (the copy of a copy) the schema no longer refers us back to any eidos or primordial model; it "is no longer referred to any ontology or even to any dialectic".[5]

However what I will be arguing shortly, after a brief consideration of the various scholarly approaches to Plato's concept of mimesis, is that Plato's challenge within his ingeniously engineered mimetological program is not to discount *what* (copies- *eikons* or images-*eidola*) is produced by the subject-mimetician, but consider *who* the mimetician is. This is primarily what is disregarded by the literature to date. Any engagement with Plato's concept of mimesis is confined to epistemological prejudices and has been unable to proceed to explicitly or implicitly reinterpret the notion of the subject.

1.2.1 The Question of Mimesis Before and After Plato

It might be said that any reconsideration of the history of mimesis ultimately leads any investigation to contradictions and confusion regarding the origin of the word and its

---

[5] Derrida 1981a: 235.

contextual usage.[6] In describing mimesis, Willamowitz-Moellondorf referred to it as "disastrous word" (*ein verhangnisvolles wort*)[7] and did so recognising its equivocal nature within the mythopoetic and philosophical tradition.[8]

I begin however here, by addressing Gerald Else's original and thorough investigation of the history of mimesis and its subsequent influence on the context by which the question of mimesis has been generally received. Certainly Else addresses two possibilities of the meaning of the verb *mimeisthai* by considering the validity of Herman Koller's argument[9] that mimesis, prior to Plato's appropriation of the term, referred to the expressive power of music and thus in musical mimesis it denoted a form of expression. Koller's conception of mimesis seems to be to some extent a romantic reconfiguration of *Darstellung* where it is treated in terms of pure presentation, that is, mimesis in dance and music takes on a figural and purely expressive quality thus it does not refer to any prior model. Else in many respects focuses on the development of the word, its usage within various contexts of the literature of the fifth century, however he is primarily guided by a determination of the historical moment when it did come to mean "representation" pure and proper. Though he contests some of Koller's arguments regarding the expressive quality of mimesis, it is only because the concept of imitation per se is not dealt with rigorously by Koller as he overlooks a formal designation of its representational qualities.[10] J.Tate similarly questions Koller for making secondary to his study the sense of mimesis that sees it involving "imitation" and "copying" simple and proper.[11]

---

[6] For other general readings of the concept of mimesis in antiquity see Melberg 1995; McKeon 1936 and Moraux 1955.

[7] Willamowitz-Moellondorf 1892: 479.

[8] Versenyi correctly recognised the equivocal nature of mimesis describing it as a "protean word". See Versenyi 1970-71: 30.

[9] Koller 1954.

[10] Else 1958: 73.

[11] Tate 1955.

Gerald Else's conclusion that mimesis is not a theoretical formulation in the fifth century but much more "a bundle of interrelated, concrete word usages"[12] does lead him, however, to acknowledge that its true mimological sense originally denoting "a miming or mimicking of a person or animal by means of voice and /or gesture"[13] was prevalent and this is not at all inconsistent to Plato's use of the term in books two and three of the *Republic*. What is of interest is that the original mimological sense of *mimeisthai* finds itself translated to the making of *images* and thus denoting the idea of mimesis as making a copy; a *mimêma*. Else correctly asserts that out of these strands of meaning Plato was able to develop an exclusive and complex conception of mimesis in general.

What Else has certainly identified in this complex conception of mimesis is what Derrida identified as the schema of mimesis, and given its propositions and consequences in many respects explains the differential treatment of the question. One problem that notably comes out of Plato's treatment of mimesis in the *Republic* is determining its twofold sense. The fact that there is a good and bad mimesis has inevitably captured the thinking of many scholars and Tate most notably investigated the two senses of mimesis and its cognates in two short articles[14] to clarify and moreover resolve inherent etymological and philological problems. The postulation of a value-laden conception of mimesis attempted to resolve the different treatment of mimesis by Plato in the earlier books of the *Republic* and the reappraisal of the mimesis question in book ten. In Tate's work the question of the subject is implicitly alluded to given what is deemed as good mimesis is a mode that resorts to a

---

[12] Else 1958: 87.

[13] Else suggests that the mimological sense of the verb *mimeisthai* originated from the Sicilian "mime" which infiltrated the Ionic-Attic sphere in the latter third of the fifth century. Else 1958: 87.

[14] Tate 1932: 161-169. and 1928: 16-23. Others who have embraced Tate's thesis and maintain the idea of two senses of imitation include, Oates 1972 and Verdenius 1962. Alexander Nehamas argues that *Republic* 394-97 does not generate two senses of imitation (50), and though he argues that all Plato allows in terms of what Tate refers to as good mimesis is not so much an *appropriate mimetic mode* but rather an *appropriate mimetic object*. Nehamas 1988: 50

nominative style where the subject of enunciation speaks in his own name and moreover represents the eidos truly and accurately.

This Platonic concern, has more recently been taken up as an issue in Elizabeth Belfiore's work on mimesis in Plato's *Republic* who also considers, like Tate, the idea that the question of falsehood, equivocity and veridical errors are at issue in Plato' treatment of mimesis.[15] Alexander Nehamas' lengthy study of the mimesis question in the *Republic* arrives at similar conclusions. However, with Belfiore, we note a consideration for the first time of the effect mimesis has on the constitution of the subject. The limitation in Belfiore's argument, however, is that the subject considered is not the mimetician but the audience.[16] Nehamas however tries to approach the problematic of the subject by attempting to consider the contrast between "being an imitator" (*mimêtês*) and "being imitative" (*mimêtikos*). Nehamas argues that it is not imitation that is excluded "but all poetry that involves imitativeness".[17] However what this conclusion fails to account for is the subversion of presence which mimesis effects, and in many ways this subversion has been cloaked by the marginalisation of the problem as it appears in Plato's work given that the eidos, regardless if one is imitating it or imitative of things "like" the eidos, delimits all mimetic practices. In essence, what I am surmising here is that for Plato the verbal and nominative characterisations of the subject-mimetician does not preclude the subject from the problem of his or her complete subreption, withdrawal and loss. The acceptance of what Nehamas refers to as the *mimêtês* at the exclusion and banishment of the *mimêtikos* does not resolve the Platonic project for a stable subject. For if we assert the line that Plato wanted to ensure the theoretical

---

[15] According to Belfiore there are two senses of falsehood that preoccupy Plato when passing judgement on mimesis in the *Republic*; 1. It being a copy,image, *not* original in the ontological sense and 2. Mimetic productions do not contain a general truth (of a moral, historical and scientific kind) that is, in the veridical sense See Belfiore 1983: 40.

[16] Plato's greatest accusation according to E. Belfiore is the appeal to the childlike and foolish element in a soul subject who is divided against itself, that is, mimesis impresses upon the "affective part of the soul". See Belfiore 1983: 61.

[17] Nehamas 1998: 240; Ferrari 1989: 92-148

elimination of the false imitator or bad imitator and thus protect the subjectivity of the "true" imitator, the *mimêtês*, (which in the context of Plato's work presents itself as a monstrous oxymoron) this will undoubtedly come up against a defeat already inscribed in the original decision to banish the apocryphal mimetic subject.

Before outlining the final steps of my argument with regard to the literary tradition which engaged with the issue of mimesis in Plato's works, it seems imperative to assert that Plato had to come to a decision regarding mimesis and its relationship to the subject, in order to ensure the logical priority of the eidos. The abovementioned studies have failed to explicitly address the importance of linking mimesis to the problematic of the subject, perhaps, because the issue enters a distinctly philosophical terrain and thus remains invisible and outside the economy and scope of many scholars' concerns.

Nevertheless the problematic of the subject cannot be ignored. The Platonic treatment of mimesis cannot be properly appraised without rigorously addressing the relationship between mimesis and subjectal representation in Plato's work. It seems imperative if we are to account for the problems, ambiguities and inconsistencies within Plato's mimetology that we elucidate the way in which mimesis becomes problematic, because what is at stake is not an ontological prevarication concerning the issue of misrepresentation and falsehood, but the inescapable link to subjectal dissimulation and apocryphal withdrawal resulting from mimetic practices. Ultimately, Plato seeks to determine the manner or method that any form of subjectal constitution and preservation can be assured. If this involves the banishment of mimesis, which in his eyes presents the most pernicious tendencies of the subject, then this banishment is the decision that constitutes the subject, whether it be the philosopher-guardian or the human subject in general.

What I want to avoid is the risk of vastly oversimplifying Plato's deliberations on mimesis, since in failing to read a presumption of subjectivity into Plato's dialogues we fail to concede in what way the ontological question delimits our investigative orientations. There is

what seems to me to be a persistent exclusion of the problematic of the subject from the philosophical apprehension of the mimetology, however, this excludes the briefly hedged qualification and nuance in Nehamas' most recent article. Addressing the issue from the vantage point of the problematic elucidated here, is to allow my work in many respects to be guided by Lacoue-Labarthe's primary and foremost issue concerning Plato, that the subject cannot ever exhibit a subjectivity that is true, "authentic" without remaining indebted or held by mimesis in general.

1.3 Elucidating the Problematic of the Subject: Mimesis and Subjectivity

Though the problematic of the subject can be discussed with all rigor and philosophical accuracy in its Kantian manifestation, in Plato the notion of subjectivity is implicitly interpreted and in many respects constructed in the *Republic* as Plato prescribes a new constitution of the subject in the figure of the Philosopher-guardian. Certainly the problematic of the subject presents itself as a more complicated issue when we consider its pre-Kantian reference. It is certainly referred to in its most logical and grammatical context by Aristotle in the *Metaphysics*, as designating something that might be predicated on and certainly in the context of my discussions on the *Cratylus* this characterization of "subject" as a grammatical feature distinct from a predicate sheds an interesting light on the question of mimesis as it is treated in terms of language.[18] This Aristotelian formulation of the subject as *hypokeimenon*

---

[18] Aristotle uses a single word to establish the idea of an ultimate subject; *hypokeimenon*. In its use Aristotle refers to being as *hypokeimenon* ("that which lies beneath") because they are "not predicated of anything else (i.e subject) but everything else is predicated of them". Obviously the essentialism implied by the *hypokeimenon* (which refers to a grammatical subject and an ultimate subject in the ontological sense) is of interest as the connection explains the Latin translation of *hypokeimenon* as *substantia* and *subjectum* to encompass the two possibilities of subjectal reference that the term *hypokeimenon* encompasses. See Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1017b13. The *hypokeimenon* is characterised by its substantiality, it being self-subsistent (1028a23) and definite (1028a27). In Aristotle's doctrine of *ousia* things are depended on the *hypokeimenon*, they are because they are 'in' a *subjectum*.

in essence grounds what Plato understood as the *eidos* because the subject grounds all appearances, relativises all phenomenal things. Subjectivity may be foreign in the Greek formulation, that is, if we account for its Cartesian manifestation and Kantian treatment where it refers to the human subject as *subjectum* but nonetheless it appears in Plato,[19] as I would like to argue, as the ultimate and underlying project in the *Republic* and this in many respects motivates the treatment of all other dialogues considered in this thesis. The *Sophist* is undoubtedly the most profound example of Plato's attempt to fix the identity of the subject (a subject which remains in contradistinction to its mimed double) where the philosopher-subject is clearly differentiated from the sophistic subject, a boundary that is incessantly blurred throughout the dialogue. As early as the *Ion*, Plato again is preoccupied by notions of subjectal loss that leads to a unique conception of the subject as a singular being, substantially speaking. In terms of this substantiality, the rhapsode in the *Ion*, the sophistic subject in the *Sophist*, as is the poet and painter in the *Republic* are all represented as multifarious and in the extreme sense miscellaneous beings in their self-projection, as they have no fixed identity. Their engagement in mimetic practices effects their sense of propriety, given they do not only engage in many *technai*, which explains the Platonic criticism of polytechny, but invariably embody many properties, which explains their protean character. It is for this reason the question of mimesis has been postulated by Derrida as "an economic problem"[20] as it effects

---

[19] In Platonic *eidos* and Aristotelian *hypokeimenon* subjectivity is understood in terms of substance or substantiality, however it is to take a clearly Heideggerian line to understand them in terms of Being (*Dasein*). It is clear that the connection of substance to the human subject is a development of the modern age, but insofar as the Greek manifestation is concerned its connection to *logos, eidos* et al. suggests a connection to the servant of this logocentrism, the philosopher himself, the philosopher as subject; the Socratic subject being the "subject" par excellence.

[20] Jacques Derrida, in an essay on Kant's third Critique, has called the proxomity of mimesis and oikonomia "economimesis", he identifies a "systematic link" between the two. Having identified an exchange between the artist's genius and nature, the economy of imitation and how it can be distinguished from economy *in general*, reveals a "transeconomy" that lets the work of economimesis unfold itself to infinity. See Derrida 1981b.

the proliferation of images and subjects. However in locating the problematic at issue in my thesis, I quote Lacoue-Labarthe,[21] who states this matter succinctly,

> "The historical entry of mimesis, in the *Republic*, in fact paves the way form an entire pedagogical debate (the famous education of the guardians) wherein the haunting preoccupation with the economic will find its reason in the problematic of mimetism- a problematic that is not, as is repeated endlessly, principally a problematic of the lie, but instead the problematic of the *subject* (one can scarcely see what other word to use), and of the subject in its relation to language."[22]

The problematic of the subject, ultimately is tied to the fact that in every mimetic act, the subject is seeking to close a gap between the original and his or her representation of the original object, thought or idea. This invariably opens the gap between the original thing presented and that which represents it. In bridging this gap, the subject finds him or herself lost within this spacing, as he or she can never assure true presence of the thing represented. As a consequence all subjectal representation is not accorded with the priority and experiential efficacy of the original referent object, thing or idea. The subject is lost within its mimetic representations; the subject is lost *within* mimesis. That Plato noted the most pernicious sense of the mimetic in its mimological presentations is consistent to this understanding of loss within mimesis as any pretension assumed by taking on another's persona, voice and actions involves a form of loss and withdrawal that prevents the proper constitution of the subject, as the subject becomes *other* to him or herself; he or she *becomes other*. In this thesis, I will attempt to respond to and extend this insight into subjectivity keeping within view Plato's mimetology. Broadly speaking, the self that *becomes other*, the self-as-other which has emerged as my rubric for describing the subject and its relation to

---

[21] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's work on mimesis and most notably "Typography" is a springboard to my argument in this thesis. The influence of his work cannot go unstated as it inspired the investigation of the relationship between mimesis and subjectal representation in Plato's writings.

[22] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 125.

mimesis in Plato constitutes an account of subjectivity that in the four chosen dialogues threatens the very stabilization of the subject Plato wants to consolidate, whether it be the rhapsode, poet, painter, sophist or actor and in many respects the philosopher as such is implicated in this problematic.

1.4 Apocryphal Plato: The Question Of the Authorial Subject

A notable feature of Plato's writings is that Plato himself resorts to the forms of apocryphal withdrawal that he is critical of throughout the *Republic*, *Ion* and the *Sophist*. Though I do not want to address the issue with any kind of privilege, suffice to say that it forms the backdrop to the very effect his texts have on the whole question regarding mimesis and its relation to the problematic of the subject.[23] Plato's dialogues work on a fundamentally mimetic level given that Plato does not hesitate to speak through the Socratic *prosopon*, and yet he does so condemning the very authorial dissimulation and apocryphality that legitimises his criticism of mimesis and its ultimate expulsion from, not only the *polis*, but moreover all generic forms of discursive and artistic expression.

This undecidability regarding *who* speaks and *for* whom, is inextricably bound to general concerns running throughout this thesis. The idea of an apocryphal textuality, of masking, of ventriloquy, very much determines the nature of this undecidability regarding *who* speaks, whose ideas are posed in the dialogues. This is undoubtedly bound to a philological problem pertaining to the status of the "historical Socrates". When reading Plato's dialogues one is embroiled in a double reading , a constant shifting between narrator and dialogician, writer and speaker, outside and inside the text, distance and intimate proximity to the dialogical context. Essentially the two figures which embody all these oppositions are simply Plato and Socrates.

---

[23] For a more detailed consideration of the issue regarding the apocryphal character of Plato's discourse see Edelstein 1962: 1-22; Plass 1964: 254-278; Kosman 1992.

Without accusing Plato of any form of naivety in his resort to such apocryphal dimensions I would like, however to extrapolate in what way this paradox in Plato's writings plays itself out at the scene of his critical agenda and the ironical problem it presents. In inaugurating the character Socrates as the spokesperson of his philosophy, Plato attempts to develop a subjectal constitution more original than that founded in the discursive tradition he denounces. In Socrates the subject par excellence is presented, a subject more original than all subjectal representations. The shortfall of this exemplarity of subjectivity founded in the figure of Socrates is that for Plato it inevitably presents a reopening of the abyss of endless mimetic effects. Part of the problem encountered in every consideration of Plato's writings is the question of *who* is speaking, *whose* thoughts are being postulated in these writings. The paradoxical confusion inherent in Plato's dialogues are inherent in Platonism as such. The periodic taxonomization of Plato's dialogues seems not to necessarily resolve the issue regarding the authorial propriety of certain concepts and ideas. However in arguing that this mimetic structure of the dialogues proposes a fundamental paradox is only to suggest that Plato, as authorial subject, fails to fix himself as himself precisely because his writing becomes structurally implicated in the subjectal loss which his apocryphality effects; it becomes a writing of dissimulation. To the extent that Plato's writings are a requisite medium for a traditional form of literature, namely "tragedy", implicates the expectation of authorial loss and absence.

But is there a possibility that Plato's writings are not implicated in the denounced medium of tragedy, in the mimetic diegesis that Plato condemns in book three of the *Republic*? Certainly, Plato's emphasis on a unique subject, Socrates, sometimes falls on the side of noticing that his philosophy is a quest for a new constitution of the subject and thus

does not within this inherent paradox, mark his own withdrawal and loss because Plato hopes that he is beyond the reach of the equivocity that contaminates writing in general.[24]

I resort to an essay by Jacques Derrida titled "Khora"[25] to better explicate how I have endeavoured to approach Plato's writings. Derrida draws a fundamental distinction between the "philosophy" of Plato (which comes under the guise of "Platonism") and his "text". "The philosophy of Plato," Derrida explains, is an abstraction and a simplification, while the text from which it has been excised is complex and heterogeneous, a multiplex of innumerable threads and layers. The text produces numerous "effects": semantic and syntactical, constative and performative, stylistic and rhetorical, and what is apprehended as the content of his text is expressed in the name of Platonism."[26]

"This will be called Platonism or the philosophy of Plato, which is neither arbitrary nor illegitimate, since a certain force of thetic abstraction at work in the heterogeneous text of Plato can recommend one to do so..."Platonism" is thus certainly one of the effects of the text signed by Plato, for a long time, and for necessary reasons, the dominant effect, but this effect is always turned back against the text."[27]

For Derrida, the logocentrism inherent in Platonism is the result of a certain process of discursive legitimation and privileging of Plato's "philosophy" over the "text" he has actually written. By investing in the heterogeneous elements in the text and adhering to the various philosophemes and ideas that are engineered within its innumerable layers, I attempt not to marginalise the basic tenets of Platonism but to determine in what way the paradox and

---

[24] Derrida's focus in his "Plato's Pharmacy" is the equivocity of the sign rather than the instability inherent in "reference" or representation of the object. The polyvalence of the *pharmakon* in Plato's *Phaedrus* reveals an economy of meaning beyond the intentions of the author. See Derrida 1981a.

[25] Derrida 1995.

[26] Caputo 1998: 82.

[27] Derrida 1995: 120

the problematic of the subject is a constituent feature of the text, always keeping within view the distinction which Derrida describes and which has informed Western philosophy since Plato.

1.5 The Structure of My Thesis

The thesis is structured in such a way as to determine to some extent a development of the argument concerning the problematic of the subject and the inherent problems in Plato's mimetology. It attempts to move from the simplest conceptions of Plato's mimetology in the *Republic* and *Ion* to the more profoundly difficult formulation of the problems inherent in Plato's schema of mimesis in the *Cratylus* and the *Sophist*. For this reason the thesis encapsulates this development by identifying four sections.

The first and second sections of the thesis involves a consideration of the *Republic* and the *Ion* respectively, where the purpose is to identify the subjectal withdrawal and loss in mimesis, that is, the subjectal withdrawal attending mimesis. The *Republic* elicits the manner in which every act of mimesis or every mimetic activity involves the complete subreption of the subject; the dissimulation of the subject. Plato's attempt to arrive at the decision to banish mimesis from the polis—the mimetic expressions and artifacts of actors and painters respectively—presupposes the problems of subjectal dissimulation. The *Republic* is motivated by the decision to provide a new constitution of the subject, in the figure of the philosopher-guardian. What I will attempt to illustrate is that the decision of any philosophical constitution of the subject is made possible only by way of dismissing its mimetic doubles. This dismissal of mimesis is only possible if Plato maintains an eidetic relation for all mimetic productions and finally to repress the question of subjectal representation in the *Republic*. The argument in the *Ion* canvasses the problem at issue by addressing subjectal dissimulation and withdrawal in terms of the rhapsodic and hypocritic subject. Plato again attempts to consolidate a conception of the subject that is consistent to the demands of the *Republic*. It is a criticism of the subject, who engages in *theatrical* mimesis in order to withdraw from his or her theatrical

persona and so formally figures a split in the subject. Here again, I argue, that the ambiguity of the hermeneutic models referred to in the dialogue as appropriate within discourse contributes to the undecidability of the rhapsodic subject, who consolidates his/her subjectal presence during a performance yet paradoxically is held by his/her representative persona hence resulting in the loss of self.

In the third and fourth sections of the thesis, I take up the task of considering both the *Cratylus* and the *Sophist* in light of the argument developed in sections one and two. In these sections I seek to expound on Plato's awareness of the inherent equivocity of discourse and determine in what way this equivocity is ineradicably built into language. Whether the *Cratylus* makes that decisive step to thwart equivocity insofar as language is concerned, where the grammatical subject is secured by again reassuring the priority of the *eidos,* it is made possible by the theoretical elimination of falsehood and thus protecting the subjectivity of the subject, by ridding language of its inherent ambivalence. Still, it will be argued that the *Sophist* is implicitly caught up in the problems of the *Cratylus.* The question of the dual place adopted by the sophistic subject and Plato's way of exposing the sophist as a subjectivity without a *subjectum* is done in terms of a constantly generated self-difference. I will attempt to argue that the sophistic subject who is sought for is presented as a substitute for the philosopher, taking identity from that designation and yet radically escaping that designation. In the context of the *Sophist* I will elucidate in what way the sophistic subject presents him or herself as a self-erased subject deconstituted by his or her difference to the philosophic subject, but ultimately I seek to determine in what way the sophistic subject mimes the philosopher thus exposing in what way the philosophical subject is also bedeviled by mimesis.

The abbreviations used for ancient philosophical texts in the footnotes follow the system of the second edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.[28] The only exception to this is the *Republic* which is abbreviated as *Rep.* as opposed to the abbreviation of its Latin title *Resp.* for *Respublica.* Translations that have been provided are those of noted scholars in the field and translations that are my own are indicated by footnote. On occasion a direct translation is not given where the context of my preceding or following discussion makes the sense and meaning of the Greek clear. Greeks words that have been transliterated generally appear in italics. The exceptions to this are "mimesis", "logos", "mythos" "episteme", "techne", "poiesis", "diegesis", "pseudos", "hermeneia", "dynamis", "dianoia", "onoma", "genos", "schema", "onomastic", "physis", "aporia" and "diaeresis". The latter appear without italics because of their consistent and special usage throughout the thesis. Moreover their discursive currency and regular usage in academic philosophy and classical studies are acknowledged. For Plato's writings, I have throughout followed the Loeb translations unless otherwise indicated by footnote. Some of my own translations have been used for specific passages especially when the ambiguity of certain words are not accounted for in the received translations and will be again be indicated by footnote.

---

[28] Hammond and Scullard 1970: ix-xxii.

Chapter Two

Typologies:
Mythopoetic *Typos*

"Most excellent of strangers, we ourselves, to the best of our ability, are the authors of

a tragedy at once superlatively fair and good; at least all our polity is framed as a

representation of the fairest and best life [ἡμῖν ἡ πολιτεία ξυνέστηκε μίμησης

τοῦ καλλίστου καὶ ἀρίστου βίου] which is in reality, as we assert, the truest tragedy

[εἶναι τραγῳδίαν τὴν ἀληθεστάτην]. Thus we are composers of the same things as

ourselves, rivals of yours as artists and actors of the fairest drama

[ὑμιν ἀντίτεχνοί τε καὶ ἀνταγωνισταὶ τοῦ καλλίστου δράματος]."

Laws. VII, 817 b2-6

2.1   The Poet's "εἴδος λόγων"

It is well known that what Plato inaugurates in the *Republic* as a principle theme, namely the

discourse on Justice (περὶ δικαίου), leads to a kind of philosophical predestination to the

question of *poetics* and more fundamentally that of mimesis. Certainly the discourse on

dikaiosynê has established or predetermined the context for the discussion of the traditional

pedagogy insofar as the mythopoetic discourses (i.e. tragedy or epic) have subsumed this

classical thematic.

What unfolds as a major Socratic concern, above everything else, is the kind of language

or discourse [εἴδος λόγων] used by the poets on the question of justice and injustice

[περὶ δικαιοσύνης τε και ἀδικίας, 363 e9-a1]. Before pursuing this concern, we would have to

be in a position to understand how the derivation of the εἶδος of poetic discourse effects the deliberations on the question of justice.

To begin to formulate our concern, at least provisionally, we must ask: What can be said about poetry's εἶδος λόγων especially when it touches upon or attempts to extemporarily thematize questions of the just or injust? Essentially, the question posed here is that of poetic discourse, especially as the subsequent discourse in book two attempts to determine poetry's authenticity, tropic guilelessness and logical veracity.

It goes without saying that the poet's logos reflects on the question of justice in ways which ensures a certain distortion of truth. And it is certain that the question of poetic logos, its themes and subjects, can scarcely be a simple matter. For it is not simply that poetic logos falls out of the possibilities and efficiencies of philosophy as such, or even finally that it is supposed to present itself or assume philosophical veracity. The problem diagnosed is that of its predilection to lie, misrepresent and distort truth. It is subsequently a matter of its "content" and this is the content of the question if one may say so. The strangest of speeches, according to Socrates, concern "what the poets say about the gods and virtue [τούτων δὲ πάντων οἱ περὶ θεῶν τε λόγοι καὶἀρετῆς θαυμασιώτατοι λέγονται, 364 b3]." That is to say, the "content" of the poet's exposition, that is, everything that concerns his logos is that it subverts theological and moral prescriptions. These prescriptions, as I will attempt to illustrate, presuppose a *typos* (pattern or type) that constitutes the ineluctable truths concerning the gods and morality.

However what Glaucon recognizes (and Socrates here remains silently skeptical) is that the witness (the overseer, the signatory) the *martyras* of these *logoi* cited by the layperson is "the poet" [τοῖς λόγοις μάρτυρας ποιητὰς ἐπάγονται, 364 c8]. The "poet" is the figure here considered, the *martyras* of the gods. And it is his traditionally prodigious role as *martyras* (the one who bears witness and testimony regarding the nature of the gods) that Socrates considers

morally sinister. Socrates will make certain precautions, though he does not admit it so early in the dialogue, he will be obliged to do so by Glaucon/Thrasymachus in its ensuing moments.

"And they produce a bushel of books [βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον] of Musaeus and Orpheus, the offspring of the Moon and of the Muses, as they affirm, and these books they use in their ritual, and make not only ordinary men but states believe that there really are remissions of sins and purifications for deeds of injustice [ὡς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων], by means of sacrifice and pleasant play [διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ παιδιᾶς] for the living and that there are special rights for the defunct, which they call functions, that deliver us from evils in that other world, while terrible things await those who have neglected to sacrifice." [1]

There is certainly an urgent need for a critical ablution of the nature of poetic language and a philosophical rectification of the poet's εἶδος λόγων as such. Certainly what is deemed dangerous in the poets' "bushel of books" [βίβλων δὲ ὅμαδον], is its pernicious polylogical structure. The noise, din, hubbub, the babel [ὅμαδον] made by the many voices permeating or emanating from the poet's text brings about onerous confusion regarding the discourse on the gods. It is this dissimulation of voices and figures of discourse that certainly will inaugurate Socrates' *epistasis* of poetry by the end of the second book. Moreover, the epistatic redress of the poet's εἶδος λόγων though it involves reinstating this logos within truth and moreover entails detecting and expiating the lies about the gods, which involves a critical remission of sorts, this epistasis is rather more fundamentally concerned about the way the poet dissimulates and fictions himself, speaks in many tongues, "babelizes"[2] in his discourse, appropriates and dissimulates

---

Rep. 364 e3 - 365 a2

[2] In "Des Tours de Babel" Derrida addresses the problem caused by translation, accounting for the confusion of language and its potentialities of meanings by using the example of the biblical story of Babel. See Derrida 1985: 165-207

himself with other voices. Socrates deplores his pernicious influence on ordinary men and the state [ἰδιώτας...καὶ πόλεις, 364 e7) because it involves the duplicity of the subject, it involves the withdrawal of the subject.

As I will attempt to illustrate this criticism of the "content" of traditional mythopoetic discourse is the most sedulous and exhaustive critical exercise and it is the case only because it preempts the criticism of the "form" or *lexis* of the poet's discourse. In fact, the critique of the poetic discourse or logos in book two, measures itself constantly against the question of justice and certainly Glaucon commits himself to the pretensions of the poet who in his or her poetry improperly describes the 'just' individual. The poet's characters generally maintain "an opinion or ungrounded belief of being 'just' [δόξαν δικαιοσύνης παρασκευασαμένῳ, 365 b9]."What is more important is that this *doxic* or opinionated propriety of being "just" leads Glaucon to the presumption that the "seeming [τὸ δοκεῖν]"[3] in the case of the poet "governs or masters the reality [κύριον εὐδαιμονίας]" and subsequently "overpowers the truth [τὰν ἀλάθειαν βιᾶται]." Socrates will commit to this judgment in his critique even as Glaucon devotes himself to the poet's pretense of "being just" without any reservations [ἐπὶ τοῦτο δὴ τρεπτέον ὅλως, 365 c1-3]." Ultimately what concerns Plato is the deception and pretension of the subject as a "just being" and the most pernicious example of this deception is founded in the duplicity exhibited by the subject of poetry.

There is in Glaucon's doxological determination of "justice", that is, this pretension to being just, an element of secrecy. That behind this presentment of virtue therein lies an element of deceit. Moreover, this specious ostentation of *aretê* almost certainly never touches upon the secret. We find here that the mythopoetic discourse already, in the manner it presents these

---

[3] The word δόξα derives from δοκέω, thus the "seeming" is close to the idea of "opinion and belief" as opposed to truth or knowledge. The entire philosophical program in *Republic* is essentially the positing of truth (as a greater virtue and philosophically "just") as opposed to what is critically determined as the "seeming" aspect, non-truth basis of poetry.

philosophical themes, forms the explicit critique of "the poets" *en abyme* on the issues. These are questions and matters that exclusively belong to philosophy as such; it is a fundamental philosophical propriety. Glaucon however declares himself, at least "seemingly", to hide behind the shadowy facade of the virtuous and just man. As Glaucon explains,

"For a front and show I must draw about myself a shadow-outline of virtue [Πρόθυρα μὲν καὶ σχῆμα κύκλῳ περὶ ἐμαυτὸν σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς περιγραπτέον], but trail behind me the fox of the most sage Archilochus, shifty and bent on again. You may say it is not easy for a wrongdoer always to lie hid [οὐ ῥάδιον ἀεὶ λανθάνειν κακὸν ὄντα]. Neither is any other big thing facile we shall reply. But all the same if we expect to be happy, we must pursue the path to which the footprints of our argument point."[4]

Obviously in a very general way the terminology that will introduce the problem of mimesis appears in the context of Glaucon's bent towards the dissimulation of the ethical. The term σκιαγραφίαν (shadow writing) and its meaningful filiation to all that suggests falsehood and duplicity preempts the ontological determination of mimesis, in so far as it produces the pure outward shadowy appearance of "the thing itself". Glaucon suggests he will schematically sketch around himself a σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς ("the shadowy-appearance of virtue").[5] This deception of the shadow will not only return in subsequent moments in the dialogue, as it does in the cave allegory in book seven, but does so in an explicit critical manner in the dialogue's final moment when the question of mimesis is reappraised in view of the "theory of forms".

---

[4] *Rep.* 365 c3-6

[5] Glaucon at 365 b2 re-asks Pindar's question "Is it by justice or by crooked deceit that I the higher tower shall scale and so live my life out in fenced and guarded security?" (365b2), he answers the question, considering the moral order of the mythopoetic tradition, "by crooked deceit" σκολιαῖς ἀπάταις).

What has already been discussed on the question of the "just" is preinscribed within the discourse which will inaugurate the criticism of the logos of the poets, of poetic discourse in general. Already the question of *apatê* (deceit), falsehood and the lie, has in a monolithic way anticipated the censure of poetic logos. Moreover it involves the exile of the principal proponent of this discourse, the poet himself. Though I may seem somewhat precipitous here, exposing this critical scene, the question that presents itself as almost an exigency for the philosopher is, at least from Glaucon's standpoint, whether the poet's facile tales could conceal or ensconce the unjust man or the evil being [λανθάνειν κακὸν ὄντα, 365 c9]. The "footprints" or the traces of the present logos [τὰ ἴχνη τῶν λόγων] suggests that an incorrect typology has marked the current discourse, for though Glaucon suggests that it is "with a view to lying hid" [ἐπὶ γὰρ τὸ λανθάνειν, 365 d3], that is, through dissimulation and subjectal withdrawal, that they will organize societies and political factions through the help of teachers of cajolery, the imitative genos, it moreover forecasts the criticism of this false *typos* which has marked the logos. Though this ethic of deceit and dissimulation may elude the observation of the gods or can be expiated by sacrifices and offerings to the gods,[6] the context has been conceived for Socrates' critical intervention, for it is the philosopher who will be able to show "the falsity [ψευδῆ] of these arguments."[7]

The criticism of the poets is unavoidable, and it may be considered self-evident. How will Socrates overcome the traditional ethical paradigm founded by the poets? Adeimantus, in part, repudiates an anticipated rejoinder to his eulogy of justice and the just individual in the first book and rather calls on Socrates to freely proceed and not decline the apologetic response to the question of justice that will supersede Glaucon's logos.

---

[6] *Rep.* 365 e1-4

[7] *Rep.* 366 c3

2.2 The *Arche-Politic*: The Architechtonics of the Polis

In foregrounding this scene of the politics of poetry, as it has been recounted by Glaucon, I am hoping to orient the discussion toward Plato's ethico-political criticism of traditional poetics. In order to anticipate the adversaries (i.e. the philosophers) of the criticism of traditional mythopoetic discourse in books two and three, I would like to note how Plato plays the poet against the philosopher. Though I would like to remain cautious and avoid speaking of a "politics" here, I would like to consider at least the political implications of the logos at hand, that is to say, to consider how Plato opens the community of poets, soothsayers, rhapsodes, actors and sophists (this bastard genos) to that of the philosopher, who supposedly carries an irrepressible political exigency to maintain "truth."[8] The philosophical transcription of the *arche-politic*[9] presents a political demand to critique the community of dissimulators and imitators. It is precisely this critique that makes book two the writing and making of a new community. Its clandestine project is that which ultimately involves, as I will illustrate in the ensuing chapters of this thesis, the writing of a new subject who will reemerge at the scene of its deceitful withdrawal and loss.

It is important to note that in this context we would need to understand the political not in its restricted sense but in the broader sense, that is, as fundamentally *theoretical*. The *arche-politic* is organized on the basis of a fundamental theoretical design, that is, on the essential knowledge of *dikê* or justice. Following Heidegger, the enquiry into art or *mythopoiesis* in general is political to the extent it arises in theoretical connection to the *Republic*. In essence, the question of the political or of politics in general, is the question of truth.[10]

---

[8] This stand in the name of truth is in an exemplary manner presented in the *Apology*, where Socrates is depicted as a *martyras* of truth.

[9] See *Rep.* 369 c8

[10] See Heidegger 1979: 64-166. "Hence if one still wants to say that Plato is here inquiring politically into art, it can only meaning that he evaluates art, with reference to its position in the state, upon the essence and

Socrates will proceed to define this community, the community that will be governed by the guardian-subject, who is presented in the *Republic* as the exemplary *typos* of the subject. The *Republic*, as in the case of all the dialogues considered in this thesis, seeks to establish an appropriate conception of subjectivity. At 369c8 Socrates suggests to his interlocutors that "we create a city from the beginning in our discourse [τῷ λόγῳ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ποιῶμεν πόλιν]." The logos of the philosopher will create [ποιῶμεν] the *arche-polis* and certainly what this presupposes is a pattern or an archetype of the body politic[11] which will be written into the logos. That it is written and founded "first" [ἐξ ἀρχῆς] suggests a premeditated deparure in the logos [τῷ λόγῳ] at hand. It is for this reason the *Republic* becomes the discursive blueprint or arche-*typos* of not only the ideal polis but that of the guardian and citizen *subject*.

The philosopher, as we will further see and yet in many ways can already anticipate, will be the guardian of logos, of the nature of communication and discourse as such. After covering what could be considered as a major diversion in the critique,[12] an important question of the work is raised. Socrates wants to determine whether it is better for a man to be "working in many tasks or one [εἷς ὢν πολλὰς τέχνας ἐργαζόμενος, ἢ ὅταν μίαν εἷς, 370 b3]." Again as in many of the dialogues, the polytechnical ability of the subject is questioned and it is made clear subsequently that "it is impossible to do the work of many arts well [ἀδύνατον ἕνα πολλὰς καλῶς ἐργάζεσθαι τέχνας, 374 a7]." The polytechny is a concern throughout Plato's writings as it is an ability bedeviled by the economy of mimesis in general. The polytechnician lacks singularity as he is adept in many *technai*, thus he has propriety in many things and everything thus becomes his property. The problem of mimesis coincides with, and perhaps explains, this ability of the

---

sustaining grounds of the state, upon knowledge of truth. Such inquiry into art is "theoretical" in the highest degree, the distinction between political and theoretical inquiry no longer makes any sense at all." Heidegger 1979: 166.

[11] At *Rep.* 374 a6 it is argued that Socrates and his interlocutors are "molding" a *polis* [ἐπλάττομεν τὴν πόλιν]. The idea of molding suggests creating an archetype .

polytechnician, as he is able to feign possessing knowledge of many *technai*. The concern moreover translates as an economic one, as the polytechnician is able to proliferate and reproduce erroneously counterfeit and mimetically determined knowledge.

Indications throughout the early part of book two permit us to preempt the critique of mimesis. The mimetician or imitator, before even the critique of his logos or work as such begins, exceeds the requirements of the proscribed *polis*. The entire class of huntsmen and mimeticians [οἵ μιμηταί] exceed the requirements of necessity in the *politeia*.[13] This criticism further includes "the poets and their assistants, rhapsodists, actors, chorus-dancers, contractors-and the manufacturers of all kinds of articles, especially those that have to do with women's adornment."[14] And certainly what was considered useful or χρεία in the original outline of the polis determines in many ways how the work or arts of the mimetic genos is considered "unnecessary [οὐκέτι τοῦ ἀναγκαίου, 373 b4]."[15]

2.2.1 The Arche-*typos* of Subjectivity: The Guardian as Subject

The schema of the polis is seen to be untenable here, without considering "the work of the guardian [τῶν φυλάκων ἔργον, 374 e1]." What is deemed necessary is the incarnation of the φύλαξ of the *archepolis* given the unappeasable problematic of the subject has to be superseded. Socrates adds to the traditional constitution of the φύλακα, that is, in addition to the traditional qualities of "his high-spirited nature [θυμοειδὴς] his strength [ἰσχυρὸς] and quickness [ταχὺς, 376 c4][16] a more essential quality. Socrates seeks to assure that he carries a philosophical disposition, or more correctly, he must have the "philosopher" within him. This point refers to

---

[12] *Rep.* 370c-373d.

[13] *Rep.* 373 b1-7

[14] *Rep.* 373 b8-c3

[15] Though, for Plato, the *genos* is not *anagkaion* it is not yet excluded from the *arche-polis*.

[16] Such qualities are recognizable in the heroic ethos promulgated by the traditional mythopoetic tradition from Homer to Aeschylus.

the lack of a "philosophical nature [ἔτι προσγενέσθαι φιλόσοφος τὴν φύσιν, 375 e9]" in the guardians fashioned by the mythopoetic tradition.[17] Already here the guardian subject is distinguished from the subject of dissimulation, pretension and polytechny. The guardian is represented as a subject that is to be fashioned in a manner that he bears resemblance to the philosopher. Plato has thus already conceived subjectivity in terms of philosophical physis, in doing this he is able to assert a new constitution of the subject in the figure of the guardian.

Whatever the interest accorded to the guardian, and this remains, despite politics, an altogether philosophical interest, we need to consider to what extent this interest emerges out of a philosophical exigency or uneasiness. This is certainly a matter we shall return to since the question of pedagogy reveals a fundamental disjunction and theoretical conflict, as the traditional form of pedagogy is set against the *tropos*[18] of philosophical education.

In this rapid presentation of Plato's development of the *archepolis*, the central concern being metaphysical as it considers the arche-*typos* of subjectivity, and in trying to point out a radical disjunction between the traditional pedagogy and that which Socrates forcefully puts in place, it seems important to begin to understand what this radical differentiation, or more appropriately, disjunction, suggests within the philosophical presupposition of the new pedagogy.

Socrates asks, after mature consideration of the poet's *eidos logon* and its political and pedagogical ramifications,

---

[17] Plato undoubtedly has the traditional Homeric hero or *basileus* in mind. This is consistent given the discussion at hand but moreover it preempts the Homeric examples that are later appraised and censured.

[18] See *Rep.* 376 c9

"What, then, is our education?" [Τίς οὖν ἡ παιδεία;] Or is it hard to find

better than that which long time has been discovered?

[ἢ χαλεπὸν εὑρεῖν βελτίω τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ χρόνου εὑρημένης;]."[19]

Obviously we can see that this question carries a fundamental philosophical presupposition. To further the argument is almost to answer the second question in the negative, that is, that traditional pedagogy is not found to be βελτίω (or better) and moreover has not stood the test of time; it has proved maleficent to members of the traditional polis. Certainly Plato's emphasis upon the pedagogic essence of the mythopoetic tradition and its predominance in the education of the *politê* or citizen is a fundamental concern, for the problem, as I will illustrate, takes on one fundamental name; "mimesis." This amounts to the potential problems that inherently are generated when accounting for the relation between mimesis and subjectivity. Ultimately it is the relationship between the two that foregrounds the fundamental question concerning the relationship between philosophy and all *other* discursive forms banished and condemned in Plato's dialogues.

2.3 Generic Differentiations: *Mousikê* and Logos

Socrates has now stressed the centrality of the question of pedagogy in book two and in particular part of the question presents a regard for the generic classification of traditional *pedagogics*. Gymnastics and Music are considered to be the fundamental subjects for the body and soul respectively. In order to understand the relation between them and discern what it is they delimit, Socrates necessarily needs to maintain that the question of pedagogy is a question of *theoria*. Theory is the arche and telos of *pedagogics*. It is for this reason the question of gymnastics is subordinated to the question of μουσική which in essence encapsulates the "theoretical".

---

[19] For a parallel discussion on the question of *paedagogics* see *Pol.* 300b and *Laws* 844A.

The entire discussion on pedagogy is organized around two conceptions (a) a prototypal design (the *archepolis*), that is, the theoretical schema of the philosopher's *polis* and (b) a new conception of subjectivity which involves the presentation of the subject that is conceived from the theoretical schema of the typology in books two and three. The education in *mousikê* is prioritized in its deliberation, one, because it quite simply precedes and begins at an earlier age [πρότερον ἀρξόμεθα παιδεύοντας, 376 e7][20] and by way of suggestion the education in *mousikê* expropriates a philosophical responsibility, an education "for the soul [ἐπὶ ψυχῇ, 376 e6]."

What is revealed subsequently is that a fundamental eidos belongs to *mousikê*, in that its logos is an originary condition of pedagogics and more broadly ethics. However this propriety of *mousikê*, logos as its primary educational tool, is forthwith questioned, since in the diaeresis there are "two kinds of logos [Λόγων δὲ διττὸν εἶδος, 376e 8]," two aspects or "forms" of discourse, namely, the true [τὸ ἀληθές] and the false [ψεῦδος].[21] One inevitably questions this bipartition in the formal musicology and asks what legitimately prompts the idea of the *pseudos* logos as essentially pertaining to falsehood or the "untrue".[22]

If Plato passes over the geneology of the mythopoetic tradition, the development of the mythopoetic logos and its discursive mode, it is rather to set up a metaphysical opposition between two kinds of logos by way of fashioning an order of subordination. The logos v . ., is classified as ψεῦδος[23] involves its inscription in the metaphysical order that the *Republic* as a whole attempts to establish, that which ultimately presumes the eidos or Idea. The pseudos logos

---

[20] See *Rep.* 377a 5.

[21] See Hesiod's *Theog.* 27-28.

[22] According to Belfiore the basis of Plato's attack of the mythopoetic tradition is conditioned on the fact that there is a vindication of the lie of falsehood. Hesiodic mythoi "speak lies like truth" and the *pseudea* of the mythopoetic tradition is based on an incorrect typology. Plato according to Belfiore condones the *pseudea* that resemble truth as long as they follow the prescribed typology of books three, 389b and 414b-c. See Belfiore 1985: 50.

will be elaborately treated only in terms of logos ἀληθές. However, does Plato's *pseudology*, the discourse on the lie or the fictional, subsume the metaphysics of the dialogue or does it maintain itself below or beyond metaphysical oppositions? This question we shall return to shortly, it seems necessary to consider how Plato treats the traditional pedagogical system.

2.4 Typographic Metaphor: On the Maternal Logos

"Do you not know, then that the beginning in every task is the chief thing

[Οὐκοῦν οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι ἀρχὴ παντὸς ἔργου μέγιστον], especially for any creature that is

young and tender? For it is then that it is best molded and takes the impression one

wishes to stamp upon it [μάλιστα γὰρ δὴ τότε πλάττεται καὶ ἐνδύεται

τύπος, ὃν ἄν τις βούληται ἑκάστῳ ἐνσημήνασθα]."[24]

The density of these metaphors of "impressions" and "moldings"[25] interests us because the entire pedagogical debate is oriented around the effects of a particular logos on the young and the *arche* is significant in so far as impressions are permanently made. Socrates determines there are two phases to the pedagogic metaphor; (a) a preparation of ground which involves a type of "molding" of the subject and (b) the marking of the typos of one's discourse or logos on this subjectal ground.

---

[23] *Rep.* 376 e9

[24] *Rep.* 377 a8-b3

[25] See Sling 1988. 41. Sling points out that there are two distinct metaphors here: the first πλάττεται is that of molding in shape (377 c5-6) and the second ἐνδύεται τύπος of imprinting an impression upon it. Also see *Theaet.* 191d 6-7 for a similar use of the metaphor, where it is suggested that the mind receives sensations and impressions (perceptions) like a block of wax stamped with the impressions of signet rings (ὥσπερ δακτυλίων σημεια ἐνσημαινομένους). Also in the *Laws* 789e mothers are told to mold their infants like wax (πλάττειν...οιον κήριον). A further example of the "molding metaphor" see. *Alc.* 121d 6-7 (προστέτακται επιμέλεσθαι του γενομένου...αναπλάττοντας τα μέλη του παιδός).

The traditional pedagogy is presented as a pernicious presentiment of the maternal or the feminine *as such*. The maternal discourse, the pedagogy of mothers and nurses, does not take into account the prematuration of the child's psyche and Socrates recognizes in it its absolute passivity.[26] The metaphors of "moldings" and "receiving impressions" concerns itself with the passive being of the child-subject and finds fundamentally pernicious the psychological inclination and passive reception of the mother's recitation of fables and stories. From here it is a short step to assure that the concern further encapsulates the effects, impressions of the maternal logos which in essence shows itself to be primordial, that is to say, it precedes or comes before the discourse of philosophy.

2.4.1 Typography, Mimesis and the Feminine

Certainly the premature child is essentially predisposed to the effects of the maternal logos; the effects which are deemed to be perniciously mimetic. The typographic metaphor illustrates the effect of mimesis and how the mimetic is necessarily inherent in the maternal logos. This could be considered an abrupt introduction to the problem of mimesis however it presupposes the problem of the affective character of mimesis, it attests to the vulnerability and utter passivity of the subject. Though it is the child-subject that is screened from a mimetic affectation, it is most certainly the philosopher-guardian that this critique remains pertinent to. The critique of the primordial logos of the mother is predisposed to molding, fashioning, sculpting the figure of the guardian subject. Stated more rigorously, philosophy in its pedagogical supposition is, perhaps, engendering a new conception of subjectivity in the example of the guardian-subject (the *phylaka*) by drawing upon the typographic and essentially *mimetic* effects of the maternal logos.

---

[26] On the discussion of the passivity of the subject which the metaphors imply and its mimetic effects see Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: n. 26. 126. Lacoue-Labarthe makes much of the typographic metaphor in his *Typography* explaining, "Mimesis is the effect of the *typo-graphy* and of the fundamental "in-semination" which at bottom define the essence of *paideia* (of formation or of *Bildung*)." Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 127.

As we will see in due course, Plato's conception of the guardian subject entails the "fictioning", "figuration" of the subject; it involves a fundamental *mimetic* predilection.

Questions of course persist, which might in the end defeat the possibility of the subject in the *Republic*. Thus, how would it be possible to elaborate the content of this subject without admitting the problems that arise from its relationship to mimesis? Might the subject somehow precede mimesis by giving us something that mimetic events then regenerate as replicas? Or, if this is too thoroughly to gainsay Plato's pedagogical and typological prescriptions, could it perhaps, under an opposite description, be a subject that is consequent upon mimetic duplication? Or even, might this subject finally exhibit a subjectivity that is "true" in the specific sense of being free from remaining in fee to mimesis?

One necessarily has to concur with Lacoue-Labarthe on this point that the problem of pedagogy is not simply "the problem of the lie,"[27] of the pseudos logos, which Socrates will castigate and censor in the ensuing moments of the dialogue. Instead it is oriented around the problem of the "subject"[28] especially in its passive relation to or more appropriately its passive reception of the maternal logoi, which already implies a subordinate relation.

Behind a thematic still largely dependent on traditional *pedagogics*, that is, the maternal logos, we can draw from this critical moment an uneasiness regarding the origins of these *mythoi* recited by mothers and nurses. It is certain that Socrates had already had an idea of the fortuitous constitution of the traditional mythology. Even if Socrates constructs an entirely new mythology[29] it would be one that will be foundational for the polis, which in essence will formulate the fundamental structure of subjectivity. Socrates recognizes the originary differentiation of these *mythoi* recited by mothers and nurses and moreover alludes to their

---

[27] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 125.

[28] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 125.

[29] Segal 1978: 315-335.

obscure origins and derivation, their doubtful authorship and chance pedagogues. Socrates explains,

> "Shall we then, thus lightly suffer our children to listen to any chance stories [τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων μύθους] fashioned by any chance teachers and so take into their minds/souls [λαμβάνειν ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς] for the most part contrary to those that we shall think it desirable for them to hold when they grow up?"[30]

The child's natural submission to these *mythoi*, devised and authenticated fortuitously, preoccupies Socrates precisely because it already entangles the child in a psychological affectation, as these mythoi leave their "impression" on the soul. The child essentially is engendered by these impromptu recitative *mythoi*. The question of pedagogy, though it already subordinates the question of poiesis as poesy or as mimetic, is refocused or redirected by way of concerning itself with truth which already presupposes its relation to the *mimetic* in general.

2.5 *Pseudology*: The Censure of the *Pseudos*

> "We must begin, then it seems, by a censorship over our storymakers [ἐπιστατητέον τοῖς μυθοποιοῖς] and what they do well we must pass [καὶ ὃν μὲν ἂν καλὸν ποιήσωσιν, ἐγκριτέον] and what not, reject [ὃν δ' ἂν μή, ἀποκριτέον]. And the stories on the accepted list we will induce nurses and mothers to tell to the children [τοὺς δ ἐγκριθντας πείσομεν τὰς τροφούς τε καὶ μητέρας λέγειν τοῖς παισὶ] and so shape their souls by these stories [καὶ πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν τοῖς μύθοις]far rather than their bodies by their hands [πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὰ σώματα ταῖς χερσίν]. But most of

---

[30] *Rep.*377 b4-7.

the stories they now tell we must reject [ὦν δέ νῦν λέγουσι τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκβλητέον]."[31]

The censorship program adopted here attempts to respond to the problematic of the subject and more implicitly the maternal influence on the subject. Socrates explains that an epistasis, a "censorship over the *mythopoets* [ἐπιστατητέον τοῖς μυθοποιοῖς]" is necessary and this overall necessitates the implementation of a *mythology* that in essence can theorize its own conception and origin. It is almost certain that the diverse figures and denomination of mythoi, the accidental and "chance" circulation of tales and stories, must be redressed. The recognizably heterogeneous and dissociated origins of the traditional mythology lead the enquiry to the urgent rectification of traditional *pedagogics*. This entails a purification of its language and moreover, as we shall subsequently see, its content and form. This philosophical *epistasis*, as I would like to refer to it, does not merely redress the problem of the feminine alone, a problem which will be restated in the beginning of the third book of the *Republic*, but moreover overhauls the problem of mimesis in general. In the name of philosophy or under the pressure of something that exclusively has proffered philosophy its right, namely *dikê*, the mythology is interrogated and censured in view of something other than its pedagogical influence; namely mimesis, that is, the inscription of the subject by a *typos* inappropriate to it.

Such an *epistasis* deems to suppress the pseudologic quality of the traditional mythology yet, on the other hand, it attempts to conserve in its proper presentation a logos *alêthes*, that is, a logos which is a likely presentation of truth. For though most of the stories [τοῖς μύθοις] that are "told by nurses and mothers [τὰς τροφούς τε καὶ μητέρας λέγειν]" are answered to and thus "rejected [ἀποκριτέον]," it is all *mythoi* that do not appeal to beauty [καλὸν] and are not made or "poeticized well [ἂν καλὸν ποιήσωσιν]" that are relentlessly

---

[31] *Rep.*377 b9-c6.

castigated.[32] Socrates explains that after such an *apokrisis*, a peremptory separation of all stories that involves the bipartition of the true and false mythoi, that he and his interlocutors will mandate mothers and nurses to shape "their children's souls [πλάττειν τὰς ψυχὰς]" with selected or philosophically appropriate or "approved [τοὺς ἐγκριθέντας]" stories. Mythoi will be consecrated as philosophy and more ominously, through philosophy. The mythoi that are deemed τοὺς ἐγκριθέντας, that is, all mythoi that are considered to be "appropriate" are those that heretofore comprise of the "truth."

It is on the grounds of truth that most of the stories are thrown away, cast out or "rejected [τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐκβλητέον]." This all begins necessarily through an act of censure, by a censorship over the storymakers, the *mythopoets*. As we will soon determine, from book three Plato regulates his entire critique of the mythopoetic tradition through what may be called an epistatic program. It involves a scrupulous expurgation of the traditional mythology and thus inaugurates the fictioning of the theoretical polity and most importantly the constitution and re-inscription of the citizen subject.

The motive and interest in the traditional mythology is not sufficiently circumscribed in the second book of the *Republic*. What is certain, in any case, is that a theoretical containment, the implementation of a great example of mythology, the endorsement of paradigmatic *mythoi*, is necessary for there to be an effective critique and a proper or justifiable *epistasis*. Indeed, it is the heterogeneous and diverse forms of mythoi, which moreover implies the "accidental" forms of the traditional mythology, that presents a critical and more explicitly a "theoretical" problem.

"The example of the greater stories [ἐν τοῖς μείζοσιν μύθοις] will show us

the lesser to [ὀψόμεθα καὶ τοὺς ἐλάττους]. For surely the pattern must be the

---

[32] The form content criticism is not formerly introduced (*Rep.* 377b9-c6) here however it is inaugurated in a clandestine manner and not in a formal philosophical way. This has much to do with the fact no conception of the eidos has at this stage been formulated.

same [τὸν αὐτὸν τύπον εἶναι] and the greater and the less must have a like tendency [καὶ ταὐτὸν δύνασθαι τούς τε μείζους καὶ τοὺς ἐλάττους]."[33]

Certainly, in the example of the greater stories [τοῖς μείζοσιν μύθοις] Socrates has discovered a *typos*, a pattern or schema, that precedes all these differentiations and mythic derivations that encompass the non-originary character of mythos proper. Certainly this *typology* will lead the way for the critique of *mythopoiesis*, that is, the making, fashioning or constitution of mythoi in their traditional presentation. Socrates discovers the mythopoetic *typos* in the mythoi of Hesiod and Homer; he argues that therewith lies the great paradigm of the traditional mythoi. Socrates goes on to say,

> "Those that Hesiod and Homer and the other poets related to us [Οὓς Ἡσίοδός τε...καὶ Ὅμηρος ἡμῖν ἐλεγέτην καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταί]. These, composed false stories which they told and still tell to mankind [οὗτοι γάρ που μύθους τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ψευδεῖς συντιθέντες ἔλεγόν τε καὶ λέγουσιν] one ought first to chiefly blame, especially if the lie has no beauty in it [ἐάν τις μὴ καλῶς ψεύδηται]...like when anyone images (represents) badly in his speech the true nature of gods and heroes [Ὅταν εἰκάζῃ τις κακῶς τῷ λόγῳ περὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἡρώων οἷοί εἰσιν], like a painter whose portraits bear no resemblance to his models [ὥσπερ γραφεὺς μηδὲν ἐοικότα γράφων οἷς ἂν ὅμοια βουληθῇ γράψαι]."[34]

---

[33] *Rep.* 377c7-d1.

[34] *Rep.* 377 d3-e4

We would have to say that here the question of the pseudos[35] emerges and forms the basis of Plato's criticism not only of traditional *mythopoiesis* but of mimesis in general. He pursues the critical path of the initial constellation of the pseudos in the maternal logos as lie, equivocation and more ambiguously "fiction". The pseudos emerges as a systematic link to mimesis; it forms the basis for an unremitting mimetological undertaking. It is no accident that in the closing moments of the *Republic* Plato delivers a paradigmatic self-regulated typos for mythopoiesis. A mythological model regulated by Plato's philosophical typology is conceived in the example of the "Myth of Er"[36] which is presented as the foundational myth of the dialogue itself. The irony of the *Republic* is that Plato himself advances the deep-seated fictionality of every enunciative act. He himself advances this mimesis he thus far is critical of. It is for this reason that the *Republic* could be read as the mimetic event *par excellence*.

It is to be noted that because the pseudos precludes the proper pedagogy that the guardian subject would undertake, it is fundamentally because it is associated with the feminine as it is conceived from within the maternal microcosm, the domestic world.[37] The origin of the

---

[35] See Liddell-Scott 1980: 901. ψεύδω (root ΨΥΔ)- I. *to cheat by lies, to beguile*. II. of statements, *to be untrue*. III. in Plat. *fiction* (see Cornford's *Republic*). "The words 'fiction', 'fictitious', are used to represent the Greek pseudos, which has a much wider sense than our 'lie': it covers any statement describing events which never in fact occurred, and so applies to all works of imagination, all fictitious narratives ('stories') in myth or allegory, fable or parable, poetry or romance. As Plato does not confuse fiction with falsehood or identity truth with literal statements of fact, pseudos should be rendered by 'fiction' or 'falsehood' according to the context, and sometimes by 'lie'. It can also mean 'error' when it corresponds to the passive verb *epseusthai* 'to be deceived' or 'mistaken' (*Rep.* 382b and 535e). See Cornford 1945: 68. The position I take with regards to the meaning of pseudos is that it is within the pseudology of book two and three bound to the lie and "fiction" is falsehood or a form of lying insofar as it does not represent or recount the truth.

[36] *Rep.* 614 b

[37] Its the repression of a maternal influence as far as possible, and any influence should be based on the telling of stories which have been philosophically deemed *kalon*, beautiful, this *epistasis* (as we will recognize Plato's entire *poetics* is essentially an *epistasis*) is regulated by what one could call a 'moral aestheticism', *to kalon*. Plato is very much haunted by the impressive (τύπος...ἐνσέμενασθαι, II.377b), the *typographic* effect of the mythopoetic tradition (a Dionysianism possibly, if we think of Nietzsche), a

pseudos, which refers to both the lie and fiction, *is* the feminine itself; moreover it refers to the mimetic character of the feminine.

2.5.1 The Twofold Sense of the Pseudos: On Mimetic Fictions and Lies

From this point, and Plato has barely entered into the pseudological assignation of mimesis, the pseudos is related to mimesis.[38] In stating that the mythopoets "don't lie beautifully [μὴ καλῶς ψεύδηται]," that is, that they don't make lies that resemble the "truth", suggests that the *typos*, the schema of all mythoi subsume the *mimetic*. Mimesis is hidden in its depths. When the mythopoet makes "bad representations or *eikons* [εἰκάζῃ τις κακῶς]" like "a painter whose portraits bear no resemblance to his models [ὥσπερ γραφεὺς μηδὲν ἐοικότα γράφων οἷς ἂν ὅμοια βουληθῇ γράψαι, 377 e1-4]," mimesis is already, by implication a bad representation and the pseudos is falsehood. Moreover, that which is not homoiological, that is, *like* its model, thus adequately correct, is judged to be pseudos.

One can now ascertain two meanings of the pseudos[39] either the meaning of the "lie", of enunciative statements deemed to be "untrue",[40] which in essence clarifies the analogy to the

---

distinct form of feminine discourse (since it is mothers and nurses who first tell theses stories, *mythoi*) which he wants to overcome, for it is without doubt, the "shaping of the soul" (...*plattein tas psychas*) that preoccupies his philosophical program, for it insures the purity of the soul, the "polity" of the soul *as such*, thus Plato recognizes that there is a discourse of the feminine and this is *not* the discourse of truth, of philosophy *as such*.

[38] Elizabeth Belfiore argues that the question of pseudos is to be considered independently from the question of mimesis, however that is to ignore in what way the pseudology of book II already presupposes mimesis as that which *is not* (as pseudos). The mythopoet's pseudos logos is analogically related to the painter's bad representation (which is not *homoiological*) at 377 e2-4 which anticipates in many respects the criticism of mimesis. The theoretical correlation between the pseudos and mimesis is already presupposed by Belfiore 1985: 49-50.

[39] In his translation and notes on the *Republic* Cornford explains that "as Plato does not confuse fiction with falsehood or identity truth with literal statements of fact, pseudos should be rendered by 'fiction' or 'falsehood' according to the context, and sometimes by lie" See Cornford 1945: 68. Though that may be the

γραφεύς or "fiction" which alludes to the poetic creations of the mythopoet. However the pseudos is determined in its linguistic application and meaning by the mimetology of the dialogue, as the lie is intricately bound to fiction and inversely the fictional necessarily encompasses the lie. The analogy to the "zoographer" is motivated by a similar determination or mimetic relation which Plato reappraises in book ten. Plato seeks to determine that the problem of the pseudos is related to the fact that it is a false representation. This formally or generically suggests prevarication of the pseudos given it inherently need not subscribe to the order of truth. Ultimately any understanding of the pseudos would account for a number of its senses, including that it involves "deception", that is, it beguiles or deceives by way of "lying". Most importantly, in the context of the *Republic*, the pseudos encompasses the epistemological "error". All possibilities of the pseudos appear fundamental in this context given that in many respects it presupposes the mimetic as such.

Socrates proceeds to efface the pseudos, given that it has been determined that the pseudos is not placed henceforth in the service of what is deemed *kalon*, that is, it does not embody "beauty" in its essence and "truth" in its eidos. The example raised by Socrates regarding the myth of Ouranos' castration by Chronos, as it is told in Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the entire history of parricidal references in this myth is considered to be not only "an inelegant deception, lie or fiction [οὐ καλῶς ἐψεύσατο, 377 e8]" but moreover morally adjudged "the greatest of lies [τὸ μέγιστον ψεῦδος]." In this context the two possibilities of the pseudos are denoted.

---

case, that context determines the meaning of pseudos its oscillation of meaning is of great interest especially insofar as Plato seeks to assign it as falsehood when using the analogy to the painter. In the broad context of the *Republic* where the "true" and the "false" is ultimately at issue, then the pseudos has a particular Platonic determination where the fiction as pseudos ultimately is fiction as bad representation thus fundamentally a lie.

[40] See Page 1991: 1-33

2.5.2 The Mimesis of Castration as Epistatic Ritual

A description of a ritualized censure of the traditional mythoi is founded at this stage of the dialogue. Lacoue-Labarthe explains "it cannot be wholly an accident that the first "example" of fiction that Plato proposes for censure is the Hesiodic myth of the castration of Uranus?"[41] Though there is no theoretical way that Plato is able to contain within certain limits all forms of bad "fictioning" and the fabrication of immoral "lies", it is only by way of employing the figure of castration, which is already referenced within a recognizable mythic scene, that Plato is able to repress and silence the traditional mythology.

Thus it is the scene of sacrifice [θυσαμένους] which inaugurates the re-telling, the repetition of such mythoi under a pledge of secrecy. They are unfit to be spoken of as they are nefarious and for this sole reason they must remain secret [δι' ἀπορρήτων]. This ritualized censorship imposes a silencing of sorts, it literally buries in "silence [σιγᾶσθαι, 378 a4]" the horrific mythoi recounted and referred to in the traditional mythology. This bringing to silence paradoxically though allows for a recitative repetition of these mythoi to a select few, which implies the philosopher's genos. Though these mythoi are bound to a re-telling or re-citation they are assured their preservation at the scene of sacrifice. Socrates details the ritual explaining that that they are to sacrifice "not a pig, but some great and unprocurable, or more appropriately, an arbitrary victim [θυσαμένους οὐ χοῖρον, ἀλλά τι μέγα καὶ ἄπορον θῦμα 378 a5-6]."[42] This epistatic ritual shows a concernment that apprehends or seizes the mythoi from free circulation to the public, especially to all children, naive and vulnerable persons. One can thus see that these mythoi are silenced through what could be deemed a naive repetition, that is, through a mimesis of castration. This moment of sacrifice is without doubt an immense apotropy; an apotropaic contrivance which involves turning away from the threat of castration. The sacrificial scene only

---

[41] Lacoue Labarthe 1989: 130-1.

[42] I translated ἄπορον as "arbitrary" given the clandestine nature of the sacrifice.

allows for repetition, it warrants only mimesis, it codifies by way of a repetition of the recitation and retelling of the mythoi within a ritualized context. What it ultimately achieves is the general epistatic effacement of the myth of origins.

"Even if they were true I should not think that they out to be thus lightly told to thoughtless young persons [οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἰ ἦν ἀληθῆ, ὤμην δεῖν ῥᾳδίως οὕτω λέγεσθαι πρὸς ἄφρονάς τε καὶ νέους]. But the best way would be to bury them in silence [ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν σιγᾶσθαι], and if there were some necessity for relating them [εἰ δὲ ἀνάγκη τις ἦν λέγειν], that only a small audience should be admitted under pledge of secrecy [δι᾽ ἀπορρήτων ἀκούειν ὡς ὀλιγίστους], and after sacrificing not a pig, but some huge and arbitrary victim [θυσαμένους οὐ χοῖρον, ἀλλά τι μέγα καὶ ἄπορον θῦμα], to the end that only few as possible should have heard these tales [ὅπως ὅ τι ἐλαχίστοις συνέβη ἀκοῦσαι]...They are not to be told in our city [Καὶ οὐ λεκτέοι... ἐν τῇ ἡμητέρᾳ πόλει] nor is it to be said in the hearing of a young man [οὐδὲ λεκτέον νέῳ ἀκούοντι] that in doing the utmost wrong he would do nothing to surprise anybody [ὡς ἀδικῶν τὰ ἔσχατα οὐδὲν ἂν θαυμαστὸν ποιοῖ] nor again in punishing his father's wrongdoing to the limit [οὐδ᾽ αὖ ἀδικοῦντα πατέρα κολάζων παντὶ τρόπῳ], but would only be following the example of the first and greatest of the gods [ἀλλὰ δρῴη ἂν ὅπερ θεῶν οἱ πρῶτοί τε καὶ μέγιστοι]."[43]

Thus it is fear of repetition, of mimesis, of "imitating" the first and greatest gods. The fear of a young man admonishing his father's wrongful acts by the most extreme ways [κολάζων παντὶ τρόπω] discloses the simulated character of this *tropos*, that "castration" can be

repeated by way of "imitating" the paradigm. It is in this way that mimesis is indelibly tied to the idea of *tropos*, the manner and the ways of action or *praxis*, something Aristotle considered fundamental to mimesis and immediately here, we think of the drama, of tragedy.[44]

What is really involved here, when certain mythoi are prohibited in being cited and recited to the guardian subject? Simply a corpus of mythoi are censured precisely because they could inspire a form of imitation, it could legitimize the mimetic tropos which Plato finds the most pernicious example of subjectal depropriation. Thus it attempts, above all, to prohibit the influence of the formidable mimetic effect of the traditional and archaic mythology precisely because it illustrates the *tropos* of imitation and the precarious possibility of repetition. This unprincipled aspect of mimesis, its original mimological sense, is eventually considered in book three, that is, the mimesis that involves the imitation of others' actions and voices. This already subsumes serious ethological questions, that is, it intimates a predisposition of the subject's "imitation" of particular characters [ἤθη] or mythic "subjects".

Whatever we might make of what has turned out to be a "psychology" of the child-subject, the lesson, with respect to the traditional mythology, is extremely clear: the more these mythoi are identified with, the greater the mimetic desire to repeat its lessons, imitate its examples. Socrates adds, which essentially indicates the fundamental problem of the mimetic disposition, since it takes literally or at face value the meaning of these mythoi, that "we must not admit into our city [οὐ παραδεκτέον εἰς τὴν πόλιν] mythoi either wrought in allegory or without allegory [οὔτ' ἐν ὑπονοίαις πεποιημένας οὔτε ἄνευ ὑπονοιῶν], for the young are not able to distinguish what is and what is not allegory [ὁ γὰρ νέος οὐχ οἷός τε κρίνειν ὅ τί τε ὑπόνοια καὶ ὃ μή, 378d 5-9]."[45]

---

[43] *Rep*.378 a2-b5

[44] In defining tragedy Aristotle explains that it is "an imitation of an action [μίμησις πράξεως]". See *Poet.* 1449b VI.7; *Poet.* VI.2 and VI.5.

[45] For further consideration on Plato's understanding of allegory see Tate 1929.

Socrates develops a psychology of the subject that leaves nothing unanswered and recognizes the effect of the mimetic impression on the subject who listens to these tales. Without a proper hermeneutic understanding, the competency and skill to read by way of ὑπόνοια [46] there is a threat of being indelibly and unalterably marked by these mythoi. This said, it would also not be too difficult to detect, running beneath this pedagogical debate, the guiding and constant preoccupation with the hermeneutic or philosophical propensity to discern not merely the real meaning or hidden thought of a mythos, moreover it is to exhibit the philosophical aptitude to perceive the hidden dangers of the traditional mythology as a whole. As a consequence, it is indeed mimesis that is at bottom averred because it is deemed absolutely pernicious to the young who would naturally submit to it.[47]

Now to suggest, as Socrates does, that the essence of this *epistatic* program is the absolute refusal of any form of mimesis is clearly to say that if there is to be a model, a *typos*, a paradigm or pattern to "imitate" they have to be ones which "bring the fairest 'mythologizing' of *aretê* or virtue to their ears [ὅ τι κάλλιστα μεμυθολογημένα πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἀκούειν, 378e 2]." It is on this basis the first stories should be composed, that is, bearing in mind the proper *typos* which will assist composition or the poetic process. This is a preliminary declaration in which Socrates unequivocally directs the discussion to the question of *typos,* that is, to the *typology* inherent in *mythopoiesis*.

2.6 Theologemes: *Typology* of the Divine

Now that Plato has sketched out the inherent problems in the traditional mythology, he returns to the thematic announced at the outset. Plato has Socrates consider the fundamental pseudological structures and the abhorrent mimetism of the traditional mythoi and thus by necessity

---

[46] For a discussion of Plato's conception of *huponoia* see Tate 1929: 142-154.

contemplates the manner by which he can critically delimit the inherent problems of traditional mythopoiesis. The importance of considering properly and rigorously the typology of the traditional mythoi leads to establishing a *typos* which prefigures poetry and the composition of mythoi in general.

Socrates considers Adeimantus and himself as founders of a polis and it is clearly stated that they "are not poets [οὐκ ἐσμὲν ποιηταὶ]." According to Socrates

"They are the founders of the models, [οἰκισταῖς δὲ τοὺς μὲν τύπους προσήκει εἰδέναι] on which poets must compose their myths [ἐν οἷς δεῖ μυθολογεῖν τοὺς ποιητάς] and from which their poems must not be allowed to deviate [παρ' οὓς ἐαν ποιῶσιν οὐκ ἐπιτρεπτέον]."[48]

They are οἰκισταῖς, that is to say, "founders" and more appropriately "builders, constructors" of the proper *typoi* for all forms of mythopoiesis. This self-nomination of being οἰκισταῖς in itself suggests an anti-mimetic or non-poetic disposition. It evokes a demiurgic disposition which involves a pure act of production. Socrates is careful to separate his demiurgic role of "founding" proper *typoi*, which is an originative activity, from the poet who will "make" imitations, that is, pure reproductions based on the proffered *typology*. This differentiation is consolidated further when Socrates states that "the founders are not required themselves to compose fables [οὐ μὴν αὐτοῖς γε ποιητέον μύθους, 379 a7]."

---

[47] See Aristotle *Poet.* 1448b IV 5 who explains this natural disposition toward mimesis in humans. "For it is an instinct of human beings, from childhood, to engage in mimesis [τό τε γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι σύνφυτον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παίδων ἐστὶ]."

[48] *Rep.*379 a1-4.

2.6.1   First *Typos* of mythopoiesis: The Proper Physis of the Gods[49]

The decisive philosophical criticism is now produced, more or less according to the need for a proper *typos*. Adeimantus asks what would be "the patterns or *types* of logos concerning the gods or of 'theology' as such [οἱ τύποι περὶ θεολογίας, 379a5]." Socrates replies that "the true quality of god" be attributed to him, that is, that "god is good in reality [ἀγαθὸς ὅ θεὸς τῷ ὄντι, 379a6]." The poet's *lexis* would have to represent that and for this reason whatever form of poetry is employed, whether epic, melic or tragic verse, that is, regardless of the poetic genre, this necessarily must be the embodied *typos* in any poem.

The fact that a moral thematic is identifiably that which prefigures the first *typos*, it in many respects, down to the last book of the dialogue and in its final signature, works through the idea of the *agathon* as a noble object of the philosopher, a thematic which the mythopoets effectively discount and omit, at least in its philosophical thematization.[50] Now whether there is essentially an ontological identification of god and the eidos of the 'Good', as it is elaborated in book six, is certainly contentious. That it preempts the philosophical discussions on the 'Good' and the "Theory of Forms" in the *Republic* is very much apparent. The first *typos* is that god "*is* good" and the "cause of the good". Certainly Plato puts forth an appropriate theological *typos* or *theologeme* which bearing in mind its *typos* and represenation establishes a proper conception of god.

> "This then will be one of the laws and patterns concerning the gods
>
> [τῶν περὶ θεοὺς νόμων τε καὶ τύπων] to which speakers and poets will
>
> be required to conform [ἐν ᾧ δεήσει τοὺς λέγοντας λέγειν καὶ τοὺς

---

[49] *Rep.* 379a 9-380c 7

[50] The "Good" is discussed in book seven *Rep.* 507 b- 509 c and in many respects preempts the final banishment of mimesis in the final book of the dialogue.

48

ποιοῦντας ποιεῖν], that god is not the cause of all things, but only of the good [μὴ πάντων αἴτιον τὸν θεὸν ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν]."[51]

How does what we might call this philosophical (onto-theological) typology of the divine (what has been determined as the *typos* of the divine) operate in terms of the traditional or archaic (Homeric and Hesiodic) representation of the divine? How does such a prescription of a law or a nomos of theological types reply to the problems and the conditions of the traditional theology? There is what could be described as a representational disproportion or dissymetry between the divine *typos* (prescribed by this philosophical typology) and the representation of the divine which does not subscribe to any particular *typos*. One can conceive of this disproportion by declaring the problematic of mimesis. Without going ahead of ourselves here, since this problematic will more overtly be dealt with in the third book, a typology of the divine, designs the nomothetic presuppositions of what would be considered a proper form of mimesis. If mimesis is a problem, that is, pernicious in its mythic representations and poetic initiations, then a typology prescribed by philosophical "law" organizes, regulates, governs (assuming the laws just now decreed) all mimetic operations. We ought not ignore the fact that it is the nomothetic foundations of this typology that decrees and structurally corresponds to the schema of the second *typos*.

2.6.2 Second *Typos* of Mythopoiesis: The Single Eidos of the Gods[52]

"Do you think that god is a wizard and capable of manifesting himself by design [ἆρα γόητα τὸν θεὸνοἴει εἶναι καὶ οἷον ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς φαντάζεσθαι] now in one aspect, now in another, at one time himself changing and altering his shape in many transformations, [ἄλλοτε ἐν ἄλλαις ἰδέαις, τοτὲ μέν αὐτὸν γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀλλάττοντα τὸ αὑτοῦ εἶδος

---

[51] *Rep.*380 c6-9

εἰς πολλὰς μορφάς] and at another deceiving us and causing us to believe

such things about him [τοτὲ δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀπατῶντα καὶ ποιοῦντα περὶ αὐτοῦ

τοιαῦτα δοκεῖν;] or that he is simple and less likely than anything else to

depart from his own form? [ἢ ἁπλοῦν τε εἶναι καὶ πάντων ἥκιστα τῆς

ἑαυτοῦ ἰδέας ἐκβαίνειν]."[53]

What troubles Plato in the last section of book two regarding the logoi about the gods

[περί θεολογίας] is that the gods are represented as "polymorphic" by nature, that is, they

assume "many forms [πολλὰς μορφάς]." They are represented as diverting and abandoning their

proper "form", their essential nature or eidos. By never assuming "his own form

[τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἰδέας],"[54] the god is described as γόητος, a juggler, a wizard and in essence a

dissimulator. The γόητος is designated in the critical vocabulary as a term Plato employs in his

description of the mimetician.[55]

Socrates arrests the idea of the gods betraying an ideal *theic* form, which is simple

[ἁπλῶς, 381c 8] and perfect. The dissymmetry in a god's form, this disproportion which is the

effect or etiologically related to a change in *theic* form is denounced. The μεταβολή in the proper

eidos of god is censured as an unfeasible condition of representation and moreover it is

considered etiologically improbable. [56] As Socrates explains, "that which is in the best state by

nature or art or both admits least alteration by something else [τὸ καλῶς ἔχον ἢ φύσει ἢ τέχνῃ

---

[52] *Rep.* 380d 1-383c 7

[53] *Rep.* 380d 1-7

[54] See *Rep.* 381c9 where it is argued that god would not want to alter himself or change form (that is to say, divert from his essential nature [Αδύνατον...θεῷ ἐθέλειν αὐτὸν ἀλλοιοῦν] but rather perfectly and in the fairest sense abides simply in his own form [κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος ὢν εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν μένει ἀεὶ ἁπλῶς ἐν τῇ αὑτοῦ μορφῇ]. The example of Proteus is also raised (who is known to be *pantodapos*. See *Rep.*381d 2.

[55] See *Rep.* 598b where the painter (the zoographer) is described as γόητος.

[56] At *Rep.* 381b4 Socrates explains, "it is least of all likely that there would be many forms in (a *polymorhic*) god.

ἢ ἀμφοτέροις ἐλαχίστην μεταβολὴν ὑπ᾽ ἄλλου ἐνδέχεται, 381a9-b2]."[57] The mythopoetic tradition is criticized for it has its gods transforming themselves, and changing themselves into anonymous, strange "polymorphic" figures. It is thus necessary for Plato that this lexicon (this type of fictionalized theology) is expunged from the ideal polis and that the proper *typos* is assumed and recounted in every discourse.

2.7 The *Pseudos as* Truth: The Preinscription of the Fictional "Lie"

That there is in the logoi concerning the gods a type of logos which is identifiably fictional and bound to the lie, has already been predetermined. The pseudos, the lying or fictioning in "words" by way of logos [Τὸ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ψεῦδος, 382 C5] involves the diminution of truth, insofar as the mythopoetic logos attempts to resemble truth [ὁ ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεῦδος, 382a 3].[58] That the traditional theology is essentially pseudological suggests that for ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ψεῦδος actually translates as "the falsehood [Τὸ ψεῦδος] in words, in discourse [ἐν τοῖς λόγοις]," that is to say, it refers to the"fictional" in general. So again, Plato's theological *typos* is one which opposes itself to the execrating fictioning accounts of Hesiodic and Homeric mythoi.

The pseudos logos is essentially, in this context, what we understand as "fiction" or the "fictional" discourse. From the formal point of view, there is the fact that "fiction" is considered to be a form of logos bound to the lie as it can feign truth or simulate it. The exact mode of the fictional logos is unimportant at this stage, as it will certainly be considered in the third book, it is however sufficient for us to see in what way the content of this logos, that is, "the lie like the

---

[57] The soul or the *psyche* is also considered to least susceptible to changes and alterations as opposed to the body see *Rep.* 381a 1-2 and discussions on the division of the soul in book four.

[58] Much is made of ὁ ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεῦδος at *Rep.*382a 3 in the scholia. Shorey translates it as "veritable lie" (Shorey 1930) and Belfiore translates it as "true lie" which in Plato's account would present itself as an oxymoron. (Belfiore 1985). Discussion of the use of ὡς as preposition or adverb. See Murray 1995: 149.

truth" elicits fundamental hermeneutical problems, that is, insofar as the reception of this kind of logos is concerned.

> "Pseudos (which resembles the truth or feigns truth) - ignorance namely in the soul of the man deceived [τοῦτο ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεῦδος, ψεῦδος καλοῖτο, ἡ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἄγνοια ἡ τοῦ ἐψευσμένου]. For the falsehood in words is a copy of the affectation in the soul [ἐπεὶ τό γε εν τοῖς λόγοις μίμημά τι τοῦ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἐστὶ παθήματος], an after-rising image of it [καὶ ὕστερον γεγονὸς εἴδωλον] and not an altogether unmixed falsehood [οὐ πάνυ ἄκρατον ψεῦδος]."[59]

Thus the pseudos logos leaves an indelible impression on "the soul of the man deceived [ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ... τοῦ ἐψευσμένου]," its an inscription which comes into view essentially as a copy. It is a *mimêma* of the affectation, the *pathêma* in the soul, an εἴδωλον, a supervening image which comes temporally after the event [ὕστερον γεγονὸς] of its account. The *pathêma* thus involves affective or passive emotional response to the pseudos logos whether it is the experience of fear [*phobos* 382 E1] or madness [*manian* 382 E2] that is provoked. It is described as a typographical impression that permanently marks the subject. Thus mimesis here appears as a psychological projection *in* or *of* the psyche. The *pathêma* appears as a copy in reflection, the subject reflects upon an *eidolon*, a mark on the soul that could only appear as a redoubtable image of the *pathêma*. The subject equally as an experiencing self and object, is marked by an impressed *mimêma*, a phantasm which remains marked on the *psyche*.

Socrates does warn us again about the influence of the maternal logos and explains that mothers must not "under the influence of such poets terrify their children with harmful tales [μηδ' αὖ ὑπὸ τούτων ἀναπειθόμεαι αἱ μητέρες τὰ παιδία ἐκδειματούντων, λέγουσαι τοὺς

---

[59] *Rep.* 382 b6-c1

μύθους κακῶς]" that represent certain gods as apparitions that haunt the night in the likeness of many strangers from all manner of lands [ὡς ἄρα θεοί τινες περιέχονται νύκτωρ πολλοῖς ξένοις καὶ παντοδαποῖς ἰνδαλλόμενοι, 381 e1-3]. In effect, the dissimulation of the gods is questioned again. Obviously in dissimulation there is something troublesome and dangerous particularly as it establishes a relationship of fear and misunderstanding in the subject.

> "Then god is altogether simple and true in deed and word [ὁ θεὸς ἁπλοῦν
> καὶ ἀληθὲς ἔν τε ἔργῳ καὶ ἐν λόγῳ] and neither changes himself nor
> deceives [καὶ οὔτε αὐτὸς μεθίσταται οὔτε ἄλλους ἐξαπατᾷ] others by
> visions or words or the sending of signs [οὔτε κατὰ φαντασίας οὔτε κατὰ
> λόγους οὔτε κατὰ σημείων πομπάς] in waking or in dreams [οὔθ᾽ ὕπαρ
> οὔτ᾽ ὄναρ]."[60]

It is from this point in book two that mimesis will be subjected to truth or at least the question of mimesis will be (to use Derrida's terms) "commanded by the process of truth".[61] The poet subsequently will be subjected to the law and types appropriate when referring to the gods, in their logos.[62] We mustn't forget Plato lays down another *typos* of theological discourse which overrides the Homeric and Hesiodic *typoi*, another type of discourse and "an appropriate form of *legein*, and poiesis in general [περὶ θεῶν καὶ λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν, 383 A3-4]." There is here, a prescription of a *typos* with its imposed philosophical limits.

2.8 Homeric Thanatology: First *Epistasis*

In the third book Socrates proposes a type, a *typos*, a form of writing or discourse which will expunge, overwrite or literally 'write through' [ἐξαλείψωμεν 386 c3, διαγράφωμεν 387 b3] the various maniacal references within works of poetry particularly those of the *epos*, that is, the

---

[60] *Rep.* 382 e7- 383 a1
[61] Derrida 1981a: 193.

works associated with the Homeric tradition as such. Explaining that an "opposite type" [τὸν ἐναντίον τύπον] is what must be required "in speech and in verse" [λέκτεον καὶ ποιητέον, 387 c8]. Plato has Socrates not only prescribe a censorship on the redoubtable character and nature of Homeric verse and mythopoetics in general but moreover clears the way for the development of what is deemed a truth oriented *aletheic* discourse on the gods, that is, he imposes a proper theological *typos*.

One needs to ask what is the nature of this *epistatic* program, "this censorship of mythic tales [ἐπιστατεῖν καὶ περὶ τούτων τῶν μύθων, 386 b7-8]?" Where does philosophy or the philosopher for that matter emerge as the arbitrator of logos in general? Book three begins with the question of death, *ton thanaton*, and its representation in poetry. The concern is that it is apprehended with fear [τὸν θανάτον δεδιέναι] and the required epistasis involves the practice of repression. The subsequent books of the *Republic* delineates a philosophical *epistasis* that is nothing other than a repressive mechanism, a silencing of all that evades ontological understanding. The Homeric verses are a form of writing which propose a *typos* which incarnates a redoubtable thanatology, a linguistic ruse which is motivated by the very will to represent what by its nature evades man (mortals, heroes) and language itself (the *epos*, the word), namely, the subject of death.

One can begin by considering the Socratic citation of Homer's thanatological references and the general anomalous description of Hades, or as Socrates would argue, "this dispraising of life in Hades, λιδορεῖν...τὰ ἐν ˇΑιδου, 386 b9],"

> "Ah, then, it is true that something of us does survive even in the Halls of
> Hades, but with no intellect at all, only the ghost and semblance of a man
> [ὦ πόποι, ἦ ῥά τις ἔστι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον,

---

[62] *Rep.*380 c6-7

ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν].”[63]

“Unto him (Teiresias) was granted intelligence even after death, but the rest

of them are flittering shadows (or shadowy phantoms). [οἴῳ πεπνῦσθαι,

ταὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀΐσσουσι].”[64]

“Under the earth like vapour vanished the gibbering soul. [ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ

χθονός, ἠΰτε καπνός, ᾤχετο τετριγυῖα].”[65]

Plato’s disquietude with reference to Homer’s thanatology is specifically directed
towards the representation of non-being and the shadow worlds that the *Republic* seeks to ascend
from. The threat of a form of subjectal loss reflected in the loss of one’s intellect [φρένες οὐκ]
after death, impels his philosophical epistasis, which yet again reveals a concern regarding the
subject’s constitution. In every respect, such superintendence, such epistatic control actually
seeks to manage the economy of the pseudos logos. Plato’s epistasis is a denial of thanatos as a
radical negativity,[66] it essentially reviews the tropics of negativity as it is determined traditionally
within a general economy as a loss of being, of rationality, of the life forms. Homer’s
thanatology undercuts the ontological status of the “subject” in general whether it refers to the
epic hero Odysseus or the subject partaking in these recited mythoi about Odysseus.

There are certain consoling illusions regarding death that Plato would like to upraise,
however the *epistasis* over Homer asserts that there is something more fundamental at stake,
something which installs philosophical autonomy, something which safeguards its very economy;

---

[63] Homer *Il*.xxiii.103

[64] Homer *Od*.x.495

[65] Homer *Il*.xxiii.100

[66] This is quite overt in the thanatological thematic (the thanatography) of the *Phaedo* where Plato employs
what Derrida describes as a “rhetoric of borders” to enter into the metaphysics of “immortality of the soul” ,
which in essence is overtly thematized at the end of book ten. See *Rep.* 608c until the dialogues end. See
Derrida 1993: 3

the transcendentality of being, of philosophical being, which escapes presenting itself *mise en abyme*, within the abyss of Hades, within what is abysmally thanatographical. Plato necessarily questions Homer on the basis of a certain conceptualization of death, that is, in terms of this radical negativity, its purported general economy? What seemingly is the exacerbation of life in Homer, leads Plato to an impromptu deliberation of the enigmatic, abysmal *typos* founded in *poiêtikê* itself. He can pave the way and subsequently see through this entire epistatic program and superintend the works of the mythopoets.

Thus Plato's *epistasis* involves placing under erasure[67] the Homeric vocabulary and this actually entails covering over, wiping out, obliterating [ἐξαλείψομεν, 386 c3], overwriting, or writing through [διαγράφωμεν, 387 b3], throwing away, discarding, rejecting the entire mythopoetic lexicon as such. The actual act of logically excluding or erasing "the entire vocabulary of terror and fear [τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ὀνόματα πάντα τὰ δεινά τε καὶ φοβερὰ ἀποβλητέα, 387 b8-9]" and moreover negate, deduct, that is, through *aphairesis* [ἀφαιρετέα, 387 c11] every reference or *onoma*, which will undermine the piety of reason involves a complete subreption of the pseudos that accompanies every act of poiesis.

What is involved in this overturning and censorship of the Homeric vocabulary [τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ὀνόματα, 387 b8]?[68] In the first instance it concerns itself with the possibility that the subject will be traversed by this lexicon and these tales in such a way that it will effect a disquieting instability on their subject sense. Socrates explains,

---

[67] The words διαγράφωμεν and ἐξαλείψομεν could refer to a process whereby the traditional lexicon of the mythopoets is placed "under erasure" (*sous rapture*). The lexicon is cancelled out but not really rejected given certain words are recirculated by Plato in terms of a new metaphysical and eidetic conception within the mimetology. In many respects Plato is metaphorically pointing out the absence of any definitive meaning and value in the traditional lexicon of the mythopoets and in recirculating them and apprehending them in terms of the eidos there is in a sense an attempt to consolidate and assign to them their correct value and meaning. See Derrida 1974: 19 and 60.

"We are in fear for our guardians lest the habit of such thrills make them more sensitive and soft. [ἡμεῖς δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν φυλάκων φοβούμεθα, μὴ ἐκτῆς τοιαύτης φρίκης θερμότεροι καὶ μαλακώτεροι τοῦ δέοντος γένωνται ἡμιν]."[69]

Thus in this critique, there is a recognized risk of the deconstitution of the subject in their affective appropriation of the language inscribed in the pseudos logos. This consequence is astutely recognized by Lacoue-Labarthe explaining that "mimesis is always related to the preinscription of the subject in language"[70] and thus it is no surprise that this potential preinscription relates not only to the guardian subject but to the citizen subject in general, for time and again, the effect of this is related to those who listen to these terrifying mythic references; the listening subject [τοὺς ἀκούοντας, 387 c3] who is attendant to these mythoi.

Hidden in this concern is the manner Plato regulates and controls this sinuous poetic lexicon. Does it involve a simple discarding and negation or does it moreover attend to the process of mimetic appropriation of the mythopoetic vocabulary which will later aid Plato's critique of *mimêtikê* in general. This generalized appropriation of the Homeric vocabulary, actually assures that mimesis can be conceived in these terms, for these onomata, such as εἴδωλον, σκιαὶ ἀΐσσουσι refer to images, shadows, phantoms and thus actually founds the vocabulary of Plato's mimetology. For Plato since these onomata will be circulated within the developed mimetology as contrary to philosophy's lexicon, it is most interesting that the appropriation and regulation of the mythopoetic lexicon will define the schema in which they will be apprehended. A mimetological vocabulary will be apprehended in contradistinction to the

---

[68] In one respect the reference to the onomata circulated within mythopoiesis preempts the concerns that will most certainly guide the enquiry in the *Cratylus*.

[69] *Rep.* 387 c5-6

[70] Lacoue Labarthe 1989: 42

eidos and, if we consider the allegory of the cave,[71] it will form the terms of Plato's own mythological and mimetological constructions. Thus this appropriation of the lexicon begins to 'fix' mimesis, its meaning, its concept, given mimesis will always be described by the vocabulary appropriated by Plato. This philosophical vocabulary thus ultimately doubles, mirrors Homer's. The references to shadows (*skiai*) and phantoms (*eidolon*) in the Homeric thanatology are appropriated, 'made appropriate' insofar as they elucidate Plato's mimetology.[72]

Though from this, it is clear that what Plato wishes to absolve with regards to such references to death, that is, within the locus of mythopoiesis as such, is fear itself [δεδιέναι], he nonetheless prescribes to include in his model polis "sayings that will make the guardian subject least likely to fear death [ἆρ' οὐ ταῦτα τε λεκτέον καὶ οἷα αὐτοὺς ποιῆσαι ἥκιστα τὸν θάνατον δεδιέναι, 386 a7-b1]." It is clear that Homeric mythoi seem to treat death more in terms of negativity and the fear it instills in the subject is the question of concern. And it is for this reason, according to the nomothetically prescribed typology of the second book, "the opposite *typos* will be required in speech and in verse [Τὸν δὲ ἐναντίον τύπον τούτοις λεκτέον τε καὶ ποιητέον, 387 c8]."

Obviously, the whole epistatic operation presupposes that pseudos could only involve absolute vicariousness and the infinite circulation of "lies" and that in essence "liken the false to the true [ἀφομοιοῦντες τῷ ἀληθεῖ τὸ ψεῦδος, 382 d4]." We are forewarned, in the beginning of the third book, just before the closure of the topic of logos[73] that the more "poetic" a mythos is [ὅσῳ ποιητικώτερα] they should be deemed less suited to the ears of boys and men.[74] There is in this, as we have seen, the question of the guardian's subject sense and his preinscription in the

---

[71] See *Rep.* 514a-521b

[72] Thus mimesis appears at the scene of death, in the cavern or *spelea*. It legitimates Plato's *epistasis* and the theoretical vigilance to create a new foundation myth. The "Myth of Er" (*Rep.*613 e ff) becomes the epilogical testament of the soul's immortality.

[73] *Rep.*392 c6

symbolic order of the proscribed typology. This presents itself as a "psychological" proposition which assumes the reducibility of the subject's *ethos* or character to the *typos* which is deemed philosophically appropriate.

Now the same typological presuppositions concerning the content of mythopoiesis will in effect be reemphasized in the discussion concerning "poetic" diction or style of speech [τὸ λέξεως, 392 c7].[75] As I will attempt to show, the onto-typology of the third book is intricately bound to the decision that is meant to establish subjectivity. Plato is undoubtedly seeking to secure subjectivity by ensuring that all forms of misrepresentation and equivocity is eschewed from mythopoiesis. The problematic of the subject is inevitably adjudged in terms of a decision regarding the mimetic typos that has infiltrated the stories and tales of the mythopoetic tradition. Any consideration, from here on, concerning the question of *lexis* elicits inherently pernicious effects on the subject of enunciation and moreover the multifarious consequences of inherent forms of subjectal representation.

---

[74] *Rep.* 387 b3

[75] For usage of *lexis* as referring to the manner or style of speech in Plato cf. *Ap.* 17d 3. "I am therefore an utter foreigner to the manner of speech (λέξεως) here (*i.e. the courts*)."

Chapter Three

Philosophical *Poetics*

Socrates: Pray, then, if we strip any kind of poetry of its melody, its rhythm and its
metre, we get mere speeches as the residue, do we not?

[...εἴ τις περιέλοι τῆς ποιήσεως πάσης τό τε μέλος καὶ τὸν ῥυθμὸν καὶ τὸ μέτρον, ἄ

λλο τι ἢ λόγοι γίγνονται τὸ λειπόμενον]

Callicles: That must be so.

Socrates: And those speeches are spoken to a great crowd of people?

Callicles: Yes

Socrates: Hence poetry is a kind of public speaking.

[Δημηγορία ἄρα τίς ἐστιν ἡ ποιητική]

Callicles: Apparently.

Scorates: Then it must be a rhetorical kind of speaking

[Οὐκοῦν ῥητορικὴ δημηγορία ἂν εἴη]; or do you not think that the poets use rhetoric
in the theaters? [ἢ οὐ ῥητορεύειν δοκοῦσί σοι οἱ ποιηταὶ ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις;].

Gorgias 502 c4-d1

3.1   The Question of "Form" or *Lexis*

We have progressed toward a fundamental debate which in its classic form appears early in the

dialogue as the classic *diaphora*, difference or opposition between philosophy and poetry or

literature in general. The development of the debate is so little modeled upon a notion of generic

differentiation at this stage and it is for this reason that the third book introduces the matter of

lexis or poetic diction in general [τὸ δὲ λέξεως, 392 c7] that is to say, the "style" or mode of speech or discourse as such.[1]

The whole question now is consequently whether or not the question of *lexis* reveals the problem of philosophy's own "style" and moreover of Platonic *lexis*. For we have to ask what does the question of *lexis* presuppose? The matter of logos presupposes *a priori* a privileged consideration in the second book of the *Republic*. The priority of ἅ λέκτεον ("the matter of speech"), its discussion prior to ὡς λεκτέον ("the manner of speech") certainly is a philosophical privilege and interest as it is pertinently of theoretical interest, a matter of *theoria*. It is, moreover, a deliberate avoidance of the fundamental question concerning the "subject" mimetician, a question that resurfaces with every attempt to delimit mimesis. Certainly the construction of the subordination of *lexis*, obviously involves repressing the gaping chasm that stresses the difference. However the question of *lexis* seems not only to advance, in the manner in which it projects itself, the problem of enunciative practice or the manner of speech, of discourse as such,[2] but it also advances the problem of the subject in general; the subject of enunciation. The *Republic* presents, for Plato a fundamental challenge that involves not only discounting *what* the mimetician produces, but also describing *who* the mimetician is.[3]

It is reasonable to ask where in the dialogue can we situate this strange proximity between the ἅ λέκτεον and the ὡς λεκτέον? Is it in the performance of the Platonic text that has already, if we consider the problems of the dialogical form or philosophy's *lexis*, become part of the problem? Or does Plato's dialogism or his *lexis* already propose a model for discourse? Is the

---

[1] See *Ap.* 17d 3 where Socrates claims to be unfamiliar with the "style of speech" used in the law courts.

[2] Certainly *lexis* becomes a theoretical preoccupation in rhetoric in Aristotle *Peri Rhetorikês*.

[3] See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 125

Platonic dialogue the preliminary *paradeigma* of discourse?[4] This is a fundamental question when considering what is at stake in the Platonic dialogue, bearing in mind that Plato ultimately condemns the mimetic practice that he himself practices.[5]

3.2 On Λέξις: the Modes of Enunciation

We must clarify, first and foremost, why there is an appraisal of the question of *lexis*? Is it strictly a "formal" object in its thematic evaluation in the third book? In some respects, the mode

---

[4] Plato cannot really condemn those being dismissed as mimeticians in the first exclusion in book three, as they are themselves being dismissed *by* mimeticians in the dialogue in general.

[5] Thus the entire problem of mimesis in the *Republic*, is centered upon his literary criticism, the cogency of an irreconcilable contrariety between what is understood as Plato's λέξις, that is, the manner, the form of his text and what is generally understood as the λόγος, that is, its very content, its *system* of meaning. It seems that Plato's *lexis*, the dialogical form raises the fundamental difficulty of philosophy's distance to the ruses of mimesis. The mimetic structure of the dialogues (what can be referred to as its *logomimetic* structure) undoes Plato's epistemological inquiry on the matter of poetry. It collapses at the point where mimesis can only appear *as* presentation, as a form of presence identifiable within a textual matrix. Plato's *lexis* problematizes his logos, his mimetology. In Plato's *lexis* there is a temporal distancing (since we are reading the representations or retelling of 'historical' dialogues) arising out of a fundamental mimesis which undoes what is deemed absolute in the diegetic presentation of a dialogue. Plato's dialogues are structurally representational in its structure, given its enunciative mode and thus mimetic in terms of its *lexis*. Though the problem of mimesis is not peculiarly an exterior problem (external to the discourse), an object for philosophical inquiry, it is philosophy's parasite. Mimesis essentially has a parasitic relationship to 'discourse in general' (all enunciative and linguistic practices) which does not necessarily mitigate philosophical discourse, that is, that form of discourse which is deemed philosophical in essence, that is, according to its mode of discourse, enunciation, exposition which defines its *logical* essence. Mimesis essentially subverts the presence of such an essence, contaminates (as it is a trope of *contaminatio*, as we observe it generically in 'parody' or comedy e.g. in Aristophanes and Terence) what is understood as a primordial philosophical essence, which is a question of propriety, property, pertains to the proper *as such* insofar as the discourse of philosophy within a western tradition has delimited *such* an essence, that is, a non-mimetic essence. It seemingly presents itself as a discourse or enunciative practice which claims a sense of self-possession, self-presence of the philosophical "subject". It thus alludes to what Derrida understands as the "metaphysics of the proper," which essentially holds the primacy of the 'subject', the enunciative (speaking) subject; Socrates.

of *lexis* is merely a question of style, of syntax, but does it moreover involve regulating the manner or form of composition or of *discoursing* as such? The moral logos, which is represented as an example of the second book, is problematically embroiled in the problem of *lexis* and its explicit philosophical thematization is seemingly just as necessary.[6] The poet's logos is not only deemed to be problematic but so is the manner of poetic expression. What we discern in the ensuing discussion of the third book is that the logos, the content or subject matter, of the mythopoet is not only morally erroneous so is the manner of his discourse, his own enunciative practices. *Lexis* is further embroiled in the moral/philosophical criticism that Plato pursues. It will be formalized and disciplined especially since the "morality" of the mythopoetic tradition will remain inarticulable and unrepresented in the newly constituted polis.

From this long critique of the content of mythopoiesis, Socrates moves to a criticism of *lexis* only in an attempt to discern the mimetic power and influence of mythopoiesis. When providing an explanation for this critical regression, this movement from the content *to* the statement, from the logos *to* the question of enunciation or *lexis*, it might be argued that it is from this point forward that the question of subjectivity is broached. The question is theoretically entwined with the question of mimesis or representation.

Lacoue-Labarthe first elicits insightfully the link for Plato between mimesis and subjectivity. He notices that Plato's expulsion of mimesis is tied to the critical consideration of what is properly called *lexis*, the mode or manner of logos or to use his terms "enunciation" proper.[7] No doubt the proscriptive and prescriptive logos of the second book prepares the critical appraisal of the poetic modes. Mimesis is consequently grounded in this original determination of the subject of speech, of *lexis*. It becomes a question of the fundamental depropriation of the

---

[6] The question of the εἶδος λόγων raised again *Rep.* 392 a 5 has now been prescribed bearing in mind the criticism of the poet's εἶδος λόγων treated in book two.

[7] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 132-133.

speaking subject, of the mythopoet who was critically derided in the second book. What is distinct about the mode of mythopoiesis? As we shall see, Plato insists on this all the more in that the lie, fiction or the pseudos is assumed by the question of *lexis*.

What emerges as the question of style resurfaces here as nothing other than the problem of mimesis in its most general postulations. As we shall soon determine, it is a form of mimesis which is variable in its expressive mode; a mimesis or a mimetic mode which appeals to the theatre, to the actor; a mimesis which undoubtedly appeals to its original mimological sense that Plato takes issue to. At 393d Socrates identifies three modes of *lexis* within the mythopoetic example. One where the poet proceeds by "pure narration [ἁπλῇ διηγήσει],"[8] another by narrative that is effected "through representation or imitation [διὰ μιμήσεως]" and one which "employs both modes [ἢ δι' ἀμφοτέρων περαίνουσιν]."[9] What we are dealing with here is not the phenomenon of logos but the poetically expressive and rhetorical nature of *legein*, the manner of logos; of enunciative practice in general. *Lexis* is undoubtedly only a consequence of mimesis. Moreover, the effect produced is the effect of the mask, it is an ethological concern, a question of character or ἦθος,[10] which involves assuming another persona, since the narration

---

[8] In *Poetics* 1448a 20-4, Aristotle makes this distinction stating that the poet "narrates as himself" [ἀπαγγέλοντα...ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ μεταβάλλοντα] or by a mode of apocryphy, where one "becomes other" [ἕτερόν τι γιγνόμενον].

[9] *Rep.* 393 d6-8

[10] Aristotle described ἦθος as one of the six important features that constitute the performance of tragedy. Modern scholars have warned against the assumption that classical notions of *ethos* (character) can be regarded as synonymous as those of our own. See Baldry 1971: 99-100. I treat *ethos* as a representational entity which pertains to the idea of the mask or πρόσωπον, of a persona which is represented within a metafictive theatrical space by the *hypocritês* (the actor). Thus I try not to draw it away from its essential connection to the tragic stage and the hypocritic subject's propriety. Thus *ethos* is intrinsically linked to the *persona* or mask. Certainly in *Poetics* XV 1-12, Aristotle's ethological description refers to characteristics in men's natures however he sees them as projected, by way of the prosopon, onto the stage, by way of the actors. So Aristotle's *ethos* acts to determine the qualities of the actors who represent and perform the

διὰ μιμήσεως involves the poet's appropriation or dissimulating appropriation of a character's voice. Far from being a concern of recounting another's logos, it is the appropriation of the *other's* voice, general being and *ethos* which remains disturbing for Socrates. It is a question that concerns itself with the withdrawal and loss of the subject *through* mimesis. The narration διὰ μιμήσεως propels a performative moment in which the status of the poet as *autos*, as an autonomous self or subject constantly vacillates.[11]

3.3 Mimetic Diegesis and the Splitting of the Authorial Subject.

We are dealing, then, with a phenomenon of mimesis that involves the splitting of the speaking subject, the schizophrenic status of the poet, a phenomenon that in the *Ion* is presented as a modicum of rhapsodic practice.[12] This 'split' in the subject signifies the appropriation and mastering reappropriation of another's voice, another subject or being. Homer speaking as Chryses represents a moment in which the status of the authorial subject vacillates, from diegesis to mimesis and back; from the self to the other and back.

> "The poet himself is the speaker and does not even attempt to suggest to us
>
> that anyone but himself is speaking. But what follows he delivers as if he
>
> were himself Chryses and tries as far as may be to make us feel that not

---

action. See Aristotle *Poet.* 1450a VI. 4-5; "Character is that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents [τὰ δὲ ἤθη, καθ᾽ ὃ ποιούς τινας εἶναί φαμεν τούς πράττοντας]."

[11] Murray 1996: 170 correctly suggests that the question of *lexis* is not strictly an "aesthetic phenomenon" that is, it does not bear entirely on an elaboration of a "poetics" (i.e. a theorisation of poiesis) but rather it has ethical implications (and I add more specifically ethological considerations- of being other). For further comment on the "ethical" concerns regarding the consideration of *mimetic mode* in book three see Ferrari 1989: 114-118 and Havelock 1963: 21-22.

[12] Stanford considers the commentary on *lexis* as a fundamental criticism of "mimicry" (and especially its onomatopoeic mode since it critically involves "the abandonment of one's identity." Stanford 1973: 190.

Homer   is   the   speaker,   but   the   priest,   an   old   man.

[λέγει τε αὐτὸς ὁ ποιητὴς καὶ οὐδ᾽ ἐπιχειρεῖ ἡμῶν τὴν διάνοιαν ἄλλοσε

τρέπειν, ὡς ἄλλος τις ὁ λέγων ἢ αὐτός τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ὥσπερ αὐτὸς ὢν ὁ

Χρύσης λέγει καὶ πειρᾶται ἡμᾶς ὅτι μάλιστα ποιῆσαι]."[13]

Mimetic diegesis or narration "through or by way of mimesis [διὰ μιμήσεως]," that is, by employing a mimetic narrational mode, involves a process of subjectal withdrawal, that is a movement between two identities. This is evident in the structure of the narrative and especially in its performative display. It seems, then, to be a fundamentally critical concern, as the critique of mimetic diegesis addresses the vacillation of authorial voice, the splitting of the authorial subject. The subject becomes double or presents him or herself as a double being, being two.

What is involved in the mimetic mode of diegesis is an indecision between two beings, two subjects. Moreover it testifies to the dynamics of subjectal withdrawal, where the original self withdraws or is lost in an *other*. This form of mimetic diegesis, according to Plato, is pernicious as it undermines the singularity of the subject since any form of subjectal withdrawal involves the authorial subject wavering between two different figures, two voices, two subjects. Apocryphy, and its modal mimetic rendition, involves an interposed fictional subject (or "figure"), who mimetically is carried by this subjectal vacillation. This involves a double movement in the *diegetic* performance, in the enunciation of voices. This makes every diegesis essentially *mimetic* in essence, as the subject's recitation involves becoming other and subsequently becoming double.

Given the nature of mimetic diegesis we can observe that we are not far removed from the drama, from the theatre and the rhapsodic techne. In the diegetic mode that is presented "by way of mimesis" we recognize the *hypocritic* operation of the mask or the *prosopon*. The dual

place of the subject, to which Plato has ingeniously called attention here, is a phenomenon which in all the considered dialogues is known to bedevil mimesis.

"It is narration, is it not, both when he presents the several speeches and the matter between the speeches? [Οὐκουν διήγησις μέν ἐστι καὶ ὅταν τὰς ῥήσεις ἐκαστοτε λέγῃ καὶ ὅταν τὰ μεταξὺ τῶν ῥήσεων]"..."But when he delivers a speech as if he were someone else, shall we not say that he then assimilates thereby his own diction as far as possible to that of the person to whom he announces as about to speak? [Ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν γέ τινα λέγῃ ῥῆσιν ὥς τις ἄλλος ὤν, ἆρ οὐ τότε ὁμοιοῦν αὐτὸν φήσομεν ὅ τι μάλιστα τὴν αὐτοῦ λέξιν ἑκάστῳ, ὃν ἂν προείπῃ ὡς ἐροῦντα;]"

"And is not likening one's self to another in speech or bodily bearing an imitation of him to whom one likens one's self?
[Οὐκουν τό γε ὁμοιοῦν ἑαυτὸν ἄλλῳ ἢ κατὰ φωνὴν ἢ κατὰ σξῆμα μιμεῖσθαί ἐστιν ἐκεῖνον ᾧ ἄν τις ὁμοιοῖ;]"

"In such a case then he and the other poets effect their narration through imitation. [Ἐν δὴ τῷ τοιούτῳ, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὗτός τε καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ποιηταὶ διὰ μιμήσεως τὴν διήγησιν ποιοῦνται]."[14]

Certainly we come to understand in διὰ μιμήσεως τὴν διήγησιν ποιοῦνται that the poiesis sets up diegesis in a particular way, it presents it in a way that involves another *tropos*. The semantic inflexion of poiesis brings us closer to mimesis, but even more so to the apocryphy that this mimetic mode implies. The apocryphal character of representation as it is implied by the practice of "likening oneself to another [ὁμοιοῦν ἑαυτὸν ἄλλῳ]" illustrates that "by way of"

---

[13] *Rep.* 393 a6-b3
[14] *Rep.* 393 b7-d1

mimesis, that is, διὰ μιμήσεως, a movement of withdrawal or loss of the subject occurs. And here we must not ignore what is on the one hand the critique of *mythopoiesis*; its "style", its *lexis*, and on the other, the articulation of the question in its most restricted sense, the question of poiesis or "poesy", the art of the word, of language, of poetic discourse.[15] And yet this question of poiesis in general is subordinated to something more fundamental, that is, the subject that is involved in mimesis. It can easily be shown that, *mutatis mutandis*, there is in any text or episode of reported speech, this dual positioning of the authorial subject, both inside and outside the event. There is thus already, in this identification or imitation of another's words or discourse [τὴν αὐτοῦ λέξιν], a dual-subject or a "being double" whenever anything is enunciated. What becomes of interest though is what effect does this diegetic mimesis have on the subject? What is at stake when the subject becomes *like* another [ὥς τις ἄλλος ὢν]? These questions are intimately bound to Plato's critical motivation which has as much to do with arriving at some kind of determination or hermeneutic delimitation of mimesis as well as assuring the proper constitution of the subject.

3.4 *Haplê* Diegesis: The Constitution of the Subject of Enunciation

What has thus far lacked articulation or commentary is the distinct themes of books two and three. Whereas the typology of book two presupposes political and let us add ontological cogitations. Book three is essentially poetological, that is to say, it takes up the question of poiesis in a prolusory way, in the form of an announcement and in anticipation of the mimetology which circumscribes or delimits poiesis as fundamentally mimetic in the final book of the *Republic*. Certainly there is the "bringing to decision"[16] the question of poiesis and

---

[15] According to Heidegger poetic art [*Dichtkunst*] "testifies to the primacy of such art within Greek culture as a whole...Therefore it is not accidental that when Plato brings to speech and decision the relationship of art and truth he deals primarily and predominantly with poetic creation and the poet. Heidegger 1991: 165

[16] Heidegger speaks of the *zur Entscheidung bringen* "bringing to decision" of the status of art or its essence (starting at book III) but acknowledges that it is in traversing the seventh book (the discussion of

certainly more overtly in the final book, the decision about mimesis. Of course, this decision or this "bringing to decision", besides it anticipating a normative hermeneutic exigency (a decision based on "interpreting" pure and simple mimesis as such) requires setting up the problem of poiesis as such, and especially its mode or *lexis*, since it sketches out the mimetological presuppositions of the entire dialogue. This question is certainly raised only to better access the ontological implications of the critique of *apocryphy*; the overt critique of the subject who practices mimesis and the manner by which it is overhauled by a new constitution of the subject.

3.4.1 The "Trope of Apocrypty" as Subjectal Withdrawal

"But if the poet should conceal himself nowhere, then his entire poetizing and

narration would have been accomplished without imitation

[Εἰ δὲ γε μηδαμοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἀποκρύπτοιτο ὁ ποιητής, πᾶσα ἂν αὐτῷ

ἄνευ μιμήσεως ἡ ποίησίς τε καὶ διήγησις γεγονυῖα εἴη]."[17]

The mimetic poet is criticized for "concealing himself [ἑαυτὸν ἀποκρύπτοιτο ὁ ποιητὴς]" at the moment of his representation. The Platonic indictment of mimesis is in Jean Luc Nancy's and Lacoue-Labarthe's terms an "indictment of apocrypty, the dissimulation or dispersion of the author (or the subject of discourse) behind the figures (characters or mouthpieces) of dialogical narration."[18] What is essentially the modal quality of diegesis "by way of mimesis", as Lacoue-Labarthe explains, is that it is "indirect and apocryphal."[19] It is appropriate to take this brief

---

the essence of truth, based on the Allegory of the Cave) that the possibility of deciding upon art (and for Lacoue-Labarthe deciding upon mimesis) is made possible in the tenth book. This is certainly a point which we shall return to and nonetheless it is "in anticipation" that one makes an account of it. See Heidegger 1991. 168-169. See also Lacoue-Labarthe's commentary on this passage in 1989: 75-77. Similarly Lacoue-Labarthe is guided by the exigency of the decision concerning mimesis and the subject in the *Republic*.

[17] *Rep.* 393 d3-8

[18] Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy. 1988: 87

[19] See Lacoue-Labarthe 1986: 273, "*indirecte et apocryphe.*"

reference to the idea of *apocryphy* by Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe and carry forward its tropic sense, especially in terms of how it manifests itself as trope. This moreover elicits how Plato's *lexis*, his manner, his style, the presentation of his own discourse, or formally speaking, his dialogues submits itself to the dramatico-mimetic order, that is, the model he himself condemns. The critique as we have so far determined is of the subject mentally withdrawing from the 'self' that is his or her character during poiesis, remaining as detached or withdrawn subject. The 'self' that is before the audience, that is, during the performance, is then *no subject*, but as it were an "emptied self," as site of pure mimetic action. To reappraise the typological metaphor introduced as a criticism or suspicion of mimesis in book two, the subject is open to be marked, affected by an *other* (i.e character), by an external identity that marks (*typtein*) the soul in the act of performative poiesis.

This of course raises a fundamental question given the context of Plato's criticism of mimesis. *Who* is the subject who delivers the words and actions of a character, if these come from an apocryphal subject, that is, if these words and actions come from a self that is not a subject? What is the ontological status of the emptied self always already mimetically marked by the characters he or she represents? In turn, this question yet again raises a prior question concerning Plato as such, the author of this criticism of apocrypty. Who announces this criticism? Is it really Plato or his *mimos*, Socrates? All this I hope will sharpen my thetic concerns regarding the distinction and or interplay between two forms of apocrypty that will consistently be canvassed in this thesis. The first now obtains, as a figure of philosophical will, namely Plato, who withdraws, detaches or distances himself from his own work, yet still becomes represented through it, by way of the figure of Socrates.

Though Plato can only be apprehended as the authorial figure external to the work he still is a figure represented *en abyme* within it, by way of the Socratic *prosopon* or mask. The intriguing fact regarding Plato, and he certainly does not naively commit to this, is that in every

dialogue he is a figure *figured* as choosing to remain separated from "his" mimetic deliveries.[20]

As I will reiterate throughout this paper, the figuring of subjectal withdrawal becomes interesting when one observes that what is threatened under this apocryphality or mimetic operation is the distinction between literature (encompassing, poetry, drama etc) and philosophy and their respective subjects. This distinction or difference between two logoi that Plato want to preserve in the final book of the *Republic* as a *diaphora*.[21] The refusal of the authorial subject to appear, whose thoughts, I might add, cannot exist independently of the text that frames it, corresponds to the non-arrival of the subject of philosophy.

So when "the poet does not conceal himself [μηδαμοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἀποκρύπτοιτο ὁ ποιητής]"[22] or does not assume an other's *prosopon* or is not "playing the other,"[23] he achieves diegesis "without mimesis [ἄνευ μιμήσεως]." In the example on the passage from the *Iliad* diegesis would be achieved ἄνευ μιμήσεως. If Homer spoke as himself, "as Homer [ὡς Ὅμηρος]" and "not as Chryses [μὴ ὡς Χρύσης]" then he would be adopting a proper non-mimetic mode of diegesis.[24] Mimesis is even more formidable here for its apocryphal dimension insinuates the subject hides, conceals him or herself, it thus participates in a paradoxical ontological situation. A diegesis that resorts to mimesis ultimately necessitates the poet's apocryphy. One might say that we are simply dealing with the fact of enunciation in general, that is, that the *lexis* of apocryphality prescribes the position of the poet in relation to mimicry.

---

[20] There is only one dialogue that the historical Plato is notably present and that presence in the work is at the scene of Socrates' death that is at the discarding of the Socratic *prosopon*. It is interesting to note that the only appearance of the Platonic prosopon is at the scene of the death of Socrates, this subsequently assigns the power of authorial presence at the scene of the death of the father as it involves a discarding of the Socratic mask. See *Apology*.

[21] See *Rep*. 607 b5

[22] Else points out how Plato finds in the poet's "apocryphy" an unethical deception which moreover carries through the ethical concerns of the dialogue particularly in the ensuing middle books. See Else 1986. 25.

[23] For the dramatic implications of the prosopopeiology in tragedy see Zeitlin 1996.

[24] See *Rep*. 393 d3-4.

Mimesis thus determines the poetic effect of the "trope of apocrypty." The mimological dimension of apocryphal enunciative practices, that is, its most primitive modality involves a complete subreption of subjectivity as it involves the enunciation of a fictional voice, the appropriation of another's *prosopon* or "figure". However what I want to emphasize here is that *apocryphy*, which describes the poetic trope that is dependent upon a diegesis through mimesis, involves the fundamental paradox of enunciation, of being double or of being two.[25]

We are dealing, then, not with the problem of diegesis but that of mimesis or of a paradox of enunciation. From here it is a short step to introduce, after the legitimation of ἁπλῇ διηγήσει[26], that is, of narration "without mimesis", the genres of the drama as diegetic modes which involve mimesis. However a mimesis that presupposes the theatrical presentation of the mask, of apocryphal *lexis*, suggests a pernicious diegetic mode given it assumes the performative display of subjectal withdrawal. Before any such consideration it is important to ask what is it in subjectal apocryphy that Plato finds so pernicious, and in terms of appropriate diegetic modes of discourse, why is it that "simple" or "pure" diegesis is privileged and moreover, in what way does it eradicate the equivocity that apocryphal presentations supposedly deliver?

---

[25] Lacoue-Labarthe in his discussion of Diderot's "Paradox of the Actor" makes much of Diderot's relation as author to his text, that is, that he occupies "two incompatible places", that is, he is author and character or fictional *prosopon*. Beyond authorial control this leads Lacoue-Labarthe to consider the problem of enunciation in a more limited scope, that is in relation of this paradox of being two, one as general enunciator (author) and also in an act of segregation of setting himself apart from the author to constitute himself as character simultaneously. See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 250-251.

[26] The example of ἁπλῇ διήγησις (simple and pure narration) is also stated/achieved "without metre [ἄνευ μέτρου]" Socrates quickly qualifies "he is not a poet [οὐ γάρ εἰμι ποιητικός]."

3.4.2 Eradicating Subjectal Apocryphy: Equivocity of Discourse

We have to again proceed with an exposition of Plato's decision to expel mimesis from the polis and rescind it from the citizen subject in general. One point that needs to be re-stated, since we are reiterating what Lacoue-Labarthe has already elicited, is that the initial expulsion of mimesis, the first decision to expel mimesis is oriented towards a decision distinguishing between two *diegetic* modes, that is, *haplê* diegesis and *mimetic* diegesis.[27] The privilege and acceptance of "simple" diegesis derives from the fact that the narrator or authorial subject remains himself or herself in the act of poiesis, rather than adopting another mimetic *prosopon*. Certainly in the context of Plato's own diegesis it seems legitimate to ask whether this is a sustainable distinction, whether *haplê* diegesis is not in any way bedeviled by mimesis. When is it that Plato is himself and Socrates a dramatic *prosopon*? Is not Socrates nothing other than Plato's mimetic persona. In addressing this concern, I do not want to accuse Plato of critical naivety. Plato seems to recognize the difficulties in the prosopopoiesis subsumed by all diegetic modes. It is possible that all Plato concerns himself with is the consistency of authorial voice and the unpretentiousness of the subject, even if it seems subjectivity becomes less connected or related to an "original self". Plato is cautious when approaching a mimetic diegesis which involves a vacillation of authorial voice and the temptation of adopting a series of *prosopa*. How does then Plato invoke the problem of subjectivity given our admission that "simple" diegesis does not necessarily assure that on the occasion of enunciation the speaker does not entirely remain himself or herself, given that in this purest and uncontaminated form of diegesis one inevitably adopts another *prosopon*.

---

[27] There is the "mixed" diegetic mode which I deliberately left out in my discussion as Plato's decision to accept only "simple" diegesis suggests that Plato saw that the "mixed" mode as essentially mimetic.

Lacoue-Labarthe certainly explores this decision concerning subjectivity and mimesis in a resounding way. He asserts that the problematic of subjectivity is dealt with or explored by Plato in terms of what he calls "the problematic of the lie."[28] Plato is seeking to secure a form of speech that encompasses a sense of propriety and thus remains unequivocal. It involves securing subjectivity by ensuring that when we speak, we speak as ourselves. Our words should not be heard as the words of others. As Lacoue-Labarthe correctly asserts, "this is why the origin of lying, of fiction, has to be sought actually in the direction of what is properly called enunciation. It must be shown that the "mythic lie" proceeds essentially from poetic irresponsibility, that is, from a fundamental perversion of poetic practice, indeed—ultimately—*of linguistic practice in general*. It is because they put themselves out of reach and do not come to answer for their discourse, it is because they do not assist or attend their productions but instead do everything to give them the appearance of autonomy (of truth), it is because, finally, the author in them disappears and thus gives free reign to the circulation of language, that poets "lie" and "show" themselves to be incapable of decision before natural equivocity of discourse."[29]

So what seems to fundamentally concern Plato is, what Lacoue-Labarthe correctly observes to be the "equivocity of discourse", that is, the ability of words to conceal the identity of the speaker and thus present themselves as illicit citations, as is the case with the rhapsode and actor. Plato's decision to expel mimesis has as its aim the ending of this equivocity; it is a decision motivated by the potential ineffability of words and the identity of the enunciator of these words. However if this is the reason that motivates the Platonic decision to expel mimesis is this decision ultimately directed against the rhapsode and actor—the *hypocritēs*, the declaimer—the subject that plays the *other*? More importantly, does Plato face in what has been discerned as the inherent "equivocity of discourse" a more fundamental problem inherent in

---

[28] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 129.

[29] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 132. Lacoue-Labarthe's emphases.

discourse in general? Is not this "equivocity" permanently built into discourse (speech/oral or writing/literary)?[30] Does not Plato's decision to expel mimesis—since it presents all things equivocally—point towards an unending equivocity in his own dialogues, his own writing? Can the decision to expel mimesis be made? Answering this will be the task of the succeeding chapter, at this stage it seems necessary to determine in what way does this equivocity manifest itself in the hypocritic subject, the subject Plato now turns his criticism to.

3.5 Hypocritica: The Critique of Dramatic *Lexis*

"There is one kind of poetry and tale-telling which works wholly through imitation [ὅτι τῆς ποιήσεώς τε καὶ μυθολογίας ἡ μὲν διὰ μιμήσεως ὅλον ἐστίν] as you remarked, tragedy and comedy [ὥσπερ σὺ λέγεις, τραγῳδία τε καὶ κωμῳδία] and another which employs the recital of the poet himself, best exemplified, I presume, in the dithyramb [ἡ δὲ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ· εὕροις δ᾽ ἂν αὐτὴν μάλιστά που ἐν διθυράμβοις·] and there is again that which employs both, in epic poetry [ἡ δ᾽ αὖ δι᾽ ἀμφοτέρων ἔν τε τῇ τῶν ἐπῶν ποιήσει]."[31]

It may not be sustainable to simply assert that the "theatre" or the "drama" is conceived out of the diegesis that occurs διὰ μιμήσεως, however it is certain that Plato discerns in dramatic *lexis* not only an opposite mode, a mode that is in opposition,[32] critically speaking, to the sanctioned

---

[30] Certainly at this point I am alluding to the movement of Derrida's notion of *différance* and though I do not address it directly it certainly lingers in the background of this thesis. Essentially the equivocity of discourse highlights in what way meaning is temporally deferred and yet in what way it supplies the loss of meaning. The equivocity as such refers to the semiotic workings of difference and the constant deferral of self-present intelligible meaning. See Derrida 1982.

[31] *Rep.* 394 b9-c5

[32] *Rep.* 394 b3. Opposite of simple narration occurs [ἐναντία γίγνεται] in the drama when we have simply the alternation of speeches.

and "politically" exempt mode of ἁπλῇ διηγήσει, but a mode which removes or effaces the subject altogether. As Socrates explains "when one removes the words of the poet between and leaves the alternation of speeches [ὅταν τις τὰ τοῦ ποιητοῦ τὰ μεταξὺ τῶν ῥήσεων ἐξαιρῶν τὰ ἀμοιβαῖα καταλείπῃ, 394 b4]" a mode of *lexis* peculiar to the drama is described. Essentially the mode of lexis referred to "is what happens in tragedy [ὅτι ἔστι τὸ περὶ τὰς τραγῳδίας τοιοῦτον]." It is a mode of lexis that admittedly "works entirely or wholly through imitation [διὰ μιμήσεως ὅλη ἐστίν, 394 c1]."

As regards the poet's dissimulation, the splitting of enunciation, as it has been illustrated in the Homeric example and having accounted for the *lexical* or generic properties of epic poetry, we now recognize something more explicit in drama's entirely mimetic mode. It involves the complete subreption of the authorial subject, the subjective or authorial effacement of the subject responsible for the logos. This is in contrast to the dithyramb, where authorial voice is not only distinguishable but present, it is "a recitation or a "messaging" which comes entirely from the poet or authorial subject [ἡ δὲ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ]."[33] In other words in the dithyramb Plato discerns that when the subject speaks, he or she speaks as him or herself. In the dithyramb there is a generically inherent consistency of authorial voice and the subject. The drama —tragedy, comedy, rhapsody—is not regulated by the model of a true or proper diegetic mode when the author is in some way present or presents himself. This consistency of authorial voice is, according to Plato, undermined by the hypocritical techne.

It is for this reason Plato now pursues the most pernicious forms of mimesis, that is, tragic mimesis, especially its exaggerated ethologico-mimetic elements. Tragedy and Comedy are "wholly" mimetic, however it is a mimesis that entirely derives from a hypocritic efficacy; it is a mimesis entirely of the mask or the *prosopon*. The actor or *hypokritês* not only declaims and thus

---

[33] Aristotle in the *Poetics* describes tragedy as being performed οὐ δι᾽ ἀπαγγελίας (*Poet.* 1449 b2-6)

effaces the poet-author, he or she also displaces the author. If we consider it from the perspective of the poet-author or *tragodidaskalos*, the subject of enunciation or the speaker, namely the actor, can never be made to coincide with the creative subject (i.e. the poet or author). In principle, tragic mimesis or the "wholly" mimetic mode, can never guarantee or assure such an agreement or a poetological relation. And moreover, the hypocritic subject (the actor) can never properly even coincide with him or herself; the actor is psychologically split, he is always already fabricated as *other*, he or she assumes the *prosopon* by discarding the self and thus never takes responsibility for the things said nor does he or she make any proprietal claims, in terms of owning or laying autonomous claim to his or her enunciative acts.[34]

How is it then that Plato, even in this critical pursuance of the consideration of *lexis*, he does not speak one word of philosophical discourse as such, the mode or style of philosophy?[35] What can we gather from such a serious critical omission? What of philosophy's *lexis*? What is being performed or enacted in the very dialogue that concerns us? What does the *Republic* bring to decision or more precisely what does it seek to decide upon? If the "wholly" *mimetic* mode involves purely "the alternation of speeches [τὰ μεταξὺ τῶν ῥήσεων]," the mode discussed is essentially that of the "dialogue" or the "dialogical form" [τὰ ἀμοιβαῖα][36] and Plato's writings are implicated in this criticism of mimetic diegesis but what Plato also achieves in resorting to the very tropes he seeks to banish from all forms of subjectal exemplarities is the critical distance from the equivocity inherent in discourse, in language and in writing.

---

[34] Havelock 1963: 21 argues that Plato is not concerned with genre differences but rather attempts to treat "poetry as a whole" (that is, he is concerned with "poetics" pure and simple) however the turn to theatrical (tragic) mimesis is a significant moment in the discussion of mimesis and it is more likely that Plato is concerned (as the ensuing discussion on the guardian's ethological models is concerned) with the ethologico-mimetic effects of a most pernicious *diegetic* mode (which employs the dialogue as such) that is, the *theatre* or the drama as such and its effect on the subject in general and more specifically later on the guardian as political (citizen) or philosophical "subject".

[35] Τὰ ἀμοιβαῖα in this passage refers to the "dialogue form". See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 192.

Having said this, a critical decision has to be made, and a first attempt is made in the early books of the *Republic* which I have thus far considered. Ultimately the decision regarding mimesis has to be made because it has to take place if Plato is to assure that an exemplary form of subjectivity is constructed, a subject which always coincides with itself.

"Are we to suffer our poets to narrate as imitators or in part as imitators and in part not, and what sort of things in each case, or not allow them to imitate at all [πότερον ἐάσομεν τοὺς ποιητὰς μιμουμένους ἡμῖν τὰς διηγήσεις ποιεῖσθαι, ἢ τὰ μὲν μιμουμένου, τὰ δὲ μή, καὶ ὁποῖα ἑκάτερα, ἢ οὐδὲ μιμεῖσθαι]."[37]

This is not only a decision regarding mimesis and subjectivity that concerns itself with the poets but most importantly the guardian-subject that Plato is attempting to exemplarily construct in his ideal polis. Plato has Socrates ask a question that ultimately elucidates the ostensible theoretical purpose of the decision concerning mimesis, "Do we wish our guardians to be good mimics or not? [...μιμητικοὺς ἡμῖν δεῖ εἶναι τοὺς φύλακας ἢ οὔ; 394e2]." Ultimately this decision regarding mimesis is a decision regarding the subject.[38] Reflecting for a moment, it is imperative to ask, has the decision regarding mimesis, which ultimately becomes the decision regarding the subject, been made, has it been delivered?

---

[37] *Rep.*394 d2-5

[38] Plato at this point also warns that the subject is not represented equivocally given his concerns regarding polytechnic abilities of the subject. The subject who engages in many things ultimately engages with mimesis and subsequently presents him or herself as multifarious being. See *Rep.* 394 e6

3.6 Deferral of the Mimetic Decision

Though mimesis thus far has been read as a disfigurement of the truth and has thus been associated to the lie, falsehood and diverse forms of pretension, Plato has Socrates return to a consideration of the constitution of the guardian; the exemplary subject. Socrates goes on to explain,

> "And does not the same rule hold for imitation, that the same man is not able
>
> to imitate many things well as he can one? [Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ μιμήσεως ὁ
>
> αὐτὸς λόγος, ὅτι πολλὰ ὁ αὐτὸς μιμεῖσθαι εὖ ὥσπερ ἓν οὐ δυνατός;]."[39]

The subject "cannot imitate many things [πολλὰ ὁ αὐτὸς μιμεῖσθαι]," the logic of this claim suggests that the subject becomes other, diversifies him or herself and thus this possibility of polytechnical mimesis does not assure a healthy constitution of the subject. Undoubtedly if Plato wants to assure the proper "installation" or constitution of the subject then the guardian subject must be "incapable of imitating many things [ἀδύνατος εἶναι πολλὰ καλῶς μιμεῖσθαι, 395 b5]." Most interesting is that a paradox of production is introduced, in the first instance the guardian-subject is prescribed with the role of demiurge of civil liberty [εἶναι δημιουργοὺς ἐλευθερίας τῆς πόλεως] and thus as demiurg "should not imitate anything else [οὐδὲν δὴ δέοι ἂν αὐτοὺς ἄλλο πράττειν οὐδὲ μιμεῖσθαι, 395 c1-5]." As demiurg, there is an originative productive ability consigned to the guardian-subject and by not partaking in any form of mimetic activity Plato is able to exclude mimesis from the subject's productive constitution. Presenting the demiurgic quality of the guardian-subject tends toward the protection of the self-identity appropriate to the subject. However by implicitly considering the psychological impression of mimesis Plato seems to cancel out the demiurgic necessity of the

---

[39] *Rep.* 394 e8-9

subject by having Socrates explain that "if they imitate they should from childhood up imitate what is appropriate to them [ἐὰν δὲ μιμῶνται, μιμεῖσθαι τὰ τούτοις προσήκοντα εὐθὺς ἐκ παίδων, 395c4]."

Paradoxically there is an admission of *mimesis* in the subject's constitution and consequently there again is some kind of delay in the decision concerning mimesis even as the exigency for delivering the decision is acknowledged thus far. Is it because Plato recognizes that the subject that demiurgically creates a truth is inevitably incommensurate to it? Is the finitude of subjectal representation a concern given that without having formally embarked upon an investigation of the eidos, which is transcendental in its Platonic formulations that no proper account can be made of the mimetic allowance, of the potentiality of mimetic investure.

Plato is undoubtedly aware of the mimetic ramifications on any potential constitution of the subject (and polis) given that the concern regarding mimesis and subjectivity is that the guardian "may imbibe the reality that come out of his or her mimetic investments [...ἵνα μὴ ἐκ τῆς μιμήσεως τοῦ εἶναι ἀπολαύσωσιν, 395 c9-d1]." Socrates states clearly the effects on the subject,

> "Or have you not observed that imitations, if continued from youth far into
>
> life, settle down into habits and second nature in the body, the speech, and the
>
> thought? [...ὅτι αἱ μιμήσεις, ἐὰν ἐκ νέων πόρρω διατελέσωσιν,
>
> εἰς ἔθη τε καὶ φύσιν καθίστανται καὶ κατὰ σῶμα καὶ φωνὰς καὶ κατὰ τὴν δ
>
> ιάνοιαν;]."[40]

Here, clearly defined in this context, the guardian subject who engages in mimesis becomes the thing or reality he or she represents and a different perception of subjectivity emerges which sees the guardian as fundamentally a mimetic subject and not a demiurgic

---

[40] *Rep.*395 d1-4

subject. Most significantly the effect of mimesis is wide-ranging given if they settle and become part of the nature of the subject it is externalized mimetically "in the body, the voice or speech and thought [καὶ κατὰ σῶμα καὶ φωνὰς καὶ κατὰ τὴν διάνοιαν]"of the subject in question.

Plato's main task now is to consider, above all, how he may clear the path to allow for some mimetic practices knowing too well that such a predisposition will ultimately undermine the very constitution of the subject that he wants to establish. Given there is no absolute banishment of mimesis thus far, even bearing in mind the criticism propelled throughout books two and three, how is it that the guardian-subject, given the acceptability of some mimetic practices [ἐὰν δὲ μιμῶνται, 395c4] discriminates between what is derived or degenerate and what is original or authentic? How is proper or improper mimesis or, for that matter, good or bad mimesis differentiated in every mimetic investure?

One could hardly assert more strongly the paradox inherent in the critique of mimesis thus far and it seems with what follows out of the early appraisal of the mimesis question that Plato is aware of the critical and theoretical shortfalls in the critique thus far. An irrevocable step forward can only be made if the critique is thoroughly based on a conception of the eidos. The subjectal constitution is deferred at this point and it cannot stand as the inaugural and conditioning point of its legitimate ground. Mimesis is now suspended upon an indiscernible understanding of the subject who practices mimesis. And in order to understand "who" is the subject of mimesis Plato finds it necessary to consider a proper philosophical formulation of the eidos and thus illustrate in what way the subject can be conceived in relation to the eidos, that is, how it could be eidetically conceived. To consider the subject (the subject who imitates, who wills, who acts, who produces, who creates) outside of any eidetic conception makes no sense in the context of Plato's mimetology. To ensure the singularization of the subject, Plato is well aware that there must be a complete dismissal of mimesis given a partial mimetic engagement sets off a multiplicity of mimetic investments and possibilities. But the challenge now is to

determine how Plato can achieve this process of singularization and subjectal reconstitution without risking another return of mimesis. Certainly, I will try, aided by Lacoue-Labarthe's reading, to explain the repetition of the decision which consequently will elucidate the overall treatment of mimesis in its most general terms and whether this successfully warrants the constitution of the subject of the Platonic *politeia*.

Chapter Four

Mimetology

"Let us further say to her (muses) [προσείπωμεν δὲ αὐτῇ],
lest she condemn us for harshness and rusticity, that there is from
old a quarrel between philosophy and poetry
[ὅτι παλαιὰ μέν τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ ποιητικῇ]".

Rep. **607b4-5**

4.1   Reiterations: Reappraising the Mimesis Question

One principal concern that forms the backdrop to the *Republic* especially as it evolves in the "cave allegory" in book seven, is the question of subjectal loss, the loss of the subject of philosophy in mimesis. Certainly in view of the division of the soul and "cave allegory"[1] the return to the question of mimesis in the final book of the *Republic* is an attempt to save the subject, to recoup this sense of loss that mimesis is attendant to. It is a decision regarding the subject, a decision for subjectivity[2] that is at stake in the *Republic* and book ten attempts to gather and reformulate the questions broached in the previous books.

Socrates in the final book's opening vigilantly repeats the argument regarding the necessary exclusion of all mimetic arts explaining that "in refusing to admit at all so much of it

---

[1] *Rep.* 514a-521b

[2] Lacoue-Labarthe approached Plato's philosophy and its Heideggerian interpretation by regarding both alike as attempting to secure subjectivity by a decision which protects and produces the "subject". Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 43-138.

as is imitative; [Τὸ μηδαμῇ παραδέχεσθαι αὐτῇ ὅση μιμητική]" for that it is certainly not to be received is, I think, still more plainly apparent now that we have distinguished the several parts of the soul [τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδη]." The exclusion of mimesis, its repeated dismissal has become more apparent, more transparent if we bear in mind the philosophical importance of the division of the soul in book four and the cave allegory in book seven.[3] By determining τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς εἴδη and the two worlds of the 'cave allegory' it intimates that the mimetic dismissal is deemed necessary.[4]

However this dismissal does not occur without some expressions of reverence to the tragic poets and Homer, without involving a philosophical *apologia* to "the first teacher" [πρῶτος διδάσκαλός], Homer.[5] However the failed exclusion of mimesis we discovered in book three, which anticipates the tripartite 'division of the soul' in book four, is oriented towards the protection of the self-identity of the subject. Socrates appraises similar concerns investigated in the earlier books, again identifying poetry as the cause of subjectal dispossession, and indicating that the art of tragic poets and other imitators to be "a corruption of the mind of all listeners who do not possess as an antidote a knowledge of its real nature [λώβη ἔοικεν εἶναι πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα τῆς τῶν ἀκουόντων διανοίας, ὅσοι μὴ ἔχουσι φάρμακον τὸ εἰδέναι αὐτὰ οἷα τυγχάνει ὄντα.]."[6] Plato interestingly refers to the need of a *pharmakon* to things of the mimetic kind which corrupts the dianoia (mind, thought, judgement) of *listeners*. For the mimetic poison that corrupts dianoia Socrates signals the need for an antidote. This antidote, Socrates refers to, is

---

[3] I will proceed here assuming the reader is aware of the references being made in the other books of the *Republic*. Any detailed discussion of the "division of the soul" and the "cave allegory" is beyond the scope of this thesis. The expectation is that the generally accepted interpretative readings of the philosophical statements made concerning the "psychology" in book four (*Rep.* 434d-441c) and the "speleology" in book seven (*Rep.* 514a-521b) are acknowledged in the context of my discussion.

[4] According to Nehamas it is with the division of the soul (book 8) that the banishment of mimesis is made possible. Nehamas 1988: 52

[5] *Rep.* 595 c1-c4

[6] *Rep.* 595 b3-b7

knowledge of the real nature of things [τὸ εἰδέναι αὐτὰ οἶα τυγχάνει ὄντα] and it undoubtedly refers to the blindness to the real in the cave allegory.[7]

What is problematic here is that the oral dismissal of book three, where the *dianoia* of *listeners* is at issue, does not escape the implications of the "specular" *pharmakon*. The "undecidability" of the *pharmakon* Derrida likens to the reversibility which constitutes the "trick of the mirror"[8] or less literally the trick of mimesis. Socrates asks Adeimantus, though in this case in its generality; "what imitation is in general [Μίμησιν ὅλως...]"[9] and in approaching it as such, in its generality, is able to approach it differently, steering away from its oral or mimological theorizations in book three.[10] Following their customary procedure (i.e dialectics)[11] the demiurge is considered in view of how he or she posits "a single Idea [εἶδος...ἐν]."[12] How his or her demiurgic act adheres to the transparent order of forms and ideas. What is posited as an εἶδος is within view, it is "seen". Socrates explains, "...the demiurge who produces either of them (i.e. couch/table) fixes his eyes[13] on the idea or Form [ὁ δημιουργὸς... πρὸς τὴν ἰδέαν βλέπων, 10.596b4-b5]." What is interesting here is that we have a specular or visual precondition in all demiurgic activity. The demiurge πρὸς τὴν ἰδέαν βλέπων. The demiurge views, or keeps within view the form or the idea of the thing produced, it concedes that any demiurgic production tends toward an eidetic orientation.

---

[7] *Rep.* 515c1-2 The prisoners in the Cave are said to believe that "the truth is nothing but the shadows of artifacts [τάς τῶν σκευαστῶν σκύας]."

[8] Derrida 1981a: 157-8.

[9] *Rep.*595 c6

[10] Commentators have argued that there is a definitional difference between mimesis in book three which they understand as referring to "impersonation" and book ten where it comes to refer to "representation" in general. See Brownson 1920: 92-93; Cornford 1941: 324 note 1; Havelock 1963: 20-26.

[11] *Rep.* 596 a5

[12] *Rep.* 596 a6

[13] See *Crat.* 389 a-b.

Let us however clarify this, the demiurge who orients his vision πρὸς τὴν ἰδέαν, does not in actual fact look upon the forms or the eidos in its most abstract sense. He looks upon the phenomenal presentation of the eidos, the outline the general *idea*. This specular engagement is confined to seeing, to the visual.[14] Before presenting the "sun analogy"[15] Socrates states clearly that with regard to the "many" and the "one", "the former are seen [ὁρᾶσθαι] but not intellected [νοεῖσθαι], while the *ideas* are intellected but not seen."[16] So the demiurge is confined to a specular engagement with the eidos and not a dianoetic engagement. In other words, the demiurgic act does not necessarily involve any intellection as such and thus restricted to a phenomenal and eikastic orientation.

The demiurge thus "is not only able to make [ποιῆσαι] all implements, but he produces [ποιεῖ] all plants and animals, including himself, and there to earth and heaven and in Hades under the earth [596 c]."[17] The demiurgic act is essentially a poetic activity, that is, in its simplest form is considered to be creative or more accurately, "productive". But what the demiurge produces is the phenomenal; what is within view. But why is it that Adeimantus describes the demiurge, incredulously maybe, as "a most marvelous sophist

---

[14] Heidegger certainly attends to the conception of the eidos as the which gives itself "in seeing", in ἰδεῖν. Heidegger 2002: 36.

[15] *Rep.*508b-c The ἀναλογία presented asserts the idea that the Good is founded or conceived in "the intelligible region" [ἐν τῷ νοητῷ τόπῳ] with respect to intelligence [νοῦς] and the sun is "in the visual region" [ἐν τῷ ὁρατῷ]", that is, with respect to sight and what is seen".

[16] *Rep.* 507b

[17] Harold Cherniss legitimately addresses the question regarding whether "god created the Ideas" (since Plotinus, the Neoplatonic tradition has accepted the premise). According to Cherniss, "God is imitative" (Cherniss 1932: 240). However Cherniss does explain that God's imitation is different to the artist's imitation and as he points out divine imitation is ignored by Plato (Cherniss 1932: 242) This is not the case in terms of the *Sophist*, however Cherniss highlights an ambiguity re: nature of divine imitation in the *Republic*.

[θαυμαστόν σοφιστήν, 596 d1]."[18] Certainly the relation to sophistics is deliberate and pre-empts the classic problematic of the subject as it is presented in the *Sophist*, but the relation is assumed because the demiurgic act involves in essence not true poiesis, creativity and production but rather it is considered to be reproductive, it duplicates or reproduces what phenomenally *is*, which is precisely why the sophist is suspect.

4.2 Heliotropism: The Specularization of Mimesis [19]

"But it is something that the craftsman can make everywhere and quickly.

You could do it most quickly if you should choose to take a mirror and carry

it about everywhere [εἰ θέλεις λαβὼν κάταπτρον περιφέρειν πανταχῇ]. You

will speedily produce the sun [ἥλιον ποιήσεις] and all the things in the sky,

and speedily the earth and yourself [σαυτόν] and the other animals and

implements and plants and all the objects of which we just now spoke."[20]

A creator of all things [ἁπάντων ποιητής, 596 d4] would be able to produce all things by way of mirroring them, but mirroring is confirmed as being itself mimetic for what is produced is the "apperance [φαινόμενα]" of things *not* the "reality [ὄντα]" and the "truth [ἀληθείᾳ]."[21] The figure of the mirror determines the nature of a particular form of mimesis not entirely thematised in book three, what is at issue in book ten is "specular" mimesis. What do we understand about the mimetic now? Mimesis is now incipiently 'pure' *reflection*. By interpreting mimesis as "mirroring", by confining mimesis to a "specular" or visual interpretation assures the mimetic

---

[18] Prior to the divine demiurge being described a θαυμαστόν...σοφιστήν, what seemingly presents him/herself as the demiurge in 596c2 is described as θαυμαστὸν ἄνδρα.

[19] Specularization of mimesis essentially refers to the process in book ten whereby mimesis is understood in terms of philosophical eidos, it is conceived only within an *eidetic* relation. That is it assumes a mimesis that creates icons and phantasms.

[20] *Rep.* 596 d9-e4

[21] *Rep.* 596 e4

confinement of the subject to the world of the cave, of shadows. Mimesis is now irrevocably determined by the speleology[22] of book seven.

Obviously the idea of a form and its copy is used now as an example [τούτων ζητήσωμεν] "to determine the nature of the imitator [...τὸν μιμητὴν τοῦτον, τίς ποτ' ἐστίν; 597 b1-2]." The paradigm of the mirror introduced in book ten, is already embryonically present in book seven. The failed attempt to dismiss oral mimesis provides an explanation for the philosophical investigations in the sections concerning the "Divided Line"[23] and the "Cave allegory".[24] It necessitates the repetition of dismissing mimesis and it can only be achieved by way of mimetic repetition; the dismissal is itself *mimetic*. What could not establish itself in the form of a decision concerning the mimetic expulsion nevertheless has been trapped, in a philosophical way, in the specular or visual realm. It, in essence, has been "trapped in view" within the cave, the underworld, the world of delusory shadows and phantasms.

Socrates is clear when considering the productive activity of the demiurgic craftsman[25] that he or she does not make or produce τὸ ὄν ("being", "the real"). Concluding that "if he does not make that which really is, he could not be said to make real being but something that resembles real being but is not that [Οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ὃ ἔστι ποιεῖ, οὐκ ἂν τὸ ὂν ποιεῖ, ἀλλά τι τοιοῦτον οἷον τὸ ὄν, ὂν δὲ οὔ; 597 a4]." So the craftsman does "not make real being [οὐκ ἂν τὸ ὂν ποιοι]," his productive import tends to that which "is not [ὄν..οὔ]." Therefore, in

---

[22] Derrida describes the "cave allegory" of book seven as the "speleology." See Derrida 1981a: 192.

[23] See *Rep.* 509d-511e and 521c-535a. Images and reflections are said to be the object of the mental state of *eikasia* (conjecture) See Paton 1921: 69-104.

[24] See *Rep.* 7.514a-521b. It is important to note in what way these Socratic metaphors are implicated in a series of metaphors. The cave allegory is explicitly related to the line (517a-b) and as John Sallis correctly observes "it takes over the images of light and the sun from the earlier analogy". Sallis 1975: 445.

[25] The zoographer or painter is first compared in this example.

the Socratic example, the craftsman "does not make "the couch in itself, the eidos of the couch [οὐ τὸ εἶδος ποιεῖ, 597a2]" but a particular couch.[26]

It proves to be quite contentious to introduce the theory of forms to the logos concerning mimesis. Many have been the academic debates concerning the place of the theory in any mimetology or theorization of mimesis. Alexander Nehamas argues that the appeal to the theory of Forms in seeking a definition of imitation at 595c7 is "strange" suggesting that it is a peculiar version of the theory that is introduced in book ten, an argument that implies the extraneous character of the mimetology in the final book.[27] Nehamas suggests that any description of the "three removes from reality" or the "one over many argument"[28] as a legitimization of any theory that suggests there are forms of artifacts is not necessarily required to make the argument work. [29] However the vocabulary of the mimetology developed in the *Republic* suggests otherwise, for the argument sets to demonstrate that any *poetic* activity, and I mean that in its broadest "demiurgic" sense, always simply copies, represents "what is" [τὶ ἔστιν;]; it copies the eidos. Reiterating the question of mimesis in the context of book ten is a necessary consequence of what has been determined in book seven. It is with the elucidation of the eidos (the truth or *aletheia*) that the truth of mimesis can be decided. Something that by

---

[26] Prior to the allegory being introduced Socrates does assert the significance of re-introducing within their logos the question about the *eidê*. See *Rep.* 507b. As John Sallis correctly points out it is an *assertion* that occurs by way of logos. Sallis 1975: 402-3. Socrates says that they refer the many "to the one idea, of each as though the idea were one; and we address it as that which is [ὃ ἔστιν]."

[27] There is no intention here to consider whether the theory of forms should be extended to include artifacts (as "beds" are treated in the painter analogy) suffice to say that I will argue that any extension of the theory of forms only serves to enter mimesis within its specular determination, its confinement within the *eidetic*. Some notable commentators have not taken the paradigmatic references to the theory of forms. I.M.Crombie believes Plato "overstates his case" in book ten arguing that the choice of beds and tables is "derisory". Crombie 1962: 147. Others commentators who similarly see problems with the existence of forms of artifacta include Grube 1974: 241 n.4; Cornford 1945: 315-16; Woozley and Cross 1964.

[28] *Rep.* 596a

[29] Nehamas 1988: 54

necessity needs to be pointed out has yet to be decided. Book three delivered but a deferral of the decision concerning mimesis "in general".

Book ten comprises a steady and intricate relation with the speleology of book seven. Its aim is to keep in view what Lacoue-Labarthe calls, after Derrida, *heliotropism*: "the motif of light" which has been "from the start constitutive of the discourse of philosophy upon its object: the metaphysical."[30] Any presumption of an illumination of the eidos inevitably ensures the proper constitution of the subject. The idea of 'heliotropism' is oriented around the following objective; it is designed to constitute the subject of philosophy. Within this heliotropic perspective, might something "here or there...intrude or occur which would be completely foreign to the metaphysical assumption of sight and the unbroken coercion of the theoretical?"[31] Ultimately Plato identifies this something to be the mutual cancellation by which the motifs of the sensible and intelligible worlds, encompassed by the heliotropical myth of the cave in book seven, in an obscure way, interact each other. Certainly the one thing that can ultimately be responsible for this negation or cancellation is mimesis as such.

It is in this way that the demiurge comes to be called a μιμητὴς by 597e3. This nominative substitution is within the logocentric movements of book ten the critical mechanism used to see in any demiurgic act the mimetic as such. The image in the allegory of the cave is reproduced in a highly theoretical formulation when considering the demiurge as μιμητὴς or *mimetician* since Socrates clearly states that "the producer of the product three removes from nature you call the imitator?[τὸν τοῦ τρίτου ἄρα γεννήματος ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως μιμητὴν καλεῖς;]."

The movement of the logos in book ten undoubtedly repeats or replicates the movements of ascent and descent that the speleology of book seven illustrates. That the

---

[30] Lacoue-Labarthe 1993: 73.

[31] Lacoue-Labarthe 1993: 73

mimetician is τοῦ τρίτου γεννήματος suggests a degenerate offspring, however it also alludes to the subjective confinement to darkness and the world of appearances and shadows. The mimetician is a subject lost in this world, a subject who withdraws in the theatre of shadows. Ultimately it is the fact that the mimetician is three removes from nature that he is a subject *lost*. If this subjectal loss describes the mimetician, it is important to note that the subject as self is lost, according to Plato, only in the demiurgic or poetic act as such. For in the forgetting of the forms there is a forgetting of the nature of things and, in the theatre of shadows, it is also a forgetting of this loss of the self.

So it is significant for Plato to include under the name of μιμητής the tragedian[32] and not only the craftsman. Moreover it is also convenient to include under this nomination the painter or zoographer as well, who in an archetypal way typifies the mimetic. Any agreement about the nature of the imitator at 597e8 occurs by way of noting a resemblance between all imitators. Plato equates mimetic poetry to the work of a painter, and the painter's *ergon*, in turn, to the holding up of a mirror before nature.

4.3 The Painter and Poet Analogy: Establishing the *eidetic* orientation.

Many scholars have pointed out a lacuna in regard to the elements of the analogy presented between the painter and the poet. Julia Annas believes that the analogy between painting and poetry is inappropriate[33] that the concern regarding painting does not carry over to poetry and "the whole point of the assimilation of poetry to painting, the source of the charges of triviality brought against it, is the denial of it of any creativity."[34] So the poet like the painter engages in a

---

[32] *Rep.* 597 e5. "'This, then, will apply to the maker of tragedies also, if he is an imitator and is in his nature three removes from the king and the truth, as are all other imitators." [Τοῦτ᾽ ἄρα ἔσται καὶ ὁ τραγῳδοποιός, εἴπερ μιμητής ἐστι, τρίτος τις ἀπὸ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας πεφυκώς, καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄλλοι μιμηταί.]

[33] Annas 1988: 7

[34] Annas 1988: 22

purely mimetic act; it involves mere "copying" and for this reason tends toward a triviliazation of poetry.

Alexander Nehamas, on the other hand, argues that "painting is not denunciated"[35] even though a series of analogies are used between painting and poetry in book ten. Though he acknowledges that Plato's argument against poetry depends on a series of analogies with painting[36] based on this analogy Nehamas argues many commentators mistakenly maintained that Plato intended to outlaw painting as well as poetry. However it is important, at this point, to ask what are the motivations for this analogical presentation[37] especially since book ten incipiently expounds the link between the essence of demiurgic poiesis – mimesis in general – and the eidos. For as Heidegger has pointed out, in order to clarify Plato's intentions, "it is only after the elucidation of truth, in book seven, that the essence of mimesis, the 'truth' of mimesis, can be decided."[38]

The analogy between the painter's and a poet's production certainly raises more questions than it answers, especially as there is a further analogy that posits the specularisation of mimesis in book ten, that is, the paradigm of the mirror. The paradigm of the mirror leads Plato to a realization that a specularisation of mimesis would be immediately, if not theoretically, problematic. If the demiurg in general is the mirror, the analogy fails to reveal the dimension of auto-presentation that attends every praxis of artistic mimesis for, as Lacoue-Labarthe correctly

---

[35] Nehamas 1998: 281 Also see Nehamas 1988: 47 "Plato's argument against poetry depends on a series of analogies with painting." According to Nehamas many commentators mistakenly maintained that Plato intended to outlaw painting (not only poetry).

[36] Nehamas 1988: 47

[37] Julia Annas for example acknowledges poetry is censored in book III but does not ask why it is banished in book X. The significance of the analogy is intricately tied to the heliotropical myths and analogies of book VI and VII. Annas 1988: 8-9

[38] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 77. Heidegger argues that Plato intended an effective separation of art from truth- truth as aletheia as Unverstellheit- in terms of which it has been characterized, is thus deferred to this later book.

asks, "Where have we ever seen mirrors reflect themselves?"[39] The analogy fails if the painter as demiurg essentially uses the mirror as creative *organon*. If the demiurg holds up the mirror, is he engaging in *demiurgy* proper? Does he not recreate the eidos as *eidolon*?

4.4   Mimetic Proximities: the non-eidetic orientation of Mimesis

So far what has been determined is that the craftsman as *demiurg* orients his vision "toward the idea", that is, his demiurgic activity has an eidetic orientation. However the problem that presents itself in what seemingly is an unworkable analogy is that the painter's orientation is toward something else altogether. Socrates asks Adeimantus,

"To which is painting directed in every case, to the imitation of reality as it is

[πρὸς τὸ ὄν] or of appearance as it appears

[πρὸς τὸ φαινόμενον, ὡς φαίνεται]?"

"Is it an imitation of a phantasm or of the truth?

[φαντάσματος ἢ ἀληθείας οὖσα μίμησις;].

"Of a phantasm." [Φαντάσματος].

"Then the mimetic art is far removed from truth, and this, it seems, is the

reason why it can produce everything [Πόρρω ἄρα που τοῦ ἀληθοῦς

ἡ μιμητική ἐστι καί, ὡς ἔοικε, διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεργάζεται] because it

touches or lays hold of only a small part of the object and that a phantom

[ὅτι σμικρόν τι ἑκάστου ἐφάπτεται, καὶ τοῦτο εἴδωλον;]"[40]

The criticism of mimesis is one grounded by the question of proximity, that is, of contiguity in terms of truth, the immediacy or intimacy of mimetic production in terms of truth.[41]

---

[39] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 88.

[40] *Rep.* 598 b2-c4

Πόρρω ἄρα που τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἡ μιμητική ἐστι, mimesis is understood, more specifically, in terms of its distance from the truth, it being literally "far off" or "far away", as if to say, removed from, or not at home with" the truth. Is Plato then telling us that mimesis deceives (ἐξαπατεῖ) only from a distance? Is distance, in fact, the very element that produces the mimetic effect, or the dynamis of mimesis? Furthermore is Plato telling us to keep mimesis at a distance?[42] Or to keep one's own distance from its affective deception, that is, from its ἀπατῆ? It seems that Plato inexorably carries mimesis in the direction of the ineffable eidolon and in the *eidological*,[43] the notion of proximity is exposed to the idea of manifest eidola as mimetic productions. Is Plato's only concern, as Elizabeth Belfiore argues that of making "veridical mistakes",[44] that is, of mistaking images for realities? In short, what is of interest here is a representation of a subject who, in the theatre of shadows, consciously figures itself *affected* by the apparent, a subject who ultimately is deceived by eidola.[45]

A particular logic of relation is considered here, for though it is determined that by imposing a mimetic proximity "a painter would be able to deceive [ἐξαπατῶ] children and foolish men with his picture [γράψας] by exhibiting at a distance [πόρρωθεν ἐπιδεικνὺς],"[46] the mimetic production considered here, that which is produced by way of a certain proximity or

---

[41] This notion of mimetic proximity is again referred to at 605b8-c4. "...the mimetic poet [...μιμητικὸν ποιητὴν...] sets up in each individual soul a vicious constitution by fashioning phantoms far removed from reality ...[εἴδωλα εἰδωλοποιοῦντα, τοῦ δὲ ἀληθοῦς πόρρω πάνυ ἀφεστῶτα].

[42] See Heidegger 1991.

[43] This is developed further in the *Sophist* involving a consideration of eikastic and eidologic producations of mimesis.

[44] Belfiore 1983: 42

[45] With special reference to *Rep.* 605 e6-8, Belfiore argues that there is a theory of audience psychology (Belfiore 1983: 40) and this manifests itself as the fundamental concern of book ten. The greatest accusation against poetry is its "appeal to childlike and foolish element in a soul divided against itself" (Belfiore 1983: 61) that is, its appeal to the "affective part of the soul" (ἀλλοτρία πάθη). If, as Belfiore argues, Plato "is concerned with defending us against an uncritical acceptance of the pleasures of imitative poetry" (Belfiore 1983: 62) then it is precisely because of this sense of subjectal *loss* that is at issue.

[46] *Rep.* 598 c3

spacing, turns to the subversion of presence which the eidolon effects. It also shows how this subversion has been itself cloaked by the heliotropical myth in the *Republic*. Certainly all demiurgic *erga* invoke the play of this distance and it sees the presumptions of both essence and eidetic presence is undone by the irreducible distance assumed by a certain mimetic proximity between the eidos and the eidolon.

It seems the mimetology ultimately takes Plato beyond himself, for as Socrates argued in book seven the eidos precedes and is "above" all things; including nature itself, all artifacts, shadows and reflections in water. It could be radically argued that that the eidos itself might be regarded as an absent product of the language and discourse in the *Republic* that reports its presence. The logos in essence is mythos and it is mimetically determined. When logos is understood as mythos it assumes a certain proximity or distance between the writer Plato and its speaker Socrates. In the *Republic*, as in all the dialogues considered in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation, mimesis has meaning, never on its own terms, say as "auto-production", but always in relation to an original adequation which allows truth, or more appropriately, the eidos to stand in relation to *all* things. Now this adequation can only be established if the mimetology facilitates and maintains the eidetic orientation of all mimetic acts.

4.5 The Question of Mimetic Poetry: The *Eidolon* and Poetic Language

> "'Do you suppose, then, that if a man were able to produce both the exemplar
>
> and the semblance [τό τε μιμηθησόμενον καὶ τὸ εἴδωλον], he would be eager
>
> to abandon himself to the fashioning of a phantom [ἐπι τῇ τῶν εἰδώλων
>
> δημιουργίᾳ ἑαυτὸν] and set this in the forefront of his life as the best thing
>
> he had?"[47]

---

[47] *Rep.* 599a7

For Plato, the demiurgic subject is lost within the acts that mediate poiesis to the eidos. One mark in this loss in every demiurgic deed is losing sight of the eidos. An object that is inevitably exterior to it accompanies the subject. However the nature of any production is inevitably determined by its eidetic adequation. Socrates in referring to the demiurgy of the subject refers to two types of poetic productions; "the exemplar or the copy [τό μιμηθησόμενον]" and "the eidolon [τὸ εἴδωλον]." The difference between the two is significant in the context of the poet-painter analogy previously referred to. The mimetic nature of τό μιμηθησόμενον is reduced to a simple copy in description and bears a proper relation of adequation to the eidos. On the other hand, the εἴδωλον is determined to have an inadequate relation to truth and in essence refers to a non-eidetic production. But who is the demiurge that produces *eidola*? Is it all demiurges or does Plato want to identify a particular tribe or class of demiurges?

The class of demiurge who engages in *eidologic* productions is not identified at this point, however Socrates hints towards the subject "who knows all the crafts [πάσας ἐπισταμένῳ τὰς δημιουργίας καὶ τἆλλα πάντα]," a subject who is confirmed to be a magician [γόητί] and imitator [μιμητῇ].[48] The demiurge that engages in mimesis "produces phantoms, not realities [φαντάσματα γάρ, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ὄντα ποιοῦσιν]."[49] What is suggested here is that all productions by a polytechnical demiurge are phantasmatic in essence, they tend toward a non-eidetic orientation. The eidos is no longer kept within view and so the eidolon, as phantasma or phantasmatic in essence, presents itself as an excrescence of truth, a supplement of the eidos. Most importantly the eidos is no longer a carried presence in the eidolon, but something exterior, something that precedes the eidolon. In many respects the eidolon as phantasma "supersedes" the eidos.

---

[48] *Rep.* 598 d4

[49] *Rep.* 599 a3

Socrates again, as he did in books two and three, re-introduces the Homeric example. He asks whether or not the poet [οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ποιηταὶ] knows the thing [τῷ ὄντι] about which he speaks. Does the poet have the proper dianoetic relation to its object and most importantly in speaking about it does he "represent it" appropriately or to be more precise "adequately". This certainly presents itself as a fundamental question in the *Ion* where the dianoetic competency of the poet is questioned under the heading of the question of *hermeneia*.

According to Plato mimesis relates to objects which exist in secondary form, separately from any correlative sensible object or thing and doubly separated from any absolute form or *eidos*. Conversely, the eidos relates to things in an intelligible way, and bearing in mind the image of the divided line and the supplementary image of the speleology of book seven, it problematically is related to absolute subjective *noesis*, the purest form of cognition. In the *Republic* this is obviously presented in a way that is not foreign to its own criticism, it is presented in the logos at hand. When Plato employs images or resorts to obvious analogical presentations, he does so by way of mimesis. In other words, the eidos does not present itself in the way of pure or absolute presence. The logos relates to the eidos by way of mimesis, it re-presents it in a secondary or supplementary manner, even though it is argued that it is first presented as an immediate presentation in *noesis*. The issue here is that it is thereafter represented in logos. Inevitably, the problem bestowed on Plato is that the eidos itself as it is referred to *noesis* (intellection) and moreover logos (dialectic), is a representation, not a "presentation" pure and proper. In its reference it is irreducibly an eidolon.

This brings me to the mimetic logos that Plato sees poetry is derived of. Homer is introduced to highlight that he is no "physician" that he cannot discuss matters concerning physiology or medicine, but in any reference to a logos that concerns medicine, the poet is merely an "imitator of physician's talk [μιμητὴς μόνον ἰατρικῶν λόγων]."[50] Overall, as he does

---

[50] *Rep.* 599c2

in the *Ion*, the poet has no competence in regard to the logos concerning "the other arts."[51] However Plato does not want to confine his criticism to concerns regarding technical logos but wants to extend it to the philosophical concerns pursued in books six and seven, that is, on the logos concerning "the greatest and finest things [περὶ δὲ ὧν μεγίστων τε καὶ καλλίστων]."

The turn from logos concerning *technai* to a fundamental philosophical context is a significant one, as the choice to pursue "the greatest and finest things" is offered as a philosophical and *logocentric* necessity. An intriguing space is opened here between the notions of the eidolon and its relation to the eidos and in what way or manner it manifests itself in logos. One might ask: what finally is the difference between poetic logos and the logos peculiar to philosophy? Can we associate philosophical logos with the *eidololologic* character of all poetic *erga*? Can the *Republic* as the exemplary or paradigmatic logos, which in its movement attends to the *eidê as eidê*, be redescribed in its claim to philosophical immediacy and vividness as a logos which escapes totalizing presence? Can the logos in this very dialogue, be conceived only outside the totalizing metaphysical notion of presence? Isn't the *Republic*, in its movement, in the experience of its logos, a representation, a mimetic logos mediating what is absolute (eidos) in its own writing? All this however, will be predicated upon establishing firstly a generalized description of poetry as archetypally a mimetic logos.

Mimesis is determined to be a falsity by virtue of its not letting the eidos present itself as itself in the *logoi* that represent it. The mimetic logos of the poet has meaning for Plato only in relation to the eidos, never on its own terms. For this reason the poet, and more specifically Homer, is a "creator of phantoms [εἰδώλου δημιουργός, 599d4]" and in that respect Homer, and one could surmise poetry as such, is of "no public service [μὴ δημοσία]" in the political *mythos* of the *Republic* and Socrates consequently adds that there is "no Homeric way of life [βίου Ὁμηρικήν, 600b1]." What is peculiar is that the poet not only engages in a demiurgic

---

[51] See *Rep.* 599c7-9 for the question concerning Homer's competence in the other arts or *technai*

mimesis which is foreign to the demiurge (eg. Carpenter), on the level of logos it is doubly foreign to the philosopher's work. The mimetic logos of the poet presents an eidolon, a representation of an image, that is, it represents what is already a sensible presentation as we have seen in the distinctive character of τό μιμηθησόμενον, the "first image". In the eidolon a duplication of the image presents itself, it is doubly removed from the eidos in which truth emerges truly. Though I do not agree with Nehamas that the painter or zoographer (the painter of living "sensible" things) is not excluded or dismissed in book ten, I do see in what way Plato may have seen poetry to be considered the more pernicious of the mimetic arts as it involves in its ethological transcription a form of subjectal withdrawal. This provides sufficient reason to dismiss "the class of poets [τοὺς ποιητικοὺς μιμητὰς]" or the "poetic tribe" from the mythic State.

> "'Shall we, then, lay it down that all the poetic tribe, beginning with Homer,
>
> are imitators of images of excellence and of the other things that they create
>
> and do not hold on truth?
>
> [Οὐκοῦν τιθῶμεν ἀπὸ Ὁμήρου ἀρξαμένους πάντας
>
> τοὺς ποιητικοὺς μιμητὰς εἰδώλων ἀρετῆς εἶναι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, περὶ ὦ ποιο
>
> ῦσι, τῆς δὲ ἀληθείας οὐχ ἅπτεσθαι;]."[52]

As in the *Sophist*, it is a class or genos that is to be dismissed and what is most poignant about this criticism is that the challenge for Plato is not primarily how to discount *what* the poet produces, as if to suggest that poiesis is only at issue here, rather it is to discount the poet as mimetician.[53] That Plato abandons the question of the subject and its intricate relation to mimesis in book three and embarks upon the vivid poetological criticism in book ten, whereby the *what* of representation is at issue, seems to reveal in what way establishing the distinction

---

[τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας].

[52] *Rep.* 600e4-7

[53] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 89-90

between originals and mimetic copies is significant and may explain the reason for this revisitation of the very question that inspired the philosophical seriousness of the middle books. Book three insofar as it identifies the relationship between representation (mimesis in general) and subjectivity also showed up the mimetic enquiry. It showed how fragile the distinction upheld and critically maintained in book ten is; it leads towards an abyss in which originals (or the eidos as such) can no longer be sighted for endless or perpetual mimesis. By metaphorically relating the poetic to the techne of the painter[54] what Plato does do is twofold, in the first instance, poetry is represented within the *eidetic* example as a specular manifestation, however in the second instance it represents poetry mimetically by way of analogy or metaphorical relation.

"We shall say that the poet himself, knowing nothing but how to imitate, lays on with words and phrases the colors of the several arts in such fashion that others equally ignorant, who see things only through words, will deem his words most excellent, whether he speak in rhythm, metre and harmony about cobbling or generalship or anything whatever. So mighty is the spell that these adornments naturally exercise; though when they are stripped bare of their musical coloring and taken by themselves, I think you know what sort of a showing these sayings of the poets make."

[...καὶ τὸν ποιητικὸν φήσομεν χρώματ᾽ ἄττα ἑκάστων τῶν τεχνῶν τοῖς ὀνόμασι καὶ ῥήμασιν ἐπιξρωματίζειν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐπαΐοντα ἀλλ᾽ ἢ μιμεῖσθαι, ὥστε ἑτέροις τοιούτοις ἐκ τῶν λόγων θεωροῦσι δοκεῖν, ἐάν τε περὶ σκυτοτομίας τις λέγῃ ἐν μέτρῳ καὶ ῥυθμῷ καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ, πάνυ εὖ δοκεῖν λέγεσθαι, ἐάν τε περὶ στρατηγίας ἐάν τε περὶ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν οὕτω φύσει αὐτὰ ταῦτα μεγάλην τινὰ κήλησιν ἔχειν. ἐπεὶ γυμνωθέντα γε τῶν τῆς μουσικῆς χρωμάτων τὰ τῶν ποιητῶν, αὐτὰ ἐφ᾽ αὑτῶν λεγόμενα, οἶμαί σε

---

[54] For a comparison of the poet to the painter, see *Rep.* 600 e8-601a2

εἰδέναι οἷα φαίνεται].[55]

It seems necessary to ask what this description of poetry presupposes. What is implied by the ornamental nature of poetic mimesis? In many respects, it presupposes in an obvious way another subaltern concern, that is, how does what is present in poetry distinguish or singularise itself, how does it appear as itself; that is to say, does it in essence conceal "what is" and subsequently present itself deceptively? If poetry is taken by itself, apprehended in its own right, by way of "stripping bare" its formal and thus exterior adornments, is it something other than what it seems, as suggested by the passage above? What of "the poet's technical application of musical coloration [τῆς μουσικῆς χρωμάτων τὰ τῶν ποιητῶν]" is this to be considered as something technically adjunct? Is musical coloration strictly an act of μιμεῖσθαι?

Plato obviously sees in the poet's demiurgic acts a superimposing and extraneous mimetic activity which fundamentally reduces poetry to something *other* than what its logos endeavors to represent. This undoubtedly revisits the critical insistence of a form of *lexis* that reduces discourse to its "simplest" form. It is oriented toward distinguishing a "simple narrative or diegetic form" (*haplê* diegesis) from mimesis. Thus when Plato sees in this act of μιμεῖσθαι the activities of musical coloration and lexical adornment, he is again attempting to hold up an unsustainable distinction. In what way does this simple discourse, a discourse stripped of its adornments and lexical and generic idiosyncrasies in actual fact present something as it really *is*? Does any discourse in any way absolve itself of mimesis? Is it reasonable to postulate an occasion of discourse that presents something, as it *is*, the eidos in its full presence? Isn't the intelligible eidos at the origin always already a representation mediated by words or language in general? This however suggests approaching the nexus of subjectal presentation and mimesis in a way that soon will issue why there is in book ten this Platonic insistence on approaching *what* is represented, rather than engaging subjectal representation.

---

[55] *Rep.* 601 a4-b8

4.6 *Eidolopoiesis*: Mimetic Exchange in the production of *eidola*

In broaching the notion of the *eidolopoietic*, that is, the poetic production or creation of *eidola*, it is useful to begin with the following observation. For Plato, it seems, the eidolon elicits the eidos as a "doubling" of the eidetic representation. In fact *eidolopoetic* doubling presents the eidolon and the eidos as symmetrical opposites rather than equivalents. The eidolon thus is a representation of something exterior, it is a mimetic excess attended to in *eidolopoetics*. What does Socrates mean when he says that "the creator of the phantom [ὁ τοῦ εἰδώλου ποιητής], the imitator [ὁ μιμητής] knows nothing of the reality but only the appearance [τοῦ μὲν ὄντος ...τοῦ δὲ φαινομένου]."[56] Doubling refers to the loss or concealment of the eidos through a mimetic excess. What is represented is not the eidos itself but the copy of the eidos, the eidetic representation.[57] So the "apparent" is represented in such a way that the representation is excessive, superfluous and for this reason Socrates determines that "mimesis is concerned with the third remove from truth [τὸ δὲ δὴ μιμεῖσθαι τοῦτο οὐ περὶ τρίτον μέν τί ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας]."[58] However this mimetic proximity, this distance from the truth or the eidos itself suggests that the representation as excess, this hyperbolic mimesis as representation of the apparent or phenomenal, is precisely what is considered to be most pernicious according to the philosopher. Does mimesis in book ten allow the eidolon to be overdetermined as eidos, display itself as a nonpresentable idea? Might there be a notion of the eidolon as an excess of representation, an excess that defies representation?

---

[56] *Rep.* 601 b12

[57] See *Rep.* 601 d2-3. "...three arts..."[τρεῖς τέχνας]; the user's art, the maker's and the imitator's [χρησομένην - ποιήσουσαν - μιμησομένην]. "Now do not the excellence, the beauty, the rightness of every implement, living thing, and action refer solely to the use [τὴν χρείαν ἐστί] for which is made or by nature adapted."

[58] *Rep.* 602 c1

"The imitator knows nothing worth mentioning of the things he imitates, but that imitation is a form of play [εἶναι παιδιάν], not to be taken seriously [οὐ σπουδὴν τὴν μίμησιν], and that those who attempt tragic poetry, whether in iambics or heroic verse, are all together imitators [πάντας εἶναι μιμητικούς]."[59]

Book ten in effect begins with Plato's attempt to extend previous notions of mimesis as it has been developed in books two and three. Certainly what presents itself, which is of great interest here, is that the subject who engages in this hyperbolic or excessive mimesis, the representation of the phenomenal as an excessive eidetic projection, is *lost* in his production. The "three removes" theorization or this proximal distancing displays a dialectic of displacement of the imitator by the imitated and vice versa. In terms that I have used hitherto, the question is whether the eidolon as such marks subjectal absence or loss.

The characteristic form of the *eidolopoetic* in evidence in all these modes is, in Platonic terms, the interaction between mimesis and its object eidos; mimesis disappears as the eidolon, as supplementation of the eidos appears. If for mimesis we read "representation" in the general sense, the *eidolopoetic* here yields the following in its productive import: the eidolon disappears as the eidos appears. And conversely, the eidos disappears as the eidolon appears.

4.6.1 The eidolon as supplement.

If eidolopoiesis involves "the creation of phantasms and not real being [φαντάσματα γάρ, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὄντα ποιοῦσιν]" then it establishes itself non-eidetically, it creates a non-eidetic manifestation and suggests that in producing phantasmata or eidola, representation disappears. In other words, there is a supplanting of the original by the *eidolopoetic* production and it annuls its secondary status. But with a fuller description of *eidolopoiesis* what we have is

---

[59] *Rep.* 602 b5-10

an exchange of representations. Under this mimetic exchange, any representation passes into its opposite. In other words, as the eidolon appears its status as representation disappears, for it *is* in some way yet it *is not* in terms of the referential eidos.[60] But this mimetic exchange also involves the eidolon disappearing into representation; it takes on its secondariness in terms of representing the eidos. There is more to add however, for it is the "three removes" theory that defines this mimetic exchange, since the eidolon is "copy of a copy", it already is a "representation of a representation" and thus in one way, according to the logic of the mimetic exchange, the eidolon presents itself as an *on* in its own right by way of supplanting the *original* and simultaneously presents itself as an irrevocable supplement, an add on.[61]

What I have tried to illustrate is that mimesis in general, or the form of mimesis that operated in its full and most general sense in book ten, effects what I call the "mimetic exchange." What book ten allows, bearing in mind the heliotropical myths of the previous books, is the incessant confusion of mimetic productions, whether they be described as eidola, phantasmata etc. It cannot "in general" confine mimesis to the non-eidetic or the eidetic pure and simple. The "three removes" theory allows for a temporal succession of eidola, the eidolopoetic effect illustrates how the eidolon is a triumph of the non-eidetic through a "generalized" and "sustained" mimetic exchange. Plato's criticism of *eidolopoiesis* is bound to the fact that it opens the gap between the eidolon and the eidos and given mimesis in general cannot close this gap it is

---

[60] This presents itself as one of the most disconcerting issues in the *Sophist* and will be dealt with in more detail in chapters eleven and twelve of this thesis.

[61] Derrida appropriates this term from Rousseau, who saw a supplement as "an inessential extra added to something complete in itself." Derrida argues that what is complete "in itself" cannot be added to, and so there is a supplement only if there is an originary lack. In any binarism or oppositional set of terms, the second term can be argued to exist in order to fill in an originary lack in the first. This chiasmatic relationship, in which one term secretly resides in another and initiates a movement that constitutes and deconstitutes the limit of a closure, Derrida calls *invagination*. See Derrida 1974.

thus tied to "the work of spacing".[62] What is ultimately pernicious about *eidolopoiesis* is that the eidolon substitutes for the eidos within the mimetic exchange.

The eidolon traps its own reflection, by identifying the mimetic representation of mimesis as a *mise-en-abyme* an artistic production the matter of which comprises infinite self-reference.[63] So by placing itself *en abyme*, the eidolon can succeed in depicting itself as *it is*, in its own right, since when the eidolon appears *in* mimesis, it disappears, occurring as representation and then appears, and so on. By extending previous notions of mimesis, Plato has found that the only way to confine and define mimesis, is by way of generalizing it. Book ten embarks on a description of the eidolon as manifesting the *essential* absence of the eidos. I emphasize "essential" so as not to circumvent the philosophical underpinnings of the "eidetic relation" in any theorization of mimesis.

4.7 Mimesis and the Philosophical Eidos

Having determined the equivocal nature of mimesis, it is important now to consider how the question of mimesis has been generalized in terms of its meaning giving it an epistemological ground. As early as Tate's deliberation with the question of mimesis in Plato's *Republic*[64] and recently in Elizabeth Belfiore's article "A Theory of Imitation in Plato's *Republic*"[65] there have been attempts to reconcile the various meanings of mimesis, its form, its concept and this is the most prominent issue in the scholarship; it's the double deployment of

---

[62] Derrida 1974: 48

[63] Barbara Johnson explains "(*en abyme* is) now used whenever some part of a whole can be seen as a representation of that whole, often ad infinitum, as in the Quaker oats box on which a man holds up a Quaker oats box on which a man etc." in Derrida 1981a: 265.

[64] Tate 1928 and 1932.

[65] Belfiore 1984.

mimesis in book three and book ten of Plato's *Republic*.[66] An attempt is made to synthetically relate what is obviously contentious within a rigorous epistemology, by resorting to a hermeneutic –and one must say that the problem of mimesis is `rather a problem of its interpretation, that is, of hermeneutics – which would fix, stabilize the meaning of mimesis within a critical context. Philologists have failed to ascertain the ontological problematic, that is, they have failed to consider in what way the question of mimesis is forced to correspond to the question of *subjectivity*. It is simply necessary to point out that subjectivity needs to be understood as a structural necessity of formally representational experience. Such a correspondence actually undermines the stabilization of what is understood within a regionalized understanding in Plato as *mimêtikê*[67] and what is understood as *mimesis in general*.[68] One of the inherent problems in Plato's mimetology is that whether it is the subject of enunciation (Socrates) or the subject of writing (Plato) both find themselves in a representational structure which separate the "I" from its mimetic investments.

Plato's entire mimetology recognizes the epistemological problematic, the innate complexities in any attempted epistemic determination of mimesis. The relation to *poiêtikê*[69] is a relation by determination, that is, to determine the substitution of one by (or for) the other, their orientation within a similar economy. One necessarily is required to play out the relation between

---

[66] The repetition of the treatment of mimesis actually traps mimesis within the epistemological net weaved in Plato's metaphysical elaboration of his theory of Forms in book seven. By book ten mimesis is eidetically determined.

[67] "…the *–ike* forms of *mimeisthai* refer only to imitation of many things and that this helps to reconcile the account of *Republic* 3 with that of *Republic* 10". Essentially all *-ikê* words designate an art or science. Belfiore, argues that the "theoretical treatment of mimesis in *Republic* 3 and 10, however obscurely presented, at least much more consistent and coherent that has often been thought". See Belfiore 1984: 146. Moreover Belfiore argues that a technical vocabulary is used for a particular kind of mimesis that is attacked in both book 3 and 10. *Mimêtikê* is attacked as a particular kind of imitation "the imitation of many things". See Belfiore 1984: 145

[68] See *Rep.* 595 c6

[69] The question of mimesis is again raised in book ten and considered in terms to poetry. See *Rep.* 595 a3.

mimesis and *subjectivity* for any engagement with the relation between the *imitation* and the

imitated in Plato's *Republic*. For what now is maintained in the second mimetic appraisal in book

ten is the absolute discernability of the eidos and the eidolon. There is an opportunity to bring

about the return of the subject by safeguarding mimesis from its litigious repetition. This

absolute discernability is maintained by way of presenting the theory of forms and in maintaining

the distinction between the representation and what is represented and the priority of what is

represented to its representation. The decision to again dismiss mimesis will assure subjectal

return as the decision contrasts the subject with what is "external" to the subject. Mimesis in

book ten is articulated upon the theory of forms and the paradigmatic reference to the theory

corresponds to a return of the subject, concurrent with every manifestation of its loss. The

introduction of the theory of forms and what follows as the second mimetic appraisal cannot be

coincidence nor moreover can it be considered nugatory and trivial as most serious commentators

of the *Republic* claim.[70]

Mimesis thus is treated in terms of a "generalized" conception dependent entirely on its

eidetic orientation. In book three it is conceived in terms of dramatic *lexis*, it is confined to its

theatrical meaning and mimological connotations. However it is conceived as such only because

---

[70] The discussion raised in book ten according to most commentators of the *Republic* is considered to be
"not serious"; this essentially is surmised because the introduction of technico-aesthetic concerns effects a
disorientation of the serious philosophical concerns appraised between books four to nine. See Crombie,
1962. G.M.A. Grube in his translation of the Republic argues "The painter is here (in book ten) used as an
illustration and if we take details too seriously they involve many difficulties, such as an existence of forms
of artifacta, that the forms are created by the gods, which they are nowhere else in Plato, and that the
carpenter imitates the Form directly" in Grube 1961: 241, n.4. W.J.Oates argues that in book ten Plato is
attacking the poets with "the crudest and most naïve form of the theory of Ideas". See Oates 1972: 39. Other
commentators who similarly question the purpose and problems introduced in book ten include Cornford
1961: 315-16; Woozley and Cross 1964: 284-85.

the *eidetic* relation is not established, at least not in its rigorous philosophical postulations.[71] However Elizabeth Belfiore sees that mimesis is consistently treated in the earlier and later books, explaining that "what Plato consistently means in *Republic* 3 and 10 is that to imitate is to make one thing (or person) similar to another thing (or person) in sound or shape."[72] So Belfiore argues that Plato consigns himself to a "vocabulary of similarity" in order to develop a theory of mimesis. However this is to engage a consistency that completely ignores an essentially fundamental concern for Plato. In book ten Plato establishes the *eidetic* relation of mimesis, that is, mimesis is read as a disfigurement of the eidos by producing *eidola*. Book ten yields an assimilation of mimesis to the theory of forms. Having been assimilated as such, no alternative figure is available with which to describe mimetic fictioning or fashioning.

As I have stated earlier, mimesis has meaning never on its own terms but always in relation to an original adequation. But bearing in mind what Belfiore suggests, especially as she argues that it is by way of introducing "...the *–ike* forms of *mimeisthai*", by presenting it as an "art" or techne, that allows Plato "to reconcile the account of *Republic* 3 with that of *Republic* 10."[73] This type of interpretation misses the real point of Plato's treatment of mimesis in the *Republic*. In book ten, *after* having established the *eidetic* relation of mimesis, Plato restricts his mimetology to a dismissal and discounting of *what* the mimetician produces and thus ignoring the subjectal question of *who* the mimetician is? What this problem appraises is a failure to recognize and account for the dynamic involving Plato's two dismissals of mimesis from the *politeia*. This is a matter I will soon return to and consider in greater detail.

---

[71] Scholars who accept that mimesis means "impersonation" in book three and "representation" in book ten. See Brownson 1920: 92-93; Cornford 1941: 324 n.1; Havelock 1963: 20-26; Tate argues that "tenth book of the *Republic* as supplementary to, and consistent with, the second and third". See Tate 1932: 163 n.1

[72] Belfiore 1984: 126.

[73] Belfiore 1984: 145-6

4.8 The Visual and Acoustic Patterns of Mimesis

Returning to the poet as the archetypal mimetician, Plato proceeds with his criticism by establishing the poet's analogous relationship to the painter or zoographer. Invoking the elements of a non-eidetic mimesis, Plato suggests a resemblance with a difference. The eidetic undoubtedly is oriented in its simplest form to the visual, to the visibly apprehended. Yet in referring to the errors of vision [τῆς ὄψεως] caused by *zoographic* mimesis and the confusion it causes "in our souls" [ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ],[74] Plato's presentation of truth or "reality" is entirely eidetic in its orientation. This "error of vision" constitutes the non-eidetic essence of the eidolon given what is represented is *not* real or, simply put, *is* false. The eidos in any visual representation of it, in every zoographic *demiurgia*, is essentially other than the "real" which goes unpresented in the eidolon. In other words, any visual apprehension is not *eidetic* in essence, as the eidos is essentially hidden, lost, nonpresentable, concealed in the eidolon. And yet, in book ten, this representation of the eidolon as non-eidetic is ambiguously inscribed since it emerges only in interplay with the eidos and this is implicit when Plato treats mimesis under the rubric of the eidetic metaphor.

In the terms I have already broached, what is subsequently being developed here is the seed of a pathological description of mimesis,[75] what Elizabeth Belfiore determines to be the greatest accusation against mimetic poetry[76] based on a theory of audience psychology, that is, the "appeal to childlike and foolish element in a soul divided against itself,"[77] the "affective part of the soul" (ἀλλοτρία παθῇ). The mimetic "associates with a part in us that is remote from

---

[74] *Rep.* 602c10-d3

[75] Versenyi broaches the question of *methexis* as a fundamental concern for Plato as in any consideration of mimesis would have to consider "the pathology of the audience at the performance of poetry". See Versenyi 1970-1: 26

[76] Belfiore 1983: 40

[77] Belfiore 1983: 61

intelligence [πόρρω δ᾽ αὖ φρονήσεως ὄντι τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν προσομιλεῖ]"[78] and for this reason this "distance" or "remoteness" from *phronesis* involves again a description of subjectal loss. This "loss of the subject" is of a different order as it is characterized by the notion of mimesis as poetry. Though the relation to the zoographic and skiagraphic visual *technai* is referred to, Plato wants to pursue the elements of subjectal loss implied by the poetic. It is more pernicious fundamentally because this criticism does not "hold only for vision [τὴν ὄψιν], it applies also to hearing [κατὰ τὴν ἀκοήν] and to what we call poetry."[79]

What is at issue here is the effacement of the *graphic* arts (i.e *zoography* and its related artistic mode, *skiagraphy* or shadow painting). The exposition has thus brought us to the *mimetic* mode which analogically invokes poetry explicitly. The analogy of painting [ἐκ τῆς γραφικῆς] is abandoned at 603 b8, as it is decided by Socrates that it can no longer be applied to the mimetic mode that pertains to "hearing" [κατὰ τὴν ἀκοήν], a mode of mimesis that in its most fundamental sense pertains to the non-visual or more appropriately, its *non-eidetic* forms.

At this point, the dismissal of mimesis and as a consequence poetry is more seriously at issue.[80] Lacoue-Labarthe directs his attention at explaining this repetition as a failed "installation" of the subject. What is discovered in Plato's exploration of mimesis is the theoretical and, more significantly, ontological connection to subjectivity. Mimesis, in fact, is oriented towards the question of the subject, even as it is developed in book three and especially in book ten as the protection and preservation of the self-identity of the subject.

---

[78] *Rep.* 603 a10

[79] *Rep.* 603 b5

[80] At this point I concur with Alexander Nehamas who argues that though poetry is "controlled" in book three, in book ten "it is not to be admitted" with the division of the soul in book eight the banishment is made possible. Poetry creates a "bad constitution" (κακὴν πολιτείαν, 605 b7-8) in the soul. See Nehamas 1988. 52.

Certainly, this preservation of the subject involves a hiatus or break between the various psychological categories broached in book four with the division of the soul.[81] Socrates is concerned about the "appeal" or the affectivity of mimetic poetry, the impressions it leaves on the subject. Socrates turns to the psychological affectation that mimetic poetry effects, seeking to determine very clearly, "that part of the mind to which mimetic poetry [ποιήσεως μιμητική] appeals" in order to "see whether it is inferior or the nobly serious part."[82] To date, Socrates explored mimesis in terms of the subject of mimesis, "producer" of a mimetic work, the mimesis of the demiurge. Now the subject attendant to all mimetic productions is not limited to the agent or demiurge, that is, the mimetician pure and simply, however it is attendant to by the listener, the spectator who listens and observes the performance. The spectator is also displaced or dispersed as subject by his act of listening, by attending to mimesis much in the same way as the mimetician as demiurgic agent is displaced by his or her mimetic acts.

Plato has Socrates quickly return to a consideration of the representational mode which involves language, poetic mimesis as such. This return seeks to determine the structure of mimesis which effectively disperses the authorial subject. Poetic mimesis appears to be about a pre-existent subject which, under the description presented in book three, only exists as a result of mimesis. Plato inevitably returns to the criticism of poetry in the final book of the *Republic* in order to reconstitute his *poetics* in terms of subjectal truth. Socrates explains in what way subjectal representation occurs and goes on to consider the nature of the subjectal subversion which poetic mimesis instigates.

---

[81] Though Nehamas argues that by Book 10 poetry "is not to be admitted" and that with the division of the soul in book 8 the banishment of poetry is consequently made possible, I would like to defer whether Plato has successfully established this condition of possibility, especially after a consideration of the affectivity of *mimetic poetry*. Nehamas 1988: 52

[82] *Rep.* 603 c2-3

"Mimetic poetry...imitates human beings acting under compulsion or voluntarily, and as a result of their actions supposing themselves to have fared well or ill and in all this feeling either grief or joy

[πράττοντας, φαμέν, ἀνθρώπους μιμεῖται ἡ μιμητικὴ βιαίους ἢ ἑκουσίας πράξεις, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πράττειν ἢ εὖ οἰόμενος ἢ κακῶς πεπραγέναι, καὶ ἐν τούτοις δὴ πᾶσιν ἢ λυπουμένους ἢ χαίροντας]."[83]

Returning to places where Plato canvasses the potential subversion of subjectal representation in book three, in reconsidering the question of poetry or more accurately "poetic mimesis" what is again reappraised is the question of the subject. That "mimetic poetry represents human beings' actions [πράττοντας...ἀνθρώπους μιμεῖται ἡ μιμητικὴ]"[84] does not simply refer to the formal dramatic and theatrical nature of mimesis, its most primitive and simple manifestation but ultimately refers to an originary and constitutive loss of the self. For Socrates there is a subject who manifests itself as originary, in that it is a subject not installed by mimesis.

"And does not the fretful part of us present many and varied occasions for imitation, while the intelligent and temperate disposition, always at one with itself [παραπλήσιον...αὐτῶι] is neither easy to imitate [οὑτῷ ῥᾴδιον μιμήσασθαι] nor to be understood when imitated [οὔτε μιμούμενον εὐπετὲς καταμαθεῖν], especially by a nondescript mob assembled in the theatre [...εἰς θέατρα.]?"[85]

Socrates' claim seeks to remain subtly but clearly distinct from that which is subject to mimesis. Thus for Plato the subject presents itself in terms of sameness, it is unvarying and

---

[83] *Rep.* 603 c4

[84] See Aristotle *Poet* 1449b VI. 7.

[85] *Rep.* 604 e1 or e2

inimitable; it is "always at one with itself [παραπλήσιον...αὐτῶι]." The above passage refers to a proper conception of the subject given that it achieves presence in its resistance "to imitate". It presents a subject that is "inimitable", a subject that is not "easy to imitate [οὐτῷ ῥᾴδιον μιμήσασθαι]." Again the mode of mimesis considered is that related to the theatre however more poignantly it addresses the spectator who is attendant to dramatic performances.

Plato believes what becomes present in the subject's affectation and this subjectal identification with varying and multiple representations is the loss of the subject. Within the mimetic performance, in the theatre, the subject is that which is lost in mimesis. This mimetic identification is irreducible to any unvarying or constitutive notion of subjectivity, signifying radical and irremediable absence of the self *through* mimesis. Mimetic poets, in light of the division of the soul,[86] "destroy the rational part of the soul [ἀπόλλυσι τὸ λογιστικόν, 605b5]." Mimesis is determined as falsity and as such corrupts by virtue of its not letting the subject present itself in its singularity and sameness. As the mimetician is not inclined to the λογιστικόν, that element in the soul which remains irreducible to mimesis, he attends to or tends toward that which is pleasing and "easy to imitate [εὐμίμητον εἶναι]."

The ascent from the world of shadows and the subject's reconciliation with the rational part of the soul is stalled and desisted by mimetic productions that range from the zoographic and more perniciously its poetic formulations. What poetry does, by virtue of its mimetic nature, is demonstrate the subversion of the substantiality or identity of the subject.

4.9   Thaumatopoetics: Two Modes of Subjectal Representation

"This consideration, then, makes it right for us to proceed to lay hold of him

and set him down as the counterpart of the painter [...τιθεῖμεν ἀντίστροφον

---

[86] That is on the basis of which the tripartite division of the soul was postulated at 603d3-7 in the "psychology" of book 4.

αὐτὸν τῷ ζωγράφῳ]; for he resembles him in that his creations are inferior in respect of reality; and the fact that his appeal is to the inferior part of the soul and not to the best part is another point of resemblance."[87]

It is important to note that Plato cannot abandon the eidetic metaphor, even though it seems that painting, as Nehamas argues, is not ultimately at issue in book ten. If that is the case then one should ask why the "poet" becomes the counterpart or in essence is presented "as corresponding to" the painter or zoographer. Why is the example of painting or the example of specular mimesis presented as the *antistrophê* of the audible or oral mimetic mode? Can the decision regarding the dismissal of mimesis ever take place without assuring the specularization of mimesis in its eidetic determination?

It seems that in book ten the exposition of mimesis can only be taken as a demonstration of how the structure of subjectivity reiterates itself. In this light, what presents itself before us is the decision that constitutes the subject, whether it be the subject of enunciation (the poet) or the subject of painting (the painter). This decision is constantly deferred and yet reappraised as a necessity for the philosopher. It is a decision about the subject that occurs primarily to eradicate any form of equivocity that on one level the subject produces by way of mimesis and the equivocity that affects and confuses the subject attendant to mimesis, which in turn is mimetically affected.[88]

"And so scene-painting in its exploitation of this weakness of our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft, and so do jugglery and many other such contrivances."[ὦ δὴ ἡμῶν τῷ παθήματι τῆς φύσεως ἡ σκιαγραφία

---

[87] *Rep.* 605a6-b2

[88] At *Rep.* 605a, Socrates is very clear to what extent mimesis appeals to the mob, essentially referencing the cave dwellers who are beset from within by a power of loss, having identified (by way of an irremediable affectation) by *mimetic* shadows and the like.

ἐπιθεμένη οὐδὲν ἀπολείπει καὶ ἡ θαυματοποιὶα καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ τοιαῦ

ται μηχαναί].”[89]

Observations such as the thaumatopoetic nature of mimesis, admittedly pertain to representationally mediated experience of the subject, or at least the "affective" experience as it becomes cast representationally. Understood thus, affectivity can be expected formally to manifest the subject, if not as presence, then as lack of presence, as the subject is an affect of representation or mimesis in general. It is precisely for this reason that Socrates claims, "the mimetic poet [...μιμητικὸν ποιητὴν...] sets up in each individual soul a vicious constitution by fashioning phantoms far removed from reality [κακὴν πολιτείαν ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστου τῇ ψυχῇ ἐμποιεῖν...εἴδωλα εἰδωλοποιοῦντα, τοῦ δὲ ἀληθοῦς πόρρω πάνυ ἀφεστῶτα.].”[90]

4.10 The Double Dismissal of Mimesis

There is notably an indecisive treatment of mimesis in the *Republic* as the last book revisits the question of mimesis yet again. In book ten the second critique of mimesis presents itself as a necessary repetition of the same problematic. This repetition emphatically affirms the undecidable nature of mimesis, its ambivalent meaning or determinations.[91] This reiteration of the mimetic decision cannot concede to the very possibility of a mimetic sense or any representation *as such*, there is no *locus classicus* of the very notion, it is essentially non-conceptual. Does it escape the reserve of the Platonic eidos, particularly since Plato attempts to determine it *as* concept schematically, that is, in relation to the eidos. There is a rigorous delimitation of mimesis within a fundamental epistemology, an uncompromising mimetologism pre-empted by the speleology of book seven. Perhaps, it is here, from within Plato's texts, that

---

[89] *Rep.* 602d3

[90] *Rep.* 605b8-c4

[91] Versenyi like Havelock attests to the "ambivalence of mimesis" re: "what Plato means by mimesis. (Versenyi 1970-1: 24) Others who argue that there is no coherent concept of mimesis include Atkins 1934. 48-51; Annas 1981: 336-44.

we will encounter the "strange mirror" which Derrida alludes to[92] which reflects, duplicates and multiplies those already supplementary marks or traces which oppose whatever maintains and decides Plato's texts or even "Platonism" itself.

Plato repeats the dismissal of oral mimetic discourse in book three of the *Republic* with another dismissal in book ten. Essentially what is involved in this second dismissal involves a dismissal of the specular copying that already implies the eidos. The oral dismissal in book three already is tainted by its own equivocity. Plato dismisses poets/mimeticians as mouthpieces through a mouthpiece of his own, Socrates; he resorts to a fundamental mimetic trope of apocryphal mimesis. There is no doubt Plato would have been aware of the inherent self-contradiction in the apocryphal nature of the dialogues, that what presents itself in the mimetic dismissal in book three is a monstrous oxymoron insofar as self-presentation or authorial subjectivity is concerned. And this presents itself as fundamentally a Platonic concern.

4.10.1   The Mimetic Paradox in Plato's writings

Lacoue-Labarthe concurs that Plato would have been gravely aware of the fundamental paradox proposed by the theoretical elimination of apocryphal mimesis given his own texts are paradigmatically mimetic and apocryphal. As we noted earlier, Plato's focus is on oral mimesis, because a speaker who speaks in his own name is there to be questioned as to whether he or she is speaking as him or herself. Acknowledging this, the question of whether Socrates is speaking for himself does not resonate outside the boundaries of the dialogue itself. Socrates denouncing mimeticians does so *as* Socrates, as every enunciation is made in his own name and not *hypocritically*. Plato, being the author rather than the enunciator, remains hidden, *apocryphal* and as such outside this discursive economy. Reflecting on Plato we approach his thought as a metaphysical subject; yet having said this, how is it that we can avoid consideration of the Plato *who* writes, the "real" authorial subject who is, in essence, an apocryphal subject *hidden* in his

---

[92] Derrida 1981a: 191.

writing. Plato, as much as the sophist, poet and rhapsode, withdraws himself from the critical scene.

Plato does, however, come to glimpse that the problem of mimesis cannot be so easily contained. The problem of Plato's apocryphality is implicated in the fact he writes Socrates' speech, Plato's voice comes inevitably to underlie Socrates' enunciations, so Socrates, bearing in mind the definition of oral *mimetic* modes, ultimately becomes Plato's mouthpiece, he becomes his mimos. As Lacoue-Labarthe correctly asserts "in reality Plato- and this is the height of the paradox- does not speak one word of the *philosophical discourse itself*...But in the *text* it is Socrates, 'his' *mimos*, the mimetic part of himself who speaks philosophically."[93]

So the decision to safeguard subjectivity is now referred to another decision, removing it away from the theoretical dismissal of oral mimetic modes. The philosopher Socrates, as a *prosopon*- an enunciating figure- echoes an external authorial will; there is the Platonic will behind all his enunciations. Given Plato's authorial will is not represented directly in the dialogue, but can be ascertained only through an act of ventriloquy, the entire event of the dismissal of oral mimesis is established as being itself mimetic. Mimesis in book ten is essentially a mode of *mirorring*, and the very decision to expel mimesis is itself mirrored, by the inherent paradoxy of authorial will. As Lacoue-Labarthe suggests it presents a failed attempt to dismiss mimesis.

"This operation has a mirror, a theoretical trap- a "thaumatic" machine in it.

An extra one. And because of this everything is lost and swallowed in an

abyss".[94]

---

[93] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 135. Lacoue-Labarthe's emphases. In dealing with Plato we treat his thought as a metaphysical subject; but how is it that we can avoid consideration of the Plato *who writes,* and who remains an apocryphal figure in relation to his writing. Plato, as much as the sophist, poet and rhapsode, withdraws himself from the critical scene.

[94] Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 134

What does this "swallowing" into an abyss suggest in the context of Lacoue-Labarthe's statement? Does it suggest or allude to the deferral of the decision regarding mimesis? Does it suggest its mirroring effect, the repetition of the decision, that decides upon a mimesis that "rears itself from the abyss"? The decision to exclude or dismiss mimesis is still found to be ungrounded and in essence what we do have or remains a possibility for the decision to be delivered is to structurally bring forth and present subjectivity.

This redoubled criticism of mimesis, this critical repetition to adjudge mimesis in book ten in terms of its specular projection, by necessity leads to a fundamentally different consideration of the question and its subject. Mimesis in book ten is re-interpreted, it is apprehended differently as it attempts to aver the paradox of Plato's own apocryphy. Mimesis is apprehended simply as "mirroring", which proffers an interpretation which suggests the specular, visual or eidetic dimension because it orients the question regarding mimesis to a rigorous philosophical conception of the eidos. But still the mimesi that remains undecided on is the apocryphal and oral mimetic mode considered in book three.

Thus the mode of mimesis that could not establish itself in book three of the *Republic*, that is, the oral mimetic mode, is nevertheless trapped in the mirror of Plato's own writing, it is reflected in the mirror that is Plato's "writing". It evidences that the dialogues represent an "historical" authorial subject. "Plato"- the writing subject- is only self-possessed as subject by wearing his Socratic *prosopon*. The author of the dialogues—of the texts ascribed to him, the texts composed in his name—is mirrored as one who is "outside" the text who is beyond the responsibilities of equivocity, such that will be identified in the *Cratylus*, that undermines oral discourse or linguistic practices in general. What the text as "mirror" captures is a *phantasma* (phantom, ghost, specter) of an authorial subject. If we distinguish the decision regarding mimesis and its ostensible theoretical purpose, it seems necessary to consider why this repetition or rather this philosophically taxing "doubling" of the decision, why reiterate the mimetic

decision? Does the decision regarding mimesis ever take place?[95] Has the decision already been made?

4.10.2 The Play of the Mimetic Decision

"The distinction between the two senses of imitation is in fact, as I have argued, clearly, explicitly and deliberately made. The alleged contradiction (of which commentators have made so much) between the earlier and later discussion amounts to no more than a play upon words, and represents no real inconsistency of thought."[96.]

There is nothing in the *Republic* one should and can subscribe an "alleged contradiction" to, with reference to Plato's discussion on mimesis. In Tate's words, we do not have to go back on this for there is "no real inconsistency of thought" and that what is allegedly contradictory about Plato's treatment in books three and ten "amounts to no more than a play upon words". As one would have surmised, the concern *here*, in our context, is the nature of this play, and whether it emerges through a recognition of what, in our deliberations on mimesis, remains absolutely irreducible to an epistemological ground. Is Plato's "play upon words" rather the manifest dissolution of an epistemology which fails (recognizes, and thus 'playfully' eludes its failure) to economize what is essentially inordinately in excess. Is mimesis in Derrida's understanding an "undecidable"? Does it induce 'play', can it only be engaged with playfully? We have seen thus far that mimesis warns of falling into the snares of metaphysical conceptualizations especially given its orientations within Plato's mimetology. The *Republic* itself is organized around this incredible "play upon words", a certain lugubrious playfulness, the play which is itself mimetic.

---

[95] According to Lacoue-Labarthe "a subject never *coincides with itself*" meaning that writing always "hollows out" what it attempts to install and this suggests that writing does not infinitely reflect itself or "place itself *en abyme*". For Lacoue-Labarthe the mimetic decision "never takes place". See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 136-7.

The entire thesis is possibly an adumbration of this "play" that is mimesis, it understands that mimesis in Plato's *Republic* can only be approached via negations and tropic detours, which in essence my own writing necessarily has to repeat, duplicate. This means to engage in a reading which is hyperbolically mimetic in essence, it engages with it until it is misdirected, takes an unexpected detour. What this ultimately suggests is that mimesis is difficult to decide upon, our deliberations exhibit the impossibility of a decision.

Nonetheless we draw upon all the patient brilliance Plato has resorted to in order to track mimesis and the possibility of a decision. Decision ultimately is what Lacoue-Labarthe notices as the will by which mimesis is expelled. But is the "play upon words" Tate identifies in Plato, the "form of play [εἶναι παιδιάν 602 b7]" that is mimesis, the play of mimesis that marks the structure of Plato's text?

I have constant occasion to note various ramifications of this play and this detour and this deferral of the decision concerning mimesis. It is therefore, for Plato, a matter of eidetically determining mimesis and thus expel it not only from his ideal polis but from the individual's own psyche. This stubborn permanence in the *Republic* to make a decision regarding mimesis is underlined by a rigorous "onto-mimetology"[97] as it is motivated by a more profound decision concerning the subject; the philosopher-guardian.[98] For certainly in Plato there is in this mimetic reappraisal in book ten a serious philosophical demonstration of how the structure of subjectivity reiterates itself as it is marked through a series of self-protective decidings, so much so, the philosopher becomes ultimately the *phylax*, the guardian of the citizen subject in general. In book

---

[96] Tate 1932: 161.

[97] Derrida's describes Platonic apprehension of mimesis within the history of western metaphysics as "onto-mimetology" (see Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 7) a term that attempts to demonstrate the loss of the subject in mimesis. "Onto-mimetology" which is also "onto-typology" in Lacoue-Labarthe refers to a logic by which the subject is cast as a figure of itself and thus lost *as* itself. See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 47-53.

ten, it is the philosophical exigency of the decision that is of interest, as it has to be made in order to assure a reconstitution of the subject. The decision ultimately seeks to salvage a conception of the subject that is fashioned throughout the *Republic* in the philosopher's name. Over and above the original motivation for the decision which rested on a hypothetical purpose in book three to eradicate the equivocity of speech and writing, to dismiss the language of falsehood, of shadows and mimetic *typoi,* it remains necessary to consider what should ultimately be made of this decision and this unique constitution of the subject.

4.11   Plato's Speleology and the *Eidetic* Metaphor

As I have attempted to illustrate, mimesis in the *Republic* is already twice 'something', this is the apparent contradiction inherent in book three which necessarily is abnegated in the second treatment or critical reappraisal of mimesis in book ten. Mimesis is both good and bad, at once lauded and condemned.[99] It is here, that Plato finds himself in a logical predicament because by book ten mimesis is treated epistemologically as it is brought within the visual realm. The mimetology attempts to establish the eidetic correspondence of the mimetic following the epistemology (the philosophy *stricto senso*) of books four to nine. This is the only way Plato is able to epistemologically orient a consideration of mimesis in terms of the eidos. This is fundamentally the structural and logical difference between the two critiques of mimesis, firstly in books two and three and later again in book ten. The laborious and rigorous philosophical ascent from book four established a conception of the eidos and the episteme that will aid in its proper apprehension; dialectics.[100] By establishing the priority of the eidos Plato is able to facilely embark on the criticism of the zoographer and skiagrapher, who become the

---

[98] In book five, Plato extends the notion of the subject to incorporate the philosophical nature that all guardians must have innate within them. The guardian subject presents itself as a more complex constitution of subjectivity as the philosopher paradoxically must be *basileus* or king (*Rep.* 471c-474b).

[99] See Derrida 1981a: 189-193.

paradigmatic mimeticians, but this criticism is undertaken to indirectly pursue a founding criticism of the *poiêtês* (the poet) and *poiêtikê* (poetry) in general. In this way Plato is able to repudiate and banish the mimetic and bespelling investment of the poets on the polity (the acclaimed *politeia*) and the *polity* of the philosopher-guardian's soul, by assuring their mimetic productions are eidetically evaluated.

4.11.1 The Critique of "Affectivity" and the Endless Return of Mimesis

Paradoxically the whole eidetic orientation of mimesis is not sustained and the problem identified is a problem that similarly marks the mimetology in the *Sophist*. Poetic mimesis, the form of mimesis which employs language as its medium, is difficult to eidetically determine. Inevitably Plato again refers to the mimological aspects appraised in the third book to better confront poetic mimesis. It is by approaching the psychology of the audience[101] and developing a critique of affectivity that he, yet again, attempts to make a decision. The decision regarding mimesis from this point on, without surprise, concerns itself with the subject who listens to poetic recitations and who moreover witness their performative *epideixis*. The "affectivity" of the subject concerns Plato greatly and it is for this reason that "the greatest accusation against poetic mimesis [τό γε μέγιστον κατηγορήκαμεν αὐτῆς] is its power to corrupt" [ἱκανὴν εἶναι λωβᾶσθαι, 605c6]." Socrates goes on to discuss the generative influence of mimesis,

"When we hear Homer or some other of the makers of tragedy imitating one

of the heroes who is in grief, and is delivering a long tirade in his

lamentations or chanting and beating his breast, feel pleasure, and abandon

ourselves and accompany the representation with sympathy and eagerness,

---

[100] Dialectic is appraised in book seven and is expanded in terms of the speleology in order to adopt the method for the proper apprehension of the eidos. See *Rep.* 531c-535a.

[101] See *Rep.*605 a where Socrates transparently states that mimesis appeals in general to the multitude.

and we praise as an excellent poet the one who most strongly affects us in this way.

[...ἡμῶν ἀκροώμενοί Ὁμήρου ἤ ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν τραγῳδοποιῶν

μιμουμένου τινὰ τῶν ἡρώων ἐν πένθει ὄντα καὶ μακρὰν ῥῆσιν ἀποτείνοντα

ἐν τοῖς ὀδυρμοῖς, ἤ καὶ ᾄδοντάς τε καὶ κοπτομένους, οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι χαίρομέν τε

καὶ ἐνδόντες ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἐπόμεθα ξυμπάσχοντες καὶ σπουδάζοντες ἔπαιν

οῦμεν ὡς ἀγαθὸν ποιητήν, ὃς ἄν ἡμᾶς ὅ τι μάλιστα οὕτω διαθῇ].”[102]

Undoubtedly Plato leads us to a more pernicious claim for the subjectal loss involved in witnessing and participating in mimetic performances. The subject "abandons" him or herself by "accompanying" the representation, he or she is carried away and lost within the performance. The subject who accompanies the performance is affected in an indelible way; they are impressed [ξυμπάσχοντες] by the performance. It is not surprising, yet again, that the critical gesture that associated the traditional mythoi with the maternal, now associates the poetic with the feminine and this most notably in the form of theatrical mimesis invoked by the criticism of performance.[103] Socrates explains in his criticism of performative mimesis that "what we were praising in the theatre is that which pertains to woman [ἐκεῖνο δὲ γυναικός]." It is necessary to ask to what degree is Plato's critique of mimesis dependent upon what is discreetly feminine and why this officious horror of all that is feminine, or whatever pertains to woman? Is what is provoked from the outset what Plato understands as the deconstituting, depropriative aspect of woman *in general*, the emotional and appetitive part of the soul. One recognizes here the basic tenets of feminine discourse insofar as mimesis is concerned, though we need moreover to ask, what is the relation of the feminine to mimesis? Is it an essentially maternal (or feminine) motivation, an activity defined in terms of a reproductive ability?

---

[102] *Rep.* 605c9-d5

[103] *Rep.* 605e1

Froma Zeitlin peremptorily fixes the natural junction of the feminine and mimesis, she explains, "Woman is the mimetic creature par excellence...Woman is perennially under suspicion as the one who acts a part...but hides other thoughts and feelings, dangerous to men, within herself and the house."[104] On the tragic stage Zeitlin identifies the tragic figure on the stage in terms of the power of mimesis,

> "The feminine is a tragic figure on the stage; she is also the mistress of mimesis, the heart and soul of the theatre. The feminine instructs the other through her own example- that is, in her own name and under her own experience- but also through her ability to teach the other to impersonate her."[105]

However this appropriation of mimesis by the feminine obscures the whole discussion of mimesis, as it does not pose the question of mimesis in terms of the feminine in itself but poses the question, yet again, in Plato's terms. Zeitlin is duplicating a Platonic gesture, only insofar as she accepts the Platonic interpretation of mimesis, the epistemological grounding of what essentially remains groundless; what unfixes such a ground within a problematization. What precludes Zeitlin's "connection of the feminine and mimesis" is a complicity with the Platonic interpretation of mimesis, thus virtually accepting what Plato castigated and here I need to clarify that this does not necessarily subsume and assimilate the entire misogynistic animadversion of the feminine as such. As Lacoue-Labarthe explains this complicity would involve bringing "back what was condemned, namely (at least) a fixed (definite) interpretation of mimesis, which is no doubt not only the platonic interpretation but which, since Plato, is

---

[104] Zeitlin 1985: 85.
[105] Zeitlin 1985. 80

certainly the philosophical interpretation."[106] So when Zeitlin associates mimesis with the feminine, she associates woman with everything that beguiles, seduces or perverts the mastery of philosophy. Woman is everywhere associated with the mimetic dynamis that insidiously destroys the sovereignty of reason as if the capacity of "reason" is an impropriety of the feminine.[107]

Socrates can describe the mimetic art as "an inferior thing [φαύλῳ ξυγγιγνομένη]" given it cohabitates with an inferior and "engenders inferior offspring [φαῦλα γεννᾷ ἡ μιμητική, 603 b3-4]" and for this reason it is associated to the feminine as such. This argument works by taking seriously the association of mimesis to the feminine given that the criticism of mimesis was inaugurated in books two and three by establishing the link to the maternal.[108]

Foregoing the criticism of mimesis in terms of its eidetic determination has forced Plato to come full circle and this foregoing becomes germane to the consideration of Plato's discussion of mimesis in terms of its original moment in books two and three. The dismissal of mimesis, even having traversed in the final book its schematic determination by apprehending it in terms of the eidos, has forced Plato to concede that the dismissal has not taken place. It can be argued that the very reach of the second dismissal of mimesis has been reduced to again encounter the problem inherent in the first occurrent dismissal.

---

[106] Lacoue-Labarthe 1986: 279. "...c'est reconduire ce qui etait la condamne, a savoir (au moins) une interpretation determinee de la mimesis, qui n'est sans doute pas, seulement l'interpretation platonicienne mais qui, depuis Platon, est assurement l'interpretation philosophique..." my translation.

[107] Derrida has much to say about this association or assimilation of the feminine to the themes philosophy marginalizes, such as metaphor, style and writing (*mimesis* in general) most notably in Nietzsche's writing. However Derrida discerns a paradoxic in Nietzsche's metaphoric discourse that can be described as generically feminine (given his style of logos or *his lexis*). Derrida finds in Nietzsche's text the undecidability of all claims concerning woman and metaphor and similarly it presents itself as such in the context of this thesis especially when woman is associated to mimesis. See Derrida 1979: 71.

[108] *Rep.* 606a6-9 refers to the affectation of the plaintive part of the soul [τοῦ θρηνώδους] and it is all reference to dirges and lamentations that are debunked as they were previously in book two.

4.11.2 The *Palaia Diaphora* between Poetry and Philosophy

Aware that the mimological and thus theatrical mimetic modes have again been considered in the Socratic examples in order to better ascertain the effect on the subject who bears witness to the recitation of mythoi, Socrates continues to proceed to not admit poetry into the ideal polis.[109] But even this dismissal is desultory as there is again an exigent reappraisal or recalling of the "topic of poetry" [ἀναμνησθεῖσι περὶ ποιήσεως, 607 b1] and it necessarily takes on an apologetic character [ἀπολελογήσθω, 607 b2]. Socrates legitimizes this appraisal necessitating a call to the muse,

> "Let us further say to her [προσείπωμεν δὲ αὐτῇ], lest she condemn us for
>
> harshness and rusticity, that there is from old a quarrel between philosophy
>
> and poetry [...ὅτι παλαιὰ μέν τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ ποιητικῇ]."[110]

This can be seen from the provenance which Plato attaches to the inherited mythopoetic tradition. Plato inherits the problem regarding the difference between philosophy and poetry. Though the *diaphora* suggests a generic difference between the two, it presents itself in the form of dismissal of mimesis as a polemic. But even in this polemical context, Socrates acknowledges the spell poetry has over its subjects.

> "Let it be declared that if the mimetic and dulcet poetry [ἡ πρὸς ἡδονὴν
>
> ποιητικὴ καὶ ἡ μίμησις] can show any reason for her existence in a well-
>
> governed state, we would gladly admit her, since we ourselves are very
>
> conscious of her spell [...κηλουμένοις ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς ᾽]. But all the same it would
>
> be impious to betray what we believe to be the truth...Do not you yourself
>
> feel her spell [οὐ κηλεῖ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς καὶ σύ] and especially when Homer is her
>
> interpreter, [ὅταν δι᾽ Ὁμήρου θεωρῇς αὐτήν;] then may she not justly return

---

[109] *Rep.* 606e1-607a9

from this exile after she has pleaded her defence, whether in lyric or other measure."[111]

The potentiality of loss is, in the end, something in which philosophy must contest by virtue of its complicity with poetic discourse. Plato concerns himself in his polemic with the loss of subjectal power which poetry occasions, his contextualization of the problem, includes the effect poetry has on the philosophical subject. Hence it is worth seeing how the decision regarding mimesis and ultimately the subject is *in essence* unable to be made. The decision becomes problematic precisely when Socrates decides to silence the muse, not allow her to plead her defense. The muse is considered pernicious because of her faculty to put a spell on the subject; possess the subject who attends her recitations. This is considered the only manner by which to ensure that any project of subjectal salvage is fulfilled, that is, by repressing the spell that poetry can cast on the subject. Evidently, poetry bears a property that is its own by virtue of its mimetic character. Socrates in his final dismissive call also resorts to the charms of the muses.

"Even as men who have fallen in love, if they think that the love is not good for them, hard though it be, nevertheless refrain, so we, owing to the love of this kind of poetry inbred in us by our education in these fine polities of ours, will gladly have the best possible case made out for her goodness and truth, but as long as she is unable to make good her defense [ἀπολογήσασθαι] we shall chant over to ourselves as we listen the reasons that we have given as a counter-charm to her spell [ἀκροασόμεθ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐπᾴδοντες ἡμιν αυτοῖς τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, ὃν λέγομεν, καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐπῳδήν], to preserve us from slipping back into the childish loves of the multitude, [εὐλαβούμενοι πάλιν

---

[110] *Rep.* 607 b5

[111] *Rep.* 607c5-d2

ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς τὸν παιδικόν τε καὶ τὸν τῶν πολλῶν ἔρωτα] for we have come

to see that we must not take such poetry seriously, as a serious thing that lays

hold on truth, [ὡς οὐ σπουδαστέον ἐπι τῇ τοιαύτη ποιήσει ὡς ἀληθείας

τε ἁπτομένῃ καὶ σπουδαίᾳ] but that he who lends an ear to it must be on his

guard fearing for the polity in his soul and must believe what we have said

about poetry. [ἀλλ εὐλαβητέον αὐτὴν τῷ ἀκροωμένῳ, περὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ

πολιτείας δεδιότι, καὶ νομιστέα ἅπερ εἰρήκαμεν περὶ ποιήσεως]."[112]

Obviously the decision has been presented and it is replete with criteria of subjectal preservation. The second decision then, if it goes so far as attempting a theoretical elimination of poetry and subsequently protects the subjectivity of the subject who is attendant to it, is likely to come up against a defeat already inscribed in the original decision to banish mimesis. For the mimesis that Plato again attempts to dispel, is the mimesis of the performance, of the theatre. It is the mimesis interrogated in book three, that is, its primordial mimological manifestations. Whether the arguments of the subsequent books which led to a reappraisal of the mimesis question successfully leads to its banishment is questionable, given the actual dismissal of mimesis is tainted by its own equivocity.

---

[112] *Rep.* 607e8-b1

Chapter Five

The Question of Hermeneia

"Whenever a poet is seated on the Muses Tripod, he is not in his senses, but resembles a fountain [τότε οὐκ ἔμφρων ἐστίν, οἷον δὲ κρήνη] which gives cause to the upward rush of water, and since his art consists in imitation [καὶ τῆς τέχνης οὔσης μιμήσεως] he is compelled to contradict himself [ἐναντία λέγειν] when he creates characters of contradictory moods; and he knows not which of these contradictory utterances are true."

Laws IV. 719 c2-9

5.1 Rhapsody and Philosophy: The Hermeneutics of Difference

In Plato's *Ion*, there is a fundamental question that permeates the entire dialogue and it orients itself around the question of hermeneutics in general[1] and more specifically the questioning of rhapsodic hermeneia. Within the confounds of my own thetic concerns it manifests itself otherwise as the problem of what is the proper form of discourse or more appropriately the proper mode of enunciation. Again it considers some of the fundamental concerns thus far considered regarding the mode of *lexis* that is appropriate to discourse in general.

---

[1] According to Weineck, H. Flashar, in his afterword to the *Tusculum* edition of *Ion,* is one of its few readers to identify the technique of interpretation as an important concern of the dialogue. Flashar, however, concludes, in my opinion too hastily, that "principally, there can be no rhapsodic knowledge [in the sense of techne]," and he proceeds traditionally to center his reading on Socrates' notion of poetry (Flashar 1963.56). See Weineck 1998: 27, n.14.

In the *Ion,* the rhapsodist is understood in relation to what Plato determines to be

something like the argument which runs throughout book three of the *Republic,* that is, what is a

proper *lexis,* a proper manner of speaking or an appropriate "enunciative mode".[2] And this does

not exclude the question of a certain propriety in the *Ion* particularly as it is raised in relation to

hermeneutics or a proper interpretive practice. This seems to be the most palpable articulation of

Plato's criticism of rhapsodic hermeneutics, that it does not lend itself or orient itself around the

object of a thought, of *dianoia.*

Something altogether different organizes rhapsodic hermeneutics. Socrates certainly

states early his concern regarding the nature of rhapsodic hermeneia, explaining that the

rhapsode's role in the hermeneutic relation to the poet's *ergon* is one of "apprehending his

thought [τὴν τούτου διανοίαν ἐκμανθάνειν, 530 d8]" and "not merely the words he says

[μὴ μόνον τὰ ἔπη, 530 c1]." It is obvious that for Plato hermeneia is a question of apprehending

dianoia, it is to acknowledge the immanence and presentness of authorial meaning, it is to seek

essence, foundation, origin of the *ergon* in the thought; in the conceptual or thematic orientations

promulgated by the author. Thus the hermeneut should "seek out" (literally ἐκμανθάνειν),

comprehend and articulate dianoia, which etymologically amounts to the thought, purpose,

intention, and ultimately understanding "meaning" of the author's *ergon.*

However let us concentrate here on another possibility of hermeneutics, that of poetic

and particularly rhapsodic hermeneia which as I will attempt to elucidate disrupts philosophical

---

[2] Lacoue-Labarthe considers the instability of the subject of enunciation most notably in view of Rep 307d. See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 133. "The Ion confronts the reader with the same problem that it itself is concerned with: the problem of finding the true rationale and the true function for the elocutionists, (*the rhapsode*) the critic." Ranta 1967: 228. I suggest that if there is a true function of the rhapsode, it is not the philosophical function or rationale, the understanding within the *Ion* of the enunciative subject, certainly clarifies disparities in the nature and function of philosophical speech (and always in relation to the Socratic subject) and that of rhapsodic speech (which is not subjective, rather divinely dispensed and invested).

hermeneutics, it fractures the metaphysical closure of the hermeneutic program. It is in the question of speech, the performative enunciation of the rhapsode where we could possibly locate a certain difference, even a volatile dissension toward the philosophical hermeneutics which Plato desires to put in place. This will be the organizing theme of my speculations on rhapsodic hermeneia to see how it continually and interminably undermines such epistemic viability or undoes hermeneutic (interpretive) closure. And it is in the context of the question of hermeneia that the difference between philosophical hermeneutics and rhapsodic hermeneutics essentially leads our subject to an elucidation of hermeneia; its divided or twofold possibility.

5.2   *Enthusiasmos* and the Lodestone Metaphor

Let us begin under the heading of our preliminary concerns and see how rhapsodic hermeneutics according to Socrates, does not proceed from a legitimate epistemic origin but rather from an altogether irrational, fallacious, and ungrounded performative moment. Socrates denies Ion both episteme (knowledge) and techne (art) with regards to rhapsody, particularly as he lacks proper hermeneutic ground. Subsequently he introduces a metaphor to illustrate the dynamis (power) which is the origin and source of poetic and rhapsodic hermeneia. Socrates explains:

> "This is not an art in you, whereby you speak well on Homer, but a divine power which moves you like the stone which Euripides named a lodestone but most people call "Heraclea stone". For this stone not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a power whereby they in turn are able to do the very same thing as the stone and attract other rings so that sometimes there is formed quite a long chain of bits of iron and rings, suspended one from another, and they all depend for this power on that one stone. In the same manner the Muse inspires men herself, and then by means of these inspired

persons the inspiration spreads to others, and holds them in a connected chain. For all the good epic poets utter all those fine poems not from art, but as inspired and possessed, and the good lyric poets likewise."

[ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τέχνη μὲν οὐκ ὂν παρὰ σοὶ περὶ Ομήρου ευ λέγειν, ὃ νῦν δ ἡ ἔλεγον, θεία δὲ δύναμις, ἥ σε κινεῖ, ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ λίθῳ, ἣν Εὐριπίδης μὲν Μαγνῆτιν ὠνόμασεν, οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ Ἡρακλείαν. καί γὰρ αὕτη η λίθος οὐ μόνον αυτοὺς τοὺς δακτυλίους ἄγει τοὺς σιδηροῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ δύναμιν ἐντίθησι τοῖς δακτυλίοις, ὥστ' αυ δύνασθαι ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ποιεῖν ὅπερ ἡ λίθος, ἄλλους ἄγειν δακτυλίους, ὥστ' ἐνίοτε ὁρμαθὸς μακρὸς πάνυ σιδηρίων καὶ δακτυλίων ἐξ ἀλλήλων ἤρτηται· πᾶσι δὲ τούτοις ἐξ ἐκείνης τῆς λίθου, ἡ δύναμις ἀνήρτηται. οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἡ Μοῦσα ἐνθέους μὲν ποιεῖ αὐτή, διὰ δὲ τῶν ἐνθέων τούτων ἄλλων ἐνθουσιαζόντων ὁρμαθὸς ἐξαρτᾶται πάντες γὰρ οἵ τε τῶν ἐπῶν ποιηταὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ οὐκ' εκ τέχνης ἀλλ' ἔνθεοι ὄντες καὶ κατεχόμενοι πάντα ταῦτα τὰ καλὰ λέγουσι ποιήματα, καὶ οἱ μελοποιοὶ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ὡσαύτως].[3]

What we gather from the "lodestone metaphor" is that Socrates denies Ion both episteme (knowledge) and techne (art)[4] and proffers the divine dynamis as the origin and the source of poetic creativity and composition. It is perhaps consistent with Plato to present a metaphor to indicate the non-epistemic grounds and the absence of recognizable technical precepts to illustrate the *poetics* of his day. Even as we attempt to determine the subject-genre which Plato

---

[3] *Ion.* 533 d1-e9

[4] I will upraise the problem of finding a suitable translation for the word techne, particularly in the context of the *Ion*, in the latter part of this thesis. It suffices that we embark upon its determinative use in the context of Plato's other dialogues and its Aristotelian determinations as *art*. However this is in no way a peremptory delimitation of the problem of its meaning, rather it needs an extensive treatment and one cannot improvise or become to haste in giving forth an appropriate response.

inaugurates in his own discourse, in the so-called "Socratic dialogues" [Σωκρατικοί λόγοι], he essentially has to contend with the prominence of rhapsodic and sophistic *logoi* and discourses.

Such dynamis which the "lodestone metaphor" attempts to illustrate, puts into question the propriety of the poet's creative genius and it would seem that the question of genius, the natural gifts the poet brandishes (as Ion does throughout the dialogue) involves what Pindar understood as the natural or inherent *sophia* of the poet.[5] Later in Hellenistic literary criticism the question of poetic sophia became a preponderate concern; the question of τὰ μεγαλοφυῆ or the question of "genius" in Pseudo-Longinus' Περὶ Ὕψους[6] and in Latin criticism the *ingenium* in Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria*[7] we note the very "nature" or natural ability Plato wants to underwrite. That Ion would be one ring [δακτυλίος] among many within the chain [ὁρμαθὸς] divests from him the very ability that he initially claimed; he is only granted the "divine dynamis" [θεία δύναμις] which emanates from the Muse.

Certainly what the metaphor suggests is that such dispossession certainly challenges Ion as "subject", as the metaphor alludes to a passivity that implies subjectal loss. However Ion does not acquiesce in the notion of him "being mad" [κατά μανίαν], his epideictic desire (as we shall see) to recite or perform Homer is an attempt to disprove a maniacal disposition.

Ion's denial of being κατά μανίαν is overlooked by Socrates, however an entire strategy is involved here, and it is seemingly necessary if the critical elucidation of rhapsodic

---

[5] See *Olympian* 2, 83- 86. "Wise (*sophos*) is he who has much knowledge by birth/nature (φυά)". Thayer clearly articulates this notion of *sophia* as divinely inspired or naturally inherent in the poets. Thayer 1975: 6-8.

[6] See Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* (Περὶ Ὕψους) II: 1.

[7] See Quintillian *Institutio Oratoria*, book X. II:12. It is by nature, by the orator's natural gifts, according to Quintillian, that true creativity and a proper *imitatio* can be achieved. So it is by way of *naturae* or the *ingenium* that we can understand the true productive and formative force of the orator.

hermeneutics is to effectively take place. Socrates argues that the possessed Ion (who is *enthéos*) is in a possessive trance, that madness or delirium has dispossessed the rhapsodic subject. *Tôn entheôn*[8] or possession, which leads to the breakdown of the *ego*, the deconstitution of the "subject" allows Socrates to realize that it is by way of *tôn entheôn* (which literally implies a possession of the god, being "full of the god", of being literally engodded[9]) that he can speak of the dispossession of the subject or *ego*.[10] Thus there is nothing self-propagating or originative in terms of the poet's work. His *ergon* is essentially not *his own*, authorial propriety is impossible to maintain. But we are left to consider how does this "impossible propriety" measure up in terms of an understanding of the subjectal withdrawal presented.

If what links Homer (the poet) to Ion (the rhapsode) is this divine dynamis (from the Muse), this power which deconstitutes the personalities, the subject sense of Homer and Ion, then Plato has succeeded in exposing this deconstitutive factor in what is referred to as τῶν ἐνθέων. Contrarily, the dialogue, the *Ion* itself as text, is the incarnation of the Socratic subject; it is constitutive of philosophical subjectivism. In Plato's writings the Socratic *prosopon* (the figure and the person) is "the prototype of the subject itself"[11] in Plato's Dialogues. Through a self-propelling dialectic the dialogue exemplifies the very constitution of the philosophical 'subject' as opposed to its skepticism of a community of interlocutors which the philosophical subject is measured against, the *others* whom Socrates ironically denigrates and disavows, namely, the sophists, poets and rhapsodes alike. Plato inaugurates the dialogue because it establishes the

---

[8] See *Ion* 533 e7

[9] The translation of τῶν ἐνθεῶν as "engodded" is possibly the most literal in the context of the *Ion*. See translation in Farness 1991: 85.

[10] Dodds, in reference to the notion of divine inspiration or possession argues for the early understanding that "creative thinking is not the work of the *ego*" Dodds 1964: 81 or see chapter three: The Blessings of Madness. 64-81.

[11] Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988: 86.

conditions of possibility of the speaking subject (Socrates), the beginning of the tradition of the self-knowing subject, the genesis of the philosophical subject as such. Plato's rationale here (and in all the dialogues considered in this thesis) serves to highlight the decision that constitutes the subject.

The philosopher (as we note in the *Republic*) exiles, banishes philosophy's *other*, a counterfeit logos which is identified with the dynamically inspired poets of the past who are exposed to the apocalyptic trends of Socratic discourse. The *Ion* is thus the beginning of a debate which is relayed throughout the entire Platonic corpus, it generates the exchange which subsequently ascertains the authenticated, aletheic (truth-revealing) logos of philosophy. What is sieved out of the exchange (that is, the exchange between Socrates and Ion) is the difference between Socrates and *others*. It engages an opposition or *diaphora* (as Socrates implores in book ten of the *Republic*), which gives rise to the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy respectively. I have already pointed out the lacuna which this *diaphora* highlights and in many respects, it is for this reason that the *diaphora* invites a return of the subject concurrent with every manifestation of its loss.

The impossible propriety of the rhapsodic subject presupposes that Socrates occupies a very singular place in the Platonic dialogue, that being the presentation of the "proper" subject.[12] This role allows Socrates to dramatically convey an officious and critical power over Ion since the dynamis which the "Lodestone metaphor" attempts to illustrate, puts into question the

---

[12] Else suggests that the figure of Socrates in the "Dialogues", that is to say, "the Unvarying Man" serves Plato as a "personal example" of the proper and exemplary non-mimetic subject. Else 1986: 32. Certainly, he is dramatically juxtaposed (and consistently we might add) to the protean and mimetic subjects (poets, sophists and the like). Socrates agonistically would identify and situate himself in relation to what in the *Timaeus* was generically (or geneologically) identified as the mimetic *genos*, tribe or race.

propriety of the poet-rhapsode's creative, epideictic and interpretive competence. Moreover the metaphor shows how subjectivty is destablished.

Ion's hermeneutic *praxis* does not pertain to techne or imply a form of technical *savoire faire* [ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τέχνη μὲν οὐκ, 533 d1]. That Ion would be one ring among many within the chain divests from him the very ability that he initially claimed; his hermeneutic *praxis* is possible only because of the divine dynamis (*theia* dynamis) which emanates from the Muse. The rhapsode's speech is invested or dispensed by divine power or dynamis,[13] it is not properly the rhapsode's utterance or speech but a dynamis divine in essence that allows for the moment of enunciation, for the possibility of speech. Thus in every enunciative act it is not his own logos (in the proprietary sense) that is heard, that is to say, it is not educed from the rhapsodic subject, or a proper speaking subject who could claim what he says is his own. So *who* is speaking? And if what is proper in speaking is indubitably a property of the philosophical subject, namely Socrates, what is the nature of the rhapsodic subject? This certainly will be relayed as a critical concern throughout this section insofar as it impinges upon not only a certain criticism of poetry and rhapsody, a criticism of hermeneutic models hidden within the connotations of the question of hermeneutics as it is presented by Plato, but more so the question concerning the subject of enunciation.

5.3 Entheosis: Poetic *Mania* and the Deconstitution of the Subject

Unlike Shelley's apologetic reading of the *Ion*[14] as a positive account of divine inspiration in poetry, which essentially presents the *Ion* as a model of romantic discourse and criticism, of romanticism as such, is according to Pappas "a misunderstanding of the *Ion*,"[15] and explains that

---

[13] *Ion.* 532 d3

[14] Shelley 1965: 233-248.

[15] Pappas 1989: 381

"the claim of poetic madness is as derogatory as any other imputation of insanity…it looks like a concession to poetry only because readers have underestimated the anti-poetic arguments in other sections of the dialogue."[16] The very acumen of Pappas' comment lies in what is discernibly a criticism of poetry by promulgating the creative impotence of the rhapsodic subject, the lack of a techne that regulates all epistemic endeavors.

Plato sets his criticism against a poetry of *enthusiasmos*, of inspiration as such.[17] It is a criticism of the poet-rhapsode's *mania* or madness.[18] As Taylor notes, what made a poet "distinctive" was his technique, his craftsmanship, his resort to techne[19], and in the *Ion* something altogether novel and unconventional is ascribed to the poet. In the *Ion*, Plato certainly denies the poet an architectonics, a technical ability with words.[20]

---

[16] Nicholas Pappas does not elaborate any further on the question of poetic madness in the *Ion*, but does later reconcile it, indirectly though, to the idea of perspectivism in poetry or the privileging of the notion of perspective as opposed to the interests in universals in Plato's philosophical discourse. See Pappas 1989: 381

[17] See Partee 1971: 2 for a consideration of how the question of inspiration influences Plato's literary criticism.

[18] *Mania* or madness is not intended to suggest a purely clinical or psychoanalytical determination, it is a restricted form of madness, considered only in relation to "inspiration". For a more detailed study of the relationship between the two see Pieper 1964.

[19] See Taylor 1926: 38.

[20] See *Ap.* 22b-c. Socrates seeking the wisest of men, concludes that the poets do not compose from knowledge or wisdom [οὐ σοφίᾳ ποιεῖν] but by nature because they were inspired [ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες]. A.E. Taylor does reference inspiration by qualifying it as "non-rational". Taylor 1926: 39. In the *Phaedrus* possession and poetic madness is said to derive from the Muses [ἀπὸ Μουσῶν κατοκωχή τε καὶ μανία, *Phdr.* 245 a1-2]. The psychological state of the poet at the moment of poiesis is one of *mania* and Socrates states the precondition of possessive madness as the only possibility for poiesis proper. At *Phdr.* 245a5-9 Socrates says, "he who without the divine madness [ἄνευ μανίας] comes to the doors of the Muses confident that he will be a good poet by art [ἐκ τέχνη] meets with no success and the poetry of the sane man [τοῦ σωφρονοῦντος] vanishes into nothingness before that of the inspired madmen [τῶν μαινομένων]".

However, beyond the denial of Ion's techne, the charge of being κατά μανίαν is more at issue because the implied return of mimesis in the dialogue ultimately is the madness that ends subjectivity. What is precisely threatening about madness, as Lacoue-Labarthe alleges, is the threat to the subject, to the authority the subject assumes, an authority which is philosophically deemed, an authority which belongs to the philosopher, a monopoly which in all the extant dialogues, in whatever is extant from the philosophical literature of the writer Plato, is the monopoly (by means of dialectic, by a composed dialogism) which belongs to the speaker Socrates, the essentially propitious example of the philosophical "subject". Insofar as the discourse of philosophy is concerned, Lacoue-Labarthe is correct to state, that "the 'subject', there is no other word, is still what remains in question."[21]

Now with reference to the poet, or what is understood in poetic activity, Plato seizes *poiesis* and differentiates it from the rational, thus philosophical by exposing the poet as one "inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer with him [ἂν ἔνθεός τε γένηται καὶ ἔκφρων καὶ ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῇ, 534 b6-7]." Now it is precisely in the sense of being frenzied, senseless, out of one's mind, literally ἔκφρων, that the poet is differentiated from the philosopher. The poet is without will or purpose, without *phronesis*, his is essentially a non-rational and fallacious hermeneutic *praxis* as it is not dependent upon a techne or episteme. Socrates is careful not to allow Ion to demonstrate his rhapsodic art, thus Ion's claim to techne is immediately denied[22] and the dialogue develops via the presentation of the "Lodestone

---

[21] Lacoue-Labarthe 1993: 88.

[22] *Ion.* 530 d5-531 a1. Interesting to note that Socrates does claim that any performance (or exhibition, *epideixai* as he literally states) will require a more appropriate time, a time of leisure to listen to him [ποιήσομαι σχηολῆν ἀκροάσθαι]. This would be digressive, that it would actually disrupt the dialectical progression and subsequent denunciation of Ion if any rhapsodic *epideixai* was allowed within the context of the dialogue. Ion is twice denied an *epideixis*. See *Ion.* 530d9 and 536d8.

Metaphor" into an assiduous critical analysis of the poet-rhapsode's *mania*, his state of *entheosis*; the deconstitutive factor which infects the subject or otherwise a subjective deconstitution which is described by way of being "carried out of himself [ἔξω σαυτοῦ γίγνῃ, 535 b9]."

Does Plato offer a simple exclusion of madness[23] and a reconstitution of the "subject" in the *Ion*, a positing of the proper (Socratic) subject? Plato recognizes the pernicious nature of madness to the subject and he discernibly recognizes it *in* the poets, rhapsodes and the like; there is a discernment in the *Ion* (when considering "poetics" or "rhapsodics") of what we might call poetic *mania* or *furor poeticus*.[24] If what is assured from the outset is a sense of dispossession, disappropriation, a frenzied madness, then possibly it is what Nietzsche found in "logical Socratism", an impossible Dionysianism[25]; its very exclusion, the folly of a mad discourse. But it is to be reminded that Ion does not acquiesce in the notion of him "being mad [κατά μανίαν];" his epideictic desire (as we shall see later) to recite or perform Homer, to provide a performative hermeneia, is an attempt to disprove a maniacal disposition and demonstrate an exclusive hermeneutic ingenuity.

Plato is undoubtedly desirous of a rational discourse, which does not mire the self-possessed philosopher with the madness of poetic recitation. Ion's *rhapsodics* endorses an

---

[23] See Lacoue-Labarthe 1993. In the Section in Chapter 4: Obliteration, subtitled 'Exorcising Madness: The Appropriation of the Unthought', Lacoue-Labarthe poses the idea in Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche of the "exclusion of madness" and the very possibility of such an exclusion (and whether such an exclusion is only possible through an act of appropriation). Similarly it can be suggested that Socrates will have to resort to a similar act of appropriation to determine the nature of the rhapsodic subject is. For an argument along these lines see Wilcox 1987: 158

[24] As Penelope Murray suggests, there is a parallelism or analogy in the *Ion* which Plato wants to put into play, that is, the parallelism or "old association" between poetry and prophecy and this in the context of the dialogue is relayed "in order to give credence to Plato's picture of the frenzied poet". See Murray, 1996: 118 and 1992: 32-33.

[25] Nietzsche 1967: 88-89. Originally published in 1886.

invidious discourse whose dynamic affection is the subject's dispossession. All of this is not completely unrelated to Plato's later criticism of poiesis, one indeed has to acknowledge the failure of an accordant *poetics*, a theory of poetry in Plato's works, for his criticism is lived in the dialogues, there is no presentation of poetical *dicta*; there is rather what Hans-George Gadamer correctly observes to be a presentation of philosophical values and originative moral concerns.[26] Essentially the *Ion* is Plato's elaboration of a proper or more appropriate form of discourse, of enunciative practice, of speaking and more specifically an alleged rational discourse, which is paradeigmatically philosophical. One considers Plato's work insofar as it inaugurates a philosophical moment and the program of philosophy as such. Now in terms of *poetics* it is more likely that Plato allows for a form of poetic activity that is evidently concordant with a technical *savoir-faire* that bases itself on some sort of epistemic justification or hermeneutic ground. This new form of poetic discourse which Socrates essentially proffers, reads as something like the organon of what philosophy inaugurates, something Plato effects, that is, a new rhapsody.[27]

Overcoming what can be described as the *atechnical* character of rhapsody, in the exhaustive criticism of the poet-rhapsode's *enthusiasmos* (inspiration) or madness, attempts to constitute an originative philosophical criticism by way of recasting the hermeneutic model of the rhapsode within the dianoetic acumen of philosophy's neoteric hermeneutic model. Thus because there is nothing self-propagating or originative in terms of the poet and rhapsode's interpretative *praxis*, a new hermeneutic orientation is inevitably projected. But we are left to consider how does this hermeneutic briefing measure up in terms of our understanding of

---

[26] See Gadamer 1990: 70-72

[27] Baltzly 1992: 29-52. Baltzly essentially argues that beneath Plato's apparent criticism of *poetry* (in all its forms) there is essentially a systematic Platonic theory of the interpretation of poetry (in the hermeneutic activity of the rhapsode). Baltzly argues that within the *Ion* there is a Platonic literary criticism in process. La Driere argues that the *Ion* is essentially oriented around the question whether there is "a scientific method" available for a "criticism of the poetic art." See La Driere 1951: 26.

rhapsodic hermeneutics. The fact remains however, that one fundamental point Socrates instates

is that Ion occupies an ambiguous hermeneutic *topos* which as the "Lodestone Metaphor" asserts

divides him, makes him *other* to himself. Socrates explains,

> "For not by art do they utter these things [οὐ γὰρ τέχνῃ ταῦτα λέγουσιν], but
>
> by divine influence [ἀλλὰ θείᾳ δυνάμει]; since, if they had fully learnt by art
>
> to speak on one kind of theme, they would know how to speak on all. And for
>
> this reason God takes away the mind of these men and uses them as his
>
> ministers, just as he does soothsayers and godly seers, in order that we who
>
> hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price,
>
> when they are out of their wits [οἷς νοῦς μὴ πάρεστιν], but that it is god
>
> himself who speaks and addresses us through them [ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς αὐτός ἐστιν
>
> ὁ λέγων, διὰ τούτων δὲ φθέγγεται πρὸς ἡμᾶς]."[28]

The "genesis" of poetic activity, the prototypical state of the poet, is the state of being

out of his senses and the ontological implication of this is certainly made manifest by Plato.

Socrates says the poet is "out of his senses [οὐκ ἔμφρονες ὄντες, 534 a2-3]." Poets are always

controlled, subdued, "held [κατεχόμενοι πάντα, 533 e8]" by the power of the Muses[29] and the

distance recognized by Plato between poetry and philosophy is intrinsically related to the

distance between mimesis and *truth*,[30] and it is in this distance (a recognition of the archaism of

the mythopoetic tradition) that Plato detects a deviation in his own discourse, his own logos from

this archaic tradition. Plato sees in the tradition which the rhapsode Ion represents (whom at least

within the dialogue we accept to be the representative of this archaism) a sense of subjectal loss,

the frantic and possessed body of the poet (who compares to the Corybantian worshippers in

---

[28] *Ion.* 534 c5-d5

[29] Plato in the *Laws (Nomoi*, Book VII) develops similar notion of man being god's toy/plaything (παιγίον).

their state of madness, 534 a1), the breakdown of *phronesis*, the engodded poet, the poet *entheos*, through whom "God himself speaks [ἀλλ᾽ ὁ θεὸς αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ λέγων, 534 d3-4]." The poet's "mind is not present [οἷς νοῦς μὴ πάρεστιν, 534 d3]," there is a displacement of his subject sense, he has no sense of self, he is a divided or split "subject".[31]

Consequently, the *Ion* is the dialogue "about the subject". The *Ion* in its most formal sense opened the path to the problematic of the subject implied by the idea of τῶν ἐνθέων. The idea cannot but resound when we take into account the "the Dialogues", that is, the dialogical form as we understand it, its generic essence, is the "genre" of the subject *par excellence*.[32] The dialogue (this genre form which belonged to the dramatic poets) is more correctly the eponymous genre of the Socratic subject,[33] whatever it is in the person and character that invests itself into the literary devices Plato employs for his inaugurated philosophical program, the founding of a new discourse, that is, philosophy which breaks from the archaism, the "irrationality" to use Dodds terminology[34] of the mythopoetic tradition.

---

[30] See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 78-86.

[31] See Tigerstedt 1970: 164 who argues that the idea of poetical inspiration in terms of its manic view, it being linked to a state of madness is not evident in Homer, though there are signs of it in Hesiod and Pindar. Tigerstedt essentially formulates in a historical analysis of the notion of *enthousiasmos* the view that it takes on the manic and frenzied sense only in Plato's work. See also Tigerstedt 1969: 7-13.

[32] See Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy 1988: 86. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, in their elaboration on the Dialogue understand it as the fulfillment of the "moral genre of the fragment" in German romanticism (Schlegel) and the formation of a "subjective literature" in general. Both acknowledge its origin, in terms of the extemporization of subjectivities (of speaking subjects) in Plato's examples.

[33] *Sokratikoi logoi* in Aristotle possibly does not only refer to Plato's dialogues whose main spokesperson is Socrates, there are examples of other such *logoi*, such as Xenophon. According to David Sider the term *Socratikos* logos also refers to literary dialogues, thus it often refers to a 'genre' of the dialogue, that is, a literature which employs the dialogical form. See Sider 1981: 15-19. In this context though, I want to consider why Plato privileges the "genre" of the dialogue to promulgate his philosophy.

[34] See Dodds 1945: 16-25.

5.4 Mimesis and Inspiration

As a point of departure, one should essentially consider what thematic connection there is between mimesis and *inspiration* described in the lodestone metaphor. This question certainly lies behind a thematic largely dependent upon Gerald Else's scholarly contribution on Greek poetics, for he discerns that "many of the fuller, more substantial expositions in Plato treat poetry under the headings either of inspiration [ἐνθουσιασμός] or of imitation [μίμησις], but these two concepts always appear separately. One might be tempted to take them as positive and negative indicators respectively, but the facts turn out to be less simple. Inspiration is not necessarily a term of praise, and imitation by itself does not necessarily convey dispraise".[35]

The impossible propriety that Plato identifies with the mythopoetic tradition essentially is bound to Plato's criticism of mimesis[36] and all discourses —the sophistic, poetic and rhapsodic logoi—which are mimetically invested. Socrates explains that it is "not an art in" Ion [τοῦτο τέχνη μὲν οὐκ ὂν παρὰ σοὶ, 533 d2] rather "a divine power" [θεία δύναμις, 533 d2] which permits his logos.[37] What is the poetic power or energy invested in the poet-rhapsode? It is obviously this claim that allows Plato to not accommodate techne-episteme within the sphere of

---

[35] My thetic position regarding the so-called texts which deal with "imitation" and those which treat "inspiration" as it will be consequently proven accepts Else's stand that it would be "inefficient and misleading" to divide the Platonic corpus to these two generic types (i.e "inspiration texts and imitation texts"). Else 1986: 5

[36] Penelope Murray discusses the *Ion* by considering the question of mimesis and appraising that the criticism of inspiration in the *Ion* preempts the denunciation of poetic mimesis as the implacable law determining the poet's *praxis*. Murray argues "mimesis and inspiration are identical" (Murray 1992: 46), however their is a problem in securing the logic of this parallelism, in so far as the paradox of mimesis elicits the possibility of a virile or creative element, an active sense which undermines the passivity of the poet-rhapsode in the moment of *entheosis* (inspiration).

[37] We will return later to the question of the multiplication of the divine logos in the activity of *hermeneusis* into *logoi*.

mimetic praxis in the later Dialogues, and in the *Ion* similar denials are made. "It is not an art *in*" Ion, in other words, it is by recognizing a lack, an impropriety that Plato has Socrates expose the utter passivity of the poet-rhapsode who is moved by a divine power, a dynamis (which if we recount the metaphor) is mimetic in terms of its contaminative effect, its ability to reproduce itself and replicate its effect, the very fact that it surpasses human ingenuity. Is it here that the poet's "great nature", his μεγαλοφυΐα, resides as the Pseudo-Longinus would later argue?[38] Or should we be asking whether Plato-Socrates denies the poet-rhapsode this precocity, for he has no technical ability, no techne as a creative resource and subsequently no true episteme, that is, no knowledge or understanding of his poetic *praxis*?

The dynamism which infects the poet, reproduces itself in the poet and consequently possesses him [κατέχει] is mimetic[39] in essence, because mimesis is effectively at play in the reproduction and duplication of this dynamis. As one might gather when considering the metaphor, dynamis implies true reproduction. This dynamis is disseminated mimetically by the "magnet stone" [Μαγνῆτιν...λίθος] that imparts this dynamis to other "rings" [τοῖς δακτυλίοις]. As the metaphor images this, the Muse imparts this θεία δύναμις to the poets and rhapsodes alike, that is, it has the power to create or more correctly do what the stone creates and does

---

[38] Pseudo Longinus, *Peri Ipsous* XXXIII, 4. The Pseudo-Longinus also speaks of the poet's "great nature" [μεγάλη φύσις, IX, 11].

[39] Spariosu's argument that the concept of mimesis is fundamental to the criticism of poetry in the *Ion* seems to be considerably difficult to maintain throughout this particular text, though I do accept that what I call the *mimetic* dynamism which pervades the entire tradition of *mythopoiesis* presents itself within the context of the metaphor of the Lodestone, insofar as the whole question of replication or reproduction of a source dynamis is implied. The *Ion* is possibly the working through (within Plato's philosophic criticism) the concept of mimesis which resides within the critical appraisal of the mythopoetic tradition in the later text, the *Republic*. See Spariosu 1991: 13-26.

[ὥστ' αυ δύνασθαι ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ποιεῖν ὅπερ ἡ λίθος, 533 d9-e1]. Ποιεῖν[40] in this context means more than "making" or "production"; it is essentially oriented towards mimesis, that is, to the mimetic replication of the dynamis imparted by the Muse. Poiesis is subsequently related to this dynamis, though for Plato it is important to illustrate that the poet proceeds 'in composition' after being inspired and enthused, thus possessed and held by this dynamis, and that he never proceeds from techne. The dynamis disseminated from the experience of *entheosis* (possession by the god) becomes a precondition of any creative act for the poet and rhapsode. We can nevertheless begin to discern what is at stake in the *Ion*, at least mark out a number of motifs which highlight the agon in Plato's work insofar as the opposition between philosophy and poetry is concerned. We can now ask, what in fact is the relationship between *entheosis* (possession, this deconstitution of the subject) and the subject of madness? To what degree is this relationship organized by the notion of mimesis, or at least its interpretation? In the criticism of rhapsodic hermeneutics is there an implied criticism of mimesis as such?

It is imperative at this point to reiterate that the general problematic of hermeneia, the two potential meanings the word carries, is an extension of the problem of the subject, that is, in what I have discerned to be the *entheosis* of the poet and rhapsode (bearing in mind the implications of the "lodestone metaphor"). The problem can further be condensed to account for the relation between *theia* dynamis and mimetics as such. Such dynamism allows for a replication of this dynamis, this capacity of the poet, and subsequently in his interpreter; the

---

[40] Penelope Murray makes a valid point regarding the paradox or terminological contradiction in Plato's use of *poiein* in this context. Where an utter passivity is illustrated (an inability to create, make, compose as an intentional *praxis*) in the metaphor, the word *poiein* appears as a contradicting this lack of authorial intention. Murray looks at 534a2 [οὐκ ἔμφρονες...ποιοῦσιν] stating this is a "contradiction in terms, since *poiein* and its cognates when used of poetry generally refer to the craft aspects of poetic composition". See Murray 1992: 29. However, this is how Aristotle can relate poiesis to mimesis and what is crucial for Plato

rhapsode. It is a dynamic quality, invested or "put into" [δύναμιν ἐντίθησι, 533 d7] the poet, it is essentially invested power, a reproduced dynamis. If dynamis within a linguistic context also refers to the power of signification, or meaning in general, thus it becomes apparent that the dynamis imparted by the Muse, is the dynamis of speech, of enunciation (as in the case of the "fresh-voiced daughters of Zeus" who invested the power of speech in Hesiod in the *Theogony*[41]) but also in extension the dynamis to project meaning to words, meaning to every utterance, a semantic possibility. However, in the context of the Ion, this remains a hermeneutic problem and it is difficult to determine whether *theia* dynamis involves the communication of meaning *as such*. It perhaps involves communication proper, rather than the transmission of some allegorical content which the poet and rhapsode as *hermênês* has to reveal in the finitude of an interpretive act, of an hermeneia. This problem we shall return to later, whereby the hermeneutic problem is properly appraised.

5.4.1 The Question of Authorial Propriety

In relation to ancient Greek poetics, one problem has emerged, above all, as a rudiment questioning of the relation between imitation (*mimesis*) and inspiration (*entheosis*)[42] which endlessly recalls the question of the artist's activity in terms of the idea of authorial propriety, that is, insofar as we understand *how* the poet owns his actions, his thoughts, his very creation.

---

in the context of the *Ion* is that poiesis is not always *technical*, that is, it is not guided by a techne; there is no proper technical operation of the poetic (creative) act.

[41] See Hesiod, *Theogony* 33-35, "...And breathed a sacred voice into my mouth, with which to celebrate the things to come and things which were before".

[42] See G.F.Else's review of W.J.Verdenius' *Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and its Meaning to Us*, (Else 1953: 263). Else does present the relation between *imitation* and *inspiration* as an unresolved "thorny problem" which possibly any insight on this relation could implicate Plato in his own criticisms, if one can determine a relation; it can never properly be strictly a logical one. The Pseudo-Longinus similarly considers the relation between mimesis and inspiration in his *Peri Ipsous*, section 13:2.

The question of authorial propriety in the *Ion* is one that questions the intentional and authorized *praxis* of the poet.

> "For a poet is a light and winged and sacred thing, and is unable to ever indite
>
> until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer
>
> in him. [Κοῦφον γὰρ χρῆμα ποιητής ἐστι καὶ πτηνὸν καὶ ἱερόν, καὶ οὐ
>
> πρότερον οἱός τε ποιεῖν, πρὶν ἂν ἔνθεός τε γένηται καὶ ἔκφρων καὶ ὁ νοῦς
>
> μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῇ]."[43]

What manifests itself as poetry is never realized prior [οὐ πρότερον] to inspiration, that moment of "being engodded" [ἔνθεός τε γένηται]. Creation or τό ποιεῖν is never considered the willed act of the author. Plato puts into question the notion of subjective (authorial) control, and *entheosis* certainly undermines the intentions of the poet, a creative intentionality as such. If we followed attentively this section of the text, the poet is understood by a sense of *loss*, subjective loss, what is more properly a subjective displacement (that is, a displacement of himself, of being outside of himself) for he is *ekphron* ('out of mind' *ek-phron* or more literally his mind is "out of", or "outside" what is in the corporeal sense, his body, thus effectively *other* to himself, divided) and also his *nous* "is no longer in him" [ὁ νοῦς μηκέτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐνῇ]. Essentially (and possibly ideally) god or the divine enters *in* him, possesses him, he becomes *entheos*, he *becomes* engodded if we are to consider the ontological implications of the word *genetai*.

Still more precisely, such a creative ability at the most originative moment, regulates poiesis to divine authorial assurance. In terms of poiesis, the activity of composition, creativity as such, there is a powerlessness that Plato recognizes in the poet's creative ability if he has not experienced *entheosis*. Thus τῶν ἐνθέων, this engodded aspect, is identified as a treasure, a

---

[43] *Ion.* 534 b4-7

possession [κτῆμα, 534 b8] even as it possesses, without which the poet cannot create, or engage in poiesis [δ᾽ ἂν τουτὶ ἔχῃ τὸ κτῆμα, ἀδύνατος πᾶς ποιεῖν, 534 b7-8]. Plato essentially dislodges the poet's poiesis from all creative and authorial autonomy. Notwithstanding, all this is not totally unrelated to the poet's resort to something which can be defined as techne, he composes without artistic ability or knowledge [οὐ τέχνῃ ποιοῦντες, 534 b9], something which Aristotle in his *Poetics* does not deny the poet, that is, a certain *technic* essence in ποιεῖν or "production".[44] *Poiein* for Plato designates an operation that essentially refers to mimesis, that is, to the mimetic replication of the dynamis imparted by the Muse. If *poiein* is related to this divine dynamis and illustrates that the poet proceeds 'in composition' only after being inspired and enthused, *affected by*, possessed and held by this dynamis, Plato's criticism of the poets and rhapsodes will be critically endorsed, as techne does not precede composition. In a sense, behind this criticism resides a criticism of a feminine aesthetism because for Plato it is purely passive, not virile or "really creative". Such a determination of poetics and rhapsodics as essentially a "passive" disposition constantly solicits Plato's philosophic criticism. At any rate this is what explains Plato's treatment of rhapsodic hermeneutics, that it essentially remains a hermeneutic problem. The problem of interpretation as such is certainly at issue here, as it becomes a question of what is being "reproduced" in every act of hermeneia.

It remains fundamentally difficult to determine whether divine dynamis involves the communication of some divine message (a transcendental signified) or simply communication proper. Ion's logos is reduced to a fundamental hermeneutic practice, which excludes any form of *inventio*, of an improvised reflexivity in relation to the Homeric narratives which he recites.

---

[44] See Aristotle *Peri Poiêtikês*. We here approach a kind of turning point in ancient Greek literary criticism, since for Aristotle poiesis corresponds to, or is a strict correlate of techne. Aristotle's theory of poiesis involves recognizing certain technical precepts which are essentially prescribed in his theory of poetry, essentially techne is poiesis.

Ion or one must say, the rhapsode in general is an interpreter three times removed from the original logos, since rhapsodes are "interpreters of interpreters" [ἑρμηνέων ἑρμηνῆς γίγνεσθε, 535 a8],[45] that is to say, interpreters of the poets themselves.[46] One cannot help but return to this for there is a redoubled criticism in the *Ion*, one of the poets and a criticism of those who show utmost fidelity to their logos, namely, the rhapsodes. This could shed light on the nature of the Platonic enterprise, that is, of the criticism of rhapsody and its peculiar hermeneutic model that it alters the scheme of hermeneutics so as to better clarify the philosophical (dialectical) orientation that it presupposes. The hermeneutic presupposition involves the "interpretation" of a work or poem according to its eidos or authorial idea which is essentially divinely bestowed upon the work. It is by now well clear that the propositions of the *Ion* seem to be ordered by this double determination of hermeneia.

However, what I want to discern is in what way the rhapsode exhibits a different hermeneutic relation and whether in effect it undermines Socrates' description of the rhapsode as a subject who is deconstituted by the logos he or she exhibits. It will be shown in the ensuing chapter that the rhapsodic subject is not a passive mediator of poetic language or logos, the performative character of the rhapsode's hermeneia attests to a fundamentally more radical conception of hermeneutics in so far as it preempts the fundamental problematic of the subject which the thesis addresses.

---

[45] The question of the rhapsodes being ἑρμηνέων ἑρμηνῆς is a logical manifestation of the concept of mimesis as it presents itself in book ten of the *Republic*. Even though Socrates never mentions the word mimesis, the entire discussion on poetry in the *Ion* presupposes it. Plato is very early on aware of the dynamis of poetry, what he recognizes (I must add) a certain life and creative value of the poet, his being disposed towards mimesis. For a comparative reading of inspiration "in relation to" and "in terms of" mimesis, see Murray 1992.

[46] This argument can be compared to the one that runs throughout book ten of *Republic* where the painter's mimetic productions (and subsequently the poet by analogy) is "three times removed from truth or the eidos"

Chapter Six

Rhapsodic Hermeneutics

"Then we shall be right in calling those divine of whom we spoke just now as soothsayers and prophets and all of the poetic turn: and especially we can say of the statesmen that they are divine and enraptured, as being inspired and possessed of god when they succeed in speaking many great things while knowing nothing of what they say."

Ὀρθῶς ἄρ' ἂν καλοῖμεν θείους τε, οὓς νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν χρησμῳδοὺς καὶ μάντεις κα
ὶ τοὺς ποιητικοὺς ἅπαντας καὶ τοὺς πολιτικοὺς οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτων φαῖμεν ἂν θείου
ς τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθουσιάζειν, ἐπίπνους ὄντας καὶ κατεχομένους ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν
κατορθῶσι λέγοντες πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μηδὲν εἰδότες ὧν λέγουσιν.

Gorgias 99 e9-d5

6.1 Divine *Heurema*: Theological Poetics

What are the implications of the relegation of poetic-rhapsodic *praxis* to a hermeneutic translation or interpretation of the divine logos? What are the hermeneutic networks and connections between the human (or *anthropological*) and the *divine* (or theological)? Does the thematization of this hermeneutic relation to the divine logos inform this systematically organized criticism of the poet-rhapsode as enthused, maniacal, dispossessed subject? Is the rhapsodic subject who is essentially limited to the maniacal effects caused by his *entheosis*, strictly limited in its value by that passive form of relation to the divine?

It is almost as if the determination of the rhapsodic subject as enthused and maniacal inhibited any theoretical breakthrough regarding the exact nature of rhapsodic hermeneutics. In

short, the determination of rhapsodic hermeneutics cannot be made determinable unless a "psychology" of the subject is written. As will become clear, we shall pass close to a humanistic (philosophical) determination of the subject which resurfaces here as nothing other than the propitious philosophical example, Socrates. It happens that in the *Ion*, the question of the subject is recapitulated in the immediate certitude of the self-present (self-knowing) Socratic subject. A demonstration of the rhapsode's lack of subject sense (of being subject) is given when Socrates having considered poetry and rhapsody as undeveloped and non-definable *technai*, arrives at the examination of its products, or more correctly, *erga*. Socrates says further on in relation to this context,

> "For the god...intended him to be a sign to us that we should not waver or
> doubt that these fine poems are not human or the work of men
> [ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρώπινά ἐστι τὰ καλὰ ταῦτα ποιήματα οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπων], but
> divine and the work of gods [ἀλλὰ θεῖα καὶ θεῶν], and that the poets are
> merely the interpreters of the gods, according as each is possessed by one of
> the heavenly powers [οἱ δὲ ποιηταὶ οὐδὲν ἀλλ᾽ ἢ ἑρμηνῆς εἰσι τῶν
> θεῶν, κατεχόμενοι ἐξ ὅτου ἂν ἕκαστος κατέχηται]."[1]

Hence, these poems [ταῦτα ποιήματα] are not the *erga* or the work of a human author; they are not the product of a human being. To quote Socrates, "οὐκ ἀνθρώπινά"; they do not pertain to any human faculty, neither to the human itself, rather "they are works of the gods [ἀλλὰ θεῖα καὶ θεῶν]." The authorship of all poems is radically untranslatable if understood in terms of *anthropos*; it enters the whole domain of the *divine*, or what is considered *theia*. Poets are merely "interpreters of the gods [ἑρμηνῆς εἰσι τῶν θεῶν]", thus in terms of the *poiêmata* they have a secondary role of carrying the works, translating the words of the gods to humans as

---

[1] *Ion* 534 e1-5

such. The poets (like Hermes) are the messengers of the gods, or as Socrates refers to them, the

hyperetais;[2] the chosen servants of the gods, ministers to their logos.[3] It is immediately clear, that

Plato is undermining the role of the poet-rhapsode. Soon after we are reminded that "the god of

set purpose sang the finest songs through the most inferior poets

[ταῦτα ἐνδεικνύμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐξεπίτηδες διὰ τοῦ φαυλοτάτου ποιητοῦ το κάλλιστον μέλος

ἦσεν, 534 e6-7]"[4] and Socrates further underscores the distancing of the poet from the *poiêmata*,

not only by devaluing his role, nor by an inequitable degradation of his role as mere interpreter or

messenger of the gods, rather this impropriety in or depravity of the poet's *praxis* is intrinsically

related to him not being *author*, a creative authorial figure. The audience[5] is left never to doubt

[μὴ διστάζωμεν, 534 e2] that "these fine poems are not human or the work of men, but divine

and the work of gods [ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρώπινά ἐστι τὰ καλὰ ταῦτα ποιήματα οὐδὲ ἀνθρώπων,

ἀλλὰ θεῖα καὶ θεῶν]," and the poet is supposed to evince [ἐνδείξασθαι, 534 e2] the divine

authorship of the *poiêmata*.

Socrates references paradigmatically the case of Tynnichus "who never composed a

single poem [οὐδὲν πώποτ' ἐποίησε ποίημα]" of deserved mention who produced the 'paean'.

---

[2] *Ion* 534 c9

[3] The notion of the poet being the servant of the Muses was a conventional description of the poet, particularly in the phrase Μουσῶν θεράπων (e.g. Hesiod's Theogony 100). See Murray 1996: 120.

[4] τοῦ φαυλοτάτου ποιητοῦ at 534 E7, I translated as "the most inferior poets" and discarded Lamb's translation "the meanest of poets". Essentially, there is a logic of secondarity (in relation to the role of the poet) which runs throughout this section of the text. Consider the reference to Tynnichus the Chalcidian, who though mentioned for having produced the "paean" (which is qualified properly as "an invention of the Muses") never produced anything of worth, in this context, Tynnichus is considered in the most denigrating sense as *phaulotatos*. See *Ion* 534 d4-8.

[5] See 534d1-2, ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀκούοντες also see 534a7 and 534b2. This suggests the importance of the audience as the final link in the chain which the metaphor suggests. In the audience (as in the listener or reader) lies the destinational reception, the apprehension of the divine *logos*. For Plato it highlights the "pure passivity" of reception.

Paradoxically it is considered (and Tynnichus himself supposedly conceded this) that it is "the invention or finding of the Muses", [εὕρημά τι Μοισᾶν, 534 d9]. This example merely deploys the concept of the author in terms of the divine, that the original find or discovery of the *poiêmata*, the poems as *heurêma*, as *inventio* cannot be detached from some sort of divine *moira*. It certainly puts into the framework of this discussion the whole question of the deep disparity between *invention* [εὕρημά] and imitation (mimesis);[6] the former is most proper to the gods (the Muses) whereas the latter, the most intimate essence of mimesis or poetic mimetism is pertinent to the poets themselves.

The hermeneutic question the *Ion* orients itself around (along with the hermeneutics of the dialogue itself) is the nature of rhapsodic hermeneia. Though this may not seem a major discovery in terms of the thematics which assembles the question of hermeneutics, in any case it asks that we consider what has been elucidated thus far. Essentially rhapsodic hermeneia has no epistemological motivation, it does not orient itself towards some dianoetic telos and this obviously is a critical (philosophical) consideration which bears entirely on the essence of truth. But when Socrates states that "the rhapsode ought to make himself an interpreter of the poet's thought to his audience" [τὸν γάρ ῥαψῳδὸν ἑρμηνέα δεῖ τοῦ ποιητοῦ τῆς διανοίας γίγνεσθαι τοῖς ἀκούουσι, 530 c4-5]" he is determining the role of the rhapsode as an intermediary, who transmits what is present to the understanding as the poet's dianoia. In other words, Socrates anticipates a hermeneutic engagement that fundamentally lends itself to a metaphysics of presence, since the rhapsode should access within an ordered apprehension a

---

[6] The difference in terms of the mimetic nature of *inventio* and what is purely *imitatio* (that is, the most technical, non-original sense of *mimesis*) in Book X of Quintillian's *Institutio Oratorio* will be discussed in conclusion, in the summation of what can be ascertained as a detour in Plato's concept of mimesis particularly since Aristotle in later literary criticism, this is more discernible in the Pseudo-Longinus' *Peri Ipsous* ("On the Sublime") and obviously Latin literary criticism (particularly Quintillian).

pregiven, originary logocentric or a *dianoetic* presence within the work.[7] However we reach an interminable paradox here, as the propriety of the poet's logos still remains in question. The poet's composition (that is, the poem) is nothing other than the articulation of the divine logos and the interpretive pronouncement or enunciation of this divine logos. Socrates, as we noted in the previous chapter, originally argues that τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπο τοῦ ποιητοῦ, that is, "what the poet says"[8] corresponds to what the poet thinks, the dianoia of the poet. This essentially should be the object of the rhapsodes hermeneutic exercise. Though it is at the aforementioned turning point of the dialogue, that is, when Ion's techne is held in disputation, that the problem of the poet's *legómena* is essentially that of knowing or grasping the *dianoetic* essence of *ta legómena* of the gods (or of the Muses), Socrates clearly states that it is not in fact the poet who speaks but rather "the god himself is the speaker [ὁ θεὸς αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ λέγων, 534 d]." What is in fact apprehended in the poet's voice is really another voice; the divine voice is articulated in all poetry, a dynamis or power (divinational in essence) altogether foreign to the poetic subject.

The hermeneutic engagement therefore entails an engagement that is foreign to, *other* to the supposed author of the poem. There is no object of dianoia to present or make immanent within an interpretive act. So how sufficiently does rhapsodic hermeneutics correspond to our understanding of hermeneutics, of interpretation as such? Does hermeneia actually involve the interpretation of some hidden meaning or allegorical content of the divine logos? If the god speaks through all poets, particularly as Socrates recognizes poets like the rhapsodes, as a passive

---

[7] See Janaway 1992: 1-2

[7] La Driere argues that the *Ion* is oriented around whether Ion can speak on Homer, whether he can provide an epistemic ground for any discourse on Homer's work. If Socrates questions Ion's competence on "talking about Homer" [λέγειν περὶ Ὁμήρου] as LaDriere argues, then possibly we should consider more carefully Ion's *epideictic* competence and how Socrates bypasses Ion's offer for an *epideixis* of Homer's poetry, as an illustration that rhapsodic techne is not strictly epistemic but rather a performative one, alas the comparison to the *hypokritês*. See La Driere 1951: 28-9.

[8] *Ion* 530 c3

mouthpiece of the gods, what now of the dianoia of the poet? Does hermeneia involve, as in the case of the rhapsode, interpreting in the logos of the gods, a divinely dispensed truth? Or is there another more original possibility, does rhapsodic hermeneutics entail the theatrical or performative enunciation of logos as such? Does it involve a hermeneutic participation in the logos which becomes altogether transformative, other to any originary *dianoetic* essence? Is the hermeneia of the rhapsode translatable only insofar as we can rigorously recognize its performative dimension? What is drawn from all this, besides the performativity of logos or what we may discern as a performative poetic, is an etymological criterion that affirms another possibility of hermeneutics.

6.2 The Double Meaning of Hermeneia

Rhapsodic hermeneia most probably is related to the role of the messenger god Hermes. It is possibly all about delivery, the deliverance of the divine logos to man (via the poet and subsequently the rhapsode) and the possible interpretive participation in this logos within the hermeneutic chain that the "Magnet Metaphor" denotes. Guthrie in reflection on the meaning of the word *hermêneus* and its cognates in the *Ion* clearly states that the word in this context refers to the "messenger or go-between", who is "simply reporting what he is told".[9] The word more appropriate in this interpretation of hermeneia is 'transference', that is, it refers to something sent and thus transferred.[10] Heidegger in his "A Dialogue On Language", actually highlights the

---

[9] Guthrie1975: 203

[10] I would not decline the possibility that *hermeneia* in the context of the *Ion* could possibly connote some idea of poetical-rhapsodic "transference", particularly in relation to words such as τό ἕρμαιον (a godsend, something which is reputed to be the gift of the gods), and particularly in the role of *Hermes* as a messenger of the gods. Though I do not deny its meaning as "interpretation", this however is complicated by the nature of this interpretation whether it is reduced to an interpretation of meaning, to the content of signs or words or more notably reducing something to signs and words, as in "putting into words" and in "giving utterance to". See under Ἑρμῆς Liddell and Scott 1989: 315.

importance of the two meanings of hermeneia, especially converging upon the meaning of the word in the *Ion*,

> *Inquirer*: The expression 'hermeneutic' derives from the Greek verb hermeneia. The verb is related to the noun *hermeneus*, which is referable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger, He brings the message of destiny; hermeneia is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message. Such exposition becomes an interpretation of what has been said by the poets who, according to Socrates in Plato's *Ion* (534 e) *hermenês eisin tôn theôn*-"are interpreters of the gods".
>
> *Japanese*: I am very fond of this short Platonic dialogue. In the passage you have in mind, Socrates carries the affinities even further by surmising that the rhapsodes are those who bear the tidings of the poets' word.
>
> *Inquirer*: All this makes it clear that hermeneutics means not just the interpretation, but even before it, the bearing of message and tidings.[11]

Thus the "bearing of message and tidings" specifically refers to the poet's and rhapsode's hermeneutic practice, as it is they who "put into words" and "give utterance to" the message of the gods. It is their words that resonate and transmit the message of the divine logos, more specifically they direct this logos and transfer it to a receiver, the audience. Within the history of philosophy it becomes in some sense a divine missive and "the message of destiny" which appraises the very possibility of logos, of discourse *as such* and most importantly a hermeneutic possibility. Thus hermeneia is important insofar as the logos is transferred by this divine dynamis and subsequently finds its destination in the listener, in the audience who tends to

---

[11] Heidegger 1971: 29.

the logos transferred. It is also in this respect that it is dispensed by the god to an ineluctable destination. This essentially is the relation of *theia moira* to the logos itself, that it becomes destinational, the logos is foreordained as a directive, a missive. And it is from this notion of hermeneia that an inadequate interpretive operation will be exposed as Socrates is unable to speak directly about, make palpable within some sort of hermeneutic clarification, the logos which the poet-rhapsode approach unless, as we will see in the epilogical moment of the dialogue, Socrates resorts to an immense trope of rhapsodic identification.

Everything here rests upon the presentation of the "lodestone metaphor". What Plato announces or proposes, by resorting to this operative metaphor, is that to a larger degree hermeneia attests to the passive nature of poetic-rhapsodic logos. The poet and the rhapsode are understood within a hermeneutic relation. Socrates earlier states, that if the poets are the interpreters of the gods, the rhapsodes are the "interpreters of interpreters" [ἑρμηνέων ἑρμηνῆς γίγνεσθε, 535 a8]. The poet and rhapsode within the hermeneutic relation are suspended links in the chain, dynamically related. In this chain of hermeneutic relations we can discern the contamination, the mixing and also paradoxically the differentiation, conflict, incommensurability of voices, discourses, logoi. Each performative or interpretive intervention involves the grafting of one performative enunciation, voice, discourse to another and the poetic-rhapsodic hermeneutic relation subsequently divulges in the transferential event interpretive supplements and dynamic re-inscriptions; the proliferation of logoi.

Rhapsodic hermeneutics does not ultimately make immanent an original, pre-given thought. It is not even dependent on an ontology of prior understanding, it does not inhabit or locate the object of a dianoia; it does not even deliver with epistemic and technical assurance any axiological, epistemological and theological essence of thought. As we will see poetic-rhapsodic hermeneia disrupts and fractures the conditions, processes, the fundamental mimetism of the

hermeneutic circle. The "lodestone metaphor" aversely proffers an alternative hermeneutic motif since hermeneia can never proceed from the assimilation of dianoia but rather permits the rhapsode to disengage his performative logos from the origin.

Plato's criticism of the poets and his redoubled denouncement of the rhapsodes (Ion, as the representative of this genos) is based on the fact that poetic and rhapsodic hermeneutics does not engage in the clarification of the meaning of the divine logos. Rather it steeps itself in the articulation of the divine logos in the multiplied forms of various poetic logoi. Rhapsodic hermeneutics tends towards a generative multiplicity of logoi, a disseminative discourse. One recalls the "genres" of the dithyramb, of lyric poetry and tragedy as an exemplification of this multiplying of discourses, of voices, of all that transpires as generic forms of these logoi. Socrates states "this man sings dithyrambs, another laudatory odes, another dance-songs, another epic or else iambic verse, but each is at fault in any other kind [τὰ δ᾽ ἄλλα φαῦλος αὐτῶν ἕκαστός ἐστιν]."[12] Socrates claims that the rhapsode's articulation of the divine message is not consistent, it contaminates the divine logos through a fragmentation which characteristically descends to man, the realm of mortal beings, as a timorous plurality of logoi. This plurality (in terms of genre forms and poetic conventions) attests to the differential specificity of literature as such. Plato is interested in a normative poetics, he would like to consider poetry as a "whole", as science [ποιητικὴ...τὸ ὅλον, 532 c8] and not in terms of its polytechnical properties and discernible "genre" differentiations.

Thus in the *Republic* Plato can begin his epistatic exercise and censorship of poetry by formulating within his criticism a "genre" of mimesis to strategically establish its normative and epistemic generality [τὸ ὅλον]. Plato effects in his philosophical poetics an obvious homogenization of these different logoi (i.e. lyric, dythyrambic, tragic, epic etc.) under the

---

[12] *Ion.* 534 c3-5

catchword "mimesis". Plato's indictment of mimesis is an arraignment of whatever it is *poiêtikê*
or literature encapsulates, that is, a pernicious plurality of logoi. And what Plato recognizes in
rhapsodics by immediately reducing it to a hermeneutic problem, is that its logos or its mode of
hermeneia would not have any hermeneutic puissance. The performative nature of rhapsodics
inscribes within its logos the possibility of sustaining a dynamic discursive exchange which as a
consequence resists the codification of hermeneutics as an interpretative activity oriented toward
dianoia.

6.3 The Hermeneutics of Enunciation

Ion deciding he is not the hermeneut [ἑρμηνϋς] of other *technai* decides he is the hermeneut of
different voices and subjects;[13] and this is where the meaning of hermeneia (in terms of
rhapsody) shifts by alluding to a performative dimension. It has much to do with the ethological
concerns (i.e. questions of dramatic characterization, prosopopeic identification) that define the
performative character of the rhapsode's hermeneutic engagement. Ion explains he is the
hermeneut of what "befits a man to say, and the sort of thing that a woman should say; the sort

---

[13] See Pappas 1989: 384. Pappas briefly highlights what I have understood in the uniqueness of the Homeric
pronouncement regarding various so-called *technai* (which I recognize as discourses). Pappas explains,
"What Ion knows, when he understands a Homeric passage about charioteering, is not something about
charioteering, but about Homer *on* charioteering" I depart from Pappas on what he understands as Ion's
"claim to knowledge" regarding Homer, for the *Ion* as a philosophical dialogue problematizes the epistemic
grounds of the rhapsode's hermeneutic practice, that is, Ion as *hermênês* is different to the modern sense of
the hermeneut, our understanding of the role of commentator and interpreter. We mustn't ignore, that in the
art of the rhapsode (that is, if we can conclude that there is something that is known as a techne of the
rhapsode), there is no scope within this art, within the performative (recitive) aspect of the rhapsode's art
for commentary and interpretation. Socrates does challenge in the rhapsode a "mode" of mimesis, that is, a
purely imitative (and representational) recitation of Homer's poetry and this "mode" of mimesis is
extemporized in the metaphor of the Heraclea Stone. We thus do understand that (according to this
metaphor which accents the "mode" of mimesis), Homer's poetry is nothing other than a mimesis of the
divine logos.

for a slave and the sort for a freeman; and the sort for a subject or for a ruler."[14] Following Murray, "Ion's claim that the rhapsode will know the kinds of things that it is appropriate for different characters to say shows some awareness that knowledge of poetry might be something other than knowledge about its factual content. Socrates refuses to recognize the distinction between content and expression which Ion is tentatively trying to formulate".[15]

But in saying this, Ion is caught in a problematic hermeneutic web, and it is the duplicitous and dissimulative nature of what he enunciates or says that Socrates denounces. There is no unity or homogeneity of authorial logos, nor is there a totalizing epistemic plausibility in rhapsodic hermeneutics. This leads Socrates to class the rhapsodes with the most criticized genos of the *Republic*; the *hypokritai*, the actors who are identified as Ion is, by their duplicity. However we must consider by contrast, that Ion does not work from any epistemological presumption and the transformative possibilities of the poetic-rhapsodic hermeneutic relation remain rich and inexhaustible. Any performative hermeneia certainly challenges the interpretive authority of the subject as it involves assuming an other prosopon, appropriating an other voice. Herewith is founded the pernicious nature of rhapsodic hermeneia which in essence resists interpreting logos but rather resorts to theatrically representing it.

It is for this very reason Socrates brands Ion a Proteus, one who changes character, changes beings, assumes many *personas* [παντοδαπὸς γίγνῃ, 541 e8]. He does not identify with the propriety of a single authorial voice rather he is attendant to different and diverse voices, and this only after abandoning the claim of retaining a penurious knowledge of the epistemic grounds of other *technai* represented in Homer's poetry (i.e. medicine, charioteering, generalship etc.). Ion as hermeneut cannot make a decision about these diverse and multiplied logoi and thus annuls in principle every claim to a techne and discovers his competence in performative

---

[14] *Ion* 540 b4-6

recitations or *hypocritical* enunciative practices. Ion is always speaking as the *other*. Ion does not attend to the techno-epistemological unity organized by a *dianoetic* telos which essentially defines the aforementioned *technai*.

One concludes from this that Ion interprets not what Homer intends to say on these various *technai*, it is not completely the object of a dianoia and making a decision about some general concept or episteme. What interests Ion is Homer's unique pronouncement regarding these diverse discourses, the staging of these different voices and logoi. It is the splitting of Homer's voice (that he can be both Odysseus and then assume the role of Achilles) which pertains to an *hypocritic* and subsequently ethological interest Ion, as rhapsode, exemplifies. Hence Ion struggles to make a decision throughout the dialogue, not only between (a) several *technai* (i.e. charioteering, medicine, generalship), which essentially involves his exegetical competence in these *technai*; but also (b) concerning the nature of poiesis or *poiêtikê* as a whole, where he can assure knowledge of a primary epistemic ground for rhapsodics. His hermeneutic *praxis* lends itself to the possibility of the *other's* logos; any transferential hermeneutic play affirms an originary difference between multiple and inexhaustibly diverse logoi.

This hermeneutic play of any enunciative act suggests that rhapsodic hermeneutics does not seek to decipher a truth or a *dianoetic* arche nor does it occupy wholly an eschatology of thought. Rhapsodic hermeneia involves a performative intervention which guarantees not the presentation of the authorial dianoia, but within the hermeneutic relation and its dynamic play, it involves the dissemination of other voices, other logoi; its divine, poetical and ethological transcriptions. Such a hermeneutic possibility cannot present the unity of a dianoia, there is no constitution of the subject in the apprehension of dianoia, we rather become aware of how the subject interminably divides and is differentiated within the chain of hermeneutical transference

---

[15] See Murray 1996: 130

that unfolds. From one act of hermeneia to the next, the rhapsode gets further away from the origin of *dianoêsis*. Rhapsodic hermeneia suggests a veritable and transformative hermeneutic possibility.

6.4   The Paradox of the Rhapsodic Performance

One cannot help but ask why a rhapsode becomes the *other speaker* of this dialogue and 'rhapsody' the object of criticism in general. What concerns Plato beyond determining on a purely philosophical ground the status of rhapsody? Is it simply to determine whether Ion can lay claim to techne (art) and episteme (knowledge), that there is in rhapsodics a discursive form or hermeneutics which tends to the content or signified concept of the work? Or is it more poignantly a question of the status of the rhapsode as an intermediary? Socrates himself in the "Magnet Metaphor" refers to him as the middle ring [ὁ δὲ μέσος σὺ ὁ ῥαψῳδὸς, 536 A1] who lays claim in his own disputed techne a privileged passage of communication, the transference of a logos to a corruptible and easily enthused audience or "listeners" [οἱ ἀκούοντες, 534 d1-2]. Ion meeting Socrates (who plays his recognizable role as *eiron*, the ironist par excellence) after carrying off first prize in a contest of rhapsodes[16] is immediately challenged to a new agon which resonates as the origin of the *palaiá diaphorá* between poetry and philosophy which Plato identifies in bock ten of the *Republic*. Typically the dialogue develops in its ritual elenchus towards exposing Ion, who frustratingly exposes himself as a protean type, a duplicitous, divided subject. In this exposé we also recognize what Plato's grievance is against rhapsody. Essentially it is tied to Ion's privileged role of transferring or transmitting to an audience an hermeneia, performatively playing out what the divine logos causes on the level of *entheosis* of the poet, rhapsode then listener. As Partee observes it determines "its pernicious effects on the intellect".[17]

---

[16] *Ion* 530 a5

[17] Partee 1973: 213. Obviously this is a rudimentary concern in Plato's work, the affectivity of poetry, its effect upon reason.

It is a participatory essence of spectacality, of the performance as such, of the theatricalization of the logos, where Plato ascertains the pernicious influence of the theatre.

6.4.1 The Splitting of The Subject: The Poetics of Subjectal Withdrawal and Return

In a noted passage of the dialogue, Ion speaks of a doubleness experienced, a subjective division, at the moment of hermeneutic engagement, an eloquent dissolution of all the Socratic determinations centering around the question of the *maniacal*, divinely enthused subject. Ion states,

> "For I look down upon the them from the platform and see them at such moments crying and turning awestruck eyes upon me and yielding to the amazement of my tale. For I have to pay the closest attention to them since if I set them crying, I shall laugh myself because of the money I take, but if they laugh, I myself shall cry because of the money I lose.
> [δεῖ γάρ με καὶ σφόδρ᾽ αὐτοῖς τον νοῦν προσέχειν· ὡς ἐαν μεν κλαίοντας α ὑτους καθίσω, αὐτος γελάσομαι ἀργύριον λαμβάνων, ἐαν δε γελῶντας, αὐτος κλαύσομαι ἀργύριον ἀπολλύς.]."

Socrates asks further,

> "And are you aware that your spectator is the last of the rings which I spoke of as receiving from each other the power transmitted from the Heraclea lodestone? You, the rhapsode and actor, are the middle ring; the poet himself is the first; but it is the god who through the whole series draws the souls of men whithersoever he pleases, making the power of one depend on the other.
> [Οἰσθα οὐν ὅτι οὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεατης τῶν δακτυλίων ὁ ἔσχατος, ὧν ἐγω ἔλεγον ὑπο τῆς Ἡρακλειώτιδος λίθου ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων την δύναμιν

λαμβάνειν; ὁ δε μέσος συ ὁ ῥαψῳδὸς καὶ ὑποκριτής, ὁ δε πρῶτος

αὐτὸς ὁ ποιητής· ὁ δε θεος δια πάντων τούτων ἕλκει την ψυχὴν

ὅποι ἀν βούληται τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀνακρεμαννὺς ἐξ ἀλλήλων

την δύναμιν]."[18]

Ion divides himself during performance as does the *hypocritês* (the actor),[19] He simulates that he is among the scenes he is describing (whether in Ithaca or Troy)[20] paying "attention" [προσέχειν] to his audience's response, attending to the success of his transmission of the *theia* dynamis which makes the moment of hermeneutic transmission and "participation" [*methexis*] possible. Ion is complicatedly both ἐκφρῶν, that is, "out of his senses"[21] and ἐμφρῶν, in his right mind, fully conscious and aware of the theatrical situation, that is, cognizant and in complete προσέχει. What is at stake in this psychological division, or schizophrenic state of the rhapsode Ion? How is it that being "in possession" [κατεχόμενος], at a complete loss of control, disappropriated and alienated from himself that Ion can simultaneously and intentionally be something other than the maniacal state which seems to dictate him. How is it that he can claim complete mastery over his performance, his characterizations and paradoxically assume mastery over the uncontrollable or unmasterable state of delirium, frenzy, possession which Socrates accuses Ion of?

Firstly, we have to recognize that in some way, Ion like the actor is a declaimer, for he claims propriety over the performance, the transmission of a dynamic logos to his audience. Ion seemingly does not succumb to the dynamis described in the "lodestone metaphor" he ostensibly is not possessed. On the other hand when Ion relates a tale his eyes are filled with tears, and

---

[18] *Ion* 535 a1- 536 a3

[19] See *Laws* book II 659a-d cite for further description of the split sense of the actor as subject of his or her own performance.

[20] *Ion 535* c2

when it is a tale of fear his hair stands on end and his heart leaps,[22] a man who seems involuntarily held by the stories related by himself, he is simultaneously an audience member, an attendant to his own recitation.

I have already pointed out that the rhapsodic subject hesitates here. The hesitation is between two representations. One involves Ion's loss of propriety, of being "held" [κατέχειν] by his own performance thereby his self loss, the other involves Ion's self gain, its manifestation in this self loss as that which has concealed itself in order that Ion might appear. If this performative paradox is examined, it exhibits the characteristic nature of rhapsody and its relation to mimesis. As I have indicated the two representations in question are those of subjectal presentation, which involves the autonomy and ownership of the self and subjectal loss respectively. An overall effect of subjectal loss is created by hesitation between these two psychological representations of the rhapsodic subject.

The demonstration of the character of this psychological division is not difficult. First, the two psychological representations exist, as it were side-by-side. At the very culmination where Ion asserts himself during the manifest presentation of his performance Ion himself is concealed. But seen from the opposite side, this subjectal withdrawal becomes a manifestation of Ion's persona; it reveals a mask. There is in this subjectal withdrawal a process of defamiliarization which signifies that there is something behind the mask or persona.

This is ultimately the paradox of the rhapsodic performance and its subject, that in the oscillation between the presented and lost versions of the subject, you have an indecisive

---

[21] *Ion* 535 d7-8

[22] *Ion* 537 c4-9

oscillation between loss and gain.[23] One might say, that this oscillation happens in the performative experience and moreover affects the audience's mimetic identification with this subjectal economy.

6.4.2 Mimetic Identification or *Methexis*

It is for this reason the rhapsodic subject is condemned because it is his position as middle man that makes him a more threatening figure insofar as the rhapsodic performance is concerned; it impinges upon Plato's perturbation of the performance and his criticism of the theatre. As ὁ μέσος (as intermediary) he is privileged as being the final passage which will transmit to the audience (within a bespelling performance) his own dynamis over them or perhaps a dynamis which resembles that which is received as *theia moira*. The fact the rhapsodic subject can divide himself, that is, 'being' both *ekphrôn* and *emphrôn*[24], reveals his duplicity as he participates and shares in the audience's experience and can concurrently detach himself and stand outside of this participation. Ion can assume some distance from his performative *epideixis* by not being affected by the dynamic logos which is transferred during the performance to the spectator. This is the impending factor and most critical in the context of the *Ion*, something we have already discerned in the *Republic*, it is the form of participatory identification (*methexis*) that is deemed pernicious. *Methexis* involves the mimesis of the audience who participates in the performance and thus are possessed and marked by it in an indelible way. It is this "passive" mode of the

---

[23] Weineck acknowledges the "diametrically opposed relationship" Ion has with his audience instead of being "magnetically" related to them. She admits that the relationship between poetic text, rhapsodic text, and the passion of the audience emerges as far more complicated than initially asserted. Weineck 1998: 30.

[24] This impinges upon the other oppositional schema interposed in the *Ion* that is, the relation between *katéchein* (being possessed, to be held) and *proséchein* (to hold to, to give heed to). This certainly corresponds to the rhapsode assuming a state of passivity or a more active performative role. Tigerstedt is correct (as are other commentators) in pointing out that complicatedly "possession cannot be Ion's lot" (Tigerstedt 1969: 21) particularly if Ion has the performative capacity to pay close attention to his audience (τον νοῦν προσέχειν, 535e4-5].

spectator, his/her 'passive receptivity' that Plato finds even more deleterious, that is, the passive and immediate identification of the spectator. One cannot help but think of the "polity of the soul" its contamination and putrefaction if we consider the context of Plato's criticism of dramatic poetry in the *Republic*. The rhapsode's mimesis like the actor's mimesis, is one which is apparently more active and virile.[25] It is in this respect that the mimesis and the hermeneutic activity of the rhapsode in the context of a performance (in his act of role-playing, in his dissimulation) is threatening and of pernicious effect as it presupposes and attest to, as Lacoue-Labarthe would understand it, "a fundamental disappropriation".[26] Plato cannot help but think that the spectator's pathetic identification is itself disappropriating, it is related to an uncontrollable alteration of the spectator's pathos, feelings, and it is possibly in this respect Aristotle's *catharsis* has a place in any theory of the theatre. However this pathos (associated to inspiration in the *Apology*)[27] is related to *enthusiasmos* only by way of an unmasterable disappropriation of the subject. If it is related to mimesis it is only as a fundamental passivity, that is, through pathetic identification.

What seems to allude to the "utter passivity"[28] of the poet/rhapsode that the "Magnet Metaphor" reveals early in the dialogue now exposes a duplicitous and disappropriative feature of the rhapsode's performative and hermeneutic expression. Paradoxical thoughts emanate from this peculiar response by Ion commenting on his performances, disconcerting enough to have forced our complete reconsideration and rethinking of Socrates' metaphor insofar as it fails to

---

[25] Nietzsche endeavored to save mimesis from the metaphysical snares of Plato's philosophy; recognizing Plato managed to appropriate and expose mimesis in terms of an arrant passive assignation. See Lacoue-Labarthe 1994: 107 and 109-110.

[26] Lacoue-Labarthe 1994: 110.

[27] In *Apol.* 22c5-6, poetical inspiration is considered a πάθος (pathos) to which poets are subjected to (πεπονθόντες)

[28] Guthrie does make it clear that Socrates' intention in the dialogue is to highlight "the utter passivity of the poet". See Guthrie 1975: 203, n.L

disqualify or make obsolete the active hermeneutic participation of the rhapsode, who by this stage is likened to the actors, the *hypokritai*.

A certain movement has occurred, a sudden shift in interest, forthwith the spectator is considered by Socrates. Rhapsodic influence needs to be curbed. Its performative essence, its active and virile nature, poses a threat to the audience. Ion paying closest attention to them [αὐτοῖς τον νοῦν προσέχειν] ratifies his non-possession, his non-passivity; he rejects being in a state of frenzied possession. It certainly conveys the possibility for *inventio* or what is "really creative" (to use Lacoue-Labarthe's terms) in the performative activity of the rhapsode. Moreover it highlights the economy of success and failure by infecting, altering, influencing the pathos of the audience. If successful, and this requires the audience's complete submission to the tale recited through a discharge of tears, through emotional or pathetic release, Ion will laugh and run off with the takings; however if he fails, since the audience would laugh given they would not have been nonplussed by his performance, he shall cry for the money he will lose.

Does this though presuppose that the rhapsode does not simply echo or repeat the articulated logos of the poet? Does the rhapsode within this plurality of transmitted logoi play an essentially more active role than the poet? Can he strictly be identified by a mimetic passivity? Is the activity of the rhapsode more pernicious than that of the poet since he occasions an active form of mimesis?

There is a founding moment in the criticism of Ion in that he is denied the claim that poetic texts or *poiêmata* are a source of techne and episteme. The inanity of Ion's opprobrious claim to techne in particular extends to the folly of his being as such, he not only knows *no thing* but further he is *no one*. Ion is a man who does not recognize properties and subjects (in terms of poetics) but is also without properties and qualities, and following Lacoue-Labarthe, he could be

understood as "a subjectless subject, a pure *no one*".[29] However, if rhapsodic hermeneia does not exemplify a movement towards the comprehension of dianoia, then the rhapsodic subject (his madness and paradoxical will, his split, schizophrenic, double nature) ontologically enacts or performs the hermeneutic relation; by bearing the other's voice, the other's logos, the other's discourse; by "being *other*".

If the audience (or the spectator) is the last ring in the plurality of rings drawn together by this dynamis (if we understand the metaphor correctly) is the rhapsode's role more important and thus more threatening for Plato? Is the rhapsode seen to exemplify a pedagogical role rather than a strictly performative one? Is the *Ion* more a criticism of rhapsody than of poetry *per se*? Or is it in fact a redoubled criticism, that is to say, a criticism which implicates poetry with rhapsody as such?[30]

6.5   Philosophical Rhapsodics: Hermeneia as 'Interpretation'

Considering its agonistic structure, one might see the *Ion* as the text which attempts to determine the wisdom that resides within the dialogue between Ion and Socrates. It is Ion who classes Socrates amongst "the wise men [τῶν σοφῶν, 532 d6]" and Socrates in ironic response,

---

[29] Lacoue-Labarthe in his *Diderot: Le Paradoxe et le Mimesis*, discusses in great detail the entire differentiation between the active and passive forms of *mimesis*. Interestingly his reading of Diderot deals with the paradox of mimesis, in so far as its duplicity is concerned, its double nature. In Diderot's "The Paradox of Acting", Lacoue-Labarthe sees Diderot "*converting* mimesis" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 265), where the passivity an entire tradition associated with mimesis is relinquished by displaying its active essence.

[30] Tigerstedt at least considers the possibility that the *Ion* could be a disguised criticism of poetry, however decides in his reading that their are no direct anti-poetic sentiments expressed. However, it seems necessary that at least what Guthrie recognizes as Socrates' desire to expose "the utter passivity of the poet" (See Guthrie 1975: 207) should be addressed, or at least posed as a question. The *Ion* is a complex and ambiguous dialogue, in so far as authorial intention is concerned, it seems likely there is the insinuation of a criticism of poetry. See also Tigerstedt 1969.

distinguishes as *sophoi* the rhapsodes and actors alike. The irony though is inextricably related to the agon between the philosopher and the rhapsode, even as Socrates refers to himself as a "simple layman [ἰδιώτην ἄνθρωπον, 532 e1]" who "speaks the plain truth [τἀληθῆ λέγω, 532 d9]" Ion the rhapsode will be identified as the lying declaimer of this truth. Yet the irony of the *Ion*, and one dare say the entire corpus of Platonic literature, is that the *sophia* of the others (whether it be the sophist, the rhapsode or poet etc.) is not only challenged in the name of truth but furthermore appropriated for the sake of truth. This *sophia* though exceeds Plato's discourse as such, it is appropriated, played with and showcased by his own interpreter, Socrates.[31]

By the dialogues end, Ion is forced to choose between being *ádikos* (unjust) or *theîos* (divine), having been accused by Socrates for playing him false [ἐμοὶ ὑποσχόμενος, 541 e3]. It is against the background of this definition or ontological determination of Ion's subject, that Socrates achieves mastery and control over the rhapsode's dissimulating and protean nature. Nonetheless, before such a decision is made possible, before we can actually account for the possibility of what must be termed a 'philosophical' decision, Plato who even though he stands outside yet between his two protagonists in the dialogue, essentially has to stage Socrates, make Socrates assume the role of the rhapsode to illustrate this role, to make a decision about "rhapsodics" as such since Ion problematically remains coy and evades him and presents himself, protean like, as incomprehensible. The possibility of this decision belongs to the other's discourse and is never properly philosophical; there remains that element of indecision. This indecision belongs to the masquerader, the dissembler, impostor, it belongs to the rhapsode Ion who is unable to decide upon *who* he is.

---

[31] If we consider the thematics of the dialogues and their dramatico-philosophical arrangement, Plato is resolutely wary of all "other" discourses that do not proceed from a consideration of philosophical *archai*. In the *Ion* his association or pairing off of rhapsodes and actors by virtue of certain resembling features in their performative practice lays bare a new founded critique on the performative and theatrical essence of their 'genre' mediation.

Thus the dialogue deliberately raises the problem of hermeneia insofar as it attempts to determine subjectivity. If the concept of hermeneia governs the oppositions Socrates instates; *emphrôn/ekphrôn, epistêmê/entheós, technê/theîa dýnamis*, which are encapsulated by the binarism, philosophy/poetry then we would have to consider its undecidability in terms of its meaning. For the philosopher it would involve interpretation as such; but on the other hand, for the rhapsode it would involve performative messaging and dissemination of other logoi, encapsulating a complex array of divinational or ethological preconsiderations. What interpretation is to be placed on the recognition of this undecidability concerning hermeneia? The problem is intricately tied to Ion's subject sense because in the hermeneutic experience of a subjectal split, Ion's hermeneia is not grounded in the claims of Socrates' metaphor. Ion problematically resurrects himself as a figure of a subject who possesses consciousness and will.

If hermeneia prefigures the possibility of a decision Socrates, if not the rhapsode Ion, necessarily has to resort to making, then the only assurance by which a logical or reasonable conclusion can be arrived at in the dialogue, would require Socrates' resort to an immense trope; a parodical identification *with* and *of* the rhapsode. Plato thus has to make Socrates present at the scene of mimesis by mimetically identifying with the rhapsodic subject.

And what of hermeneia? What if it was presented as ambiguous, undecidable insofar as its meaning is concerned? What if, in the context of the *Ion*, it had no proper or determinate meaning? Does this etymological undecidability set into motion the play of these opposites, the hermeneutic *play* of Socrates and Ion, the dialogical space or the space of communication which proffers the possibility of hermeneutics, a hermeneutics which in significant ways effects the communicative or dialogical movements back and forth? Is the dialogue itself bequeathed by another hermeneutic problem? Certainly, the contextual double role, function and meaning of hermeneia undermines and challenges the fixity of these oppositions set up by the Socratic

argument. Socrates depends on the meaning of hermeneia as interpretive act (and not as an expressive or performative *praxis*) in order to undermine Ion's paradoxical subjectal will. Above all, the problem concerning rhapsodic hermeneutics is a problem inherent in the subject of enunciation, in that the subject who is at once present during his/her performative epideixis, simultaneously withdraws from that scene, he/she ultimately remains unaccountable insofar as their mimetic and hermeneutic deliveries are concerned.

There is here then the philosophical exigency of a decision in the *Ion* and it will have to be made by the philosopher in a way that will force us to acknowledge his self-contradiction. Thus, if we follow the dialectical trajectory Plato leads us through; it is one which leads us to an empty *topos* of hermeneutic possibility. Socrates' *lexis* or style (resorting to parodical identification) involves appropriating the role of the rhapsode to interpret the "rhapsodic" as such. Such parodical identification (and parody or irony cannot be ignored as fundamentally mimetic *tropes*) involves capturing the protean Ion, whose role is marked by an unstable ambivalence, by the fact he is *ipso facto*, "a no-one".

Socrates between 538 b9 to 539 d5 does not speak as the philosopher but as the *other*.[32] This is where philosophy's assured essence is questionable. Though its search for truth claims precedence over literature's traditional concern for poetic *lexis*, philosophy's logos is always contaminated by the *other's* style. In three cited examples,[33] Socrates wants to decide (κρῖναι, 538 d5) whether it is the rhapsode's art to decide on "the correctness of what Homer says

---

[32] Though the irony of the staging of Socrates as rhapsode completely evades Ion, he has to succumb to a philosophical dynamis, to an epistemological ascendancy and mastery which all hermeneutic *play* will remain subordinate to. Ion is completely dispossessed, as Socrates appropriates the very power which Ion is supposed to possess, he disembodies it from Ion, repeats the very performance of dissimulation which will fool Ion (as Ion does his audience) into this spectacular *methexis*. See Wilcox 1987: 158–60 for a detailed discussion of the metamorphosis of Socrates as rhapsode.

[33] *Ion.* 538 b9-539 d5

[ὀρθῶς λέγει Ὅμηρος, 538 c5]" when reciting various passages of the *Iliad* or that of other experts who identify with a techne, namely in reference to the doctor's, fisherman's and finally the seer's art. According to Socrates it is only these experts that can decide on various technical and epistemic matters recounted in Homer's poetry. Ion is figured as not only a no-one but moreover as one who knows no-thing.

However Socrates' ascendancy in this dialogue depends upon him having to assume the role of the *other*, *speak for* the *other*. Socrates' speaking *as* and *for* the *other* involves the complete and conclusive subreption of the *other*; the arrant silencing of the *other*, the marginalization of the *other's* logos. Though the relationship between the Socratic *prosopon* and theatricality is well known in the "dialogues", it is this masquerading of the *other*, this theatrical ventriloquy which forges Socrates' complicity with the rhapsodic subject. As soon as there is identification with the *other*, with the *other's* discourse, then there is always mimesis.[34] And this certainly proffers itself as the classic hermeneutic moment in the dialogue where Socrates' interprets the rhapsode (his role, his subject), abandoning hermeneutic difference and guaranteeing the authority of the hermeneutic motif which has preoccupied the entire history of metaphysics.

All this raises one important question. Has Plato, yet again, abandoned the problematic of the subject as it was presented in the Lodestone metaphor and in Ion's description of subjectal split? Has the question concerning subjectivity and the problems it raises concerning hermeneia

---

[34] Lacoue-Labarthe proffers interesting understanding of theatrical *mimesis* as an imitation forged through "identification". The very acumen of Lacoue-Labarthe's understanding of *mimesis* through identification (the actor's *mimesis*) is its pernicious effect on the audience; as they replicate the process of identification. Lacoue-Labarthe 1994: 109-110.

been marginalized by a reorientation of the hermeneutic question to what can be described as principally philosophical prejudices and preconceptions?

By dictating the dialogical event, the hermeneutic context of dialogical exchange, Plato avoids confronting the vagaries and vicissitudes of the subject, of subjectal division. In this parodical identification resides the philosophical exigency to recover the meaning of hermeneia as interpretation and not risk the primordial implications of hermeneutics in the endless and incessant transferential possibilities already presupposed by the deferral of hermeneutical meaning and the meaning of hermeneutics as such. Socrates, as Plato's hermeneut, returns to Ion a decided meaning of hermeneia when deciding on Ion's *subject*. By illustrating clearly his context (which is philosophical in essence) and annulling the open and generative possibilities of the rhapsode's subjectal presentations, Socrates proffers a philosophically decided meaning of hermeneia as "interpretation" which thereby delivers this meaning within a totalizing dialectics, thereby ignoring the problematic of Ion's subject that marks the dialogue. The philosophical dynamis which brings about the event of interpretive closure, that is, a closed formalization of the hermeneutic theme by presenting and illustrating a saturating taxonomy of *technai* and their epistemicity, overrides Ion's false pretense.

So the protean Ion exemplifies the failure of the *other* to make a decision about where he stands, he is undecidably manifold, *pantodapós*. In this way he blurs the roles, no longer permitting a decision between them. However, this condition of being *pantodapós*, confirms Socrates' hostility to Ion. Ion is forced to choose being *theios* (divine) so as to avoid the indetermination of '*who* he is', and risk being ἄδικος (unjust). And yet again, it is the question of justice [δικαιοσύνη], which inaugurates the criticism of mimetic poetry and its very indictment in book two of the *Republic*. This decision (which, as we have determined, is a *decision* philosophy requires to be made in regard to Ion's subject) finally leads Ion to assume a proper

subject sense, to be recognized properly as 'subject' and subsequently rest any claim on techne and episteme. However, Socrates is not altogether autarchic, he can only claim ironico-philosophical mastery over Ion by playing, imitating the rhapsode via *identification* and thus interpret the rhapsode, through knowledge of Ion's dissimulating techne. In this respect there is a contamination of the purity of philosophical logos, particularly in the dialogically assayed hermeneutic participation Socrates and Ion unfurl, the originary difference between philosophical and rhapsodic interpretive *praxis*. Thus to interpret or identify the rhapsode, Socrates has to *identify with* Ion and engage in an unrestricted *methexis*, which lends itself as the classic hermeneutic moment of the dialogue. Socrates thus assumes the role of the rhapsode, recites Homer himself, divides himself in order to illustrate his argument, to make transparent clarify his own logos; in order to interpret (and this possibly is intimately related to the bearing of certain platonic tidings) the discourse or logos of the *other*, which will amount to the hermeneutic determinations of philosophy itself.[35]

---

[35] The difficulty in discerning Plato's authorial voice or the philosophical intendment of the author (i.e. Plato) is most certainly divulged by what has been determined within our discourse as "the problem of Socrates". Plato's anonymity is topical in any reconsideration of the Dialogues and in the context of the *Ion* it is made more obtrusive since "authorial voice", or a propriety of the *logos* is questioned insofar as the poet/rhapsode is concerned. Plato should be understood in terms of intricate authorial evasions and prosopopoieic identification considering that in this dialogue (i.e. the *Ion*) Socrates is Plato's mouthpiece and essentially the hermeneut of Plato's Dialogues *as such*.

Chapter Seven

Orthonomatologies

"The account given by us all must be, of course, of the nature

of imitations and representations."

Μίμησιν μὲν γὰρ δή καὶ ἀπεικασίαν τὰ παρὰ πάντων

ἡμῶν ῥηθέντα χρεών που γενέσθαι.

Critias **107 b6-7**

7.1   On the Propriety of Names

In the *Cratylus* we are confronted with two notions of the correctness of onomata and immediately the delineated theme of the dialogue's subtitle is set within discursive view. Against the background of this complicated inquiry, in which enormous difficulties are presented to the reader in determining its nature,[1] what I consider to be addressed in this dialogue is the question of the propriety of language in mythopoetic discourse. From the beginning, it takes issue with what I call an *orthonomatology*, a study or a logos concerning the "propriety" of onomata, that is, in what way they are proper or correct in their signifying function, especially in the context of the use of onomata within the mythopoetic tradition. The discourse of the poets is nothing other

---

[1] There has been much discussion regarding the structure of the *Cratylus*, its style and its composition. Commentators have tended to be critical of its compository form, noting many ellipses and gaps. This stylistic problematic (and the mode of discourse) has furthermore elicited a chronological interest in the *Cratylus*, more often than not situating it before the "middle period". See Robinson 1969.

than fiction, that is, the very thing against which philosophical discourse claims to constitute itself.

Whether this is an epistemological orientation or a fundamentally linguistic questioning, I will not labor at this point to segregate.[2] The "orientation" of the dialogue or doubled logos to certain philosophical or non-philosophical conceptions of language and more precisely onomata[3] tends to elucidate where both philosophical and linguistic concerns are implicated in the orthonomatology of the dialogue. The *Cratylus* seeks to determine the propriety of onomata in order to ascertain the truth and falsity of logos in general. A fundamental philosophical matter concerning the question of falsehood overhauls any linguistic concerns.

We might note here that the presentation of two obvious, though characteristically oppositional, theses, namely, that of Cratylus and Hermogenes and the emergence of a third mediative (or intermediative) thesis presented by Socrates himself, is not a discursive accident.

---

[2] Many commentators have pursued with interest the epistemological concerns of the *Cratylus* obviously at the cost of marginalizing the power of its linguistic interest. The interest in truth statements and predication theory fuels their commentaries. See. Robinson 1969; Anagnostopoulos 1972; Richardson 1976; Nehring overtly argues that onomata have an epistemological function. See Nehring 1945: 14 Nehrig insists that Greek philosopher's interest in language is not linguistic but epistemological or philosophically oriented inquiry. Nehring 1945: 13. Gerard Genette's reading of the dialogue certainly privileges a linguistic approach to its key thematic, that of the function of onomata within linguistics, though it is very apparent that as a linguist (with a structuralist background) he seems to carry through in his *Mimologiques* a problematization of reference, what he understands as "mimologism" though committed to the possibility of reference, observes its inevitable ablution in the linguistic motivation (the "eponymic" motivation as he describes it) of onomata as such. See Genette 1994.

[3] Certainly we would have to begin by pointing out a confusion regarding the use of the word *onoma* in the *Cratylus*. *Onoma* covers, in the Greek language, two heterogeneous possibilities: (a) that of nomination, that is, the proper name and (b) as common noun (in which it is worth noting that in the latin *nomen* both linguistic possibilities are captured). J. Gould Jr uses "word" in general as translation of *onoma*. See Gould 1969; 20. Robinson notes that in Plato's use of *onoma* "there lay undistinguished at least five notions that are distinct now: the proper name, the name, the word, the noun, and the subject of predication". See Robinson 1969: 222.

The dialogue can only establish the integrity of philosophical logos if it addresses the terms of an opposition that ultimately prefaces the orthonomatology at issue. The manner in which philosophical logos reasserts its priority over *mythos*, poetic discourse in general again is spelled out in the cycle of arguments which only Socrates can disrupt.

7.1.1 Nomothetic and Naturalist Orthonomatologies

Firstly we will attempt to simply situate the first thetic propositions of the dialogue, both the Hermogenic and Cratylic theses, and subsequently devote our analysis to the movement of Socrates' logos with a regard to what is at stake in the orthonomatologies of both Cratylus and Hermogenes. In the Cratylic discussion concerning the propriety of the onoma, in the attempt to determine its proper function, 'reference' is established by nature or *physis*. According to Cratylus there is a natural association or reciprocation between an onoma and its referent. Cratylus argues "that everything has a right name of its own, which comes by nature [ὀνόματος ὀρθότητα εἶναι ἑκάστων τῶν ὄντων φύσει πεφυκυῖαν]" and that "a name is not whatever people call a thing by agreement [καὶ οὐ τοῦτο εἶναι ὄνομα ὃ ἄν τινες ξυνθέμενοι καλεῖν καλῶσι, 383 a5]." According to Cratylus, onomata have a natural propriety, they by nature belong to their objects or referents. That is to suggest, not only do onomata signify their referents, but they encompass the signified or carry the 'concept' of the thing referred to.

Hermogenes opposes the natural conception of onomata, he questions the natural commensurability that characterises the Cratylic determination of the propriety of onomata. The positing of the arbitrary nature of onomata by Hermogenes is based on the recognition of the correctness of names being determined by "convention" [ξυνθήκη] and "agreement" [ὁμολογία].[4] The arbitrary nature of onomata (of words, or signs) is essentially an implacable

---

[4] *Cra.* 384 d1. The Hermogenic thesis considers the problematic of 'reference' more astutely by understanding (in Sassurean terms) the question of the arbitrary nature of language. The arbitrariness of

criticism of Cratylism. Hermogenes insists "no name belongs to any particular thing by nature [οὐ γὰρ φύσει ἐκάστῳ πεφυκέναι ὄνομα οὐδὲν οὐδενιν]" but only by habit and custom of those who employ it and who established the usage [ἀλλὰ νόμῳ καὶ ἔθει τῶν ἐθισάντων τε καὶ καλούντων, 384 d7]. It is almost certain that the orthonomatological problematic can be reduced to a fundamental aporia. The two oppositional theses are torn between proper explication and rupture, for both the naturalist and nomothetic prescriptions are built upon the "aporia of reference" as such, that is to say, the fundamental problem of the manner in which an onoma "refers", "references" or postulates a proper referential function.

From the dialogue's outset, Socrates is situated between two theses; he has been asked to be "a partner in the logos at hand [ἀνακοινωσώμεθα τὸν λόγον, 383 a1]." Now this partnership presupposes, already, a mediation of the two orthonomatological theses, it represents a dialogical aporia, where reconciliation, mediation will depend on drawing attention to the notion of ὀρθότητα, which amounts to a consideration of what Genette determines to be at issue in the orthonomatology, the "propriety of names".[5] So what I seek to reassert at this point is that the aporia, the inability to reconcile this thetic heterogeneity, suggests that the dialogue is less about the correctness of names *stricto senso* but a consideration of the properties of an onoma, the propriety of the onoma insofar it embodies the thing referred to. It appraises fundamental Sassurean terms, as it engages the issue concerning whether the signifier embodies the signified.[6]

---

onomata turns us to questioning the very nature of onomata especially if they supposedly have a natural propriety.

[5] *La propriété des noms*. Genette understands that what is at issue in the dialogue is not strictly "correctness" of names, but rather it is really a question of their "propriety". Propriety suggests a correctness of word choice insofar as words are assigned correctly to things, that is to say a determination of a words proprietary power in relation to the object it is assigned to or "belongs to". See Genette 1995: 12.

[6] The bond between the Signifier and Signified is arbitrary. There is nothing in either the thing or the word that makes the two go together, no natural, intrinsic, or logical relation between a particular sound image and a concept. See Ferdinand de Sassure's *Course in general linguistics*.1974.

Though Socrates appears to adopt and defend the Cratylic thesis, it is only to better address the Hermogenic thesis without disrupting this opposition. He asks Hermogenes who attests to the arbitrariness of onomata that there is in words a true and a false, as there are true and false *logoi*. If a logos is to be true or false, then the parts of a logos may be true or false. Socrates arrives at the conclusion that if the smallest parts of a logos are onomata therefore onomata may be true or false. At this point I do not yet want to elaborate on the nature of logos structure as such but I would like to state here, in suspension, that all onomata, that is, onomata within a logos structure, are to be conceived, according to Plato, in terms of whether they are true or false. It seems an onoma is but a little logos and that the onoma seen as logos presumes a priority for the generation of its onomastic component.

Thus the *Cratylus* posits two orthonomatological orders that no doubt are modified and subsequently regulated by this inapparent stricture of the aporia at issue, namely, the problem of "reference". At this stage the problem presents itself as whether the onoma truly refers or incorrectly refers to things. The fundamental aporia attenuates the credulity of the orthonomatologies introduced, for the conception that onomata "refer" or enter into some natural or nomothetic "correspondence" to things, the object of reference or referent as such, is obfuscated by the generalization of the property and propriety of onomata insofar as their onomastic function, or if one prefers, their linguistic motivation is concerned.

What matters in the orthonomatologies at issue is the abstract determination of the proprietal relation, association or reciprocity of onomata and their referents. It is at this point, thus presented to us in its problematization, not as a question of if they "refer", but in what manner the problem of reference is superseded. For Socrates any orthonomatology that takes the Hermogenic line then would in some way involve the undoing of the relationship between the onoma and its referent and it is that which Socrates would like logos to effect and that is at the primary level that an onoma is true in itself. And the fact that logos is raised in relation to the

orthonomatology considered is no accident as Socrates' object is to establish in what way logos assures the propriety of the onoma, the commensurability between word and thing.

7.2 The *Aporia* of Reference

How does one focus on this impossible place, the aporia that has problematized the orthonomatologies at issue? What now, in what appears to be an overt critique of the Hermogenic thesis or of the conventialist onomatology, is at stake? Does Socrates' critique of the arbitrariness of language play a fundamental role in opening another critical space? Does the Socratic refutation of the Hermogenic thesis present itself as a double critique, that is, of the Cratylism pursued and, for the moment, asserted in the dialogue? The possibility of a critique under the title of the dialogue, in the name of this dialogue, is something that truncates itself through the critical expropriation of the nomothetic prescription of Hermogenes' orthonomatology. Certainly what ensues from the aporia is a criticism which puts its object in place, a criticism which tampers with neither its presuppositions nor its prescriptive effusion of its onomatological framework, in constituting a concept of the onoma as such.[7]

7.2.1 Onomastic Motivation and the Workings Of Logos

Considering its strictly philosophical interest, Socrates raises the question of truth, asking Hermogenes whether there is anything in which one could determine a "true logos" [λόγος ἀληθής] and a false one [ψευδής]. One can discern here, in what sense this philosophical preoccupation with the logocentric structure of logos solicits the interest of most commentators of the *Cratylus*, especially as it presents itself as a compelling resolution of the epistemological

---

[7] The fundamental aporia which preoccupies the orthonomatology incipiently recounts the problematic concerning the subject of speech, writing or discourse in general. It is an issue intricately linked to the equivocity inherent in discourse as it has thus far been thematised in the *Republic*. Moreover it prepares the ground for the discussion in the *Sophist*.

break or dialogical aporia.[8] It is the notion that logos constitutes the onoma by assuring it performs a proper referential function. The linguistic motivation of onomata is clearly determined within a sentence or statement, within logos as such. For Robinson the motivation of the onoma rests (and this is contrary to what Socrates asserts, however we shall return to this) on its function within logos.

> *Socrates:* Is there anything which you call speaking the truth and speaking
>
> falsehood [...καλεῖς τι ἀληθῆ λέγειν καὶ ψευδῆ;]
>
> *Hermogenes:* Yes
>
> *Socrates:* Then there would be true speech and false speech?
>
> [Οὐκουν εἴη ἂν λόγος ἀληθής, ὁ δὲ ψευδής;]
>
> *Hermogenes:* Certainly
>
> *Socrates:* Then that speech which says things as they are is true, and that
>
> which says them as they are not is false?
>
> *Hermogenes:* Yes
>
> *Socrates:* It is possible, then, to say in speech that which is and that which is
>
> not?
>
> [Ἔστιν ἄρα τοῦτο, λόγῳ λέγειν τὰ ὄντα τε καὶ μή;]
>
> *Hermogenes:* Certainly.
>
> *Socrates:* Is true speech true only as a whole, and are its parts untrue?
>
> *Hermogenes:* No, its parts also are true.

---

[8] Section 385b-c of the dialogue provides for some scholars a determinate discussion of what is at issue, essentially fulfill there proper linguistic function within a statement or logos and that is a purely referential function, that is, they designate, name or refer. In a purely logical manner, scholars such as Robinson and Anagnostopoulos have considered what is discussed at this point as of true philosophical interest and thus marginalizing the mimetic theory of language (Cratylism) by asserting that the *onoma's* functioning is "to refer" and not to describe or represent their referents.

Socrates: Are the large parts true, but not the small ones, or are all true?

Hermogenes: All, in my opinion.

Socrates: Is there, then, anything which you say is a smaller part of speech

than a name? [Ἔστιν ουν ὅ τι λέγεις λόγου σμικρότερον μόριον

ἄλλο ἢ ὄνομα;]

Hermogenes: No, that is the smallest.

Socrates: And the name is spoken as a part of the true speech?

[Καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἄρα τὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς λόγου λέγεται;]

Hermogenes: Yes.

Socrates: Then it is, according to you, true.[9]

One can discern in Richard Robinson's studies on the *Cratylus*, in what sense the orthonomatology involves consolidating the onoma has a referential function within logos. Onomata will be correct insofar as they "refer" or "name". "The purpose of a name is to refer us to a thing."[10] The epistemological exigency is notable insofar as the aporia of reference needs to be surmounted. The Socratic inquiry at this point of the dialogue has disrupted and problematically perverted the onoma's proper linguistic function. Socrates precludes the arbitrariness that correctly describes onomata and their proper function. Socrates attempts to situate his discourse within its Cratylic limits. Robinson, though, observes a false reasoning or argumentation at 385 b-c, since Socrates almost asserts onomata describe, represent their referents, which suggests onomata perform what *logoi* perform. But it seems we must take

---

[9] *Cra.* 385 b-c

[10] "The purpose of making a name is to have a means of referencing people to something and the purpose of using the name is to refer someone to it" (Robinson 1956: 334). Pfeiffer believes that the argument at 385 b-c attempts to establish the "correspondence theory of truth." Pfeiffer 1972: 93.

account that Socrates is, at this stage of the dialogue, pursuing the Cratylic argument; exhibiting, reiterating, tracing it at the limit of the aporia.

One may argue that the Fregean thesis, no doubt, provides Robinson with a scientific and subsequently "proper" point of departure in resolving the problem of the aporia of reference in the *Cratylus*.[11]   The onoma is not to be conceived on the basis of containing by nature or *physis* an "ideal" conception, meaning, description of its referent, the onoma is essentially unmotivated in this sense. It cannot function like or as logos, it should not be conceived as a "little statement".[12] Robinson concerns himself that such a conception of onomata involves seceding to names a metaphorical function or motivation. According to this conception "all language is metaphorical"[13] if we admit they can perform what logos does, then a quasi-metaphoricity of onomastic function is accredited to onomata. However if the nature-theory of onomata is based on its metaphorical functioning, as Robinson asserts, then this insistence on the referential function of onomata, which complies with an arbitrary conception of the sign, will remain wary of metaphorical motivations as it will pervert "reference" pure and simple, since this quasi-metaphoricity of onomata will involve insinuating things without actually referring to them. Metaphor is the increasing destruction of the onoma and its proper linguistic function.[14] The metaphoricity of onomata infiltrates the medium in which it properly functions within,

---

[11] Gottlob Frege established the conception that sense determines reference. "A proper name (word, sign, sign combination, expression) expresses its sense when it stands for or designates its reference." Frege 1980: 61.

[12] Robinson observes Plato has constructed a bad argument at 385 b-c where an *onoma* is determined to perform what logos does. See Robinson 1969: 335.

[13] Robinson 1969: 335.

[14] Derrida, in "The White Mythology", believed that philosophers have attempted to define metaphor on philosophical terms as a figure that can be explained by its reference to an other, more properly philosophical language. Derrida explains, "metaphor is determined by philosophy as a provisional loss of meaning, an economy of the proper without irreparable damage, a certainly inevitable detour, but also a

namely, logos or to use Robinson's term, the "statement". The role of onomata, accounting for their quasi-metaphoricity, is made conspicuous at this stage by the discursive deliberations at 385 b-c. However Plato seems more patient, for he wants to discover the work of onomata, their productivity and function at the root of the aporia, that is, the suspension of referentiality.

What section 385 b-c[15] has achieved above everything else, is that it exposes the primal and unsettling contigency of the aporia at issue. To say that it is a defective or unsound explanation of onomastic function is to ignore the manner in which Plato would like to keep the question of onomata open to the aporia. If that is the case, the passage in 385 c-d certainly intensifies the aporia of reference in such a way as to make the issue of orthonomatology much more complex, by suspending the innocent plenitude of onomata.

Socrates approximates onomata to logos, they can correspond to conceptuality or the concept of the thing, that is to say, deliver a signified. Since the "onoma is the smallest part of logos [λόγου σμικρότερον μόριον ἄλλο ἢ ὄνομα, 385 c5]" then as it is possible to utter speech or make a logos that is either true or false "so it is possible to utter either a false or a true name [ἄρα ὄνομα ψεῦδος καὶ ἀληθὲς λέγειν, 385 c9]." According to this argument, regardless of the misconceptions the scholia impose on the passage,[16] there is precisely a role or function of onomata which involves the representation of the signified. Perhaps we could go so far as to assert that there is the working of the onoma to resemble logos, something commentators of the

---

history with its sights set on, and within the horizon of, the circular reappropriation of literal, proper meaning". Derrida 1982: 270.

[15] Malcolm Schofield disputes that section 385 b2-d1 is an insertion and not part of the *textus receptus*, which admittedly would resolve many problems scholars would have with its process of reasoning. Though Robinson believes (though a bad argument) it is posited as a refutation of the Hermogenic thesis (1969:123) Schofield argues that this peculiar passage violently interrupts the flow of the dialogue and essentially "irrelevant" to the context. See Schofield 1972: 246.

[16] See Robinson 1956: 324-341. Lorenz and Mittelstrasse 1967: 1-20; Weingartner 1970: 5-25. See also Pfeiffer 1972.

dialogue have remained reluctant to accept.[17] Now, I do not want to accept this unitary conception of the onoma, which asserts that it can serve a representational function, that it is a container of the signified, but I would rather suspend its motivations within the aporia that the orthonomatology of the *Cratylus* is inscribed within. For at this stage the concepts or theories of onomata, both in the Cratylic and Hermogenic formulations, are founded and paradoxically suspended in the *aporia* of reference.

7.3   Onomatopoetics: "Naming" and the Technics of Mimesis

This long theoretical disquisition on the orthonomatology of the *Cratylus* has produced a supposedly aporetic limit on the discussion. Socrates obviously repeats and mobilizes the *logoi* of his interlocutors within the equivocity of this aporia, it becomes the site of the Socratic operation. Having refuted the possibility of the arbitrary nature of onomata, that is, their nomothetic prescriptions[18] Socrates creates an impasse, whereby he considers how a conception of onomata can be sustained other than by pure reference and conceived by naturally representing the eidos or essence of things.

---

[17] Aristotle in his *On Interpretation* [Περί 'Ερμηνείας] explains onomata cannot be true or false as such but propositions or statements determine this, thus determining the arbitrary nature of the *onoma*, "Onomata are by convention, no *onoma* signifies by nature" [τὸ δὲ συνθήκην, ὅτι φύσει τῶν ὀνομάτων οὐδέν ἐστιν]. "An onoma is a sound having meaning established by convention alone ['Ονομα μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ φωνὴ σημαντικὴ κατὰ συνθήκην]...while no part of it has any meaning, when considered apart from the whole [ἧς μηδὲν μέρος ἐστὶ σημαντικὸν κεχωρισμένον, ch.2; 20]. G.S. Kirk believes that the hermeneutic approach to this dialogue has been heavily influenced by Aristotle's *Cratylus* (in his *Metaphysics*) who is a convinced Heraclitean. We are confronted with the problem of two different Cratyluses. See Kirk 1951: 253.

[18] I tend to agree that the refutation of Hermogenes' conventionalism occurs earlier, that is, at *Cra.* 385 c, though it is heuristically worked through in the discussion of the "shuttle analogy" (*Cra.* 387 e). Commentators who propose this; See Weingartner 1970: 15. Lorenz and Mittlestrass 1967: 7. The strategic criticism of Protagoras' *homo mensura* doctrine (*Cra.* 385 e) and Euthydemus Of Chios' "relativism" (*Cra.* 386 e) forces the abandonment of the sophistic conceptions of truth, creating the path for the theoretical appraisal of the eidos in this context.

Socrates explains that "things have a fixed reality of their own, not in relation to us nor caused by us [οὐ πρὸς ἡμᾶς οὐδέ ὑφ' ἡμων, 386 e1]" and concludes that "things exist of themselves in relation to their own reality imposed by nature [ἀλλὰ καθ' αὐτὰ πρὸς τήν αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἔχοντα ἧπερ πέφυκεν]." Immediately, what is suggested and considering the following argument regarding the ethical import in *praxeis* which are understood as having "their own separate nature [ἀλλ αὐτῶν τινα ἰδιαν φύσιν ἔχουσαι;]"[19] is an anti-relativist, therefore anti-conventionalist reasoning and thus there is a consideration of things having their own essential nature and properties. Socrates considers "naming", the act of designating a name for a thing or the act of "referring" to a thing by name, as a distinct *praxis* [τὸ ὀνομάζειν πρᾶξις τίς ἐστιν, 387 c8] with its own peculiar nature and discernible properties.

Following the logical trajectory of the argument Socrates explains that "naming" [*onomazein*] is a kind of *praxis* and that the onoma is an instrument, that is, an *organon* that facilitates this *praxis*. Socrates relates the onoma as *organon* to an analogous instrument, the shuttle.[20] What is of interest in this formulated analogy is the technical puissance illustrated by the example of the shuttle. As the shuttle is used to weave fabric, so does the onoma function in "naming" things. As Socrates explains,

"A name is, then, an instrument of teaching and of separating reality, as a

shuttle is an instrument of separating the web.

[Ονομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστιν ὄργανον και διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας, ὥ

σπερ κερκὶς ὑφάσματος,]."[21]

---

[19] *Cra.* 387 d1-2

[20] See Aristotle *On Interpretation* [*Peri Hermeneias*] 16b 33. "Every sentence is significant not as a tool [*organon*] but by convention". Language as *organon* according to Aristotle suggests a naturalist conception of linguistic functioning.

[21] *Cra.* 388 b9-c1

The onoma has a bi-organic function; that is to say, as *organon* it performs two things. The result of this definition is worthy of note: (a) The onoma serves a diacritical function, it separates or distinguishes between "essences" and here already the didactic operation of this definition is overt in its intentions. The onoma is *diakritikon* in its function, it is a precondition of its organo-technic operation, that it "separates essences [διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας,]." So its diacritical efficacity is determined by it being able to differentiate the essence [τῆς οὐσίας] of things, what Kretzman understands to be a "taxonomic" function;[22] (b) The onoma is considered furthermore as an *organon didaskalikon*, that is, it performs a didactic role. More poignantly it communicates proper knowledge or communicates "essences", it becomes a didactic *organon*.

7.3.1   Onomastic Essence: Onoma as Representation of τῆς οὐσίας

However we must remain careful and not suggest that Plato supports the naturalist view of language, represented by a vibrant Cratylism, that is, that in words are contained the "essences" of things, τῆς οὐσίας of referents. Plato has Socrates depart from the Cratylic thesis, recognizing that names are correct if they represent the "interior nature" of things, that is, they bear a representation of the eidos of a thing. For Socrates, "essences" precede names. Names function as an addition to "essences". What is discerned as τῆς οὐσίας is ontologically prior to the onoma. Though Socrates seems to comply with the naturalism of Cratylus, insofar as the question of language is concerned, by stating that "names belong to things by nature [φύσει τὰ ὀνόμα εἶναι τοῖς πράγμασι, 390 d]," he will however problematize this strict "natural" commensturability of word and thing with the appraisal of the mimesis question. Certainly mimesis will affect two attitudes of language, both the semantic and semiotic functions of the onoma. However we shall return to this later, it seems imperative to return to the problem

---

[22] Kretzman understands the diacritic function to be essentially "taxonomic". As he further explains, "taxonomy may be the employment of names already imposed on real things according to their nature". See Kretzman 1971: 128.

of the eidos for it has presented itself within the scholia as the center of the web of concerns, questions, themes which permeate the *Cratylus*.

According to the very logic of such a requestioning of the Cratylic logos to the classically Socratic antilogos, Socrates' concerns, as I would like to note, do not simply reproduce the traditional Cratylic thesis, the argument from *physis*, even though Cratylism remains a model for the ensuing discourse on "onomata". Such a model is necessary for in it Plato confronts the decision to appraise the exemplary problem of Cratylism, that is, mimesis.

As the shuttle must be made by the carpenter in view of its "ideal form" [τὸ εἶδος, 389 b2], in view of the eidos, regardless of its material; "wood, metal, iron", so the name must be made in the same way, regardless of its material sign; letters or syllables and moreover whether in Greek or barbaric/foreign tongue. The carpenter makes the shuttle based on the "real shuttle" or the shuttle that carries, partakes or properly contains in its interior the eidos [ὁ ἔστιν κερκὶς, 389 b6 or τὸ τῆς κερκίδος ἔχειν εἶδος, 389 b9].[23] This suggests that all technai should properly orient its activities around the eidos and the shuttle analogy already raises the question concerning a metaphysics of "interiority", given that the discussion at this point has led to a consideration of the eidos of things.

At this point of the dialogue the conception of the eidos in the shuttle analogy and mimesis as such have been beckoning each other indirectly. It is certain that the shuttle analogy begs the question, it anticipates the mimetology of the dialogue's third moment. And yet for

---

[23] Brian Calvert though admitting that the conception of eidos (form) in the *Cratylus* is akin to 'transcendent forms' discerns in its articulation (that is, in the context of the shuttle analogy) a plurality "as opposed to the unity characteristic of the classical form" (Calvert 1970: 26) He develops a genus-species determination of two types of ἰδέαι the 'form' proper (which in its generic determination refers to shuttles "whose nature is to weave") and the "Proper-Form" (προσῆκον εἶδος) (which refers to the species of shuttles "whose nature is to weave cloth A". He is prepared to concede the transcendentality of the forms only insofar as "the Proper-Form acts as a link between this world and the world of forms". Calvert 1970: 34.

unclarifiable reasons Plato has introduced the notion of the eidos in an ambiguous and, for some commentators, paradoxical manner.[24] In many respects, one could see how this problem of the eidos, again is embroiled in the very problematics of language, words and signs which the dialogue develops. Somehow we have found ourselves in the linguistic lacuna of paradoxicalities and ambiguities which Plato has already thus far been inextricably bound to, perhaps unintentionally. However the problem of the eidos is presented already as a problem of a certain conception of the eidos proper, it is hidden within the structure of the eidos as such. Since the term eidos contains the motif of its Platonic determination, one cannot ignore its metaphysical sense. One naturally and by necessity dwells on the problematics of the Platonic lexicon in this case to consider whether the eidos is that of "transcendent forms", which we note its articulation and conceptual orientation in the *Republic*)[25] and consider whether, as most commentators have been prepared to accept, a technical or generic sense in its contextual application. In the case of the latter, it would undoubtedly presuppose a distinction which ascertains, in the case of its technical or generic and epistemic usage and determination, a non-metaphysical supposition.

One is compelled to reconsider, and this I believe by necessity, whether the burden of the metaphysics of the "eidos" modifies the technical sense of the term? Does it eschew its metaphysical determination, that is, does the determination of eidos escape metaphysics proper in

---

[24] Calvert suggests Plato has distinguished the "transcendent form" in the dialogue with a sense of "nervousness and hesitation" (Calvert 1970: 35). Luce on the other hand sees a process of argumentation which has ambiguated the terminological usage of the term eidos suggesting that the *Cratylus* presents the theory of forms "in a less complete and less clear way" (Calvert 1970: 24) bearing in mind that she is comparing the theoretical elaboration of eidos in the *Cratylus* to its classical conception in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*. See also Luce 1965.

[25] Most scholars reading Plato's dialogue according to the "evolutionistic" and "unitary" approach of Shorey's Plato or within its historical determination have conceded that the *Cratylus* prepares the ground for the development and formalization of the "Theory of Transcendent Forms" in the *Phaedo* and *Republic* (or in Plato's dialogues of the 'Middle Period'). See Ross 1951: 18-21; Luce 1965: 30. Calvert 1970: 34-35. Kahn 1973.

the context of the *Cratylus*? Socrates explains in an important passage that the *nomothetes* (who is essentially the "onomaturg") must have "his eye fixed upon the absolute or ideal name [...βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεινο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, 389 d6]." Certainly here there is a degree of speculative metaphysics presupposed by the act of "seeing the thing itself" or in the looking toward the "thing itself" [βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτο] as it repeats the Platonic schema endorsed in book ten of the *Republic*.[26] Everything is possibly opened up in two questions: What is that which is the name [ἐκεινο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα]? And following Plato's eidetic prescriptions, one should furthermore ask "what is the proper form of the name or what is the name's eidos [τὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος εἶδος, 390 a7]?"

This problem anticipates many other questions, which we shall treat in due course, however I would like to slow down for a moment and address the last question. What is the name's eidos? What is it in the name we have *to see*, speculatively speaking? Is it it's shape, form or figure? This would already contradict what Socrates has already warned us against, that is, the accidental form or arbitrary quality of the *organon* whether it be the name or shuttle. The name's form is its intelligible essence or idea and ousia is grounded in the eidos. Ultimately the ousia of a thing is its eidos. To add to this "metaphysics" of the essence, what is paramount is that ousia or essence is fundamentally the *presence* of the eidos, that is, the eidos is present as essence or ousia. So though eidos is not clearly formulated it nonetheless emerges schematically as a metaphysical conception, that which is *present* in the onoma. The eidos as onoma is the ultimate subject and implicitly designates the ousia itself, that which is the essence of things, that which purely *is* without further qualification.

---

[26] At 389 b1, again the carpenter (like the name-maker or onomaturg) has to keep in view the eidos [πρὸς ἐκεῖνο τὸ εἶδος] of the shuttle and never make a shuttle modeling it on a particular one. See also 390 a 1 where τὴν αὐτὴν ἰδέαν of an organon (whether shuttle or name) must be reproduced.

Thus the notion of eidos is metaphysical, in its conception and formulation, to the extent to which it precedes "representation", that is, to the extent it is copied or reproduced. It is important to recognize that the eidos as far as the onomaturg is concerned needs to βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ, that is, view the eidos, and this assumes in its reflectivity, in the specularity of the reflective act, a presence of the eidos to consciousness. The eidos is fashioned as a moment of pure presence, thus structurally and ontologically is determined, by what Derrida understands to be a "metaphysics of presence".

7.3.2   The Eidetic Orientation of Onomastic Mimesis

What is principally at stake, then, is a conception of the eidos attending to the demands of a metaphysics of presence. Thus the way "the onomaturg 'makes', 'fashions', that is, *poiêin* the onoma is in view of its eidos [βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, πάντα τὰ ὀνόματα ποιεῖν τε καὶ τίθεσθαι, 389 d5]." We are now in a position to understand how the eidos of the onoma fulfils itself in its representation, that is, its "onomatopoetic [τὰ ὀνόματα ποιεῖν]" or mimetic representation as onoma. The proper eidos of the onoma would assume that τῆς οὐσίας of things is represented purely and simply. Onomata must work by diacritically determining τῆς οὐσίας, the essence of things as such. The onoma's functioning is therefore open to modification, insofar as its functioning is not determined by its capacity 'to refer' to things alone but furthermore 'represent' the concept, idea, the essence of things.[27]

What now must be considered in the onomatopoetic concerns of the *Cratylus* is if onomata have been 'fashioned' or 'made' in view of the eidos. Paradoxically, the νομοθέτης is

---

[27] Raphael Demos believes that the nature of the name's functioning is "bipolar" in its ability to actually 'reference' or 'refer' and/or contain 'sense' or 'meaning' (that is, contain the signified). See Demos 1964: 600-2. J.Ackrill in his "Demos on Plato" (which is a response to the cited article) is critical of Demos' persistence with the mimetic theory (which Demos recognizes causes much difficulty) and restates that logos/statements necessary condition of language function. See Demos 1964: 610-3.

spoken of as the maker of onomata, but the nature of his *onomatopoiesis* must be questioned.[28] For there is the possibility, as his name suggests, that the nomothetes "gives" [*thetei*] or arbitrarily confers onomata, by way of *nomos* rather than "make" them, that is, in an act of production or poiesis proper. This suggests that it is never in view of the eidos. Though Plato would see in "making" or any poetic predilection a problematic complicity with mimesis, he is nonetheless engrossed by its congenital philosophical workability. The *nomothetês* implicitly is the arbitrator of language but moreso, like Hermogenes, determines onomata as arbitrary.[29] It seems unlikely then that "he gives to each thing the proper form of the onoma [τὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος εἶδος ἀποδίδῳ, 390 a4]."

There is a return to the motif emphatically developed in book ten of the *Republic*[30] of the relation between "maker" and "user" of *organa*, given that now onomata have been conceived as *organa*. In the case of who will "superintend the work of the *nomothetês* [τοῦ νομοθέτου ἔργῳ ἐπιστατήσειέ, 390 c2]" it is considered by Socrates that the dialectician [διαλεκτικόν, 390 c8] that is, the philosopher, which amounts to saying the Socratic subject as such, is only able to access the truth about onomata or determine an orthonomatology. From this point on, the philosopher, the dialectician will reinterpret onomastic use according to its mimetic motivations and subsequent modifications in the etymological exercise. Additionally, the philosopher-dialectician would have to evaluate the orthonomatology at issue by determining how onomata function, what work they do, how they signify and this is what has precisely been lacking up

---

[28] At *Cra.* 424 a6 the ὀνομαστικός is referred to as the maker of onomata, since the relation presupposes the art or *techne* of making onomata [ἡ τέχνη ἡ ὀνομαστική], which is pursued in the context of its mimetic disposition.

[29] Nancy Demand makes much of this contradiction of the nomothetes' role and function as an onomaturg who should appeal to the proper or ideal form of the onoma though paradoxically determines their arbatrariness. As Demand explains "a nomothetês who gives names by φύσει is a contradiction". Demand 1975: 106-7.

[30] *Rep.* 598c

until the prelude to Socrates' etymologies. We must not ignore, however, that what presses against this aporia of reference is mimesis itself for it disorients the onoma in terms of its referential function as it, in the first instance, does not assure the identity of the referent and in the second, the identity of the onoma used to refer to the eidos is moreover not guaranteed. Mimesis breaches the constitution of an orthonomatology. Its disruptive effects and motivations in etymology, in liberating onomata, the signifier from its orientation toward its referent, will lead Plato to ameliorate its onomastic force or *dynamis* by determining its subordinate relation to the eidos as truth.

Chapter Eight

Poetic Etymologies

Socrates: Now what are we intended to mean by discourse [τὸν λόγον]?
I think it means one of three things.

Thaetetus: What are they?

Socrates: The First would be making one's own thought clear through
speech by means of verbs and nouns
[...τὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ διανοιαν ἐμφανῆ ποιεῖν διὰ φωνῆς μετὰ
ῥημάτων τε καὶ ὀνομάτων], *imaging* the opinion in the stream that
flows through the lips, as in a mirror or water [ὥσπερ εἰς κάτοπτρον ἢ
ὕδωρ τὴν δόξαν ἐκτυπούμενον εἰς τὴν διὰ τοῦ στόματος ῥοήν].

Theaetetus **206 c8-d4**

8.1   The Onoma as Literary Object

Much has been written regarding what is deemed to be the most philosophically significant part

of this dialogue[1] however this occurs at the cost of excluding or subordinating the 'Socratic

etymologies' to the philosophically pertinent discussion on the question of language and truth.

Commentators have chosen to ponder on the etymologies in a haphazard manner, overlooking the

seriousness of the etymological exercise.[2] Gerard Genette correctly observes in his *Mimologiques*

---

[1] *Cra.* 422a

[2] Guthrie describes Socratic etymologies as a "pseudo-science". (Guthrie 1975: 25). Taylor describes the
etymologies as "fanciful" and believes that it is "plain that we are not to find the serious meaning of the
dialogue here". See Taylor 1960: 77-8. For Shorey they are "outrageous etymologies" and serve to parody

that the etymological section of the dialogue has "a seriousness excluding neither sophism nor a sense of play".[3] However is this sophism motivated by a pure doxographic or critical interest? Are the etymologies purely an illustration of sophistic studies on language or those pertaining to the etymologies of the mythopoetic tradition?[4] Or does the entire dialogue orient itself around what could be understood as its title? Is the "Cratylism" of the dialogue what ultimately governs its enquiry? Now, what the etymologies produce or effect, even in its fictive or poetic proliferations, potentially and unremittingly has other more serious consequences that are enfolded within the dilemma of the dialogue; the problem of signification; of meaning and sense and the aporia of reference.

Our intention here has only been to feed off the idea that something of mimesis is at stake in this dialogue. Certainly the discussion after the etymological section of the dialogue places some powerful constraints on the effect of mimesis and moreover on certain mimetic effects, the playful and poetic convolutions, which the etymologies spill forth. In keeping with a classical conception of etymology we may lose site of the demands of the etymological section, in turn we should persist reviewing whether there is in the etymological section of the *Cratylus* another movement of the 'etymological', another motivation of onomata? Do the etymologies Socrates advocates lead to the fulfillment of meaning, the deliverance of the signified or the *etymon* as such?

---

the etymological speculations of Plato's contemporaries. Shorey 1965: 211. Like Shorey, Levinson describes the etymologies as a "circus parade". See Levinson 1957: 26. Of the commentators who have considered that the etymologies have a certain purpose in the context of the dialogue's themes and concerns and for a notably systematic study of the etymologies see Brumbaugh 1957: 8.

[3] Genette 1995: 7

[4] Susan B. Levin in her study of the etymologies, argues that Plato takes the literary tradition as a central opponent. See Levin 1997: 47.

What one can discern in Socrates' etymologies is that the onoma becomes the object itself, the literary thing as such. It is no longer comprehended in relation to things or objects purely and simply, but rather in relation to the subject or subjects of mythopoetic discourse as such. It involves the appropriation and recirculation of the Homeric lexicon. The onoma is furthermore treated as a diacritic instrument or *organon*. Beyond objective relations, it is the fictive or literary onoma that is particular to the intentions of the etymology. For there is a productiveness in the onomata circulated and diffused within the mythopoetic corpus as they indubitably have a currency of meaning. Etymology determines the onomastic, rhetorical and metaphoric force and value of onomata. Here the onomata etymologised become, in fact, the sole linguistic object, or otherwise, accounting for the poetic effects of the etymologies, the "literary object" par excellence.[5]

Socrates ironically first turns to the sophists for aid in seeking the best way or most "correct manner to investigate [ὀρθοτάτη μὲν τῆς σκέψεως]" the problem. Hermogenes declines the sophistic approach, and agrees "to pursue the inquiry following the lead of Homer and the other poets [παρ' Ὁμήρου χρὴ μανθάνειν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ποιητῶν, 391 d1]." By way of appropriating the vocabulary and atomic onomastic examples of the poets Socrates inaugurates his etymological exercise, but surely only to locate its effects, its movement at the margins or limits of discourse as such. Certainly, Plato in all his dialogues has never ceased to mix his language with that of the literary or mythopoetic tradition. Inevitably this is the double bind of the Platonic dialogue, it being constantly reinscribed within the field of *mythopoetics*.

---

[5] Heath is emphatic about the literary interest the onomata have in the etymology section of the dialogue explaining that "this part of the dialogue (*i.e. the etymology section*) stands to the rest much in relation which the 'myths' in other dialogues stand to the rest in them" (Heath 1988: 201). Levin argues that the onomata analysed by Plato were also etymologised in literary sources and this according to her is evidence of the dialogue's link to that tradition (Levin 1995: 98-99). See also Levin 1997.

8.2 Inspired Etymologies: The Poetics of *Syntithetic* Logos

One understands better now, no doubt, in what sense, having determined the literary currency of onomata, the etymology designs itself as a literary rehearsal of productivity and effects of *mythopoiesis*. To stress the point, it presents itself as an importunate solicitation of the "production" or the poeticizing of meaning which subsumes the imminence and indefinite linguistic motivation of the onoma as proper name. Thus, before beginning an exposition of the etymologies (which I will say now, will not reconstitute the "order" or "structure" of its deliberation)[6] it seems imperative to note that though the etymologies do not attain the scientific or philological rigor it purports to (accounting for the fact they take up two thirds of the dialogue) it regardless revitalizes onomata, exhibits a signifying motivation, but not in the sense whereby it heals the breach of signifier and signified and closes in on the aporetics of reference, but to manifest the onoma most palpably and intensely within a network of signifiers, which are circulated within the internal nexus of mythopoetic lexicon.

We will begin the commentary with Socrates' etymology of Zeus' onoma [τὸ τοῦ Διὸς ὄνομα]. Socrates explains that in etymologizing the onoma "Zeus" that its result brings about a logos, namely that Zeus' onoma etymologized is "exactly like a logos [ἔστιν οἷον λόγος, 396 a1]." Essentially we divide it into parts, for some call him Ζῆνα and others call him Δία, but "the two in combination express the nature of the god [ἓν δηλοῖ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ θεοῦ, 396 a5]." Thus Zeus' onoma is opened by its divisibility and subsequent double postulation. As Socrates goes on to explain, Zeus' onoma is the correct and appropriate name of the god, since the etymology reveals a logos within his onoma which

---

[6] See Brumbaugh 1957-8. Brumbaugh charts the ordering principles at work in the etymologies (in some instances cosmological, logical etc.) which is worked through by what he determines to be a "dialectical etymology". Brumbaugh 1957-8: 506.

adequately represents his nature, for it is "through whom [δι᾽ ὄν] all living beings have the gift of life [ζῆν]". The onoma Zeus reveals a series of signifiers which make up, syntagmatically or in combination [συντιθέμενα] a logos, namely, δι᾽ ὄν ζῆν ἀει πᾶσι τοῖς ζῷσιν ὑπάρχει.

The meaning of Zeus' onoma is certainly not constituted immanently. It will require that its logos "represents" the meaningful nature of the god, but the subject Zeus is instituted in by other signifiers, and bearing in mind the disappearance of the designative function of the onoma as proper name, the representation will imply a natural motivation of the onoma by representing the physis of its referent. The Onoma is suspended between its designative function and its revealed signifying possibility, its ideality as onoma is to contain the signified; the deity's physis. We can see now what *aporiai* are attendant on any theory of "reference" or pure referentiality and essentially they are theoretically imposed on the concerns of the *Cratylus*. The onoma as signifier presents the signified which reveals Zeus' physis. This revelation of physis is dependent however on another signifier within the syntagmatic chain of signifiers. The contingent linkage or *syntithesis* which presents Zeus' name as a logos is subsumed by the onoma.[7] The proper name Zeus reveals or manifests itself as a syntithetic logos, that is, it produces significatory effects and dynamic diversions of meaning. Certainly, Plato recognizes here the indefiniteness of reference, the conundrum of the fundamental aporia that is the *arche* problematic of the *Cratylus*.

Now whether we can admit that the onoma proceeds from the idea that its meaning can be determined by a semanticism, that is to say, that there is a semantic fertility in onomata, I

---

[7] Derrida's idea of the "signifier of the signifier" seems important to note particularly as it illustrates the movement of language, though in its origin "conceals and erases itself in its own production. There the signified always already functions as a signifier" (Derrida 1974: 7) or as Derrida puts otherwise "the

would like for the time being to leave open. For though the etymologies illustrate the exigency of making onomata perform a semantic function, that they become meaningful by way of recovering an ostensive reference,[8] we should suspect, in view of τὸ τοῦ Διὸς ὄνομα, what it reveals, discloses, manifests [ἐν δηλοῖ] is not a presence of Zeus' physis (that is, a signified) but rather a chain of other onomata.

That an onoma can reveal itself as logos or present itself as a kind of logos (speech, discourse, statement, proposition) would seem factitious or even illogical, at least according to the presuppositions of the correspondence theory of language or the referential logic. Somehow the syntactic relationship between the smallest part of logos (the onoma) and the whole (logos as such) has been inversed and here we necessarily recall the paradoxicality of the implications of the passage in 385 b-c. In the example of Zeus' onoma the etymology reveals the index of a double movement which, in effect, displaces the onoma: (a) that the name as proper name serves at a primary level a designative function, it refers to a subject and in this what is presupposed is the nomothetic principle of onomastic function and (b) that on a more substantive level, names through etymologization, "signify", carry or convey an essential meaning, namely, represent the physis of the "subject" in question.[9] In this sense Socrates' etymologies semantize or even

---

signified is originarily and essentially... always already in the position of the signifier". See Derrida 1974: 73.

[8] Thomas W. Bestor argues that Plato's *Cratylus* is preoccuppied with semantics. A number of semantic systems are considered (especially as they reveal their structure in the etymologies). See Bestor 1980.

[9] It is certainly not by chance if, in the purely designative function of the name Hermogenes, Socrates (along with the Cratylus) discerned a further "signifying" possibility of the proper name. Cratylus disputed Hermogenes and the propriety of his name as such (that is, that it is not appropriate or proper to him) in the opening of the dialogue (see *Cra.* 383 b6); he is not the "son of Hermes" (which etymologically speaking, is what the onoma "Hermogenes" means). Certainly even in the proper name we encounter the problem of it being a word as such (an onoma in its more general sense, beyond its nominative sense). And as such it begins to signify (*semenein*). Certainly the significatory motivation of the proper name as name, word, sign in general logically stymies the designative function of the proper name, where it ought to purely or

idealize the significance and force of the onoma, however this double movement does not apprehend the poetic or playful convolutions of meanings which indicates an irreducible alterity. What is of interest here is the dissemination of the proper name which transforms itself into a common name or other onomata. The operation is notable in the onoma Διόνυσος. Etymologized it reveals two other onomata δίδους and οἶνον, an adjective and a common noun.

The quite simple etymological result of the onoma Zeus reveals a *syntithetic* logos [i.e. δι᾽ ὄν ζῆν ἀει πᾶσι τοῖς ζῶσιν ὑπάρχει]. It presents itself as a structure greater than the onoma [Δία]. Though paradoxically it is generated by the onoma, it is a *syntithesis* of signifiers which emerges from the onoma. However the *syntithetic* logos is heterogeneous, it reveals a performative or poetic dimension of logos. It is not syntactically of interest; it is not σύνταξις (syntax) that is properly described.[10] It is for this reason contingent compared to the grammatical *syntax* or the order of a sentence or statement. It forces us to consider the revelatory importance of the poetic or contingent productions of the etymologies. The force of this *syntithetic* logos owes much to its figural manifestations, since the iteration of the onoma Zeus (accounting for its new contextual conditions after its division into two other onomata) leads to a contingent syntithetic revelation which, in essence, alters the onomastic or significatory force of onomata. This etymology of τὸ τοῦ Διὸς ὄνομα certainly complicates the functioning of the onoma,

transparently designate or reference the namebearer Hermogenes. The Cratylic position which attests to the linguistic correctness of names signifying the nature or physis of the thing, object, person etc. named, preempts the motivation of Socrates' etymologies and especially that proper names (and Socrates as we will soon come to begins with the proper names of gods and heroes) before serving a designative or nominational role, are already caught up in the network of onomata (Hermes, genos) and it begins to signify. As Derrida astutely puts it, the proper name as such "is not supposed to signify anything yet it does begin to signify". Derrida 1974.

[10] As opposed to the grammatical function of syntax or σύνταξις (which governs the "order" of onoma*ta* within a statement, proposition or sentence) I want to emphasize (bearing in mind the movement of the

precisely because it proffers the possible autonomy and sovereign significance of the onoma as such. There is something like a pure "motivativity" in the onoma to disclose or strew itself as logos, that is, as a *syntithesis* of other encrypted signifiers. The syntithetic charge of the onoma leads to the deferment or suspension of what in a philological etymologism involves the divulgence of the *etymon*, the simple, atomic, real or actual and present signified. However considering the poetic effects of the etymologies, where the unity of signification is not imperviously concerted, its fundamental conjuncture is certainly the rehearsal of the mythopoetic lexicon, even as it risks de...roying the "scientificity" or philological credulity of the etymological operation. In our present example, what the onoma Zeus evokes irreducibly adheres to other encrypted or hidden signifiers, which according to Plato, are *eponymies*, for the etymological project, though exorbitant, when compared to the mythopoetic adumbration of onomastic disseminations, narrativized and fictively strewn, endeavors to establish "the eponymy of the onoma [ἡ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐπωνυμίας, 395 b]," which amounts to a semantization of the onoma.

The etymological exercise is not automatically or essentially the extension of inspiration or prophetic revelations. There is rather a dialectical link between inspiration (the inspired logos) and the philosophical work which leads to the peculiarities of onomastic motivation. The *eponym* incites a point of contact with other onomata or signifiers. In its elaboration it charges an other discourse, it recirculates onomata within another discursive field. This is a discourse which philosophy is in constant dialogue with, a discourse in which it is compromised to, in its borrowings, appropriations and imitations, it is the mythopoetic discourse as such that the etymologies are led back to.

---

etymological operation) the structural openness of the *syntithetic* logos and its poetic or figural manifestation, its liberation of the signifier from occupying the place of the signified.

8.3   Eponymies: The mimetic motivation of the onoma

The word ἐπωνυμίας does not bear directly on the idea of "designation" purely and simply; that is to say, the *eponym* is not simply a cognomen, an appellative onoma, a surname or nickname. As Genette correctly observes "it serves to give meaning to a name thought to be without one, that is to say, to find in it one or two hidden names, themselves hypothetically meaningful."[11] It depends upon a number of determinations of which the most notable conception is that the *eponym* is a "significant" onoma. In other words it is a significant name for a subject or more generally the genos in question, thus it becomes a descriptive "nickname" or "surname". Orestes' name ("mountain man") bears 'significance' geneollogically for the meaning of his name is generically and naturally inscribed, it is κατὰ φύσιν. It is in accordance with his nature though paradoxically not of his father's genos, that is, of the Pelopidae in general.[12] It is obvious that this type of eponymic motivation, bears significance insofar it is true by way of physis and moreover geneologically.[13]

Socrates' explains that "the offspring of each class will be of the same class [ἐξ᾽ ἑκάστου γένους ἕτερον τοιοῦτον ἔγκονον] and consequently the progeny of a genos "should be called by the same names [κλητέον δὴ ταὐτὰ ὀνόματα, 394 c5]." So a progeny who

---

[11] Genette 1995: 18.

[12] See *Cra.* 395 a2. B. Rosenstock makes a point of Orestes is Socrates example of a monstrous name since it eponymically refers to his savage nature (ὀρεινὸς, "mountainous", 394 e7). It is in contradiction to his father's nature whose name eponymically reveals that he is "awesome in perseverence [ἀγαστὸς κατὰ τὴν ἐπιμονὴν, 395 a6]". For Rosenstock this reveals the "sophistic" force of the eponyms since they reveal disinherited and illegitimate meanings, resulting in eponymic ambiguities, it is Plato's intention (Rosenstock concludes) that the *Cratylus* is staged as the drama "of a disinherited and illegitimate son seeking for his patrimony and his legitimate name". See Rosenstock 1992:403 and 415.

[13] Hesiod in his *Theogony* 143-5, refers to the genos of Κύκλωπες explaining that their name is an eponym referring to their "one round eye" [κυκλοτερὴς ὀφθαλμός]. He explains that the Cyclopes name is an eponym [Κύκλωπες δ᾽ ὄνομα ἦσαν ἐπώνυμον].

are "born according with nature [κατὰ φύσιν γιγνομένοις] the appropriate or same name should be given [τὰ αὐτὰ ἀποδοτέον ὀνόματα]." Those born contrary to the nature of a particular genos, that is, παρὰ φύσιν, are deemed monstrosities [ἐν τέρατος] of the genos they belong to. Those who are by nature ἐν τέρατος "should receive the name of his class [τὸ τοῦ γένους ὄνομα ἀποδοτέον]" or to appropriate the term used by Socrates, a subject born contrary to the nature of his genos should take on or hold the *eponym* (nickname or surname, τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἔχειν, 394 d7) of the genos which befits his nature.[14] The *eponym* is significant only if it correctly refers to a subject or genos (that is, the physis of this genos). The perversions of physis yields monstrosities, it involves a deviation from the proper nature of geno*s* since it progenically engenders "monsters". We have come to determine that the *eponym* obviously does not properly designate the subject who is παρὰ φύσιν and consequently ἐν τέρατος.[15]

Based on this account, nothing should be left to chance or presented contingently insofar as onomata are concerned, there is a natural propriety in onomata. Essentially they encrypt, hide and subsequently through etymological analysis reveal eponymies, which signify the characteristic "nature" of the genos concerned. And it is the eponymy as a revealed

---

[14] As Socrates explains an "impious son" cannot take the name of his pious father [τοῦ εὐσεβούς]. In other words he cannot take on the eponym "Theophilos" (beloved of god) or "Mnesitheus" (Mindful of god) since his teratological nature is in contradiction to the name which correctly designates the genos who are κατὰ φύσιν.

[15] Considering the context of this discussion of *geneologies* and *eponymies*, it seems to present itself as a fundamental concern for Plato to be able to segregate, divide or differentiate by genos. In the *Timaeus* there is discussion concerning the unclassifiable genos of imitators and in the *Sophist* (to which I refer the reader) an urgency is expressed in the inquiry of sophistics to classify, identify again another "unclassifiable genos" that is, the genos of sophists who dissimulate themselves within the genos of philosophers.

"significant" name, that is, it presents or brings into presence the nature encrypted in the onoma as proper name.[16]

But is there something in the eponym or to put it otherwise in the motivation of the eponym which alludes to the possibility of engendering "monstrosities" or perversions of its natural and proprietal meanings which Plato sees as problematic. If we go through the family scenes or the geneologies of the mythopoetic tradition is there revealed in the eponymies an implicit invocation of their status as monstrosities of language. The eponym should reveal a "familiarity" or cohabitation with meaning, that is, insofar as meaning presupposes the physis or disclose the nature [δηλοῦν τὴν φύσιν, 395 b6] of a family, a genos or the father [τῷ πατρὶ, 395 a2].[17]

From the foregoing discussion of geneologies and eponymies we should retain the idea that, along with the account of the problem of reference or its stated aporetic limitation, the linguistic motivation of the eponym is mimetic in essence. The *eponym* is engendered in the "named-after" relation[18] which is essentially a mimetic relation, that is, it can only be accounted for in terms of its derivative or derivational constitution. The eponym thus involves the representation of the thing itself, the representation of physis or nature. The motivation of the *eponymy* is mimetic, there is a determinably derivative sense to the word. Eponymy and mimesis

---

[16] Gerard Genette explains that "if the question of eponymy is born on the privileged ground of the proper name it gains all its value and importance only by being able to transpose, or transplant itself, afterward, to the more difficult, but far reaching and hence more significant ground of common names and nouns". See Genette 1995: 17.

[17] Certainly the eponym can take on the same status *as* writing, that is of the bastard or parricide son, and here I refer the reader to Derrida's discussion of the parricidal scene in Derrida 1981a: 75-84.

[18] Susan Levin determines the conception of the eponym centers on the fact onomata are correctly assigned to their referents. This assignation involves establishing the "named-after" relation. Other notable examples raised by Levin is the use of eponymy in the *Phaedo*, where particulars participating in the forms are named after them [...τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν, *Phaedo* 102 b1-2]. See Levin 1997: 49-52.

are on par, since both involve representation in their adequated relation to the physis of things. The invariable feature of the function of the eponym in the *Cratylus* sketches out one aspect of the mimetic which in many respects constrains the *syntithetic* openness of the etymologies. It is commanded by correctness or more correctly truth as such, that is, insofar as the eponym is the fulfillment of reference. However does the eponymic motivation, given it is fundamentally mimetic, reveal another liberating performative dimension that breaches its essentialized referential functioning, its conformity with physis and the world? Eponymies can involve mimetic lesions that can prove, in their pure "representational" motivation, to unsettle the propriety of the onoma. The eponym in essence presents itself as something like an *arche-onoma* which exceeds the traditional and restricted sense of the onoma as it releases a series of repressed significations which as a consequence thwart the orthonomatology at issue.

8.4   The Speculum of the Onoma

The task is thus to seek "the eponymy of the onoma [ἡ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐπωνυμίας, 395 b]" in Socrates' etymologies. From the determination of the eponym as a representation by way of the "named-after" relation of physis or nature of a subject or genos, it preinscribes its ideality as a locus or container of a present or immanent meaning. One may come to consider that reference and representation as such would rather present itself as a circumscribed problem. However it is almost inevitable and at the same time an important step of the etymological operation that the meaning of the onoma can be extended, since the onoma embodies an inextricable texture of hidden signifiers, which in their proliferation do not destroy meaning or cede to unpredictable ambiguities[19] but rather that the possibility of meaning as determinate and closed off,

---

[19] Robert Brumbaugh is very much aware that "an ambiguity of meanings confront the etymologist". (Brumbaugh 1957-8: 508 n.6). Bruce Rosenstock also asserts that the etymologies illustrate the

consistently remains open. The meaning of an onoma remains open not because it necessarily can mean "anything" but because there is never a prior determination of meaning. We have in the eponymic motivation of the onoma further onomastic connections and correlations that can never be harnessed or saturated by the poeticity of the etymologies. There is always a surplus of meaning established; a dissemination (to use Derrida's working of the term) arising from the eponymic motivation of the onoma and it is in this respect that the etymologies are of a seminal interest rather than purely semantic one.

The eponymy of the onoma, as representation of nature or essence, can be described as an intelligible ideality which is mimetically bound or tied to the onoma. However does it suggest a pure unity, that is, insofar as τὴν φύσιν is eponymically carried and represented, in an essential way, by the onoma? The problem of the Socratic etymologies, even in their admittedly inspired and poetic form, do not reveal or disclose [δηλοῖ][20] a pure layer of meaning, a transparent signified. It is necessary here to point out, again, that the eponymic motivation of the onoma amounts to representing or at least describing the nature [τὴν φύσιν] of the god. Now is this what is achieved in the etymology of the onoma Apollo ['Απόλλω] and here it should be reiterated that the fact 'Απόλλω is the god's onoma is suspended in the eponymic moment.

Socrates explains that "the name Apollo ['Απόλλω] is admirably appropriate to the power of the god [κάλλιστα κείμενον πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ, 404 e5]" and as he further explains,

---

unmasterability of language (especially its rhetoricity) which intensifies ambiguities. See also Rosenstock 1992: 415.

[20] Robinson argues that the account of the name as δήλωμα (revelation, disclosure, description) has led the discussion to associating it to μίμημα, believing it a fallacy in the argument. See Robinson 1956: 336-337.

"No single name more aptly indicates the four functions of the god, touching

upon them all in a manner declaring his power in music, prophecy, medicine

and archery.

[οὐ γάρ ἔστιν ὅ τι ἂν μᾶλλον ὄνομα ἥρμοσεν ἓν ὂν τέτταρσι δυνάμεσι ταῖς

τοῦ θεοῦ, ὥστε πασῶν ἐφάπτεσθαι καὶ δηλοῦν τρόπον τινὰ μουσικήν τε

καὶ μαντικὴν καὶ ἰατρικὴν καὶ τοξικήν]."[21]

There are subsequently four determinations of the god's physis and dynamis: 1. as god of

purification [ἀπολούων- purifies and washes away] and purgations [ἀπολύων- delivers from

evil]. 2. Truth as simplicity, as the Thessalians call him, that is, Ἁπλοῦν (simple) 3. Controller of

darts in archery, as in βολῶν, for he is "ever darting" [ἀεὶ βάλλων] and 4. the alpha in Apollo

signifies "together" [τὸ ὁμοῦ] as in "the harmony in song [περὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ ᾠδῇ ἁρμονίαν]."

In the last determination of the onoma, Socrates explains that by "changing *homo* to

alpha [μεταβαλόντες ἀντὶ τοῦ ὁμο ἄλφα]" when it was originally Ὁμοπολῶν, we try to capture

the harmonic meaning of his onoma. A second lambda is added because without it it sounded like

disaster [ἀπολῶ, ἀπόλωλα] that is to say "it presented itself as a homonym for catastrophe

[ὅτι ὁμώνυμον ἐγίγνετο τῷ χαλεπῷ ὀνόματι]."[22]

The etymological content revealed in the onoma Apollo may be, in essence, erroneous

but what seems important is to consider how its eponymic effects do not depend on onomata

being *orthos* (correct, proper). The eponymic effect essentially crosses and even exceeds

etymology, this preoccupation with the *etymon*. It is the effect of simulacra, the mirroring or

reflexion of hidden, buried and accumulated onomata, which introduce onomastic shadows and

---

[21] *Cra.* 405 a1-4

[22] See *Cra.* 404e-406a for the etymology of the onoma Apollo.

images or, if one attends to this movement, traces of meaning. Here, we are alluding to fissures and breaches in the onoma as a linguistic atom which cannot be dominated by Socrates' etymologism or for that matter any science or philosophy. With the etymologization of the onoma 'Apollo' we have the presentation of four other onomata, a reduction into four simple elements in which an equivocity is inherent therein; ἁπλοῦ (simple), ἀεὶ βάλλοντος (ever darting), ἀπολούοντος (purifying), ὁμοπολοῦντος (accompanying).[23] Meaning does not homogeneously present itself, even as the etymology of Apollo's name attempts to cease the movement of meaning, it relaunches it, as it is embodied in the trace structure of the onoma. The onoma 'Apollo' reflexively reproduces other onomata (homonyms, paronyms, and other onomastic inscriptions) and this is precisely the speculum of the onoma.

The etymological exercise has revealed nothing but supplementary evocations, chains of signifiers, with no stability of meaning, that is, it does not reveal an *etymon*. It can be discounted as poetic or "playful [παιδικῶς]" in its evocation, however it ambivalently suggests a serious working through of the fundamental problem of referentiality. For this reason an explanation of this signifying flux is called for.[24] Socrates realizes that "the interpretations run away with him [410e]" and by the end of the etymological exercise "everything is flowing and moving and always full of constant motion and generation [ἀλλὰ ῥεῖν καὶ φέρεσθαι καὶ μεστὰ

---

[23] It is at *Cra.* 406 a1-3 that Socrates at the end of the etymologization of the onoma "Apollo", reveals four onomata (as linguistic atoms).

[24] *Rep.*411 b

εἶναι πάσης φορᾶς καὶ γενέσεως ἀεί, 411 c5]."[25] We note that in the eponymy of the onoma the multiplied effects of supplementarity[26] displaces the origin, the *etymon* and as such the onoma is marked by an irrevocable absence.

The flux of significations seriously impugns the attempt to supersede or move beyond the aporia of reference. What now will be performed and made explicit in this new skepsis or analysis of onomata is the reappraisal of the mimesis question within the horizon of the eidos as a linguistic ideality. This is a critical moment in the dialogue, since the generalized equivocation of the etymologies threatens the absolute univocity of the eidetic. The project is to delimit mimesis; neutralize its generation or etymological propagation of buried and accumulated signifying possibilities.

---

[25] Mackenzie argues that "the flux doctrine is first presented in the ironical context of the etymologies". Mackenzie 1986:137. For similar views on the Heracliteanism of the etymologies see also Friedlander 1964: 205.

[26] In following Derrida's reading of Rousseau concerning the supplementary character of writing, I wish to follow a similar logic highlighting an effect produced when following the supplementary logic of the etymological section of the dialogue. Onomata refuse to occupy, even in their eponymic motivation, their proper, subordinate place in the economy of the orthonomatology. See Derrida 1974: 153-5.

Chapter Nine

Onomastic Mimesis

"When the representation of things spoken by means
of gestures arose, it produced the whole art of dancing.
[Διὸ μίμησις τῶν λεγομένων σχ ːμαϲι γενομένη τὴν
ὀρχηστικὴν ἐξειργάσατο ːὲγ ˑπˑ ϕϡωϲαϲαν]."

Laws VI 816 a5-6

9.1   Stoicheiology: Linguistic Atomism

It is clear that the working of the etymologies, which in its illustration sought to think through
the relationship between the onoma and its referent and thus work beyond the aporia of
reference, proved to be too open to every investure of etymologization. Certainly with the
fundamental problems of the "foreign origins" of words, the subtractions and additions of letters
which has led to the alteration of the forms and meanings of various onomata has led to the
obfuscation of their origins,[1] this explains the failure of the etymologies to arrive at the *etymon* of
any name.

Socrates considers that what the investigation requires at this stage is a more minute
analysis. It has been agreed that attention will be given to "the elements [στοιχεῖα] of sentences
and words [...λόγων καὶ ὀνομάτων, 422 a]." The *stoicheion* is not subject to the field of infinite
substitutions and derivation, it represents the closure of an atomic unit and structure. As Socrates

---

[1] See *Cra.* 418 a7.

explains, "for these, if they are elements, can no longer rightly appear to be composed of other onomata [ταῦτα γάρ που οὐκέτι δίκαιον φανῆναι ἐξ ἄλλων ὀνομάτων ξυγκείμενα, ἂν οὕτως ἔχῃ, 422 a5]." The philosophical exigency, as it manifests itself in this renewed investigation of the orthonomatology, observes that at some point the proliferation of onomata can be halted by way of disclosing the *stoicheion* of an onoma. Socrates illustrates this movement of his *stoicheology* by explaining to Hermogenes,

"We said just now that *agathon* was composed of *agaston* and *thoon*; and perhaps we might say that *thoon* was composed of other words, and those of still others, we should be right in saying that we had at last reached an element and that we must no longer refer to other words for its derivation [...ἐπι στοιχείῳ τε ἤδη εἶναι καί οὐκέτι τοῦτο ἡμᾶς δεῖν εἰς ἄλλα ὀνόματα ἀναφέρειν]."[2]

The etymologies have shown that alterity is operative within the structure of the onoma. Socrates though acknowledging the trace-structure of the onoma believes that the *stoicheion* is structurally requisite in the onoma. In other words that this alteration of the onoma, its proliferation and *anaphora*, its referencing other onomata, can cease at the revelation of an atomic unit, namely the *stoicheion*. The *stoicheion* of the onoma is for Socrates an atomic unity within the onoma which is immutable, invariable and permanently present.

Socrates thus has found an *arche* that would contain the problematics that the etymologies have spilled forth; an atomic entity which does not retain any permanent traces of other onomata. The *stoicheiology* requires that in order to trace the *stoicheion* of the onoma it will need to be considered by resorting to "an alternative method of investigation or inquiry [...δεῖ τὴν τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητα εἶναι, 422 c3]," a *tropos* of investigation which will

rigorously subordinate the work of onomata within the mimetology of the final section of the dialogue which will in essence с :ħ the work of difference in the constitution of onomata. The investigation subsequently considers the *stoicheiology* of "the first or original onomata" [τῶν πρώτων ὀνομάτων], that is, as opposed to the compound derivative forms of τα ὑστατα ὀνόματα. The *stoicheion* becomes the substantive atomic unit founded in the original onomata.

9.2   The Tropology of Mimesis

Tⁱᵘis new *tropos* of investigation is not necessarily structurally contingent and provisional. The entire movement of the investigation harbors the problem of mimesis and its conceptual filiation to the problem of reference or referentiality as such. This new directive of the investigation and we should account for its *tropos* as that which will supersede the problems of the initial aporia which underwrite the orthonomatologies, certainly delimits the problem of referentiality to a fundamental mimetology. It will be deemed necessary to take into account what this mimetological limit or presupposition signifies now, beyond its hypothetical presumption in the "shuttle analogy"? It is clear by now that the concept of stability and permanence presupposed by the *stoicheiology* will assist us in thinking the relationship between mimesis and the onoma, especially in the manner it refers to a metaphysics. Above all, in considering the mimetic as the natural motivation of the onoma, it proposes an instituted bridging of the aporia founded in the original orthonomatologies.

By this stage Socrates has become more attentive to the hidden problematics of the reducibility of the onoma as mimetically motivated. All onomata "have [ἔχειν]" a principle of

---

[2] *Cra.* 422 a8-b4

correctness[3] which is based upon "the intention of showing the nature of the things named [...τῶν ὀνομάτων ἡ ὀρθότης τοιαύτη τις ἐβούλετο εἶναι, οἵα δηλοῦν οἷον ἕκαστόν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων, 422 d1-2]." The verb δηλόω though it suggests in its general contextual usage in the *Cratylus* the intention "to signify or indicate", that is, in pure linguistic terms. It furthermore presupposes the mimetology. Δηλόω refers to a natural mimetic actuation, it involves making visible or manifest, disclosing and revealing the eidos. We can see already how this lines up mimesis in terms of truth, since the mimetic motivation of the onoma would involve making manifest, bringing out of invisibility, disclosing, making visible the named thing's ousia. But the inherent problems in this particular model of language and orthonomatology underwritten by mimesis, will soon be made apparent, for certainly Plato strategically is working toward the prioritization of truth, the thing in itself, the ousia of things in order to supercede the mimetic proliferations of onomata in any consideration of their correctness. From this point on, the reappraisal of mimesis is prescribed by its "intention" and almost arbitrary motivation.

"What sort of an imitation is a name?

[ἀλλὰ τίς ἄν μίμησεις εἴη τὸ ὄνομα;]"[4]

The form of the question to which Hermogenes necessarily has to respond to already entails the determination of the onoma as a 'representation' or 'imitation' [μίμησεις]. It is posited and considered in terms of mimesis and moreover in terms of a generic type of mimesis. Already the onoma is determined as a "representation" of something exterior to itself, it refers generically to something outlying or lying outside, namely, the thing, *pragma* or 'being' itself (τὰ ὄντα). The question of mimesis radically presents the onoma in terms of its separateness, its distance from "things-themselves". But is the onoma as mimesis a degenerate and somewhat

---

[3] See *Cra.* 422 d6 The question of propriety is alluded to in the word ἔχειν.

[4] *Cra.* 432 c8

superfluous entity? Let us retain the schematic and dialogical workings that structures the mimetology.

Mimesis firstly is grounded in its original and primitive manifestation, given its mimological sense, in the sign language of the body. Socrates makes this point clear explaining that

"If we had no voice or tongue and wished to make things clear to one another,

should we not try as dumb people actually do, to make signs with our hands

and head and person generally?

[εἰ φωνὴν μή εἴχομεν μηδὲ γλῶτταν, ἐβουλόμεθα δε δηλοῦν

ἀλλήλοις τὰ πράγματα, ἆρ οὐκ ἄν, ὥσπερ νῦν οἱ ἐνεοί ἐπεχειροῦμενἄν ση

μαίνειν ταῖς χερσί καὶ τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ σώματι]."[5]

It follows that in the body's signs; what the body, hands, head σημαίνειν, is that they are "in imitation of the nature of the thing in question [μιμούμενοι αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν τοῦ πράγματος, 423 a3]." It is in mimetic impersonation, that is, in the employment of certain mimetic schemes or schematic representations that the expression or the intention of making meaning transparent or manifest is achieved and accomplished as δήλωμά.

Another example of mimetic language is that of onomatopoeia, "the imitation by voice, tongue or mouth [φωνῇ καὶ γλώττῃ και στόματι]." Socrates explains that an onoma in this case would be "a vocal imitation of that which is imitated, and he who imitates with his voice names that which he imitates ['Ονομ' ἄρ' ἐστίν, ὡς ἔοικε, μίμημα φωνῇ ἐκείνου ὅ μιμεῖται, καὶ ὀνομάζει ὁ μιμούμενος τῇ φωνῇ ὅ ἂν μιμῆται, 423 b7]." In onomatopoeia there is an obvious mimetic correspondence or phonic *homoiosis* between sound and sense. Thus according to Socrates

---

[5] *Cra.* 422 e2-5

"People who imitate sheep and cocks and other animals were naming those

which they imitate [τοὺς τά πρόβατα μιμουμένους τούτους καὶ τοὺς

ἀλεκτρυόνας καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα ἀναγκαζοίμεθ᾽ ἂν ὁμολογεῖν ὀνομάζειν τα

ῦτα ἅπερ μιμοῦνται]."[6]

Mimesis is explicitly thematized in terms of its various forms or *tropoi*. Now two *tropoi*

of mimesis have been explicated, (a) that which pertains to the body or "bodily imitation

[μιμησαμένου...τοῦ σώματος]" and (b) the expression, communication that involves "the

imitation by voice, tongue or mouth [φωνῇ καὶ γλώττῃ και στόματι]," onomatopoeia proper. In

this notion of onomatopoeia there is the conception that in onomatopoeic expression the thing

imitated is named, that is, ὀνομάζειν ταῦτα ἅπερ μιμοῦνται. Thus mimesis here involves more

than naming, it involves "representation" as such. Socrates introduces mimesis to highlight a

fundamental disparity, a certain distance between what is named and its referent or nominatum.

He attempts to illustrate that the mimetic correspondence is not assured by the principle of

identity, by a proximity of sign and its meaning, sound and sense. When Socrates asks

Hermogenes "what sort of an imitation is a name", the question of onomastic correctness

confuses itself with its assured homoiological determination.

The tropology of mimesis insofar as language is concerned enters into a different

thematic plain when considering the nature of *musical* mimesis, which is related to

communication, expression, evocation since we are contemplating the *tropos* of vocal

expression, that is, what can be described as the expression by use of the voice or *phonê*.

However Socrates in considering musical mimesis will proffer for the first time a different

schematology of the onomastic techne [ἡ τέχνη ἡ ὀνομαστικὴ], which as we shall soon see,

presents itself as a faithful image of the ousia of things.

---

[6] *Cra.* 423 c4-6

According to Socrates a name shall never be warranted as having been made if (a) "we imitate things as we do in music, although musical imitation is also vocal [οὐκ ἐὰν καθάπερ τῇ μουσικῇ μιμούμεθα τὰ πράγματα οὕτω μιμούμεθα...καίτοι φωνῇ γε καὶ τότε μιμούμεθα, 423 c8-b3]". So the nature of the onomastic techne should embody a different *tropos* of mimesis, as it is a distinctly different form of vocal expression that is peculiar to music. Moreover, (b) the onomastic techne involves the imitation of a distinct object, thus it does not produce an onoma "by imitating that which music imitates [οὐκ ἐὰν ἅπερ ἡ μουσικὴ μιμεῖται καὶ ἡμεις μιμώμεθα, 423 b4-d2]." In attempting to clarify the nature of musical mimesis, Socrates clearly states that music imitates the sound [φωνῇ], shape [σχῆμα] and colour [χρῶμα] of things and that "the art of naming is not employed in imitation of those qualities and has nothing to do with them [Εοικε τοίνυν οὐκ ἐάν τις ταῦτα μιμῆται, οὐδέ περὶ ταύτας τὰς μιμήσεις ἡ τέχνη ἡ ὀνομαστικὴ εἶναι]."[7]

The kind of mimesis whose case is thus being considered and thus preoccupies the onomastic techne does not involve the imitation of the objects peculiar to *musical* mimesis, namely, "sound" [φωνή], "shape" [σχῆμα], and "colour" [χρῶμα].[8] Subsequently the onomastic techne necessarily has to involve imitating an object which is distinct and peculiar to the process of naming, of nomination as such, so in essence 'mimophony' [μίμημα φωνῇ] is not purely onomatopoeic or disposed toward euphonics or musicality. Socrates tries to determine or mark the difference between the *tropos* of onomastic and *musical* mimesis. The latter lends itself to the imitation of appearances and a phenomenality of things; the former pertains to discourse and language, to the intelligible eidos of things. The most important development of our understanding of onomastic mimesis is that it is a mimesis that pertains to techne and it is brought paradoxically into opposition of what is discernibly a non-technical or rather *atechnical*

---

[7] *Cra.* 423 d4

form of mimesis. The onomastic techne thus is a techne which in its operation involves mimesis as such. Thus it is determined that the mimesis of onomata does not comprise of pure representationality, of imitation as such in the purest sense, that is, an imitation of φωνή, σχῆμα, χρῶμα, it is not a pictorial or ornamental representation of the appearance of things. Essentially, onomastic mimesis is the 'representation' of the "essence" or "essential nature" [τὴν οὐσίαν] of each thing, the rendering *present* the ousia of things, not its mere phenomenality. It is a mimetic practice that supersedes and extends itself beyond the schematological and chromatic displays of *musical* mimesis. Socrates goes on to explain,

"If anyone could imitate this essential nature (or essence) of a thing by means

of letters and syllables he would show what each thing really is

[εἴ τις αὐτὸ τοῦτο μιμεῖσθαι δύναιτο ἑκάστου, τὴν οὐσίαν γράμμασί τε καὶ

συλλαβαῖς ἆρ οὐκ ἂν δηλοῖ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν;]."[9]

So there are three determinations of mimesis, three distinct *tropoi* which the tropology has considered, which are subordinated to the *tropos* of mimesis identified as onomastic: (a) the *onomatopoeic* or mimophonic [μίμημα φωνῇ] (b) that peculiar to music [μουσικὴ] and finally (c) the graphic form, which incorporates painting and writing in general [γραφική]. Certainly this tropology of mimesis announces the internal division of the mimetic and it shows us yet again how a tropology, the diverse mimetic *tropoi*, opens up many possibilities of mimesis. Socrates, without doubt, attempts its circumvention, tries again to contain the many permutations of mimesis, especially the *tropics* of its mimophonic, graphic and musical expressions and most notably its ornamental and supplementary effects.

---

[8] See *Cra.* 423 d6-9

[9] *Cra.* 423 e7-9

9.3   Onomastics and the Graphic Metaphor

So what is the τέχνη of the name-maker [ὁ ὀνομαστικός]? The technical nature of onomastic mimesis, as we have so far determined, considers as its object not a certain phenomenality or exteriority of things, but something interior to the thing, its very essence, its ousia. As an object of mimesis, the name-maker certainly and accountably has to employ a mimetic practice which lies outside the primitive order of mimesis which involves the imitation of the apparent and phenomenal but more importantly lies outside its "imitative" and mimological determinations. This is possibly the most difficult section of the dialogue to circumvent, as we are still unclear as to what the nature of onomastic mimesis is, particularly as it involves naming the nature of an interiority (the ousia) of the thing without yet being sure what this interiority entails. This is the obstinate direction Socrates would like to take the entire thematics of the question of onomata, to their epistemological indeterminations. Socrates plays on these mimetic resonances, especially in connecting the question of mimesis to the orthonomatology of the dialogue, in order to bring us to another epistemological crossroads.

So the problem of onomastic mimesis in the *Cratylus* is that it is delimited or inscribed within the order of truth. The object of the name-maker's mimesis is not a phenomenality or what is apparent in reality, but something more interior. This interiority, the essence or ousia of the thing has to be represented. The name's representation of the "thing itself" measures onomastics (name-making) in terms of truth. The correctness of an onoma or the onoma's propriety or correctness depends on how adequately it represents and reveals the object's ousia; the truth or reality of the object. Onomata as mimetic productions are thus constituted by the order of mimesis and this sets up a relation of *homoiosis* or adequation between the onoma and *pragma*.

"We must in turn give names to things which ought to have them, if there are any names to which they can all, like the letters [ὥσπερ τὰ στοιχεῖα], be

referred, from which it is possible to see what their nature is and whether there are any classes among them, as there are among letters. When we have properly examined all these points, we must know how to apply each letter with reference to its similarity or resemblance [κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα] is to be applied to one thing or many are to be combined; just as painters, when they wish to produce a representation [οἱ ζωγράφοι βουλόμενοι ἀφομοιοῦν] sometimes use only red, sometimes some other color, and sometimes mix many colors [τῶν φαρμάκων], as when they are making a picture [ἡ εἰκὼ ν] of a man or something of that sort, employing each color I suppose, as they think the particular picture demands it. In just this way we, too, shall apply letters to things, using one letter for one thing, when that seems to be required, or many letters together, forming syllables, as they are called, and in turn combining syllables and by their combination forming nouns and verbs. And from nouns and verbs again we shall finally construct something great and fair and complete. Just as in our comparison we made a picture by the art of painting [ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ τὸ ζῷον τῇ γραφικῇ], so now we shall make language by the art of naming, or of rhetoric, or whatever it be [ἐνταῦθα τὸν λόγον τῇ ὀνομαστικῇ ἢ ῥητορικῇ ἢ ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ τέχνη]."[10]

As it appears, the onomastic techne bases its mimetic activity by use of the *stoicheion* (letter) to create syllables and in combination onomata. Analogically the zoographic techne employs the *pharmakon* (colour) to fulfill its imitation or representation. The *stoicheion* is correctly applied to things "by resemblance or similitude [κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα]" and similarly

---

[10] *Cra.* 424 d5- 425 a4

the zoographer or painter is said to make his paintings assuring a mimetic similarity [ἀφομοιοῦν] to things. Onomata are subsequently based on the mimetic composition of the *stoicheia* as are colours in pictorial mimetics or zoography. What now is discernibly "language" in its formation is based on mimetics, however we should follow Socrates further in this mimetology of onomastics so as to return to the fundamental problematics of the *stoicheion*. The *stoicheion* is a phonic signifier which is thematized by the insistence on the *phonê*. But even in trying to draw his conception of the *stoicheion* away from the paradigm of the onomatopoieic or musical mimesis, Socrates resorts to the scriptual or graphic metaphor to illustrate the function or workings of the *stoicheion* within onomastic composition. This movement into graphologics is interesting as it insists on pursuing the compositional paradigm by reference to graphic mimetics, which in terms of language or onomastic composition is least resourceful when considered graphologically.

Though the mimetology of language may seem ridiculous or capricious [γελοῖα...φανεῖσθαι, 425 d1] in its logic, given what is maintained is that "things are made manifest through imitation in letters and syllables [γράμμασι καὶ συλλαβαῖς τὰ πράγματα μεμιμημένα κατάδηλα γιγνόμενα, 425 d2]," it is because Socrates remains alert to the problems the graphic metaphor presents. The analogy of onomastics to *zoographics* anticipates an operation that leads us back into the initial aporia. There is a kind of disconcerting similarity that constitutes the two operations even as one tends toward the representation of "essences" and the other imitating appearances.[11] Yet the two operations are conducted in a movement that is drawn into the entire field of mimesis. That, of course, keeps the gap between the two open even as Socrates attempts to institute in onomastics a veritable form of mimesis. This is already a

---

[11] Göran Sörbom understands this to be the discernible feature which separates nominal mimesis and pictorial mimesis, that in the case of the former the onoma is a *mimêma* only insofar as it represents the

sufficient indication that the mimetology inherently, in its logical and ontological determination, unsettles the mimetic hierarchy it attempts to constitute. The problem being that it resorts to the graphic metaphor which reveals the very schema of mimesis itself. Socrates' stoicheology will now introduce the phonological prescriptions of the mimetic, it will now reflect upon what appears to be an appeal to phonologics; thus treating the *stoicheion* as an elementary sound or phonic signifier in attempt to move away from the vagaries of graphic mimesis.

9.4   Phonomimetics or Glossal Mimesis

"The letter ῥῶ (rho), as I was saying, appeared to be a fine instrument

expressive of motion to the name giver who wished to imitate rapidity, and he

often applies it to motion [καλὸν ἔδοξεν ὄργανον εἶναι τῆς κινήσεως

τῷ τὰ ὀνόματα τιθεμένῳ πρὸς τὸ ἀφομοιοῦν τῇ φορᾷ]. In the first place, in

the words ῥεῖν (flow) and ῥοή (current) he imitates the rapidity by this letter

[διὰ τούτου τοῦγράμματος τὴν φορὰν μιμεῖται], then in τρόμος (trembling)

and in τρέχειν (run) and also in such words as κρούειν

(strike), θραύειν (break), ἐρείκεν (rend), θρύπτειν (crush)

κερματίζειν (crumble) ῥυμβεῖν (whirl) he expresses the action of them all

chiefly by means of the letter rho; for he observed I suppose, that the tongue

is least at rest and most agitated in pronouncing this letter, and that is

probably the reason why he employed it for these words."[12]

What one supposes is introduced here is a forgetting of the graphic metaphor and the thesis which successfully accounts for the mimetic relationship between the *stoicheion* as phonic

---

"essence of a phenomenon, its *ousia*" whereas the latter represents or imitates "contingent qualities, colors and shapes". See Sörbom 1966: 111-12.

[12] *Cra.* 426 d3-e5

signifier and the eidos it represents. In the example of 'rho', the representation of the idea of "motion" or *kinesis* is made manifest. Mimesis is advanced, in this context, as the possibility of pure glossal correctness and thus assuring the emergence out of the primitive exemplification of onomatopoeia. The tongue or *glotta* (in the example of the letter 'rho') schematically and in terms of the sound or *phonê* reproduces or represents the idea of *kinesis*. This in essence is not a purely onomatopoeic act or *praxis* but insinuates into presence of the *stoicheion* or *gramma* the idea or concept of *kinesis*, it carries or encompasses the signified (the idea of motion or rapidity).[13] The *stoicheion* 'rho' represents the concept or idea of *kinesis*. Following this glossal mimetics, Socrates valorizes the domain of ideality, of conceiving the *stoicheion* as a reproduction based on an idea, which is determined phonomimetically. The sound or *phonê* carries or represents the idea. However we note further the physiological or glossal determinations where phonomimesis also refers to a schematics of representation, if we account for the tongue's movement, action and rhythm, similarly carries the conception or idea of motion. As Socrates explains, "the tongue [τὴν γλῶτταν] is least at rest and most agitated in pronouncing this letter". The possibility of glossal mimetics, which is "sensible" or physiological in essence, seems to correspond to the ideality of sound or *phonê* which encompasses the intelligible idea. We can follow this double *mimetism*, the two activities of mimesis, in the *stoicheology* at issue. The *phonomimetic* and the *glossomimetic* are phonologically concomitant. Let us consider what Socrates says further on,

> "Iota again, he employs for everything subtle [τῷ δὲ αὖ ἰῶτα πρὸς τὰ λεπτὰ
>
> πάντα], which can most readily pass through all things. Therefore he imitates
>
> [ἀπομιμεῖται] the nature of ἰέναι (go) and ἵεσθαι (hasten) by means of iota,

---

[13] John Sallis correctly notes the difficulty of this theorization of the *stoicheion* especially since "rho" is meant to represent or encompass the idea of *kinesis* it is a *stoicheion* absent from the onoma it represents conceptually. See Sallis 1975.

just as he imitated all such notions as ψυχρόν (cold, shivering), ζέον (seething), σείεσθαι (shake), and σεισμός (shock) by means of 'phi', 'psi', 'sigma' and 'zeta', because those letters are pronounced with much breath [ὅτι πνευματώδη τὰ γράμματα, πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα μεμίμηται αὐτοῖς ὀνομάζ ων]. Whenever he imitates that which resembles blowing [καὶ ὅταν που τὸ φυσῶδες μιμῆται], the giver of names always appears to use for the most part such letters [πανταχοῦ ἐνταῦθα ὡς τὸ πολὺ τὰ τοιαῦτα γράμματα ἐπιφέρειν φαίνεται ὁ τὰ ὀνόματα τιθέμενος]. And again he appears to have thought that the comprehension and pressure of the tongue in the pronunciation of 'delta' and 'tau' was naturally fitted to imitate the notion of binding and rest [πρὸς τὴν μίμησιν τοῦ δεσμοῦ καὶ τῆς στάσεως]. And perceiving that the tongue has a gliding movement most in the pronunciation of 'lambda' [ὅτι δὲ ὀλισθάνει μάλιστα ἐν τῷ λάβδα ἡ γλῶττα κατιδών], by resemblance made the words [ἀφομοιῶν ὠνόμασε] λεῖα (level), ὀλισθάνειν (glide) itself, λιπαρόν (sleek), κολλῶδες (glutinous), and the like. Where the gliding of the tongue is stopped by the sound of gamma he produced the nature of γκισχρόν (glutinous), γλυκύ (sweet), γλοιῶδες (gluey). And again, perceiving 'nu' is an internal sound [τοῦ δ' αὖ νῦ τὸ εἴσω αἰσθόμενης τῆς φωνῆς], he made the words ἔνδον (inside) and ἐντός (within), assimilating the meanings to the letters [ὡς ἀφομοιῶν τοῖς γράμμασι τὰ ἔργα], and 'alpha' again he assigned to greatness, and 'eta' to length, because the letters are large. He needed the sign O for the chief element of the words. And in this was the lawgiver appears to apply the other letters, making by letters and

syllables a name for each and everything, and from these names he

compounds all the rest by imitation [...συντιθέναι ἀπομιμούμρνος]."[14]

Phonomimetics brings language close to voice and breath, appeals to a "pneumatological"[15] conception of the *stoicheion*. It promulgates a natural mimesis which involves "breath and voice" as in the example of *stoicheia* pronounced with much breath [ὅτι πνευματώδη τὰ γράμματα]; 'psi', 'zeta' and 'sigma' phonomimetically represent a "pneumatological essence [τὸ φυσῶδες μιμῆται]." The phonomimetic depends entirely on certain *glossal* workings and functions and it is dependent on the rhythmic and physiological workings of the tongue in its mimetic disposition to produce the *stoicheia*. The "gliding of the tongue" produces lambda and stopping or ceasing the gliding movement of the tongue produces gamma. The gramma as such is not the written *stoicheion* which is secondary, it is the naturalized or idealized gramma as elementary sound, that is, it conveys a phonematic quality. Obviously this would be one way of forgetting the graphic metaphor which implies a certain distancing or spacing in the mimetic correspondence produced between *mimeme* and its object or referent. The *phonê*, its pneumatological essence, can naturalize mimesis, institute the presence of *phonê* and idea. Socrates however has not resolved the problems of this natural or mimetic quality of the *stoicheion*, for in another theoretical or dialogical intermission he accepts the phonomimetic as the basis of the correctness of onomata[16], which in essence concludes his dialogue with Hermogenes. However the phonomimetics of the stoicheiology still carries the premises of its own deconstruction. The turn in the dialogue, the substitution of speakers or interlocutors, the

---

[14] *Cra.* 426 e6-427c9

[15] Derrida works through the metaphor of the "writing on the soul" in the *Phaedrus* and in the case of Rousseau a valorized metaphoric writing which is divine and living to illustrate a natural writing (which is not secondary; writing in the literal or strict sense) is immediately "united to the voice and breath". That "its nature is not grammatological but pneumatological. It is hieratic." See Derrida 1974: 17.

[16] See *Cra.* 427d1

substitution of Hermogenes for Cratylus, implies a new victim of the dialogical scrutiny; Cratylus. Hermogenes was never essentially the target here, for in the founding moment of the dialogue it is a Cratylism at issue, given its orthonomatology presupposes the mimetic.

We see here in its pinnacle moment the resurgence of the Cratylic problematic, that is, what Plato now turns to is the trace of mimesis in the Cratylism propounded. Cratylus will enter the field of this discussion however only to see how mimesis divides itself again to bring us again within view of the aporia of reference, which again needs to be reiterated is what the *Cratylus* portends to theoretically supersede. Socrates advises Cratylus that they must "look both forwards and backwards [βλέπειν ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω, 428 d8]" in order to accede to the problems any orthonomatology proposes. Such is the structure of this dialogue; it appeals dialogically to a double movement, committed to a mimetic logic, a logic of repetitions and reiterations.

9.5 The Two Cratyluses: Mimesis as Supplementation

Again Socrates, alongside Cratylus, reintroduces the graphic metaphor just as he acceded to the possibility of a mimesis which seemed to insinuate itself within presence in its pneumatological prescriptions. Again Socrates revisits the aporia, approaches the gap, the distance, the unassailable hiatus between the *mimeme* and its referent by again instituting pictorial mimetics within his mimetology. The phonomimetic conception of language, may have drafted the rudimentary linquistic principles of Cratylism, a theory of the natural or mimetic motivation of onomata. It may have potentially brought the dialogue to a close by prescribing an orthonomatological premise which should have appealed to Cratylus. However it is scarcely surprising that Socrates is able to pick out, throughout his mimetological deliberation, the warnings against mimesis. One is warned again of the foreseeable virulent condemnation of mimesis; its double tenor. Socrates begins by asking Cratylus,

Socrates: "You would agree, would you not, that the name is one thing and the thing of which it is a name is another?" [ἆρ οὐκ ἄλλο μὲν ἂν φαίης τὸ ὄνομα εἶναι, ἄλλο δὲ ἐκεῖνο οὗ τὸ ὄνομά ἐστιν]

Cratylus: Yes, I should.

Socrates: And you agree that the name is an imitation of the thing named [...τὸ ὄνομα ὁμολογεῖς μίμημά τι εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος]?

Cratylus: Most assuredly.

Socrates: And you agree that paintings also are imitations, though in a different way, of things? [καὶ τὰ ζωγραφήματα τρόπον τινὰ ἄλλον λέγεις μιμήματα εἶναι πραγμάτων τινῶν;].

Cratylus: Yes.

Socrates: Well then- for perhaps I do not understand, and you may be right- can both of these imitations [ταῦτα ἀμφότερα τὰ μιμήματα], the paintings and the names, be assigned and applied to the things which they imitate, or not [τά τε ζωγραφήματα κἀκεῖνα τὰ ὀνόματα, τοῖς πράγμασιν ὧν μιμήματα ἐστιν, ἢ οὔ]?

Cratylus: They can.[17]

The problem raised here is not the mimetological problem concerning whether onomastic mimesis is similar or concomitant to the imitations of the zoographic arts, the difference has already been established, insofar as the object of onomastics is the ousia, the essence or being of things and that of zoographics is a contingent phenomenality. The problem is the nature of the relation or reference to the thing named or represented, which in essence , if we try to understand what the mimetology prescribes, is an ontological problem of the relation between the original and copy, the notation which we have already noted circumscribes and

underwrites Plato's mimetology in the *Republic*. What in fact happens here is that onomata are now considered in terms of their mimetic relation to "things in themselves", rather than "in themselves". What the etymological undertaking revealed and what Socrates seeks to reestablish in the dialogue's third moment is a restoration of the problem of reference, the aporia that connately illegitimatizes the proposed orthonomatologies. Cratylism proposes the unity of onomata which essentially proposes that the onoma embodies the signified, their propriety is prefixed; it is prior to any reference, application or referral to things. Socrates again wants to draw Cratylus to the limit of the aporia of reference, by creating a passage, by way of the specular-pictorial analogy, to subordinate the Cratylic thesis to the problematics of the aporia. He does so by propelling the mimetico-relational motivation of onomata, which in this case is pushed to the extreme, by introducing the paradigm of the "two Cratyluses".

The mimetology is an inevitable passage into the problematics founded in the aporia. Socrates must try twice to supersede the Cratylism instituted. Of course, this redoubled effort, and one must concede this, involves Socrates unequivocally affirming that of all that has been thought on the subject of onomata, on the possibility of onomastic correctness, only a fundamental impropriety "in" onomata can be discerned. Socrates further on comments on the nature of this impropriety, opening up the problematic to "truth" as such,

> "I call that kind of assignment in the case of both imitations- paintings and
>
> names correct [καλῶ ἔγωγε διανομὴν ἐπ᾽ ἀμφοτέροις μὲν τοῖς
>
> μιμήμασιν, τοῖς τε ζῴοις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, ὀρθήν], and in the case of
>
> names not only correct, but true [ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς ὀνόμαι πρὸς τῷ ὀρθὴν καὶ
>
> ἀληθῆ]; and the other kind, which gives and applies the unlike imitation, I call
>
> incorrect and in the case of names, false [τὴν δ᾽ ἑτέραν, τὴν τοῦ ἀνομοίου

---

[17] *Cra.* 429a1-b3

δόσιν τε καὶ ἐπιφοράν, οὐκ ὀρθήν, καὶ ψευδῆ ὅταν ἐπ᾽ ὀνόμασιν ᾖ]."[18]

So the mimetology proposes another conception of mimesis which involves understanding the *mimeme* (whether it is the onoma or the *zôgraphêma*) as something applied, conferred or imposed upon things that is, if we consider carefully what is suggested by the meaning of ἐπιφοράν. More problematically it suggests an "addition", a supplementation, insofar as the *mimeme* "brings upon" or *epipherei* on the thing itself something that not only resembles it but is other and in difference to it, a supplement of the thing itself. However what is "given to" [δόσιν] things is something exterior, and as it is declared in the passage, it could be something "unlike" [ἀνομοίου] the thing itself or something "like". What is of interest here is that the propriety of onomata is inscribed within the order of truth. Because onomata represent the non-contingent qualities of things, namely their ousia or essence, it implies a more veritable mimetism which makes onomata either true [ἀληθῆ] or false [ψευδῆ]. This determination of the onoma in terms of truth, its installation within the order of truth is no mere accident of reasoning, it can be supposed as a philosophical necessity; a necessity in light of the aporia. By establishing a "relational" logic of mimesis, Socrates is able to consider the propriety of onomata in terms of truth, he considers the possibility of the *pseudo* mimetic productivity of onomastics and subsequently alludes to the improprieties and degenerative properties of the onoma, insofar as it does not properly represent what is appropriate to or in a sense the "properties [τὰ προσήκοντα]" of things. The *mimetic* capacity of the onoma wrenches it from its condition of origin, of being prior to things in the Cratylic sense, that is, correct "in themselves". Cratylus insists onomata can never be incorrect and that they are always *orthôs* and he does so even in accepting that paintings or pictorial representations can be "incorrectly assigned [μὴ ὀρθῶς διανέμειν, 430 d9]."

---

[18] *Cra.* 430 d2-7

Socrates has set up the mimetism of onomastics in terms of truth, moreover he has subordinated it to truth by way of the constitutive "relational" logic of mimesis which presupposes something prior to the onoma as *mimeme* as such. Again a decision has to be made about the propriety of onomata, but, paradoxically, it is a decision (as it was the case in the *Republic*) about mimesis in general or everything that is subsumed by mimesis. The paradigm of the "two Cratyluses" in essence brings to a decision and this I understand in the strongest critical sense the conditions of possibility of any orthonomatological hypothesis. By considering the paradigm at issue, hence the insistence on mimesis, Cratylus has to necessarily concede that what is proper to onomata is an "impropriety" which in essence prepares the ground for the metaphysics of truth or the presupposition of *aletheia*.

> "The image must not by any means reproduce all the qualities of that which it
>
> imitates, if it is to be an image [οὐδὲ τὸ παράπαν δέῃ πάντα ἀποδοῦναι,
>
> οἷόν ἐστιν ᾧ εἰκάζει, εἰ μέλλει εἰκὼν εἶναι]…Would there be two things,
>
> Cratylus and the image of Cratylus [ἆρ᾽ ἂν δύο πράγματα εἴη τοιάδε, οἷον
>
> Κρατύλος καὶ Κρατύλου εἰκών], if some god should not merely imitate your
>
> colour and form, as painters do [εἴ τις θεῶν μὴ μόνον τὸ σὸν χρῶμα καὶ
>
> σχῆμα ἀπεικάσειεν ὥσπερ οἱ ζωγράφοι;], but should also make all the inner
>
> parts like yours, should reproduce the same reflexibility and warmth, should
>
> put into them, motion, life, and intellect, such as exist in you, and in short,
>
> should place beside you a duplicate of all your qualities? Would there be in
>
> such an event Cratylus and an image of Cratylus or two Cratyluses?
>
> [πότερον Κρατύλος ἂν καὶ εἰκὼν Κρατύλου τότ᾽ εἴη τὸ τοιοῦτον,
>
> ἢ δύο Κρατύλοι]."

And Further on,

> "Surely Cratylus, the effect produced by the names upon the things of which
>
> they are names would be ridiculous, if they were to be entirely like them in
>
> every respect [Γελοῖα γοῦν...ὑπὸ τῶν ὀνομάτων πάθοι ἂν ἐκεῖνα ὧν
>
> ὀνόματα ἐστιν τὰ ὀνόματα εἰ πάντα πανταχῇ αὐτοῖς ὁμοιωθείη].
>
> For everything would be duplicated, and no one could tell in any case which
>
> was the real thing and which the name. [διττὰ γὰρ ἄν που πάντα γένοιτο,
>
> καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἔχοι αὐτῶν εἰπεῖν οὐδεὶς οὐδέτερον ὁπότερόν ἐστι τὸ μὲ
>
> αὐτό, τὸ δὲ ὄνομα]."[19]

The entire reading of this passage, which can only be understood as the endorsement of

Plato's mimetology in relation to onomastics, in fact, proceeds from the assimilation of mimesis

to truth. The onoma has thus far been understood in terms of the rectitude of its iconographic

production, it has been determined as an εἰκών.[20] This iconology of the onoma already

subordinates it to its object of reference, it separates it, makes it different. The onoma, as the

"paradigm" suggests, is an εἰκών, a secondary production; second to the original. The onoma as

mimeme can never be entirely like the thing it represents [εἰ πάντα πανταχῇ αὐτοῖς ὁμοιωθείη],

the degree of *homoiosis* achieved will always be in the Platonic sense one of adequation. A total

mimesis will produce an equivocal and troubling double, it will "engender two of the same

[διττὰ γὰρ ἄν που πάντα γένοιτο]," which paradoxically presupposes an internal division of the

original. The order of truth establishes an order of priority which in essence premises the

question of "propriety" as such. Any conception of the two [διττα] productions of mimesis

necessarily has to be reinscribed within this aletheic order, where the *mimeme* is ontologically

nothing more than an εἰκών, this is, according to the relational logic of the mimetology.

---

[19] *Cra.* 432 b2- d8

[20] See *Cra.* 431 c2-9

However there is another possibility, for if there were "two Cratyluses [δύο Κρατύλοι]" according to the "paradigm" the entire ground of the mimetology will immediately miscarry what is schematically represented by the notation "Cratylus and the image of Cratylus [Κρατύλος καὶ εἰκὼν Κρατύλου]." Certainly the implication of this supplementary logic of onomastic mimesis which doubles or duplicates the thing itself, suggests the surreptitious manner in which onomata work; suspending reference and operating within a logic of substitution.

What is threatening about onomastic mimesis when it is apprehended in terms of this logic of supplementation is that it can effect a proliferation of onomata, as the etymologies revealed, and the dissimulation of the "thing itself". This is provoked from the outset by its linguistic function and constitution, which essentially, in a pernicious significatory movement, will lead us back to the aporia of reference, which the relational logic of the mimetology attempts to overhaul. Again, as in all the dialogues which attempt to circumscribe mimesis, a "typology" is prescribed for onomastics, that is to say, the τύπος of things;[21] its intrinsic quality is prescribed for the mimetician. The essential mark or feature of things has to be retained in the mimetic production of onomata.

Just as there was an urgent need to epistatically purify the *logos* of mythopoiesis in the *Republic*, so here there needs to be a serious purification of *language as such*, from the *stoicheion* to the composite onoma. Socrates by the dialogue's end, by again resorting to the *stoicheiology*, discerns the incorrect use, application and subsequent insertion of the 'lambda', which represents "smoothness", "softness", in the word σκληρότης ("hardness"). Cratylus concedes that he discerns the meaning of σκληρότης "by way of custom [διὰ γε τό ἔθος, 434 e4]," admitting that the insertion of the 'lambda' is an impropriety in the onoma [οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἔγκειται, 434 b6]. The admission that "custom, not likeness, is the principle of

---

[21] See *Cra.* 432 e9

signification/revelation [...τὴν ὁμοιότητα δήλωμα εἶναι...τὸ ἔθος, 435 b2]," is paradoxically a Cratylic admission of the arbitrariness of onomata.[22] In positing the arbitrary nature of onomata[23] Socrates establishes an impasse, at least insofar as the aporia is concerned, whereby the necessary link between name/signifier and concept/signified is established. One understands better now, no doubt, that there is no orthonomatology proposed by Plato. It will be necessary to confirm that the *Cratylus* is as anti-Cratylic as well as anti-Hermogenic since the symmetry of these two orthonomatologies is its central motif, even though it is figured out or figured through the aporia of reference. It involves, in its ironic oscillations, a questioning of the epistemological implications of any correspondence or referential logic. This is evident in the fact that Cratylus has to admit that it is far better (methodologically and didactically) to learn "from the truth itself [ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας]" rather than from the *eikon* [ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνος, 439 a6-b2] or for that matter, the onoma. This gives rise to two possibilities of epistemology; moreover it gives rise to a differentiation within the field of knowledge.

9.6   The Exclusion of Mimesis: The Two Orders of Truth

How is it that we can propose what is at stake in the *Cratylus* is the theory of knowledge? The epistemological exigency by necessity establishes the truth of two orders; of an order of onomata (names) and the order of *pragmata* (things). To what degree is such a differentiation generated by the aporia of reference? We have noted that paradigmatically onomata can arrest the passage of reference, of referencing "things in themselves", that is, "in showing the nature of the thing" [ἥτις ἐνδείξεται οἷόν ἐστι τὸ πρᾶγμα, 428e1] as such.

---

[22] Socrates even after this conclusion still ascribes to the arbitrary function of onomata, a mimetic motivation (as if to incorporate within this orthonomatology the "Cratylism" just denounced). He explicitly states that "custom indicates...both by the like and by the unlike" [τὸ ἔθος...καὶ ὁμοίῳ καὶ ἀνομοίῳ δηλοῖ, 435 b3].

Accordingly the fact of the appearance and onomastic production of onomata is deemed unnecessary, for in seeking their correctness (ὀρθότητα) Socrates raises a question mark over whether we can learn, gain knowledge about things through them, especially as they are engendered mimetically. Socrates warns Cratylus that,

> "He who in his inquiry after things follows names and examines into the
> meaning of each one runs great risks of being deceived [εἴ τις ζητῶν τὰ
> πράγματα ἀκολουθοῖτοῖς ὀνόμασι, σκοπῶν οἶον ἕκαστον βούλεται
> εἶναι, ἆρ ἐννοεῖς ὅτι οὐ σμικρὸς κίνδυνός ἐστιν ἐξαπατηθῆναι]."[24]

It is curious here that, a completely new problem is presented in the *Cratylus*, which certainly moves us further from its original interest in onomata as such and toward the question of the "truth of things [τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν ὄντων, 438e]." Obviously by discarding the anterior nature of onomata, Plato wants to consider how they stand in the pretense of the question of truth. The difficulty presented by this new problem, pertaining to the theory of knowledge, becomes more acute when we begin to consider the "two classes of onomata" [τὰ ἕτερα ὀνόματα] which Socrates alludes to, "those which point towards rest [τὰ ἐπὶ τὴν στάσιν ἄγοντα]" and "those that point towards motion [τὰ ἐπὶ τὴν φοράν]." Given this identification Socrates discovers the difficulties inherent in any propriety of the onoma, he thus considers separately the true being of things [τῶν ὄντων] without resort to language.

The Cratylic thesis is further blown asunder precisely by way of revealing or exposing the weaknesses of the entire discourse on onomata in the *Cratylus*. How do we come to "know" things? According to Plato it is certainly not in onomata. Socrates explains "It is not in onomata" but "we must look for something else, not names, which shall show us which of these two kinds

---

[23] At *Cra.* 435 b8 the example of numbers [τὸν ἀριθμὸν] is introduced to analogically attest to the arbitrariness of the onoma.

are the true names, which of them, that is to say, show the truth of things [...δείξαντα δῆλον ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν ὄντων, 438 a6-e1]."

Socrates asserts by 438e that things, nature, truth, reality, τὰ ὄντα may be learned "without resorting to onomata or 'without' onomata as such [...δυνατόν μαθεῖν ἄνευ ὀνομάτων τὰ ὄντα]" and resorts to the most natural and straightest or "just manner [εἰκός τε καὶ δικαιότατον]" of apprehending τὰ ὄντα, that is, "through each other if they are akin and through themselves [εἴ πῃ ξυγγενῆ ἐστιν καὶ αὐτὰ δι αὐτῶν, 436 b6]." So the principle of identity is presented or posited as the only true means of epistemic accession. However Socrates does assert that knowledge of things "through themselves [δι αὐτῶν]" is essentially possible by recognizing *difference*, by acknowledging fundamental heterological presuppositions, for he concedes, "whatever is other and different from them would signify not them, but something other and different [τὸ γάρ που ἔτερον ἐκεινων καὶ ἀλλοῖον ἔτερον

ἄν τι καὶ ἀλλοῖον σημαίνον, ἀλλα οὐκ ἐκεῖνα, 438e]."

This amounts to the assertion that there is an exterior difference referred to, which is different to the significatory differences interior to the language system, that being between onoma and *pragma*. The theory of knowledge proposed, of knowing things "through themselves" as opposed to knowing things through onomata, is critically directed against the equivocity of language and against any assertion of the propriety of onomata. Knowledge of things cannot possibly be acceded "within" language. Plato identifies a notable infidelity in onomata, in their mimetic proliferations and substitutions they can never properly or justly represent τὰ ὄντα. Onomata are constituted by the supplementary logic of mimesis. How the notion of secondarity is tied to Platos' conception of language, how it is caught in the web of the descriptive appraisal of mimesis has by now been established by exposing the twofold constitution of mimesis.

---

[24] *Cra.* 435 e3

Which is the better and surer way towards knowledge is a preoccupation or concern that isolates or excludes the mimesis question to another order, that of onomata as such. The real matter lying beneath the Socratic description of onomata as *eikones* (proxys, stand ins, substitutes) of "things-themselves" is to delineate that knowledge of τὰ ὄντα will have to be attained outside of language or be arrived at without resorting to onomata, and it is in this way the epistemological quandary of Plato's suppositions leaves us considering the "form of things [τῆς αὐτοῦ ἰδέας, 439 d1]." And here it is the subject that is protected from a language that embodies the differential unrest, flux of its signifying possibilities. In retrospect what was ascertained in the etymological section of the dialogue was the unreliability of the linguistic and mimetic practices of the mythopoetic tradition. It is essentially on this basis that the conclusion is a self protective deciding, not only for the subject in general, but moreover it involves the self-preservation of the philosophical subject against the equivocity of onomata and language in general.

We already have a foreboding that mimesis is presented in other Platonic dialogues, as a form of falsehood, it is derivative and encapsulated by the pseudos (lie, fiction, falsehood, unreality). Yet in the *Cratylus* it is climatically asked whether it is more correct to gain knowledge and learn of realities in every heuristic endeavor from (i) the representation or *icon* [ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνος] or (ii) from the truth [ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας, 439 a7-b2]. "From the truth" amounts to accessing knowledge of things "through themselves" [αὐτὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν][25] and that whatever is discerned or apprehended regarding the nature of things through the *eikon* [ἐκ τῆς εἰκόνος] is knowledge gained or things learnt "from names" [ἐκ τῶν ὀνομάτων]. There is an exclusion and abasement of onomata, for in essence, onomata are mimetically invested; they are essentially *eikones* and as such unreliable. The onoma is declared outside the domain of truth, outside of true knowledge or an epistemicity which is derived "from the truth" [ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας]. But on

the other hand onomastic mimesis escapes the closure of this order of truth, it is able to question the epistemological hypothesis and obligation. Onomastics appears as another or different order, which though iconological in essence, that is, it engineers the supplementary work of onomata, produces the referential limits between these two orders, it inaugurates a referentiality which will no longer belong to a metaphysics of plenitude and presence.

In the *Cratylus* we are drawn to the ungraspable limits of the aporia. Though onomastic mimesis is excluded by the dialogue's end, even though Socrates persisted with it for the dialogue's entire duration, because it affirms and yet unsettles the mimetology propounded, it is articulated around the division between word and thing. In many respects the aporia is that which grounds mimesis. In the *Cratylus* it leads to the closure and condemnation of the philosophical problematic of mimesis, since it leads us to the aporia. Onomastic mimesis is pernicious because it conceives the onoma in relation to the thing, though simultaneously alters and withdraws the possibility of this relation, it unsettles the idea of the onoma as essentially founded on reciprocity or association to the world, nature or τὰ ὄντα. Always, what announces itself is the inherent paradox of onomastics, of mimesis in general, it being proper and improper in its linguistic motivation. On the one hand, it is motivated by a supplementary logic, where it doubles or proliferates its work and productions leading to a series of figural and signifying substitutions and displacements and on the other hand, in trying to restrain it within the mimetological field, works subordinately to the origin or original, that is, it remains incapable of origination. Essentially it is difficult to conceive of the onoma as in any sense supplying a referent. The orthonomatology of the dialogue has shown how onomata constantly frustrate the desire for some assurance of onomastic unity and representation of self-present meaning and truth. What we have rather encountered is an endless series of onomastic inscriptions, a perpetual redoubling of an

---

[25] *Cra.* 439b4-9

onoma upon onoma, such that the possibility of reference is incessantly deferred and differentiated.

Plato's mistrust of language is bound to the inherent equivocity of discourse and the onomata it circulates.[26] Ultimately this distrust extends beyond language and attends to the subject who uses language as an organon of dissimulation and misrepresentation. In many respects the aporia in the *Cratylus* is the aporia that leads us to the crossroads of the sophistic field. The *Sophist*, as we shall see, again reappraises the issues brought to an aporetic end in the *Cratylus* as Plato seeks to determine the nature of the sophist and his dissimulative use of logos as a similucrum of philosophy's logos.

---

[26] Derrida has alluded to in his writing on the *Phaedrus* that for Plato truth presents itself in the form of an inward revelation, a "writing in the soul", that makes itself visible "reflectively" to the mind as a pure presence. See Derrida 1981a.

Chapter Ten

The Sophist as *Aporon* Eidos

Stranger: Then those who participate in all those governments -with the exception of the scientific one- are to be eliminated as not being statesmen, but partisans [ἀλλὰ στασιαστικοῦς]: and since they preside over the greatest counterfeits [καὶ εἰδώλων μεγίστων προστάτας ὄντας], they are themselves counterfeits, and since they are the greatest imitators and deceivers/cheats [μεγίστους δὲ ὄντας μιμητὰς καὶ γόητας], they are the greatest of all sophists [μεγίστους γίγνεσθαι τῶν σοφιστῶν σοφιστάς].

Socrates: This term "sophist" seems to have come round quite rightly to the so-called statesmen [εἰς τοὺς πολιτικούς].

Stranger: Well, this part has been exactly like a drama [τοῦτο μὲν ἀτεχνῶς ἡμῖν ὥσπερ δρᾶμα]. Just as we remarked a moment ago, a festive troop of centaurs and satyrs was coming into view [Κενταυρικὸν ὁρᾶσθαι καὶ Σατυρικόν τινα θίασον], which we had to separate from the art of statesmanship [ὃν χωριστέον ἀπὸ πολιτικῆς εἴη τέχνης]; and now we have succeeded in doing this, though it has been very difficult.

Politicus 303 c1-d2

10.1 Authorial Apocryphy: The *Xenos* as Unnamed Subject

It is by now well established that what has been imputed to Plato as a philosophy of apocryphal dimensions, insofar as the authorship of the dialogues is concerned, is but a philosophy coming

out of the death of Socrates.[1] "Platonism" is essentially the rehearsal of the Socratic scene or moment; Socrates the philosophical figure *par excellence*. Things are far from being as simple as that in Plato's *Sophist*. A new *prosopon* is introduced within the dialogue, a *prosopon* which literally takes the place of Socrates in a remarkable figural substitution. The Ξένος Ελεάτης (The Eleatic Stranger), as the chief *prosopon* of this dialogue is Socrates' substitute, he wears the Socratic mask.

In order to explain this substitution of roles, it is perhaps necessary to ask why the Stranger [ξένος]? Why is he granted in this dialogue such a position of prominence and importance? He is described by Theodorus as "a real philosopher" [ἄνδρα φιλόσοφον, 216 a6] and Socrates shows a sense of ironical concern that maybe Theodorus has brought to their company some god and no mere stranger [οὐ ξένον ἀλλά τινα θεὸν, 216 a9] a god of refutation and elenchus [θεὸς ὤν τις ἐλεγκτικός, 216 b5] since they may be worthless or inferior [φαύλους] in the *elenchtic* discourse.[2] Though Socrates will not feature prominently in the ensuing discourse on the sophist and thus is given a passive and secondary role in the dialogue, this figural substitution is significant insofar as it remains implicated in the issue concerning the problematic of the subject in the *Sophist* as it doubly distances Plato's authorial voice. The distance between Plato and the Eleatic protagonist has now been doubled. The Eleatic philosopher is a 'stranger' not only because he is a foreigner but more significantly because he is the unnameable, the other which Plato speaks through. The Platonic voice is heard in the other, in the foreigner and most significantly in the figure or person that cannot be named. The distance

---

[1] Derrida 1981a: 163.

[2] In *Republic* 381 d Socrates is critical of a Homeric line where god's are described as disguising themselves and thus appearing to mortals as Strangers or *xenoi*. Is this suspicion of disguise a suspicion toward the Stranger's Subject? Is the Stranger the Philosopher or the Sophist?

elicited by this masquerade is not simply a form of duplicity nor is it of dramatic relevance it highlights the problematic of the subject that, in an incipient manner, Plato remains attendant to.

Though Heidegger correctly discerns it is a dialogue which is "Socratic" in essence,[3] the Stranger's reception presents to the reader a fundamental authorial problematic, which is adumbrated by the withdrawal of Socrates from the critical scene, given what is being posited here is the inauthentic philosopher, the fabricated [πλαστῶς, c6] philosopher who is represented in the dialogue in a concealed way. This presupposes an apocryphality which in essence points not only to the title of the dialogue, that is, to the sophist (to what Heidegger understands to be "a mere playful imitation of sophistry"),[4] but to Plato as such. Therein lies the exigency of the question that poses the ὄντως φιλόσοφος, the "real philosopher"; the Socratic philosopher par excellence, the truly divine [θεῖος] philosopher.[5]

The Stranger is an enigmatic and unclassifiable *prosopon*. All we know of him through Theodorus is that he is from Elea. And though he does not consider him a god, as Socrates assumes in jest, he is nonetheless described as θεῖος an epithet Theodorus ascribes to all philosophers [τοὺς φιλόσοφους, 216 c1]. However, the Stranger remains unidentifiable, for Socrates remains suspicious knowing very well that it is not any easier to recognize the genos of philosophers as it is to recognize the genos of gods [τοῦτο μέντοι κινδυνεύει τὸ γένος οὐ

---

[3] Heidegger 1997: 164

[4] Heidegger 1997: 160

[5] Friedländer reminds us that much must be made of the dramatic scene, alluding to the fact that though Socrates is formally absent, he is listening and implicitly present by way of the ear, even though it is without any form of discursive participation. What does this suggest? What do we make of what Friedländer's constant references to Socrates being attendant to the discourse though in silence. The discourse is conducted in Socrates' shadow who is "silently listening", attendant to the Stranger's logos. Friedlander 1969: 251, 254-5 and 257.

πολύ τι ῥᾷον...εἶναι διακρίνειν ἢ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, 216 c5]. In fact, Socrates' suspicion of the Stranger refers to the very problematic the dialogue itself endeavors to clarify, the ability to identify, segregate and select lineages or *genoi* [τὸ γένος...διακρίνειν]. Socrates does not fail to attend to this, further on he explains:

> "For these men- I mean those who are not feignedly but really philosophers-
> appear disguised in all sorts of shapes [οὗτοι παντοῖοι φανταζόμενοι...
> οἱ μὴ πλαστῶς ἀλλ᾽ ὄντως φιλόσοφοι], thanks to the ignorance of the rest of
> mankind, and visit the cities, beholding from above the life of those below,
> and they seem to some to be of no worth and to others to be worth everything.
> And sometimes they appear disguised as statesmen and sometimes as
> sophists, and sometimes they may give some people the impression that they
> are altogether mad [καὶ τοτὲ μὲν πολιτικοὶ φαντάζονται, τοτὲ δὲ σοφισταί,
> τοτὲ δ᾽ ἔστιν οἷς δόξαν παράσχοιντο ἂν ὡς παντάπασιν ἔχοντες μανικῶς]."[6]

Beyond the mistrust Socrates displays toward the Stranger (beyond this declared suspicion toward the Stranger's anonymity) it is obvious that the Stranger who *appears*[7] to show himself as a philosopher represents the moment in the dialogue where the status of his subject is deeply implicated with the status of the sophistic subject. The Stranger, at this stage, occupies in reality no place, he remains double— statesman, sophist, madman— and in these three lineage's resides the specter of the philosopher. This is tied to the rudiment question this thesis tries to

---

[6] *Soph.* 216 c5-d2

[7] At *Soph.* 216 c5-d2 φανταζόμενοι, φαντάζονται highlights the distinct lexicon of Plato's mimetology for what "appears" or the forms of pretension alluded to in this passage again highlights the issues concerning the subject.

address, the problematic of the subject. The Stranger' anonymity or his unassignability is here even more formidable, he remains unidentifiable and without a proper lineage.

We may accept that the Stranger is literally a foreigner (a non-Athenian) and not pursue the matter further. However we would have to naturally ask where does the Stranger dissociate himself from Socrates, and moreover, where does the Stranger depart from the philosophy of Plato? Should we ask *who* the Stranger is, rather than why Plato pays him such reverence in the dramaturgy of this dialogue? Is there a doxographical exigency to name, identify, that is, establish the identity of the Stranger, as the philological credulity of Marsilio Ficino confirms?[8]

It is obvious that we are not simply dealing with the problem of *who* is speaking but rather that the enunciative subject is (in terms of a sophisticated and artful "apocryphality") possibly two "beings", the philosopher or more radically the sophist in disguise. It goes without saying that the introduction of the Stranger does not explain this double pose nor does it elucidate the nature of his apocryphy. Is the Stranger Plato's mouthpiece? Is the Stranger the organon of the philosopher, who speaks in place of Socrates? Is this name ξένος an eponym of sorts, the *eponym* of the philosopher and sophist equally? The Stranger as the nameless and the unnamed—god-foreigner-stranger—could radically be considered the surrogate voice of two subjects, both philosopher and sophist. Another explanation, which of course is not so explicit in its testimony, is that the Stranger is the *arche-philosopher*, the archetypal or "model" figure of the philosopher, the exemplary philosophical subject. Since no proper name can be marked in the dialogue, the Stranger can thus be viewed, in the context of the dialogical enquiry, as an anonymous figure that dissimulates between being a philosopher or sophist in an attempt to arrest

---

[8] If we consider the *commentaria* of Allen's study, Ficino states that the Eleatic Stranger was Melissus and his entire commentary certainly remains consistent in his reference to the Stranger as Melissus. Allen 1989: 221

the nature of the subject in question. In this final possibility the Stranger doubly displaces Plato from his text, as the mask worn by Plato is nameless, it has no character and no being.

The issue concerning the Stranger's anonymity needed to be if not rigorously pursued, it at least had to be acknowledged given the nature of the subject in question in the *Sophist*. What I have illustrated is that the Stranger's anonymity is complicitous to the sophist's anonymity. The question why the Stranger takes charge in the *Sophist*, and why Socrates remains silent and is literally absented[9] remains inscribed within the dialogue's structure. For though the *Sophist* is essentially an enquiry on sophistics and a determination of the sophist's eidos and genos, it seems that the Stranger's anonymity is in some way implicated in the subject of this enquiry. The *Sophist* also seeks to determine the philosophical genos by default. So the Stranger who is represented as the enunciative subject is an obscure and neutral subject and his marked *apocryphality* is an issue already implicated in the search for the unnamed and unknown beast, the sophist. However his subject is also marked by the search for the philosophical subject in general. The Stranger as mask or disguise will present himself as a formidable threat insofar as he is already surreptitiously confused with the *subject* of this inquiry. The sophistic and philosophical subjects are irremediably or even vertiginously engulfed in the equivocation of the Stranger's *subject*. It is for this reason we pay attention to the Socratic suspicion, because the Stranger is both the philosopher and sophist, that is, "either one or the other" or "neither one nor the other". Thus the Stranger as *subject* becomes the prosopopoiesis of the dialogue's subject.

---

[9] In the *Politicus* the Stranger is the dialogue's main enunciative subject. Socrates though is a principle participant (and interlocutor).

10.2 *On Diaeretics*: The Paradeigma for the Philosophical Hunt

In order to catch a glimpse of what this dialogue seeks to posit in its investigation, it is necessary to *name* the object of investigation, designate it by *name*, make it subject to the enquiry. Obviously the investigation proceeds "with the sophist [ἀπὸ τοῦ σοφιστοῦ, 218 b9]", but the Stranger discerns that he and Theaetetus "share only his *name* in common [...σὺ κἀγὼ τούτου πέρι τοὔνομα μόνον ἔχομεν κοινῇ, 218 c2]." The philosopher and sophist are not yet distinguishable, they are in some way identical insofar as their designation by name is concerned. Both by nomination are akin and affiliated. We can understand now how the derivation *sophist* is carried out; it proceeds from a concept or notion of *sophia*[10] which both sophist and philosopher partake of.

However we must bear in mind that this similarity is only granted insofar as both philosopher and sophist share a common name and the Stranger takes numerous precautions to initiate a logos or argument which will ascertain the difference between these two figures of *sophia*. The Stranger initiates a logos which will lead to "an agreement [συνομολογήσασθαι]" about the subject or determine "the nature of their subject [πέρι τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ]." However he will not entrust what is named or nameable without exposing it to logos as such. This is

---

[10] See *Rep.* 428 a9ff. The conception of *sophia* is that it is something achieved (or gained) independently from a techne. *Sophia* is distinct from techne, yet interestingly enough the Stranger in trying to hunt the sophist is first attempting to apprehend his techne or determine what sophistics in general entails. Socrates explains there are manifold *epistemes* (or knowledges) which do not determine *sophia* as such, *sophia* is the property of the subject who encompasses all forms of knowledge [τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν σοφίαν καλεῖσθαι, 429 a4]; *episteme* in general. This paradoxically is a sophistic propriety, *sophia* is possibly the propriety of the sophist (in the same way it is a philosophical propriety). The Stranger needs to determine where the impropriety (in terms of *sophia*) lies within sophistics, for both philosopher and sophist share the name in common.

essentially a logos which appeals to the constitution or restoration of what would be the very essence of the philosopher and the sophist, it approaches the fundamental question concerning the subject of sophia. The Stranger expresses this with much urgency;

> "We ought always in every instance to come to agreement about the thing
>
> itself by argument rather than about the mere name without argument."
>
> [δεῖ δὲ ἀεῖ παντὸς πέρι τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μᾶλλον διὰ λόγων ἢ τοὔνομα
>
> μόνον συνομολογήσασθαι χωρὶς λόγου]."[11]

Having agreed upon the method of their logos, that they approach their subject not by name alone but by way of logos or proper argument [διὰ λόγων], the Stranger proceeds identifying a twofold objective. They are to posit the *tropos* (manner, character) of the sophist and determine his *phylê* (tribe, race) and as a result arrive at a determination of the philosophical subject. What will be played out in the "ontology" of the *Sophist* is what Gilles Deleuze described as the logical subjugation of the *phantasm* or the *similucrum*.[12] Though we are going ahead of ourselves here, it needs to be pointed out that the Stranger's logos is an *epinoesis* (a search and seizing in the form of knowledge) of the sophist's equivocal nature. Ultimately the object of the enquiry, the quarry to use the hunter's metaphor, needs to be determined as subject, it needs to be predicated. However, the Stranger forewarns Theaetetus of the quandary that they are approaching, as he explains clearly

> "The tribe which we now intend to search for, the sophist, is not the easiest
>
> thing in the world to catch and define [τὸ δὲ φῦλον ὃ νῦν ἐπινοοῦμεν

---

[11] *Soph.* 218 c4-5

[12] See Deleuze 1990.

ζητεῖν οὐ πάντων ῥᾷστον συλλαβεῖν τί ποτ' ἔστιν, ὁ σοφιστῆς] and everyone

has agreed long ago that if investigations of great matters are to be properly

worked out we ought to practise them on small and easier matters

before attacking the very greatest. So now, Theaetetus, this is my advice to

ourselves, since we think the family of sophists is troublesome and hard to

catch [χαλεπὸν καὶ δυσθήρευτον ἡγησαμένοις εἶναι τὸ τοῦ σοφιστοῦ

γένος] that we first practice the method of hunting in something easier."[13]

The Stranger discerns that the sophistic genos is difficult to trail, it is troublesome

because there is no track to follow, no easy ὁδός, no easy pathway that could lead to the sophist.

However it is because there is no proper place wherein the sophist resides that he is in essence

like the Stranger, that is, an anonymous and empty subject, and for this reason is considered to be

atopos. So the sophist has no property at this stage and what seems more difficult, he resides in

"no place" in particular; he does not reside in a place or *topos* that makes him visible to the

enquiry.

In order to provide a discursive departure, the Stranger begins by seeking a paradigm that

would hopefully provide the method by which the sophist can be approached. The search for the

sophist and his genos will be gathered by way of "the simpler example [ἐν ἄλλῳ ῥᾷονι τὴν

μέθοδον]", which amounts to saying the scientific and elementary method. Notably, the

paradigm sought for is that of the angler [ἀσπαλιευτής] which the Stranger hopes will offer

himself and Theaetetus the "method" [μέθοδον] which will prove suitable for the purpose of

their logos.[14]

---

[13] *Soph.* 218 c6-9
[14] *See Soph.* 218 e-219 a. The *paradeigma* sought for becomes the metaphorical name of the sophist, it at least anticipates the nature of his techne; being the "acquisitive" art. The Stranger states the sophist is

10.3   On the Sophistic Techne: The Impropriety of *Polytechnics*

"What is the sophist's art? [ἀλλά τινα τέχνην αὐτὸν;]."[15]

How should one go about determining the sophist's techne? Everything which sophistics falls under cannot simply be consigned to the determination of a single techne. And now it is obvious that it is a problem of techne and not the sophist (his figure, visage and moreover his genos or tribe) that has stalled the Stranger's logos. Beginning the search by way of considering techne involves acknowledging that there is never any pure and simple techne which defines sophistics in general.[16] Consequently there is for this reason no simple figure of the sophist that one can bring within view. In spite of the enormous range of the sophist's techne, the whole machinery of the *diaeretic* method brings the sophist and philosopher closer together. *Diaeretics* has yet to distinguish the legitimate and authentic philosopher from his imitation. The philosopher is still implicated with the dissembling sophist. As we shall soon see, when arriving

---

"related" [ξυγγενῆ] to the angler (221 d7), that is, of a related or similar genos or family, as both are sort of "hunters" [θηρευτά].

[15] *Soph.* 221 d5

[16] John Sallis though interestingly points out that this beginning is "curious" in terms of attempting a determination of sophistics, especially since Socrates denies techne to the sophist (Sallis refers to the *Gorgias*). It should be said that in the *Gorgias* it is ῥητορική (rhetoric) at issue and not sophistics, though admittedly this distinction would pose similar problems for the philosopher since both rhetoric and sophistics are theoretically related, that is, they resemble one another. In the *Gorgias* Socrates pursues a vast political question regarding public speaking and confined within the sphere of the political. Socrates does contend that "rhetoric is an image (semblance or similucrum) of the branch of politics [ἔστι ἡ ῥητορική...πολιτικῆς μορίου εἴδωλον, 463 d1]". In the sophist an unclassifiable and enigmatic figure is pursued, the most pernicious kind who portends to be a kind of "philosopher" or more problematically the philosopher as such (the archetypal figure of *sophia*). See Sallis 1975: 468. For a similar argument which questions the proclamation of sophistics as techne, See Chadwick. 1984: 93.

at the *eristic* art (ἐριστικὸν) and the *diacritic* art (διακριτική) the philosopher is found to be like those who make a trade out of mimesis, that is, those who simulate the philosopher's techne.

The Stranger clearly explains to Theaetetus that with regard to the sophistic techne, the class or its generic configuration "partakes of no simple/mean art, but of a very many sided one [οὐ γάρ τι φαύλης μέτοχόν ἐστι τέχνης...ἀλλ᾽ εὖ μάλα ποικίλης, 223 c1-2]." Further on, the Stranger clarifies that techne *appears* to belong to a particular genos, "it presents an appearance or phantasma of being [...φάντασμα παρέχεται, 223 c3]." So techne essentially is the property of "another genos [ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον εἶναί τι γένος]" and it is in essence simulated by the sophistic genos as ποικίλης. In appropriating the techne of another genos (the Stranger incipiently refers to the philosophical genos here) the sophist withdraws into the simulacrum of the philosopher's genos. What was shared in common between the philosopher and sophist by way of techne, suggests it is only phantasmatically true in the sophist's case, and thus the sophistic subject misleadingly identifies himself with the philosopher's genos.[17]

Now if the sophistic techne (which the Stranger considers in order to discern the genos which the sophist belongs to) is a techne par excellence, it is only a techne of the simulacrum or the φάντασμα. At this stage his techne ποικίλης, that is, his many-sided or "mixed" and impure techne (which we might add overtly suggests an impropriety) prevents the sophist from belonging to a particular genos because the Stranger cannot assure the verity of his techne and eidos as such.

Behind the approach to the question of sophistics, which is still dependent largely on the method of diaeresis, we observe one thing, that the sophist is related to a techne ποικίλης. Martin

---

[17] Sallis 1975: 472

Heidegger correctly questions this designation, asking how does a single techne[18] that which is subsumed by a single name be ποικίλης?[19] The Stranger appraises a little further on this issue and questions the sophistic techne for being arguably "a single techne [μιᾷ τέχνη]".[20] and it is here perhaps that the problem of the sophist (though the Stranger in the dialogue's opening acknowledged the difficulty of this particular examination)[21] is brought to our awareness insofar as his relation to simulacra, phantasms threatens to essentially divert the diaeretic appellation of classes to what is apparent, to the *phantasma* as such. But on the question of the sophist's techne, it is suffice to say that if his techne produces the *phantasma* then it is, as techne, phantasmatic in essence, given it simulates or imitates another genos' techne.[22]

The Stranger finally arrives at a definition of the sophist which is multiple and subsequently multifarious. It is certain that the Stranger had already had a hint of the sophist's *polytechnical* ability. However the concern for the philosopher is that it arguably feigns to be encompassed by the law of a single techne, and this contributes to the difficulty of identifying τὸν σοφιστικὸν γένος.[23] The Stranger explains:

> "The sophist is nothing else, apparently, than the money making class of
> disputations, argumentative, controversial, pugnacious, combative, acquisitive
> art [Οὐδὲν ἀλλ᾽ ἢ τὸ χρηματιστικὸν γένος, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐριστικῆς ὂν τέχνης,
> τῆς ἀντιλογικῆς, τῆς ἀμφισβητητικῆς, τῆς μαχητικῆς, τῆς ἀγωνιστικῆς, τῆς
> κτητικῆς ἔστιν, ὡς ὁ λόγος αὖ μεμήνυκε νῦν, ὁ σοφιστῆς]."[24]

---

[18] Heidegger 1992: 271.

[19] *Soph.* 232 c2

[20] *Soph.* 233 d9

[21] *Soph.* 217 d

[22] *Soph.* 223 c3-4.

[23] *Soph.* 224 c8

[24] *Soph.* 225 e5-7

It goes without saying that the Stranger's principle concern is to explain this multiple position the sophist assumes taking into account the *polytechnical* nature of his techne. The Stranger warns Theaetetus that "he is a many-sided creature [τὸ ποικίλον εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ θηρίον, 226 a6]" and thus should be approached with caution. This issue concerning the *polytechny* of sophistics goes beyond a moral or philosophical questioning of what is heterogeneous and discordant within the diaeretic order. It is preoccupied with a fundamental difficulty that the order of diaeresis cannot clarify, that is, firstly, *who* is the sophist or the sophistic subject? What is his *phylê* or genos? And secondly *what* is the subject of sophistics or sophistry as such? One notes that in these two questions underlies an order of philosophical privilege, clearly the Stranger's diaeresis is preoccupied with the subject of sophistics, that is, the *"what is"* which is a paradigmatic epistemological question, neglecting to see how it is intrinsically bound to the ontological question of *"who* is" the sophist. The sophistic techne is pursued in the first diaeresis out of philosophical necessity but the difficulty here is that in being ποικίλης it is thus difficult to classify. Any possible classification of the sophistic techne is dependent upon, in a restricted way, a clarification of the question of the sophistic *subject* as such, which involves addressing the problematic regarding *who* the subject in question *is*. The Stranger acknowledges the philosophical difficulty inherent in the multiplicity that governs the sophistical techne. Seeking an affirmative acknowledgment of this very difficulty from his interlocutor, he asks,

> "Do you see the truth of the statement that this creature is many sided [τὸ ποικίλον εἶναι τοῦτο τὸ θηρίον] and as the saying is, not to be caught with one hand?"[25]

---

[25] *Soph.* 223 e8

The duplicity of the sophist, the simulacrum of his *polytechny* plays on identifying with the philosopher. The sophist "plays" on belonging to a proper place, that is, the philosopher's *topos*. It is only by way of simulating the philosopher's techne that the sophist can legitimate his *polytechny*. And by identifying with the place or *topos* of philosophy the sophist is able assure the truth of his techne ποικίλης. It is here, more than elsewhere, the Stranger seeks to determine the impropriety of the sophist's techne, it needs to be chartered by the truth of the logos at hand. This legitimation of *sophistics*, *polytechnics* and *mimetics* essentially is derived from a common techne the sophist and philosopher partake of, namely, the *elenchus*.

As the greatest and most efficacious of all discursive purifications, the *elenchus* is common to both philosopher and sophist, it has shown itself as a property of sophistics, as a fundamental propriety of the sophistic techne, and the Stranger acknowledges this commonality but he makes the admission with fear [φοβοῦμαι σοφιστὰς φάναι, 231 a1], in case he and Theaetetus have granted the sophists "too high a mead of honor" [Μὴ μεῖζον αὐτοῖς προσάπτωμεν γέρας, 231 a3]." Certainly we cannot discount the avowal of fear and horror to what the diaeresis disclosed as merely an ironic denouement.[26] The timorous commonality of the philosopher and sophist alludes us to the issues concerning the problematic of the subject in the dialogue's opening. The art of the *elenchus* is the logocentric propriety of both philosopher and sophist and this commonality of *technics* of logos (and most notably the fact that it is in a paradoxical relation to the *antilogics* that described sophistics immediately before this identification)[27] does not lead to an assimilation of the sophist to the genos of

---

[26] Taylor and Cornford consider μὴ μεῖζον αὐτοῖς προσάπτωμεν γέρας, as ironic. (See Taylor 1926: 381 n.1; Cornford 1935: 180 n.2). However this in all seriousness suggests that we have encountered a passage where a real fear of resemblance and similitude has been admitted to between philosopher and sophist.

[27] See *Soph.* 225 b8 ff. The ἀντιλογικόν is a determination that properly identifies the sophist yet somehow the sophist has become embroiled in a classification of the *diacritical* which has made the sophist a practitioner of the *elenchus*, the Socratic techne par excellence. Certainly we have reached a boundary or

philosophers. The sophistic subject does not belong to this genos he merely *resembles* the philosopher. As the Stranger explains further on,

> "Yes, and a wolf is very like a dog, the wildest like the tamest of animals. But the cautious man must be especially on his guard in the matter of resemblances, for they are very slippery things.
>
> [Καὶ γὰρ κυνὶ λύκος, ἀγριώτατον ἡμερωτάτῳ. τὸν δὲ ἀσφαλῆ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀεὶ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φυλακήν ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος]."[28]

Although the *elenchus* is established as a common techne of both philosopher and sophist, the question of assimilation, of belonging to the same genos is, of course, not yet admitted. But if it is not admitted as such, it gestures and points toward a commonality by means of resemblance, that is, by *homoiosis*. However the philosopher must keep his guard "on matters of resemblance [περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας]", and he must protect, guard [φυλάττωσιν] a boundary or limit [ὅρων][29] which, diacritically speaking, separates, distinguishes, differentiates the "like from the like" and "the worse from the better" which is essentially what *diacritics* seeks to accomplish, that is, it seeks to differentiate the philosopher from the sophist. The Stranger necessarily needs to preserve a generic and tribal boundary or border.[30] So resemblance does not

---

horon which the sophist has violated, especially as he has appropriated the *diacritic* and *kathartic* techne which is peculiar to the field of Socratic philosophy.

[28] *Soph.* 231 a 3-5

[29] Cornford's translation of *Soph.* 231 a7-8 suggests that the issue of the boundary between the sophist and philosopher, that is, the tribal boundary is of no small matter.

[30] See *Soph.* 226 c5 ff. Διακριτικήν or the art of discrimination accomplishes two things. The *diacritic* determination of separating the "worse from the better" [τὸ μὲν χεῖρον ἀπὸ βελτίονος] involves a *kathartic* function, and furthermore the "separation of like from like" [τὸ δ᾽ ὅμοιον ἀφ᾽ ὁμοίου].

admit assimilation, there is rather a point of difference that as a matter of urgency needs to be preserved.[31]

It seems important to point out the duplicity of this exclusion of the sophist from the legitimate genos of the philosopher. Paradoxically the Stranger acknowledges the philosopher's identification with the most improbable genos by way of *homoiosis* or resemblance. The Stranger's strategy operates from the place of the sophist, and what makes this an alarming situation, so disconcerting that it requires a revaluation of the masquerade that moves the entire logos, is the confusing legitimation of philosophy as *sophistics*. The *elenchus*, the Stranger asserts, directs us to the "legitimately born art of sophistics [ἡ γένει γενναία σοφιστική]", and it directs us to a lineage of proper practitioners of *sophia*, which both philosopher and sophist, it seems, belong and are akin to.[32]

It is precisely the question of lineage, and Deleuze is very astute in pursuing this problematic of geneology with regard to the *Sophist*,[33] which retains no clear boundary or limit which point toward distinctions by diaeretically identifying two distinct genera. Both philosopher

---

[31] Kerferd makes much of the phrase περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητας arguing that Plato is making reference to Speucippus whose treatise Ὅμοια used ὁμοιότητα as a principle of grouping (that is, to use our term, of assimilation). However, it is important to note that the *elenchus* (in its *diacritic-kathartic* function within discourse) proves wary of the assimilationism of *homoiology*. Resemblance points toward difference. Kerferd 1954: 85-6. See also 86 n.1.

[32] See *Soph.* 231 b5. Kerferd makes much of this line suggesting that it is evidence of a sophistic *method* "which if used in the right way could prepare the ground for a true understanding of reality based on Forms. It is in this sense that Plato could speak of the art of sophistry which is of noble lineage'" Kerferd 1954: 90.

[33] Deleuze correctly points out that the *Sophist* selects lineages, but it is achieved by *amphisbêtisis* (what Deleuze describes as a "dialectic of rivalry, a dialectic of rivals and suitors". I might add that it is interesting to note that the confusing and multiple determinations of the sophist begin at the point when the ἀμφισβητητικόν is discovered at 225 b1 which the diaeresis in its many reinscriptions of types discloses the *elenchus*. Deleuze's prognostication is not at all audacious or heedless to the dialogue's unfolding, but rather explains through the process of specification. See Deleuze 1990: 254.

and sophist can only be characterized by the absence of a proper genos, of propriety, economy and a fixed and established domicile. Theaetetus intimates the geneological *aporia* even as he overtly comments on the *aporia* of the sophist,

> "But the sophist has by this time appeared to be so many things that I am at a loss to know what in the word to say he really is, with any assurance that I am speaking the truth. [ἀπορῶ δὲ ἔγωγε ἤδη διὰ τὸ πολλὰ πεφάνθαι, τί χρή ποτε ὡς ἀληθῆ λέγοντα καὶ διισχυριζόμενον εἰπεῖν ὄντως εἶναι τὸν σοφιστήν]."[34]

The discourse continues, by necessity I might add, to proceed from an *aporia*, from an unmarked or unrecognizable passage. The passage or *poria* is affected by "resemblances" or a fundamental homoiology, and this ensures the assimilation of the sophist to the legitimate genos by way of a common lineage that the sophist and philosopher share. The sophist and philosopher share the same inheritance; both implacably advocate and maintain *sophia*.

10.4   The Six Sophists: Towards a Metaphoric Figuration

As we have thus far observed, in detailing the genealogy of the sophistic genos, the Stranger trails the very same genealogical line of the philosopher and this particular genos of the *sophoi* introduces itself and permeates the dialogue with all its ambivalence. The search for the sophist problematically leaves the Stranger and Theaetetus with six figural determinations of the sophist.

(1) A paid hunter after the young and wealthy [...νέων καὶ πλουσίων ἔμμισθος θηρευτής].[35]

(2) A merchant in articles of knowledge for the soul. [ἔμπορός τις περὶ τά τῆς ψυχῆς

---

[34] *Soph.* 231 b9-c2

[35] *Soph.* 231 d2-3. In this first determination we can see the uncanny resemblance to the philosopher (if we consider the figure of the Stranger) as he is a hunter as well, tracking down throughout his *diaeresis* his quarry; the sophist.

μαθήματα].[36]

(3) A retailer of these same articles of knowledge [...περὶ ταὐτὰ ταῦτα κάπηλος ἀνεφάνη].[37]

(4) A seller of his own productions of knowledge [...αὐτοπώλης περὶ τὰ μαθήματα ἡμῖν ἦν].[38]

(5) An athlete in contests of words who had taken for his own the art of disputation [...τῆς γάρ ἀγωνιστικῆς περὶ λόγους ἦν τις ἀθλητής, τῆ· ἐριστικὴν τέχνην].[39]

(6) A purger of souls, who removes opinions that obstruct learning. [δοξῶν ἐμποδίων περὶ ψυχὴν καθαρτὴν,].[40]

We note that the sixth sophist elicits complicity to the philosopher. However the Stranger is concerned that the sixth sophist has been ranked within a genos he does not properly belong to, that is to say, the sophist pretends to belong to the genos of philosophers. We must however recognize that the sixth sophist is paradoxically the philosopher in disguise.[41] Bernadete correctly observes that "at the end of the sixth definition the sophist has turned out to be a kind of philosopher (Socrates in fact)".[42] Let us for the moment hold the problem of this simulated *genos*

---

[36] *Soph.* 231 d4

[37] *Soph.* 231 d5

[38] *Soph.* 231 d6-7

[39] *Soph.* 231 e1-2. Τὴν ἐριστικὴν τέχνην is a *technic* of argumentation which involves "seeking victory in argument" or the appearance of such a success, as is suggested in *Theaetetus* 167 e3-6. See Kerferd.1981: 62-3. Also see *Sophist* 225 e5-7. The fifth determination overlaps with the function of the heuristic *logos*, which remains in Plato the legitimate techne of the sophist even as it produces illegitimate "doxastic" inferences within logos.

[40] *Soph.* 231 d2-e5. The sixth determination is possibly the most philosophical in essence if we consider the Platonic project in all the dialogues which is oriented around the constitution of the subject by eliminating *doxa* (opinion) and banishing mimesis

[41] See Sallis 1975: 488. Sallis points out that the activity of *katharsis* of the soul (of doxastic views or opinions) is an "unmistakably Socratic activity" in which the sixth sophist is engaged in. The sixth sophist as the disguised philosopher elicits a fundamental question regarding the propriety of the *kathartic* techne.

[42] Bernadete 1960: 138.

that the Stranger understands the sophist has been able to deceptively identify with and consider the importance of the *figural* descriptions of the sophist in the six definitions identified.

In what way does the sophist resemble the philosopher? As we have noted already by employing the *elenchic* method as an art of reasoning.[43] It is by way of a techne shared between these two figures of *sophia* that they are thus gathered into the same genos. On the condition that we understand clearly and do not rest comfortably with such a conclusion, the Stranger in referring to these two figures of *sophia* resorts to a figural metaphor to avoid a contaminative genealogical relation, the philosopher and sophist are like the dog[44] and wolf.

Following these six figural determinations of the sophist, we see that the figures presented to us by the Stranger are metaphoric figurations. The sophist is identified as a hunter [θηρευτής], merchant [ἔμποϱός], retailer [κάπηλος], seller [αὐτοπώλης], an athlete [ἀθλητής] and finally a purger [κάθαϱτης].[45] The sophist is thus represented as a practitioner of polytechny and thus is viewed as a multifarious subject. Already these figurations make the sophist complicitous to the developed distrust the Stranger and Theaetetus have of his dissimulation and prosopopoeic apocryphy. The indictment of the sophist and his business of play and mimesis later in the dialogue is caught up in his dubious charade as duplicitous figure. The sophist presents himself as a figure of dissimulation. As a result his acclaimed knowledge of many

---

[43] *Soph.* 231 a1

[44] Does the dog metaphorically refer to the "philosophic dog" of the *Republic*. See *Rep.* 375a-376c

[45] Cornford suggests that the first five definitions are satiric descriptions, however he argues that by the sixth definition "the satire is dropped" (Cornford 1935: 173). Kerferd also discerns that the sixth definition "is very different" accepting Cornford's diagnosis. (Cornford 1935: 84) The seriousness of the sixth definition is related to the sophist having been discerned as resembling or bearing a likeness to the philosopher. Taylor argues that the passage describes six different aspects of sophistics. (Taylor 1926: 379) However in all this, it is the metaphoric figuration which is of interest, the attempt to make the sophist

things, his polytechny, is condemned and questioned. However let us consider what are the consequences of these six figures of the sophist uncovered. There is obviously a nuance that exists within these discovered figurations, that is, of mimesis at work. The "figure" (Lacoue-Labarthe reminds us)[46] is the most important word in the lexicon of mimetology as it alludes to the fictional, the *pseudos* or the untrue, that which is not real or that which *is not* or non-being in general. The consequences of this figuration of the sophist I would like to return to later, suffice to say that the point of resemblance is the real subject disputed.

In hunting the sophist we see in what way he has been dispersed, masked, obliterated and rendered almost unpresentable not only by the imprudence and philosophical authority of the Stranger's diaeresis, but first and foremost by the redoubtable and irreducible difficulty of mimesis. He has many faces and figures himself differently and it is precisely for this reason mimesis (and the sophist as such) will bring us to the limits of the problematic of the subject.

10.5 *Antilogics*: The Delimitation of Sophistics as Phantasmatic Techne

"Then do you see that when a man appears to know many things [ὅταν ἐπιστήμων τις πολλῶν φαίνηται], but is called by the name of a single art [μιᾶς δὲ τέχνης ὀνόματι προσαγορεύηται], there is something wrong about this impression [τὸ φάντασμα τοῦτο ὡς οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὑγιές], and that in fact, the person who labors under this impression in connection with any art is clearly unable to see the common principle of the art, to which all these kinds of knowledge pertain [ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὡς ὁ πάσχων αὐτὸ πρός τινα τέχνην οὐ

---

present by representing his "figure", it involves a figuration which is further testimony to his duplicitous nature.

[46] Lacoue-Labarthe 1994.

δύναται κατιδεῖν ἐκεῖνο αὐτῆς εἰς ὃ πάντα τὰ μαθήματα ταῦτα βλέπει], so

that he calls him who possesses them by many names instead of one?

[διὸ καῖ πολλοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀνθ᾿ ἑνὸς τὸν ἔχοντα αὐτὰ προσαγορεύει]."[47]

Having taken this precaution with regard to "resemblances" and homoiosis, it is τὸ φάντασμα of the sophist's techne—that it feigns being "singular"—that both gathers and authorizes these polytechnic traits of the "one" techne [μιᾶς τέχνης]. It is obvious, τὸ φάντασμα τοῦτο refers to μιᾶς τέχνης and it takes into account the semblancing of a principled techne. It does not only involve the difference separating the *phantasmatic* techne from the "true" techne (or separating the subject of the one from the subject of the other), but also reveals the fundamental dissymmetry of the theoretical doubling of techne effected by sophistics, which ultimately reveals the technical efficacy of the sophistic subject. The theoretical consequence (though it remains at the limit of this discourse on the sophist) is one of "naming" this *polytechnical* or what is in essence a *phantasmatic* techne by either one or many names.[48]

However the Stranger attempts to give one single name to the sophist's techne that is, it is considered a form of *antilogics* [ἀντιλογικὸν, 232 b4]. Yet this also leads the discussion into a consideration of the subject matter the sophist engages with, which involves exposing the "field of ἀντιλέγειν",[49] which is a field which again resembles that which the philosopher inhabits. However, the antilogical, according to the Stranger, reveals the *topography* of sophistic discourse, its subject and subject matter specifically. Essentially *antilogics* deals with: (a)

---

[47] *Soph.* 232 a1-8

[48] This certainly refers us back to some fundamental problems of the discourse on onomastic propriety discussed

[49] Heidegger 1997: 265

"Divine things which are invisible to others [περὶ τῶν θείων, ὅσ' ἀφανῆ τοῖς πολλοῖς]," that is, the sophist makes visible the divine which is essentially ἀφανῆ, non-phenomenal or invisible. He brings into visibility all that concerns the divine. (b) "Visible things of earth and heaven and the like [ὅσα φανερὰ γῆς τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα]." Which suggests all that is φανερὰ, apparent, immediate or within view. (c) "Generation and being in general [γενέσεώς τε καὶ οὐσίας περί κατὰ πάντων]," which is overtly linked to the aforementioned subjects (of the divine and the earthly), thus the sophist constitutes an "ontology" in terms of γένεσις and οὐσίας and finally (d) "Laws and public affairs [περὶ νόμων καὶ ξυμπάντων τῶν πολιτικῶν]." Apart from the notable philosophical propriety over subjects which the sophist engages, the propriety of the statesmen or the *politicus* is infringed upon here. The sophist claims propriety over the issues of νόμος and whatever concerns the polis.[50] The "field of ἀντιλέγειν" conceals the sophist even further, since he again is inscribed within the opening problematic of the dialogue, the difference between the philosopher, statesman and sophist.[51]

The polytechnical competence of the sophist presents itself as a problem for the Stranger, since he has already presented himself within the "field" of both politics and philosophy. It suggests that the sophist's relation to his subject matter is not itself a singular relation but rather manifold. It is agreed that it is impossible [ἀδύνατον] to know all things [πάντα ἐπίστασθαι] and that "it is a sort of knowledge based upon mere opinion [δοξαστικὴν] that the sophist has been shown to possess about all things, not true knowledge [οὐκ ἀλήθειαν]".[52] It is not difficult to see how the Stranger's accusation is aimed less at the sophist himself (since he has yet been

---

[50] This sense of philosophical propriety is legitimized both in the *Republic* and the dialogue on the *Statesman* which of course can be read as a prelude to the problems considered in the *Sophist*.

[51] It should be assumed that the Statesman or Politicus has already been identified (that is, in terms of his genos) in the *Theaetetus*. The *Sophist* essentially needs to diacritically determine the difference between sophist and philosopher, moreover to work over certain *homoiological* traits.

[52] *Soph.* 233 c6

captured, made present or rendered presentable) but rather at a particular kind of practitioner of antilogical discourse; the *antilogician*. However the Stranger attempts to designate the *antilogical* discourse as a sophistic property.[53] It could be said that, either out of prudence or rather, let us say, philosophical "autarchicism", the Stranger is seeking to chase the sophist out of the philosopher's terrain or *topos*. However, it is necessary to ask, how is it that the *antilogical* or what is understood in the word ἀντιλογικὸν that we come within view of another resemblance with the *elenchus*?[54] In what way do these two technai resemble each other, a relation which Kerferd argues "applies equally well"?[55] How, in fact, does the sophist find himself associated with two fields of techne?[56]

10.5.1 Sophist as Mimetician: The Art of Jugglery and Play in Logos

Having agreed upon the fact that it is impossible to know all or many things and that antilogical reasoning is the effect of this polytechny, the Stranger again asks, "what is then the magical power of the sophistic art? [τὸ τῆς σοφιστικῆς δυνάμεως θαῦμα;]" and here there is, as it was the case in the *Republic* when accounting for the mimetic subject, that an immediate relation to the *thaumatopoios*, the juggler and trickster is discerned. It is against the background of this

---

[53] See *Theaetetus* 154d f.

[54] In the *Phaedrus* (261 c4-e5) Socrates designates 'antilogics as a practise of the Eleatic philosopher Palamedes (Zeno of Elea?). However it is a techne of discourse or logos (contradictory in its movement, contrary to 'dialectics') which Plato conclusively argues the sophists above all employ. Ἡ ἀντιλογικὴ is described as a techne of logos which is able "to produce a resemblance [ὁμοιοῦν] between all things, which is achieved through disguise and dissimulation [ἀποκρυπτομένος]. Yet conclusively 'antilogics' is described in this passage as ἄτεχνον, that is to say, artless, a non-techne.

[55] Kerferd makes much of the results of the fifth definition applying equally well to the method described in the sixth definition, that is, antilogics and elenchus. Kerferd 1954: 89.

[56] Plato has warned us of how it is possible to mistake 'antilogics' for dialectics. In *Rep.* 454 a4-5, Socrates makes issue of how the power of antilogics [ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἀντιλογικῆς τέχνης] can dissimulate itself or misrepresent itself as dialectics, when it is *not* [οὐ διαλέκτῳ].

delimitation that the sophist's techne is associated to the *thauma*, to the juggler's tricks and magical conjuring. The sophist will be identified—like the poet, rhapsode, painter before him—with the mimetic genos, a family of imitators. In point of fact, it is because the imitative arts (beyond their expression of being a form of artistic and charming play)[57] are diverse and differentiated [ποικιλώτατον, 234 b3] that the sophist is associated with it. His proficiency and skill in many things renders and presents him as most adept in mimesis, in the making of copies and simulacra. The Stranger goes on in the chase for the sophist, having located him in another terrain or *topos* altogether, there within the world of simulacra and phantasms.

> "And so we recognize that he who professes to be able by virtue of a single
>
> art to make all things will be able by virtue of the painter's art
>
> [ἀπεργαζόμενος τῇ γραφικῇ τέχνῃ], to make imitations [μιμήματα] which
>
> have the same names as the real things [ὁμώνυμα τῶν ὄντων], and by showing
>
> the pictures at a distance will be able to deceive the duller ones among young
>
> children into the belief that he is perfectly able to accomplish in fact whatever
>
> he wishes to do."[58]

This is precisely, mutatis mutandis, the type of analogy that the Stranger wants to instate. The sophist is submitted to the schema of mimesis which the "painter's art [τῇ γραφικῇ τέχνῃ]" paradigmatically subscribes to. By reference to the painter the Stranger goes beyond the limits of what philosophy has circumscribed within the *mimetic* realm; every art and discourse which is mimetically invested. The zoographic or graphic arts are designated not only as paradigmatically mimetic, but furthermore they form the principal paradigm of what the *mimetic* involves. Unceasingly Plato refers back to painting or zoography (the purely mimetic art) to essentially

---

[57] See *Soph.* 234 b1-2

[58] *Soph.* 234 b2-9

propose and translate mimesis in its specular sense, that is, it is eidetically determined. It is clear, at this point of the dialogue, that what is at issue is the question of representation, that is, strictly speaking of mimesis. The sophist will be topologically inscribed within the mimetic, moving always outside and beyond the eidos and philosophy as such. The sophist is determined (through his constant evasions and many guises) as a subject of non-presence and non-truth and the incompatibility between mimesis and the truth can never be more clearly asserted through this repeated reference to the painter's art.

The fact remains however, that though this analogy proposes the sophist as *mimetician* or as mimetic subject, he is different to the painter in that his mimetic investments are far removed from the visible, eidetic or purely representational nature of the painter's art. The sophist uses logos and not the painter's colors, shades and lines, that is, he uses a linguistic medium to make his representations and does not appropriate the fundamental media of the zoographic techne. Let us consider how the Stranger conceives this difference;

> "May we not expect to find that there is another art which has to do with words [περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἆρ᾿ οὐ προσδοκῶμεν εἶναί τινα ἄλλην τέχνην] by virtue of which it is possible to bewitch the young through their ears with words while they are still standing at a distance from the realities of truth, by exhibiting to them spoken images of all things [δεικνύντας εἴδωλα λεγόμενα περὶ πάντων], so as to make it seem that they are true and that the speaker is the wisest of all men in all things?"[59]

This reference to false *legein* or to an *eidoiologic* discourse [εἴδωλα λεγόμενα] brings us in close proximity to the sophist and his techne. Foremost it asserts the close relation between his techne and mimesis, especially in relation to *legein*. Indeed, the Stranger explains that these

discourses are sophistic in essence as they bewitch [τοῖς λόγοις γοητεύειν] and are exhibited as "spoken images" [εἴδωλα λεγόμενα].

It is immediately clear that there has been a change in the way we must approach the sophist's techne. The *diaeretic* moment of the dialogue has been unable to successfully inscribe the sophist within the genera and species so far identified. How does one approach the sophist? How does one identify him, if not by identifying his constant appearance at a break or incision, that is, *between* the fork, the bifurcation of the *diaeretic* strategy. At 235 a 2, the Stranger contends the sophist is "a kind of juggler, an imitator of realities" [τῶν γοήτων ἐστί τις, μιμητὴς ὢν τῶν ὄντων], he vacillates *between* two possibilities. Now it is precisely as γόητας and as μιμητὴς that we can comprehend the many evasions of the sophist between numerous bifurcations. The juggler and imitator always moves in his praxis towards dissimulation, apocryphy. The sophist who howls out enchantments, who is a sorcerer of words, of *logoi*, the enchanter of the ignorant and the young constantly presents himself as *double*. He can never be identified, made present. Through his juggling acts and many guises he evades, absconds ontological identification. The sophist is the principal master of "play", his business, as the Stranger asserts, is "play" [τῶν τῆς παιδιᾶς μετεχόντων ἐστί, 235 a6].

It is clear that a different recourse should be taken now in order to approach the sophist, and the Stranger's new approach involves adopting a different stratagem which will entrap the sophist in the "encircling net" [ἐν ἀμφιβληστρικῷ] of their logos. This suggests a hermeneutic trap will be set up that will make the captured sophist present before the philosopher, victim to his analytic scrutiny. The Stranger explains to Theaetetus:

"Look sharp, then; it is now our business not to let the beast get away again

---

[59] *Soph.* 234 c1-8

["Αγε δή, νυςν ἡμέτερον ἔργον ἤδη τὸν θηςρα μηκέτ' ἀνεῖναι], for we have almost got him into a kind of encircling net of the devices we employ in arguments about such subjects [σχεδὸν γάρ αὐτὸν περιειλήφαμεν ἐν ἀμφιβληστρικῶ τινι τῶν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις περὶ τᾶ τοιαῦτα ὀργάνων], so that he will not now escape the next thing." [ὥστε οὐκέτ' ἐκφεύξεται τόδε γε]."

There has been a generic identification made by the Stranger and Theaetetus when submitting to the definition of the sophist as γόητας and μιμητὴς. The sophist is said to belong to "the class of conjurers [...τοῦ γένους εἶναι τοῦ τῶν θαυματοποιῶντες τις εἶς],"[60] the class of the makers of *thaumata*, miracles, apparitions and phantoms. Another *diaeresis* is necessary before we are able to identify the sophist who now apparently belongs to the genos of *thaumatopoioi*; the class of conjurers, jugglers and wonder-workers.

"It is decided, then, that we will as quickly as possible divide the image making art [Δέδοκται τοίνυν ὅτι τάχιστα διαιρεῖν τὴν εἰδωλοποιικὴν τέχνην] and go down into it [καὶ καταβάντας εἰς αὐτήν], and if the sophist stands his ground against us at first [ἐὰν μὲν ἡμᾶς εὐθὺς ὁ σοφιστὴς ὑπομείνῃ], we will seize him by the orders of reason, our king, then deliver him up to the king and display his capture [συλλαβεῖν αὐτὸν κατὰ τὰ ἐπεσταλμένα ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ λόγου, κἀκείνῳ παραδόντας ἀποφῆναι τὴν ἄγραν]. But if he tries to take cover in any of the various sections of the imitative art [ἐὰν δ' ἄρα κατὰ μέρη τῆς μιμητικῆς δύηταί πη], we must follow him, always dividing the section into which he has retreated, until he is caught [ξυνακολουθεῖν αὐτῷ διαιροῦντας ἀει τὴν ὑποδεχομένην αὐτὸν

---

[60] *Soph.* 235 b5

μοῖραν, ἔωσπερ ἂν ληφθῇ]. For assuredly neither he nor any other creature

will ever boast of having escaped from pursuers who are able to follow up the

pursuit in detail and everywhere in this methodical way." [πάντως οὔτε οὗτος οὔτε ἄλλο γένος οὐδὲν μή ποτε ἐκφυγὸν ἐπεύξηται τὴν

τῶν οὕτω δυναμένων μετιέναι καθ᾽ ἕκαστά τε καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα μέθοδον]."[61]

Up until this point of the dialogue it is noted by the Stranger that the sophist is constantly

appearing and disappearing within the sections [μέρη] the diaeresis has so far identified. It is by

realizing that it is in the ontological determination of the sophist's being (how he figures or

appears within every bifurcation) that the Stranger is able to methodically pursue him every time

he retreats within the nexus of the philosopher's *diaeretic* strategy. The ontological problematic

(*who* is the sophist?) is pursued with an effectiveness which is not at all discrete and one can

suggest absolutely brutal, as there is an insistence to track him down, capture him and present

him to kingly reason [τοῦ βασιλικοῦ λόγου]; deliver the sophist as victim before the sovereignty

and illustrious authority of the philosopher. Again in the pursuit of the sophist, the method of

division [τρόπον τῆς διαιρέσεως] is applied to determine which of the two classes of mimesis

[δύο...εἴδη τῆς μιμητικῆς] the sophist belongs to. It is precisely this inability to locate and name

the sophist within one of these two forms or εἴδη of mimesis that the Stranger and Theaetetus

adjudge a philosophical necessity to return to the method of division originally appealed to.

10.6 The Two *Eidê* of Mimesis: The Internal Division of *Eidolopoiêkê*

There is tied to this potential abortion of the original diaeresis, a final division made, that of

mimesis. It attempts to determine which of its two forms the sophist is subsumed under. How is it

possible to reconstitute the network and logic of Plato's concept of mimesis in the *corpus*

platonicum. In the *Sophist* the concept of mimesis presents itself as an extremely complex idea

---

[61] *Soph.* 235 b5-c7

and especially in terms of its designated subject; that is to say, when we attempt to constitute it or understand it in relation to the sophistic subject as such. Though the sophist remains a dispersed figure whose identity escapes us, there is in effect a belief that possibly we have arrived at a final bifurcation. It is neither pure accident, nor a kind of simple transition, that the question of mimesis will finally aid the Stranger and Theaetetus in the ontological determination of the sophistic subject. The diaeresis up until this point obviously remains very schematic (identifying genus-species relations within a pyramidal schematization) and having not yet taken into account the impasse the diaeretic operations of the dialogue has now inscribed, the Stranger precariously gets caught up in the tangle of the sophist's *mimetism* which he endeavors to classify. In spite of the growing distrust of the sophist and his genos (namely the *thaumatopoioi*), the Stranger is guided by an unequivocal affiliation with the metaphysics of identity and presence, which obviously the sophist altogether eludes and subsequently belies. The efforts of the Stranger lead his search to a suspect *topos*, outside and beyond philosophy, that is, within the *topos* of copies [*eikastic*] and simulacra [*phantasmatic*].

The two *eidê* of mimesis have weakened the first diaeresis and despite the Stranger's admonitions of the sophist given he cannot make out which eidos of mimesis applies to him,[62] the problem, as I shall later illustrate, is bound to the problem of "the *tropos* of diaeresis [...τρόπον τῆς διαιρέσεως]" which the investigation employs. Essentially it is a *tropos* which cannot identify or clarify the nature of the sophist. The tropos it will be noted is not fueled by dialectics, it is not regulated by a dialectical conception. Certainly the Stranger's avowed plan is to avoid the aporetic crossroads that mimesis has revealed at this stage of the dialogue.

What exactly is the difference between these two *eidê* of mimesis discovered? Is it a difference founded on the classic Platonic notation of original and copy? The first eidos of

---

[62] See *Soph.* 235 d2-4

mimesis; the *eikastic* [τὴν εικαστικὴν τέχνην, 235 d6] is most certainly dependent on this Platonic binarism, since by rule, the *eikastic* (the likeness making art) is an imitation or representation following the proportions (length, breadth and depth) of the original; of a referent model or paradigm [τοῦ παραδείγματος]. Among all the traits of this eidos of mimesis is the *eikastic* reproduction of a likeness; it produces an icon (an *eikon*) keeping within view the paradigm or the eidos. In other words, it is a homoiological relation to the paradigm (model or original) that determines the nature of the *eikon* produced. The *eikastic* involves "copying" pure and simple; it follows the principle of *homoiosis*.[63]

An analysis of the second eidos of mimesis remains. Though indispensable, it appears to radically work outside this classic Platonic notation. The *phantastic* [φανταστικὴν, 236 c4] appears like or bears a semblance to [φαίνεται] the paradigm; it does not bear a true likeness or εἰκόνα. It cannot be properly classified among the copies or productions which bear a resemblance to the original. The *phantastic* is common to the paradigm with the exception of detail, for the artists of *phantasmata* "give their figures not the actual proportions but those that seem to be beautiful [καλόν]." The Stranger describes the *phantasma* as that which "appears to be something without actually being similar to that something [ἐπείπερ φαίνεται μέν, ἔοικε δὲ οὔ, φάντασμα; 236 b]. "

Certainly there is an internal division in *eidolopoiêke*; a duplication of mimesis as such. In both the *eikastic* and *phantastic* forms of mimesis we see the paradox of both *being* like and unlike their referent paradigm, since for obvious reasons both mimetic productions are not the original as such. Yet the Stranger decides and maintains that one eidos of mimesis, namely the

---

[63] Sörbom actually contributes an important insight regarding the two kinds of *mimesis*, expressing that it is a homoiological relation maintained by the *eikon* with respect to its referent paradigm that differentiates it from the *phantasma*. The *eikon* follows the precepts of being *like* its model, it carries a pure relationship of resemblance. See Sörbom 1966: 157-8.

phantastic, is ontologically more problematic for it is something *other* than the paradigm, it is indistinguishably or unidentifiably an appearance or *phantasma*. The *phantastic* presents to us something which in essence is *other*, unlike and dissimilar to the paradigm. So in the *phantasma* we may observe a very strange ontological relation to the paradigm. The *phantasma* is essentially the supplement of the original precisely because it does not assure a relation of *homoiosis*, of absolute similitude to the paradigm; it is not εἰκός, like or similar.[64] In a definition that leaves no room for doubt, the Stranger decides that the *phantastic* is "the art which produces a *phantasma* (an illusive appearance or simulacrum), but not a likeness [Τὴν δή φάντασμα ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰκόνα ἀπεργαζομένην, 236 c3]."

The Stranger has already invoked as a proper conception of mimesis the proper representation of a paradigm in the *eikastic* illustration. The *eikastic* entails a re-presentation of the original following an ontological order of similitude; of *homoiosis*. Whence mimesis has now been subsumed by a techne. The technical term εἰδωλοποιικῆς has placed or confined mimesis within the order of a techne thus follows the law of adequation. Mimesis is used at this stage of the dialogue interchangeably with the *eidolopoieic*,[65] it is subsumed by techne, that is to say, it follows a prescribed technical order and structure. But is that the propriety of mimesis? Is mimesis limited to the injunction of a techne? Is it properly, in its onto-mimetological determination, presupposed by the *homoiological*? Should the Stranger be asking why the *eidolopoieic* divides itself? Is this an impropriety of mimesis, that it repeats itself in its representations?

---

[64] Τό εἰκός suggests that something (and in this case the image) is not "likely or probable" that is if we measure or determine it in terms of the model, paradigm or the actuality/truth of things as such. It suggests the image is apparently fitted to or seemingly appropriate to its model. Again, as always is the case with *mimesis*, it is a question of propriety.

[65] Stanley Rosen suggests that mimesis and *eidolopoieic* are used interchangeably. Rosen 1983: 312.

This paves the way for an interrogation of what exactly it is the sophist produces? However with the introduction of this ambiguous term *eidolon* (image), we are forced to consider more carefully its ontological relation to the paradigm, which in the Platonic determination becomes the intelligible eidos. The eidolon is an impoverished product. The Stranger describes it as aberrant and even deceitful precisely because it is able to supplant the original. Once again determining the ontological nature of εἴδωλα is to enter into a determination of sophistics, and because the eidolon (and especially one type of eidolon, the *phantasma*) remains unclassifiable and anomalous insofar as its ontological status is concerned, it problematically makes the "maker" of εἴδωλα, that is, the sophist, who by this stage is classified as an *eidolopoios*, an incredulous and questionable subject.

It is nonetheless true that mimesis moves and transforms the sophist to a number of figural determinations; it opens up many ontological possibilities insofar as his subject is concerned. If we argue that the paradigm of the zoographer is introduced[66] to discuss the question of *eidolopoiêkê* one might suggest that the question of the figure, the image (*eidolon*) in a very intricate manner raises the problem the Stranger encounters in positing the figure of the sophist. This is only so because the sophist evades him as a phantasm or phantasmatic figure. It is this *figuration* that unfolds in this adoption or appraisal of the new paradigm. The stranger wishes ultimately to achieve making a portrait or a portrait sketch and figuration of the sophist.[67] Could there be a moment where having arrived at the portrait of the sophist (at the end of the diaeretic exercise) that we have rather confronted the figure of the philosopher? Is there a complicity or even figural contamination of the figure of the philosopher? Could there have been such a denouement whereby the effect of representing the sophist almost always delivers before us the philosopher instead?

---

[66] See *Soph.* 234 b4

By this stage a distinction has not been achieved, as if to suggest the philosopher and sophist belong to the same family or genos. The question of *eidolopoiêkê* is embarked upon or appraised hopefully to achieve what the method of *diaeresis* failed to accomplish to delineate, the distinction between the philosopher and sophist and this is overwhelmingly a moment of identification, that is, identifying within the same, the philosopher, and in the other, the sophist. The diaeretic confirmation of εἰδωλοποιηκὴ, given it is presented as a technical circumvention of mimesis proceeds from the assimilation of techne, making it accessible to conceive or interpret mimesis in terms of the *eikastic*. However the internal division of εἰδωλοποιηκὴ delivers the *phantastic* and the sophist is brought subsequently within the horizon of the *phantastic*, which in fact displaces the position of the sophistic question. The sophist is caught in the graft of this internal division and it is this diaeretic juncture that presents the logic of the double bind, which in Cornford's words becomes "the problem of the εἴδωλον".[68] Certainly what the internal division, and the resultant double bind of this diaeresis, invites is for us to think that the philosopher must always confront at least two figures of the sophist or one figure that is always already "double". Everything seems to point to the fact that this "internal division" of εἰδωλοποιηκὴ[69] muddles the distinction between two sophists. It is for this reason that the division of the *eidolopoiec* is connected to the philosophical compulsion to discover the philosopher.

---

[67] See Rosen 1983.

[68] Cornford 1935: 322-323. Cornford believes that at this point of the dialogue Plato is merely "shelving the *eidolon* problem" (and it arguably and unconvincingly in my case) appears again in the final diaeresis and resolved (for most commentators) when the "falsity" of *eidola* is proven. Cornford argues that the *eidola* problem "is meant to recall the contrast of reality and appearance as set forth in the *Republic*".

[69] Richard Bluck argues that the inability to situate or locate the sophist within one of the two *eide* of *mimesis* is related precisely to the problem of *eidola*. "Image making as a whole is baffling". See Bluck 1975: 60.

How this problematic of the sophistic subject can be overcome has more to do with determining the terms and language of the enquiry as already the philosophical quandary is caught up in absence, non-being and the otherness of the sophist. Given the nature of the aletheic determination of the first diaeresis, how can the Stranger supersede this aporia or caesura in the discourse on the sophist? Would it not involve a consideration of the shortfalls in their own logos and thus in a renewed manner approach the nature of logos in general?

Chapter Eleven

The Caesura within Discourse

Stranger: Then those who participate in all those governments- with the
exception of the scientific one [τῆς ἐπιστήμονος ἀφαιρετέον]- are to be eliminated
as not being statesmen, but partisans [οὐκ ὄντας πολιτικοὺς ἀλλὰ στασιαστικούς];
and since they preside over the greatest counterfeiters, they are themselves counterfeits
[καὶ εἰδώλων μεγίστων προστάτας ὄντας καὶ αὐτοὺς εἶναι τοιούτους], and
since they are the greatest of imitators and cheats, they are the greatest of all sophists
[μεγίστους δὲ ὄντας μιμητὰς καὶ γόητας μεγίστους γίγνεσθαι τῶν σοφιστῶν
σοφιστά].

Politicus 303 b9-c3

11. 1   The Double Bind in the First Diaeresis.

It is this abandonment of the *diaeretic* method that needs to be examined now. Why this most
commented section in the scholia on the *Sophist*[1] has been given such philosophical import and
prominence most probably comes down to the incomplete and inconclusive results of the first
diaeresis. The Stranger himself acknowledges "the difficult nature of the *skepsis* or investigation
[ἐν παντάπασι χαλεπῇ σκέψει]" for we have been led to a strange and puzzling bifurcation
within the discourse on the sophist, which remains indistinct and almost impossible to logically
render intelligible. But again what evades us is the figure of the sophist or a certain figuration
which is left untraceable. And could this be precisely the nature of the ontological determination

---

[1] See *Soph.* 236 e ff.

of the sophist, his *being* as such? In seeking the sophist are we merely trailing a phantom, an eidolon?

Since the Stranger's first diaeresis takes into account the sophist in his doubling or his dissimulation, which in many respects determines how necessary it is to "double" the diaeresis, to repeat it or reintroduce it and fill this lacuna, the philosopher himself subsequently cannot avoid becoming caught up in this double act. This loss of the sophist within the double bind of the first diaeresis (which undermines in advance any constitution of his genos and determination of his subject) essentially constitutes the real problematic of the dialogue. Since the sophist is strictly indissociable from the philosopher, the internal division of εἰδωλοποιηκὴ is essentially a division or splitting of mimesis, which "doubles" in its process of constitution and appropriation. But what should be noted here is that there is a constant though obscured breakdown of the *phantastic*, of all the resources of the *phantastic* techne in general. The *phantastic* deconstructs at least as much as it helps construct, it dissimulates as much as it simulates, it conceals as much as it reveals. More precisely, the *phantastic* continually *alters* what it constructs, so much so, that we might suggest that the diaeresis[2] is the *phantastic* mechane which has thus far fulfilled the specular doubling of the sophist's figure.

Obviously the diaeresis in the dialogue's first moment was not totalizing or homogenizing in its division of genuses. It concedes in its interruption that the question of the sophist remains open, so much so, that the sophist even presented himself within the most legitimate genos, the philosopher's tribe or family. We could possibly suggest that the most difficult moment of the dialogue, after the abandonment of the philosopher-hunter's *tropos* of diaeresis, is that it has encountered an interdiction where the diaeresis is interrupted by a

---

[2] The *logic* of diaeresis is one which in essence brings it into the field of the *mimetic*, since it is mechanized or put to work by virtue of *homoiologies* and *heterologies*.

methodological limit; the limitations of its own method. This interdiction has not failed to lead us to a more genuinely Platonic moment in the dialogue, what Platonists and other philosophers would recognize as the more philosophical moment of the *Sophist*.[3] It is connected to the first diaeresis only by way of reinstating its *subject*. To designate the sophist within the last division of *eidolopoiêkê* (that is, in either *eikastike* or *phantastike*) it is necessary to prove that non-being [μή ὄν] and falsehood [ψευδός] in some way exist, which is a philosophical position that exceeds and contradicts Parmenides' ontology. And what is fundamentally exceeded here is the Stranger's filiations with the logos of the father, the founder of the Eleaticism he initially identified with.

11.2 First Aporia : The Sophist's Eidos and τὸ μὴ ὄv

At this stage we have seen (with the interruption of the first diaeresis) that the sophist has withdrawn εἰς ἄπορον εἶδος,[4] that is, he resides within an aporetic, impenetrable eidos. And we know that it is the problem the philosopher has encountered; that in not being able to identify or determine a proper sophistical techne, so as to better understand the nature of the sophist's productions, he has failed to effectively penetrate the sophist's eidos. For above all, the sophist does not order his activities, his poiesis according to the imperative of a techne. But all the same, the sophist paradoxically lays claim to a techne, however it is problematically linked to a phantasmatic content that remains insubstantial, unidentifiable and philosophically spurious.

---

[3] Some commentators of the *Sophist* have remained sceptical over philosophers' (especially modern logicians) methodological diminution of other questions posed or themes investigated in the dialogue (namely the ontological problematic). Such a "scalpel" approach (to use Tigerstedt's expression for reductive hermeneutics, see Tigerstedt 1969) subsequently overplays and accentuates this particular section of the dialogue (259 e) however to more or less foreground issues in modern logical theory (i.e problems of identity and predication or more radically "the self-predication of forms" etc.). See De Rijk 1986: 9-10. De Rijk expresses skepticism to the modification of the "Theory of Ideas" by modern logicians.

[4] *Soph.* 262 d2

However the sophist will be sublated in and through philosophy for in being a subject who "speaks falsehood [ψευδῆ λέγειν]" and moreover "opines that falsehood really exists [δοξάζειν ὄντως εἶναι, 236 e5]" he will thus be exposed by the dialectics that undoes enantiologies (discourses of contradictions), for what this *aporia* problematically implies is that non-being exists [...ὁ λόγος οὗτος ὑποθέσθαι τὸ μὴ ὂν εἶναι, 237 a1].

Let us beware of opposing philosophy to sophistics, for what we discover in the dialogue's unfolding is that both the improbability of non-being and the difficulty of such a hypothesis (which is enantiological in essence) refers this discourse on the sophist not to sophistics as such, but back to philosophy, and more specifically to Parmenides. From this moment on the Stranger takes leave of the sophist and the classic Parmenidean maxim is recanted to conceive the ontological problematic; the problem of τὸ μὴ ὄν, in terms of the history of ontology.

> "Never let this thought prevail, saith he, that non-being is
>
> [εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα]. But keep your mind from this way of
>
> investigating."[5]

Traditional philosophical (Eleatic) discourse founds itself on this particular understanding of the problem of non-being. It seems imperative to the Stranger to examine the premises of this Parmenidean position. The Stranger will discover, of course, that not only is there no ontology free from the problem of τὸ μὴ ὄν, but moreover he discovers that the idea of τὸ ὄν (being as such) reveals itself and uncovers the truth of τὸ μὴ ὄν. Careful philosophical consideration and reverence is first given to the Parmenidean maxim. Addressing an important question which deems the ontological problematic a problem inherent in the Eleaticism examined, the Stranger asks, "To what is the designation non-being [τὸ μὴ ὄν] to be applied?

Logically the answer is negative; it cannot be applied (a) "to any being [τῶν ὄντων ἐπί τι τὸ μὴ ὂν οὐκ οἰστέον]" nor (b) "to something [οὐδ' ἐπὶ τὸ τὶ, 237 c5]."

The reference to Parmenides' maxim can be read as a denouement in the dialogue, since the paradox constituting the conception of being and non-being needs to be retracted so as to promulgate the ontological problematic. "The first and greatest aporia yet remains [τῶν ἀποριῶν ἡ μεγίστη, 238 a2] which affects the very beginning of the matter [περὶ γὰρ αὐτὴν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀρχὴν οὖσα τυγχάνει, 238 a9-c5]." There is, according to the Stranger, another attribute added to the thing that is, some "other being" [τῶν ὄντων ἔτερον]. There is therefore a relation between a being and another being and the conception of number is raised to illustrate this relation, for there is an ontological relation when adding an attribute of being(s) (both singular and plural) to one thing that *is* [τῷ...ὄντι].[6] What is the significance of this "great aporia"? It perhaps anticipates the "ontological problematic" in a way that the discussion is forced to consider in what way non-being "is". It is precisely for this reason that the Stranger was not able to capture the sophist in the first diaresis because the phantasmatic topos in which the sophist retreated was seen to *not* exist in terms of truth.

One can recognize the proximity to the ontological problematic throughout this discourse, and that the difference between Eleatic ontology and that propounded by the anonymous Stranger (who comes out of the Eleatic position) is significant. For admitting the possibility of a relation between being and non-being will lead our reasoning to an enantiology and the Stranger is aware that there is no way to absorb "non-being" into any logos without falling into contradiction. If we take into account the description of the sophist's logos as εἴδωλα λεγόμενα, as the presentation of simulacra, we note that this is precisely the charge that

---

[5] *Soph.* 237 a6

[6] *Soph.* 238a9-c5

would have been brought against philosophy, given it engaged in the logos the sophist engages with. The Stranger explains to Theaetetus:

> "That it is impossible rightly to utter or to say or to think of non-being
>
> without any attribute…it is a thing inconceivable, inexpressible, unspeakable,
>
> irrational.[Συννοεῖς οὖν ὡς οὔτε φθέγξασθαι δυνατὸν ὀρθῶς οὔτ᾽ εἰπεῖν
>
> οὔτε διανοηθῆναι τὸ μὴ ὂν αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτό, ἀλλ᾽ ἔστιν αδιανόητόν τε καὶ
>
> ἄρρητον καὶ ἄφθεγητον καὶ ἄλογον;].”[7]

The essentially irrational dimension of this interrogation of non-being becomes clearer. It seems to anticipate what is at stake in the discourse on the sophist. The Stranger finds it difficult to speak correctly about non-being, that is, he cannot demonstrate "an orthology of non-being [τὴν ὀρθολογίαν περὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν…239 b5]." The question of non-being disallows the Stranger's discourse or logos any purity or propriety. The Stranger warns of the possibility of falling into an enantiology or of producing εἴδωλα. His discourse has complicated this elenchus by remarking complicity between non-being and logos. Thus the Stranger's logos cannot situate itself in an external and critical position with regard to its subject; τὸ μὴ ὄν, he cannot provide an orthology of non-being without embarking on a discourse operating on contradiction, that is, a discourse operating on sophistic terms. The Stranger's logos wants to retain a certain purity as thought, especially with respect to the question of being *as such*, it wants to retain orthological credulity. Certainly the Stranger is forced to consider τὸ μὴ ὄν in terms of logical correctness and rectitude and aver a mimetic or *phantastic* contamination of logos which constitutes the enantiological.

---

[7] *Soph.* 238 c7-9

11.3 Second Aporia: Sophistic *Eidola* and τὸ μὴ ὄν

There is not a hint of belief that we are coming closer to the sophist. The Stranger and Theaetetus confess that the sophist has in most dissimulative fashion "hidden himself in a place or *topos* we cannot explore [...εἰς ἄπορον ὁ σοφιστὴς τόπον καταδέδυκεν, 239 c7]." There is nothing surprising in this aporetic position the sophist has led the elenchus to. The Stranger admits to the weakness or impoverished conceptual orientation of their discourse [τῆς χρείας τῶν λόγων] and it is therefore not at all surprising that the sophist will be able to "overturn their discourse [αποστρέψει τοὺς λόγους]" and subsequently ask the philosopher, having named him εἰδωλοποιος, "what he exactly means by εἴδωλον or image [τί ποτε τὸ παράπαν εἴδωλον λέγομεν, 239 d2]" given the enormous etymological conundrum this term presents to the Stranger's discourse.[8]

Since the question of mimesis has already been introduced, the Stranger's allusion to the question of εἴδωλα is made with the quite conscious intent of reintroducing mimesis in relation to the ontological problematic. The term eidolon is interpreted within the general structure of mimesis. The essence of mimesis is the production of eidola in the broadest sense and it is in this way that it will be definitively circumscribed within the ontology of τὸ μὴ ὄν. However we shall return to this determination a little further on, for now let us consider the working definition of the eidolon, that is, the generalized meaning of the eidolon.

Replying to the sophist's question "what is an eidolon?" Theaetetus explains that they are "the reflections in water and in mirrors and those in paintings too, and sculptures and all the other things of the same sort [...τά τε ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι καὶ κατόπτροις εἴδωλα, ἔτι καὶ τὰ

γεγραμμένα καὶ τὰ τετυπωμένα καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα που τοιαῦτ' ἔσθ' ἕτερα].”[9] So the eidolon is defined essentially in terms of the *eidetic* (the visual or the visible), it is purely an appearance, a semblance; it is, to use Heidegger's terminology here, an "idol", that is to say, "the semblance (*anschein*) of pure outward appearance."[10] The determination of the eidolon thus presupposes the eidos, it shows itself to be the reflection or appearance of an exteriority or "superficial" being; a "little eidos."[11] This however does not suggest that it is small in stature, but rather as a quality of representation (insofar as it remains a copy of the eidos) it is slight, small or negligible in value precisely because it is a representation of the eidos only in a superficial and generalized way.[12]

The question of eidola however would require extremely delicate analysis if Theaetetus wished the sophist to see its different eidetic modalities. The Stranger warns Theaetetus, the sophist will profess blindness or that "he has no eyes at all" [οὐκ ἔχειν ὄμματα] and that "he will question you only about that which is deduced from your words [τὸ δ' ἐκ τῶν λόγων ἐρωτήσει σε μόνον, 240 a3]". Thus everything is limited (in the sophist's mind) to the consequences of the philosopher's words or logos or what emerges or comes out of his discourse [ἐκ τῶν λόγων].

---

[8] The εἴδωλον in Homer is an "insubstantial" semblance of the real. Odysseus sees the *eidolon* of his mother whom when he embraces escapes him like a shadow or dream [*Od.* 11 206-14]. Also the *eidolon* of Aeneas deceives the Greeks and Trojans [*Il.* 5 449-53].

[9] *Soph.* 239 d5-6

[10] Heidegger 1991: 186. In book ten of *Republic* we already noted how the "idol" is measured against the order of truth or the eidos, since it is assumed by the paradigm of the mirror, water reflections and the graphic and typographic representations that it is insubstantial and enters into being (as non-being) by the presupposition of an eidos.

[11] See *Rep.* 598 b5-8 where the εἴδωλον is described as σμικρόν...εἴδωλον.

[12] Much is made by Lacoue-Labarthe regarding the diminutive quality of the εἴδωλον especially because it is conception based on the theory of forms, the εἴδωλον presupposes the eidos, it is secondary to it. See Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 87.

What we might conclude from this is that the definition of eidolon presupposes the commentary on what follows Theaetetus' "paradigm of the mirror"[13] and other such graphic and typographic presentations. The commentary involves fastidiously deciding upon the ontological status of the eidolon, that is, insofar as its relationship to logos or discourse is concerned. Clearly, the eidetic example will not ratify Theaetetus' definition by example and the sophist will demand how the eidolon relates to logos or discourse properly speaking.[14] Within logos it would be difficult to expose the eidolon to the presupposition of an eidos by way of the eidetic example and, as I have previously stated, this is precisely what affects the interruption of the first diaeresis.

Theaetetus restates his explanation of the eidolon by definition, rather than by referring to its exemplars.[15] The eidolon in Theaetetus' second definition is essentially "another such thing fashioned in the likeness of the true one [εἴδωλον...εἶναι πλήν γε τὸ πρὸς τἀληθινὸν ἀφομιωμένον ἕτερον τοιοῦτον,]."[16] There is certainly no ambiguity here, if we consider that in this second definition the commentary in book ten of the *Republic* reappears, the question of mimesis; of "representation" as such, that is, of mimesis in relation to the eidos or *aletheia*. This second definition of eidolon certainly constitutes a hiatus since it forces upon the discourse a final contradiction, that is, if the eidolon "is like the true [τὸ ἀληθινὸν]" then it logically follows that it is nothing other than the untrue or that which is *not* true [τὸ μὴ ἀληθινὸν, 240 b2], it is opposite of the true [...ἐναντίον ἀληθοῦς].[17] It is clear though, that the nature of this contradiction allows for both the Stranger and Theaetetus to abandon traditional ontologics (i.e.

---

[13] Similar use of the "paradigm of the mirror" in *Rep.* 596 d9-e4.

[14] See *Theaet.*206 e8- d4 for a specular description of logos.

[15] The example by definition is denotative of the structure of mimesis, since the or any "example" *as such* provides a model or indicates the thing as such, as is the case of the "mirror" being an instance of or is mimetically indicative of what an *eidôlon* is.

[16] *Soph.* 240 a8

[17] Thus "not true" μὴ ἀληθινὸν. See *Soph.* 240 b6.

Eleatic ontology) and point toward a purely Platonic terrain which brings into their discourse, out of necessity and in a restricted way, the conception of the Platonic eidos.

It is certain that the ontological problematic has marked the discourse. The problem of τὸ μὴ ὄν and whether it "is" cannot by definition be completely subsumed by a rigorous ontological order. We are made aware, by way of the Stranger's observation that yet again "non-being" has got into an entanglement with being [...συμπλοκὴν τὸ μὴ ὄν τῷ ὄντι, 240 c1]. At this point, having observed this *symplokê* of non-being and being, it should be clear that the entire question of the eidolon (and consequently the entire investigation regarding the sophistic subject and his genos) is caught within this *symplokê*. What has made the philosopher *atopos* on this question? Essentially, in admitting a likeness or *eikona* "really does exist [ὄντως ἐστὶν]" the philosopher is forced to concede that "non-being exists in a way [τὸ μὴ ὄν...εἶναί πως, 240 c5]." The eidolon subsequently is still caught in the tension that entangles τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν and for this reason there is no solidarity in the conception of the eidolon as "non-being" pure and simple. For though traceably it is non-being, in effect "it *is* in some way or manner of speaking. [εἶναί πως]."[18]

Now the question posed for the philosopher is how to confront the many-headed sophist [ὁ πολυκέφαλος σοφιστὴς] within this classical problematic of the subject. At stake is, of course, an enormous question which is fundamentally the main question of this dialogue, and Heidegger repeatedly reminds us of this in his laborious commentary on the *Sophist*. Who is the sophist? What is his nature? And what of his genos? And this is no "irrelevant question" as Jason Xenakis wants us to believe, impertinently redirecting the thematics of the *Sophist* from the ontological problematic so as to better assert the so-called "logic" of the main section. The question of the

---

[18] The problem of the εἴδωλον (as Cornford has coined it) is that it both *is* and *is not* what it is the image of (i.e the eidos or original or paradigm). As Sallis and Cornford before him argue, it is the undecidable ontological status of the εἴδωλον which problematizes the enquiry. See Sallis 1975: 488.

sophist and his genos is certainly the decreeing subject of the dialogue, as it is a question of the *subject* as such, it is entangled in the whole problematic of the subject.

The question of the sophistic subject cannot be elucidated, according to the Stranger, unless the more abstruse question of how can we define the sophistic techne without falling into contradiction or an enantiology is contested.[19] The enantiologies so far encountered are completely rooted in the diaeretic method which sought to delimit "sophistics". The Stranger cannot ignore the traditional ontologies appraised for the ontological problematic was revealed by the first diaeresis. Discussion concerning the section which commentators ascertained to be the major section of the dialogue; "the metaphysical kernel of the dialogue",[20] indirectly concedes to the fact that the question of the sophist cannot be subordinated to the philosophical concerns of modern logicians.[21] This would marginalize or misapprehend the importance of the inquiry into the sophist and his genos as such. What rather must be ratified is how the question of *sophistics* is measured against the question of ontological truth, a truth which refers precisely to the metaphysics of being and presence. What is found in such a situation is a concern which poses itself problematically in all attendant discourses on the *Sophist.*

---

[19] See *Soph.* 240 c8

[20] See Cornford 1935:188. There has been a structural division of the sophist that in essence delineates the "philosophically serious" part of the dialogue (on the question of non-being) which separates it from what is considered the dramatic exterior (the question of the sophist). Heidegger points out this traditional division in H.Bonitz who first used the metaphor of the shell/kernel structure of the *Sophist,* however argues (and I concur) "can breed pseudo-problems" and pleads his reader to free themselves from this "extrinsic division". See Heidegger.1997: 160-162. Also Friedlander moreover discovers a similar structural division of the dialogue except he introduces a new metaphor; "frame/picture (content). See Friedlander 1969: 258. Chadwick also accepts the traditional structural division of the dialogue. Chadwick 1984: 95.

[21] I particularly refer to how the question of the *symplokê* is seen as preempting modern logical theory about "truth statements" or predicative statements. See Owen 1971: 223-267; Ackrill 1955: 31-35 and 1957: 1-6. Also See Kahn 1966: 245-265; Moravcsik 1962: 23-78 and Malcolm 1967: 130-146.

It is hard to see, under these conditions, what the sophist's techne or art involves or on what rules or precepts it is based on. The Stranger nonetheless does retrieve an original philosophical suspicion of sophistics; that it is an art of deception [ἀπατητικὴν, 240 d1] and in eesence is founded on "false opinion" [ψευδῆ δοξάζειν, 240 d3]. However the Stranger and Theaetetus are still left designating to the sophist a techne which really "is not" a techne in the manner which all *technai* are, that is, a techne incorporating proper technical principles which produces substantive unfeigned and non-mimetic logoi. By inscribing "falsehood" [ψευδός] and "opinion" [δόξα] in the sophist's techne the Stranger is still forced into the admission that both falsehood and opinion are assignable to "non-being" and subsequently entrapped within another enantiology.

The Stranger states urgently the necessity to make a withdrawal from this issue concerning the sophist in order to aver the sophist's unfaltering polemic against the philosopher.[22] He thus requests a reconsideration of the Parmenidean position. The philosopher's atopic relation to its subject evidently augments the gravity of this caesura within the discourse on the sophist. The sophist cannot be caught;[23] his place, his status and his genos remain indistinct and undetermined. Since the εἴδωλον is caught up in the problem of τὸ μή ὄν, it is the proliferation of εἴδωλα which makes the task of catching the sophist difficult since εἴδωλα are infinite [ἀπεράντων] in their productions, so much so that the sophist remains inscribed within infinite *topoi*.

11.4   Philosophical Parricide: The Father's Logos as Mythos

What obstinately keeps together the philosophical exigencies stirred by the first diaeresis would seem to be (within the scope of the dialogue) an enantiology, a discourse or logos founded

---

[22] *Soph.* 241 c9

on contradictions and which furthermore promulgates contradictions. The opening of contradiction by way of discussing the status of τὸ μὴ ὄν appears analogically as a familiar Platonic opposition that is endorsed in the opposition between the original and the copy. The copy would be reduced to the negative and unreasonable conclusions of Eleatic ontologics. What is the status of the image or the eidolon in the history of ontology? Perhaps the maintenance of the eidolon's "being", that is, in the way it "is", ontologically speaking, in some way resists the metaphysical opposition of the cave allegory in book seven of the *Republic*? It seems necessary to ask ourselves under what conditions the Stranger (an Eleatic philosopher we must remind ourselves)[24] goes beyond the determinable principles of traditional ontologics. Ontology is uprooted both from the authority of the father's logos (Parmenides) and from the all-powerful constraints of the "unity of being" founded by the philosophy of the father. The Stranger's bold request to test and limit consequentially the authority of Eleatic ontology ensconces a concern of being misjudged or misinterpreted as "a sort of parricide" [Μή με οἷον πατραλοίον ὑπολάβῃς γίγνεσθαι τινα].[25] By exposing the vulnerability of the Eleatic position, by determining its disposability, we may argue the Stranger violently dissolves the classic episteme of ontologics, seeking an alternative path to clarifying the ontological problematic, the problem which in essence defines the dialogue's working. The Stranger explains,

"In defining myself I shall have to test the theory of my father Parmenides,

and contend forcibly that after a fashion not-being is on the other hand in a

sense being is not." [Τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς Παρμενίδου λόγον ἀναγκαῖον

---

[23] *Soph.* 240 c2

[24] The Stranger is not only a γένος ἐξ Ἐλέας but moreover a companion of Parmenides ἑταῖρον δὲ τῶν Παρμενίδην. See *Soph.* 216a 2-3.

[25] *Soph.* 241 d3. Heidegger argues that the fact the Stranger is "capable of patricide" is linked to the higher possibility of him being a "god" not as a "disguised Eleatic" and it is pending on this that he presents himself as a philosophical man "to be taken seriously in the matters at issue". Heidegger 1997: 166.

ἡμῖν ἀμυνομένοις ἔσται βασανίζειν, καὶ βιάζεσθαιτό τε μὴ ὂν ὡς ἔστι κατ

άτι καὶ τὸ ὂν αὖ πάλιν ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πῃ].”[26]

The possibility of parricide, of what will be rehearsed within the Stranger's logos as a philosophical parricide, is imported inside the Platonic context. And it is the prevalence granted to the Parmenidean logos, to the unity of its ontology, which opens up the space within the dialogue where it will be tested [βασανίζειν] by means of a violent departure. It goes without saying that this philosophical parricide emphasizes a movement or departure that informs the path of ontological engagement. Though it is done in a discontinuous and irruptive manner, by brutally examining or testing the father, it affirms an absolute difference between traditional ontologics and the new ontology revealed in the ensuing so-called "middle section" of the dialogue. However we must be wary to what degree this affirms an absolute break and whether the Stranger's ensuing logos restates the new ontology on the father's ground; on the most traditional and oldest ground.

What does the act of philosophical parricide consist of? What is suggested in this overturning of the paternal logos? Theaetetus confirms the necessity of the parricidal act; it is so plain "even to a blind man". [27] Though the Stranger has set down traditional ontology in its inaugural contradiction, he has furthermore set down its critique, by way of a complete reversal or *metabole*. There is sufficient reason to believe he has become μανικὸς or irrational, so extreme is his critique that it resulted in "the overturning of his own discourse [μεταβαλὼν ἐμαυτὸν ἄνω καὶ κάτω]." This metabole is only possible if we "challenge the paternal logos [ἐπιτίθεσθαι τῳ πατρικῷ λόγῳ]." According to the Stranger, a metabole withi̇ discourse (a philosophical metabole) carries out (and we are thinking here after Plato aṇd according to him) the parricidal act, that is, after having abandoned, or let us rather say killed the

[26] *Soph.* 241 d8
[27] *Soph.* 241 d7

figure of the father. In anticipating the parricidal act, the Stranger has furnished the premises of an ontology that will no longer be simply dominated by the father's unitarian conception of being. As Derrida correctly asserts, Parmenides is condemned because he neglects mimesis.[28] Yet, what does this neglect involve? This criticism of Parmenides' "ontology" can as such be judged according to his inattention or theoretical disregard of mimesis, this systematic omission or oversight of mimesis in his ontology. Parmenides fails to attend to or account for the mimetic proliferations of icons, eidola or the *phantasma*. Undoubtedly this amounts to instituting a logos which avers contradiction or systematic incoherence on the question of being and non-being. The Stranger does explain that,

> "Unless these statements are either disproved or accepted, noone who speaks
>
> about false words or false opinion [περὶ λόγων ψευδῶν λέγων ἢ δόξης]-
>
> whether images or likenesses or imitations or appearances [εἴτε εἰδώλων
>
> εἴτε εἰκόνων εἴτε μιμημάτων εἴτε φαντασμάτων]- or about the arts which
>
> have to do with them can ever help being forced to contradict himself
>
> [τὰ ἐναντία ἀναγκαζόμενος αὐτῷ λέγειν] and make himself
>
> ridiculous/laughable".[29]

What is implicit in the ontological problematic which Parmenides' ontology divulges is not only a noted neglect, but I will add, the continuous suppression of mimesis. It ignores and overlooks the very thing the sophist has proven himself to hide within by prohibiting the circulation of mimesis in his ontological theory. The authority of the Parmenidean logos is challenged precisely because the problem of mimesis has remained unnoticed. The paternal logos does not account and furthermore inhibits the elenchus of mimesis and its ontological supposition.

---

[28] Derrida 1981a: 186.

It is certain that the impoverishment of the entire discourse on ontology is also forcibly repelled. The most elementary ideas of traditional ontologics, and it is the early Ionian school, Herakleitos and Empedocles who are furthermore vehemently challenged, are founded carelessly.[30] According to the Stranger, his philosophical forefathers have promulgated philosophical mythoi, "every one of them seems to tell us a story, as if we were children [Μῦθόν τινα ἕκαστος φαίνεταί μοι διηγεῖσθαι παισὶν ὡς οὖσιν ἡμῖν, 242 c8]." From this situation, the child's logos (the 'son' if we recall Derrida here)[31] depreciates the logos of the father. The father's logos is presented or displayed to the son as a narrative, as a mythos, that is, not founded on truth and tainted by many and diverse modalities which disserves the dialectical rigor which the Stranger will later paradigmatically display. Subsequently the ensuing logos (the son's logos) not only imparts a suspicion of the paternal thesis it furthermore sets the ground by which to rectify the effect of sophistics. It is interesting to note that Plato legitimizes a different form of epistasis here; it has emerged in a similar manner to that inaugurated in book two of the *Republic* where the maternal logos is denounced and censured. In the context of the Parmenidean logos, the description of the father's logos as mythic in essence given it overlooks and neglects mimesis in its ontological logos, beyond its literary and rhetorical effect, again legitimizes, as it did in the *Republic*, the censure and the severing of lineages.

11.5   Being as Third Something [τρίτον τι]

Having ascertained the problem of τό μή ὄν, the Stranger furthermore recognizes that it harbors implicitly another problem, namely of τό ὄν. We also recognize now that according to the

---

[29] *Soph.* 241 e1-4

[30] *Soph.*242 c6

[31] Derrida's *Pharmacy* suggests that the *Phaedrus* would already be sufficient to exhibit the Platonic scene as the origin of a fundamental difference between the father (speech) and son (writing). Derrida 1981a.

Stranger some irreducible complicity lies between τό μή ὄν and τό ὄν, and from this *symplokê* we also see again that what is furthermore articulated within this ontological problematic is the lineal and tribal relationship of the philosopher and sophist.

Certainly the Stranger's critique of Parmenides and other fathers of philosophy is aimed only in some way at the proper restoration of its weakness and defects. The Stranger suggests that the method by which they can perform this critique and establish the critical scene is by way of questioning their forefathers directly, as if they were present [λέγω γὰρ δὴ ταύτῃ δεῖν ποιεῖσθαι τὴν μέθοδον ἡμᾶς, οἷον αὐτῶν παρόντων ἀναπυνθανομένους ὧδε, 243c9]. Theaetetus, who so far has been the passive respondent throughout this dialogue, takes on the position of the absent father, he speaks in place of the father, he becomes the representative voice of the father's logos; he speaks and answers for the father. The ensuing critique is intimately bound to the absence of the father. Theaetetus plays the father, he wears the father's *prosopon*, and he assumes the Eleatic mask. Certainly this mimetic recitation of the paternal logos is committed to fulfilling the parricidal act and the method is mimetic *in essence*.

The Stranger begins by asking his forefathers,[32] "what do you wish to mean or designate when you say 'being'? [τί ποτε βούλεσθε σημαίνειν ὁπόταν ὄν φθέγγησθε; 244 a4]." It is from a certain representation of the ontological arguments of the men of "ideas" [τῶν ἐν εἴδεσιν] and the men of matter or bodies (the atomists) [τῶν εἰς σῶμα] that the Stranger takes recourse to the propositions of the "aboriginal sons of the dragon's teeth" the sons of Cadmus, namely the atomists, who in some way admit within their ontology that both the incorporeal (the invisible, *aoraton*) and the corporeal (the sensible) exists.[33] The Stranger developing further this proposition that "both exist" [ἀμφότερα εἶναι], suggests their argument has been able to arrive at

---

[32] The Discourse on Ontologics resembles a *gigantomachy* that is in terms of who has resolved the ontological aporia. See *Soph.* 246 a4

[33] *Soph.* 247 d5

an ὅρον that is to say, a rule, standard or measure, whereby they can set up a working definition of being, "that it is nothing else than power [τίθεμαι γὰρ ὅρον ὁρίζειν τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἔστιν οὐκ ἄλλο τι πλὴν δύναμις, 247 e4]."

However this ὅρον sets the limit or the boundary which allows for a cogitation of the more peaceful philosophers [ἡμερώτεροι, 246 c9], that is, the "friends of Ideas or Forms [τοὺς τῶν εἰδῶν φίλους, 248 a 3]." The *dynamis* which *is* being certainly challenges the manner by which they differentiate or set apart "generation or birth" [γένεσιν] and "essence or being as such" [οὐσίαν]. The former is designated as the reality of the corporeal or of bodies and the latter the reality of mind, life or soul. Again further contradictions are met with the application of the ὅρον by which we are to consider being. If one abides by the ontology of either Herakleitos or Parmenides (who in argument we return to), if one accepts the necessary or a priori value of their propositions, one must immediately submit to an inherent contradiction. What Theaetetus constantly recognizes in the Stranger's sophistic questioning (and I say sophistic as the whole manner of discourse is an effect of rhetoric and the function of prosopopeic identification) is another enantiology.

What is contained within this sophism is the transformation of a language (a philosophical language or vocabulary) and particularly what it designates. In the regulated exchanges between the Stranger and the history of philosophy (its language and founding concepts) what takes place in an infrastructural sense is a working around its own blind spot (its own contradictions and enantiologies), that is why the Stranger calls on Theaetetus to resort to the child's εὐχήν (prayer) and vow that "all things are immovable and in motion" [ὅσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα, 249 d3]. This delivers a knowledge which is not a knowledge at all, which in essence encompasses a sophistic resolution. The child's εὐχήν legitimately transgresses the logos of the father and this leads us toward something other than the father,

namely, the bastard sons; sons without lineage or tribal filiation, sons without a proper genos. With the parricidal act this presents a similar philosophical problem for the philosopher as he has altogether denounced his lineage, his genos.

It would not be easy to demonstrate the ontological problematic without setting within view and at the horizon of this critique the sophist. Fundamentally this type of analysis of being neither begins or ends with philosophy, that is, it cannot be confined within the retrospective analysis of the history of ontological discourse. The analysis attempts necessarily, and ultimately one might add, to entrap the sophist within the internal and inherent contradiction of the child's εὐχήν. Surely τό ὄν cannot be confined to the dogmatic philosophy of the father— which one might add is inevitably a "unitary" conception of τό ὄν— as the history of its meaning (its application and usage) is contradicted by the work of mimesis by way of positing τό μὴ ὄν. The full presence of τό ὄν cannot be endorsed. Mimesis has affected the withdrawal or disappearance of the originary unity and presence of τό ὄν.

Now, if we ask ourselves, as the Stranger asks Theaetetus, what is the essential predicate of the difference between *kinesis* and *stasis*, we should logically argue "being". Again this presents itself in logical terms as a monstrous enantiology, for if we say both *kinesis* and *stasis* "are" (logically and furthermore existentially speaking) we are saying they are the same [αὐτὰ ἀμφότερα εἶναι, 250 b4]. Essentially, the Stranger proposes that being posits itself as a third something [τρίτον...τι τὸ ὄν, 250 c1]. What then is this τρίτον...τι, which being "is"? Certainly it is a third entity irreducible to the ontological dualism of *kinesis* and *stasis*, that is, it does not absolutely determine their ontological relation so we still are left with the problem "that being has emerged outside of both these classes [τὸ δὲ ὄν ἡμῖν νῦν ἐκτὸς τούτων ἀμφοτέρων

ἀναπέγάται, 250 d2]." This realization opens up the common aporia of being and non-being, one neither can nor should ignore that the ontological problematic is reinstated by both, given "being and non-being participate equally in the aporia at issue [τό τε ὄν καὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν ἀπορίας μετειλήφατον, 250 e4]." Certainly with the history of ontological discourse we have encountered a history of irrefutable reinscriptions and generalizations of the philosophical meaning of being and non-being, most notably its significations and designations within logos. The Stranger and Theaetetus now have to mediate upon the *aporia* which makes being and non-being cross or weave into one another indefinitely. The investigation will enter into the *symploke* which determines their signification.

11.6   Dialectics: The Science of *Symploke*

One might assume that the meaning of τὸ ὄν has been limited by the imposition of τὸ μὴ ὄν within ontologics. Certainly the *symploke* of τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν leads us back to the very opening of the problematic space that traditional ontologics has divulged. According to the Stranger the idea of the *symploke* permits us to make some inroads or allows for a "clear path" [*euporoteron*] by which we can embark upon the ontological problematic.

Obviously the three questions posed by the Stranger seek to establish a decision concerning the type of *symploke* of being and non-being,[34] particularly within the doctrines or philosophical systems of the forefathers. However, an absolute privilege will be granted (as we

---

[34] In referring to the entire problematic of ontologics, the Stranger asks three questions which essentially are posed to clarify the conditions of possibility of any *symploke*. We shall go through them methodically. (a) Shall we attribute neither being to rest and motion...shall we assume they do not mingle and cannot participate in one another [ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἄμικτα ὄντα καὶ ἀδύνατον μεταλαμβάνειν ἀλλήλων...] (b) Shall we gather all things together, believing that they are capable of combining with one another? [ἢ πάντα εἰς ταὐτὸν ξυνάγωμεν ὡς δυνατὰ ἐπικοινωνεῖν ἀλλήλοις;](c) Or are some capable of it and others not? [ἢ τὰ μέν, τά δὲ μή;]. *Soph.* 251 d5-8.

shall see) to a certain kind of *symplokê*, that which ultimately describes the operation of dialectics.

The positive operation of the science of the *symplokê* is illustrated by the fact "that some things will mingle and others will not" [τὰ μὲν ἐθέλειν, τὰ δὲ μὴ συμμίγνυσθαι, 252 e2]. The form of interlacing posited seems to defy criticism or analysis, especially as it illustrates its condition of possibility as dialectics. The science of the *symplokê* fruitfully exhibits the forms and kinds of interweaving or interlacing that can be achieved without leaving the mimetological problem unacknowledged.[35]

The concept of techne (insofar as it regulates any *symplokê*), bears the character of scientificity, there is a supposition of the epistemic. The Stranger essentially admits a *symplokê* of the genera and classes [τὰ γένη] recognizing that some commingle or interweave and others do not.[36] However it is with the aid of some science [ἐπιστήμης] and by way of logos or discourse [διὰ τῶν λόγων] that the philosopher can proceed towards determining (and it is the figure of the philosopher assumed here) the proper harmonization or sound agreement of genera [ποῖα ποίοις συμφωνεῖ τῶν γενῶν, 253 b8]. What is presupposed in the descriptive itinerary of this necessary science or episteme, which determines which genera mingle and which separate

---

[35] The art of grammar or the rules that define *grammatics* [τῆς γραμματικῆς] exemplifies the properly logical functioning of the *symplokê*. The Stranger explains using the example of the grammatical sciences that things "are in much the same condition as the letters of the alphabet; for some of these do not fit each other and others do" (*Soph.* 253 a2). It is apparent from the example of *grammatics* that a *techne* is presupposed that determines or establishes the rules of relation and connection between vowels and consonants; a techne which clearly determines the proper interweaving (that is, *symplokê*) of letters or *grammata*. Similarly the *symplokê* of "high and low sounds" presupposes "the art to know the sounds which mingle and those which do not" and that is the techne of the μουσικός (See *Soph.* 253 b1). The Stranger obviously begins to delimit the forms of *symplokê* that occur and he achieves this by excluding forms (and this I might add implicitly) not regulated by the limitations of a techne and reducing the functioning of any *symplokê* to the intrinsic rules and values of techne.

[ὥστε συμμίγνυσθαι δυνατὰ εἶναι, καὶ πάλιν ἐν ταῖ· διαιρέσεσιν, 253 c2] is that the *symplokê* is fundamentally *dialectical* in its workings and for this reason can only function "by way of logos [διὰ τῶν λόγων]." Theaetetus admits that the "greatest of sciences" [τῆς μεγίστης, 253 c4] is needed, and admittedly the philosopher's episteme has been discovered, which in the Stranger's retort suggests having discovered the figure of the philosopher as such, "just as it was the sophist that was being sought for [ζητοῦντες τὸν σοφιστὴν πρότερον ἀνηυρηκέναι τὸν φιλόσοφον, 253 c9]." In order to set forth the sophist's techne the Stranger has to recur to this by way of the philosopher's episteme and what certainly will bring together and moreover guide the Stranger's logos is the science of *dialectics*. The demonstration of dialectics that follows alleges a new manner of diaeresis, a diaeresis regulated by the science of the *symplokê*.[37] What is subsequently appraised as the greatest science leads the discourse to another direction and this I suggest in terms of the manner of its investigation, that is, a new *tropos* of diaeresis. The Stranger indicates what links the possibility of diaeresis with the science of dialectics.

> "Shall we not say that the division of things by classes and the avoidance of
>
> the belief that the same class is another, or another the same, belongs to the
>
> science of dialectic. [Τὸ κατὰ γένη διαιρεῖσθαι καὶ μήτε ταὐτὸν εἶδος
>
> ἕτερον ἡγησθασθαι μήτε ἕτερον ὂν ταὐτὸν μῶν οὐ τῆς διαλεκτικῆς
>
> φήσομεν ἐπιστήμης εἶναι]."[38]

---

[36] *Soph.* 253 b6

[37] What the Stranger is in fact trying to assert is the mode or instance of logos, its very possibility. The Stranger suggests that "the complete separation of each thing from all is the utterly final obliteration of all discourse [Τελεωτάτη πάντων λόγων ἐστὶν ἀφάνισις τὸ διαλύειν ἕκαστον ἀπὸ πάντων]" and that "our power of discourse is derived from the interweaving of forms or Ideas with one another [διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀλλήλων τῶν εἰδῶν συμπλοκὴν ὁ λόγος γέγονεν ἡμῖν, 259 e5-9]".

[38] *Soph.* 253 d1-3

Finally, having identified the ontological problematic, having discovered the philosopher's genos by denouncing his historical lineage, the Stranger is able to resume his diaeresis with the aid of dialectics and address the problematic concerning the sophistic subject.

11.7 Philosophical Topologies: Philosophic and Sophistic *Topoi* [39]

Between the philosopher and the sophist what is at stake is knowing the techne of each; it is also knowing what the properties of their techne entails. This is more notable now that the philosopher has discovered his epistemic ground. Certainly, the dialogue is at this moment giving into dialectics and leading the interlocutors beyond the *aporia* the sophist has led them to. Having discovered in τό διαλεκτικὸν the philosopher, according to the Stranger it is "in some region or *topos* like this that we shall always, both now and hereafter, discover the philosopher [Τὸν μὲν δὴ φιλόσοφον ἐν τοιούτῳ τινὶ τόπῳ καὶ νῦν καὶ ἔπειτα ἀνευρήσομεν, 253 e8]" and by default we would also have encountered the sophist. The opposition of philosopher and sophist will never be one of simple symmetry, for we can recall how out one stage in the original diaeresis they were confused in the same genos. However by positing or introducing dialectics and submitting the logos to the epistemic order of dialectics the Stranger has not only discovered found the philosopher by erratum, furthermore he sets up the passage beyond the *aporia* of the originary diaeretic inscription and by recourse to dialectics (to the science of the *symplokê*) undoes that geneological web and the improper mixing of two genera given that they cannot properly commingle. In asking how the sophist and philosopher differ,[40] Theaetetus, lays open the possibility for the Stranger's dialectical separation of the sophist and the philosopher. The Stranger enucleates the difference,

---

[39] For a discussion on the problem of place in the Plato's writings, see Howland 1986: 21-55.

[40] *Soph.* 254 a2

"The sophist runs away into the darkness of non-being, feeling his way in it

by practice, and is hard to discern on account of the darkness of the place

[Ὁ μὲν ἀποδιδράσκων εἰς τὴν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος σκοτεινότητα, τριβῇ

προσαπτόμενος αὐτῆς, διὰ τὸ σκοτεινὸν τοῦ τόπου κατανοῆσαι χαλεπός]...

But the philosopher, always devoting himself through reason to the idea of

being, is also very difficult to see on account of the brilliant light of the place;

for the eyes of the soul of the multitude are not strong enough to endure the

sight of the divine. [Ὁ δέ γε φιλόσοφος, τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ διὰ λογισμῶν

προσκείμενος ἰδέᾳ, διὰ τὸ λαμπρὸν αὖ τῆς χώρας οὐδαμῶς εὐπετῆς

ὀφθῆναι· τὰ γὰρ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχῆς ὄμματα καρτερεῖν πρός τὸ θεῖον

ἀφορῶντα ἀδύνατα]."[41]

The Stranger's answer suggests the impossibility of any full presence of the sophistic or

the philosophic subject, and more appropriately their eidos is difficult to "see". Whence the

sophist, who hides within τὸ σκοτεινὸν, and the philosopher, who resides within τὸ λαμπρὸν,

though difficult to "see" both sophist and philosopher can be conceived in terms of the

opposition between the sensible and intelligible.[42] The sophist "feels his way through the

darkness of non-being by practice [τριβῇ προσαπτόμενος αὐτῆς]" the philosopher on the other

hand by way of reason devotes himself to the *idea* of being [τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ διὰ λογισμῶν

προσκείμενος ἰδέα] that is to say, his reasoning inclines him towards the intelligible eidos.

Knowledge of falsehood will aid the philosopher toward differentiating *eidolologic*

productions, which involves distinguishing between good and bad *eidola*. Such knowledge

---

[41] *Soph.* 254 a5-b1

[42] It is interesting to note here that Plato refers yet again to the heliotropical metaphors used in book seven of the *Republic* to differentiate the subject of ascension into the upper world of light and those who reside in the dark cavern amidst a world of shadows. See *Rep.* 514a-521b.

assists in the process of philosophically differentiating between the *eikastic* and *phantastic* technai. The ontological interrogation of the being of non-being and falsehood from 237a2 to 264c allows for the resumption of the diaeresis and it directs us beyond aporia or the aporetic limit which the sophist cunningly has lured the philosopher into.[43]

11.7.1 The Double *Symplokê* and the Simulation of Philosophical Logos

Before I investigate this turn in the dialogue, a consideration of the way the discourse on the sophist has changed is imperative as this new philosophical directive promises a resolution of the problematic of the subject. The question remains to determine what is the nature of logos? Is it strictly the scholastic or logical formulation that is implied? In fact, we know that up until this point of the dialogue, logos suggests another model altogether and not strictly that of formal "logic". Martin Heidegger constantly reminds us in a manner analogous to that which he presents in his introduction to *Being and Time*, that logos as it is meant and intended by Plato is not reducible to the doctrinal determinations of modern logic.[44] With respect to the συμπλοκή,

---

[43] Within the system of this ontological argument, the man who is ultimately accountable (and this is the object of the philosopher's critique) is the one "who says the other is in a sense the same or that the same is the other [ὅταν τέ τις ἕτερον ὄν πη ταὐτὸν εἶναι φῇ καὶ ὅταν ταὐτὸν ὄν ἕτερον, 259 c9], which within a given logos involves separating everything from everything else or bringing forward opposites [τἀναντία, 259 d8] in their logos. Such a man (and the Stranger presupposes the sophist at this point of the argument) is uneducated [ἀμούσου] and unphilosophical [ἀφιλόσοφου, 259 e1].

[44] Heidegger alerts us to the fact that the signification of logos is discourse and means the same as δηλοῦν as it involve making manifest what one is talking about in one's discourse. (Heidegger 1962: 55-56). The distinction between the copula and the existential can thus only in all rigor be established at the point where we lose sight of the figure of the sophist, by making truth fully present (by privileging the argument of the copula) a logical prophylaxis of the "Platonism" modern logicians and philosophers attempt to ascribe to Plato's dialogues. The study of relations between classes and genera in the dialogue's first diaeresis is excluded, that is, the diaeresis which attempts to define the sophist. Ackrill extenuates this exclusion arguing it is a relation which is not properly pursued by Plato, asking us to consider only the relations considered and scrutinized (at that moment of the dialogue where we lose sight of the sophist and

Heidegger has discovered two fundamental questions in relation to the interpretation of logos in Plato's *Sophist*.

By reiterating these questions we may possibly find where "logicians" have floundered in their interpretation of logos and thus prescripted certain logical formulations of the problem in the *Sophist*. To return to Heidegger, it is important to see what he sees at issue with regard to logos. Heidegger asks, "(1) To what extent is a συμπλοκή or κοινωνία of ὄν and μὴ ὄν possible in the structure of λόγος as such?" and "(2) To what extent is a συμπλοκή or κοινωνία possible between λόγος and the ὄν it addresses?"[45]

With regard to the first question, Heidegger finds within the structure of logos a *symplokê* that is, an internal *symplokê* peculiar to logos, which defines its structure. In so far as logos addresses something, that something is addressed as *ti*. This understanding of the structure of logos finds its example in grammar or the grammatical sciences whereby a certain syntax characterizes the *symplokê*, but moreover a semantic qualification. Obviously the *symplokê* of the noun [ὄνομα] and verb [ῥῆμα] paradeigmatically elucidates this form of the *symplokê* within the structure of logos as such.

The second question seems to be most fundamental in that it elevates the question of logos to a strictly Platonic level, that is, if we bear in mind the nature and problem of literary form and the dialogism which characterizes Plato's discursive *tropos*. Heidegger discerns what he characterizes as "the double συμπλοκή."[46] Logos has a relation to the ὄν, that which it addresses and speaks about but moreover is an ὄν as such.

---

his figure) which commits us to a full intuition of the paradigm of classical ontology. See Ackrill, 1971: 217

[45] Heidegger 1997: 351.

[46] Heidegger 1997: 351.

To be precise, what is at stake here is an analysis that can account for the possibilities of logos and its possibility is reinforced by it being determined as a genus of being. The Stranger explains to Theaetetus that "our object was to establish discourse as one of our classes of being [πρὸς τõ τõν λόγον ἡμῖν τῶν ὄντων ἕν τι γενῶν εἶναι, 260 a4]," that is to say, logos does not only address *ônta* but furthermore it is an ὄν ontologically speaking. Logos, however, is possible if it functions under certain conditions, namely, the condition of possibility of a *symplokê tôn eidôn*. In this way the diaeresis takes on a new methodological value as it functions according to "the diacritical principle of the *symplokê*".[47] This diacriticity is motivated by the science of dialectics, given that it is dialectics which determines the compatibilities, union and furthermore the incompatibilities, exclusion of *eidê*, it regulates and controls the system of differences within logos as such. The *symplokê* is the essence and genesis of discourse and without it the Stranger reminds us we would be deprived of philosophy.[48] Yet it is in the dialectical conception of the *symplokê* that we no doubt see the governing pattern of the Stranger's logos whereby philosophy does not only institute itself as an *aletheic* logos (a discourse on truth as unveiling) but furthermore determines its opposition to sophistic logos as the *pseudês* logos which simulates and imitates the logos of philosophy.

The first diaeresis has failed only because it floundered at the moment when the sophist needed to be identified within a particular genos. Hence he was found within a generalized class, that of *eidolopoiêkê*. Bluck correctly pinpoints the problem in the Stranger's pursuit for the sophist's techne is that "he has taken refuge in a class which baffles investigation".[49] Thus the genus of *eidolopoiêkê* proposed a number of problems. Essentially the double *symplokê* suggests that the sophistic being is able to simulate the being of logos. Given the logos of the philosopher

---

[47] Derrida 1981a: 166.

[48] *Soph.* 260 a9.

[49] Bluck 1975: 60.

is an ὄv then the sophist can simulate it and present it in the form of the internal *symplokê* that will make his logos appear *like* the philosopher's logos. The sophist is able to produce an *eidolon* of the philosopher's logos thus his logos will always appear *to be like* it in its simulated form. The Stranger having embraced the logic of the *symplokê* after the philosophical parricide believes now that the introduction of the ontological problematic is a sure route back to identifying the sophistic subject and with the aid of dialectics they have discovered the method which will lead into the second diaeretic moment of the dialogue.

Chapter Twelve

Doubling Mimesis

"Not that I disparage in any way the poetic clan [οὔ τι τὸ ποιητικὸν ἀτιμάζων γένος], but it is plain to all that the imitative tribe [τὸ μιμητικὸν ἔθνος] will imitate with the most ease and success the things amidst which it has been reared, whereas it is hard for any man to imitate well in action what lies outside the range of his rearing, and still harder in speech. Again, as to the tribe of Sophists [τὸ δὲ τῶν σοφιστῶν γένος], although I esteem them highly versed in many fine discourses of other kinds, yet I fear lest haply, seeing they are a class which roams from city to city and has no settled habitations of its own [φοβοῦμαι δὲ μή πως, ἄτε πλανητὸν ὂν κατὰ πόλεις οἰκήσεις τε ἰδίας οὐδαμῇ διῳκηκός], they may go wide of the mark in regard to men who are at once philosophers and statesmen [ἄστοχον ἅμα φιλοσόφων ἀνδρῶν ᾖ καὶ πολιτικῶν]."

Timaeus 19 d3-e6

12.1 The Resumption of Diaeresis

The sophist, at this point of the caesura within the discourse, is determined as a putative pre-figural subject, rendered as unrepresentable and lost to itself within the first diaeresis. The sophist has always been fleeing into non-being and with the determination of the possibility of non-being "being" in some way, by way of the science of the *symplokê*, the way is paved for the figuring of this subjectal withdrawal of the sophist. The second diaeresis will hopefully lead to the entrapment of the sophist; the ultimate figuration of the sophistic subject. The sophist can now be identified or "figured out" and will be subject to decision. Indeed, it seems that having

established the possibility of non-being and falsehood, that now the Stranger will be able to identify the sophist within the form of mimesis that is phantasmatic in essence as it is structurally related to non-being.

In the last division we observed that *eidolopoiêkê* (the image-making art) was divided into *eikastikê* (likeness-making art) and *phantastikên* (fantastic art) and that the Stranger and Theaetetus stopped at this division for they "did not know to which of the two the sophist should be assigned".[1] The Stranger and Theaetetus are in a position to understand that Parmenides' doctrine (that no *eidola* exist at all "because falsehood never exists anywhere in any way") caused the perplexity [ἀπορουμένων, 264 d8] which led them to an *aporia* or an aporetic limit in the first diaeresis. The aporia presented itself in the form of subjectal withdrawal, for in the diaeresis of mimesis the sophistic subject absents itself "from itself" becoming unpossessed by the mimesis which transforms it. In other words, within the confusion of *eidolopoetics*, between *eikastics* and *phantastics*, the sophistic subject withdraws between this bifurcation as a producer of mimesis, but in this, also withdraws "into itself" to allow mimesis free play. It is no surprise that the sophist appears as the philosopher or if we were to be more precise, the philospher (within the diaeretic moment) encounters that strange mirror that reflects its own image.

Things resume, then after having proven falsehood and non-being exists in some way and that "imitations of realities" [μιμήματα τῶν ὄντων] and an "art of deception" [ἀπατητικήν] exist also.[2] The Stranger decides to pursue the sophist from "the right hand part of the genos divided", namely from within the *phantastic* class. It is presupposed that the sophist resides or belongs there and this branch of the fork now confirms what it originally was unable to discriminate, that is, the genos of the sophist and the techne he partakes in. The Stranger advises Theaetetus to approach the sophist and his genos by

---

[1] *Soph.* 264 c5-6.

"...Clinging close to the company to which the sophist belongs, until, having stripped him of all common properties [τα κοινὰ πάντα περιελόντες] and left him only his own peculiar nature [τὴν οἰκείαν...φύσιν]."[3]

Obviously this identification of certain "common properties" the sophist possesses is nothing more than the mimetic mirror that the philosopher encounters in identifying commonalities or similarities between the philosopher and the sophist. Any attempt to strip the sophist of common properties "shared" with the philosopher will require the philosophical subject, to some extent, to refuse or renounce itself. The philosopher, in fearing sophistic complicity, has something to give up. In stripping the sophist, the philosophical subject is stripping itself of certain "common properties" also. In this case the philosopher as subject is figured as choosing to remain separated from the sophist's mimetic deliveries, in other words, the philosophical subject has to be separated from the sophist by avoiding, within the diaeresis, a specular entrapment.

All this sharpens my original question concerning the distinction and interplay between the two types of subject canvassed in the dialogue. The philosopher now obtains as a figure of dialectical will that desires to separate itself from his work, but still becomes represented through it. Such a figure is "Plato", that is, Plato as an authorial figure external to the dialogue and the Stranger as a figure represented *en abyme* within it. The Stranger or the philosphical subject feigns not belonging to the sophistic genos, the philosphical subject *like* the sophistic subject is also *atopos*; has no place. The philosophical subject (as presented by the Stranger) is at best an imitation of the sophist, what he endeavors is to escape hunting or chasing his own image.

---

[2] *Soph.* 264 d5.

[3] *Soph.* 264 e 2-3

What is expected in the final diaeresis is a kind of preinscription of the sophist's nature, a propriety that derives from the identification of the sophist's οἰκείαν...φύσιν. The sophist who originally is identified by his *polytechny* is pursued within a singular determination as belonging to a single and unique genos. The sophistic subject who is identified with many technai, who has identified his discourse with the discourse of *others* is now articulated in terms of his peculiar and unique nature. The Stranger believes that he can no longer be dispersed, lost and splintered within the cleavage of the *eidolopoiêkê* techne. He will be stripped of all commonalities or common properties [τα κοινὰ πάντα] that made it so easy for him to be confused with the philosopher. Though this is an expression of extreme philosophical will, this act of "stripping" or discarding τα κοινὰ πάντα is in many respects an unaccompanied act. The Stranger finally faces a mirror hoping to discard the sophistic mask.

Dialectic at this stage has been identified as a proper or more philosophical method of diaeresis. It does not only "sift", that is, "set apart" or set in relief two different *genê*, but also determines a διάκρισις, as Heidegger understands it, that is, diaeresis now involves "a setting off and distinguishing of something from something else"[4] and moreover it methodically and scientifically extracts the better from the worse, the true from the false; and as we shall soon see, good mimesis from bad mimesis. It takes on another terminological meaning, essentially as a form of sifting which "purifies" [κάθαρσις][5]. Thus the tropos of diaeresis applied or appraised by way of dialectics sets up a different methodological, and as a consequence structural moment which can be described as a diaeresis which has the "character of *katharsis*"[6].

The transformation to which the Stranger subjects his discourse on the sophist thus moves in a direction that removes itself from the pure classificatory and scientific motivations of

---

[4] Heidegger 1992: 249.

[5] Heidegger 1992: 247-49.

[6] Heidegger 1992: 249.

the first diaeresis. The purpose of diaeresis can no longer be purely evolved around the differentiation of "like from like," that is, by way of dividing a genus into its species. The second diaeretic moment is motivated by ethical judgments, it has a purificational or *cathartic* function; a segregating of the bad form the good, the copy from the original, the authentic from the inauthentic. This is no doubt Deleuze's suspicion, observing that the method of diaeresis selects lineages[7], it ultimately seeks to distinguish pretenders from the authentic practitioners of *sophia*. And it is fundamentally *sophia* at stake here given the genos of the philosopher and the sophistic genos are in contention, they are insinuated within a dialectic of rivalry [*amphisbêtesis*].

It is extremely clear that recourse is still being taken here to the dialectical approach, for it is dialectics that will show forth the sophist and simultáneously the philosopher. Dialectics tends toward an *epideictic* orientation. We may recall that the Stranger, before beginning the division of techne in general, says to Theaetetus that in the final probing into the sophist's *being* that "we shall show [ἐπιδείξωμεν] him plainly first to ourselves and secondly to those who are most closely akin to the dialectic method [καὶ τοῖς ἐγγυτάτω γένει τῆς τοιαύτης μεθόδου πεφυκόσιν, 265 a1-2]". It is clear that τῆς τοιαύτης μεθόδου refers to the dialectical method, for the diaeresis is resumed principally because a dialectical conception has been laid out which will guide the second diaeretic moment.[8] What must we understand here? Essentially that there is an epideictic motivation in the last course of events, it is about showing forth, *figuring* out, making present the sophist, "illuminate the place in which otherwise the sophist can conceal himself".[9] It is hoped that the diaeretic junction of the eidolon no longer becomes a point of deceptive confusion and paradox. For as we approach the topos of simulacra or *phantasmata*, what is

---

[7] Gilles Deleuze further points out that the "method of division is employed paradoxically, not in order to evaluate the just pretenders, but, on the contrary, in order to track down the false pretender as such, in order to define the being (or rather than nonbeing) of the simulacrum" Deleuze 1990: 254.

[8] See *Soph.* 253 e1-3

[9] Sallis 2000: 46.

shown forth can be mistakenly seen or erroneously mediated to the clarity and certitude of the eidos, to what is seen and made visible. This is why the operation of the dialectic, its methodical regulation of the second diaeresis, could expose its own fragility as an epideictic discourse. Dialectics operates successfully within what Deleuze understands to be "the world of representation" that is, the binary system of essence-appearance or original-copy; a system contingent upon the subordination of everything to the eidos. Thus, it is believed by the Stranger and Theaetetus, that only the passage through dialectics will allow them to decide upon the eidos of the sophist and then as a consequence determine his genos. Crucial to this determination is to show the πως of τὸ μὴ ὄν which amounts to showing *how* the sophist resides in it.

12.2 The Problem of *Eidolopoiêkê*: The Doubling of Mimesis

The whole mimesis question inspires a new inroads to the sophist's *topos*. As logos (especially as a tropos of dialectics or a dialectical logos) it has been described as a discursive procedure which "gets you somewhere [τι περαίνει, 262 d]." It has allowed for this singular movement toward the sophist and his genos, that is, beyond the aporia at 231 c1-2. In fact, it is rigorously possible and necessary to meet with the Heideggerian clarification of the question of sophistics by way of understanding how the manifold aspects and figural determinations of the sophist can only be approached in a unifying way from the matter of techne. It is necessary for the Stranger (in the second diaeresis) to reduce all sophistic technai, that is, the *polytechny* of the sophist, to the integral system of a single techne. The multiplicity of the sophist's techne renders the sophist ontologically ungraspable; the figure of the sophist cannot be represented and thus remains unpresentable. Before we turn to this subjectal division, it is important we consider further the movement of the second diaeresis and in what way it moves toward the problematic of the subject in terms of mimesis.

12.2.1 The Supplementary Diaeresis: The Modification of *Poiesis* as Mimesis

The division of techne [τέχνην...διαιρούμενοι], which is the first division that sanctions the proper resumption of the second diaeresis, implies a shift in the methodological preinscription of its generic subject. This supplementary diaeresis, attempts an effective resolution of the problem of the sophist; it attempts to unveil or unmask the sophist *as* a single entity and *within* a single ontological determination, and that is, to identify the sophist with non-being.

Techne is divided into the *poetic* (productive) and *ktetic* (acquisitive). However what the Stranger properly points out is that though the sophist originally showed himself in the *ktetic* class, he was problematically effaced within that genos. The sophist has incessantly dislocated the critical hold of the first diaeresis and destabilized the modicum of philosophical assurance the *diaeretic* method exemplified. This was achieved by way of being identified with a genos he never properly belonged to, by way of subjectal mirroring, by feigning to be *like* the philosopher. The Stranger in the second diaeresis discovers that the mimetic art [μιμητική] has seized the sophist within a proper ontological order. Mimetics literally "has taken him over" [μιμητικὴ περιείληφεν αὐτὸν τέχνη, 265a9].

It is at this moment that the Stranger allows for the resumption of this supplementary diaeresis, he abandons the sophist's identification with the *ktetic* and places him within the horizon of the *poetic*. The *poetic* as a matter of fact is something *like* the *mimetic*.[10] The sophist now has come to be properly identified with another techne, namely μιμητική. The stranger himself makes a point of the theoretical accord between *poietics* and *mimetics* explaining that mimesis is a kind of "poetic production [ἡ ...μίμησις ποίησις τίς ἐστιν...]" however the nature of its productive activity is fundamentally different from that of the craftsman or the *demiurge* proper. Mimesis is a kind of production "of images [εἰδώλων μέντοι] and not of real things

[ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτῶν ἕκαστων, 265 b1-2]." However one can be suspicious of how the Stranger interprets what seems to be a disputable theoretical accord between *poetics* and *mimetics*.[11] In fact, if the entire strategy of the second diaeresis consists in trying to go one better than the sophist in order to master him, if it is a question of circumventing the sophist's *genos*, how would it be possible to end this hunt if the sophist is again identified with the *phantastic*? Does not the phantastic resist showing, revealing, and unveiling the "being" of things, the eidos of things? Can the *phantastic* or the *phantasma* be organized within the theoretical realm of the visible? Does it pass through the eidos or Idea or does it conceal dissimilarity and difference?[12] Can the sophist be hunted within the dark *topos* of the μὴ ὄν (non-being)? Is there truly an eidos for the sophist? And furthermore, does not this invisibility, this specter of the sophist correspond to the world of the cave in the *Republic*; that is to the world of the σκοτεινόν? How can the philosopher distinguish himself from the sophist when for each shadow there is an image cast behind one's view? The sophist's eidos still will remain tenuous and possibly the resolution of the ontological problematic is a successful incursion to the topology which confined the sophist to darkness and invisibility, the world of shadows and non-being [μὴ ὄν]. The passage into the *poetic* will inevitably reveal the sophist within the philosophical specularization which will make his eidos known, and most importantly brought within view. But will not this be in the form of dissimulation, as something other than what comes within our view as being?

Following the schema of the consequent generic divisions we observe there is a submission of all poetic genres to the entire thematics of mimesis, that is to say, that the generic offshoots of the *poetic* elicit fundamental mimetological presuppositions. Any treatment of mimesis and its poetic nature involves a description of the particular modification of truth as

---

[10] See *Soph.* 265 a3

[11] See *Soph.* 265a

[12] Deleuze 1990: 257-259

Being or Idea. The clue to this modification is the association of the word mimesis with Plato's mimetology, in so far as mimesis is eidetically determined. Thus the exposition of mimesis in the *Sophist* incipiently expounds the link between the essence of representational poiesis – mimesis – and the (re)presentation of the eidos. The modification of poiesis, in this final section of the dialogue, moves from it being understood as "production" as representation of the eidos to production as its dissimulation; the degradation of the eidos. Both modifications in the *Sophist* presume the *poetic* as the productive copying of the eidos and its creative dissimulation. The Stranger at this point moves from discussing poiesis as producing and representing properly speaking, to considering the relationship of poiesis to mimesis as dissimulation. However, this consideration is made of mimesis only, as if mimesis now uniquely represents poiesis. Certainly such a theoretical coupling of poiesis with mimesis conspires to assimilate (as it has already been shown in book ten of the *Republic*) mimesis to truth or the eidos as degraded or disinstalled. Poiesis is subordinated to the question of mimesis, and thus the artistic product, the *poetic*, is always simply the representation or the copy of what "is" because mimesis is consistently apprehended as a representation of what precedes it. Within the Platonic schema mimesis is always a retrospective appropriation of the eidos.

12.2.2 Theiopoetics and Anthropopoetics

The division of the *poetic* differentiates between the *mimetics* of divine [θεῖον] productions, which is considered to be a more veritable mimetic practice and the human [ἀνθρώπινον]. In both cases, the "thing itself" [αὐτό] and the image [εἴδωλον] are produced.[13] Divine mimesis involves "divine reason and knowledge [λόγου...καὶ ἐπιστήμης θείας, 265 c9]," it is the work of logos and episteme and thus has scientific credulity. Though divine mimesis does not imply the absence of a producing subject it still, in some respect, refers to the self-invisible transcendental

---

[13] *Soph.* 265 c7

divine self that is the subject. The defining character of the theiopoetical is that its mimesis is founded as "pure production"; "it produces nature [φύσει...ποιεῖσθαι θείᾳ τέχνῃ, 265 e3]." Nature (*physis*) or all living things (the *bios*) come into being through "god's *demiurgy* [ἢ θεοῦ δημιουργοῦντος, 265 c4]". Divine mimesis involves producing the idols of sleep (dreams) and the phantasms of the day (shades and reflections).[14] Whatever the nature of the mimesis of the divine, its effect is to reiterate the subject as the telos of nature.

Logically, according to this division, human mimesis is the imitation of divine mimesis. Divine mimesis is *autopoetic* in essence[15] and given human mimesis is imitative of the divine example it is understood to be *eidolopoeic*, in other words it produces *eidola*. According to the Stranger, on each side there is the autopoetic, that is, the creation or poiesis of things in themselves or a poiesis of the same, and on the other the *eidolopoiec* which involves the poiesis of idols. The *Eidolopoios* is yet another name given to the sophist. But the comparison to the *autopoetic* character of divine mimesis suggest that in sophistical mimesis, in the work of the *eidolopoios*, there is by implication the workings of the divine or more appropriately the *eidolopoiec* slips into the demoniacal, it is presented as the work of a *mechanê* or contrivance, the trick of a demon. Though we have noted that human poiesis involves an imitation of *divine* poiesis it paradoxically involves a poiesis that is similar or equal to divine mimesis because it is demonic, that is, it is able to produce kinds of dreams (images, phantoms) and the dream is a divine creation *par excellence*.

---

[14] *Soph.* 266 b3

[15] See Dionysius of Halicarnassus Περὶ Δεινάρχου Section 7. The autopoetic sense of the divine and natural form of mimesis is further developed by Dionysius when he refers to "τοῖς ἀρχετύποις αὐτοφυής" According to him the αὐτοφυής refers to the auto-productive, self-generative aspect of the model's type as *arche-type*, being ἀρχέτυπον. It is most importantly that which is 'self-produced' and autonomous in its creation - what is natural (φύσικος ἐστὶ) as opposed to what is artificial, a product of artifice, that which ultimately refers to the contrivance [ἐπιτετηδευμένον] of technical production as it is the case with the sophist's techne.

310

The *poetic* import of the αὐτο and the eidolon is well founded especially because it is based on a homoiological principle, since the image created (say in the example of human *poetics*; the products of painting or γραφικῇ) is "a likeness [τὸ ὁμοιωμάτων]." Though what subverts this homoiology is the further division of the eidolon into (a) the likeness-making art [εἰκαστικόν] which retains a sense of the homoiological, and (b) the fantastic-making art or the making of similucra or *phantasmata* [φανταστικὸν,265 d9] which strays from the eidos, Deleuze correctly observes the *phantasma* "places in question the very notations of copy and model."[16] Thus it is the homoiological principle of the *eikastic* techne which follows the principle of sameness; referencing the eidos of the "thing-itself" or the αὐτο, that is indubitably undermined because its techne prescribes pure "copying".

The question why the Stranger abandons the first diaeresis and modified the manner of the second diaeresis obviously is linked to the contradictory structure of the *eidolon* and it presents itself continually as a critical problem in the dialogue.[17] This contradictory structure is insinuated by the problem of mimesis insofar as the mimetic relation between the *auto* and the *eidôlon* proposes a difficulty with regards to eidola in general. In any case, it is the supposed resolution of the ontological problematic that evidently permits the final definition of the sophist in the second diaeresis, however it seems at a cost of a certain subordination of *sophistics* or could we possibly discern a dialectical conception which essentially directs itself to a reversal of Platonism by Plato himself.[18] It will be seen that the problem of mimesis impinges upon the whole of the second diaeresis, that is, both structurally and dialectically. The sophist cannot be captured and held down, and no dialectical or diaeretic operation could possibly achieve this unless a strange

[16] Deleuze 1990: 256.
[17] Rosen 1983: 147.
[18] Deleuze 1990: 256.

proximity between the philosopher and sophist is arranged, that is to suggest, unless the diaeresis sets the passage into the *phantastic*, the other and non-being as such.

The opposition between τὸ ὄv and τὸ μή ὄv is entirely ascertained and inscribed within the structure of mimesis in general and in many respects delineates the logic of the *symploke*. Tò ὄv and τὸ μή ὄv are both species of repetition which effects a supplementation where what is supplied is another unity (the *eidolon*) which fills and relieves the lack of plenitude and unity of the "thing itself" (*auto*); the eidos of the thing itself. So in effect mimesis discovers in the eidos the possibility of its repetition, its simulation and representation as *eidolon*. Though the eidos gives rise to mimetics and dialectics as such, they remain two incongruent technai whose movements in relation to truth are different. On the one hand, dialectics brings or discovers the eidos in the thing itself or in the *auto*, on the other hand, mimetics initiates a movement of non-truth and non-being for the eidos is dispersed and multiplied through the *mimeme*, simulacrum, *eidolon* and phantasm. As one may suspect, the focus is none other than that from which Plato's entire theorization of the eidos proceeds and to which, in the orthodox "theory of forms", all philosophy is referred to in order to constitute itself. Ultimately it is this theory and the dialectical movement toward the eidos that delimits the power and influence of the *mimetic* and forbids its proliferation of *eidola* within discourse.

12.3 The Eidolon as *mise en abyme*

It is difficult to see, under the conditions set by the dialectical conception of diaeresis, what the eidolon and more problematically what the *phantasma* brings into play, assuming at least that the possibility of establishing a philosophical position with regards to the sophist concedes a certain limit that dialectics must lead beyond. Thus the difficulty consists entirely, as one might have expected after the interruption of the first diaeresis, of determining the nature of the eidolon. In other words, what constitutes the difficulty of the sophist—and subsequently the difficulty of

accessing his *topos*— is the inability to identify the kind of mimesis he engages with and the nature of his mimetic productions. In its very character mimesis (even in the *Sophist*) remains infinitely ambiguous. Having encountered mimesis in its generalized sense in *poiêtikên* (the productive arts) as *mimêtikên* [265 a3], it appears again within the other sub-divisions derived from the *phantastikôn* with its (a) discernible zoographic or reproductive sense as "copying" and (b) its hypocritical and mimological sense.[19] I will return to this unprecedented double inscription of mimesis but firstly we need to consider the Stranger's diaeresis and ascertain what determinations the divisions of the fantastic techne produces.

And this is precisely what is at issue in the sophist it is the question of the subject, the problematic of subjectal representation. What I have hoped to have shown is that the ambit of the problematic is not restricted to its manifestation in the *Sophist*. Rather, as it has become evident, that manifestation is pivotal for questions regarding subjectivity that spread through to all of Plato's dialogues considered in this thesis. The *Sophist* more than any dialogue revises the terms of the received problematic of the subject as it is conceived in Plato's mimetology. It does the same with the question of the mimesis and with the question of the "split" in the subject by way of the paradox of subjectal representation.

12.4. Miming Subjectal withdrawal

The dialectical intention of the second diaeresis divulges a further division of the *phantastic* art[20] and the instrument or *organon* of *mimetic* productions is defined. The phantasm can be produced in two ways, (a) by instruments *as such* [τὸ...ὀργάνων γιγνόμενων] and (b) by means of the producer of *phantasmata* when offering himself as the instrument [...ἑαυτον ὄργανον] of representation. Having decided to let go and not pursue further the

---

[19] *Soph.* 267 a9

division which identifies the *zoographic* and other forms of *graphic* technai leaving it for someone else to "unify and name appropriately",[21] the Stranger decides to look at the potentialities of the *organon* within the mimetic.

The Stranger is obviously coming within view of the sophist and pursues him in the form of *phantastic* art where the producer uses himself as an *organon*. It remains for us to comprehend what the Stranger understands to be the form of *mimetics* which involves using "the self as *organon* [ἐαυτον ὄργανον]." Considering this, it is important to determine what is at stake in the difference maintained between a mimesis which employs *organa* as such, and on the other hand, a mimesis which employs the self as an *organon*. To pursue our first concern, the Stranger argues that mimesis which involves the subject using ἐαυτον ὄργανον is the mimesis of the actor, the dissimulator and feigner, it attests to a hypocritical essence. According to the Stranger, the subject using ἐαυτον ὄργανον involves an individual "employing his own person as his instrument, makes his own figure or voice [τὸ σὸν σχῆμα τις τῷ ἐαυτοῦ χρώμενος σώματι

[τὸ σὸν σχῆμα τις τῷ ἐαυτοῦ χρώμενος σώματι προσόμοιον ἢ φωνὴν φωνῇ φαίνεσθαι ποιῇ, 267 a6-7]." What this subscribes to, de facto, is a type of mimesis which the *schema* (figure, attitude, gesture) and *phonê* (voice, sound) is used as an *organon* to make [ποιῇ] certain representations. It is a mimesis founded on a primitive and original essence of the *mimetic*, that is, it is mimological in essence. For since the *mimos* (mime) and *hypokritês* (actor) employ the *schema* of the body to make figural gestures or representations and the actor uses his own voice as if it is an other's voice, he does not imitate objects *as such*, but *mimics* individual subjects. This is a mimesis where the subject represents him or herself as *other*, it involves a complete withdrawal from self-presence.

---

[20] *Soph.* 267 a

[21] *Soph.* 267 b1-3

Thus the mimesis that involves using the self as organon is condemned to a *poetics* that is deprived of verity and authenticity and is determined by dissimulation and non-being. For the self as *organon* resorts to masquerade and mimetic apocryphy, it is fundamentally a mimesis of the mask and thus ultimately involves subjectal withdrawal or the complete subreption or dissimulation of the subject. The question of authenticity is confined to the veritable ground of "being", and like the *mimos* or *hypocrites*, the sophist schematically or figurally presents himself as *other*, and furthermore employs his voice as if it is an *other* voice, he is thus caught up in a mimesis which is dependent on fraudulence and mimetic imposture.

Hence the question informing the dialogue as a whole pertains not only to the sophistic subject, but also to the subject of philosophy. At issue in the withdrawal of the former subject is also the withdrawal of the latter. So the whole thrust of the Stranger's enterprise corresponding to this subjectal withdrawal is the claim that the event of figuration (or "figuring out" the sophist) is the event of the withdrawal of the subject of philosophy who is the agent of this figuration. The subject present and detectable, but always as *other* to itself, is the subject of philosophy.[22] The subject of philosophy cannot be presented except *mimetically* and again it is the Platonic dialogue as the medium of this representation that most interests me here. The dialogue both makes and breaks philosophy, producing its subjects as writers and the written, but always as *other* than themselves.

The *Sophist* thus repeatedly concerns itself with tracing in its dialogical unfolding the places where the subject of philosophy—its figure or *typos*— works relentlessly to reassert itself within this endless mimetic movement. As it were, the subject occupies, with an ultimately unsustainable substantiality, the site from which mimetic production is launched, preventing this

---

[22] This is the subject represented successively to and through philosophy as Cartesian cogito, Kantian transcendental ego, Hegelian dialectical subject and Freudian amalgam.

site from being more than an empty *topos*. As subject, it constitutes itself as a final aporia to non-subjectivity and the forces of untraceable mimetic productions. The second diaeresis and the mode of its manifestation during mimesis, is of some interest, it presents as figuring and approximating for view a subject, which, since it repeatedly presents itself within various cleavages, in actual fact is rendered unpresentable. What the figuring and the approximation signify, and how they signify, is the question at hand.

This is essentially the logic of *mimicry* that though the sophistic subject disperses himself or herself into *other* personages (figures, characters, *prosopa*) he or she paradoxically enough accentuates the identities of different *prosopa*. Subsequently sophistic mimesis is a presentation of non-being, but paradoxically this non-being is a representation of *a* being. This underscores the logic of the *symplokē* as the sophistic subject presents himself or herself as a third something, an unclassifiable and dissimulated being. Thus the Stranger has offered the subject of mimesis as *no one*, but the Stranger has done this by way of discussing a subject that uses the "self as *organon* [ἑαυτον ὄργανον]." The sophistic subject productively figures itself in detachment from its "producing self" and it is for this reason that the diaeresis highlights the return of the incipiently figured subject as a "non-being" that *is*.

It seems mimesis no longer conveys a meaning consonant with its definition at 235c2 and 235d1 where its poetological essence is assured. Mimesis at this point is seen as claiming a poetic essence, distinct from nature or physis.[23] Implicitly, the purity of the idea of mimesis as essentially a poetic or "productive" force is lost in the conception of the *phantastic* techne. The dissimulation of the sophist suggests that the determination of mimesis is one of impropriety.

---

[23] See Dionysius of Halicarnassus Περὶ Δεινάρχου Section 7. Like Plato, Dionysius argues that there are "two different *tropous* of mimesis [δύο τρόπους τῆς διαφορᾶς μιμήσεως]." What is established is that the *tropos* differs; one being φυσικός, that is, the form of imitation is turned towards the direction of φύσις and the other subscribing to certain precepts [τῶν παραγγελμάτων] of techne.

The effect sophistic mimesis produces is proportional to its freedom from attachment to a proper eidos or form. This sophistic subject best houses the pure productive mimetic energy by itself becoming other. So, here, we have the connection to paradox in general, as that exchange between nothing and everything. For the more the sophist dissimulates himself by using the self as *organon*, the more he can be anything, even appear to be *like* the philosopher. Now though the Stranger offers a description of the sophist as, one might say, *ipso facto*, a philosopher, he also offers a prescription for what is a proper form of mimesis, which remains consonant to its eidetic orientations.

Now, having determined the pseudos as something associated, or more appropriately, founded in *phantastikê*, mimesis can now be defined in terms of subjectal dissimulation and in this respect the sophist becomes now a pernicious figure in two ways. Firstly as an already withdrawn subject who resides in an empty or dark *topos*, as noted in the first diaeresis, and secondly, as one capable of shedding his identity by consciously becoming a different subject, that is, by becoming other than himself, always appearing to be *like* the philosopher.

There is in the final diaeresis (or in the resumption or repetition of diaeresis) a question of the splitting of mimesis itself, its redistribution between subject as empty *topos* of process and subject as *organon*. Equivalently there is a suggestion of a point of suspension, of hesitation, perhaps of a repeated caesura, between the subject who has never been present at the scene of mimesis and the subject who withdraws from that scene, perhaps in *mimicry* of the original withdrawal. This mimicry, of course, will be evoked in the very same gesture where Socrates repeats and imitates this very withdrawal in the opening scene of the dialogue, deliberately dissociating himself from the Stranger and the problematic that has overcome the enquiry. What does Socrates' decision or will to withdraw suggest here? What of Plato himself, who has already doubly withdrawn himself as writer? However it is imperative to follow the Stranger's lead and

see how the original withdrawal of the sophist in the first diaeresis is repeated again in the second.

By 265a10-b3 the sophist having been defined as ἑαυτον ὄργανον indicates that one of the most salient aspects of the sophist is that in his mimicry or mimological representation his withdrawal into darkness or non-being is mirrored or repeated in this active withdrawal by way of dissimulating himself in repeatedly *seeming* to be like the philosopher. This mirroring might even correspond to a mirroring of the distinction itself as a *mise en abyme*. The sophist becomes an eidolon. The sophist in the final diaeresis is a subject absent from himself. This leads to a more ambitious, general claim the Stranger makes when acknowledging the subjectal dissimulation involved when the sophist treats his self as *organon*.

The sophist as eidolon absents itself, from itself by treating himself as *organon*, he becomes unpossessable by the diaeresis which repeatedly transforms him. In the original diaeresis when the sophist's eidos is pursued or configured he withdraws from the scene as a mimetic producer, that is, as a producer of imitations. In the second diaeresis we have arrived at a subject that deliberately withdraws "into itself" becoming *organon* and allowing mimesis endless free play and as a consequence "being his own product or creation" is figured as choosing to remain separated from its mimetic deliveries. The sophist presents himself at a site where no self now exists to displace "himself" and thus in this self-representation he can again coincide with the philosopher. Certainly what collapses in its most pernicious manifestations is the distinction between sophistics and philosophy and their respective subjects.

More fundamentally the mimesis that resorts to using the self as *organon* is mimesis in its most authentic form and as a consequence its most pernicious form. It is authentic precisely because it is a mimesis that is performed by use of one's own self; one's own voice, one's own body. It involves this *phantasmatic* return of the self from otherness to sameness. It is a mimesis

that is autopoetic in its most purest sense as it does not employ foreign instruments or *organa* to make its imitations, it employs the "self" pure and simple. The imitator, the sophist in this case, is the whole being or subject, the imitator becomes himself what is other to him. Paradoxically, it means the imitator becomes the same as he becomes other. This is, in essence, the phantasmatic logic of the *symplokê* that it will always combine its same and its other.

12.5   Doxomimesis: The Final Withdrawal of the Sophistic Subject

It remains to be seen what the Stranger is aiming at under this division of *phantastike*. There is a repeated inscription —which in essence is a redoubled inscription—of the sophist's techne within the generalized poetological character of *mimêtikê*.[24] Again, dividing the mimesis of the *mimos* who uses his body and voice as organon, we arrive at another *tropos* of mimesis no longer generalized in terms of its generic correlation to *poiêtikê*, it is, what the Stranger names μιμητικὸν.[25] This tropos of mimesis according to the Stranger "also has two parts" [καὶ τοῦτο ἔτι διπλοῦν, 267 b3] and this division largely impinges upon a determination of the nature of *sophistic* mimesis and its proliferation outside the realm of techne and *poetics*. The Stranger recognizes that it is certainly a matter of *sophistics* and its relation to philosophy and more specifically the relation between the mimesis of the sophist—the *doxomimetic*— and its relation to eidos. According to the Stranger,

> "some who imitate do so with knowledge of that which they imitate, and
> others without such knowledge [Τῶν μιμουμένων οἱ μὲν εἰδότες ὃ μιμοῦνται
> τοῦτο πράττουσιν, οἱ δ' οὐκ εἰδότες]."[26]

---

[24] See *Soph.* 265a-b.

[25] *Soph.* 267 a9.

[26] *Soph.* 267 b5.

What is, in fact, revealed in the juxtaposition of the forms of mimesis in the Stranger's diaeresis is a complete and greatest division [μείζω διαίρεσιν]; that of knowledge [γνώσεως] and ignorance [ἀγνωσίας].[27] We know, in an ineluctable manner that this further division of mimesis is skewed by an overt philosophical prejudice, since by fact, what has preoccupied and to a certain point constituted the second diaeresis is without doubt an epistemological or *gnoseological* motivation. Assuredly there exists in Plato a prominent critique of *agnôsias* (ignorance) in all the dialogues and certainly the science of *dialektikê* orients itself, teleologically speaking, to the ends of *gnosis* or self-knowledge. This critique —whether in the *Protagoras, Theaetetus* or *Gorgias*—is directed toward the sophist and his lineage; the sophistic genos as a whole. The sophist feigns *gnosis* he teaches under the appearance and illusion of knowing, he simulates knowledge. However a paradox again emerges in this final diaeresis because though the sophistic subject feigns and simulates *gnosis* he does so "knowingly", his mimesis is based on knowledge [εἰδότων...μίμημα, 267 b8]. As the Stranger explains to Theaetetus, "a man who imitates you would know you and your figure" [τὸ γὰρ σὸν σχῆμα καὶ σὲ γιγνώσκων ἄν τις μιμήσαιτο, 267 b9] thus the sophist basis his knowledge of another *schema* or figure on his ability to imitate the *other*.

What has already singularized itself in the name of the sophist is the *doxomimetical* and this is due to the fact the Stranger questions the basis of the sophist's knowledge of the *other*. Subsequently the sophistic logos is considered counterfeit; a discourse of simulation, that is to say; the doxomimetic is based on imitating things the sophistic subject opines to know about, an "imitation which is based on opinion" [τὴν μὲν μετὰ δόξης μίμησιν, 267 d8] and since the sophist has been identified among those "who imitate" but "not among those who know" [ὁ γὰρ σοφιστὴς οὐκ ἐν τοῖς εἰδοσιν ἦν, αλλ᾽ ἐν τοῖς μιμουμένοις δή, 267 e6] he is said to imitate by pure ignorance, by way of pure naivety or by way of irony, that is, by knowing that

---

[27] *Soph.* 267 b6.

which he does not know.[28] It is underlined that the form of doxomimetics that is coloured by irony, in its turn operates in either the political or demological forms of discourse.[29] But it is in this space, if we hark back on the great Socratic judgment in the *Apologia*, that the confusion of the philosopher and sophist is inherently preinscribed. Is not "irony" a Socratic propriety; is not Socrates the iron *par* excellence? In this final diaeresis something of the philosopher appears and again the sophist withdraws by way of dissimulation, that is, by appearing to be *like* the philosopher. Moreover he appears to be *like* all those subjects—statesman, rhetor, poet and rhapsode—who occupy the political and demological *topoi*. In other words, to the end, the great science of the *symplokê* collects nothing without dividing it, in other words it could not reveal the true eidos of things without diagrammatically setting side by side the eidos belonging to others.

So why does mimesis further divide itself in the *Sophist*? Why does this division of other presumed species of mimesis create such a disparity and fundamental difference to *mimetics* in general? In mimetics the acclaimed unity of its technical and poetological order is endlessly disrupted by a division that reveals an incongruent non-poetic mimesis which is identified by the plurality of subjects, beings, *genê*. The doxomimetic thus effectuates the endless proliferation of the *mimetic* in general. The doxomimetical occasions the improper *symplokê* of the ὄν and μὴ ὄν. This is certainly the pernicious nature of the sophistic logos; nevertheless we shall return to the sophist's doxological orientation shortly, it seems necessary to raise some vital questions with regard to the doxomimetic.

Firstly, is the doxomimetic congenital to the *techno*-poetic essence of mimetics as an assumed species of mimesis in general, *ton mimetikon*? Following this question, we must ask, whether or not what is differentiated in the division of the mimetic genus is the lack of a techne;

---

[28] *Soph.* 268 a

[29] *Soph.* 268 b

that is, it is to determine whether the sophist can lay claim to a techne in the way a craftsman or painter does. In this final diaeresis we can only surmise that the sophist essentially lays claim to a techne that cannot be found and subsequently defined by the philosopher; a techne that cannot be properly classified under the technai that are defined according to well-founded technical precepts and rules which amounts to technai which properly keep within view the eidos of its representations. Thus the doxomimetic is not really a techne in the strict sense since its representations are founded on collecting and dividing simultaneously, it is essentially *atechnical* in the sense it simulates techne, it feigns the work of a techne.

In the proliferation of *mimemes* (given the endless potentialities of reference) an asymmetry appears. What is made double in φαντιστική is the *manner* of mimesis—its *tropos*— and *what* mimesis is supposed to represent or reproduce. So the doxomimetic, in fact, divides mimesis into two and subsequently recounts the problem of mimesis in the history of its interpretation. The doxomimetic imitates nothing pre-existing but nonetheless it involves imitating, however it does so without reference to the eidos. So the sophistic *phantasma* becomes not a derivative of the eidos, but it becomes ontologically a being: it *is* not. The doxomimetic subsequently involves the fundamental reversal and affirmation of Plato's world of shadows. Since the doxomimetic is founded on the determinations of *phantastikê, dianoia, doxa* it peculiarly works outside the classical or Platonic schema of mimesis. The doxomimetic has at any rate produced an effect of incessant fluctuations between two possibilities, two meanings and its inherent double *tropos*. Thus in pursuing the sophist—or whatever pertains to sophistics or the sophistical arts—the philosopher's logos is found to be in constant *symplokê* with the non-truth and non-presence of the sophistic logos.

By the dialogue's end, we have seen nothing of the sophist or of the real philosopher. And in the absence of the unwritten fourth dialogue, the *Philosopher,* one is unable to determine both

antipodal figures, however it is undoubtedly subsumed in the accounts of the other dialogues, including the one on the *Sophist*. Now what follows from the absence of the fourth dialogue is that the philosopher is already on the scene of all the other dialogues and interestingly enough in this dialogue that anticipates the *Philosopher* the philosopher announces himself in the name of an unnamed Stranger or *xenos*. Doesn't the Parmenidean father have a voice, and why is it simulated, made audible or discernible by an outsider, a Stranger?

We would have extreme difficulty attempting to pin down mimesis within the method of division or *diairesis* which Plato promulgates. There would not be a single or homogeneous place or class where mimesis or techne *mimêtikê* could be consolidated within. The impossibility tends to reveal to us the impossibility of presenting it as a concept, which will always amount to the philosophical (that is to say, Platonic) determination as *representation* proper. Such a conceptual determination assigns to it a closed meaning or function. However in the *Sophist* we tend to acknowledge the impossibility of such a determination, that mimesis, even if we consider its *technic essence*, cannot be assigned a single place within the diaeretic logos, it will endlessly simulate itself and this may be the essence of the mimetic *mechanê*.

One can only *symplekein* the name of the sophist by weaving it in with the name of the philosopher, a name forged out of *sophia*. It is at this point that dialectics or the science of the *symplokê* will always combine the same and its other as the dialogue does combining the sophist and the philosopher. We can only admit that the final diaeresis revealed the dual place of the sophist and the Stranger has ingeniously drawn attention to the fact that the sophist's doxomimesis has yet again made the sophist ungraspable. The sophist is an eternally displaced subject and is doomed always to be doubled and for this reason in mimicking the withdrawal of the first diaeresis the sophistic subject yet again figures itself to match his rival. The final diaeresis resurrects the figure of a subject possessing a will that makes him indistinguishable

from the philosopher because the sophistic subject has never been present at the scene of mimesis as he is the subject who constantly withdraws from that scene.

The sophistic subject as the producer of mimesis deliberately withdraws into itself to allow mimesis free play thus escaping the philosopher's dialectical trap. Hence the problematic informing the Stranger pertains not only to the sophistic subject, as there are two types of subjects canvassed here, moreover it pertains equally to the *subject* of philosophy because given the sophist has to be "figured" and "represented" the Stranger can only present the sophistic subject within mimesis and in this figuration there is endless dissimulation that draws the second diaeresis to the aporia that preeminently describes mimesis in general. The Stranger in essence encounters the eidolon of the philosopher at the moment when the sophistic subject detaches himself from the eidolon that the Stranger's final diaeresis delivers.

12.6   Conclusion:

It has been my intent here to show in what way the question of mimesis and Plato's rigorous mimetology is embroiled by a fundamental ontological problematic concerning subjectivity. In many respects the four dialogues considered involve an attempt to arrive at the anti-mimetic decision, the decision to banish mimesis in order to preserve the self-identity of the subject and its proper constitution. In many respects, the endless deferrals and postponement of a decision concerning mimesis and subjectivity in Plato's dialogues has much to do with the way mimesis deprives any ground by which a decision capable of structurally engendering the subject might be made. Mimesis in its most pernicious sense undermines the eidos and in essence any possibility of establishing a ground for the possibility of a decision is dependent upon consolidating the eidetic orientation of mimesis.

Given mimesis is seen in its most pernicious manifestation as a *mise-en-abyme*, which stretches the potentialities of reference to the point where it structurally comprises infinite self reference—and here we account for the structure of the eidolon and phantasma—Plato's eidetic determination of mimesis will ultimately fail to productively affix itself within the mimetology. Lacoue-Labarthe's reading has led him to the conclusion that *"the decision* (regarding mimesis) never takes place"[30] and certainly this is true if one acknowledges the ostensible theoretical purpose of Plato's mimetology. However, what I hope to have shown is that dialogically the decision is always being made; even in its endless deferrals and postponements there is in every attempted determination of mimesis a decision that refers or calls upon another decisive moment in all the dialogues. Essentially, the decision regarding mimesis and its expulsion, is dependent upon the problematic of the subject given the mimetology depends on the separation of the subject with what is mimetically external to it. Thus the eidetic reduction of the mimetic stumbles on its ultimate evasion of *who* is the subject of representation remaining persistent with a "theoretical" conception of mimesis that organizes itself within its eidetic limitations and leads Plato, and Aristotle after him,[31] to appropriate mimesis in such a way that it serves its eidetic orientation and epistemological delimitation. In conclusion it raises the fundamental problem which is radically pertinent to the problematic issued in this thesis, that concerning the endless return of mimesis which confronts Plato's work and the loss of the subject who cannot coincide with him or herself in his or her endless engagement with mimesis. Inevitably the problematic as

---

[30] Lacoue Labarthe 1989: 136

[31] See Appendix 1: 325. In this brief outwork, I consider how the question of mimesis in Aristotle is a deliberate avoidance of the problematic of the subject considered in this thesis. Like Plato, Aristotle's mimetology attempts a poetological reduction of mimesis, that is, identifying it as a representation of universals in so far as the poet's activity is concerned. The so-called apologist of the mimetic tradition also orients his criticism around the subject of representation and more specifically the *hypocritical subject*. Thus Aristotle's mimetology dictates a poeto-ideological reduction of mimesis as he condemns the hyperbolic play of the actor, the excesses of his or her mimetic deliveries.

such is not confined to the dramatization of subjects in the extant dialogues but moreover extends beyond the text itself, implicating Plato as such in the mimesis that ultimately delivers his logos. In conclusion, what has not been *decided* by Plato is rather caught up in a continual process of *deciding* through endless deferrals, detours, interruptions and repetitions. Though Plato's call for decision concerning the subject and mimesis inherently presents itself as a philosophical exigency in its Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian and Freudian manifestations, it moreover reflects a *subject* that presents itself as a *phantasma* (specter, phantom, ghost) that has since Plato, haunted western philosophical writing.

Appendix

Aristotle's Mimetology:
Hyperbolic Mimesis and the Actor

Aristotle's *Poetics* develops a theorization of one of the most problematic terms of recent philological and philosophical interest- mimesis. The impropriety of this word in terms of its meaning, its application as a concept in ancient literary criticism has always been apparent and its redoubtable and equivocal nature still remains an etymological problem for scholars in the field of ancient literary criticism. The history of mimesis within philosophical and philological discourse is complicated and heterogeneous in itself and Plato attempted unsuccessfully an exhaustive formalization of its meaning within his literary criticism. Aristotle is the first to have embraced the term and impugn the pejorative sense assigned to it by Plato. In the *Poetics* it is endorsed as a homogeneous concept insofar as *poiêtikê* as a whole is concerned, that is, in terms of the episteme of poetry; and it has been generally discoursed by the philological tradition (from Butcher, Else, Halliwell even within philosophy Paul Ricouer) as a mimesis which is originally creative. That poetry is radically mimetic—a copy of a copy of the eidos— is underwritten by Plato's metaphysics, since poetry is mimesis only in terms of the eidos. Aristotelian mimesis is moved outside the context of the "theory of ideas" and is understood as a mode of poiesis,[1] of

---

[1] The *Poetics* influenced a subsequent tradition in ancient literary criticism by defining mimesis in terms of an originative creative *praxis*. In Hellenistic literary criticism (See Dionysius of Halicarnassus' tropology of mimesis in section 7 of Περὶ Δεινάρχου, Chapter 13 of Pseudo-Longinus' Περὶ Ὕψους) mimesis is understood as a mode of poiêsis which adopts its model from nature, physis. With the Romans *imitatio* is

pure production, of what is "properly creative;" it is, to quote Paul Ricouer, a "creative imitation".[2] Mimesis for Aristotle accomplishes its aim when it seems to function as poiesis.

In the *Poetics*, the productive predilection of the poet is oriented around what Aristotle considered to be an imperative element in poiesis; *mythos* (the plot). The primacy accorded to the construction or making of plots or *mythoi* is no more exemplified than in Aristotle's ruminations of the genre of tragedy. In the *Poetics*, mythos essentially is rigorously conceived as the "first principle" and "as it were the soul of tragedy" [ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἷον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγῳδίας, 6, 1450a 39-40]. Mythos as the *arche*-principle, as the unimpeachable basis of the poet's activity reveals the apophantic essence of the poet's mimesis; namely that in the construction or making of mythos, which to quote Aristotle is "the end of which tragedy aims" [ὥστε ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγῳδιας] an unmitigated creativity is founded.

Aristotle essentially proposed a twofold analysis of tragedy, [a] of tragedy "in itself"— αὐτό τε καθ αὐτό[3] and [b] in terms of the theatre, or stage- πρὸς τὰ θέατρα.[4] However, the critical matter in the context of the *Poetics* is the consideration of what tragedy is αὐτό τε καθ᾽ αὐτό, as it is properly of 'philosophical' significance and value to assay tragedy's

---

bound to the imitation of the ancients, however it is exercised as a veritable form of *inventio* (cf. Orstorical mimesis in Cicero's *De Finibus* and *De Oratore*, book X of Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria* , Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* LXXXIV where mimesis is understood in terms of appropriation and a creative form of *contaminatio*).

[2] Ricouer 1984: 45

[3] Aristotle considering the evolution of tragedy alleges it began originally or originated in improvisation (απ' ἀρχῆς αὐτοσχεδιαστικὴ) and gradually evolved and "found its own natural form" (τὴν αὐτης φύσιν), that being its dialogical or conversational mode. An interesting description of this evolution is a metrical difference, where the tetrameter (more suitable for dancing and performance) was abandoned for the "most conversational" meter being the iambic. According to Aristotle "nature itself discovered the proper meter" (ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὗρε) and suggests that τὴν αὐτης φύσιν of tragedy its most natural form or essence is its conversational or dialogical mode, which essentially merges with a philosophical privilege and interest in speech and dialogue since Plato.

[4] *Poet* IV, 1449a 7-8

essence or its requisite properties. Tragedy πρὸς τὰ θεάτρα as we shall see is almost a subsidiary concern and outside the realm of Aristotle's most philosophical consideration, that is, what tragedy is "in itself", according to its essence. The spectacle is definitively assured to be the least important property of tragedy within Aristotle's hierarchization of its qualitative elements in chapter 6, 1450a19-50b28. Whatever pertains to the spectacle is extraneous and essentially ornamental. Yet it seems imperative to ask how is it that the spectacle, the domain of theatrical ὄψις, becomes a marginalized concern in any theory of tragedy, since tragedy (generically understood) would have been apprehended in terms of performance, in view of its theatricality? Evidently, what is an endorsement of mythos leads to the subordination of the spectacle to a philosophical *poetics* or theory of tragedy. Clearly, Aristotle's theory of poetry cannot be strictly separated from philosophy; it is a theorization within philosophy and in the *Poetics* attains philosophical significance. According to Aristotle, poetry deals with universals or general truths [τὰ καθόλου] it is "more philosophical" [φιλοσοφώτερον] and "serious" [σπουδαιότερον][5] and on this basis, how tragedy proffers itself as a philosophical model (in terms of its thematization of universal subjects) becomes obviously manifest. The extent of this subordination of the theatre would fundamentally elicit our understanding of theatrical mimesis (i.e. the actor's mimesis) and how it subverts Aristotle's attempt to rectify, even to a certain extent refine tragedy. Aristotle explains that the

> "Spectacle while highly attractive is yet quite foreign to the art and has
> nothing to do with poetry. Indeed the effect of tragedy is independent of
> performance and actors, and, besides, the costumier's art has more scope than
> the poet's for rendering the effects of spectacle."
> [ἡ δὲ ὄψις ψυχαγωγικὸν μέν ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα οἰκεῖον τῆς
> ποιητικῆς· ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγῳδίας δύναμις καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος καὶ ὑποκριτῶν

---

[5] *Poet.* IX, 1451b 6

ἔστιν, ἔτι δὲ κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἡ τοῦ
σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἐστιν, 1450b16-20]

The spectacle is considered ἀτεχνότατον (inartistic) and Aristotle only concedes its one patent property by invariably saying it is ψυχαγωγικὸν (attractive, persuasive). In a single gesture Aristotle devalues the importance of performance or the play's performativity by (a) explaining that the spectacle does not pertain to techne that is, it is *atechnical*, "without techne" (this point we shall return to) and (b) alleging that the power of tragedy, its dynamic quality or effect, its *dynamis* can be realized even without the agon and actor's performance [ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγῳδίας δύναμις καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἐστιν]. To be perfectly consistent with Aristotle's context, tragedy's *dynamis* (what we understand and has been philosophically determined as the "tragic" essence) can be realized in reading [ἀναγινώσκειν].

It is possible to see how Aristotle's *Poetics* could have been grafted into the philological tradition. Richmond Lattimore, in his *Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy*, accords the autonomous rights of the text; its narrative structure. In his deliberations on tragedy, the importance of the "order of events", institutes the primacy of mythos, essentially repeating the Aristotelian notion of mythos as τῆς συστάσεως τῶν πραγμάτων. If, as Aristotle insists, tragedy is essentially a form of poiesis, Lattimore reiterates this Aristotelian formalization stating purely and simply "Greek tragedy is poetry".[6] Evidence would indicate that "tragedy" remains a regulated idea by what I call a philological Aristotelianism. Whatever the position of the "theatre" in relation to this tradition, mythos (plot), *dianoia* (thought), *ethos* (character) are discursively privileged and the semantics of tragedy's exemplary texts brings under exclusive dictatorship what is the accorded non-poetic, theatrical essence of tragedy. This subsequently ensured the marginalization of the spectacle or theatrical *opsis* and the discursive prominence of the text.

Before developing our critique, we must consider how Aristotle establishes the primacy of mythos in the *Poetics*. Aristotle explains that there are two ways to experience "fear and pity" (which amounts to tragedy's effect or *dynamis*); (a) from the actual spectacle [ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως] and (b) from mythos itself [ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τῶν πραγμάτων]. In chapter 24, 1453b, he explains,

> "Fear and pity sometimes result from the spectacle and are sometimes aroused
>
> by the structure of events which is preferable and the mark of the
>
> better/superior poet. The plot should be so constructed that even without
>
> seeing the play anyone hearing of the incidents happening thrills with fear and
>
> pity as a result of what occurs. As one would feel when hearing the plot of the
>
> Oedipus. To produce this effect by means of an appeal to the eye is inartistic
>
> and needs extraneous aids, while those who by such means produce an effect
>
> which is not fearful but merely monstrous have nothing in common with
>
> tragedy. For one should not seek from tragedy all kinds of pleasure but that
>
> which is peculiar to tragedy, and since the poet must by representation
>
> produce the pleasure which comes from feeling pity and fear, obviously this
>
> should be built into the events."

> [Εστιν μὲν οὖν τὸ φοβερὸν καὶ ἐλεεινὸν ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως γίγνεσθαι, ἔστιν δὲ
>
> καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅπερ ἐστὶ πρότερον καὶ ποιητ
>
> οὗ ἀμείνος. δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ ὁρᾶν οὕτω συνεστάναι τὸν μῦθον ὥστε τ
>
> ὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα καὶ φρίττειν καὶ ἐλεεῖν ἐκ τῶν
>
> συμβαινόντων· ἅπερ ἂν πάθοι τις ἀκούων τὸν τοῦ Οἰδίπου μῦθον. τὸ δὲ διά
>
> τῆς ὄψεως τοῦτο παρασκευάζειν ἀτεχνότερον καὶ χορηγίας δεόμενόν
>
> ἐστιν. οἱ δὲ μὴ τὸ φοβερὸν διὰ τῆς ὄψεως ἀλλὰ τὸ τερατῶδες μόνον

---

[6] Lattimore 1964: 115

παρασκευάζοντες οὐδὲν τραγῳδίᾳ κοινωνοῦσιν· οὐ γὰρ πᾶσαν δεῖ ζητεῖν

ἡδονὴν ἀπὸ τραγῳδίας ἀλλὰ τὴν οἰκείαν. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ ἐλέου καὶ φόβου

διὰ μιμήσεως δεῖ ἡδονὴν παρασκευάζειν τὸν ποιητήν, φανερὸν ὡς τοῦτο ἐν

τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐμποιητέον, 1453b 1-18]

Thus tragedy's *dynamis* is embodied in the plot, that is, what occurs [ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόντων] in tragedy and what happens [τὰ πράγματα γινόμενα] is occasioned by the plot. It is a quality of the better or even superior poet who can arouse "pity and fear" from the plot as opposed to the spectacle and not only is this preferable for Aristotle, it furthermore attests to mythos preceding or being ontologically prior to the spectacle. To produce fear and pity by means of the spectacle or an appeal to the eye [διὰ τῆς ὄψεως] is not only inartistic [ἀτεχνότερον], it requires furthermore extraneous aids [χορηγίας δεόμενόν ἐστιν); something foreign or outside the art of poetry is required to assist in its theatrical realization.[7] As Aristotle clearly states, instead of the fearful (which mythos naturally produces or arouses) the monstrous [τὸ τερατῶδες] will be viewed in all spectacular representations. The monstrous exceeds the proper tragic arousal of fear as it functions on the basis of a renunciation of tragedy's poetic expression. The pleasures of tragedy must be peculiar to it, pertain to its restricted economy (its generic laws), it is produced entirely from within itself, from within the structure of events. Everything in terms of the affective responsivity or pathetic identification that tragedy produces is submitted to the determinations of mythos. This is the only way by which Aristotle can mark (as we shall see) that which separates tragedy from its excess.

---

[7] The χορηγίας (for example) beyond referring to "choral aids", is appropriately more suggestive in this context if we accept Butcher's translation as referring to the "extraneous aids" of the theatre (193). Since the spectacle is inassimilable and not pertinent to Aristotelian *poetics* as it is beyond the artistic and techno-poetical concerns of the poet, its orchestration is consummated by the *skeuopoios* or stage-designer whose influence is outside of the creative *praxis* of the poet.

Thus, tragedy's *dynamis* as a source of pleasure [ἡδονὴν] is only possible and can only appear if the poet produces it [παρασκευάζειν τὸν ποιητήν] and builds it into the events or happenings of the plot [ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν ἐ̣ ̣τοιητέον] and not the representation of these in the spectacle. The very acumen of this insight is that in the *Poetics* tragedy's *dynamis* or the "tragic" effect must be philosophically appurtenant and proper to tragedy's essence. It is a particular kind of tragedy Aristotle prescribes which proffers particular effects and pleasures, and it is perfectly clear here how pertinent the question of *Katharsis* or the *katharsisfrage* is to philosophical and philological discourse in general.[8]

It is almost certain that the *Poetics* represents tragedy in such a way that it seemingly is under philosophical surveillance, in other words, what is presented as tragedy "in itself" is protected against what is extraneous to or outside what Aristotle determines to be its poetico-philosophical essence. And it is through a criticism of the actor that Aristotle is able to relay a criticism of the spectacle as such. The indictment of the actor's mimesis or representation of the poet's work is fundamental to his theoretical animadversion of spectacality. Aristotle's approbation of Plato's criticism of the actor's mimesis is unequivocal, one could even suggest that the *Poetics* accentuates it because it accords an autonomy to a *poetics* which marginalizes the spectacular or theatrical apprehension of tragedy. Moreover, Aristotle employs a

---

[8] Gerald Else's understanding of *Katharsis* is bound to the notion of tragic *hamartia* and it is in this respect that a *catharsis* of the incidents is related to *peripeteia* or *anagnorisis* as a "clarification" of the events unfolding. Leon Golden's "clarification theory" (See Golden 1992) and Harvey D. Goldstein's belief that *katharsis* has "an aesthetic rather than a psychological meaning" (Goldstein 1966: 573) are consistent with the new hermeneutic appraisals regarding the *Katharsisfrage*. Philologists have come to privilege an interpretation of *katharsis* which lends itself to what Segal understands to be a moment of "intellectual clarification" (Segal 1996: 153) rather than a hermeneutic reading of the catharsis clause which suggests the psychological purgation or purification of the audience's emotions through spectacular *methexis* (i.e an affective and pathetic participation or identification with the character or narrative happenings). The *Katharsis* question is no longer purely understood in terms of the psychology of the audience (as in Butcher

comprehensive critical vocabulary; certain terminological *differentia* which thematize the rift between *mythos* and *opsis*, text and spectacle. In reference to mythos Aristotle speaks of πράττοντες (agents of action) and not of the ὑποκριτής (the actor; which he appraises only in relation to the spectacle) and furthermore if one is to ponder on Aristotle's eclectic use of a critical vocabulary he refers to πράξις in relation to the "agent" or "man of action" (and that the plot represents this *praxis*) and in relation to the actor, κίνησις (movement) is overtly commented on. The *Poetics* formalizes a generic limit or propriety of the poet-tragedian's poiesis and essentially creates a homogeneous field which organizes poetic *praxis*. A poetics of closure highlights the manner in which Aristotle sharpens the distinction between poiesis as such (what I call a *mimetopoetics*) and what exclusively remains outside this formalized homogeneous field, that is, the non-poetic, *atechnical* quality of the spectacle.[9]

By chapter 26 (the final section of the *Poetics*) Aristotle turns aside the question of poetic mimesis and critically appraises the question of the actor's mimesis and how it manifests itself in the spectacle is especially problematic. How it presents itself as misrepresentation, flawed semblance, ostentatious play, particularly as a form of *excess*, as a *hyperbole* within the genre is more resolutely examined. Aristotle explains that "it is not a criticism of poetry, but of acting [οὐ τῆς ποιητικῆς ἡ κατηγορία ἀλλὰ τῆς ὑποκριτικῆς, 26, 1462a, 4-5]" that he appraises. It is not surprising then, that this criticism is at work with respect to mimesis as it reiterates a well-established Platonic criticism of the *hypokritês*.[10] Aristotelian mimesis, though it is a

---

and Bywater), but in terms of the unfolding of mythos, that is, it's function or operation remains interior to the text; within the structure or order of the narrative happenings.

[9] Gerald Else attests to the productive essence of Aristotelian mimesis, explaining that "the mimetic process is the activity of *poiêtikê*, its locus is not in the performance or representation, but specifically in the drafting of the plot". Thus the locus or even the "essence" of Aristotelian mimesis is the "production" of mythos. Else's insight, that the locus of mimesis is not "performance" but rather the "plot", places emphasis on an important distinction between the mimesis of *praxis* which is the poet's endeavor and mimetic *praxis* which is what the actor exhibits within a performance, it involves "imitating *action* by *action*" (1963: 12).

[10] *See* Plato's *Gorg.* 502-503, *Laws* Bk II, *Rep.* books two and three and the *Ion*.

delimitation of mimesis as poiesis which undertakes to extirpate the equivocal nature of mimesis problematically still conceals a fundamental paradoxy in its conceptualization as a stable aesthetic term. It divulges a differentiation between presentation (in poiesis), that is, as pure creative *praxis* and representation (in *opsis*) as theatrical or dramatic reproduction. However, this differential schema (as we shall see) reveals the fundamental paradox of mimesis, and it is this paradoxy which essentially underscores what Stephen Halliwell discerns to be Aristotle's equivocal position in relation to the theatre.[11] Aristotle's criticism is of paramount importance insofar as deciding the fate of the theatre or of the theatrical arts is concerned, however he is unable to escape the trace of the pejorative sense assigned to mimesis by Plato especially in terms of the theatre. Mimesis etymologically carries the trace of its original *mimological* sense, its performative aspect, even as Aristotle attempts to introduce it in the *Poetics* as a poetico-aesthetic concept.

Approaching the actor's performance by way of intuitively considering a presumption of the actor, that being, that he necessarily needs to *add* [προσθῇ] something of his own in the performance in order to deliver and translate effectively to the audience the meaning of the play, Aristotle explains,

> "And indeed actors think the audience do not understand unless they put in something of their own, and so they exaggerate their movements, as you see bad flute-players whirling about if they have to represent 'the discus' or mauling the leader of the chorus when they are playing 'the Scylla'."

> [ὡς γὰρ οὐκ αἰσθανομένων ἂν μὴ αὐτὸς προσθῇ, πολλὴν κίνησιν κινοῦνται, οἷον οἱ φαῦλοι αὐληταὶ κυλιόμενοι ἂν δίσκον δέῃ μιμεῖσθαι, καὶ ἕλκοντες τὸν κορυφαῖον ἂν Σκύλλαν αὐλῶσιν, 1461b 29-33].

---

[11] Halliwell 1987: 97

So it is an impropriety in the actor's performance of the play which Aristotle detects, an impropriety which in essence is disappropriative, insofar as the poet's text is concerned. The actor assumes that the audience would not apprehend or be affected by [οὐκ αἰσθανομένων] the play if the performance is not seasoned by his creative *prosthesis*, that is, if he did not "add" to the play [ἂν μὴ αὐτὸς προσθῇ]. Such additions are considered to be in excess or excessive insofar as the poet's text is concerned and this performative excess is denounced in the most manifest way by Aristotle. The actor's *kinesis* and *schemata* or *semeia*; the actor's performative language in general poses problems for any delimitation of mimesis. The peremptory declaration that the actor essentially "adds" [προσθῇ], engages in a performative *prosthesis* leads his criticism to consider the nature of the language of the theatre only in terms of excess, insofar as it exceeds the techno-poetical concerns of the poet.

One necessarily needs to ask what is the nature of this excess? Is it strictly bound to the theatre, to the actor's performative *epideixis*? According to Aristotle the actor exaggerates his performance with "too much movement" (πολλὴν κίνησιν], as in the case of Callipides who "exaggerates" [ὑπερβάλλοντα] or overstates his physical actions. This criticism is echoed by Mynniscus who dubbed Callipides an "ape" [πίθηκον]; his excessive style was considered a form of "aping" and how aping is related to mimesis is manifest; as we consider a most primitive mimesis; mimicry and an unconscionable form of impersonation.[12] Epic is not excluded from this criticism, as a rhapsode (as in the case of Sosistratus) may "overdo his gestures" [περιεργάζεσθαι τοῖς σημείοις], engage in unnecessary and excessive gesticulation during a rhapsodic performance. Logically then, for Aristotle, "the art which represents or imitates everything and anything is utterly vulgar" [λίαν δῆλον ὅτι ἡ ἅπαντα μιμουμένη φορτική, 26, 1461b, 29] as it functions inordinately outside the economy and natural laws of tragedy. When considering various performative examples, Aristotle judges a *hyperbolic* mimesis; his criticism

is oriented around the language of gestures (*schemata*), signs (*semeia*) and movement (*kinesis*). Antonin Artaud in his *Theatre and its Double*, suggests the nature of the actor's language is censured and reproved as it "is less able to define character, to narrate man's thoughts, to explain conscious states clearly"[13] it is heterogeneous to mythos, to the text the poet produces. Mythos (and subsequently the poet's text) essentially is presented as the autotelic exegesis and closure of Aristotle's treatise on tragedy. Theatrical *opsis* is subsequently, the inessential and poetically non-functional remainder which is in excess of the unity, order and structural wholeness of the plot.

~

The comparative appraisal of epic and tragedy in the *Poetics* only serves to determine a commonality of literary proportions that they share; mythos, narrative, story. In considering which literary mimesis is better, Aristotle initially decides on epic, as "it has no need of the actor's gestures" [οὐδὲν δέονται τῶν σχημάτων]. What is insightful here, is that Aristotle introduces tragedy in terms of epic, only to negate the importance of performance and highlight a different schematization, that of mythos as such. This is the only manner by which Aristotle (within his treatise) can emphasize that which separates "tragedy" from its excess, that is, what is outside its proper generic essence. It allows Aristotle to conclude that though tragedy's only defect is performance, this defect is not necessarily "inherent" in it. According to Aristotle,

"Tragedy fulfills its function even without acting, just as much as epic,

reading makes its qualities clear. So, if it is in other respects superior, this

disadvantage is not necessarily inherent."

---

[12] Else ascertains that mimesis (*mimeisthai*) was etymologically related to μῖμος and demonstratively related to the performance (1958: 74-6).

[13] Artaud 1989: 93

[ἔτι ἡ τραγῳδία καὶ ἄνευ κινήσεως ποιεῖ τὸ αὑτῆς, ὥσπερ ἡ ἐποποιία· διὰ
γὰρ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκειν φανερὰ ὁποία τίς ἐστιν· εἰ οὖν ἐστι τά γ᾽ ἄλλα κρεί
ττων, τοῦτό γε οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῇ ὑπάρχειν, 1462a].

Thus acting, performance; the staged spectacle, the performative *epideixis* of the poet's text is not necessary [οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον], it is not an inherent or generic property of tragedy. Moreover for Aristotle it is an indecorum within the genre which attests to an absolute impropriety of its prescribed and circumscribed quality and generic essence (its effects, its pleasures). Again the significance of a verbalized or oral reading of the text, of ἀναγινώσκειν privileges a particular and almost renewed relation of reader and text (as opposed to the relation between spectactors and spectacle) and almost certainly determines a philosophical relation. The sense of hearing through reading aloud are vested against the sense of seeing the performance. Listening is privileged to the extent that it is necessary within Aristotle's emphasis on "reading" [ἀναγινώσκειν] to consider it as a metaphor of philosophical comprehension. Considering this undeniable difference (between listening and seeing) the philosophical imaginary (i.e the imaginary or specular tragic scenario) ultimately sanctions what is at stake in Aristotle's venture, namely, a philosophical tragedy, which ascribes to the text a literary autonomy.

Now, according to this surveillance of a *poetics* which is not tainted by the excesses of the theatre, which in essence is a philosophical regulation of mimesis as poiesis, Aristotle introduces an already familiar Platonic moral concern to enhance the viability and efficacy of his criticism of acting. The question of vulgarity (φορτική) is raised and all of this amounts to the assertion that Aristotle was able to subscribe to the moral and pedagogical concerns which inaugurates Plato's *epistasis* of poetry in books two and three of the *Republic*.

And one could not ignore the close relationship between "vulgarity" and the theatre in all discourse of moral and ethical thematization. Vulgarity since Plato has always been understood

in terms of theatrical mimesis and it always considered the audience's apprehension and reception of the affective behavior of inferior [φαύλων] and immoral man as pernicious in every way imagined, infecting and marking in an indelible way through spectacular *methexis* the polity of one's soul. Aristotle clearly states, that tragedy is vulgar in two ways (a) since it appeals to an inferior audience [πρὸς φαύλους, 26, 1462a,3]and (b) in terms of the actor's representations of inferior subjects [φαύλων, 26, 1462a, 8-10].

What Plato discerned to be the dissapropriative quality of the actor's mimesis, that is, his *epeideictic* competence in dissimulation, in masquerading, in theatrical *apocryphy*, led to Aristotle's assertion that mimesis must pertain to techne and principally be regulated by techne to avert the theatrical proliferation of hypocritical excesses. And as techne is fundamentally the highest feature of poiesis, it regulates the mimetic disposition of the poet and it is only within this limit that Aristotle condones mimesis.[14] As the Spectacle and acting are inartistic, and do not pertain to techne perhaps this clarifies one thing, at least in terms of the way Aristotle regulates his criticism here, that techne is what dictates and organizes poetic mimesis, that is, delimits mimesis. It precludes certain hyperboles and excesses from emerging in any creative *praxis*. In acting, on the other hand, the absence of techne or of prescribed technical precepts leads to the excesses of the actor's mimesis; it unveils what I have called a *hyperbolic* mimesis, which is uncontrolled and unmanageable, a mimesis which represents the text by adding to it, by supplementing it and more dangerously supplanting it; a mimesis which in all respects would unsteady the philosophical *poetics* extemporized by Aristotle. This is what is seemingly so paradoxical about mimesis within both Plato's and Aristotle's discourse, the paradox of mimesis (within all discourse) is that it is both active production (Aristotle's conceptualization) and

---

[14] The spectacle has already been referred to as "inartistic" (ἀτεχνότατον) and this is consistent to what Aristotle states in his *Art of Rhetoric* that the actor has a natural talent and "no art" (καὶ ἔστι φύσεως τὸ ὑποκριτικὸν εἶναι, καὶ ἀτεχνότερον) which is congruous with his view of the spectacle that it does not pertain to art or techne. See *The Art of Rhetoric*, III, 1404a7.

passive reproduction (as in book ten of the *Republic*); however this paradoxy is magnified in our deliberation by the actor's mimesis which is curiously *both* simultaneously, which makes theatrical mimesis all the more pernicious as it subverts the economy of mimesis which Plato pioneered and Aristotle desired to stabilize.

The actor's mimesis involves an impropriety, that is, a misrepresentation of the poet's text through prosthetic excess and it furthermore entails an artistic propriety, that is, a supplementation, an actualization of the text as theatrical *ergon*; which presents itself as *auto*presentation,[15] as an autonomous presentation. This *auto*presentation of the spectacle marks the limit of the actor's mimesis as the effect of a representation as repetition; a repetition bound to the logic of the supplement which proffers the possibility of a theatrical or performative presentation which is not passive in its aesthetic effusion but rather autonomous and active. Subsequently, the actor's propriety is an impropriety of sorts, he creatively delivers the play to an audience as a creative and active "subject" and his performative *prosthesis* ensures a degree of creative autonomy; however paradoxically he is a "character", a theatrical *prosopon* which attests to a fundamental passivity.

If one is to proffer a faithful reading of Aristotle's *Poetics* one could actually detect an almost subtle perversion in his work, insofar as his *mimetology* is concerned. Mimesis is two things at once in terms of the actor; it is incontestably both production and reproduction and it is in this respect that Aristotelian mimesis ultimately inhabits the inherited theoretical *topoi* of Platonism. But its paradoxy, its essential ambivalence as a double postulation within philosophical discourse resists etymological reductions. Mimesis as the philosopher Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe correctly observes is without property, "it has no *proper* to it" (1989: 116), essentially there is no *etymon* in mimesis, even within the *Poetics* Aristotle's attempt to circumscribe mimesis, to situate it as proper (in poiesis) and improper (in terms of *opsis*) fails. In

this "disastrous word" (as the eminent philologist Willamowitz-Moellondorf observed)[16] there is

a realization of never being able to philosophically master mimesis, particularly to master its

play.

---

[16]Willamowitz-Moellondorf referring to mimesis as "Ein verhangnisvolles Wort" (1919: 479) is a response
to the philological and etymological difficulties encountered in Plato's deployment of such a fundamental
concept. Plato's philosophical appropriation of mimesis has obviously delimited the field of all
interrogation on the word.

Bibliography

This Bibliography is a listing if all texts cited and referenced in the thesis

—Primary Texts—

Aristotle, *Peri Poiêtikês*. Translated. by W. Hamilton Fyfe. 1927. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hesiod, *Theogony* Translated by Dorothea Wender. 1977. Penguin Books.

Plato, *Cratylus*. Translated By H.N.Fowler 1926. *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Plato, *Republic* books 1-V. Translated by Paul Shorey. 1930. *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Plato, *Republic* books VI-X. Translated by Paul Shorey. 1935. *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Plato, *Sophist*. Translated by H.N.Fowler. 1921. *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Plato, *Ion*. Translated by W.R. Lamb. 1925. *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Pseudo-Longinus. *On the Sublime*. Translated. by W. Hamilton Fyfe. 1927. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

—Secondary Texts—

Ackrill. J.L. 1955. "ΣΥΜΠΛΟΚΗ ΕΙΔΩΝ". In *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. 2. 31-35.

Ackrill. J.L. 1957. "Plato and the Copula: *Sophist* 251-59". In *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. 77. 1957. 1-6.

Allen. M., 1989. *Icastes: Marsilio Ficino's Interpretation of Plato's Sophist*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

Alexandrakis, A. 1980. "A Differing View, Plato's Books III and X of the *Republic*", *Diotima* 8:196-198.

Anagnostopoulos, G. 1971/2. "Plato's *Cratylus*: The Two Theories of the Correctness of Names", *Review of Metaphysics* **25**.

Andronikos, M. 1973/4. "The Significance of Plato's *Cratylus*", *Review of Metaphysics* **27**.

Annas, J. 1982. "Knowledge and Language: the *Theaetetus* and the *Cratylus*" in Malcolm Schofield and Martha Craven Nussbaum (eds.) *Language and Logos: Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy to G.E.L.Owen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Annas, J. 1988. "Plato and the Triviality of Literature", in *Plato, On Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts.*, ed. Julius Moravcsik and Philip Temko, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield. 1-28.

Annas. J. 1981. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford. 336-44

Albury, W.R. 1971. "Hunting the Sophist", in *Apeiron*, volume V. 1-11.

Arieti, J.A. 1991. *Interpreting Plato: The Dialogues as Drama*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield. 270.

Artaud, A. 1989. "The Theatre and Its Double." *Artaud on Theatre*. Ed. Claude Schumacher. London: Methuen Drama.

Atkins, J.W.H. 1934. *Literary Criticism in Antiquity*, Cambridge. 1.48-51

Baldry, H.C. 1971. *The Greek Tragic Theatre*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Baltzly, D.C. 1992. "Plato and the New Rhapsody", in *Ancient Philosophy*, 12:29-52.

Belfiore, E. 1985. "The Role of the Visual Arts in Plato's Ideal State", in *Journal of the Theory and Criticism of the Visual Arts*, v.CXV. 47-57.

Belfiore, E. 1984. "A Theory of Imitation in Plato's Republic", in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, v.114. 121-146.

Belfiore, E. 1985. "Lies Unlike the Truth. Plato on Hesiod *Theogony* 27", in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, v.115. 47-57.

Belfiore, E. 1986. "Wine and Catharsis of the Emotions in Plato's *Laws*", in *Classical Quarterly*, v.36. 421-437.

Belfiore, E. 1983. "Plato's greatest accusation against Poetry", in *New Essays on Plato, Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (Supp.), **9**. 39-62.

Benardete, S. 1960. "Plato *Sophist* 223b1-7, *Phronesis*, **5**

Benardete, S. 1963. "Some Misquotation of Homer in Plato", *Phronesis*, v.18. 173-178.

Benardete, S. 1980-81. "Physics and Tragedy. On Plato's *Cratylus*", in *Ancient Philosophy*, I. 127-140.

Bernardete, S. 1989. *Socrates' Second Sailing: On Plato's Republic*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Berger, F.R. 1966. "Rest and Motion in the *Sophist*", *Phronesis*. **10**:70-77.

Bestor, Thomas Wheaton. 1980. "Plato's Semantics and Plato's *Cratylus*", *Phronesis* **25**.

Bluck, R.S. 1947. "Aristotle, Plato and Ideas of Artefacta", *The Classical Review.* 75-76.

Bluck, R.S. 1957. "False Statement in the *Sophist*", *Journal of Hellenic Studies.* 77:181-186

Bluck, R.S. 1975. *Plato's* Sophist. Manchester University Press.

Bondeson, W. 1974. "Plato's *Sophist* and the Significance of Truth Value Statements", *Apeiron,* volume 8. no.2. 41-46.

Brownson, C. 1920. *Plato's Studies and Criticism of the Poets,* Boston. 8-94

Brumbaugh, R.S. 1957. "Plato's *Cratylus*: The Order of Etymologies" *Review of Metaphysics* **11.**

Brumbaugh, R.S. 1992. "A Retracted Exile? Poetry and *Republic* 614b2", in *Ancient Philosophy,* v.12.172-173.

Butcher, S. H. 1934. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art.* New York: Dover.

Bywater, I. 1909. *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Caputo, J and Derrida, J. 1996. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation With Jacques Derrida.* Fordham University Press.

Calvert, B. 1970. "Forms and Flux in Plato's *Cratylus*", *Phronesis* **15.**

Carter, R.E. 1967. "Plato and Inspiration", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy,* volume 5. 111-121.

Cavarnos, C. 1953. "Plato's teaching on Fine Art", in *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research,* volume XIII. 487-498.

Cavarnos, C. 1971. "Plato's Critique of the Fine Arts", in *Philosophia,* Athens, I. 296-314.

Cavarnos, C. 1973. *Plato's Theory of Fine Art,* Athens.

Chen, L.C.H. 1982. "Onomatopoeia in the *Cratylus*", in *Apeiron,* volume XVI. 86-101.

Cherniss, H. 1932. "On Plato's *Republic* X, 597B", in *American Journal of Philology.* 233-242.

Chadwick Ray, A. 1984. *For Images: An Interpretation of Plato's Sophist.* University Press of America.

Cornford. F. 1945. *The Republic of Plato*, Oxford University Press.

Cornford. F. 1935. *Plato's Theory of Knowledge; the Thaeatetus and the Sophist.* London.

Crombie, M. 1962. *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines.* London: Routledge.

Deleuze , G. 1990. *The Logic of Sense.* Trans. by Mark Lester. Edited by Constantin V. Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press.

Demand, N. 1975."The Nomothetes of the *Cratylus*", *Phronesis* **20**.

Demos, R. 1964. "Symposium: Plato's Theory of Language. Plato's Philosophy of Language", *The Journal of Philosophy* **61:20**.

Demos, R. 1939. *The Philosophy of Plato.* New York.

De Rijk, L. 1986. *Plato's Sophist. A Philosophical Commentary.* North Holland Publishing Company.

Derrida. J. 1974. *Of Grammatology.* Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore. John Hopkins University.

Derrida. J. 1979. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles.* Trans. Barbara Harlow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. 1981a. *Dissemination.* Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. 1981b. "Economimesis" in Diacritics, 11.2. 3-25

Derrida, J. 1982. *Margins of Philosophy.* Translated by Allan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. 1985. "Des Tours de Babel". Translated by Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, edited by J.F.Graham. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 165-207.

Derrida, J. 1993. *Aporias.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Derrida, J. 1995a 'Eating Well', or the Calculation of the Subject, in: E. Weber (ed.), *Points Interviews, 1974-1994*, trans. P. Kamuf & others (Stanford, Stanford University Press), pp. 255-287.

Derrida, J. 1995. "Khora" in *On the Name.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. 89-130.

Dodds, E.R. 1945."Plato and the Irrational", in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.16-25.

Dodds E.R. 1964. *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dodds, E.R. 1945. "Plato and the Irrational" in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, pp.16-25.

Dorter, K. 1992. Review of Jay Farness' *Missing Socrates: Problems of Plato's Writing,* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991, in *Review of Metaphysics*, volume XLII. 856-857.

Dorter, K. 1973. "The *Ion*, Plato's Characterization of Art", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, v.32.65-78.

Duncan, Th.S. 1944-5. "Plato and Poetry", in *Classical Journal*, v. XL. 481-494.

Dyson, M. 1988. "Poetic Imitation in Plato *Republic* III", in *Antichthon*, v.32. 42-53.

Edelstein, L. 1962. "Platonic Anonymity", in *American Journal of Philology*, v.LXXXIII. 1-22.

Elias, J.A. 1984. *Plato's Defence of Poetry*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 261.

Else, G.F. 1949. Review of W.J. Verdenius' *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us*, Leiden: E.J.Brill in *Classical Philology*. 262-263.

Else, G. F. 1958. "Imitation in the Fifth Century", in *Classical Philology*, vol. LIII, no.2. 73-90.

Else, G.F. 1959. "Addendum to Imitation in the Fifth Century", in *Classical Philology*, no.2, 245.

Else, G.F. 1963. *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*. Cambridge: Harvard.

Else, G.F. 1972. *The Structure and date of Book X of Plato's 'Republic'*, Abbhandulgen der Heidelberg Akademie der Wissenschaften, Heidelberg.

Else, G.F. 1986. *Plato and Aristotle on Poetry*, ed. P.Burian, Chapel Hill and London.

Farness, J. 1991. *Missing Socrates; Problems of Plato's Writing*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Ferrari, G. 1989. "Plato and Poetry" in *The Cambridge history of Literary criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 92-148.

Fine, G. 1977. "Plato on Naming", *Philosophical Quarterly* **27:109**.

Fraassen , B.C. Van. 1969. "Logical Structure in Plato's *Sophist*", in *The Review of Metaphysics*. **22:** 482-498.

Frege, G. 1980. P. Geach and M.Black eds. *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. 3rd ed. Oxford. Basil Blackwell.

Friedlander, P. 1958. *Plato: An Introduction*, Volume 1, translated by Hans Meyerhoff, Bollingen Series LIX, New York: Pantheon Books.

Friedlander, P. 1964. *Plato: The Dialogues, The First Period*, Volume 2, translated by Hans Meyerhoff, Bollingen Series LIX, New York: Pantheon Books.

Friedlander.P. 1969. *Plato. The Dialogues*. Volume 3 (Second and Third Periods). London. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Gadamer, H-G. 1990. *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, New Have: Yale University Press.

Genette, G. 1994. *Mimologiques: Voyage en Cratylie*, Trans. Thad's E. Morgan. Lincoln. University of Nebraska.

Gerraughty, R.F. 1973. *The Role and Treatment of Poetry in Plato's 'Republic' 396b-397c*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, v.XCIII. 185-191.

Golden, L. 1975. "Plato's Concept of *Mimesis*", British Journal of Aesthetics 15. 118-131

Golden, L. 1968. Review of G. Sorbom's *Mimesis and Art*, Stockholm, Svenska Bokforl, *Classical Journal*, **LXIII**: 179-180.

Golden, L. 1992. *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis*. APA series. Ed. Matthew S. Santirocco. Georgia: Scholars Press.

Goldstein, L. 1966. "Mimesis and Catharsis Reexamined." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* **24**. 567-577.

Gomez. L.A. 1977. "Plato's Description of Dialectic in the *Sophist* 253d1-e2", *Phronesis*. **22**:29-47.

Gosling, J. 1969. Review of G. Sorbom's *Mimesis and Art*, Stockholm, Svenska Bokforl, 1966, in *Philosophical Review*, v. LXXVIII. 273-276.

Gould Jr. J.B. 1969. "Plato: About Language- The *Cratylus* Reconsidered", *Apeiron* **3**.

Gould, Thomas.1964. "Plato's Hostility to Art", in *Arion*. 70-91.

Greene, W.C.1918. "Plato's view of Poetry", in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, v.29.

Grey, D.R. 1952. "Art in the *Republic*", in *Philosophy*, v.XXVII, no.103. 291-310.

Griswold, Ch. 1981. "The Ideas and the Criticism of Poetry in Plato's *Republic*, Bk. 10", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, **19**:135-150.

Griswold, Ch. 1988. "Introduction" to *Platonic Writings, Plato Readings*, Routledge. 1-15.

Grube, G.M. 1974 *The Republic*, Indianapolis: Hackett publishing Company.

Gulley, N. 1977. "Plato On Poetry", in *Greece and Rome*. **24**: 154-169.

Guthrie, W.K.C. 1975. *A History of Greek Philosophy* IV Plato: The Man and His Dialogues: Earlier Period. Cambridge University Press.

Hackforth, R. 1945. "False Statement in Plato's *Sophist*", in *Classical   Quarterly*, **39**:56-58.

Hackforth, R. 1950-51. "Plato and the Poet's ενθουσιασμός", in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, **181**: 30.

Halliwell, S. 1987. *The Poetics of Aristotle*. London: Duckworth.

Hamlyn., D.W. 1958. "Eikasia in Plato's *Republic*". *Philosophical Quarterly*. **8**:14-23

Hantz, H. 1985. "Plato's ambivalence towards the Arts", *Diotima*, **13**: 29-35.

Hartland-Swann, J. 1951. "Plato as Poet: A Critical Interpretation II", in *Philosophy*, v. XXVI. 131-141.

Heath, B., 1988. "On Plato's *Cratylus*", *Journal of Philosophy*. **17**.

Haslam, M.W. 1991. "On Ancient Manuscripts of the *Republic*", in *Mnemosyne*, v. XLIV. 336-346.

Havelock, A.E. 1963. *Preface to Plato*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Havelock, A.E. 1982. *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Heath, B. 1988. "On Plato's *Cratylus*", *Journal of Philology* **17**.

Heidegger, M. 1962. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Harper and Row publishers.

Heidegger, M. 1971. "A Dialogue on Language" in *On the Way to Language* (Unterwegs zur Sprache) translated by Peter D. Hertz, San Francisco: Harper-Collins Publishers.

Heidegger, M. 1991. *Nietzsche*. Volumes 1 and 2. Translated by David Ferrell Krell. Harper and Row.

Heidegger, M. 1997. *Plato's Sophist*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer. Indiana Univeristy Pres.

Heidegger, M. 2002. *The Essence of Truth; On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. Translated by Ted Sadler. London: Continuum.

Henning, R.B. 1964. "A Performing Musician Looks at the *Ion*", in *Classical Journal*, v. LIX. 241-247.

Hines, J.N. 1982-3. "Plato's Cave Story. A Dream Interpretation", in *Platon*, v. XXXIV-XXXV. 145-159.

Howland, J. 1986. "The cave image and the Problem of Place; The Sophist, the Poet and the Philosopher, in *Dionysius*, X. 21-55.

Hyland, D.A. 1968. "Why Plato Wrote Dialogues", in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, v.I. 38-50.

Hwang, P.H. 1981. "Poetry in Plato's *Republic*", in *Apeiron*, v.XV. 29-37.

Janaway, C. 1992. "Craft and Fitness in Plato's *Ion*", in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, v. X. 1-23.

Kadir, D. 1994. "On the *Ars Combinatoria* of Plato's *Cratylus* and its latest Peripeties" in *Plato and Postmodernism*, ed. Steven Shankman, Pensylvania: The Aldine Press.

Kahn, C. 1973. "Language and Ontology in the *Cratylus*" in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy. Phronesis*. Supp. 1.

Kerferd, G.B. 1954. "Plato's Noble Art of Sophistry", in *Classical Quarterly*. XLVIII:84-90.

Kerferd, G.B. 1981. *The Sophistic Movement*. London. Cambridge University Press.

Ketchum, R.J. 1979. "Names Forms and Conventionalism: *Cratylus* 383-395", *Phronesis* 24.

Kirk, G.S. 1951. "The Problem of *Cratylus*", *American Journal of Philology* 72.

Koller, H. 1954 *Die Mimesis in der Antike. Nachahmung, Darstellung, Ausdruck*. Dissertationes Bernenses, Ser.1, Bern.

Kosman, L.A. 1992. "Silence and Imitation in the Platonic Dialogues", in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, edited by James C. Klagge and Nicholas D. Smith, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kretzmann, N. 1971. "Plato On the Correctness of Names", *American Philosophical Quarterly* **8:2**.

Lacey, A.R. 1959. "Plato's *Sophist* and the Forms". *Classical Quarterly*. 43-52.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. 1986. "Deux adresses". in *L'Imitation des Modernes*, Galilee.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. 1989. Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Lacoue-Labarthe, P. and Nancy, J-L. 1988. *The Literary Absolute*. Albany: The State University of New York Press.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. 1993. *The Subject of Philosophy*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press.

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. 1993. "Sublime Truth" in *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*. Translated by Jeffrey S. Librett. State University of New York Press

Lacoue-Labarthe, P. 1994. *Musica Ficta*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

La Driere, C. 1951. "The Problem of Plato's *Ion*", in *Journal of Art and Aesthetic Criticism*, v. X. 26-34.

Lang, B. 1972-3. "Presentation and Representation in Plato's Dialogues", in *Philosophical Forum*, IV. 224-240.

Lattimore, R. 1964. *Story Patterns in Greek Tragedy*. London: Athlone Press.

Levin, S.B. 1995. "What is in a Name? A Reconsideration of the *Cratylus*' Historical Sources and Topics". In *Ancient Philosophy*. **15**.

Levin, S.B. 1997. "Greek Conceptions of naming: Three Forms of Appropriateness in Plato and the Literary tradition", *Classical Philology* **92:1.**

Levinson, R.B. 1957-58. "Language and the *Cratylus*: Four Questions", *Review of Metaphysics* **11.**

Liddell and Scott. 1989. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Seventh edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lodge, R.C. 1953. *Plato's Theory of Art*, New York Humanities Press and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lorenz and Mittelstrasse. 1967. "On Rational Philosophy of Language: The Program in Plato's *Cratylus* Reconsidered". *Mind*. 1-20

Luce, J.V. 1965. "The Theory of Ideas in the *Cratylus*", *Phronesis* **10.**

Luce, J.V. 1969. "Plato on Truth and Falsity in Names" *Classical Quarterly* **19.**

Mackenzie, M. M. 1986. "Putting the *Cratylus* in its Place", *Classical Quarterly* **36.**

Maguire, J.P. 1965. "Beauty and the Fine Arts in Plato: Some 'Aporiai'", in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. 171-193.

Maguire, J.P. 1964. "The Differentiation of Art in Plato's Dialogues", in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*. 389-410.

Malcolm, J. 1967. "Plato's Analysis of τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν in the *Sophist*", in *Phronesis*, volume XII. 130-146.

Malcolm, J. 1985 "Remarks on an Incomplete Rendering of Being in the *Sophist*", in *Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie*, volume LXVII, 1985, pp.162-165.

Malcolm, J. 1985. "On what is not in any way in the *Sophist*", in *Classical Quarterly*, volume XXXV. 520-523.

Mcdowell, J. 1982. "Falsehood and Not-Being in Plato's *Sophist*". In Malcolm Schofield and Martha C. Nussbaum (eds.) *Language and Logos: Studies In Ancient Greek Philosophy presented to G.E.L.Owen.*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mckeon, Richard. 1936. "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity", in *Modern Philology*, volume XXXIV, no.1. 1-35.

Melberg, A. 1995. *Theories of Mimesis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Moraux, Paul. 1995. "La Mimesis dans les theories anciennes de la danse, de la musique et de la poesie (A propos d'un ouvrage recent)", in *Les Etudes Classiques,*. 3-13.

Moravcski, J. 1998. "Noetic Aspiration and Artistic Inspiration", in *Plato, On Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts*, edited by Julius Moravcski and Philip Temko, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield. 29-46.

Moravcsik. J. 1962. "Being and Meaning in the *Sophist*". In *Acta Philosophica Fennica* XIV 23-7.

Moss, L. "Plato and the Poetics", in *Philological Quarterly*, volume L, 1971, pp.533-542.

Murdoch, I. 1977. *The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Murley, C. "Plato and the Arts", in *Classical Bulletin*, volume XXVII, 1950, pp.13-14.

Murray, P. 1996. *Plato on Poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Murray, P. 1992. "Inspiration and Mimesis in Plato" in *The Language of the Cave*, edited by Andrew Barker and Martin Warner, Edmonton: Academic Printing and Publishing.

Nehring, S. 1945. "Plato and the Theory of Language" in *Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought and Religion.* 3.

Nehamas, A. 1988. "Plato on Imitation and Poetry in *Republic* X", in *Plato On Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts*, edited by Julius Moravcsik and Philip Temko, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 47-78.

Nehamas. A. 1998. "Plato and the Mass Media" in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates*. Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press

Nietzsche, F. 1967. *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann, New York: Random House.

Notopoulos, J.A. 1939. "The Name of Plato", in *Classical Philology*, volume XXXIV, April. 135-145.

Oates, W.J. 1941-2. "Plato's Philosophical Creative Artist", in *Classical World*, volume XXXV. 247.

Oates, W.J. 1972. *Plato's View of Art*, New York. 81.

Osborne, Catherine. 1987. "The Repudiation of Representation in Plato's *Republic* and its Repercussions", in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, volume XXXIII. 53-73.

Owen. G.E.L. 1971. "Plato on Not-Being". In *Plato I: Metaphysics and Epistemology*. Ed. Gregory Vlastos. New York: Anchor Books.

Page, C. 1991. "The Truth About Lies in Plato's *Republic*", in *Ancient Philosophy*, volume 2. 1-33.

Pappas, N. 1989. "Plato's *Ion*: The Problem of the Author", *Philosophy*, volume 64. 381-389.

Partee, M.H. 1971. "Inspiration in the Aesthetics of Plato", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume XXX. 87-95.

Partee, M.H. 1973. "Plato's Banishment of Poetry", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume 32. pp.209-222.

Partee, M.H. 1973. "Plato on the Criticism of Poetry", in *Philological Quarterly*, volume LII, 1973, pp.629-642.

Partee, M.H. 1974. "Plato on the Rhetoric of Poetry", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume 33. 203-212.

Partee, M.H. 1982. *Plato's Poetics: The Authority of Beauty*, Salt Lake City.

Pfeiffer, W.M. 1972. "True and False Speech in Plato's *Cratylus* 385 b-c", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* **2:1**.

Philip, J.A. 1961. "Mimesis in the *Sophistes* of Plato", in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, volume XCII. 453-468.

Pieper, J. 1964. *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness: The Platonic Dialogue Phaedrus*, trans. R & C. Winston, New York.

Plass, P. 1964. "Philosophic Anonymity and Irony in the Platonic Dialogues", in *American Journal of Philology*, volume LXXV. 254-278.

Plass, P. 1967. "Play and Philosophic Detachment in Plato", in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, volume XCVIII. 343-364.

Ranta, Jerrald. 1967. "The Drama of Plato's *Ion*", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume 26. 219-229.

Richardson, Mary. 1976. "True and False Names in the *Cratylus*" *Phronesis* **21**.

Ricouer, Paul. 1984. "Emplotment: A Reading in Aristotle's *Poetics.*" *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellaue. Volume 1. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Robinson, D. 1972. "The Ethical Critique of Art in the *Republic*", in *Dianoia*. 25-39.

Robinson. R. 1969. "A Criticism of Plato's *Cratylus*". In *Essays in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford.

Robinson, R. 1956. "A Criticism of Plato's *Cratylus*" *Philosophical Review*.

Rosenstock, B. 1992. "Fathers and Sons: Irony in the *Cratylus*", *Arethusa* **25:3**.

Rosen, S. 1983. *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image*. Yale University Press.

Ross, D. 1951. *Plato's Theory of Ideas*. Oxford.

Rucker, D. 1966. "Plato and the Poets", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume XXV. 167-170.

Rutherford, R.B. 1988. "Plato and Literary Criticism", in *Phronesis*, volume 33. 216-224.

Sallis, J. 1975. *Being and* Logos: *Reading the Platonic Dialogues*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Sallis, J. 2000. *The Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Sassure de, F. 1974. *Course in general linguistics* edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger ; translated from the French by Wade Baskin. Revised ed. Jonathan Culler. London : Fontana.

Schipper, E.W. 1963-64. "Mimesis in the Arts in Plato's *Laws*", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, volume 22. 199-202.

Schofield, M. 1972. "A Displacement in the Text of the *Cratylus*" *Classical Quarterly* **22**.

Schofield, M. 1982. "The Dénouement of the *Cratylus*" in *Language and Logos: Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy to G.E.L.Owen*, ed. Malcolm Schofield and Martha Craven Nussbaum, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Segal, C. 1978. "The Myth was Saved": Reflections on Homer and the Mythology of Plato's *Republic*", in *Hermes*, volume CVI. 315-335.

Segal. C. 1996. "Catharsis, Audience and Closure in Greek Tragedy." In *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*. Ed. M. S. Silk. Oxford: Clarendon Press.149-172

Shelley, P.B. 1965. "A Defence of Poetry" in *The Complete works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (eds). New York: Gordian Press.

Sider, D. 1981. "Did Plato write Dialogues Before the Death of Socrates?" in *Apeiron*. 15-19.

Skemp, J.B. 1949. "Plato and the Argument from the Arts", in *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, volume XLVI. 27-29.

Sörbom, G. 1966. *Mimesis and Art; Studies in the Origin and Early Development of an Aesthetic Vocabulary*, Bonniers: Svenska Bokforlaget.

Spariosu, M. 1991. "Plato's *Ion*: Mimesis, Poetry and Power", in *Mimesis in Contemporary theory an interdisciplinary approach: Volume 2; Mimesis, Semiosis and Power*. 13-26.

Stanford, W.B. 1973. "Onomatopoeic mimesis in Plato, *Republic* 396b-397c", in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, volume XCIII. 185-191.

Steenburgh Van, E.W. 1974. "On Spiking the Imitation Regress", in *Apeiron*, volume 8. 27-30.

Steven, R G. 1933. "Plato and the Art of His Time", in *Classical Quarterly*. 149-155.

Stockton, D. 1952-53. "Plato's Quarrel with the Poets", in *Durham University Journal*, volume XIV. 64-70.

Tate, J. 1928. "Imitation in Plato's *Republic*", in *Classical Quarterly*, volume 22.16-23.

Tate, J. 1932. "Plato and Imitation", in *Classical Quarterly*, volume 26. 161-169.

Tate. J. 1929. "Plato and Allegorical Interpretation" *CQ*. 23. 142-154.

Taylor, A.E. 1926. *Plato: The man and his work*. London: Methuen.

Thayer, H.S. 1975. "Plato's Quarrel with poetry: Simonides", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Jan-Mar. volume 36, no.1. 3-26.

Thomson, D.H. 1994. "Plato's *Cratylus* in the Light of Postmodernism" in *Plato and Postmodernism*, ed. Steven Shankman, Pensylvania: The Aldine Press.

Tigerstedt, E.N. 1969. *Plato's Idea of Poetical Inspiration*, Commentationes Hum. Litt. Soc. Scient. Fennicae, XLIV, 2, Helsinki.

Tigerstedt, E.N. 1970. "Furor Poeticus: Poetic Inspiration in Greek Literature before Democritus and Plato", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, v.31. 163-178.

Urmson, J.O. 1988. "Plato and the Poets", in *Plato, On Beauty, Wisdom, and the Arts*, edited by Julius Moravcsik and Philip Tempo, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield. 125-136.

Verdenius, W.J. 1943. "L'*Ion* de Platon", in *Mnemosyne*, v. XI. 233-262.

Verdenius, W.J. 1944. "Platon et la Poesie", in *Mnemosyne*, v. XII. 118-150.

Verdenius, W.J. 1949. *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us*, Philosophia Antiqua, Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Versenyi, L. 1970-71. "The Quarrel between Poetry and Philosophy", in *Philosophical Forum*, II. 200-212.

Weineck, S-M. 1998. "Talking About Homer: Poetic Madness, Philosophy, And The Birth Of Criticism In Plato's *Ion*", *Arethusa* 31 19–42.

Weingartner, R. 1970. "Making Sense of the *Cratylus*". *Phronesis*. 5-25

Wiegmann, H. 1990. "Plato's Critique of the Poets and the Misunderstanding of his Epistemological Argumentation", in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, volume XXIII. 109-124.

Wilcox, J. 1987. "Cross-Metamorphosis in Plato's Ion," *Literature as Philosophy: Philosophy as Literature* (ed. Donald G. Marshall). Iowa City. 155–74.

Willamowitz-Moellendorff, U Von. 1919. *Platon*. Berlin.

Williams, B. 1982. "Cratylus' Theory of Names and its Refutation" in *Language and Logos: Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy to G.E.L.Owen*, ed. Malcolm Schofield and Martha Craven Nussbaum, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wimsatt , W.K. and Brooks, C. 1964. "Socrates and the rhapsode", in *Literary Criticism; A Short History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 3-20.

Woodruff, P. 1990. "What Could Go Wrong With Inspiration? Why Plato's Poets Fail", in *Plato, On Beauty, Wisdom and the Arts,* ed. Julius Moravcsik and Philip Temko, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield.137-150.

Woozley A.D and Cross, R.C. 1964. *Plato's Republic: A Philosophical Commentary*, New York: St. Martin Press.

Zeitlin, F. 1996. *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zeitlin, F. 1985. "Playing the Other". In *Representations* 11.