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**'THE PLAY OF INTELLECT: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AESTHETICS OF
PLATONIC DIALECTIC THROUGH GADAMERIAN HERMENEUTICS'**

BY BARRY DIXON B.A., M.A.

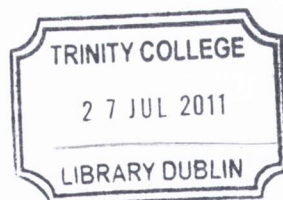
SUPERVISED BY PROFESSOR JOHN DILLON

**SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
DUBLIN, TRINITY COLLEGE, IN 2009**

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Summary:

This thesis argues for an inherently aesthetic structure to the Platonic method of dialectic. This is carried out using a two-tiered incorporation of the hermeneutic philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer.

In the first instance I examine Gadamer's treatment of art, a subject handled by him as an exemplar in order to highlight the unique truth values and operational methodology of the human sciences in general. In this way a more essential picture of artistry and the artistic experience is positioned. Crucially, though, each of the terms used by Gadamer to illuminate the fundamental nature of art is argued as being just as operative within the fabric of Platonic dialectic. In order to demonstrate this, my work is divided into three adjoining parts, each dealing with a particular area of this Gadamerian exegesis.

In my first part, Gadamer's use of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* in terms of art is shown to structure the ontological worth and cognitive draw of the Platonic dialogue. With regard to *mimesis*, Plato's utilisation of Socrates, as well as the informed, representative use of language and each of his interlocutors, is argued as being essentially mimetic in nature, though under a Platonically re-envisioned conception of the term. Similarly, and more recognisably, I argue that *anamnesis* works *through* Plato's works dialectically in the very same way as it does through a work of art for Gadamer.

In my second part I incorporate Gadamer's use of the play analogy in his transcendent conception of the 'world' of the artwork to show how the rules and regulations of the Platonic dialogue and the method of dialectic celebrated therein, operate on the discussant in the very same way. One must participate in the game, and the artwork by proxy, belonging to its separated ontological being in the same way as one participates in dialogue, yet participating in its evolving mode of being in a Platonically conceived notion of inspiration.

In my third and final part I demonstrate how the work of art only finds completion in the interpretive grasp and ultimate transmission of the spectator, presenting tragedy as the ideal artistic expression, in Gadamerian terms, because of the direct presence of the spectator. Although not included by Gadamer, I extend his treatment of tragedy to comedy. Once more I show how the interpretive grasp of the

spectator is exemplified in the Platonic dialogue, whereby the works themselves can only ever find completion in their being discussed. Of course, none of this sounds convincing when taken on its own and separated from the second level of my Gadamerian usage.

For every claim I make with regard to an implicitly aesthetic structure to Plato's dialectic is supported by an explicit examination of what Plato says in the dialogues themselves. However, in no instance is this a traditional interpretation but, rather, is a hermeneutical interpretation based on the approach of Gadamer. So in each of the treatments in the above mentioned sections, a hermeneutic interpretation of the relevant dialogues is used to support the idea under consideration. Although in areas such as *mimesis* and *anamnesis* a direct incorporation of Gadamer's reading of the *Republic* and *Phaedo* is included, I extend his method myself in my analysis of the *Phaedrus*, *Ion*, *Hippias Major* and *Symposium* in the second and third parts of my work.

So through my elucidation of Gadamer, by combining an implicit investigation of dialectic with an explicit and original interpretation of the dialogues themselves, my thesis endeavours to argue for an essentially aesthetic structure to Plato's works. Although I am careful to limit the potential of my findings with regard to Plato, given the distance between our conceptions of artistry, I need not completely limit my results to an historical perspective. For part of the consequences of my work helps show *us* a novel way of seeing how our interactions with art and the Platonic dialogue can be a paradigmatic template for how to engage with the world and the people around us in a communal, and of course dialogical pursuit of understanding.

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, I would very much like to thank my family, Rob, Dor, and Gill, for their continued support throughout the years. Their interest and enthusiasm has been a constant source of encouragement for me and is greatly appreciated. They have never once questioned my decision to continue in academia and have provided a continually supportive home environment.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Professor John Dillon, for all of his help in shaping my thesis into the work it now is.

Finally, I would like to try to express my thanks to Amélie. Her complete and utter dedication to my work has been absolute from the start and her belief in me has helped see me through the dark days with a smile on my face. I do not think I can ever fully repay her loyalty and encouragement but would like to start by dedicating this work to her.

List of Abbreviations for Quotations

* For works of Gadamer:

Truth and Method = **TM** (Joel Weinsheimer & Donald Marshall translation, 2004)

Praise of Theory: Speeches and Essays = **PT** (Chris Dawson translation, 1998)

Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. XXIV: The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer = **LLP** (ed. Lewis Hahn, 1997)

Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue: Essays in German Literary Theory, = **LPD** (trans. and intro. Robert H. Paslick, 1994)

Plato's Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the 'Philebus' = **PDE** (Robert M. Wallace translation, 1991)

The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays = **RB** (Nicholas Walker translation, 1986)

The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy = **IG** (P. Christopher Smith translation, 1986)

Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato = **DD** (P. Christopher Smith translation, 1980)

Philosophical Hermeneutics = **PH** (David E. Linge translation, 1976)

* The names of all Platonic works will appear in full and, unless otherwise stated, all Greek translations are my own.

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General Introduction: Methodology and Thematic Overview

In this work I endeavour to argue for an inherently aesthetic structure to the Platonic method of dialectic. For years, Platonic scholarship has been divided between those who highlight the centrality of the 'artistic' aspects of the dialogues, and those who analytically focus on the details of the arguments. In essence, my thesis hopes to show how Plato's very method of argument, his dialectic, can, in fact, be seen paradigmatically to underlie the essence of what constitutes artistry. In this way I hope to present the importance of a unified approach to Plato, whereby the details of the arguments are shown to be shaped and moulded by what I will present as being an essentially artistic Platonic approach: his dialectic.

In order to isolate the concept of artistry, showing its most essential structure, I use the treatment of art of the German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer. As we will see, Gadamer sought to use art as an exemplar for the truth values that are derivable from the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in his *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method*. Throughout his investigations, great distance was created between these human sciences and the exact or natural sciences. Gadamer believed the human sciences were on the wrong path of development if they were in any way approached using the methods of the natural sciences. For Gadamer, this was a wholly illegitimate procedure given the incommensurability of each area. As opposed to simply using these 'scientific' methods, then, the human sciences would need to forge their own path. As mentioned, the analysis of art was introduced by Gadamer because it showed just how illegitimate the methods of the exact sciences are when dealing with the human sciences. This much is stated by Gadamer:

"But the *Geisteswissenschaften* were the starting point of my analysis in *Truth and Method* precisely because they related to experiences that have nothing to do with method and science but lie beyond science – like the experience of art and the experience of culture that bears the imprint of its historical tradition." 'On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection', *PH*, p. 26.

Yet the most pressing reason I use Gadamer's analysis of art in my treatment of Plato and the Platonic method is because he uses Greek concepts to do so. As Gadamer himself declares in one of his essays,

"One may draw the conclusion, therefore, that anyone who thinks that art can no longer be adequately grasped using Greek concepts is not thinking in a sufficiently Greek way." 'Poetry and *Mimesis*', *RB*, p. 122.

Of course, Gadamer was also a Platonist himself. His arguments for acknowledging the importance of dialogue in Platonic interpretation will also form a central part of my own reading. I must state, however, that, although he uses Greek concepts in his exegesis of art, at no stage does Gadamer use these concepts to deal with Plato. In general, Gadamer's hermeneutic interpretations of Plato are completely separate from his theories on art. The use of Gadamer's treatment of art in such a Platonic analysis is, therefore, wholly my own enterprise.

A further point I must address in this introduction is the apparent problem of de-contextualisation. How can I draw Platonic conclusions from what is a twentieth century perspective (Gadamer's)? Although an important part of my argument lies in showing a current of aesthetic understanding to have been consciously intended by Plato in his works, I am not arguing that his dialectic was intended as such. For the very term I am using in this case, 'aesthetic', was first coined only a few hundred years ago by Alexander Baumgarten.¹ The conclusions I draw on the aesthetics of dialectic are intended, therefore, to have mainly contemporary significance. Also, although the specific study of beauty is often included in the area of aesthetics, I will use the term specifically for its artistic connotations. I have limited the sense of aesthetics in this way because of how extensive the Platonic treatment of Beauty is, feeling any such encounter on my part would take the argument of my work off on a tangent. In a sense, then, I am showing how the essence of the artistic experience can be found in Plato's works, which seems paradoxical given Plato's reputation as a 'detester' of the arts. This means that my conceptual agenda in this thesis is two-fold. In the first case I am using Gadamer's hermeneutic interpretation of Plato to show how Plato's explicit treatment of the artists, in dialogues such as the *Republic*, *Ion*,

¹ Although first mentioned in his *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), translated by Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (1954), Baumgarten expanded the notion of a science of "sensible cognition" in his unfinished work entitled *Aesthetica*, (Frankfurt an der Oder, 1750 (vol. 1) 1758 (vol. 2)). The problem of (de)contextualisation in terms of discussing art with reference to Plato, is not as commonly discussed by commentators as perhaps it should be. One of those who recognises the distance between us is Grey (1952) who simply asserts that "...Plato, in discussing art, is not talking about what we are talking about when we discuss art" (p. 292). Of course this is a key hermeneutic issue, given how even Grey's use of the term 'we', speaking in the 1950's, can no longer hold for us in the 21st century, given the rise of modern (and Post-modern) art. Halliwell (1989) presents a convincing argument as to why Plato and Aristotle can be legitimately used in any discussion of aesthetics, given the variable historic context of the term. "If, then, aesthetics is construed as encompassing the various configurations of experience, discourse, and value which converge on particular traditions of cultural practice and production, we possess a broad justification for allowing Plato and Aristotle a serious voice with its history" (p. 309). The limits of history in terms of my discussion will figure in my examination of Gadamer.

Phaedrus, and *Laws*, can only be measured after an acceptance of the mechanics of dialogue and after acknowledging what were the contemporary trappings of art in Plato's time. This will result in a more positive appropriation of the arts from *within* Plato's works. Secondly, I will be using Gadamer's philosophy of art, both the Greek and non-Greek concepts incorporated, to outline how Plato's implicit methodology as a whole can be shown to display an artistically conceived structure.

In this way, then, the primary focus of my work is on Gadamer and the use of Gadamerian concepts as a way of showing an aesthetic structure to Platonic dialectic. I, like many others, have been fascinated by the paradox of a philosopher with such extraordinary literary talents such as Plato, going to such great lengths to distance himself from any explicit association with the arts. The attempt to equate these two seemingly contradictory elements of Plato's thought is certainly the driving force of this thesis. From my first readings of Gadamer I knew I had an original way of treating the subject. From a reading of any of Gadamer's works, one notices the centrality of dialogue. Even in his treatment of art this one concept is a key feature. It is from noticing this connection between art and dialogue that the idea of my thesis was born. However, before I could apply Gadamer's dialogical theories on art to Plato, I first needed to collect his varied dealings with art and present them as a cogent and unified whole. Working from various sources, I attempt this original endeavour at the beginning of each of my three parts. Once this has been achieved, though, the main thread of my argument begins, whereby I use this collective Gadamerian theory in my treatment of Plato and the Platonic method. In this way I adopt a Gadamerian approach to Plato and his works in the hopes of showing a more sympathetic Platonic treatment of the arts.

It may seem strange that I am arguing for a more positive approach to the whole area of Plato and the arts, yet am neglecting to focus on Plato's myths, which are the traditional refuge for interpretations of this kind. Yet it is precisely because of this very traditionalism that I believe any such return would be re-treading old ground, and would be restrictive to my work, becoming a mere literature review.² Although

² The most notable attempt at rescuing a more positive Platonic approach to art through Plato's use of myth is undoubtedly that of Elias (1984). His exhaustive work moves through Plato's myths arguing that it is within these myths that Plato offers a defence of poetry. In this regard, Plato is only attacking so-called 'bad poetry'. 'Good poetry' is necessary because not even dialectic can return us to first principles. I share in Elias' inward move towards the dialogues themselves as evidence for a more positive Platonic appropriation of the arts. As mentioned, though, my own argument will not deal with the myths but rather the method.

the entire area of Plato's relationship to the arts has been examined to a forensic degree over the last one hundred years, I believe that through my use of Gadamer I can present an original take on the matter. My work itself is divided into three parts. In each of these parts a particular area of Gadamer's treatment of art is examined and ultimately shown to be reciprocated in Plato. This Platonic reciprocity will be shown both explicitly and implicitly in the dialogues, in each of the three parts.

Part One deals with how Gadamer attributed a unique and independent ontological identity to the artwork through an incorporation of *mimesis*. The question immediately arises as to how a Platonic consequence could possibly be drawn from this, given the fact that *mimesis* is seen to be used by Plato to distance the arts from proper knowledge. To counter this belief I incorporate Gadamer's hermeneutic analysis of the *Republic*, the place where *mimesis* is given its most explicit treatment, to position the significance of the dialogical method in this treatment of Plato's. Once this has been argued for I show how Plato's implicit usage of *mimesis*, a usage derived from a knowing, representational interpretation of the term that is established by Plato himself, is an imperative part of his dialogical methodology.

Due to the ontological distinctiveness of the artwork, Gadamer believed it to have an important epistemological capacity also. How an experience of art was deemed by him to be cognitive was through *anamnesis*. What the work exposed to those who openly engaged with it was a revealed recognition of the essence of our nature as existent, investigatory beings. This includes our historical tradition, as well as our ultimate finitude and limited capabilities with regard to reaching any kind of ultimate understanding. Although a superior approach to knowledge is proposed only to come through a communal engagement in dialogue, it is from within oneself that this knowledge becomes realised. In this regard, there is a shared morality here with Plato. What I hope to show through this Gadamerian usage of *anamnesis* in terms of art, is how inherently connected *anamnesis* is to dialectic, thereby arguing that the same cognitive capacity of art moves and works through the Platonic dialogue. In other words, it is through the Platonic dialogue that we can fully see the cognitive potential of art.

In Part Two, I examine the non-Greek notion of 'play' in how Gadamer conceived of the world of art. This section highlights the transcendent nature of art as comparatively seen in terms of play. Just as the game exists above and beyond its players, so too does the artwork. A further significant feature of this comparative

examination of Gadamer's is the idea that we must belong to an artwork, just like we do in play, if we are truly to elicit the potential that is possible from the experience. However, although the concept of play itself is non-Greek, its use in Plato is just as apparent as it is in Gadamer. What I examine is how Plato explicitly uses this concept of play as something to be carefully garnered for his educational programme. Not only this, but play is also used by Plato to describe the dialogical method.

Yet my handling of the idea of a 'world' of art in Platonic terms necessitates an analysis of divine artistic inspiration, where Plato is seen to apparently laud the traditional arts. Rather than use this popular haven for those who attempt to illustrate the 'artistic' tendencies of Plato, I, in fact, show how each of Plato's dealings with divine inspiration, in both the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*, are wholly ironic and must once more be seen in terms of the often-times esoteric route of dialogue. In the place of this traditionalism I argue for a *Platonic* form of inspiration that governs his dialogues. Essentially, though, I argue that this world of Plato's dialogues, and the inspiration that governs it, operates in the very same way as play and the world of art as initially established by Gadamer. Again, this is intended to show the exemplary nature of Plato's works in terms of art.

In my third and final part I examine how Gadamer saw the accomplishment of art as happening in the spectator, and his celebration of tragedy as the ideal form of art because of the spectator's direct presence. Of course, in terms of a Platonic interpretation it would be remiss to treat tragedy and not also treat comedy. Yet, as Gadamer does not extend his treatment of art to comedy, I present here my own Gadamerian extension. In other words I endeavour to argue for the same accomplishment of art in the interpretive grasp of the spectator in comedy as in tragedy. Not only this, but I also argue that the cognitive appeal of tragedy, presented by Gadamer in terms of *anamnesis*, can similarly be seen in comedy. This positive appraisal of both tragedy and comedy will again demand a dialogical return to Plato's dialogues. However, this does not only entail a treatment of the *Republic* and *Laws*, those dialogues where these arts are explicitly treated by Plato. For I attempt in this third part to show the implicit influence of tragedy and comedy on three of Plato's works. I begin by showing the comedic aspects of the *Hippias Major*, arguing that it is Hippias' inability to recognise both himself (as the butt of Socrates' humour) and the term he is using that creates the comic effect. In this way the dialogue connects a *failure at anamnesis* to its comic portrayal. Moving then to tragedy I argue that it is in

Plato's *Phaedo* where the greatest influence of this art can be seen. In essence it is my argument that Socrates is presented by Plato as the alternate tragic hero, a hero of philosophy in which the tragedy is the tragedy of life and learning. As with my examination of the *Hippias Major*, it is by mostly moving through the linguistic terminology that I present my arguments. In the final section of this third part I explore the dialogue where both tragedy and comedy are implicitly treated, the *Symposium*. A key feature of my argument here is the representative function played by the interlocutors. By critically outlining the comic intonations of Aristophanes, and the tragic intonations of Agathon (in terms of both their characters and speeches), I show how Plato is again dealing with these most influential of arts. Yet the tragic and comic is combined in the final speech of the *Symposium*, that of Alcibiades. Here, in this 'satyr-play' of a speech, we see how Plato puts in action what he has Socrates describe in word: that the same person could be both a tragedian and comedian.

As mentioned, the incorporation of Gadamer in all areas of my work is achieved by tying together his treatments from various works, and presenting a unified and inclusive theory. Almost every aspect of his explicit hermeneutic treatment of Plato comes from *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutic Studies on Plato*, which is a collection of essays written at different times that showcases in deed his hermeneutic theory of interpretation. His treatment of the dialogical aspect of Plato is further substantiated in *Plato's Dialectical Ethics*, as well as *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, where the importance of seeing Plato's dialogues as *dialogues* is once more asserted. Perhaps most important is Gadamer's entry in the *Library of Living Philosophers*, where he defends and clarifies some key features of his philosophy. However, I must make clear here that at no stage does my work explicitly deal with Gadamer's theories on the Platonic notion of the Good, given how distanced these theories are to my thesis' agenda. What is important in these works, though, is how Gadamer establishes the centrality of the dialogical method throughout each work. For, it is this methodological conception that I will incorporate into my own Platonic readings. With regard to Gadamer's theories on art, I secure in a similar way a cohesive set of Gadamerian theories. The most important text in this regard is undoubtedly *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*, another collection of essays written by Gadamer about the various elements of art and artistry. Yet, unquestionably, the single most important work, the work which binds all the different aspects of Gadamer together, is *Truth and Method*. Ostensibly

designed to demonstrate the contribution to knowledge of the human sciences, and the distance between this contribution and that of the exact sciences, *Truth and Method* will continually figure throughout my work.

What none of these works of Gadamer describe, however, is the notion that Plato's dialectic was essentially aesthetic in construct and operation. This, then, is the original contribution of my work, whereby the artistic becomes subsumed in the expression of the Platonically philosophical.

Part I:
***Mimesis* and *Anamnesis* as Gadamerian Elements in the Establishment of a
Platonic Aesthetic**

1. Introduction

In this opening part of my work I will examine the concepts of *mimesis* and *anamnesis*, showing them to be centrally operative features of what I will argue to be a Platonic aesthetic. This will be achieved, not by working in terms of any conceptual agenda of Plato's within the various works, but rather by seeing these features as part of the essential methodology employed by Plato to expound his philosophy in the first place. This is of course his method of dialectic. The ideological thrust of this endeavour stems from a detailed analysis of the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer, whose exegesis of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* in terms of art will be used in order to begin my argument's illustration of the implicitly aesthetic aspects of Platonic dialectic.

Beginning with Gadamer's handling of *mimesis*, I bring together his different encounters with this term into a unified treatment in which the idea of a merely imitative conception is utterly rejected. Instead, *mimesis* is presented as being an essential feature of art for Gadamer, one which provides the work with its unique and wholly autonomous being. By creating this cohesive Gadamerian theory, I incorporate such significant concepts as the artwork as experience (*Erlebnis*) and as symbol, as well as the epistemological negativity thereby implied in our phenomenological existence. Similarly with *anamnesis* do I combine the different areas of Gadamer's works in which this term is treated, providing a singular philosophical account. For *anamnesis* is used by Gadamer to show the cognitive potential of art, where we recognize ourselves and our ultimate finitude in the work. Here I also touch on the conditions given by Gadamer to understanding, named by him as our prejudices, in which our historicity is recognized as being a determining factor in our ability to reach meaning. In this way I show how *mimesis* and *anamnesis* are combined by Gadamer in an argument for both the ontological supremacy and epistemological worth of art.

Once this has been established, I then show how Gadamer's celebratory use of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* is, in fact, seen in the fabric of Platonic philosophy.

Beginning with *mimesis* I show how, although used originally in terms of imitation, by Plato's time a more general, collective sense of representation had been established. Not only this, but Plato explicitly outlines this very differentiation in two of his works, incorporating the representative sense into the core of his methodology. I then correlate this with how Plato treats the term in the dialogues themselves, that is, in the *Republic* and *Laws*, using Gadamer's hermeneutic approach to do so. By taking such a position my argument will avoid simply rehashing the decades of literature which Platonic *mimesis* has generated (save, perhaps, for my necessary exposition on the dual notions of *mimesis*).¹ It is important that I do not focus solely on excisions from different dialogues (such as taking Books II, III, and X from the *Republic*, for example), using extracted and de-contextualised quotations to form and support my position. The importance of viewing the dialogues as dialogues surfaces as an indelible factor in this approach, as is seen in my final part which presents how *anamnesis* moves through Plato's works in the very same way as Gadamer saw it working in art.

It is in this way, therefore, that I endeavour to begin my thesis' argument as to showing the essentially aesthetic workings of Platonic dialectic, in terms derived from Gadamer, in this case illuminating the vital role of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* in this process. Showing these features to be aesthetic in this Platonic regard will be the defining, and wholly original contribution of my argument.²

2. Gadamer and the Ontological Valence of the Mimetic

Beginning first with *mimesis*, let me now outline and examine the role of this concept in Gadamer's conception of art.³ Perhaps the most significant feature of Gadamer's use of *mimesis*, especially with regard to my later Platonic exegesis, is how the term should not be seen as a simple 'copying' of nature.⁴ Rating a work with regard to how

¹ I will attempt to deal with many of these commentaries throughout my work, engaging them when suitable at various junctures.

² So although Gadamer did attempt to defend Plato from the accusation of being a 'detester of the arts', he did not do so in terms of *mimesis* and *anamnesis*. The main work in which he outlines this refutation is called 'Plato and the Poets', one of the collected essays of *DD*, and will be examined later with regard to its paradigmatically dialogical treatment of the *Republic*.

³ For a straight-forward account of Gadamer's account of art in 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', see Stambaugh's (1997) essay 'Gadamer on the Beautiful' in *LLP*.

⁴ "The essence of a great work of art has certainly never consisted in the accurate and total imitation or counterfeit of 'nature'" 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 29.

accurately it imitates its subject is a bogus system of judgment which neglects the ontological status of the work itself.⁵ In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer introduces art and its works as being indicative of an area of intellect impenetrable and utterly alien to the truth values and methodologies of the 'exact' or 'natural' sciences. As noted by Weinsheimer (1985), ever since Kant answered the question as to what we can know in his *Critique of Reason*, before his attempt to answer what constitutes the judgment of beauty, these sciences have relegated their humanist counterparts to a secondary mode of knowledge.⁶ So putting nature ahead of art in the ontological scale is a further remnant of the monopoly held by the natural sciences over knowledge. Even portraits of well-known people should not be judged in this way. Regardless of how perfectly recognisable a portrait is, its worth is not in this mode of imitation.

"Someone who, on admiring a famous Titian or Velazquez depicting some mounted Habsburg ruler or other, thinks, 'Oh, yes, that's Charles V,' has not really seen anything of the picture at all." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 27.

This makes sense if we consider how the arts have not suffered since the flourishing of photography. If we did indeed seek the most imitative piece as being the most 'artistic', or even most 'beautiful', then surely a simple picture of the subject would triumph every time. As an appreciative audience it seems we need more from our works of art than is available to us in our everyday lives and phenomenological experience. We often expose ourselves to favourite works of art on numerous occasions throughout our life. This is a need that is itself unquenchable whereby we often find new things about the work, aspects we did not realise on previous occasions. Yet it is the same work in front of us each time. What is so important about art, then, is what we ourselves bring to it.⁷ A perfect example of this requirement of the audience was seen by Gadamer in Cubism and modern art. For here we must

⁵ Though quotes supporting this assertion are frequent, the following, I believe, sums up the point: "Naturally *mimesis* here has nothing to do with the mere imitation of something that is already familiar to us. Rather it implies that something is represented in such a way that it is actually present in sensuous abundance." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 36.

⁶ Yet despite this, Kant was also recognized by Gadamer as being the first to highlight "...the experience of art and beauty as a philosophical question in its own right." ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 18). As mentioned above, it was the answer given by Kant to this question that Gadamer objects to.

⁷ That the audience must bring something of themselves to the work is a theme repeated throughout Gadamer's essay 'The Relevance of the Beautiful'. "Every work leaves the person who responds to it a certain leeway, a space to be filled in by himself" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 26). And again we are told that in art "...there is always some reflective and intellectual accomplishment involved" 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 28.

“...make an active contribution of our own and make an effort to synthesise the outlines of the various planes as they appear on the canvas” (‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 8). In other words we must actively engage with the work, as opposed to simply passively acknowledging its presence, bringing something of ourselves to the work in the process. We must almost be presented with something that cannot be fully comprehended the first time around. In fact, the ideology behind modern art serves my initial establishment of *mimesis* quite well, given how wholly inadequate the idea of *mimesis* as an imitation is here. What the modern movement in art achieves is an entirely representative accomplishment in which we are forced to question what it is that constitutes an artwork. The basic idea of modern art can be seen as the exaltation of shape and colour, the building blocks of perception. It takes these most fundamental elements of how we experience reality out of their contingent and continually morphed existence and presents them in themselves, devoid of added meaning. The world of shape and colour, our world, is shown in its most elemental form.⁸ The mimetic aspect of the work must, therefore, be so much more than the mere imitation of its subjects.

“Every reproduction, every poetic recitation, every theatrical performance – however great the performers may be – only succeeds in communicating a genuine artistic experience of the work itself if with our inner ear we hear something quite different from what actually takes place in front of us.” ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 44.

In other words the work needs to turn us towards something we cannot experience in our everyday lives. It is this ability to be that much more than the sum of its parts that is the key to the ontological identity of art for Gadamer.⁹

⁸ “...the viewer of a Cubist or non-objective painting has to construct it for himself by synthesising the facets of the different aspects step by step” ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 10.

⁹ Although not mentioned in terms of *mimesis*, Heidegger’s work on art has clear influence on Gadamer, a fact Gadamer himself recognised. “These three lectures so closely addressed my own questions and my own experience of the proximity of art and philosophy that they awakened an immediate response in me” (*LLP*, p. 47). In these lectures, which were collected together and titled ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, Heidegger argues that art is over and above its ‘thing-ness’. Though the artwork is a thing, it is so much more than this thing. The ‘something else’ that lies within art is termed by Heidegger its artistic nature. That art is more than its physical presence is central to Gadamer’s use of *mimesis*.

As I will show again later, it is important not to bring political motivations towards Gadamer’s academic relationship with Heidegger and his philosophy of art. Michelfelder (1997) attempts just such an argument in her ‘Gadamer on Heidegger on Art’ in *LLP*. In his response, though, Gadamer downplays Heidegger’s political motivations as not being something which had much significance for him. An undoubted difference, though, between Heidegger and Gadamer when it comes to art, is how

Yet, the realisation that our qualitative scale with regard to works of art does not lie in how exactly the work imitates its subject is by no means a modern one. For even by Plato's time sculptors were extending certain body parts while reducing others in size, not just in order to curtail foreshortening, but also to provide a more pleasing work. For example, in perhaps one of the greatest statues of Greek art, the 'Warriors from Riace', we notice how elongated the thighs of each warrior are, while also seeing how small and anatomically incorrect the ribs and waist are. Statues were being produced before this time with perfectly proportioned body parts, especially in Egypt, indicating how it was not a lack of mathematical precision that made the use of inexact measurements necessary. Rather, there was simply something more that the Greeks, like all appreciative audiences, wanted from the works of art. Essentially, it seems, we cannot find this something more in the world around us, thereby charging art with this task. This is something Gadamer would repeatedly incorporate into his treatment of art. So the significance of a work does not lie in what we immediately see or hear in front of us but must rather be seen in the 'something more' that is brought to being by the work. *Mimesis* is not, therefore, some unfortunate by-product of artistic creation but is, instead, what gives art its unique identity. For, art does not always copy nature, but in some ways informs and creates it. As noted by Osborne (1987), the fact that women were painted in white on Greek vases, as opposed to the brown men, created an expectation from men that their women too would be white. In time, this expectation became the norm and undoubtedly began to inform senses of beauty. 'Life imitating art' is an undoubted feature of human nature which utterly opposes the notion of art as a simple copying.

Yet this undoubtedly more positive appropriation of the mimetic aspects of art from Gadamer brings with it a rather more negative consequence in terms of our ability to understand the phenomenological world directly. In what one could describe as representing the basic difference between the natural and human sciences, Gadamer attributes a definite epistemological handicap to our everyday experience of the world. Due to the constant flux of time, our phenomenological world presents us with instances of understanding at a continual rate, thereby perpetually crowding these

Heidegger saw the artwork as expressing a *national* identity, whereas, as I will show, Gadamer saw it as expressing something far more universal.

instances with other, new instances.¹⁰ Through creations of art, however, meaning and understanding can be weaned and subsequently cemented from this constant flow as, once embodied as art, that which each thing is can be isolated and studied. The world of the artwork, then, is wholly separate from our world as it is not affected by the damaging and uncontrollable flow of time. In creating their piece, the artist is focussing on one aspect which, in its separation and excision from this realm of existence becomes something entirely new and original. What it becomes *is* the artwork, wholly separate from the world which spawned it.¹¹ By taking the particular aspect of the work out of our given world the artist is taking it out of the permeability of time and giving it its own emphasis and elucidation. By this, Gadamer is not referring to a physical separation, its disconnected materiality (in terms of the ‘plastic’ arts), but rather to the work’s *intellectual*, detached whole. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer calls this feature of the artwork its ‘transformation into structure’, where the work is detached from any particular subject.¹² For example, the host of golden daffodils referred to by Wordsworth in his famous poem do not exist in our world but rather belong to a world ‘in the ear’. This also means that, once completed, the work is no longer defined by its original creator. On its transformation, the ontological wholeness of the piece throws off whatever intentions brought about its formation. We often believe that the author of a work will be most capable of explaining it or giving it meaning where we have failed. Not so, according to Gadamer. Often, when we hear an author describe his work and attribute meaning to it, it contradicts what we had originally thought. Yet even given this we rarely change our minds as to what the work meant for *us*. For Gadamer, “[t]he meaning that he (the author) as reader, gives his own work does not set the standard” (*TM*, 2.3.1.A.(ii)).¹³ The gift of artistry does

¹⁰ As Gadamer notes: “In fact our fundamental experience as beings subject to time is that all things escape us, that all the events of our lives fade more and more, so that at best they glow with an almost unreal shimmer in the most distant recollection.” ‘On the Contribution of Poetry to the Search for Truth’, *RB*, p. 114.

¹¹ “What we mean by ‘representation’ is, at any rate, a universal ontological structural element of the aesthetic, an event of being.” *TM*, 1.2.2.B. The emphasis in this case is my own.

¹² In her paper examining the notion of representation in Plato’s *Republic*, Osborne (1987) draws an interesting parallel between images of Christ and the concept of *mimesis*. As she boldly states: “A picture of Christ is the currently incarnate Christ, not a copy of an old no-longer-existent man. Christ exists incarnate in art (though perhaps not art alone) and he depends upon art (and perhaps ritual and words) for his current incarnation” (p. 62). This mimetic aspect of art is the very same as that of Gadamer’s, though, of course, he does not draw such religious significance from it.

¹³ We also find later in *Truth and Method*, “[f]rom this also follows the point – which hermeneutics ought never to forget – that the artist who creates something is not the appointed interpreter of it” (*TM*, 2.3.1.A.(ii)). This point comes when Gadamer describes how all works of art can be ‘read’ like literature.

not automatically include with it the gift of interpretation, a point we find recognised by Socrates in the *Apology*, and propounded by Ion with disastrous effect in his eponymous dialogue. Lodge (1954), for example, believes an art work is intended to express "...a good deal about the artist's methods, about his degree of insight, about his entire background and outlook" (p. 53). Yet this is an ultimately limiting view of art, whereby art becomes bound to the biography of the artist. Artists must instead step aside from their works and not dwell on trying to accredit meaning.¹⁴ However, Gadamer goes on to admit that our interpretations are not better than those of the artists, merely different. As I will examine later, the embedded history of each interpreting subject fundamentally shapes and informs their interpretations. In this way we are bound to understand works differently than others because our histories are not shared.¹⁵ This is especially true with Plato. So although Gadamer asserts that the meaning of a text always "goes beyond its author", he goes on to add that "[i]t is enough to say that we understand in a *different* way, *if we understand at all*" (*TM*, 2.4.1.B.(iii)). The most important point being made, then, is not who the best interpreter of the work is, but rather who it is not. By divorcing the authorial intention from the piece, Gadamer is once more building the identity of the work as a unique ontological whole that does not rely solely on its author for meaning or significance.¹⁶

I had mentioned in the Wordsworth example above how the world of the artworks existed 'in the ear', or 'in the eye', of the interpretative audience. Within the worlds of these artistic creations, the ever-changing obstacles to understanding that occupy our reality, which stem from our temporality, are cleared away and something self-contained, un-obscured, and crying out for understanding is presented to us. Due to the ever-present presence of the present, the future, which is surely needed for the closure of irrefutable understanding, will never be reached, suggesting that true and indisputable meaning, too, can never be reached. Could we ever hope truly to understand a poem or book which never ends? Artworks, however, have in a certain

¹⁴ Heidegger (2002) also asserted the inconsequential nature of the artist, comparing the relationship to "... a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge" p. 19.

¹⁵ We see this in Lebech (2006), who writes that "[a]s a historical being, one understands the text in the light of the conditions of the present, differently from the author, who will have understood it in the light of the conditions of their time" p. 228.

¹⁶ "The creation now stands independently set free in its own right, quite irrespective of the will (even the self-interpretation) of its creator" ('The Speechless Image', *RB*, p. 90). The importance of this admission is reasserted by Gadamer in a later essay where he writes that "the work of art is the expression of a truth that cannot be reduced to what its creator actually thought in it." 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', *PH*, p. 95-6.

sense their own 'time-world' which is wholly contained within the structure of the work with a meaning which will never be changed from within the work itself.¹⁷ In other words each work "...imposes its own temporality upon us" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 45). It is this feature which draws Gadamer to the potential of art, contrasted, as it is, with the ever-changing face of our direct experiences of the world. As Gadamer himself argues,

"The work of art transforms our fleeting experience into the stable and lasting form of an independent and internally coherent creation. It does so in such a way that we go beyond ourselves by penetrating deeper into the work" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 53).

So although our experience of the work is one bound by time, the world of the work itself is not. *Mimesis*, then, is the essential quality of the artwork as it is the very construct of the artwork's world, its sole means of affecting us. As stated by Gadamer *mimesis* is "the mode of being of the work of art" (*TM*, 1.2.2.B). As such, it is the becoming of the work. What is most crucial, then, is in seeing how the being of the work of art achieves total separation from its authorial and historical restrictions. The work may have been intended for a particular audience by its creator, but, for Gadamer, "the real being of his (the author's) work is what it is able to say, and this being reaches fundamentally beyond any historical confinement" ('Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', *PH*, p. 96). So although the work is brought forth from a particular time and place, through its aesthetic mechanics it transcends these historical beginnings. As opposed to a simple attempt at mirroring the world around us, *mimesis* in art becomes an essential process of presenting us with a means to proper and legitimate understanding.¹⁸ Indeed, one of the most common criticisms of *mimesis* is that it is simply a 'mirroring' of reality. Yet the sole function of the mirror is in reflection. A fundamental part of this function is how the reflected subject must remain in the presence of the mirror in order for it to keep functioning. If the subject walks away from the mirror then their image stops being reflected. As we have been seeing, however, this is not the case for Gadamer's conception of *mimesis*. Whereas a mirrored image tries to point to an original, needing this original to keep its function,

¹⁷ This is not to say that indisputable meaning can be found in art. For part of the understanding we get from art is the ultimate finitude of our existence and the boundlessness of understanding. This is a complex point, however, which will be dealt with in greater detail later on.

¹⁸ An example, used by Heidegger (1971), is van Gogh's painting of 'The Peasant Shoes', where the being of the shoes shines forth. For Heidegger, who was a great influence on Gadamer, 'the art work let us know what shoes are in truth'.

the artwork is an original itself bearing its own ontological being, so exists separately from whatever subject it presents. As Gadamer will assert, the difference and, indeed, distance between the original and the artistic creation is not something negative but is rather its essential feature. The original subject may even be seen to rely on the representation for ontological significance given how the subject only becomes original by being represented in art.¹⁹ In this sense we have, in fact, a reversal from the mirror which, as we saw, needed its subject to provide it with being, showing this comparison to be wholly inappropriate.

One of the key terms I have been using with regard to art is that it is something we 'experience'. The idea of art as an experience (*Erlebnis*) was of especial importance to Gadamer and will be examined here further to highlight the unique identity of art.²⁰ For the very idea of an 'experience' is of something which does not simply conform to the everyday but which stands out, which is, in fact, dissimilar to the everyday and unlike it to the extent that we remember it and celebrate it for this very characteristic of dissimilarity. For Gadamer,

"...something becomes an 'experience' not only insofar as it is experienced, but insofar as its being experienced makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance." *TM*, 1.1.2.B.(ii)

We extract and separate the experience from the manifold nature of existence and keep it with us. It is a common feature of our social lives to relate our most memorable experiences to others, especially to those who may have shared in the original experience. Yet, although we extract our experiences from the flow of time, this extraction can only occur because of this flow, indicating the almost paradoxical relationship that exists between the experience and the reality it is extracted from (much like Hegel's 'master and slave' relation). Most importantly though, is how the experience stands out from the rest of our lives, how it is "...no longer just something that flows past quickly in the stream of conscious life; it is meant as a unity and thus attains a new mode of being one" (*TM*, 1.1.2.B.(iii)). As such, then, the experience almost has a unique identity of its own in this separation, the reason, perhaps, why it is so useful in explaining the very same unique identity present in art. More often than

¹⁹ "The picture, then, has an autonomy that also affects the original. For strictly speaking, it is only through the picture that the original becomes the original." *TM*, 1.2.2.A.

²⁰ Gadamer traces the use of *Erlebnis* in terms of art to Dilthey's *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1929).

not, however, genuine experiences will also teach us something about either ourselves or the world around us. Experiences need not always be pleasant, such as an experience of death, but will always be insightful. Art, for Gadamer, is not only an experience itself in that it too separates itself from our ever-flowing lives and proclaims its own identity, but is in fact the quintessence of the experiencing phenomena.²¹ As a unique and self-contained structure, the artwork stands out and presents itself to us as something inherently our own.

“The power of the work of art suddenly tears the person experiencing it out of the context of his life, and yet relates him back to the whole of his existence.” *TM*, 1.1.2.B.(iii)

So an important aspect of the artistic experience for Gadamer, is how its extraction and separation from our world is still always related to this world. In the same way as any experience only becomes an experience through its relationship with the regular flow of time that it is extracted from, so too does the artistic experience attain its identity by continuing to relate the person undergoing the experience back to the context of their life. As cited by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, Georg Simmel developed the idea that there is even something adventurous about the experience, given how it too is something “undergone”, like a test or trial. Just like after an adventure, we feel enriched by the experience, as if we have reached some deeper understanding of ourselves.²² For by experiencing the work we make it inherently our own. Similarly, the experience of art will teach us something about either ourselves or the world. Essentially, an artistic experience is usually the first thing we talk to others about, while relating a favoured artistic experience is a defining feature of our characters. Although I will give later a more detailed analysis of the epistemological consequences of the artistic experience, especially the knowledge of self and the awareness of our finitude, what is becoming clearer at this early stage is the definite structure involved in art and its distance from the natural world.

²¹ “Aesthetic experience is not just one kind of experience among others, but represents the essence of experience, per se.” *TM*, 1.1.2.B.(iii)

²² Sokolowski (1997) shows how Gadamer’s concept of ‘experience’ helps distance the claims to knowledge of the natural sciences from the human sciences and the ‘event’ of knowledge. Modern sciences “...consider experience in relation to the settled conceptual knowledge that can issue from it. But experience must also be examined on its own terms, as a preparation for yet more experience, as providing ever new empirical perspectives on what it has already established” (‘Gadamer’s Theory of Hermeneutics’, *LLP*, p. 223). This also helps show the idea, that was so important to Gadamer, that questions must always remain open.

A further way of showing the positive mimetic aspects of art is in examining Gadamer's use of the 'symbol'.²³ For in the symbol both the symbol's physical being and what the symbol represents exist. Though hypothetically and conceptually independent, the symbol and what it represents converge in and through the symbol itself.²⁴ To use a common example, a five Euro note is, in itself, a physical thing composed of paper and ink. Yet its use to us is not in this physical constitution but rather in what it symbolises as the note *in itself* is not worth five Euros. This symbolising feature, however, is more what the thing 'is' than its physical being, though still existing in and through the physical note. The example used by Gadamer to show his meaning here is that of the pointing hand, whereby one is not expected to keep one's attention solely on the hand, but must rather look from the hand towards what it is pointing to. As Gadamer explains this is not just a simple act of pointing but is rather a means of allowing meaning to be.

"The symbolic does not simply point toward a meaning, but rather allows that meaning to present itself. The symbolic represents meaning" 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 34.

This is just the same method of operation as *mimesis* where we find both the method of presentation as well as what the work represents coming to being through the work itself. The idea is now developing that it is not the *mimesis* of the subjects of the works, but a more essential *mimesis* of what these subjects themselves are that concerns Gadamer.²⁵ In other words, the work of art is to be considered to be far more than what it physically is.²⁶ We can see that this is especially true in the case of poetry

²³ The symbol is the second of three concepts used by Gadamer in his essay 'The Relevance of the Beautiful' in order to approach our experience of art, the first being that of 'play' and the third that of the 'festival'. Both of these other features will be examined in later parts. Gadamer's use of the symbol analogy can again be traced to Heidegger and his essay 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. For Heidegger (2002), "[i]n the work of art, something other is brought together with the thing that is made" (p. 3). As we will see later with his analysis of the Greek word for truth, Heidegger notices that the verb 'to bring together' is, in Greek συμβάλλειν. What the symbol does, then, is, by its very nature, bring the non-physical, essential meaning together with the physical manifestation. For both Gadamer and Heidegger, then, it is the artwork which most successfully achieves this symbolic embodiment of meaning.

²⁴ An excellent work on the emergence of the Greek conception of the symbol can be found in Struck (2004).

²⁵ To show this I quote: "For what imitation reveals is precisely the real essence of the thing." ('Art and Imitation', *RB*, p. 99). Also further: "*Mimesis* is a representation in which we 'know' and have in view the essential content of what is represented." ('Poetry and *Mimesis*', *RB*, p. 119). Emphasis is again my own. This focus on essence as being that which the artwork represents could draw one to see Neoplatonic influence on Gadamer, especially Plotinian As I will show later in this part, however, this is an originally Platonic incorporation of *mimesis*.

²⁶ "For imitation enables us to see more than so-called reality. What is shown is, so to speak, elicited from the flux of manifold reality." 'The Play of Art', *RB*, p. 129.

and music, where there is not even a physical existence in the first place. In fact poetry held especial importance for Gadamer because it is paradigmatically symbolic and is made in such a way, "...that it has no other meaning beyond letting something be there" ('Poetry and *Mimesis*', *RB*, p. 119). So what my perfunctory opening to this section has shown, then, is the wholly positive exegesis of *mimesis* given by Gadamer in terms of art. The most significant points were in showing the detriment of using the term with regard to any simple copying of nature. Not even portraits were to be judged in this way. The epistemological negativity of our phenomenological immersion as a route to understanding was consequently postulated in opposition to the 'time-world' of the work itself which was extracted from this manifold existence. The artwork as an experience as well as its symbolic capability all led to providing the works with a unique and independent being, which was even distanced from its creator's intended meaning.

Yet asserting the ontological identity of art, and showing the supremacy of this ontology with regard to art's mimetic capacity over our direct phenomenological exposure, does not answer the question as to the knowledge available to us through art. It is, after all, this knowledge that Gadamer is seeking in *Truth and Method*, as being indicative of that capable for the human sciences. This leads us to the question of how it is that the artwork leads us towards a more authentic understanding and the concept of *anamnesis*.

3. *Anamnesis* and the Epistemological Capability of Art

The knowledge we get from art and its experience is called by Gadamer *anamnesis*, recognition of the truth of reality. The area of aesthetics as a whole would not fit under the remit of the hermeneutical agenda if it did not have something to say to us, a point argued for by Gadamer throughout the essay 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics' in *PH*. So what the artwork has to say is something that needs to be defined, interpreted, and ultimately, understood. It is essential to understanding Gadamer's philosophical processes with regard to art to state here that at no point does he try to prove anything about art in a formulaic sense. Instead he is trying to show that we can only "admit" these truths. For, attempting to prove the truth of art would imply that there exists a demonstration of truth extrinsic and, therefore, superior to these truths, and would be seen as an attempt to reduce art to a methodology in league with the exact or 'natural'

sciences. Kelly's criticism of Gadamer (appearing in Krajewski 2004), that he does not describe what the particular truth of art is, merely stating the truth of art to be self-evident, fails to understand the nature of what Gadamer is arguing to be the unique capacity of the truth available to us in art. Looking for a 'particular' truth value in art presupposes an observable thing which we can distance ourselves from, the very opposite of Gadamer's arguments. We cannot distance ourselves from the event of art, so cannot hope to define anything that is other than our own selves. That is why Gadamer does not simply state the truth of art to be self-evident and leave it at that. Rather, the conception of our recognised position in the world, both historical and finite, is a central feature of Gadamer's positioning of the truth revealed by art. This is why the process of *anamnesis* is such a suitable means of explaining the knowledge derivable from art, as there is nothing extrinsic to the process itself implied in the theory. What will also be apparent here is how very different the conception of a truth value in art is for Gadamer, when compared to what we might think of when we imagine truth. Kelly's (Krajewski, 2004) argument that art should not have too many cognitive demands placed on it, again assumes that, for Gadamer, these demands are something we are placing on art. We do not demand anything from art, but merely bear witness to the demands it makes on us. The expectation of a definitive knowledge, of something concrete that we can call the absolute truth of art, is something we have inherited from the exact sciences though it is completely unsuited for that which is available through art. As we will see, it is important to keep this distinction in mind when dealing with Gadamer's treatment of the concept of truth in art.²⁷ The discussion of *anamnesis* is also where Gadamer will move from attempting to reconcile the representation with the represented to in fact exalting the representation as a superior form of being. To do this he will use the full extent of Plato's most basic epistemological belief.

The theory of *anamnesis* has at its core the notion that temporal distance from a point of ontological origin elicits a cognitive decline. With regard to our more everyday experiences, the further we get from a point, both temporally and socio-historically speaking, the further it is from our thoughts and the less we can say we *know* of it. Recollection in this sense centres on the belief that this distance must be curtailed and is the attempt to return once again to this point. I previously examined

²⁷ As Gadamer himself asks us, "Does not the experience of art contain a claim to truth which is certainly different from that of science, but just as certainly is not inferior to it?" *TM*, 1.1.3.A.

the notion of the 'timelessness' of the world of the artwork, as compared to the ever-flowing constancy of our phenomenological world. As the works are centred on presenting the essence of their subjects, through their mimetic character, they were consequently seen as extracting this essence from an otherwise relentless flow of existence. What these works enable, therefore, is recognition of what truly is. We recognise in the work what is around us all the time but because of the constancy of time we are unable fully to grasp. By being cemented in the artwork, however, these aspects of reality can finally be given their own unique emphasis and elucidation. As Gadamer himself states,

"...it is part of the process of recognition that we see things in terms of what is permanent and essential in them, unencumbered by the contingent circumstances in which they were seen before and are seen again." 'Art and Imitation', *RB*, p. 99.

This is no simple feat of memory but is, rather, a form of knowledge. Yet it is also a more authentic form of knowledge because of its timeless aspect.²⁸ As the cognitive feature of the artwork, we find *anamnesis* to be the facilitating element of the potential understanding found in and through the artwork. As is clear, Heidegger's (1997) analysis of the negation involved in the Greek word for truth, *alētheia*, especially as seen in his work on Plato's *Sophist*, held great significance and influence for Gadamer.²⁹ What Gadamer uses of this in his own theory of *anamnesis* is the idea that truth is more of an 'un-forgetting' which has to be weaned from the world. Art, then, is one such way in which our understanding is given a chance to see what is otherwise hidden and forgotten.

Yet it is not by simply experiencing a work that we are guaranteed to understand it. For, although the artwork has extricated itself from the diverse stream of life, we still remain a part of this flow. What I must now introduce are the conditions under which understanding can take place. It is relevant to examine this part of Gadamer's thought here as it frames the incorporation of *anamnesis*, given how limiting these conditions can be for our understanding of art. The most essential

²⁸ "Recognition always implies that we have come to know something more authentically than we were able to do when caught up in our first encounter with it." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 47.

²⁹ What the α – privative in *alētheia* denoted for Heidegger was not just an implicit negativity (as we have in English in amoral, agnostic, asexual, etc...), but more significantly a potential to reveal. For as Heidegger puts it in his work on the *Sophist*, only that which has the *potential* to see can be called blind. That the pursuit of truth is an uncovering, then, is an inherited feature of Gadamer's treatment, an inheritance from Heidegger with a common root in Plato. For a good treatment of *alētheia* in Plato's time see Detienne (1996).

concept we need to observe then, as being an operative condition of our understanding is that of our 'prejudices'. Gadamer begins by attributing the negative connotations of the term 'prejudice' to the Enlightenment. As opposed to this purely negative conception, Gadamer believed our prejudices to be both positive **and** negative, and to be a fundamental part of human judgment and understanding.³⁰ As Horn (2005) states, Gadamer wants to, "replace the negative connotations with the idea that a prejudice could be good or bad, depending on whether it is confirmed as true or false" (p. 13). The reason for our undoubted prejudices is our being ultimately historical beings.³¹ We cannot extract ourselves from the socio-historical environment in which we were brought up and live in. We are bound to go through a process of socialisation which shapes our being in the world. As again argued by Horn (2005), to look at something without prejudice is not as natural as looking at it with prejudice. So not only is the phenomenal world a continuous current of existence, our capacity to understand is tainted by our historical presence. Yet this embeddedness is not an epistemological problem for Gadamer. As noted by Lebech (2006) it is, on the contrary, "...a necessary condition for judging, acting, and understanding" (p. 222)³² Gadamer believed that although we could not separate ourselves from the world and our history we could identify those prejudices which are negative and which distort our ability to understand, subsequently discarding them, while at the same time nurturing those positive prejudices which help us on the path towards understanding. This is a clear path towards knowledge.³³ It is our hidden prejudices which could lend us to either

³⁰ "Thus 'prejudice' certainly does not necessarily mean a false judgment, but part of the idea is that it can have either a positive or a negative value." *TM*, 2.4.1.A.ii. Mitscherling (2002) fails to see the positive aspect of prejudice in his treatment of the term and the (overly simplistic) literary example he uses to explain it.

³¹ In the essay 'Regulative Ideas or Truth-Happening' in Gadamer's entry in the *LLP*, Apel (1997) criticises Gadamer's emphasis of the past over the future. In response to this Gadamer cannot hold back his surprise. "This, however, must astonish me. The future which we do not know is supposed to take primacy over the past? Is it not the past which has stamped us permanently through its effective history?" p. 95.

³² Under Lebech (2006)'s understanding of Gadamer, it is our historically transmitted general understanding which builds the frame within which our particular understanding takes place. This understanding takes place between the interaction of the fore-understanding of our prejudices and the unknown, though expected meaning of any new subject matter. "The act of understanding takes place in the tension between the familiarity of fore-understanding and the strangeness of this expected meaning which has not yet been understood. Without this familiarity, one would not know how to approach given subject matter, and without this strangeness, one would not experience or come to know anything new" (p. 228). So the somewhat dialectical interaction between our prejudiced, historically rooted fore-understanding and the strangeness of any new subject matter is what constitutes our knowing something new.

³³ Horn (2005): "Gadamer says that knowledge of a thing is gained when the thing itself gradually shapes the a priori structure of our understanding by discrediting the illegitimate prejudices, confirming

neglect a work or distort its message.³⁴ It is no use trying to justify our prejudices methodologically, which is the reason given by Gadamer as to why the Enlightenment declared prejudices to be ‘unfounded’. Rather we must be open to the work, as we must be in all legitimate dialogue, which means being open to the possibility that one of our negative prejudices is at work. For it is through dialogue that these prejudices will be identified, given their role in hindering understanding.³⁵ The realisation which comes from identifying our prejudices is that we are historical beings who cannot escape our history.³⁶ So in order to do justice to our indelibly historical being, we must recognise the entrenched nature of our prejudices. Crucially though, the term needs to be rehabilitated first whereby we must “...acknowledge the fact that there are legitimate prejudices” (*TM*, 2.4.1.B.i.). For a legitimate prejudice could in fact help us with acknowledging the role of history and tradition in how we understand something. With regard to our experience of art, then, there are definite conditions which can affect our understanding. Although further developed later, suffice it to say at this point that the recognition involved in the experience of art is that of our historical being, an ineliminable necessity of understanding which must be an acknowledged condition of any cognitive theory.

But we do not only recognise our historicity in art. Perhaps more so than anything else, it is we ourselves who are recognised in the works. Yet it is not the face we see in the mirror, or the picture sitting on the table that we recognise, but rather the essential feature of ourselves as beings in the world. The work has a universal aspect that can appeal and belong to anyone willing to undergo the experience. Gadamer writes that, “...all art of whatever kind is a form of recognition that serves to deepen our knowledge of ourselves and thus our familiarity with the world as well” (‘Art and Imitation’, *RB*, p. 100). What we tend to take from the work is what is most relevant

the legitimate ones, and replacing the illegitimate ones with legitimate ones” (p. 16). So it is by engaging with the thing itself, dialogically I believe, which helps us achieve this shift in prejudice.

³⁴ By being such an indelible part of our cognition, our prejudices become an indelible part of our very being. “It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being. This is a provocative formulation, for I am using it to restore to its rightful place a positive concept of prejudice that was driven out of our linguistic usage by the French and the English Enlightenment.” ‘The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem’, *PH*, p. 9.

³⁵ Sokolowski (1997) in *LLP*, outlines a good set of examples of the ways in which a dialogue might fail. These include dialogues (1) with a child, (2) with someone who finds the topic disturbing so changes the topic, (3) with someone who simply does not understand the subject-matter and flounders, (4) with a deceptive interlocutor, or (5) with a stubborn or unmoving interlocutor.

³⁶ This also means we cannot ‘jump’ into the past when studying historical works. Even by learning a language and studying a culture we are still bound to our own socio-historical environment, something which will forever influence our consciousness of the past. As noted by Lebech (2006), “...the past is active and effective in the present as its governing precondition” p. 227.

for us. As I will examine in my next part, a proper experience of the work will grab the spectator, yet will grab us in order to show us that which we are.

“It (referring to art) possesses a mysterious intimacy that grips our entire being, as if there were no distance at all and every encounter with it was an encounter with ourselves.” ‘Aesthetics and Hermeneutics’, *PH*, p. 95.

We undoubtedly bring something of ourselves to the piece and when properly involved we recognise that which we initially brought as being a part of who we indelibly are. As we find in numerous forms in Gadamer, what we experience in a work of art “...and what invites our attention is how true it is – i.e., to what extent one knows and recognizes something and oneself” (*TM*, 1.2.1.B.). We do not, however, simply know ourselves again in the work, but essentially, know more of ourselves. The artwork gives us the fullest and most authoritative presentation of ourselves because of its sustained existence and ontological valence. What is perhaps most significant is how that which we recognise of ourselves was not wholly realised beforehand. In other words the results can be revelatory. When we experience the work, then, we see a less muddled representation of ourselves, a recognition “...in which we catch sight of ourselves in a way that is often unexpected or unfamiliar: what we are, what we might be, and what we are about” (‘The Play of Art’, *RB*, p. 130). It is this undoubtedly truer realisation that showed the cognitive potential of art for Gadamer.

However, part of knowing ourselves is the knowing of our finitude. As we have mentioned, the experience of art need not be necessarily pleasurable (in a hedonistic sense). Yet it is not a pessimistic consequence from this realisation, but is rather a revelatory proclamation of our humanity. In any encounter with art Gadamer stated that,

“...it is not the particular, but rather the totality of the experienceable world, man’s ontological place in it, and above all his finitude before that which transcends him, that is brought to experience.” ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 33. The emphasis is again my own.

By recognising ourselves in the tragic hero we are ultimately recognising our own powerlessness in the face of our finitude. Their fate is our fate, a recognition that is utterly true and of the most assured knowledge. There is a convergence in this recognition of all the different aspects of art that we have been examining so far. The

essential feature of humanity, what binds us together as one, is our fate, something which we find represented in art. This recognition of our fate is an experience, an experience we most certainly ‘undergo’ and can even be said to suffer. Yet through this experience and because of this experience we recognise and accept the knowledge that art has for us, a knowledge we knew before but had forgotten in the fleeting existence in which we are immersed. But emerging from the experience we are undoubtedly enlightened about ourselves and our place in the world. There is a definite emphasis in Gadamer on this transformative capability of art, whereby the cognitive attributes of the work truly change us. If we do not take anything from the artwork, “...if we are unchanged when we leave it, then, for Gadamer, we will not have heard the claim art makes on us” (Bernasconi’s introduction, *RB*, xiv). The work, therefore, needs to transform us. As Gadamer notes,

“To see that, ‘this is how it is’ is a kind of self-knowledge for the spectator, who emerges with new insight from the illusions in which he, like everyone else, lives.” *TM*, 1.2.1.D.

We can see more clearly now how the truths available to us through art must simply be ‘admitted’ and cannot be proven in a traditionally scientific sense. Yet the idea of finitude is not solely introduced by Gadamer to remind us of the inevitability of our lives. Rather, it is used to show how our knowledge can never be ultimate but is bound to our temporality. Gadamer traces this belief in what he calls “the temporality and finitude of man against the unending task of understanding and truth” (‘The Ideal of Practical Philosophy’, *PT*, p. 55) to Husserl’s concept of *Lebenswelt* (life-world) and Heidegger’s concept of the hermeneutics of facticity. What this shows us here is further evidence of how different the concept of truth is for Gadamer. As *anamnesis* shows us, the idea of participation, that we participate in truth’s happening, is paramount when considering the truth values of art. Given the fecundity of man’s finitude in the tragic art form, tragedy was to be of special significance for Gadamer. As with all aspects of my Gadamerian exegesis, I will return to this particular part of man’s tragic recognition in my final part which deals with this art form specifically and Plato’s relation to it.

So, if the mimetic aspects of art provide the works with a sound ontological basis, and their anamnestic element enables us to partake in a recognised event of truth, then we are no longer dealing with a secondary mode of knowing. For this establishes

an ontological and epistemological primacy for the work of art. Beginning with the question of *mimesis* we find a definite positivism in which the subjects of the works, rather than suffering from a second-rate imitation, achieve instead an 'increase in being'.

'Thus the situation basic to imitation that we are discussing not only implies that what is represented is there (*das Dargestellte da ist*), but also that it has come into the There more authentically (*eigentlicher ins Da gekommen ist*).'TM, 1.2.1.B.

In this way art contains a more direct way to being for its subjects through the mechanics of the work which we have just outlined.

So after this brief outline of the role of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* in the philosophy of Gadamer, both the ontological substance of art, as well as its epistemological worth, have been situated. In my next section, which is the main argument of this first part, these features will be shown as being centrally important to Plato's methodology, not thematically (well, not *just* thematically in the case of *anamnesis*), but operatively, consisting in the very fabric of Plato's philosophy. So my argument for a Platonic aesthetic will thereby be presented.

4. *Mimesis* as Imitation and Representation

When dealing with *mimesis*, especially in Greek terms, its dual conceptual meaning and translation must first be posited. This is a controversial position which has split commentators. Janaway (1995), who, in relation to *Republic* III and X, recognises the inherent problems of treating Plato's incorporation of *mimesis* as singular, rather confusingly goes on to argue for a consistent Platonic notion of *mimesis* throughout the same work.³⁷ Belfiore (1984), while advancing differing types of imitators (those who imitate many things from those who imitate one singular thing), still uses the

³⁷ Compare the following, "[w]e cannot hope for a single clear definition of *mimesis* covering all uses that Plato ever makes of the term" (p. 106), with "[i]t is in this sense that the traditional translation of *mimesis* as 'imitation' is appropriate" (p. 118). By keeping this proscriptive translation of *mimesis* as imitation throughout his work, Janaway struggles when the discussion turns to music (p. 102). For, as I will propose later, music is the best example of where *mimesis* as imitation becomes wholly inappropriate. Also of note, rather than attempt his own translations of the different senses of *mimesis*, Janaway attempts to avert the problem by keeping the Greek verb in almost every instance. For example: "[t]he other claim Plato makes is that the painter does not attempt to *mimeisthai* the Forms..." (p. 114). Also, "[t]he only restriction placed on painting is that it must make a *mimesis* of things..." (p. 115). As the dual conceptualisation of *mimesis* is centrally important to this section of my argument, I cannot use such a system as it fails to portray the variances in this duality.

term 'imitator' in her treatment, as her sole translation. Opposed to Halliwell (2002)³⁸, who I believe rightly argues for a varied contextual Platonic usage of *mimesis*, is Nehamas (1999), who argues against any notion of a dual sense of what he calls imitation, showing once more how imitation occurs as the sole translation.³⁹ Perhaps the most overtly relaxed commentary on translating *mimesis* comes from Osborne (1987) who declares that she will use "...a variety of English terms in a haphazard way to convey the Greek words related to *mimesis*, including copy, imitation, representation, fake, make-believe, pretend and portray, translating in each case according to context and/or whim" (p. 54). Though her brashness is in some ways refreshing, it fails to comprehend the problems of mistranslations in the history of commentary on *mimesis*.⁴⁰ For, as we saw above with Gadamer, *mimesis* as 'imitation' or 'copying' does not do proper ontological justice to the term. It was only with regard to an essential, representative meaning that *mimesis* was given its full significance. What I must do now, then, is show how this dual translation was operating by Plato's time, and outline how Gadamer's representative use of the term was not only acknowledged by Plato but was used as part of his philosophical programme. It is imperative to do so as I believe Plato consciously differentiated these senses himself in his treatment of *mimesis*. The most generally accepted English translation of the term uses two words to portray its meaning, namely 'imitation' and 'representation'.⁴¹ However, the vast majority of commentators, as well as almost all translators of Plato's works, use these words indiscriminately in their renderings. For example, Janaway (1995), while agreeing to a non-singular Platonic usage of *mimesis* in the *Republic*, still misuses the English term of representation, using it erroneously to describe the imitative effects of the arts⁴², as does Nehamas (1999), using both

³⁸ Yet, Halliwell would possibly view my own dual conceptual usage of *mimesis* as too 'neat'. "The study of Plato and *mimesis* has suffered repeatedly from attempts to bring together into a neat, consistent synthesis, the many different Platonic passages and contexts in which *mimesis* is addressed." p. 38.

³⁹ In fact Nehamas does not believe the conflicting uses of *mimesis* in the *Republic* can be explained at all. "This conflict, I am afraid, cannot be ultimately eliminated." p. 254.

⁴⁰ One of the few who recognise the different meanings of *mimesis* are Cross & Wooldley (1964) who correctly recognise the importance of the various contextual meanings of *mimesis*, especially for its use in English. "Now, in fact, in English, we would not normally say that Homer 'imitates' Chryses, but rather that he represents him saying such and such, or again of an actor (and again it is the word *mimesis* that Plato uses here), we would not say that he 'imitates' a character but rather that he represents him, plays the part of so and so." p. 271.

⁴¹ *Greek – English Lexicon*, Liddell and Scott, ninth edition with revised supplement, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1996.

⁴² "It seems a fair approximation to say that in modern terms Plato is talking about *representation* in the arts, or at least one kind of representation, in which an artist represents something by making an

terms indiscriminately.⁴³ Even Golden (1975) who, like me, is arguing for a varied contextual meaning of *mimesis*, still tends to use a non-specific and variable vocabulary in his renderings. As I will argue for in the subsequent section, this lack of discrimination lends to an inaccurate and somewhat damaging analysis of Platonic *mimesis*. Imperative for me now, then, is to show the extent of this Greek distinction, consequently demonstrating how important it is to keep this distinction in all English translations and studies. I feel this is wholly necessary as any lack of referential evidence regarding a 'representative' use of the term would end the argument of this section, and, indeed, this thesis, before it had even begun.

Else (1958) and Köller (1954), though they disagree on the evolutionary usage of the term, agree on a varying sense by Plato's time. Köller identifies both *Darstellung* (representation) and *Nachahmung* (imitation) as usages, while Else, though utterly opposed to Köller's treatment, still proposes a "general", interpretative usage of the term that is expressed "without actual miming" and is "ethical" in basis. However, as Else's valuable examination of the historical usage of the term shows, both the noun and its verb (μιμείσθαι) were, before Plato, used predominantly in terms of physical imitation. The usages would refer, either to humans pretending to be other humans, such as at Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* 560-564, where Orestes plans to imitate (μιμουμένω) the Phocian dialect in order to infiltrate Aegisthus' fortress, or to humans pretending to be animals, such as in the *Rhesus* generally attributed to Euripides, where Dolon dons a wolf-skin, asserting he will imitate (μιμήσομαι) the creature in order to breach enemy lines.⁴⁴ Both of these references are cited by Sörbom (1966), who gives a helpful outline of the various pre-Platonic instances of *mimesis* in his book.⁴⁵ As Sörbom goes on to describe, though, this purely

appearance of it. *Mimesis* in Book 10 is making an appearance which by intention resembles things of some kind, but is not really one of them." (p. 108). As I will argue, a representation is not a mere appearance of something, but is a more heightened, conceptual embodiment of the thing. If the artwork is another mere mode of appearance for a thing, then it is an imitation, not a representation. This is a central aspect of my argument here and is developed throughout this section.

⁴³ "To think of an artist as a maker of an appearance, by contrast, is to think of the appearance as the product of **imitation**, as something that comes into being as a result of the artist's work, as a result of the artist's **representation**." p. 263. My emphasis.

⁴⁴ Belfiore (1984) believes the imitation of animals or things is a different type of imitation to the imitation of humans. I cannot see how or why this is the case.

⁴⁵ The importance of Else, Köller, and Sörbom as commentators on the historical roots of *mimesis*, is recognised also by Golden (1975). Golden also sees how, although these commentators "differ with each other on many details, they all affirm that this term (*mimesis*) can refer to a creative action that far transcends the notion of mere copying that often is implied by the word 'imitation'" (p. 118). Just as I argue for above, Golden too sees an historical usage of *mimesis* which refers to a "deeper than surface reality" p. 120.

appearance-based incorporation of *mimesis* did indeed evolve to its non-mime-based meaning. Perhaps the first instance we have of this is in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, III, X, 2-3 where Parrhasius the painter agrees with Socrates that it is not the appearance of one beautiful figure that he endeavours to paint, but rather the general sense evoked by a *collection* of beautiful figures.⁴⁶

Socrates: Further, in portraying ideal forms of beauty, as it is not easy to come upon someone devoid of blemish, you bring together (συνάγοντες) from the many the most beautiful traits of each, and in this way make the whole appear beautiful?
Parrhasius: Yes, that is how we do it.

So Parrhasius is not imitating or copying anything in his works, for those things he paints do not correspond to any external appearance, but is rather focussed on representing that general sense which is induced through the various phenomenological bodies. Else (1958) also defined this acquired meaning in terms of a representative embodiment, which must be seen as wholly different from someone simply taking on the physical characteristics of either an animal or of some other person as it assumes an intellectual, rather than merely physical portrayal. However, although Else (1958) and Sörbom (1966) acknowledge a variance in meaning among the usages of *mimesis*, (even if Sörbom does not think it right to strictly classify these variances), both commentators still use 'imitation' and 'representation' as English translations indiscriminately in their works.⁴⁷ This defeats the whole purpose of their investigations as it nullifies any and all findings by using the same non-specific vocabulary for that which they are trying to define and specify. If a rendering is not based on a direct phenomenological appearance then it is in no way an imitation. Similarly if the thing which the rendering depicts is directly observable, then it is in no way a representation.

Yet simply because a term had acquired a differing sense by Plato's time does not necessarily entail that Plato incorporated this differentiation into his works. Luckily for us, then, Plato explicitly outlines this very demarcation in two of his dialogues. For, as recognised by Halliwell (2002), in the *Cratylus*, while conversing

⁴⁶ Nehamas (1999) makes mention of Parrhasius but continues to refer to Parrhasius' method as imitation.

⁴⁷ Sörbom (1966) (p. 28), for example, terms Orestes' imitation of the Phocian dialect, in the *Choephoroi* example used above, a representation. This is wholly inaccurate as Orestes is not representing anything but is rather imitating the voice of another. In a sense, Sörbom falls foul here of the very criticism he levels against Köller (1954) who, according to Sörbom (1966), used '*Darstellung*' and '*Ausdruck*' indiscriminately in his analysis, thus confusing the argument of the work.

with Hermogenes and Cratylus on the etymology of names, Socrates clearly differentiates *mimesis* as physical mimicry, a physical mimicry he sees as operating in the traditional arts, from the *mimesis* of essence which is representative. As we see later in the *Republic*, he who physically copies his subject without the appropriate knowledge pertaining to this subject is a corruptive imitator who gives an ultimately false account through his imitation. When trying to establish the most appropriate ‘namer’ of things in the *Cratylus*, Socrates declares at 423e that it is he who is able to “represent (μιμείσθαι) in letters and syllables this being or essence that each thing has” who would be most able to express what each thing is in itself. Not only this, but he who resorts to the realm of being from which these represented essences derive dwells on a higher and ultimately philosophical level of existence. The *Cratylus*’ sustained treatment of *mimesis* is centrally important to any commentary on Plato’s treatment of the arts, but is very rarely included by commentators. Those who do recognise the dialogue’s importance, often similarly recognise how wide-spread the scope of Plato’s encounter with *mimesis* really is. For example, Golden (1975), while commenting on the *Cratylus*’ treatment of *mimesis*, asserts that “[f]or Plato, *mimesis* is a great formal principle that penetrates every aspect of our existence” (p. 121). Because *mimesis* is used here, not solely in terms of art, but in terms of a far more fundamental philosophical question (the root of language), it can be seen to play an essential role in defining Platonic philosophy. Halliwell (2002) also recognises the importance of the *Cratylus*’ discussion of *mimesis* and again posits the consequence of this in much broader terms. For, according to Halliwell, “...it allows us to see that in picking up the traditional concept of *mimesis*, as applied to both the musicopoetic and visual arts, Plato was drawn into integrating his use of it into a larger and more complex configuration of ideas” (p. 47).⁴⁸ Although it is an artistic *mimesis* which is relegated here to the *mimesis* of essence, this is a traditionally conceived vision of art, an art which, as we saw, was traditionally referred to as mimetic. What it does show us, however, is an unquestionable duality in how Plato explicitly used and recognised *mimesis*. A further intriguing point picked up on once more by Halliwell (2002), is how Plato treats this artistic *mimesis* in terms of “...a relationship to reality that is not

⁴⁸ When referring to *Cratylus* 430a – 31d, Halliwell later argues against the idea that Plato believed the arts to be mirror-like, in terms of their mimetic make-up. “In addition to images such as portraits which are by definition correlated with individuals, there are images that represent imaginary members of classes, such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’, or even, perhaps, the classes themselves” (p. 127). Of course, this aspect of painting is the very essence of what I argue to be ‘representation’.

one of (unqualified) truth or falsity (430c-d), and, second, that the relationship between mimetic images and their objects is not ‘mathematical’ but ‘qualitative’ and therefore variable (432a-d)” (p. 48). What this means, then, is that, even at this early stage, Plato could imagine art without judging it as either true or false, and could see how variable its qualitative scale could be.

So it seems we not only have evidence of a dual sense of *mimesis* recognised by Plato, we also have Plato attribute the higher, representative sense to the philosopher. This explicit distinction is seen further in a later dialogue, the *Sophist*. For, during the discussion of the various elements of *mimesis*, a direct differentiation is outlined between that sense of *mimesis* which comes from those “with knowledge of that which they represent, and others without such knowledge” (267b). The Stranger even gives us an example of where this difference is most noticeable, and indeed, is most important.

“But what of the figure of justice and the whole of virtue in general? Are there not many who have no knowledge of it, but only opinion, and who try with great zeal to make that which they think is virtue seem to exist within them, by imitating it (μιμούμενοι) as best they can in acts and words?” *Sophist*, 267c.

This type of unknowing imitation, which forms the basis of Plato’s criticisms of the traditional arts in the *Republic*, and which is attributed here to the sophist (267e), is clearly differentiated from another set of users of *mimesis* who have “*epistēmēs historikē*”, being knowledgeable users of *mimesis* who are well-informed and concerned with the accuracy of their subjects. Although Belfiore (1984) includes the *Sophist* (267a3-4) in her argument for a consistent, imitative sense of *mimesis* throughout the *Republic*, she fails to include this clear distinction. Lodge (1953), on the other hand, recognises Plato’s positive, implicit usage of *mimesis* in terms of Plato’s theory of education,⁴⁹ while, once more, Halliwell (2002) spots how Plato associates an imitative conception of *mimesis* with the sophist, while keeping a representative sense for the philosopher. The *Sophist*’s Stranger also goes on to add that it is the knowledgeable, ‘*historikoi*’ users of *mimesis* who are the ones able to spot the ignorance of the opinion-based imitators “because of their experience in the

⁴⁹ However, Lodge fails to differentiate this varied usage of *mimesis* by Plato, in his use of English translations. As we see in many other commentators, Lodge uses ‘imitation’ and ‘representation’ indiscriminately. “In the general sense, any sort of artist (from carpenter, potter, or weaver, to painter, musician, or poet) may be said to ‘mime’, i.e. to ‘imitate’ or represent whatever he is trying to produce” (p. 170). Although Lodge also mentions the idea of *mimesis* figuring in Plato’s dialogues themselves, he does not elaborate on the point.

rough and tumble of arguments” (268a). There is no question but that these two users of *mimesis* are wholly distinct.⁵⁰

“Then I think it must be said that this user of *mimesis* is different from the other, the one who does not know from the one who knows.” *Sophist*, 267c-d.

There are numerous examples in Plato of the damaging aspects of misrepresentation, where an interlocutor is lacking in the relevant knowledge or experience to discuss a particular argument or point of view. For example, in the *Charmides*, although it is Charmides who originally proposes that *sōphrosunē* is doing one’s own job, it is a position he learned from Critias. Now when Socrates demonstrates the flaws in this argument, Charmides is only too willing, at 162b, to admit these failings, wondering what the argument’s progenitor could have been thinking. This is too much for Critias to take, so he steps into the discussion to take up the argument himself.

“But he (Critias) could be patient no more, and seemed to me to get angry with him (Charmides), just as a poet might do with an actor who treated his poetry badly.” *Charmides*, 162d.

In other words, Charmides was misrepresenting the position because of his youth and inexperience, a point admitted by Socrates at 162e. Yet despite the above quote, Plato is not referring to traditional artistry when discussing the damage of misrepresentation, but is rather concerned with how *mimesis* affects and can be used at an ethical level. The correct users of *mimesis* will need to be wholly practical in their usage, combating, as they must surely do, the opinion-based imitators and their beliefs on justice and virtue (as seen in the above quote, *Sophist*, 267c). Even if in the *Sophist*, Theaetetus does not go so far as to call these informed imitators philosophers, he does class them as the true and proper users of wisdom, an ironic turn by Plato, I believe, on the similarities of the name used for philosophers, *sophoi*, with that used for sophists, *sophistai*. As we cannot imagine a division more diverse “than that which separates knowledge and ignorance” (*Sophist*, 267b) it must be seen as highly reasonable that Plato would continue this differentiation throughout his works.

Let us, therefore, further investigate the meanings and connotations of this word. By translating *mimesis* as ‘representation’ we can take it as being a symbolic

⁵⁰ This clear connection with knowledge, is also noticed by Golden (1975), who argues that any user of *mimesis* who has this Platonically conceived knowledge can create conditions “...under which the study of imitations can lead to an insight into reality” p. 122.

embodiment of a person, place, or thing. One can be said to represent one's country in diplomatic relations, represent an accused in legal proceedings, or represent a religious belief or doctrine in one's moral actions. In this regard the term is used with the sense that one is acting on behalf of either someone or something else, and can be viewed as an attempt at a positive promotion of this person or thing. In fact, this sense of the term has its most serious embodiment when that which is represented is not a physical entity but is, instead, an intelligible one. For, although one's country or one's religious beliefs are ideal, somewhat intellectual creations, when they are being represented they are represented with the utmost solemnity. Also, those chosen as 'representatives' always come from a basis of knowledge. They are better able to present the essence of the thing represented than those who do not have this knowledge.⁵¹ Yet, in most cases, those things represented cannot represent themselves. In some sense, then, those things represented can be said to exist for us, or at least be recognised, through the act of representation. We saw this with Gadamer where he argued for the mimetic, representative aspect of art as being the most authentic way to being for those things represented in the work. Yet precisely for this reason those things represented cannot speak up against *misrepresentation*. If they who represent something do not have the proper or relevant knowledge of that which they represent, then there is every chance that they will be misrepresentative. Yet as these entities are not able to represent themselves they are powerless to stop the misrepresentation. Herein lies the danger of *mimesis*. The term is used in this sense in English popular usage today, as well as in the card game of poker's terminology,⁵² with the view that the person 'misrepresenting' is pretending to possess knowledge of their subject, when in fact they have none. This negative sense has been kept by the English-speaking world in its use of the word 'mimicry', a word which comes directly from the Greek word *mimesis* and alludes to an unknowing and superficial attempt, usually through physical, bodily movements, to copy one's subject. This sense can be similarly translated as imitation, the second of the terms we saw above as used in interpretation.

According to Else's (1958) analysis of the term, *mimesis* as imitation was the more traditional reference. Not only this, it was an ultimately artistic device, a point

⁵¹ As an example just think of when a country is represented. It is usually only the very best at what they do who are chosen as these representatives.

⁵² In the game of poker one is said to psychologically manipulate one's opponents by 'misrepresenting' that one has received a card to complete a winning hand. One will then bluff this hand when betting.

recognised by Grey (1952).⁵³ As we will detail later, Plato's main goal in his treatment of the arts was to distance his philosophy from the works and ideologies of these artists. Given this, then, we may suggest that a subversive, yet highly operational part of Plato's distancing of the two subjects would be in his using the very term that defined the arts for philosophy. This could be done by showing how an imitative *mimesis*, a *mimesis* based on a copying of bodily movements and physical characteristics, leads to emotional extremes, whereas a representative *mimesis*, which is based on a dialogical, participatory encounter with a thing, could in fact be the best and only way to truly let those things represented come to being. This difference will be examined later in this section with regard to Plato's use of *mimesis* in the *Republic* and *Laws*. So although *mimesis* is commonly translated as both representation and imitation, the terms have patent differences. For, again, we would neither say that an author imitates the characters in his works, nor that a mime artist represents the person or thing they are pretending to be in their act. We must, therefore, assert that the word *mimesis*, and so Plato's incorporation of the term, is by no means univocal.

Yet we must now see this concept of *mimesis* at work. For as we note in Platonic works such as the *Phaedrus*, part of the reason Plato chose to outline his philosophy through dialogue, as opposed to a direct treatise, is how easy and ultimately devastating it can be for an artist or thinker to have their works treated, by both commentators and students alike, in pieces, extracting quotes to suit their own purposes.⁵⁴ We must not betray the Platonic method by doing so ourselves, and so

⁵³ However, Grey also argues that Plato was trying to counter what was a modern drive towards realism in art, and that it was this type of 'illusionist' art which drew Plato's attacks. As opposed to this 'illusionism', Grey argues that Plato presents his philosophy as a more idealistic alternative, which is mimetic of 'the Good' and transcends human experience "...by hinting at the perfection of what really is" (p. 301). Yet this entails that the philosopher knows what 'really is', for we cannot hint at something we know nothing of. Steven (1933) also believed that Plato was countering a newly emerging, 'illusionism', giving the names of the painters involved. Agatharchus, for example, is ascribed the invention of perspective, while Apollodorus is presented as the originator of the plastic use of shading. Such figures as Zeuxis and Parrhasius are also mentioned as originators of this style. However, Steven goes on to argue that Euphranor, whom he describes as an 'ideal' artist, would, in fact, satisfy Plato's proscriptions in the *Laws*. "Considering, moreover, his (Euphranor) pursuit of idealism and symmetry, he appears to be the type of artist who would satisfy the conditions laid down in Book II of the *Laws*" (p. 153). Similarly, the Sicyonian artists, who applied arithmetic and geometry to painting (especially Pamphilus), would also be allowed licence to operate in Magnesia. However, although interesting, this position takes Plato's proscriptions at face-value, an approach I will argue against.

⁵⁴ At the beginning of the dialogue we note how willing Phaedrus is to give a rendering of Lysias' speech himself even though he had a copy of the original with him. Socrates, however, would rather hear the original in case Phaedrus' appropriation of the speech misrepresented Lysias' original thought. So although it is a direct speech involved, Socrates still remains vigilant over the threat of

must treat this concept while working in the only context we have: the dialogues. Yet before we attempt to see *mimesis* at work through the dialogue we must first further gauge and equate the examination of the term *in* the dialogue, which involves an analysis of what it is that Plato actually says about it. Although I previously examined Plato's differentiation of the senses of *mimesis* in both the *Cratylus* and *Sophist*, we will need to turn to the *Republic* and *Laws* where *mimesis* was given its most explicit Platonic treatment, a treatment centred on the mimetic elements of artistry. These dialogues will, therefore, be examined using the hermeneutic methodology advanced by Gadamer in *Dialogue and Dialectic* in order contextually to posit the relevance of this chapter's argumentative, dual conceptual positing of *mimesis*. Only once this has been done, and the undeniable Platonic support for *mimesis* as representation shown, can we see the implicit usage of the concept and begin to posit this Platonic aesthetic.

5. A Hermeneutic Approach to Plato's Explicit Treatment of *Mimesis* and the Argument of Dialectic

Plato's explicit treatment of the arts of his time was founded on his distinction between two senses of *mimesis*, a distinction we saw him make in the *Cratylus* (pp. 29-30) and *Sophist* (pp. 31-32). What we will find in our examination of this treatment is how the unknowing, imitative usage of the term was directed towards the reception and usage of the arts by his contemporaries, and not against the essential fabric of the subjects themselves. Coupled with this will be Gadamer's hermeneutic advance on Plato whereby the mechanics of dialogue itself are taken as being the most vital aspect of any conceptual argumentation.

Gadamer first argues in his seminal essay, 'Plato and the Poets', that Plato's attacks in the early Books of the *Republic* are not centred on poetry per se, but are rather directed towards Homer and Hesiod's use of myth and legend.⁵⁵ Very few of the later poets based their works on myth and legend, relying more on personal

misrepresentation. The modern misuse of extracted quotes from the *Phaedrus*, something we will see in Part II, is a contemporary example of how pervasive this problem is.

⁵⁵ Referring to Plato's criticisms in Books II and III of the *Republic*, Gadamer notes in this essay how, "...all this seems to be more a critique of myth such as it exists in Homer than a critique of poetry per se" (p 43). Gadamer was aware of the difficulties in comparing the apparently unfavourable remarks made by Plato in the *Republic* with regard to the arts, with his own, highly favourable placing of the arts in his hermeneutic philosophy, tackling the issue in 'Plato and the Poets' in *DD*.

experience.⁵⁶ For example, although the ethical basis of the poet Archilochus' poems, that of helping one's allies and hurting one's enemies, may have been criticised by Plato in Book I of the *Republic*, there remains quite the convergence between both thinkers. In the following quote of Archilochus', four tetrameter lines which, according to Burnett (1983), "were probably sung as part of a banquet's friendly rivalry" (p. 43), there are certain comparisons to Plato's stated desire for courage in the face of adversity at *Republic* 399a-b⁵⁷, where the Homeric ideal and the continually rejuvenated hero is utterly rejected.

“οὐ φιλέω μέγαν στρατηγὸν οὐδὲ διαπεπλιγμένον
οὐδὲ βοστρύχοισι γαῦρον οὐδ' ὑπεξυρημένον
ἀλλὰ μοι σμικρὸς τις εἴη καὶ περὶ κνήμας ἰδεῖν
ροϊκός, ἀσφαλέως βεβηκώς ποσσὶ, καρδίας πλέως”

“How I detest the tall, tiptoe-strutting officer,
Who shaves and curls his hair. Give me
A small, bow-legged man, with a gap between his knees
But who is sure-footed and full of heart.” (114W).⁵⁸

Similarly, Archilochus also rejects the hero's traditional desire for wealth and riches, preferring more the purer rewards of a warrior's life stating that, “Gyges' riches is no concern of mine (οὐ μοι τὰ Γύγεω τοῦ πολυχρύσου μέλει)” (19W). When giving advice to those who have lost relatives at sea he asserts that they should forget their “womanish wailing” and endure (ἀλλὰ τάχιστα τλήτε γυναικείου πένθος ἀπώσάμενοι) (13W), while also composing his verses in direct speech. These features show further similarities with Plato's criticisms (*Republic* 393d). Perhaps

⁵⁶ As noted by Cross & Woosley (1964), not all art is excluded from the ideal city. However, they go on to take Plato's censorship as absolute and at face value, asserting the following: “On the other hand, it is equally clear that the works of Homer and the dramatists come under Plato's ban, that they are the sort of art that Book X attacks as bad imitation, third removed from truth” (p. 281). As I develop my argument through Gadamer, I will argue against this approach. The various instances in the *Republic* where Plato has Socrates use painting favourably in his comparisons are noted by Halliwell (2002). Among these instances are *Republic* 5.472d where Socrates compares the status of his hypothetical city to an ideal painting of human beauty, which may not exist in physical form. This is a comparison used again at 6.500e-501c and at 7.540a, while *Timaeus* 19b-c refers to the *Republic* itself as a painting. As Halliwell here shows, then, the *Republic* is by no means the full-blooded attack on art that some commentators make it out to be.

⁵⁷ The tonal similarities of the Archilochus quote to Plato are, indeed, striking. ‘Just leave me the mode that would suitably represent the tone and rhythm of a courageous person who is active in battle’ (*Republic*, 399a), while being a quote of Plato's, seems to embody all that Archilochus strives for in his works.

⁵⁸ The fragment numbers for Archilochus and Tyrtæus come from *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*, ed. Ernestus Diehl (Leipzig, 1925), while the fragment numbers for Sappho come from *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta* ed. Edgar Lobel & Denys Page (Oxford, 1955).

unsurprisingly, this theme of honour and courage in the face of war is also seen in the Spartan sympathiser Tyrtaeus who decreed that the young must “stand firm and fight close flanking each other”, holding “soldierly strength” in their bosom (ὦ νέοι, ἀλλὰ μάχεσθε παρ’ ἀλλήλοισι μένοντες, μηδὲ φυγῆς αἰσχρῆς ἄρχετε μηδὲ φόβου) (7). Just as Plato argues that a nation should not fear death at *Republic* 386b-d, so too do we find in Tyrtaeus the line that one should “let death’s dark powers delight you” (8). Some poets re-examined the myths of Homer, recasting them in a new light, thusly extracting new truths and new moral codes from them.⁵⁹ For example, we find Sappho using the Homeric theme of Andromache’s arrival in Troy as a celebration of marriage in one of her ‘marriage songs’ (44). As we see in Books II and III of the *Republic*, this objective of re-examining the ideals of the traditional myths was the very same as Plato’s, though he was more philosophically directed in his amendments. Central to Gadamer’s argument, then, is how selective and individuated Plato was in his criticisms.⁶⁰ We cannot reasonably infer an attack on one or two named poets to be a general attack on their subject as a whole.

So why, then, was there this emphasis on Homer and Hesiod? The reason for this predominance in Plato’s attacks stems from what I regard to be the dangers of the imitative sense of *mimesis*.⁶¹ In Books II and III of the *Republic*, while outlining the education of his Guardians, Plato dismantles the traditional images of duty, temperance, and honour which formed the bases of Athens’ educational system.⁶² As Plato presents it, by showing the children images of what they deemed excellence, and then forcing the children to learn the works which contained these images off by

⁵⁹ Gadamer argues in ‘Plato and the Poets’, that “Plato seems to be basically of one mind with the poets of the post-Homeric period insofar as they reject the traditional accounts of the misdeeds and vices of the gods” (*DD*, p. 44). As Plato would undoubtedly have been aware of these poets, his attacks in the *Republic* must be seen as specifically directed and intentioned.

⁶⁰ Among those who agree with the specific nature of Plato’s attacks in the *Republic* is Janaway (1995) who asserts that “...the focus of the critique of poetry remains, as we shall see, on tragedy and Homeric poetry” p. 107.

⁶¹ Commentators who spot the varied Platonic use of *mimesis* often distinguish a ‘good’ type of imitation from a ‘bad’ type of imitation. Tate (1928) is one of the originators of this view, where the ‘bad’ sense of imitation is termed ‘unrestricted’, whereby the subject randomly imitates anything and everything without any recourse to the value of the thing imitated. As I have said earlier, I would term a ‘good’ sense of imitation as representation, given the inherently negative aspect of the word ‘imitation’.

⁶² However, when dealing with politics it is important not to take the political significance of Gadamer’s essay too far. Sullivan (1997) in *LLP*, does just this, arguing that as it was “...conceived, written, presented, and finally published, in Nazi Germany...” (p. 234), that ‘Plato and the Poets’ is an essentially political essay, aimed at ‘The Party’. This interpretation is very much downplayed by Gadamer in his response to Sullivan. The danger of seeing a political side to Gadamer’s early works comes to the fore with Schott’s (1997) attacks on Gadamer in the same collection.

heart, the Athenians sought to have the children imitate these characters in their own lives.⁶³ Descriptions of divine patricide, as well as disputes and lies among the gods, are heavily criticised in these early Books, as are tales of cowardice and emotional extremism amongst heroes.⁶⁴ By exposing children to the works of the artists in their entirety the Athenians were running the risk of children striving to imitate these men of disrepute and their impious deeds, deeds which were, according to Plato, rampant in the champion of the arts, Homer. Although Janaway (1995) references Jaeger's (1944) quote that 'we cannot understand Plato's criticisms of poetry unless we remember that the Greeks thought it was the epitome of all knowledge and culture', he does not take the acknowledgement any further. There is an absolute importance in recognising the cultural context of Plato's writings, a point agreed upon by Cross & Woosley (1964), Nehamas (1999)⁶⁵, Nussbaum (2001)⁶⁶ and Potolsky (2006)⁶⁷, but absent from Belfiore (1984). One aspect of Plato which Gadamer returned to many times was how crucial the idea of giving a justification was for Socrates. The rote learning of the Athenian educational system, coupled with the unquestioning mode of

⁶³ This genuine Platonic critique of the arts on psychological grounds, that imitating morally reprehensible characters can instigate moral reprehensibility, is undoubtedly an effect of performance which is coveted by Plato for philosophy. This much is recognised by Blondell (2002). "Just as smoking on stage in a play, night after night, may cause lung-cancer, and dancing on stage, night after night, may improve one's physical health, so repeating philosophical dialogues may make us more philosophical" (p. 23). Although I disagree that Plato wanted his dialogues repeated night after night (in fact I believe this is the very opposite of what he wanted), the point still helps support the idea that, rather than banning everything about the arts, Plato in fact wanted to use some aspects of their operational methodologies for philosophy.

⁶⁴ The treatment of the family in the arts is undoubtedly an important issue for Plato. While we see him take it up here in *Republic* Book II in terms of the gods and heroes, we can similarly see it earlier in the *Euthyphro*, where Euthyphro, the 'expert' on piety and religious matters, is prosecuting his own father for impiety. Of course, the family figures largest in traditional tragedy. We see this when Orestes avenges his father's murder by killing his own mother Klytaemnestra in Aeschylus' *Libation-Bearers*, and in Oedipus' unwitting killing of his own father in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*. The unlawful treatment of someone in one's own family is in fact central to almost every existent tragedy we have, be it Medea's uncompromising murder of her own children or Antigone's defiant honouring of her brother. Of course, in the *Euthyphro*, the potentially tragic subject matter of the son prosecuting his father, is merely the template to the ensuing *discussion* on the nature of piety.

⁶⁵ Referring to this cultural context Nehamas notes the following: "We do not look at the Homeric poems as a primer, from which one learned to read, to speak, to think, and to value" (p. 254). Nehamas goes on to quite rightly note that most sensible parents would not let their children read an uncensored version of Homer and Hesiod themselves anyway.

⁶⁶ "Plato's interlocutors, when in search of illumination about virtue or choice, turn naturally to the words of Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, Pindar, the tragic poets" (p. 124). The thrust of Nussbaum's examination seems to be the question why Plato did not write tragedies. A criticism of her treatment is that she takes Diogenes Laertius a bit too seriously, referring to tragedy as Plato's "former profession" (p. 129). Her strong arguments, though, for the influence of tragedy on Plato are very much in line with my own, as will be seen in my third part.

⁶⁷ Although Potolsky goes on to argue that Plato's attacks on *mimesis* are centred on his drive for masculinity. "Throughout the dialogue, moreover, Plato subtly opposes mimesis to the ideals of masculinity." p. 28.

action of the characters in these works themselves, was the very opposite of this approach, and thus continued to foster the intellectual atmosphere that Plato sought to counter.⁶⁸ We can see this distaste for the unmonitored uses of *mimesis* in education more explicitly in the *Laws*, where, when discussing the role of the epic poets in education the Athenian says,

“Over and over again it’s claimed that in order to educate young people properly we have to cram their heads full of this stuff (traditional poetry); we have to organise recitations of it so that they never stop listening to it and acquire a vast repertoire, getting poets off by heart.” *Laws*, 810e-811a.

The brunt of Plato’s criticisms in the earlier sections of the *Republic* and *Laws* seem to be directed, not to the nature of *mimesis* itself as an innately corruptive feature, but to how fourth-century Athens was using the imitative sense of *mimesis* to educate its youth without realising the power it had. We can justifiably say that this was the overriding sense because, as mentioned, neither the teachers nor the students were expected to examine the characters they recited in an informed sense, but were rather fed these characters as paradigms without question.⁶⁹ That Plato was himself aware of this inadequacy can be seen in the *Protagoras* (338e-347a) in the discussion between Protagoras and Socrates on a poem by Simonides. By this stage in the dialogue, Protagoras had used an undoubtedly Hesiodic speech in his argument in favour of the position that virtue can be taught. So in order to highlight the inadequacies of simply reciting a poem to ‘prove’ one’s points, Plato has Socrates discuss one such poem with Protagoras. It is important to note that it is not Socrates who decides to introduce the poem to the discussion, but Protagoras. By having Socrates refute Protagoras on his own turf, using the poet’s differing use of *being* noble and *becoming* noble to do

⁶⁸ That Plato’s criticisms in the early Books of the *Republic* must be contextualised in terms of the education of the Guardians, is recognised by Mitscherling (2002). Although I am in strong agreement with Mitscherling’s argument, he isolates Books II, III, and X from the *Republic* without seeing their own contextual importance with regard to the work as a whole, while also using ‘imitation’ as a sole translation of *mimesis*. I believe his argument would be strengthened and helped greatly, were he to recognise the importance of the representative sense of the term.

⁶⁹ The most distasteful characterization for Plato seems to be the epic depiction of Achilles, a point similarly recognised by Griswold (1981). Although there are numerous other characters with disreputable characteristics in Homer, Achilles is disparagingly exemplified time after time in the *Republic*, such as at 388a, 390e, and 391c. I think there are two reasons for this. The first has to do with how powerful the character of Achilles was in influencing behaviour. Secondly, and as outlined by Plato himself at 391e, Achilles was supposed to be the son of a goddess, Thetis, as well as being descended from Zeus through his father Peleus. Plato, then, seems keen to show some of the metaphysical inconsistencies and irrationalities of Homer’s works by outlining some of the more unreasonable features of Achilles’ behaviour. I am not suggesting that Plato is worried that the actual, historical personage of Achilles is being misrepresented, but rather, that the very idea of virtue is.

so, Plato can show how important discussion is to an understanding of poetry.⁷⁰ The poems cannot simply be accepted as extolling truth without question, no more than any other speech or speech-maker. According to Gadamer, Plato's treatment in general was the first time the arts were called into question and thereby forced to defend themselves, a point not always recognised by commentators, but seen in Halliwell (1989).⁷¹

"Here (in Plato), for the first time, it ceased to be self-evident that the diffuse reception and interpretation of traditional subject matter handed down in pictorial or narrative form did possess the right to truth that it had claimed." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 3.

Plato's varied critique of the mimetic features of painting, dancing, music, poetry, and drama, in some ways bound these practices with a common methodological mode of operation, thereby uniting them into what we term today, the arts, a point again noted by Halliwell (2002).

Thinkers contemporary with Plato, such as the sophists and other kinds of public speakers who relied on verbal persuasion, could also take phrases and quotations from Homer or Hesiod to suit the needs of their arguments and support their points of contention. For Gadamer, it was this inappropriate usage of the works of the artists which necessitated Plato's heavy censure. As Gadamer states, "...it is the contemporary *morality and moral education* which has established itself upon the basis of the poetic formulations of the older morality..." ('Plato and the Poets', *DD*, p. 61), which was the most pressing problem of the arts for Plato, a problem again recognised by Halliwell (1989). In other words, the sophists were misrepresenting the

⁷⁰ Although Socrates will admit later on in this dialogue that he does not find discussing poetry a very worthy endeavour. "For the discussion of poetry strikes me as very like a drinking-party of common, vulgar fellows." *Protagoras*, 347c.

⁷¹ In fact, Plato's questioning of the role of the arts is the very thing argued by Halliwell (1989) as giving him a central role in the history of aesthetics. "I wish to urge that we should see Plato not as failing to institute the history of aesthetics, but rather as contributing to it precisely by virtue of his challenging statement of, and standing towards, certain central and abiding issues about art" (p. 293). However, Halliwell's central thesis in this paper rests on showing how important Plato's (and Aristotle's) treatment of the arts is for the history of aesthetics. Yet, I would argue that the contentious nature of Plato's treatment of the arts is surely something which needs to be addressed before any question as to its relevance in the history of aesthetics. For in order to present his argument, Halliwell accepts Plato's proscriptions in the *Republic* at face value, an approach I argue against. For example: "The envisaged censorship represents a severe and constricting imposition..." (p. 298), and, "Plato's stringent cultural demands call for radical revisions in the nature of poetry and art" p. 299.

works, using them to suit their own many needs.⁷² In his work on the *Sophist*, Heidegger (1997) too noticed this connection between Plato's criticisms of the poets and the corruptive methodology (from Plato's perspective) of the sophists. For Heidegger, the sophists were solely concerned with the form of speaking itself, its aesthetic grace and balance, but more seriously, its persuasiveness. A connection with the content, the meaning of the works, is absent from the sophists and thereby necessitated Plato's attacks. For this sophistic invasion of the arts had leaked into the very psyche of the Greek people, especially in the political sphere, the corruption of which Plato himself had witnessed. The elevated position of the arts in Plato's time, especially that of poetry, had enabled this sophistic incursion, a point which Gadamer took as fundamental in the agenda of Plato in the *Republic*. What the *Republic* attempts to do, therefore, is to address this imbalance and check the unmonitored use of the arts by Plato's contemporaries. As these poets were held so highly, any recourse to their works would act like 'proof' for one course of action or belief or another, a point we have just seen from Protagoras in his eponymous dialogue. This is especially true given the dominance of the spoken word, a point mentioned above by Gadamer, as few listeners to a sophistic recitation or political speech would have had a written copy of the poet's work to reference and contextualise. Realising how variable de-contextualised Homeric quotations could be, one of the motivating factors behind Plato's critique in the *Republic* seems to be that of curtailing this sophistic misrepresentation. Homer could be made to say almost *anything*, given the exhaustive emotional range of his works.⁷³ According to Aristotle, the Athenians even used Homer as a "witness" in military decisions, the example given being that of the case of Salamis.⁷⁴ In fact, this very problem is the central argument of one of Plato's dialogues. For in the *Hippias Minor*, Plato lampoons to great effect the use of Homer to suit any position, despite its moral implications. Socrates' entire argument in this work is to show, in a purely ironical way, the lunacy and, indeed, moral danger of

⁷² The idea that Plato's problems with the arts, poetry in particular, stemmed from the sophists' misrepresentation, is a feature Gadamer would repeatedly express in his various speeches and essays. "One can point out that the new philosophical movement represented by the sophists was concerned with the interpretation of sayings by famous poets and depicted them very artfully as pedagogical examples." 'On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection', *PH*, p. 22.

⁷³ Gadamer himself argues that "...given the dominance of the spoken word in the Greek world, a poetic formulation taken out of context as creed or maxim went from the ear to the soul without the poet's overall intention defining and limiting its application." 'Plato and the Poets', *DD*, p. 47.

⁷⁴ Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, I 15, 1375b27.

such sophistic methods. This is shown by the concluding lines of the dialogue which are uncharacteristically conclusive.

“Therefore, Hippias, the person, if he exists, who deliberately makes mistakes and acts contemptibly and criminally, can only be the good person.” *Hippias Minor*, 376b.

As is a usual method of Plato’s when putting ironic arguments into Socrates’ mouth, there is an admission by Socrates that he is not ‘feeling himself’. In this instance he says at 372d-e that he is “suffering a sort of seizure”. My point, though, is that this capacity of Plato’s contemporaries, especially the sophists, to use their approach to twist Homer is a contributing factor to Plato’s attacks in the *Republic*. The tendency is even noted in the *Republic* by Adeimantus and his initial criticism, whereby a simple quote is used to show how Homer can be made say that justice is only done for the rewards it brings.⁷⁵ As opposed, then, to a work dedicated to the creation of a new state, the *Republic* addresses for Gadamer a far more pressing and elemental idea, that of education:

“Indeed, the concern here (in the *Republic*) is not even with the right laws for the state but solely with the right education for it, education in citizenship.” ‘Plato’s Educational State’, *DD*, p. 73.

Yet, as Gadamer goes on to add, “[u]ltimately, however, the latter (referring to an education in citizenship) is education in philosophy.” Given the absolutely fundamental role of the arts in the educational system of the time,⁷⁶ and Plato’s desire to, in a certain sense, re-educate the people in terms of philosophy, a conflict should

⁷⁵ It is Adeimantus who decides to discuss the poets in the first place, not Socrates. He initially does so because some of the works of the poets contain descriptions which could be taken to indicate that justice is only done for the rewards it brings.

“The other one (Homer) is similar for he says:

Any noble king who holds up justice and fears the gods,
The black earth will bear wheat and barley, the trees will
Be laid down with fruit, his sheep give birth and the sea
Will bring forth fish.” *Republic*, 363b.

So the motivation behind the poets being discussed in the first place is entirely ethical and, in fact, shares the same motivation as the *Republic* itself.

⁷⁶ As well as being mentioned by other sources, Plato himself tells us in the *Protagoras* (325c – 326c) how, under the guidance of their post-primary school teacher, the *kitharistes*, students would repeat aloud the works of the epic poets with the intent of learning these works off by heart. One legendary musician was even attributed heroic and religious status. For Orpheus was a member of Jason’s mythical crew of heroes and later developed a cult following. This is a feat not even the great Achilles or Odysseus can claim, further highlighting the significance of the arts in the lives of the ancient Athenians.

be expected. How Plato went about this re-education, including the essential role played by *mimesis*, will be examined a little later.

Of course, one of the undoubted reasons for Gadamer's continued references to the damaging effects of misinterpretation (especially of literary works), is how his own hermeneutical agenda was concerned with just such a problem. As seems clear, in order to understand one must first interpret. So Gadamer's hermeneutics is just as concerned with correct interpretation as it is with understanding. By highlighting the significance of *misinterpretation*, in terms here of Plato's attacks on a misuse of artworks, Gadamer's own hermeneutic position can be strengthened by being aligned with this Platonic ideology. So Gadamer's hermeneutic interpretation of Plato not only asserts a methodology for how to approach and interpret literary works, it implicitly shows how Plato himself was concerned with just such a method, while also illuminating a similar concern in both thinkers with misinterpretation. Although never really stated by Gadamer, the idea that Plato was the first hermeneutic philosopher by reason of his literary criticism is an interesting perspective from which to view Gadamer's interpretation of Plato and the Platonic method.

The unmonitored use of *mimesis* and the subsequent question of Plato's educational agenda in the *Republic*, leads to the central issue of how literally we are to take the 'legislation' of the dialogue. Possibly the main thrust of Gadamer's discussion in 'Plato and the Poets', is how Plato's utopian state outlined in the *Republic* is, for him, "a state in thought, not any state on earth" (p. 48). Crucially, then, this means it is not an intentionally administrative ideal. Socrates asserts many times how the state he was outlining is a state of words, meaning that the ensuing dialogue should not be taken as any sort of manifesto.⁷⁷ The state is also indelibly bound to the state of oneself, suggesting that the socio-political climate outlined is intended throughout to have wholly ethical, intrinsic implications. Given this, then, the censorship Plato proposes and the 'rules' he outlines should not be read in constitutional terms, as advice, for example, for governments to rule their state, but should instead be seen as a personal guide to educating oneself. Of course, it would be

⁷⁷ We see an example of this at 472d-e. "And did we not say we were making the model of the good city in word?" However, this is not a generally accepted position and many commentators treat the *Republic* as this type of manifesto. Although some, such as Janaway (1995) refer to this fact, they do not explore its consequences. There is a clear difference between a work with a definite theoretical framework which is set upon a desire to see this framework in deed, such as Marx's *Das Kapital* for example, and, a purely conceptual work whose actions are centred on a change of thought, as I believe the *Republic* is.

misleading to say that once the individual is guided, the state will shape itself. This is not the inference I want to make from Gadamer. For Gadamer, "Plato's state is a 'paradigm in heaven' for someone who wants to order himself and his own inner constitution" ('Plato and the Poets', *DD*, p. 49). In this respect we could say that Plato did not want to re-found any existent state, but instead wanted to re-found our very notion of *statehood*, a notion which would be centrally founded upon philosophy. In this way, the national state will not need to take care of itself, as Plato's main goal is achieved in questioning the skills and requirements of citizenship and inserting a philosophically based template for this citizenship. An important feature of Gadamer's discussion of Plato is his belief that the 'rules' of the *Republic* are designed for individuals to self-reflect and thus better themselves and each other.⁷⁸ Every single element of traditional statehood is drastically challenged in the *Republic*, so when one looks at the treatment of the arts and *mimesis* it cannot be done exclusively. Instead, it must be seen in its place as part of a complete system of overhauling, and understood "...only within the setting of this total re-founding of a new state in words of philosophy" ('Plato and the Poets', *DD*, p. 48). What is most important for Gadamer, then, in one's reading of the *Republic*, or of any Platonic work, is the ability to read it dialogically. Yet, what does this mean exactly? In *IG*, we get an answer to this question. Following up on the ideas he proposed in the various essays in *DD*, Gadamer will once more assert in this work how the entire *Republic* must be read "as one grand dialectical myth" ('The Polis and Knowledge of the Good', *IG*, p. 70).⁷⁹ Significantly, though, Gadamer explains just what he means by this.

"Of course, reading dialectically does not simply mean taking the opposite of what is said, to be the true belief. Here (in the *Republic*) reading dialectically means relating these utopian demands in each instance to their opposite, in order to find somewhere in between, what is really meant – that is, in order to recognise what the

⁷⁸ As argued by Gadamer, "[j]ustice does not exist when each person watches the other and guards against him, but when each watches himself and guards the right and just being of his own constitution." 'Plato and the Poets', *DD*, p. 51.

⁷⁹ In his 'Reflections on my Philosophical Journey' in *LLP*, we find this interpretation of the *Republic* to be confirmed. Referring to 'Plato and the Poets' Gadamer remarks that it was an essay in which he "...developed an interpretation of the *Republic* by which I still stand today as the only correct one: that the Platonic ideal state presents a conscious utopia which has more to do with Jonathan Swift than with "political science"" p. 13.

circumstances are and how they could be made better.” ‘The Polis and Knowledge of the Good’, *IG*, p. 71.⁸⁰

I take this to mean that, for Gadamer, Plato is forcing his audience to question the role of the arts in the legislation of a hypothetical state, thereby forcing them to question the current place of the arts in *their* state.⁸¹ The idea of questioning the arts had not been done before to such an extent. To read dialogically, then, can be said to mean engaging with the subject matter of the text in an open-minded way in which the work is allowed to present itself to us in a way that has significance for the individual reader. The world cannot be rationalised using the works of the poets, as it was being done by Plato’s contemporaries. What this means, therefore, is that taking Plato’s treatment of the poets at face value is the very type of reading that Plato wants to abandon. Those commentators who take this treatment literally, such as Janaway (1995)⁸² for example, are therefore neglecting the operative importance of Plato’s methodology. It is for the same reason that speeches and treatises are rejected as eliciting a purely imitative response from their listeners. What is becoming clear is that dialogue is not just a method of Plato’s but is a highly formative part of his entire philosophy. Yet, one must not simply acknowledge this fact, but must incorporate it into one’s own reading of Plato’s works. Anything less would be to become part of the methodological approach that Plato sought to reform.

What Gadamer also felt was of more importance for Plato than a simple set of rules was the creation of a ‘communal sense’, a concept Gadamer would examine in the early part of *TM* as being one of the aspects of Humanism most suited to his handling of the human sciences.⁸³ This ‘communal sense’ is an extremely significant

⁸⁰ For Gadamer, by reading Plato dialectically we are *joining him* in philosophising. “To philosophize *with* Plato, not just to criticize Plato, that is the task. To criticize Plato is perhaps just as simple-minded as to reproach Sophocles for not being Shakespeare” *LLP*, p. 32.

⁸¹ This is similarly the belief of Osborne (1987) who, referring to the *Republic*, agrees that “Plato’s main argument is demonstrating that art lacks a good defence, rather than that art itself is harmful” p. 55.

⁸² “In his examination of the content of poetry and myth Plato advocates state censorship of some of the finest works of his culture with a full-blooded passion and an attention to detail which are surely hard to stomach for most readers in the late twentieth century” p. 85.

⁸³ In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer traces the notion of the common sense, or *sensus communis*, to Vico’s ‘De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione’. “According to Vico, what gives the human will its direction is not the abstract universality of reason but the concrete universality represented by the community of a group, a people, a nation, or the whole human race.” *TM*, 1.1.1.B.ii. Yet he also saw in it the influence of the Stoics’ natural law. In essence it was the term’s non-scientific grounding that made it a perfect concept for use by the human sciences. The fidelity of Gadamer’s incorporation of Vico is examined and attested to in Verene’s (1997) essay ‘Gadamer and Vico on *Sensus Communis* and the Tradition of Humane Knowledge’ in *LLP*.

concept and is built by the composite collective of *individuals*, administered by the unwritten rules of a community, completely centred on ethics and an ideal of justice. It is our interaction with the world and other people that shapes the type of person we are and the person we will become. What is of paramount importance for Plato in the *Republic*, then, is to examine the notion of justice and to try to instil it within his own community. However, once more we note how, at the time of the dialogues, Plato's greatest obstacle to this goal came from the sophists. So successful were they and their teachings that they had spread a particular sense of justice which had instilled itself in the ethical attitude of fourth-century Athens. This prevailing sense was that nobody does what is just voluntarily.⁸⁴ In attempting to instil his own sense of justice, Plato would need to first purge the city from that which was being spread by these sophists. What Plato has Socrates do, then, accompanied as always by his interlocutors, is investigate the 'ideal' state to show that in the most just society justice can indeed be celebrated as a reward in itself and that it must be sought at all costs. Socrates' purification of poetry, therefore, is a purification of the sophists' perversion of truth and justice. Now, I feel I must mention that this perversion of the sophists may not necessarily be an actual, existing perversion. For, I do not want to overemphasise their place and role in Athenian society.⁸⁵ As well as whatever corruptive elements the sophists may have brought into Athenian society is the *potential* damage they could inflict, which I believe drew Plato's attacks on them. Given Plato's acknowledgement of the power of the spoken word, it is no surprise that these sophists, who built their profession on the power of the spoken word, would fall foul of Plato's censure. It is certainly worth bearing in mind, then, that when I talk of Plato's intellectual confrontations with these sophists it is in terms of both their actual influence and potential influence that I am referring to.

⁸⁴ We see evidence of this in Glaucon's retort early in Book II of the *Republic*: "That is not the common opinion. For they say that justice is a burden, and is to be practiced only for the rewards it brings and the popularity that comes from having a just reputation, but is to be avoided in and of itself for its onerous nature" 358a.

⁸⁵ Although de Romilly (1992) gives us a good account of the position of the sophists in fifth and fourth century Athens, she sometimes betrays a slight favouritism for these thinkers. "Unlike the philosophers, the new teachers (the sophists) were not disinterested theorists in quest of metaphysical truths" (p. 33). For a far more objective perspective see Dillon and Gergel (2003).

Yet Plato could not achieve this purification by merely laying down a set of instructions.⁸⁶ Instead he needed to appeal to the individual and show each person the implicit error of their ways. For it seems that this sense of justice is impossible to narrow down into a pedagogical formula, meaning it is useless to try to teach it directly to children.⁸⁷ It is doubtful whether even those who study justice all of their lives, such as lawyers and judges, could teach us what justice is. Our sets of laws are guidelines which are continually translated and interpreted to suit individual cases. Yet there still exists a palpable sense which unites all laws in a collective expression of the just, showing how a central part of this virtue lies here in the individual case. The collection of the individual particulars, i.e. the instances in which justice was said to be done, *makes* the general sense (of justice). What Plato must do, therefore, is appeal to each individual, for by doing so this ‘proper’ sense will be created and instilled in the crowd, and so in the community.⁸⁸ According to Gadamer, then, an education aimed at overhauling the current common sensibilities of the public was what spurred Plato in the *Republic*, forcing him to address all of what was then the current aspects of education. It was on the individual, on how the individual engaged himself within the state and with the others in the state, as opposed to the governmental operations of the state itself, that the dialogue was focussed. Gadamer saw this as happening in terms of shaping the ethos which prevailed in society, whereby a common, Platonically envisaged sense of justice would be spread throughout society, not by a treatise or governmental statute, but by the common, informed interactions of the people themselves. This is the ideal and is what constitutes for Gadamer the ‘unwritten laws’ of society.

“What is of primary importance in education, however, occurs by itself. The most significant pedagogical results are never to be attributed to the specific means of instruction but to the ‘laws of the state’ and above all to its unwritten laws, the ethos

⁸⁶ As Plato himself notes in the *Republic* when discussing how to educate the youth, “...to legislate it would be simple minded I believe. For, it would neither come to be nor remain in force being legislated in word and writing alone” 425b.

⁸⁷ When Plato eventually ‘outlines’ what justice is in the *Republic* at 443d, we note how it is not a cleverly succinct two or three line phrase. The division of the soul is totally nonsensical without understanding what these parts refer to and the ethics behind each part. It is not something which one can easily learn and rattle off to friends at parties. Indeed, it would take quite a while to explain just what Plato’s definition of justice is. Yet this is the whole point.

⁸⁸ The potentially damaging power of the crowd is admitted by Plato later on in the dialogue. “What form of private education could withstand it (the power of the crowd), and not be washed away by such blame and praise, getting carried off with the current? Won’t he agree with them as to what is both fine and shameful, and end up being like those very men?” (*Republic*, 492c-d). Influencing and appealing to the crowd, then, is of the utmost pedagogical importance.

prevailing in the society which, though concealed, secretly moulds human beings.” ‘Plato and the Poets’, *DD*, p. 49.

Given the extremity of the censorship outlined in the early Books of the *Republic*, it seems clear that Plato took serious issue with any educational ideal which relied on an imitative *mimesis* without recourse to discussion. We see this very same issue taken even further in *Republic* Book X, a section often cited in support of a total Platonic banishment of art. This epistemological attack, though severe and seemingly absolute, treats the exact same senses of *mimesis* as I have differentiated in Section IV. Just as we saw in the *Republic*’s earlier Books, the prevailing sense of *mimesis* criticised by Plato is that of imitation, centring on the idea of an artist attempting to copy nature as accurately as possible. However, we cannot simply skip from Book III to Book X. What has happened in the intermediate Books of the *Republic* fundamentally shapes Plato’s treatment of the arts in this later Book, a point recognised by Janaway (1995)⁸⁹, Nehamas (1999), and Halliwell (2002) but again absent from Belfiore (1984), who turns from Book III to Book X without any mention of how the intervening Books may have affected Book X. For at this stage Plato has defined justice by creating a tripartite division of the soul, namely appetite, spirit and reason. In Plato’s hypothetical state, education is geared almost totally towards citizens harmonising the three elements of the soul and being able to distinguish truth from appearance. Yet, far from Plato banishing all arts from his newly conceived state, we find him embracing them, not only in the state but also in the soul. For as we see in Book IV, music and poetry are essential features of a just constitution.⁹⁰

“But is it not as we discussed, a mixture of *mousikē* and gymnastics which will join them (the parts of the soul) together, heightening and increasing one with fine words and teachings, and soothing, relaxing and civilising the other in harmony and rhythm?” *Republic*, 441e – 442a.

So we find that it is the reasonable part of the soul which will be trained to harmonise these appetitive and spirited parts. In other words, it will be philosophy which will *use* the most acceptable features of the arts in this Platonic programme of education.⁹¹ In

⁸⁹ “...Book 10 is the final chapter of a systematic ethics and epistemology, and if we treat it as a self-contained treatise on the arts, many of its assumptions will seem gratuitous and baffling” p. 154.

⁹⁰ Plato’s incorporation of the Pythagorean belief in the harmonious features of music is argued by Gadamer who states: “So it was that Plato made the correct observance and unadulterated preservation of musical order the basis for the order of human life in the polis.” ‘Art and Imitation’, *RB*, p. 102.

⁹¹ Music and poetry are, of course, not the only subjects outlined by Plato as necessary in the proper education. For mathematics and geometry, as well as the other calculative arts, play a similarly major

the early Books of the *Republic*, after outlining his censorship of the presentation of heroes and gods in the arts, we are told that an examination of the presentation of men and human life would have to wait until the nature of justice had been formulated (*Republic*, 392c), a point mentioned by Nehamas (1999).⁹² By Book X this has been done. Yet this means that the content of Book X is directly related to the nature of justice previously treated in the intervening Books, a point recognised by Janaway (1995)⁹³ and Osborne (1987).⁹⁴ Once more, therefore, Plato is not delivering some totalitarian directives based on the arts themselves, but is concerned, rather, with presenting a more knowing exegesis of appearance versus reality. For it is only with regard to reality that the truly just can be based. So the reason philosophy is needed to steer the traditional art forms is that, on their own, these arts do not contain knowledge but merely opinion, an important feature of any ignorance-based procedure.⁹⁵ The often misinterpreted method used by Plato to show this in Book X is that of irony, leading him to outline perhaps his most commonly misconstrued incorporation of the theory of the Forms. Although difficult to prove, that there is a certain degree of irony in Plato's approach here is agreed upon by Halliwell (2002)⁹⁶, though rejected utterly by Nehamas (1999)⁹⁷ and not mentioned as a possibility by Janaway (1995). It is somewhat puzzling that Janaway does not mention this possibility, given his rather extended treatment of how utterly unique Plato's incorporation of the Forms is here in Book X. For example, Janaway notes how nowhere else does Plato consider who or what brought the Forms into existence, as he

role, culminating as they do in dialectic. Yet they pertain to nurturing the reasonable side of the syllabus, and do not infringe on the present discussion relating to the arts.

⁹² "...Book X is not simply an incomprehensible return to a subject that these two Books (II and III) seem to have exhausted; for a crucial part of its function is to justify the omission of poetry from the life of the city's adult inhabitants – a subject not accounted for in Books II and III" p. 256.

⁹³ "Plato's account of the human soul will enable him to argue that in poetry this sort of activity is potentially dangerous (595a5 – b7)" (p. 108). The importance of Plato's division of the soul to his treatment of art in Book X, is an important part of Janaway's argument in Chapter 6.

⁹⁴ In fact, for Osborne, Book X "...changes the way we read the *Republic* as a whole, and we cannot afford to ignore it and still say we understand what *Republic* 2 to 9 are about" p. 53.

⁹⁵ For the coupling of reason with music and poetry see *Republic*, 549b. "Reason, I said, mixed with *mousikē*. For in this alone dwells the delivery of virtue, throughout the life which has it."

⁹⁶ "First, the exposition of the tripartite schema (forms, particulars, mimesis) is highly rhetorical in tone and emphasis, even (like later parts of the critique) satirical" (p. 57). Halliwell goes on to argue that Book X "...offers a particular challenge to one conception of *mimesis*, not an exhaustive analysis of the subject" (p. 62). Showing the variability of Plato's treatment of *mimesis* is central to Halliwell's argument here. However, Halliwell does not see any such irony in Plato's treatment of the arts in Book III. Though he argues against the labelling of Plato as a 'puritan', he still describes Book III as an outline of an "...authoritarian scheme for censoring whole tracts of the greatest Greek poetry..." (p. 73). Halliwell actually argues that Plato is, what he calls, a 'romantic puritan'.

⁹⁷ "His argument in Book X of the *Republic* is neither exaggerated nor ironical" p. 251.

does here in Book X, an issue similarly noted by Cherniss (1932).⁹⁸ Again, nowhere else does Plato assert that all particulars have a corresponding Form, and that the humble craftsmen can glimpse these Forms, points of irregularity also noted by Griswold (1981).⁹⁹ Yet, unlike Griswold, who, like me, argues for a sense of irony to underlie these anomalies, Janaway asserts that Plato was “forced to use an artefact as his example of an object depicted by the painter, simply because the painter has to be contrasted with a maker of a ‘more real’ product” (p. 112). So in a sense, then, Janaway argues that Plato is forced to outline an incongruous argument in order to present his tri-scaled hierarchy. I do not believe Plato would ever seriously present an argument he believed to be illogical, unless in an ironic way.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Nehamas (1999) refers to this usage of the Forms as “strange”, noting how “...little of what Socrates says about the Forms is actually relevant to his definition of imitation” (p. 257), but does not pursue these inconsistencies any further. This position of caution with regard to Book X’s apparent claims on art is also taken by Gadamer who believed the Book’s tri-scaled level of reality to be “...intended in a dialectical and extremely ironic sense” (‘Art and Imitation’, *RB*, p. 99), and that it is “...an ironic distortion intended to emphasise the claim of philosophy as dialectic to knowledge of essence” (‘Poetry and *Mimesis*’, *RB*, p. 121.). I do not believe Gadamer intended this to imply that Plato’s theory of Forms is not meant to be serious in the *Republic*, but rather, that the irony lay in Plato’s using it *against the artists*. When Socrates has Glaucon declare the artwork to be three times removed from reality, he does so in

⁹⁸ In fact, Cherniss makes this very issue his central thesis, examining it next to the *Timaeus* and its description of the Forms. Rightly, Cherniss concludes that the reference in the *Republic* is not supported by the *Timaeus*. “Our business is not to twist the meaning of this passage to fit the words of the *Timaeus* or to misinterpret the other statements of the Theory of Ideas to make a place for this passage, but to admit the contradiction and to try to understand the purpose for which Plato introduced it” (p. 239). At no stage of his discussion does Cherniss acknowledge the possibility of irony, but instead believes this whole section on the Forms is introduced by Plato because otherwise he would have had to include “...a long argument to show that God’s imitation of the Ideas is of a character entirely different from the imitation of the workman and the artist, an argument unrelated to the purpose of the passage and for that reason avoided by Plato in his proper and customary fashion” (p. 242). Although I agree with the dialogical aspect of Cherniss’ statement, I do not believe that Plato’s “customary fashion” is in shirking arguments because they are too long.

⁹⁹ In fact Griswold’s central argument is on the fallibility of Socrates’ assertions about the Forms in Book X. However, Griswold does not relate the notion of irony to the Platonic method of dialectic. Instead we find Griswold stating that the *Republic* is “...regrettably, an incoherent dialogue” (p. 139). As I show through Gadamer, the *Republic* is only incoherent if one is expecting a treatise. ‘Coherence’ is not always a part of dialogue, especially if one has an expectation of clearly defined conclusions.

¹⁰⁰ A similar attempt to explain the unique nature of Book X’s treatment of the forms is given by Cross and Woosley (1964) who argue that “...one feels that Plato is mustering all the arguments he can think of, sometimes at the expense of accuracy and consistency, to demonstrate that the art he is attacking is an imitation of an imitation” (p. 287). What they do not comment on is how this lack of accuracy and consistency is a purposeful part of Plato’s dialectical method, with clear motivational consequences.

order to distance the appearance-based art forms (all art forms which are not philosophy) from those which deal with ultimate reality (philosophy). For the artist does not try to 'create' a bed, to use Plato's example, but rather, tries to create a work of art. We would surely declare as mentally unstable any artist who considered their painting of a bed to be a more correct bed in appearance than an actual bed. If Greek art has taught us anything it is that direct imitation is not even something we strive for in artistry, an idea we saw previously with the 'Warriors from Riace' and their incorrect anatomy (p. 12). Despite this, however, there can be no doubt that these statues are incredibly pleasing to look at. It seems that the fact that the works are disproportionate does not in any way detract from the fact these works are magnificent *representations* of an ideal masculine form. The same artwork, then, can be said to be a *bad imitation* but a *good representation*. If, then, we keep the strong sense of difference between imitation and representation, a difference we have seen Plato himself distinguish in the *Cratylus* (pp. 29-30) and *Sophist* (pp. 31-32), it can only be those artworks that attempt to imitate their subject matter that Plato is referring to in his tri-levelled scale of reality.¹⁰¹ The craftsmen, who only imitate, surely cannot experience the Forms¹⁰² so their bed too falls short of reality.¹⁰³ But whereas the craftsmen will never be able to get any closer to the Forms, dealing as they solely do in phenomenological reality and creations with a fixed meaning, the door appears left open for representative artists. For example, what if, instead of using the example of bed one was to use the example of clouds or trees, or indeed anything else outside the craftsmen's remit. Would the artists still be three times removed from reality? When artists portray the gods or perhaps scenes of legend with no basis in our reality, such as a unicorn for example, where do they lie in the scale then? Must they be relegated in a scale of reality at all if what they create does not, in fact, exist outside of the world of the artwork? When dealing in Section IV with the dual usages of *mimesis* as outlined by Plato I suggested that, given the term's traditional association with art, a highly functional part of Plato's establishment of the distance

¹⁰¹ As noted by Osborne (1987), were Plato serious in his proscriptions on *mimesis* in Book X, the preceding Books of the *Republic* would themselves fall foul of it.

¹⁰² Highlighting the ambiguity and irony of Plato's tri-scaled levels of reality in *Republic* X, is how the craftsmen are described as having the Forms as their models, something only philosophers can surely have, a point I highlighted previously in Janaway (1995).

¹⁰³ Craftsmen can only imitate because their models exist in the exact same phenomenological realm as their ultimate creations. When a craftsman brings something into existence, the likes of which has not been seen before and whose function is indeterminate, then he is no longer a craftsman but an artist.

between philosophy and traditional art would be his using of *mimesis* in its more essential sense. One could argue that the objections to Plato's tri-scaled level of reality just outlined are instinctively thought of by most people who hear the argument. If first or second year philosophy students can spot these objections, it is reasonable to infer that Plato would have been just as aware of them. Why, then, is the argument presented unattested? Well, those simple objections to the argument all lead to counter-examples which are based on a wholly representative sense of *mimesis*. By being so severe, Plato is almost forcing us to come to the rescue of art, a commonly used feature of his dialectic. Essentially though, the consequences of this rescue lead to the establishment of a more refined artistic conception. As I will argue for shortly, not only is Plato in favour of this new conception, he even uses it as a foundational part of his philosophy.

The final exploration of Plato's explicit treatment of *mimesis* before showing Plato's implicit use of its representative form will be concerned with examining the *Laws* where we can see clear evidence of how important the idea of a communal sense was to Plato, as well as finding further evidence to support a dual conception of the term in Plato. The first mention of, both, the positive power of *mimesis*, and the importance of the community, comes early in Book II when the Athenian discusses the need for choruses, given the fact that participants in these choruses would need to be educated in both singing and dancing.¹⁰⁴ Citizens of all ages would take part and would celebrate the gods at Magnesia's religious festivals. The inclusion of singing and dancing is not only unequivocal, but is described as fundamental. We might see these performances as intending to develop two separate pedagogical elements which are essential aspects of the arts. The first is the development of order. As the Athenian himself says,

"...order in movement is called 'rhythm' (ῥυθμός), and in voice – the combination of sharp and dull notes – is called 'harmony' (ἁρμονία); and the meeting of the two is called a choral performance." *Laws*, 665a.

Plato even outlines how to use the boisterous characteristics of children, shaping them into an educative tool. For the dancing and singing of a chorus suitably matches the child's love of moving and talking. It is also, perhaps, indicative of Plato's fondness

¹⁰⁴ The positive use of *mimesis* with regard to the choruses in the *Laws* is also mentioned by Schipper (1963)

for using a person's natural abilities to help them in their education. Essentially though, Plato refers to the qualitative element of these dances in terms of representative *mimesis*. For the rightful dances must be able adequately to represent, "the solemn movement of fine bodies."¹⁰⁵ In order to be 'good', dances must be able to represent two virtues. These are courage in times of war and temperance in times of peace. As dances invariably attempt to represent a certain 'sense' which may not be possible in words, and most certainly do not copy or imitate anything directly, it is not surprising that representation would play such a large part in the success or failure of the piece. It is also clear that imitation is not on the agenda. If Plato had intended his choruses to simply copy a successful military victory he could have proposed a series of mock battles, as later done by the Romans. Yet rather than do this, he advocates a wholly representative conception of the virtues which underlie the idea of the good soldier, through song and dance. This leads us to the second pedagogical element that is operative in training citizens to take part in choruses, which is the more general theme of creating a communal sense. Plato is not directing himself towards only one tier of society as being the inheritors of philosophical training, showing how his plan for philosophy must be seen as being for a wide-spread alteration of intellectual attitudes. The bases of the choruses would teach every citizen in a similar way and infuse this education into the creation of a communal, common sense based on the ideals of philosophy. In the *Laws*, Plato even connects this sense with a re-worked notion of pleasure, where all judgements with regard to these choruses are based on an educated decision-making process geared wholly towards desire for the good. One will feel pleasure towards these displays because one will be taught to search for the Good throughout one's life. In this way the choral displays are manifestations of a philosophical life. Feeling pleasure and pain towards the right sorts of things, then, will play an extremely important part in this and every other element of the educational programme. By educating citizens not only to know the Good but to long for it more than anything else, Plato attempts to associate this longing with pleasure.

"It is necessary to adjudge the arts by pleasure, but not however, by that of any which person." *Laws*, 658e.

These artistic works of song and dance, then, can be judged by pleasure, with Plato simply changing our conception of what this pleasure should rightly be. Yet, I must

¹⁰⁵ *Laws*, 814e.

add that I am not arguing here that choral training, even with a re-worked Platonic notion of pleasure, will consequently lead to knowledge of the Good. Rather I am simply positioning the place of choral training, a choral training that is fixed upon a clearly representational sense of *mimesis*, within a stated Platonic educational framework. Plato's educational road towards knowing the Good is of course only achieved, if at all, by an education in dialectic. But it is not through dialectic alone that this will be achieved. What I am arguing for is the place of a representative choral training within this education.

The judgemental process involved in the qualitative scale of these works brings us back to familiar ground. For according to the Athenian, *mimesis* will be the "attractive quality of the arts."¹⁰⁶ What the choruses are representing, and how well they do so, becomes an essential part of their educational element. No matter what opinions a person may have, the one thing they could never dispute is proportion and equality. 'Correctness', then, is how well the piece represents its subject. Importantly, this is not an imitation based on how well the piece relates to nature. Rather, correctness of representation means how successfully the piece elicits recognition. So if a particular piece is modelled on Beauty, for example, its correctness, and so also all judgements as to its worth and quality, must be guided by how accurately it represents its model. The idea of correctness lying in the representative elements of the artwork is something we have already seen in abundance in Gadamer.

So this has serious implications for the artists. In order for them to be successful they must discard their own opinions and dedicate themselves to knowledge of their models. Without this knowledge they will not be able to evoke the requisite virtue to any significant degree. This knowledge, however, is not knowledge of the purely physical, but rather knowledge that will combine through discourse the formative elements of artistry with the philosophical. Judges of these works must be no less educated. For, they too must know what has been represented, how well it has been represented, and the moral value of the work.¹⁰⁷ These three criteria show quite clearly, not only the acceptance of *mimesis* for Plato, but the elevated position it has been given with regard to the accuracy, quality and overall judgement of this art form. Even in terms of music, the philosophical education will seek to encourage a certain

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 667c.

¹⁰⁷ These requirements of art are agreed upon by Gadamer. "Rather, what we experience in a work of art and what invites our attention is how true it is – i.e., to what extent one knows and recognises something and oneself." *TM*, 1.2.1.B.

sense of harmony in its students, equipping citizens with the ability to differentiate 'good' harmony from 'bad'. Essentially though, these judgements will, once more, be judgements based on representation.

"...when faced with good or bad musical representations, which affects the soul's emotions, they [the chorus singers] may be able to pick out the good representation (μιμήσις) rejecting the opposite, and in reciting these hymns charm the souls of the youth, so challenging them to acquire virtue through the use of these representations." *Laws*, 812 c.

So it would appear to be rather clear that Plato did not only include a positive usage of *mimesis* in the earlier Books of the *Laws*, he even made it an explicit and central feature of his educative programme. Given Gadamer's argument that Plato's concern in the earlier Books of the *Republic* was not in outlining a treatment of the arts from an objective perspective, but as mentioned, in criticising a particular set of poets, we cannot, therefore, infer a Platonic attack on the subject of the arts as a whole. In some ways Plato can even be credited with creating and even embodying the intellectual conditions under which the greatest artistic works could be created and experienced. If conceived of by an artist and audience as imitation, art works can become secondary to the objects of this world. But if taken as representation, the work becomes structured by a specific mode of knowledge. Once more then, there is somewhat of a half-closed door to the artists. The reason for this merely half-closed door is, I believe, so that a purely representative artistry can be used as the structuring feature of a *philosophical* work. In the two dialogues previously examined we have seen the same distinction of *mimesis* as that proposed by Plato in the *Cratylus* and *Sophist* defining and structuring important arguments. Education, then, was the central motive in all usages examined, whether it be in Plato's criticism of the traditional, Athenian educational system and its imitative usage of the arts in their misrepresentation of virtue, or in his more positive striving towards a common education based on a total programme of civic concordance. As the most indicative feature of a representative *mimesis*, knowledge structured the strict conditions under which artworks would not merely imitate but would truly represent. What is central to recognising the different uses of *mimesis*, according to my argument in this section, is how one must *knowingly* use *mimesis*, coming from a Platonically sound foundation of intellectual belief.

Yet, an important part of Plato's epistemology, and as seen in the *Republic*, is the argument that the user of an object is in possession of the most relevant knowledge and experience of said object. This is a most important part of Plato's theory of knowledge. The merely imitative artists were attacked for having neither knowledge nor relevant experience of those things they portrayed. What they were doing, therefore, was *misrepresenting* the objects they imitated through their lack of knowledge, showing this to be a criticism from an epistemological foundation. As we saw in our examination of Book X of the *Republic* (pp. 48-52), the works of the artists could be seen as 'mirrored' images of being, but only when the artist has no relevant knowledge of the matters being represented. However, Plato's attacks in this regard do not preclude the possibility of an artist operating his craft who did have the most relevant knowledge of their depicted subject. Yet if the things of this world are mere shadows of reality, a central feature of Plato's philosophy, and true being is only found in transcendent reality, then who could possibly represent anything in the first place? Who could be the most relevant user, and so representative, of the things of our world? The answer is, of course, the philosopher who dwells not on these earthly shadows but strives for the transcendent reality the earthly shadows signify. In his amendments in the *Republic*, as well as throughout his dialogues' use of the term, I believe Plato is building up the claim that it is the philosopher who is the most suitable user of *mimesis*. As previously argued with regard to Gadamer (pp. 46-47), the most general goal of Plato's dialogues is to cleanse the soul of an improper sense of virtue and replace it instead with a more proper, Platonic sense, showing this to be beneficial for its own sake. All purveyors of any improper sense of these virtues must, then, be dealt with. Exposure to a heightened harmony within the arts will aid the creation of a harmonious soul and will thus aid the right constitution of the collective, community spirit. Yet, what is the art form that Plato suggests will help foster this proper community spirit? Well, the central problem Plato had with the imitative arts arose out of their reliance on the misrepresentation of virtue, a concept we examined in the early Books of the *Republic*. Although both Plato and Gadamer propose the process of forgetting to be an important part of learning, that is the forgetting of illegitimate opinion or prejudice, the forgetting of *self* is the very opposite of their goals. What Plato must do, therefore, is to dissuade a forgetting of self, and encourage an enlightened pedagogy of self. In order to accomplish this goal, Plato describes in the *Republic* the 'song of praise' as being the requisite form of expression.

“But know that hymns in praise of the gods and eulogies of good people are the only poetry one must admit into the city.” *Republic*, 607a.

The virtues of both the pious, courageous man, and the just and noble state should be celebrated in these harmonious eulogies, helping establish the new community spirit of the state. However, in Plato’s *Seventh Letter*, he explains how no existing state of his time was, by his standards, constitutionally sound.¹⁰⁸ He describes himself as initially excited when the democrats were overthrown in Athens by the thirty tyrants, some of whom were relatives of his. Yet this excitement soon turned to bitter disappointment when this new form of government turned out to be even worse than the ousted democracy. Plato’s disastrous foray into politics continued with his visits to Syracuse. What can one do, then, if one’s state is corrupt and irrational? What manifestation could a ‘song of praise’ take on, if there is nothing of note to claim allegiance to? According to Gadamer’s interpretation of Plato, the answer is a philosophical dialogue.

“When justice remains only as an inner certitude in the soul and is no longer to be clearly identified with any given reality, and when knowledge of it must be defended against the arguments of a new ‘enlightened’ consciousness, a philosophical discussion...becomes the only true praise of justice.” ‘Plato and the Poets’, *DD*, p. 66–67.

What I take this to mean is that the *Republic* itself becomes a ‘song of praise’ defending justice from the “enlightened consciousness” of the sophists. Commentators who take Plato’s critique of the arts in the *Republic* at face-value, tend to either struggle with or ignore this apparently welcoming embrace of eulogies and hymns (for example, see Osborne 1987, Janaway 1995, and Nehamas 1999)¹⁰⁹. Yet as a ‘song of praise’ the *Republic* itself can be said to exalt the noble character and the value of justice for its own sake, inflicting this sense on those exposed to it. We have seen Plato hint at this throughout the *Republic* in his descriptions of the characteristics needed in his ideal citizens.

¹⁰⁸ “At last I came to the conclusion that all existing states are badly governed and the condition of their laws practically incurable, without some miraculous remedy and the assistance of fortune.” *Seventh Letter*, 326a.

¹⁰⁹ Referring to the eulogies and hymns Janaway asserts the following: “Again, I doubt whether we should press these questions too hard” (p. 131), while Nehamas goes one further claiming, “[w]hat he allows of poetry at 607a4, hymns to the gods and praises of noble people, seems to me negligible and tailor-made for special occasions” (p. 268). Osborne, in a similar vein, dismisses them outright describing them as “...some very dull and inane hymns which hardly seem worthy of the name poetry” p. 65.

“But must we not search for those skilled men who are naturally suited to track both the fine and graceful nature, so that our young men, living in a wholesome place, profiting from all sides, may have some part of these fine works strike their eyes and ears like a cool breeze carrying benefits to this wholesome place, leading them at once unwittingly from childhood to likeness, friendship, and harmony to fine reason.” *Republic*, 401c-d.

Earlier in the *Republic*, when Plato is beginning the search for justice in Book IV he even asks Glaucon to join him “in a prayer” (432c). In a sense, then, we can view the ensuing philosophical discussion as the ‘song of praise’, the ‘hymn to the gods’. For example, the divinities being praised are not the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod but the intellectual Forms of reason. As justice is being celebrated for its own sake, it is what is being praised. In the *Republic*, Plato approaches the notion of divine praise in a rather vicarious way through the gods’ characterisation in the works of the artists. A more explicit metaphysical address is only seen later in the *Laws* where the Athenian seeks to counter what he describes as three heresies. These are that the gods do not exist, that they exist but do not care for us, and that they exist but are influenced by supplications and prayers. In placing his own metaphysical grounding on the educational programme of Magnesia, Plato places ‘soul’ as the first and, therefore, oldest of all divine beings. It is described as the self-generated unmoved mover which even came before matter. By nourishing that part of us that partakes in soul, we are, therefore, worshipping the ultimate divine being. A ‘hymn to the gods’ in this sense, then, would be a celebration of soul. Throughout Plato’s dialogues, the nurturing of our soul forms the central part of living the philosophical life. Yet this nurturing takes on religious significance when soul is described as a divine being. Living the philosophical life, then, entails worshipping the almighty by nurturing one’s soul. Interestingly, the Athenian will also outline how reason, being the highest part of our souls, can never be witnessed by our mortal selves. What we must seek in this life, then, are *images* of reason, representations, if you will. Plato’s dialogues contain the blueprint for worshipping this divine being, which involves living what Plato deems to be the philosophical life and addressing our existence through dialogue. When Plato refers to Magnesia’s festivals celebrating the gods, then, and the new artistic works to help celebrate these events, he could only mean a new form of artistry purely based on philosophy, given the declaration that soul is the highest divine being. In this sense we seem to be seeing an almost direct transfer of the

traditionally artistic into the Platonically artistic, a transference noted by some commentators such as Griswold (1981).¹¹⁰ For, traditional festivals honouring the gods were a central part of fourth-century Athenian life. Yet these festivals were constructed around myths and legends found in abundance in the works of the artists, myths and legends which were criticised and amended by Plato in both the *Republic* and *Laws*. As part of Plato's transfer, then, the very basis of this traditional worship, its metaphysical grounding found in the epic poets, would be switched with a Platonic basis of soul. The works used to celebrate this divine being would, then, be those with a philosophical basis which would influence, and indeed further educate, the collected community. Yet perhaps the most explicit affirmation as to the desire of Plato to use his dialogues to usurp the educative position of the arts, though still keeping their essential elements as part of his dialogical method, can be found stated by the Athenian in the last part of the *Laws*. So appropriate is this passage to the argument of my thesis I feel it necessary to quote this reference in full.

"For in looking back over the discourses we have discussed from dawn until now – not without some divine inspiration, it would appear to me – they seem to me to be arranged together like some poetic composition (ποίησις). And it is not surprising, perhaps, that a sensation of intense pleasure came over me when I looked over these discourses, all grouped together. For of all the many discourses which I have learned or listened to, whether in poetic composition or our free-flowing verse, ours have struck me as being the most measured and most proper for the young to hear." *Laws*, 811 c-d.

This passage appears to support two of the most fundamental arguments for my initial positing of Plato's use of *mimesis*. The first is recognition of the aesthetic qualities used by Plato to refer to and describe his works, referring to them here as being similar to 'poetic compositions'. The second is how Plato saw these works as being more appropriate than the works of the traditional artists to educate the young, a point also made by Halliwell (2002).¹¹¹ For Lodge (1954), what he terms the 'Platonic

¹¹⁰ "The point is rather that poetry must be guided by philosophy, and ultimately by a philosophical vision of the Ideas" (p. 141). However, Griswold does not believe that a dual sense of *mimesis* determines these hymns and eulogies, arguing instead that hymns to the gods could be referred to as representations, while eulogies to good men could be termed impersonation. This opposes my own argument as I believe both hymns to the gods and eulogies to good men are presented solely in terms of representation. I am therefore opposed to Griswold's use of 'impersonation' to term eulogies to good men. Would we really describe a celebration of a good man as an impersonation? I believe not.

¹¹¹ Referring to this section of the *Laws* Halliwell writes: "And that is why, in this, the boldest of self-referential figures in Plato's writing, tragedy – 'the truest tragedy' – can become the ultimate trope for philosophy itself and for its efforts to create an alternative vision of what 'the finest and best life' might

artist', "...does not fabricate detachable objects which can be handed around exposed for sale, and perhaps be unfairly criticised and thrown upon the scrap-heap. His creativity is an integral part of community life". In the *Laws*, the Athenian even tells us that he feels 'pleasure' when looking over the works, a judgemental procedure I examined earlier with regard to the same dialogue. Plato's dialogical form becomes itself, therefore, a highly important feature of his educational procedure. One of the most crucially important, yet often times neglected, contextual points in asserting anything about Platonic philosophy is the historical root of the term 'philosophy'. As presented most recently by Nightingale (1995), the verb to philosophise (φιλοσοφῆιν) and its cognates, did not appear before the fourth century.¹¹² Although Diogenes Laertius rather dubiously claims Pythagoras as the originator of the term, Nightingale believes the *Republic* to be the first place in literature where the term is designated. Of course, as Nightingale points out, part of Plato's goal in defining what philosophy is, lies in showing what it is not. However, in his definition of philosophy, Plato, whether consciously or not, mixes various forms, (or to use Nightingale's term, 'genres') of dialogue and expression.¹¹³ As is clear, I believe one of these genres to be an essential, structural use of the arts. Yet, Plato was not alone in championing philosophy, but had competition in the shape of Isocrates.¹¹⁴ This striving for definition, then, becomes all the more pressing for Plato. So my theory of an aesthetic root to Platonic dialectic, especially a root centred in the *Republic* and its explicit treatment of the arts, appears all the more legitimate if this is the very work where philosophy proper is designated. Distancing philosophy from the sophists, politicians, and poets is central to Plato's methodology and will be a running feature of my own

be" (p. 106). A more detailed discussion on tragedy, especially the notion of a Platonic 'tragedy of life' can be found in the third part of my work.

¹¹² Nightingale argues that in Plato's early dialogues, as well as in other sources such as Xenophon, the 'philosophy' word group was used to mean 'intellectual cultivation'. It is not until the *Republic*, Books 5-7 specifically, where a definition is given of what the philosopher both is and is not. "The definition offered in the *Republic* begins towards the end of Book 5, when Socrates suggests that philosophers should be rulers and rulers philosophers" (p. 17). This has further significance in terms of philosophy's 'ancient quarrel' with poetry. For, if philosophy as a distinct subject area is not defined properly until the *Republic*, Socrates cannot be referring to a genuine historical quarrel. So given the relatively newborn figure of philosophy, this is something of a cheeky claim by Plato. Given the thrust of my own argument, I would suggest that this cheekiness is a carefully crafted dialogical way of engaging those readers of the *Republic* with poetic sensibilities in dialogue, of catching their attention and forcing them to defend and define their beloved poetry.

¹¹³ As Nightingale herself notes: "For, although he defines philosophy in opposition to poetry and rhetoric, Plato deliberately violates the borders which he himself has drawn" p. 195.

¹¹⁴ Again, according to Nightingale, "[k]nowing what to do and to say and learning how best to manage the affairs of one's household and city: this is the task of philosophy according to Isocrates" p. 28.

theory. As I believe the dialogues are, indeed, the embodiment of a Platonically conceived aesthetic, what I will now examine is the significance of the dialogical method to Gadamer. This crucial importance will be examined in order to explain Gadamer's treatment of Plato, and to show the influence of this treatment on the final part of this section of my work. For here we will see how methodologically imperative were *mimesis* and *anamnesis* to Plato's dialectic in terms previously elicited from Gadamer's exegesis of the artwork. This wholly implicit Platonic methodology will link and combine all previous sections arguing for the essential and utterly fundamental aesthetic features of Plato.

6. Dialectic and Plato's Implicit Mimetic Methodology

What I will now propose involves taking a step back from the dialogues to view our mimetic distinction as being part of an altogether larger picture. This will involve arguing for the existence of two closely connected tools which Plato uses as the bases of his philosophical pedagogy. These tools are the constitutional embodiment of Plato as a philosopher and are his only way of affecting his audience, meaning they are not explicitly defined within the discourse of any dialogue, but rather, are implicitly incorporated into the structure of the works themselves. As my central argument, and as the culmination of my previously asserted dual conceptual positing of *mimesis* in Section IV, I will show how formative the representative usage of *mimesis* is to Plato. Essentially though, this exegesis will draw a direct link with my initial analysis of Gadamer's use of *mimesis* and *anamnesis*, highlighting my connection between Gadamer's celebration of art and Platonic philosophy. For part of my examination of Plato's distinct use of *mimesis* concerned its educative potential, whereby, rather than strictly being used to outline a new state, an informed, knowing sense of the term was used to address the individuals of the community, encouraging them to engage with and question some of their most traditionally unquestioned beliefs. This was not simply something stated by Plato as being a 'good idea' but was incorporated by him as a central part of his philosophy. However, in every society there exists a varied and, indeed, multifarious mix of people and attitudes. How could Plato appeal to everyone without laying down a general set of rules to deal with everyone? As I have been indicating, the answer is through a representative *mimesis* based on a mode of knowledge that is geared towards a communal approach to understanding. The

embodiment of this representative *mimesis* is the Platonic dialogue, something which was of fundamental importance to Gadamer.

An essential factor in understanding Gadamer's use of hermeneutics with regard to Plato is to see each of Plato's dialogues as *dialogues*. We have seen the importance of this already in Section V's examination of the *Republic*, in terms of my own interpretations as well as those of Gadamer. As Smith (1980) states in his introduction to *DD*, for Gadamer, "...each of Plato's dialogues must be understood as spoken language, as a developing discussion" (Translator's introduction, ix). Halliwell (2002) similarly recognises the importance of this dialogical aspect, noting in the *Republic* how "...even the most emphatic pronouncements made by Socrates in these contexts are best read (as 607c-e encourages us to see) as being at the service of ongoing, incomplete processes of reflection" (p. 61). This means that we are not always intended to expect logical rigour to be present throughout the works, but must instead see their 'live' aspect, whereby anything could potentially happen, or more appropriately where potentially anything could be asserted.¹¹⁵ So we should not measure the dialogue as we would a scientific treatise, expecting clearly defined conclusions. Instead we should see the dialogues as invitations to discussion, in which the method holds the key to us finding the answers. In this regard Gadamer asks us whether we ourselves would expect absolute logical precision in our own dialogues with each other.

"And we ourselves do not conduct our discussions '*more geometrico*'. Instead we move within the live play of risking assertions, of taking back what we have said, of assuming and rejecting, all the while proceeding on our way to reaching an understanding." '*Logos and Ergon in Plato's 'Lysis'*', *DD*, p. 5.

Gadamer uses this realisation in his hermeneutic studies on Plato, bringing to light the inconsistencies and illogicalities of certain dialogues. His point, though, is not in

¹¹⁵ This was similarly noticed by Natorp (2004). "We are meant to experience as unsatisfactory the purely negative and critical character of the Socratic way of philosophising and the desire is meant to be stimulated in the reader to pick up the investigation once again and to lead it to a more satisfactory result, just as Socrates himself plainly and honestly states at the end (*Protagoras*, 361c-d)" (p. 64). Although I would agree that the 'unsatisfactory' aspect of Socratic philosophising is intended to stimulate in us the desire to continue the discussion, I do not agree that we are supposed to come to 'a more satisfactory result'. To keep the example of the *Phaedo*, are we supposed to somehow answer the question as to what happens the soul after death? I think not. Rather, I believe we are simply to keep questioning and discussing without the need to find 'answers'. For, as we see in Gadamer it is in the questioning itself where the true ends of the discussion lies. It is the nature of dialogue, as well as the lack of what would qualify as a demonstrated conclusion (and subsequent end to the matter) in Plato's dialogues which makes me believe that this emphasis on the question as opposed to the answer is also true for Plato.

showing these inconsistencies as being deficits of the works, but rather in showing how they add to the natural progression of the dialogue, and how they are, in fact, entirely necessary for the dialogue, helping the matter under discussion come to be.¹¹⁶ In the *Phaedo*, for example, there are a number of arguments early in the dialogue which are not exactly logically sound. In the so-called ‘argument from opposites’ (70e-72e) and ‘argument from affinity’ (78b-80b), the majority of people who read the work would probably be able to imagine convincing counter-arguments. In his essay ‘The Proofs of Immortality in Plato’s *Phaedo*’, Gadamer shows how, although unconvincing, both arguments have centrally important parts to play in the success of the dialogue as dialogue.¹¹⁷ In fact, an often overlooked aspect of the *Phaedo* is how Plato is presenting a “...human discussion which must be understood as discussion” (‘The Proofs of Immortality in Plato’s *Phaedo*’, *DD*, p. 21). With regard to the ‘argument from opposites’ Gadamer writes that, “[w]hat is striking about the proof is that it is obviously unsuited to prove the point which it is supposed to prove” (Ibid, p. 25). Why, then, is this argument even introduced? “Is it not ultimately the very deficiency of this proof which prompts Cebes to introduce what is properly speaking not his idea but Socrates’, i.e., *anamnesis*?” (Ibid., p. 26). The argument is thereby situated as a mechanism of the dialogical method, where the egos of the participants are relegated in importance when compared to the successful progress of the discussion itself. It also highlights the importance of agreement, in which it is no good simply having one person present their position and argue for it throughout the work. Rather, it is more important that all involved are brought to the understanding together. Similarly, the deficiencies of the ‘argument from affinity’ generate the ensuing discussion. Taking an argument out of a Platonic work and conceptually isolating it is thereby presented as being a dangerous method of operating, given the potential consequences the argument may intentionally or unintentionally have for the work as a whole. The appropriate way of interpreting Plato, then, is not by examining

¹¹⁶ This point once more counters the natural sciences’ distinct grip on knowledge formation given the emphasis on us ‘bringing forth’ understanding, rather than trying to stamp it on the natural world. It is also noted by Smith (1980), who writes that, “...the success of such a live discussion is not at all to be measured by its logical rigor but by its effectiveness in bringing the essence of the subject matter to light to the extent that the limited conditions of any discussion permit” ‘Translator’s Introduction’, *DD*, x.

¹¹⁷ For Gadamer, even something as seemingly concrete as Plato’s theory of Ideas is intended to have dialogical consequences. “...the acceptance of the ‘ideas’ does not designate the acceptance of a doctrine, so much as of a line of questioning that the doctrine has the task of developing and discussing” (*LLP*, p. 33). This is what constitutes Platonic dialectic.

his definitions of concepts, thereby trying to elicit a Platonic system. "Instead, it is to retrace, as a questioner, the course of questioning that the dialogue presents and to describe the direction in which Plato, without following it, only points" (*PDE*, p. 11).¹¹⁸

Explaining the movement of dialogue, in relation to Plato's *Seventh Letter*, Gadamer describes its fundamental role in our capacity as humans to understand. For in the *Seventh Letter* Plato outlines the four ways we have of communicating a 'thing'. These are, (1) its name or word, (2) its explanation or conceptual determination, (3) its appearance, example, or figure, and finally (4) the knowledge or insight of the thing. Now although Plato asserts that we have no certainty in any of these four ways of coming to know the thing itself, the movement back and forth among these four ways constitutes dialogue. As Gadamer then argues,

"What Plato describes here as the untiring movement back and forth through the four means of knowing is in fact the art of dialectic – a perpetual passing from one thing to another which nonetheless perseveres in the single direction of what is meant and which, for want of cogent deductive proofs, remains in proximity to what is sought without ever being able to reach it." 'Dialectic and Sophism in Plato's *Seventh Letter*', *DD*, p. 122.

What all this undoubtedly shows us is how important the use of dialogue is in Gadamer's Platonic interpretation.¹¹⁹ For, it is this hermeneutic method of analysis which has prompted the next part of my work and my examination of how *mimesis* and *anamnesis* are used by Plato as part of this dialogical method.

¹¹⁸ Natorp (2004) also clearly connects the event of *anamnesis* with the method of dialectic. "There is, then, such a thing as 1) learning and 2) teaching, provided that the former is understood as 1) recollection, that is the summoning up or drawing forth of knowledge from the source of one's own consciousness, while the latter is understood as the process of awakening to self-consciousness through the procedure of 2) dialectic" (p. 77). However, Natorp is too quick to dismiss the "poetical trimmings" (p. 80) of the theory of *anamnesis* in Plato. Natorp believed in a 'scientific method' of Plato's which is to be focussed on to the detriment of any and all literary aspects. "No matter how much the whole is immersed in the consistency of mood resulting from the moment in time that is portrayed, no matter how astonishingly skilfully the course of the conversation is calculated, even in its individual passages, to produce an impression of the personality and the moment that will never leave us, our interest is still primarily aroused by the scientific discussion" (p. 149). Yet the 'course of the conversation' referred to and dismissed by Natorp above must be governed by Plato's method of dialectic. Where I differ from Natorp, then, is that I believe this method is itself Plato's scientific method. In this way no aspect of it can be dismissed as being secondary to the scientific discussion.

¹¹⁹ It also shows us how infinite was Gadamer's conception of knowledge formation and understanding, given the endless possibilities of dialogue, and how limited our understanding could ever be as we will never exhaust its depths. "The labour of dialectic, in which the truth of what is finally flashes upon us, is by nature unending and infinite" 'Dialectic and Sophism in Plato's *Seventh Letter*', *DD*, p. 121.

As it is more generally accepted that *anamnesis* is used by Plato, I will begin my argument with *mimesis* and the first of two mimetic tools incorporated by him in his dialectic. The first of these tools, which Plato uses through a representative *mimesis*, is his use of character.¹²⁰ Now this is not the traditionally artistic tool we see him dismantle in the *Republic*, but is rather an intellectual, representative embodiment. By not using the direct treatise, Plato relies on his characters to conduct his dialogues. As central features of the dialogues, more important than who the characters are is what they are representing. It is through them that the ideas and, indeed, Ideas of the dialogue are expressed, after all. So, for example, the biographies, let us say, of Simmias and Cebes in the *Phaedo* are not important when compared to the non-religious aspects of Pythagoreanism these characters represent. Again, this is by no means an imitation by Plato in his construction of these personages, but is rather a representative embodiment of a *specific intellectual perspective*. For Gadamer these characters in particular (Simmias and Cebes) represent the new ‘scientific enlightenment’ of Plato’s time, an evolution of Pythagoreanism which was no longer solely focused on religious rigour but was concerned rather with such things as mathematical investigation and the knowledge found through cosmological enquiry.¹²¹ Fundamentally, though, this is the reason they are presented here in this Platonic work. For it is through these characters that the ideals they represent for Plato can come to be and subsequently be challenged through dialogue.¹²² Plato is thereby using those intellectual perspectives represented by the dialogue’s interlocutors as initial points of discussion. To use another example, at *Philebus* 11c we find Philebus himself taking a break from the discussion and Protarchus taking over. Protarchus is able to do so *initially* because he can be taken to *represent* Philebus’ point of view. Yet Philebus, though an observer, remains a part of the dialogue. In this way Plato is showing us a microcosm of what it is his use of character achieves, in that the direct

¹²⁰ A most useful guide to the literary usage of character in Plato can be found in Blondell (2002), who similarly emphasises how we should never pit the ‘philosophical’ and the ‘dramatic’ aspects of Plato against each other, but must rather see them as complementary parts of dialectic.

¹²¹ Gadamer argues that Simias and Cebes are not concerned with the religious aspects of Pythagoreanism because of their expressed ignorance towards the Pythagorean prohibition of suicide. “Their ignorance gives us a clear indication that they are no longer interested in the religious content of the Pythagorean teachings and that they therefore genuinely represent the modern scientific enlightenment” ‘The Proofs of Immortality in Plato’s *Phaedo*’, *DD*, p. 23.

¹²² The variable contextual nature of Plato’s works is again recognised by Blondell (2002). “But it is perfectly possible, and indeed very likely (...) that Plato composed different works for performance in different contexts, by differing performers or for different audiences on different occasions” (p. 23). This might be taking the variability of Plato’s intentions a little too far, as it suggests something slightly sophistic. I do not want to paint Plato as a wandering dialectician for hire.

dialogue with Protarchus, while showing us how Protarchus himself thinks and operates is at the same time a dialogue with Philebus. Of course, I do not mean that Socrates is *in* dialogue with both Protarchus and Philebus at the same time. For it is clear that Philebus does not want to discuss directly with Socrates, given his single-minded feelings towards hedonism. However, as a listener to the exchange Philebus nevertheless remains a part of it, even if he does not want to be. If he truly did not want any part he would have left the room entirely. We might envision Philebus laughing about Socrates' responses to others after the dialogue ends. Although this is something of a negative aspect of dialogue it still shows the part he played in the dialogue. I say this because, even though in jest, this can still be seen as a continuation of the dialogical exchange. On a much larger scale, then, it is not just the individual characters who are led through the discussion, but all those witnesses to the exchange who either share in, or disagree with, these characters' opinions, arguments, and methods of operation, a point recognised by Blondell (2002).¹²³ Tension and conflict only comes when the interlocutors stray from the dialogical method and resort to sophistic arguments. When Janaway (1995) asserts that '...he (Plato) opposes the pursuit of diversity or novelty for their own sake, the seeking out of pleasurable experiences, the imaginative exploration of the morally reprehensible and ambiguous sides of human existence, the cultivation of the viewpoints of women and slaves which challenge the secure habits of the aristocratic *kalos kagathos*' (p. 105), he should simply look at Plato's works themselves to see just how far these accusations are from Plato's intentions. For example, '...the imaginative exploration of the morally reprehensible and ambiguous sides of human existence...' that Janaway refers to are thrown into dialogue throughout each of Plato's very works. The detailed examination of Lysias' thesis in the *Phaedrus*, that it is better for a beloved to give themselves to one who does not love them as opposed to someone who does, is a prime example of this. As for '...cultivating the viewpoints of women and slaves...', there is certainly a case that Plato does not treat the viewpoints of either as being of crucial importance. Yet, the *Symposium*'s Diotima, while a Priestess, is nevertheless a woman. It is something of a statement from Plato that Socrates would learn the 'rites

¹²³ "Even when mimetic identification changes a person's character, then, it does so by reinforcing a part of the self that already has an affinity or likeness to what is represented" (p. 82). Of course, the audience members who recognise themselves mimetically in one of the interlocutors, once their opinions have been 'reinforced', are then challenged by Socrates and the Platonic method. Blondell recognises this too. "If they identify with a character who changes or learns in the course of the drama, they may perhaps undergo similar educational effects" p. 92.

of love' from a woman, even if she is a Priestess. Also, it is a slave boy who is used in the *Meno* as the case-study of recollected knowledge. Again, this is something of a statement by Plato, showing us how everyone has the potential for achieving knowledge, despite their economic class. I believe these examples show us that Plato's use of character was by no means one-dimensional, and was instead used as a way of engaging varied elements of society in discussion. By simply looking at the dialogues themselves, then, Plato's proscriptions on character-use in the *Republic* can be seen in its proper light.

Yet this embodiment of intellectual perspectives is also the very thing achieved by the artwork. Each work has an underlying ideology that belongs to it and that we challenge on experiencing it. This ideology was not 'put' there by the artist but was merely brought out by the creation of the work. In Plato's works, however, we not only have this challenge, but are also shown the best way of overcoming it. For there is one character in every dialogue who guides the action. This character knows the only way towards finding knowledge is not in single-minded argumentation or in speech-making, but is rather in an open dialogue. In all but a few dialogues the central protagonist in question is, of course, Socrates. Yet, once more, Socrates is not imitated by Plato in this characterisation. Referring to the *Phaedo*, Golden (1975) notes "the skilful representation of Socrates prior to the time of his execution", and how this is of "great dramatic and philosophical interest" (both p. 129), a point I will discuss with specific reference to the *Phaedo* in my third part. In my initial outline of *mimesis* according to Gadamer in Section I, we saw how important the ontological identity of the artwork was. The idea that the artist was merely copying nature was described as a wholly illegitimate way of viewing the work. Just like this position, we would never portray Plato as a mere scribe, faithfully reciting actual Socratic dialogues. Rather, his works give birth to a conceptual representation of what was, for him, essentially Socratic. For Socrates, and his original turn towards language, *is* philosophy for Plato, and through his representation we see the very essence of the philosophical come to be.¹²⁴ Through Socrates and the

¹²⁴ Of course it was not only what Socrates stood for and brought to being that drew Plato's admiration and his desire to represent him. For, as Gadamer notes, the man himself embodied all the characteristics necessary for such a pivotal role in Plato's philosophy. "In Socrates, he (Plato) encountered in living reality how a person could steadfastly hold to what he viewed as right – unerringly, unconditionally, and in self-reliant independence from all external influences" ('*Logos and Ergon* in Plato's *Lysis*', *DD*, p. 3). The double meaning in the term 'character' can be highlighted in

dialogical method, the potential of Platonic philosophy becomes realised. It is simply impossible to distance the representation of Socrates from the notion of Platonic philosophy. When we talk of Socrates we are invariably talking about *Plato's* Socrates, and through this representation Plato's Socrates becomes so much more than the original. It is this represented Socrates, after all, who has taught generations and affected countless numbers of individuals, including Gadamer, not Socrates the historical person. A photograph or 'snap-shot' of Socrates is not something we would even want from Plato. The 'mirror image' lacks its own identity and would certainly take from Plato all claims of originality. There is surely nobody who imagines Plato's Socrates, and the dialogues in which he dominates, to be as accurate a rendering of the actual Socrates as possible. Like the 'Warriors of Riace', Socrates is not an exact imitation of the actual man, but is rather a representation of what lay behind the man, and what constitutes a true philosopher. Again, as we saw in abundance in Section I on Gadamer and *mimesis*, it was this mimetic ability which was outlined by him as being the key characteristic of art.

Plato's representation of Socrates, then, does not only aim itself towards the essence of Socrates' philosophy, but also actually exemplifies the essence of what Socratic philosophy based itself on; dialogue.¹²⁵ If we remember, this emphasis on essence defined what we examined earlier as Gadamer's representative sense of *mimesis* (especially pp. 9-11). Socrates the man, being a part of our phenomenological world, lived and died. What Plato has done in his creation is take Socrates out of this flow of existence and provide him with a fixed and timeless forum from which to propound philosophy, not simply like a character in a work of art, but more like the entire work itself, given the instrumentality of Socrates in the pedagogy of the works. As we now know, though, Plato was not the exclusive user of Socrates as a character. In fact there is even a tradition ascribed to a number of Socratic followers, all of whom use the character of Socrates.¹²⁶ The main problem for us with these thinkers, however, is how little we have of their works. For this reason there is little one can do in the realm of comparison or commentary. The evidence we do happen to have, however (especially from the exception to the list of forgotten Socratic thinkers,

Plato's representation of Socrates, given the heightened moral character of Socrates. For a discussion of philosophical character in Plato, in terms of moral fortitude, see Patterson (1987).

¹²⁵ Gadamer too saw the essence of Platonic philosophy in dialectic. "Philosophy, for Plato, is dialectic" *PDE*, p. 8.

¹²⁶ Those we know of include Antisthenes, Phaedo, Eucleides, Aristippus, Aeschines, and of course Xenophon.

Xenophon) seems to support the picture we get of Plato's Socrates. The feigned ignorance, the quest for definition, and the reduction of interlocutors' positions to an unworkable or ridiculous conclusion, are all abundantly present. Does this mean, then, that Plato was simply imitating a commonly held picture of Socrates? I believe not. For these character traits, even in the early dialogues, are not the embodiment of Plato's Socrates but are merely operative features of his methodology. As I have mentioned, I believe Plato needed his audience to recognise either their own beliefs and intellectual perspectives or those of others, in the characters of the dialogues. That Plato undoubtedly included traits of the historical Socrates is simply a way of drawing his audience into recognising Socrates. These features, then, were simply a launching pad from which Plato could propel his philosophical agenda, where the imitative mannerisms and character traits are transformed into a (Platonically designed) representative philosophical embodiment. Gadamer held Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates to be too caught up in portraying these imitative character traits, a point echoed by Guthrie (1971),¹²⁷ though is perhaps forgivable given Xenophon's primary craft as a social historian.¹²⁸ I believe Plato was not interested in faithfully recording what he believed Socrates would do in a particular situation when faced with some interlocutor or another. Rather, his works use what Socrates stood for in order to outline and examine what becomes a purely Platonic philosophy. Sure, the initial philosophical spark and general drive towards truth is based on a Socratic initiative, but I believe that rather than portray any 'Socratic' philosophy, Plato used what it was that turned Socrates himself towards the philosophical in the first place. The consequence of this is a completely unique, Platonic philosophy. Obviously this is at odds with other views that attempt to postulate such a 'Socratic' philosophy from Plato's works. I must state though, that Vlastos' (1991) presentation of the varied aspects of what he terms Socratic philosophy is undoubtedly an innovative, faithful and perhaps even wholly accurate portrayal of the methods and beliefs of the historical Socrates. This is, in most cases, without dispute. What is in dispute,

¹²⁷ Though acknowledging the detail of Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates, Guthrie (1971) never the less accuses Xenophon of "a certain literal-mindedness and tendency to prosiness, a pedestrian outlook which is sometimes frankly dull, and little sign of any capacity for profound philosophical thought" (p. 15). For Guthrie, another example of Xenophon's shortcomings is how, in his *Apology*, he puts all of his own admiration for Socrates into Socrates' own mouth. This produces "an impression of intolerable smugness and complacency" (p. 19). This makes Plato's portrayal all the more notable.

¹²⁸ Gadamer believed Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates to be similarly imitative. Referring to Socrates' portrayal in the *Memorabilia* in particular Gadamer notes that, "Xenophon's apologetic motif is all too trivial and transparent." 'Socratic Knowing and Not-Knowing', *IG*, p. 49.

however, is the underlying methodology employed by Vlastos in this presentation. As I have argued for throughout this first part of my work, Plato's dialogues must be seen in terms of their aesthetic significance, both with regard to their shape (as dialogues) and content (their characters).¹²⁹ Socrates, I suggest, is the heart of this aesthetic foundation, given how operative he is in bringing forth both the essence of what the dialogue is discussing, and in showing the most appropriate way of allowing this essence to be. Just as Gadamer postulated about the artwork earlier, so, too, do I argue that Plato's dialogues must be seen as unique wholes with their own ontological identity. What I mean by this is that each Platonic dialogue should be treated as a complete, (and as I argue for) artistic whole, which does not rely on anything outside of itself for significance and being. In this way, the Socrates of each dialogue is unique to that dialogue and is crucial to the work's operational methodology. To imagine either a 'Socrates' or a 'Socratic' philosophy that is taken from out of the Platonic dialogues, then, is to rip a *different* Socrates from each work and impose a system upon them. Of course, we can talk about a representative Socrates that is common to many dialogues. Crucially, though, this representative Socrates is a Platonic construction. By ripping a Socrates that one regards as separate to Plato's Socrates from out of each work, the essence of the Platonic work is left in tatters. The character of Socrates is an indelible part of each work and operates as a central methodological feature of the works he appears in. Though surely nobody would disagree that there are elements of Plato's Socrates which are faithful to the historical Socrates' philosophical method, this does not warrant a separate 'Socratic' extraction. All of the greatest artists had teachers. But we would not dream of attributing to them an entire ideology or conceptual framework based solely from the works of their students, as some do with Plato and Socrates, an argument supported by Strauss (2001).¹³⁰ Nowhere is representation given a truer embodiment than in Plato's Socrates because of Socrates' role in *making* the dialogue work. For, as it is Socrates himself who drives the works and extols the dialogical agenda, it is he who strives to bring that which is under discussion to the understanding of all those present. In this regard, Plato's works are not just examples of a more essential art form, but are the

¹²⁹ My opposition to Vlastos' methodology, especially in terms of the literary aspects of Plato's works, can be seen also in Kahn (1996).

¹³⁰ Strauss (2001), when dealing with the problems of having a noted ironist as one's supposed spokesman, notes: "No one would dream of ascribing to Shakespeare every sentence expressed by any Shakespearean character, however attractive that character may be." (p. 5). Although the relation between Plato and Socrates is far more complicated than that, the point is never the less a valid one.

very paradigm of it. In no other form are we shown how to come to understand both the form itself and the thing which the form seeks to bring to understanding. Socrates himself has much to thank Plato for because of this. For it is through Plato's representation that Socrates has been elevated to this increased status of being, becoming more of himself through this representation. Through Plato's representation, what Socrates taught becomes what he now is, providing him with a definite increase in being. It was this mimetic ability which was also outlined by Gadamer as a key characteristic of the artwork. As Gadamer himself argues,

"With regard to knowledge of the true, the being of the representation is more than the being of the thing represented, Homer's Achilles more than the original." *TM*, 1.2.1.B.

In fact, Socrates' becoming more than the original shares the same idea as Gadamer's use of the symbol (pp. 18-19). If we remember, both the symbol itself as well as what it symbolises is brought to being through the symbolic act. Most importantly, though, the most vital aspect of the symbol was in what it was symbolising, what it was bringing into being. In this case, although the picture of Socrates is undoubtedly important, it is a secondary mode of presenting. More important, then, is what this picture of Socrates symbolises, something we have previously seen as being the dialogical method. As we saw, "[t]he symbolic does not simply point toward a meaning, but rather allows that meaning to present itself" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 34.). Just like Gadamer's pointing hand, the symbol of Socrates must not be seen as a mere character or even historical personage, but must instead be allowed to direct us to what his representation brings to being. The symbolic Socrates of Plato's dialogues, then, while providing the original Socrates with an increase in being, also allows what stood behind the original Socrates, the reason for Plato's representation in the first place, to be presented. In some respects, Socrates' use to Plato, and indeed to us, lies not in what he was, but rather in what he now symbolises. As we have seen, this is the epitome of the power of art for Gadamer, that it always means much more than what it physically is.

Yet, the single most important difference between Plato's use of *mimesis* and that of the traditional artists is the difference between their claims to knowledge. As we saw earlier in Section V (especially pp. 37-40), the characters of the traditional arts were taught as ethical paradigms without question by the Athenians, leading to an

incorrect and wholly imitative use of *mimesis*. Socrates, on the other hand, teaches us a way *towards* knowledge, a way which itself governs a deeply ethical ideal. When I described earlier the instances where one could say representation occurs, we noticed how each of those chosen to represent did so from a strong basis of knowledge. For example, a lawyer could only ever truly represent a client if he had a firm knowledge of the law. Without this knowledge he can be accused of misrepresenting his client, grounds upon which the client could appeal any unsatisfactory judgement. As we have been seeing in all of our previous definitions of the representative sense of *mimesis*, this knowledge was fundamental. In the *Laws*, for example, we saw how the correct and proper representation of the virtues in the choral performances was reliant upon a sound basis of knowledge (pp. 52-54). Plato's representative use of Socrates, as well as his other interlocutors, comes from a non-traditional conception of knowledge, one which is guided by an awareness of the finitude of human knowledge. Its superiority, therefore, is in how it conducts itself. This leads us to the second tool used by Plato as an essential feature of his philosophy, one which is again based on a representative sense of *mimesis*.

Closely connected to the use of Socrates and the interlocutors is the knowledge upon which Plato's dialogues are based. For, as is obvious, the dialogical form is the means by which Plato engaged his philosophy with the traditional claims to knowledge of the fourth century. However, Plato did not only compose in dialogue form, but also showed the intimate relationship between philosophy and the dialogical form itself, within these very works. This use of dialogue, and its celebration of its essential self through its own form, is highly representational, a point noted even by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1447b9).¹³¹ Again, just like Gadamer's symbolic claim on the artwork, Plato's dialogues are far more than what they actually are. For, the works point towards the essential bases from which we can elicit understanding, which is the engagement of each other through discussion. Plato does not simply have his characters tell us how great dialogue is and how necessary it is for the success of understanding. For this would be regarded as in fact betraying the dialogical method, being more in league with the treatise. The dialogues themselves between the

¹³¹ Golden (1975) also notes the mimetic features of Plato's dialogues, but does not really discuss the conditions or consequences of this assertion. "A study of any Platonic dialogue will demonstrate how deeply the mimetic process penetrates the work of this philosopher who is often alleged to be the enemy of *mimesis*" (p. 124). Golden also goes too far in defending the traditional poets of Plato's time without acknowledging, I believe, the fundamental changes that Plato was envisioning for any such positive appropriation of their craft.

characters must also not be regarded as being based on actual dialogues. For this too would take an imitative viewpoint of the works, though it is something few people would argue for.¹³² Given this, the dialogue is a representation of how the dialogical form, and the Platonic ideologies behind it, addresses that which is represented by Socrates' interlocutors. Why the dialogue between these parties is representational is because of how they are kept within the confines of what is essentially dialogical. So it is philosophy *itself* that is represented therein. By taking the dialogues as representative of philosophy, our cognitive potential as investigative beings is similarly given its greatest representation by these works. This potential is brought to being, both explicitly through the perambulations of the dialogue's protagonist and interlocutors, and implicitly by the dialogical form taken by these perambulations.

Of course, there is a further mimetic element to Plato's method that is embedded in the dialogical model. This is Plato's use of language. When we learn to speak as children we tend to imitate what we hear around us, a point we find in Mitscherling (2002).¹³³ We pick up words and repeat them until we learn how to put them into sentences, a point similarly recognised by Gadamer.¹³⁴ This is the essence of the imitative feature of *mimesis* and is kept when learning the contexts of word use. When first beginning to speak we are rarely told the meaning of words, but simply recognise the situations and test them out through the play of linguistic experimentation. However, as our language develops we start asking what words mean, a trying time for most parents. What this shows is that we no longer seek merely to imitate, but want to venture into unknown linguistic terrain, where our own opinions about the world start to develop. During our development into young adulthood these opinions are, in most cases, expressed openly in order to draw people into discussion. Of course, we can see this thematically in a number of Platonic

¹³² This argument even crops up in brief in one of Gadamer's very works. For in *IG* we find "...it is vital to read Plato's dialogues not as theoretical treatises but as *mimesis* of real discussions played out between the partners and drawing them all into a game in which they all have something at stake." (*IG*, p. 97) I do not believe that Gadamer means the dialogues are transcriptions of actual dialogues but are supposed to be taken as being real discussions themselves. Although the idea that Plato's dialogues were themselves mimetic is not expanded by any means by Gadamer, the above quote surely shows that my argument is not unsuited to the Gadamerian method.

¹³³ Mitscherling uses the example of children imitating to support Plato's argument for censoring their educational environment. "As Aristotle too pointed out, and as contemporary psychologists continue to demonstrate ever more convincingly, a good part of a child's earliest education consists precisely in imitating the actions of her elders, and were the child to imitate a bad example, she might easily herself become bad" p. 152 – 153.

¹³⁴ "The apprehending child's natural urge to imitate, to form sounds, either in imitation or out of sheer pleasure, is combined in that child's mind with the illuminating flash of meaning" *LLP*, p. 42.

dialogues, such as the *Charmides* for example, where these young adults are questioned on aspects of their developing character. What Plato shows us is how important it is to throw off the imitative shackles of our youth. Keeping with the *Charmides*, and as was seen previously, we find the youth initially expressing an opinion he had learned from Critias. He failed to convince Socrates of this opinion because he did not really understand the point he was professing. Through our use of language, just like in any other part of our intellectual engagement, an understanding of meaning must be developed. The dialogue where this difference is expressly stated by Plato is the *Cratylus*, one of the dialogues where the imitative approach to language usage was utterly distanced from a more learned, representational linguistic incorporation. While I will not attempt to enter into any detailed discussion of the arguments of the dialogue, what is to be noted is how the concept of etymology is governed by a dialogical exchange that inherently uses the words it seeks to explain. Socrates' ironic lauding of naturalism is not a condemnation of the entire etymological process as such, but highlights the illegitimacy in simply accepting names as being naturally accorded. Of course, conventionalism is not given an easy time either. Yet through the dialogical investigation we are shown how our own use of language finds its potential by being investigated. As I have shown earlier (pp. 29-30), Plato has Socrates distinguish the imitative approach from its representative alternative at 432e, whereby one must resort to the essence of that which each thing is, in order to be able to fully incorporate it into one's philosophical account. So throughout Plato's works his use of language shows how one must not simply dwell on the 'science' of naming, but must examine the concepts which underlie these names. Plato shows this in every one of his dialogues, especially in the earlier works, where a single word, whether it be piety, temperance, or justice, is not examined in a 'scientific' way, but is treated dialogically in order for the true meaning of the word to show itself through the exchange.

However, the dialogues do not simply point to just a transcendent ideal. More than this is the ethical structure by which the works are framed, a template with *practical* applications from which the search for knowledge is constructed. By using the dialogical form we can see this requirement for practicality to Plato's philosophy, despite even the loftiest subject matter. Plato's philosophy could not simply dwell on transcendent reality if it stood any chance of combating the real and potential threat of the sophists and their 'perversion' of civic virtue. Instead, it must address itself to the

various tastes, beliefs, and philosophies of the people. This practicality of art and its mimetic function is also a key feature of Gadamer's. The most important part of our aesthetic experience after our exposure to art is the return to our accepted reality afterwards. We must, of course, come back to ourselves after the experience but when we do we are enlightened, changed, and educated about both ourselves and the world represented by the work. Gadamer's arguments for the practical and wholly applicable aspects of art form his opposition to what he deems the 'aesthetic consciousness'. What Gadamer believed embodied the approach of those who followed the 'aesthetic consciousness' was a conception of art that separated itself from all other considerations, such as the work's moral or cognitive implications, treating art purely for its own sake.¹³⁵ This much is stated by Gadamer:

"It (aesthetic consciousness) distinguishes the aesthetic quality of a work from all the elements of content that induce us to take up a moral or religious stance towards it and presents it solely by itself in its aesthetic 'being.'" *TM*, 1.1.3.A.

For Gadamer, though, this steals from art its educative significance. If art was to be considered purely by itself and distanced from all other areas, then there would be no basis whatsoever from which to see the truth values present in the work. Through this, what Gadamer calls 'aesthetic differentiation' carried out by the aesthetic consciousness, the work loses its essential feature.¹³⁶ What it loses for Gadamer is "...its place and the world to which it belongs insofar as it belongs instead to aesthetic consciousness" (*TM*, 1.1.3.A.). As we have seen consistently in Gadamer's theories on art, especially in Section III, the world of the work is not some "alien universe" into which we are transported. Through *anamnesis* we were said to learn about ourselves in a way unlike any other. In an example which sums up Gadamer's wholly practical approach to art, as well as showing the detriment of the aesthetic consciousness' treatment, he states that the aesthetic consciousness would call a

¹³⁵ Kelly (Krajewski, 2004) finds both positives and negatives in the 'aesthetic consciousness', but rightly states that the negatives outweigh the positives. The positives, he argues, are that, by separating a work from everything non-aesthetic, it can, in principle, be seen in its true, autonomous being. The negatives, however, are that it abstracts the work from the world in which it has meaning. This much, in terms of the negative aspects of the aesthetic consciousness, is agreed upon, and shown above, by Gadamer.

¹³⁶ This mode of conceptualising art for its own sake is argued by Gadamer to be second rate when compared to the immediate effect of art. "The consciousness of art – the aesthetic consciousness – is always secondary to the immediate truth-claim that proceeds from the work of art itself. To this extent, when we judge a work of art on the basis of its aesthetic quality, something that is really much more intimately familiar to us is alienated." 'The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem', *PH*, p. 5.

building a work of art, without any question as to whether the building could be lived in. We see in great clarity here how useful the artwork is to us were we just to see its potential. So by considering Plato's works in terms of an essential, Gadamerian artistry, a definite concordance can be seen between how serious and utterly practical the works must be. Gadamer countered the aesthetic consciousness by applying cognitive and thereby pedagogical worth to art through his incorporation of *anamnesis*. In this way he showed how it is we ourselves, as well as our historical being and ultimate finitude that is recognised in the work. It is this knowledge that teaches us about our place in the world and how the way towards understanding for us is through the engagement of dialogue. What I shall examine now, therefore, is how essential this artistic feature was to Plato. As with *mimesis*, I shall begin by examining its explicit incorporation by Plato, a much more straightforward procedure than *mimesis*, before showing its implicit incorporation into the dialogical method.

7. *Anamnesis* as Recognition of the True in the Aesthetics of Dialectic

The theory of *anamnesis* is one of Plato's most consistent, with regard to the fact that it remained unaltered, and was not renounced by him in any of his existing, later dialogues. With its most detailed beginnings in the *Meno*, *anamnesis* figures prominently in the *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Theaetetus*. In the *Meno*, it is used to show how something as seemingly objective as mathematics can indeed be misled by opinion. By using a slave boy, someone without any such thing as mathematical training, Socrates at 82b coaches the correct solving of a mathematical problem. Given the slave boy's lack of mathematical training, the only explanation is that the proofs came from a recollected knowledge which the boy experienced before his birth, thereby connecting the pursuit of knowledge to a state of recollection. Learning, therefore, is the drive towards remembering what is in our souls and which has been forgotten since our birth. That which we do manage to recollect is then transformed into knowledge by understanding, a process which is somewhat difficult to pin down in Plato (the role of mathematics as separate from that of dialectic makes it so), but which certainly occurs at some stage through an education in dialectic. The theory has great significance for the concept of teaching also, given how knowledge is *already* in the student. This is the reason Socrates often refers to himself as but a midwife, bringing forth that which is already in his discussants. *Anamnesis* receives perhaps its

most explicit exegesis from *Phaedo* 72e ff, where it is mentioned in the discussion on the nature of the soul. Beginning with how the sensible appearance of one thing, be it either a lyre or even a person, can often bring something or someone *else* to mind, recollection is thereby introduced into the discussion.¹³⁷ That this recollection is of an epistemological nature is argued for using the example of equality, where the presence of two sticks appearing at first sight equal but on closer inspection found unequal is proposed to be indicative of our innate abilities to apply un-given, *a priori* absolutes to our phenomenological judgements. Though never taught the nature of equality, we can apply it to the world, recognising both its presence and absence. How we get this knowledge, accepting the theory of *anamnesis*, is through somehow educating ourselves (dialectically, mathematically, etc...) to recognise what we know to be true but have forgotten in the confusion of our everyday existence.¹³⁸ Knowledge of sensible objects is thereby rejected by Plato through the theory of *anamnesis* as not being 'true' knowledge. Although some such thing as the route one takes to get home is undoubtedly a useful fact for us, it does not count as true knowledge. Only that which we recollect, the purer realm of unchanging Forms, is the source of true knowledge. In one of Plato's most sustained epistemological treatments, the *Theaetetus*, *anamnesis* is again featured as being the theoretical make-up of knowledge. Here, the knowledge derived from arithmetic, the very epitome of *a priori* knowledge, is described by Plato as recollected.

"What terms ought we to use about them when we speak of what the arithmetician does when he proceeds to count, or the scholar when he proceeds to read something? Here, it seems, a man who knows something is setting out to learn again from himself (παρ' ἑαυτοῦ) things which he already knows." *Theaetetus*, 198e.

Throughout these dialogues' use of *anamnesis* there is the same emphasis on the problem of eliciting understanding from the constant flow of existence, a feature we also find in Gadamer and his incorporation of both *mimesis* and *anamnesis*. If we remember, this unreliability of our phenomenal world led Gadamer to see a fixity in art, whereby we would come to recognise what was hidden behind the world that floods around us (see especially pp. 12-14 and 21). It is something of a counter-

¹³⁷ "You know well that lovers (οἱ ἔρασταί), when they see a lyre or cloak or some such thing that his beloved is fond of using, perceive the lyre but in their mind see an image of the beloved, to whom the lyre belongs." *Phaedo*, 73d.

¹³⁸ "Then before we began to see or hear and use our other senses (αἰσθάνεσθαι), we must somewhere have gained knowledge of equality in itself." 75b.

intuitive theory, as it asserts that knowledge should not be sought from outside of ourselves, but should rather be focussed on within.¹³⁹ By using the example of the slave boy in the *Meno*, Plato seems to be clear on how universal *anamnesis* could be. Of course, just as it was in Gadamer, it is dialogue which is the tool Plato has Socrates use to show the slave boy the reality of *anamnesis*.¹⁴⁰ Socrates' first dialogical step in eliciting this process of recollection is in getting rid of the false 'beliefs' and suppositions of the boy. So Plato does not propose that everyone is already ready to enter a proper dialogue and begin the process of recognition. For throughout our lives we build opinions about the world. These opinions can be detrimental to a proper dialogue, especially if they are close to one's moral ideals. Upon entering the discussion with Socrates, therefore, the falsity and illegitimacy of these opinions must be acknowledged and treated, a dialogical procedure of the utmost importance. Yet, this very same realisation was seen earlier in Gadamer when we examined his conditions of understanding and the problem of our prejudices (pp. 21-23). Just as he saw us needing to address how our historically socialised prejudices affect our capacity, and, indeed, our willingness, to understand, so too is this what we see in Socrates' priming of the slave boy. What I mean is that there are certain opinions (in Plato's case) and prejudices (in Gadamer's case) which can limit one's capacity and willingness to understand. By addressing these issues, one can be said to be clearing away the obstacles to a proper knowledge. As seen throughout Plato's works, addressing the illegitimacy of opinion is a key part of proper dialogue. However, there is an interesting side-note with regard to the Greek term used to designate opinion. For the word 'δόξα', while being commonly interpreted as opinion, was also used to describe the decision made by the majority in the council assembly. A clear association can be seen, therefore, between opinion and what was regarded as the will of the people, given the democratic ideology involved in any council decision. Yet again, then, do we find in Plato the desire to rewrite the communal sense which

¹³⁹ The consequences of this on the concept of learning is of course fundamental to Plato's dialogical process. We see this, amongst others, in Natorp's treatment of the Ideas. "What remains in this sober theory of recollection is just the claim that if learning is to be possible it must be understood, not as the acquisition of knowledge from outside the soul, but as the generation of knowledge from within the soul" (p. 37). As we will see, this inward focus and reliance on fellow discussants is just as central to Gadamer and his re-positioning of the human sciences.

¹⁴⁰ The example given in the *Meno* is recognized by Gadamer as being paradigmatic of how to use *anamnesis* in terms of art and dialectic. "Just as in the famous scene in the *Meno* where, after all the slave's untenable suppositions have collapsed, he is led out of his confusion to the right solution of the mathematical task he has been set, so also all dialectical negativity contains an adumbration of what is true" *TM*, 3.5.3.B.

emanated throughout the state. Plato's attempt to turn opinion into knowledge is thereby an extension of the civic re-education we examined earlier when discussing Gadamer's use of common sense, in terms, there, of the methodological procedures inherent in the human sciences. Of course, the way Plato attempts this inversion is by no means the same as Gadamer's. Plato had what he considered a definite scale of truth and of truth values which culminated in the Forms. This transformation of opinion to knowledge must, then, have clear ideas on what this knowledge constitutes. Gadamer, however, does not claim such a definite end for knowledge, a crucial difference. What they do share in common though, in Plato's desire to turn opinion to knowledge and Gadamer's use of common sense, is how they are both *processes* that are brought about ultimately by and through dialogue. Opinion will only be transformed through dialogue for Plato, and the common sense theory of the humanists helped highlight for Gadamer how truth is only transmitted through a communal, dialogical expression of understanding. We can also see in Plato's continued deprecation of 'δόξα' a somewhat subversive dig at the democratic process itself. This unspoken criticism of the Athenian political system has been a familiar thread in the way I have argued for a Platonic form of education, as seen most clearly in the treatment of the arts. The condemnation of δόξα as unfounded, and as actually being a damaging obstacle to understanding, shows most clearly the extent of this criticism, while at the same time showing the importance of dialogue as a counteractive measure. How the dialogues proceed to do this, however, how they are designed to counteract and admonish all users of δόξα is, to take a Gadamerian perspective, by using an operational methodology which is the very same as the work of art. For clearing away epistemological obstacles was also an essential feature of Gadamer's perspective. We noted this earlier in Section II when outlining the 'worldliness' of Gadamer's conception of art, where the clearing of obstacles was viewed as a clearing within us, a clearing which becomes clouded and difficult with the constantly changing flow of existence. However, once these obstacles to understanding have been sufficiently cleared what we then come to recognise was argued as being a truer mode of reality. The 'timelessness' of the world of the artwork stands in comparison, then, to the ever-flowing inconstancy of our phenomenological world. Recognition was how the artwork, 'elicits the permanent from the transient', where what truly is emerges in a more complete form. As Gadamer states, when I

recognise someone or something, "...what I see is freed from the contingency of this or that moment of time" ('Art and Imitation', *RB*, p. 99).¹⁴¹ So it is not a simple feature of memory but is, rather, a definite way to knowledge. In Gadamerian terms, then, we found *anamnesis* to be the facilitating element of the potential understanding found in and through the artwork. Just as we saw with *mimesis*, this very same method of recognition was the defining cognitive feature of the dialogue in Plato, used in an identical way to Gadamer's examination of art. For it was not only in the example of the slave boy in the *Meno* that recognition was used.

Given how necessary it is in the process of *anamnesis* itself, the rejection of opinion is a central aspect of how Socrates approaches all of his interlocutors. Perhaps this is seen most clearly in the earlier dialogues and the method of 'elenchus'. For example, on discussing justice in Book I of the *Republic* it is only once the other, more commonly held beliefs on the nature of this virtue have been discussed and ultimately rejected that Plato attempts to outline his own position on the matter. In fact, the 'elenchus' of the earlier dialogues is a perfect example of *anamnesis* at work as an implicit part of Plato's methodology. Yet in these earlier works it is more a recognition of reason and what is a reasonable way to discuss that is elicited. For these earlier dialogues are more centred on proper dialogue than anything else, given how important Socratic refutation is.¹⁴² It is as if Plato is trying to outline what form a proper discussion must take, before actually treating subject matter in a more affirmative way in the middle and later works. What we see in all of these works, however, is how the interlocutors all recognise the dialogical method without Socrates needing to explain how it operates. Whether they like to admit it or not, they all know when they have strayed outside the bounds of what is a reasonable assertion, recognising its illegitimacy. Although the main point of *anamnesis* for Plato is undoubtedly in expressing the recollection of the ideal objects which underlie appearance, there is no reason to suggest it cannot be transferred to the dialogical method itself. For when we listen to or read Plato's arguments, it can be said that we either agree with them (wholly or in part), disagree with them (wholly or in part), or do not understand them (wholly or in part). Yet what frames and informs these

¹⁴¹ And again: "It is part of the process of recognition that we see things in terms of what is permanent and essential in them, unencumbered by the contingent circumstances in which they were seen before and are seen again." 'Art and Imitation', *RB*, p. 99.

¹⁴² Showing that dialectic remained a central part of the 'middle' and 'later' Plato as well, was a significant part of Gadamer's agenda in *PDE*.

judgements is our reason, which of course accompanies the process of *anamnesis*, i.e. one can only come closer to recollecting by heightening one's reason. Whatever the degree of reasonableness recollected by us through the dialogue and its arguments, is therefore what constitutes our judgements as to the argument and dialogue itself. In this way I believe *anamnesis* can be said to be part of Socratic 'elenchus'. In addition we see that at no stage does Socrates introduce a turn in the discussion that isn't explained on request, and it is only on agreement that the dialogue progresses. Now whether or not the turns introduced in certain dialogues are wholly legitimate is not the point. The point I am focussing on here is the general composition of the progression and how even the most belligerent interlocutor recognises the reasonableness of the proper discussion without it ever being explained. Just as the work of art was argued by Gadamer as exciting in us recognition of what is true, so too does Plato present such recognition in his dialogues. This recognition can also be seen in our use of language, a point we examined earlier with regard to its mimetic features. For in dialogues such as the *Hippias Major*, the term under discussion is used by Socrates and the interlocutors both before the definition is attempted and after the definition has failed.

¹⁴³ Plato's point is that we use words every day, recognising when and where the word is relevant, even though we cannot always give a rational account of what the word actually means. Even when we fail in offering a satisfactory definition we do not stop using the term. All that we recognise is simply our inability to define the term. So what *anamnesis* reveals to us, then, is the necessity of dialogue in the search for truth and understanding, and the recognition of what naturally limits this search, namely the promulgation of opinion and illegitimate prejudice.¹⁴⁴ In these terms, *anamnesis* is no longer seen as a feature of a select number of Plato's works, traditionally regarded as being the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Theaetetus*, and *Phaedrus*, but rather, is seen to work through every single one of his works. And given how important the very concept of reason is to Plato, its recognition through dialectic will not only help form a truly successful dialogue, but will show the interlocutors and the audience following the discussion the nature of reason itself. This is not done explicitly but is simply

¹⁴³ This particular aspect of the *Hippias Major* is an important part of a later argument of mine on the comedic features of Plato.

¹⁴⁴ Gadamer was well aware of the importance of negating opinion in Plato, and how central this was to the process of dialogue. "Here (in Plato's dialogues) dialectic is nothing but the art of conducting a conversation and especially of revealing the mistakes in one's opinions through the process of questioning and yet further questioning." *TM*, 3.5.3.B.

recognised without comment. Once more we can see how my conception of a Platonic pedagogy works through the fabric of the works. In fact, Gadamer will once more use the example of Platonic dialectic to show the importance of recognising an illegitimate turn in one's dialogue and in one's experience of an artwork. These degenerate forms of approach, outlined in *PDE*, include those who try throughout their exchange to simply keep from being contradicted,¹⁴⁵ those who make long speeches,¹⁴⁶ and those who argue for the sake of arguing.¹⁴⁷ All these degenerate forms are more concerned with the ascendancy of their own opinions and arguments, than with engaging themselves in a legitimate way and allowing the thing to present itself. In other words they are sophistic. As Gadamer shows in the *Philebus*, the first thing Socrates has Protarchus do is to agree that he is willing to find the truth of the matter by any means necessary that is legitimate to the dialogical method, essentially, even if it leads to a position he did not originally hold. It is this openness that is fundamental to recognising the potential possible in the artistic experience. For in terms of art it is how one engages with the work that can be seen here with regard to proper dialogue. When experiencing the work one must be just as open to what it has to say as one would with a fellow discussant. All of the illegitimate ways one can engage another person in dialogue are just as serious to have in an artistic experience. Yet the artwork is not simply a fellow discussant but is rather a wholly legitimate other, a thing with which we can engage. Unlike a discussant, then, if this thing happens to contradict one, then whatever point it contradicts must be dropped.

"It is not a contradiction in the dialectical sense when another person speaks against something, but only when a thing speaks against it, whether it is another person or I myself who has stated this." *PDE*, p. 44.

Even dialogue that appears to be simply about a work of art is always a dialogue with the work of art. For it is the work itself, along with that which the work brings to being through its mimetic feature, that attempts to bring us to the understanding it has

¹⁴⁵ With regard to this type of participant Gadamer argues that "[t]he claim that his talk makes to knowledge always presents itself as *already having been satisfied...*" (*PDE*, p. 47). The italics are my own.

¹⁴⁶ "In making speeches, one addresses oneself from the beginning, not to an individual with whom one might seek to arrive at a substantive shared understanding, but to a crowd, with which a substantive shared understanding is impossible, if for no other reason than because the crowd cannot answer" (*PDE*, p. 48). So when I say that Plato is addressing a crowd I do not mean that he is doing so directly. Rather he is addressing the crowd through his addressing of the individual.

¹⁴⁷ One's purpose here is to simply silence the other which is highly degenerate. This conceals the matter at hand while attempting to present oneself as knowledgeable.

to offer. We already saw how this can be neglected, in how the Athenians misrepresented the works of the epic poets in their unquestioned extraction and dissemination of virtue (pp. 39-40). It was this unquestioned and non-dialogical approach to art that we suggested was the root cause of Plato's attacks, whereby the sophistic approach to dialogue, and the Platonic opposition it incurred, was simply transferred to the approach to art. What we find, therefore, is another convergence between the dialogical method outlined and extolled by Plato, and an artistic approach celebrated by Gadamer, though underlying the Platonic method. In this instance we have seen Platonic *anamnesis* become a defining feature of the artwork's cognitive capability.

Yet the earlier elenchus of Plato has a further mode of influence for Gadamer in the way it uses the question in its mode of recognition. For the question was of imperative importance in the way dialogue brought about the matter at hand to those involved. As is seen throughout Plato's works, though exemplified in the earlier dialogues, the question has a primacy that guides the ensuing discussion. As Gadamer notes, it is harder to ask the questions than to answer them. If a person believes it is easier to answer than to question, then they betray something of a sophistic manner, whereby they are only concerned with proving themselves right and not with reaching any deeper insight. Of course, anybody can ask a question, but not anybody can ask the right sort of question. One could almost define philosophy as the art of asking the right questions. When Gadamer analyses the importance of the question it is crucial to bear in mind that the role of the questioner does not entail that they know something the others do not. Rather, "the question is posed for him (referring to the questioner) just as it is for the other person" (*IG*, p. 59). This is something Socrates' interlocutors realise to their detriment when they attempt to become questioner, such as when Protagoras is persuaded to become questioner from *Protagoras* 338e ff. The reason questioning is so important is because for one to question one must realise that one does not know, an undoubtedly 'Socratic' realisation. To ask, one must also *want* to know. Of course a question must not be slanted in any way by being designed for only one outcome. Rather, it should come from a genuine desire to know and a genuine desire to investigate. Given the role of the question in leading dialogue, it is perhaps unsurprising that Gadamer goes so far as to state that "...the path of all knowledge leads through the question" (*TM*, 2.4.3.C.i). Yet we also realise something else with the need for questioning. For it once more forces us to recognise how limited is our

own search for understanding. This is the very same recognition we saw with Gadamer's description of the anamnestic aspects of art in Section III, whereby the work showed us more than we could have ever known in our mere everyday experiences. For Gadamer, the work of hermeneutics involves engaging with texts. How we are to understand texts, according to Gadamer, is by asking ourselves what question the text is an answer to. So, "[j]ust as each interlocutor (in a discussion) is trying to reach agreement on some subject with his partner, so also the interpreter is trying to understand what the text is saying" (*TM*, 2.4.3.C.ii.). A connection is thereby made between hermeneutics, dialogue, and art, given how all artworks are described by Gadamer as being capable of being read like texts. The question, therefore, is what makes this connection and sustains the common goal of understanding. Most importantly, the primacy of the question is once more at odds with any type of 'scientific' methodology, where it is towards the answers that one finds oneself directed. How art captures us, then, is in the questions it asks. Just like in a dialogue we work through a process of question and answer with the artwork, a dialogue which is ultimately with ourselves. This is why artworks cannot be rushed but must be lingered on so that we can begin to approach whatever the work represents. In this way, the approach of Socrates is just as relevant a method of philosophical investigation as it is artistic investigation. In fact, these worlds are not even separate anymore but in fact coalesce into a singular mode of inquiry. Thus we begin to see distinctions between art, philosophy, and dialogue disappear in the Platonic dialogue.

In the middle and later dialogues, when the more questioning, refutative elenchus (where one finds discussion on what the theme in question, be it friendship, holiness, or temperance, is not) had been somewhat replaced with a more assertive procedure (where one finds a discussion on what the theme in question, be it justice or knowledge, is), a difference normally seen to come after Book I of the *Republic*, so then do we find a similarly more assertive recognition. Once more, though, what we come to recognise in these dialogues is the very same thing we were said by Gadamer to recognise in art, namely that of ourselves and our ultimate finitude. Even in dialogues dealing with metaphysical matters it is always on moral grounds, with how we are to live while on this earth, that Plato's works can be said to draw

conclusions.¹⁴⁸ As is clear, though, it is not with the particularity of the interlocutors that Plato is concerned, but rather with all those people in the audience who associate with the interlocutor's assertion. As we saw, it was in this way that the interlocutors were said to be representative, bringing that which they represented into being through their representation. When we identify with the opinion of an interlocutor, even if it is only with one of his stated opinions, we are immediately drawn into the dialogue. By recognising this or that particular opinion as our own, it is thereby we ourselves who are brought with Socrates to whatever ends the dialogue happens to take. This is what we thereby recognise. We may not agree with how the dialogue progresses but we are nevertheless forced to question within ourselves that which we may not have thought of previously to question. Confronting ourselves in this way is an ultimately enlightening experience which brings to light and shows us a part of ourselves usually taken for granted and hidden deep within the socio-historical self we have constructed for ourselves. If this reminds us of something it is because it is the very same realisation outlined by Gadamer as being part of the educative contribution of art, where it is we who are confronted by the work, taken into dialogue with the work, and ultimately shown ourselves through this dialogue. Plato is not trying to force philosophy on anyone, but is simply trying to show people the subject's unique identity, both what it is and, most importantly, what it is not. In the closing lines of the *Euthydemus*, a dialogue dedicated to showing the damage of sophism, we find Socrates and Crito weighing up the lessons the dialogue has taught them. Contrary to what one might expect, Socrates does not declare philosophy to be the compulsory subject for Crito to pursue, given the extremes of sophism previously discussed. Rather, Socrates urges Crito to explore philosophy himself. If he does not feel it is an appropriate form of education for either himself or his sons, then he should simply try to find something else more suited for *him*.

"Let those who practice philosophy rejoice in it, whether they be useful or grievous, but you must test well the matter itself. If it appears to you to be paltry then turn all men from it, not only your sons. But if it appears to you such as it seems to me, pursue it curiously with courage, both you and your children, as they say." *Euthydemus*, 307b-c.

¹⁴⁸ As the title of *Plato's Dialectical Ethics* would suggest, Gadamer held the ethical significance of Platonic dialectic in high regard.

Although I am sure Plato is confident in the abilities of his subject to convince people of its benefits, it is ultimately a pursuit which we must decide ourselves to embark on. This can be said as nobody can convince us of something we do not want to be convinced of. As Plato states in Book VI of the *Republic*, the true philosopher must *want* to learn.¹⁴⁹ They must not feel any type of discomfort in pursuing the goals of philosophy as this would undoubtedly lead to them dropping the subject or subject-matter later on. So while philosophy is by no means a 'solo pursuit', the drive towards it must be one which begins within the self. Although dialogue and a communally based expression of intellectual exploration are the necessary means towards recognition, the realisations we are brought towards are ultimately realisations we must make ourselves. Our recognition of self is, thereby, something we must accept on our own.

Just as we saw with *mimesis* in Section VI, then, the very way Gadamer attributed a cognitive potential and capability to art is seen as being a vital part of Plato's (dialectical) operational methodology. Yet again, though, Plato's dialogues did not simply include *anamnesis* as part of its educative thrust, but showed in detail the relationship between the dialogical method and this cognitive latency. In this way, the pedagogical capacity described by Gadamer as existing in art and the human sciences in general is actually exemplified in the Platonic dialogue.

¹⁴⁹ "You cannot expect anyone to have much love for anything which he does with pain and difficulty and little success." *Republic*, 486c.

Part II:
Play, the World of Art, and the Inspiration of Platonic Dialectic

1. Introduction

In my last section I outlined the role of *mimesis* and *anamnesis* in Gadamer's analysis of art, showing them to be pivotal features in his argument for identifying the unique ontological character, and ultimately cognitive capability, of art. Beginning with *mimesis* I examined how Gadamer's use of the concept in relation to the representational form of art could be seen as being similarly used by Plato in the structuring methodology of his dialogues, especially seen in Plato's use of Socrates (pp. 67-71). In order to show this I had to begin a somewhat implicit examination of the idea of a Platonic aesthetic, where the operational concepts at work were not just examined with regard to what was said about them in the dialogues, but more importantly, were seen in terms of how they worked *through* the dialogues. Guided by the philosophical potential given by Gadamer's treatment of art to *mimesis*, the Platonic dialogue was subsequently seen to both outline and embody an ideal approach to artistry. In a similar way, the knowledge we were said by Gadamer to receive through the experience of art was shown as being just as effective in Plato. For the anamnestic capacity of art brought us to a recollected reconnaissance of ourselves in a way unlike any other. What we recognised was our history, our tradition, but ultimately, our own finitude. Undoubtedly, the most important consequence of this last part was in showing how inherent these aesthetic qualities were to the Platonic method. I did not attempt to argue that Plato coveted these aesthetic elements himself, but that they are nevertheless there in a way that helps illuminate for us the essence of the aesthetic experience.

In this previous examination and use of Gadamer, frequent mention was made of the 'world' of art within which *mimesis* and *anamnesis* operated and were contained (especially pp. 13-16). In this next part of my work I will further analyse the concept of the 'world' of art, and how Gadamer used the analogy of 'play' to explain this world. As I did previously, I will combine the various instances in Gadamer's works that relate to the nature of play and the transcendent identity of the world of art, into a singular outline. This will cover the notion of the seriousness of play and art, as well as how the regulatory structure of their worlds draw us into them

and thereby governs our actions and contribution. For just as we adopt the rules of a game, so too must we adhere to the dialogical rules necessary for properly experiencing an artwork.

In my next section I extend Gadamer's use of play to outline what I argue as being the play of Platonic dialectic. Here I show how the essence of the world of art outlined by Gadamer is seen also in Plato's dialogues. This connection is even explicitly made by Plato himself whenever he is discussing the mechanics of dialogue. However, highlighting this dialectical world of Plato necessitates the inclusion of divine inspiration. For although we have seen Plato take serious issue with those art forms designed sensually to titillate its audience without any recourse to self-betterment, he still declares all such artists throughout his works to be divinely inspired.¹ How, then, can the world of Plato's works be as cognitively superior as Gadamer's world of art if Plato attributed divine origin to those traditional art forms he philosophically rejected? In order to tackle this issue I argue for a consistent and dialectical irony used by Plato in the two dialogues where inspiration gets its greatest expression; the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*. Examining these dialogues in a hermeneutical fashion, I demonstrate how it is the characters of Ion and Phaedrus, as well as the audience these characters represented, that drew upon the use of inspiration.

Yet my examination of this wholly ironic treatment of Plato's will lead to the final part of my argument which shows a *Platonic* conception of inspiration. Essentially, this Platonic mania will be revealed as again operating in the very same way as Gadamer argues for the world of art. Once more, explicit examples of this inspiration will be shown in Plato's works. For it is in both the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* that we are given an undoubted example of the compelling draw of this unique form of compulsion. The educative thrust of this inspiration is seen as becoming complete only in spoken discussion, an argument which leads to the importance of the audience and a bridge to the third and final part of my work.

2. Gadamer on the Play of Art

Undoubtedly, one of the most significant consequences of my examination of Gadamer's incorporation of *mimesis* in terms of art was the unique and wholly

¹ For example, *Ion* 534c, *Phaedrus* 245, *Apology* 22c and *Laws* 682a.

independent ontological identity attributed therein to the work. Once embodied as art we saw how not even authorial intention could limit or shackle the work's autonomy (p. 13), whereby its absolute 'otherness' governed its ultimately cognitive capabilities. Given this, and the distinctive atemporality of the work, I spoke of the 'world' of art in terms of an exclusive transcendentalism that nevertheless represented our world in the heightened sense of its being.² What I will investigate now, therefore, is the mechanics and operational methodology of this concept of the 'world' of art. This will help further to explain how it is that art affects us, as well as highlighting in greater detail the self-governed structure of each artwork. For in order better to explain the mechanics of this world, Gadamer compares it to the workings of play.³ Now the first thing Gadamer must do when approaching the notion of play is show how serious an element play is, asking us to abandon any preconceived notion of play as wholly recreational. For one, play is an undeniable part of human culture, so much so that Gadamer goes so far as to assert that the very idea of culture would in fact be unimaginable without our capacity to play.⁴ Obviously, as children we learn how to interact with the world through play. We learn what is and what is not acceptable, as well as cultural motifs and expectations through role-playing. There is a safety in play that allows the child to experiment with the world and their surroundings. Yet, essentially, we never abandon the conventions of play in our later lives. As Gadamer notes,

"We discover forms of play in the most serious kinds of human activity: In ritual, in the administration of justice, in social behaviour in general, where we even speak of role-playing and so forth." 'The Play of Art', *RB*, p. 124.

² "The world that appears in the play of presentation does not stand like a copy next to the real world, but is that world in the heightened truth of its being" *TM*, 1.2.2.A. My own emphasis.

³ Gadamer also uses the element of 'play' as the first of three concepts incorporated in order to help approach the basis of our experience of art. The other two concepts are that of the 'symbol', which I examined in my last section, and the 'festival', which will figure in the next part of my thesis. Lebech (2006) sees Gadamer's treatment of play as having consequences which extend beyond the question of art. "For it also provides a critique of the so-called 'subject-object' model of knowledge" (p. 223). Using play, Lebech shows how Gadamer attributes both active and passive aspects to the subject, thereby arguing against those critics of Gadamer who claim that he "reduces the subject to a mere instrument of history and tradition, the latter reproducing itself through the subject" (p. 222). The importance of not misunderstanding Gadamer's use of play is therefore of great importance. "Thus if one misunderstands the concept of play, one runs the risk of misunderstanding not only Gadamer's concept of historicity, but also his concept of the subject" (p. 227).

⁴ "The first thing we must make clear to ourselves is that play is so elementary a function of human life that culture is quite inconceivable without it" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 22). Gadamer drew influence on this aspect of play from Huizinga (1955).

Play can figure prominently in courts of law, where defence lawyers often stretch themselves to argumentative lengths and expressive acts kept exclusively for these situations. Outside of a defence trial these people do not act or argue in the same manner showing how their undeniably playful behaviour is kept only for particular times and events. As it is human lives that are in the balance during this type of play, a definite seriousness can and must be seen as being involved here. Similarly, almost all of our social interactions are ruled by play. We do not act the same or talk the same with everyone, so we can be said to play different people depending on who it is we are interacting with. I do not mean this in terms of a malicious sociopathy, but in a more general, subconscious way, whereby we do it for the other person's benefit as opposed to our own. Of course, this is not solely a human feature but is seen also in the animal world. Here, Gadamer characterises the 'as if' nature of play, where an action promises further action, but seeks to replace this action. For example, male gorillas may beat their chest at their rivals, an action which is 'as if' they were fighting. It is intended to replace the fight in a show of dominance. Again with regard to justice administration, a defence lawyer acts and argues as if he was the one on trial himself. This feature of play, then, has a clear connection to the symbol and the symbolic capabilities of art. Just like this 'as if' characteristic of play, art can embody something without needing expressly to outline it, a point we again find in Mitscherling (2002).⁵ In this regard it is once more akin to the pointing hand analogy, whereby one's actions while playing can point to meaning that is not explicitly part of the initial act. In fact, this very same feature of art was one of the most important differences between an imitative and representative approach. What is most imperative, then, is seeing the extent of this 'as if' characteristic, and how serious it is when considering play.⁶ As Gadamer asks us,

"...is it not an illusion to think that we can separate play from seriousness, and only admit it to segregated areas peripheral to real life, like our leisure time which comes to resemble a relic of lost freedom?" 'The Play of Art', *RB*, p. 130.

⁵ Mitscherling highlights the connection between the mimetic features of art and play. When referring to the artwork he argues that "[i]t demands that we properly regard it as more than merely a finished product; it is to be understood as imitative, and as thereby directing the viewer beyond what is immediately, literally given" (p. 154). That both play and art are more than what they appear to be, is a key element of Gadamer's aesthetic theory.

⁶ Also in *TM* 1.2.1.A we see: "...play itself contains its own, even sacred seriousness.", and "...seriousness in playing is necessary to make the play wholly play."

Yet perhaps the best example of how important the concept of play is to an understanding of our place in the world is Gadamer's use of play in terms of faith in an essay entitled, 'On the Problem of Self-Understanding' in *PH*. In this work, Gadamer uses the very same conception of play as I describe here in terms of art, to portray the way faith asks us to belong to and participate in something that exists above us, though at the same time moves through us. Although the details of his argument are not entirely relevant here, nevertheless, the weight and significance of play is fully realised.

Of course, part of the seriousness of play lies in the fact that the ends attainable through the various types of playing are only available through play, so are intrinsic to its mechanics. Specifically, each game of play has its own unique rules and goals, meaning the behaviour of the players must be catered to suit. If we wish to attain these goals we must, therefore, take the game seriously, as we *need* the game to do so.⁷ Now the actual task of the game is not always what matters, but what this task represents. For example, the act of putting a ball in a net, in whatever manifestation this takes, is not the important thing in this type of play. Rather, it is what surrounds this act, in what this means for the player that is the purpose of the play. So although our initial thoughts towards the game may be those of recreation, for the player knows that the game is 'just a game', the act of playing transforms these motivations into the self-presentation of the game itself.⁸ We play to win and anyone who does not play to win we do not want on our team. Even when certain players' abilities are somewhat lacking in the necessary skill they attain our admiration so long as they are seen to take the game seriously. Especially in professional game-playing we will often detest players who are seen as interested solely in ends outside of the internal mechanics of the game, such as in either the financial rewards or in the media exposure which such games will often provide. In being so preoccupied we hold such players as not taking the game *seriously*, a most severe claim which warrants our wrath.⁹ So in every instance of game-playing, whether professional or amateur, Gadamer believed a wholly serious element to lie that requires our full concentration, making it a unique

⁷ The slight difference in English between 'play' and 'game' does not exist in the German *spiel*, a point recognised by Mitscherling (2002).

⁸ Ibid. "He (the player) cannot enjoy the freedom of playing himself out without transforming the aims of his purposive behaviour into mere tasks of the game."

⁹ As one such professional participant is said to have stated, "Football is not a matter of life and death. It is far more important than that." Quote attributed to Bill Shankly, manager of Liverpool F.C. from 1959 – 1974.

area in its totally contained and wholly serious structure. Only by focussing completely on the tasks of the game, becoming lost in its world, can the participant be said to be taking the game fully seriously. As we will see later, this feature figures just as prominently for Gadamer in how we are to approach the world of the artwork. A total, though momentary, distance from our everyday lives is, therefore, a must.

“For games, it is essential that the players be ‘involved’ – that is, that they allow themselves to be carried along by the tasks of the game, without keeping in mind that it is not in earnest.” *PDE*, p. 32.

Just as serious, then, must be our consideration of art. Possibly one of the biggest problems facing Gadamer’s treatment of art is how modern society has placed art and its appreciation on the periphery of what is acceptable as knowledge and, therefore, on the periphery of what is relevant understanding. As Gadamer himself notes it is quite telling how, in English, one of the classifications for works of literature and poetry is ‘fiction’. Professional artists are often perceived as operating outside of the boundaries of society and as almost subversive because of this.¹⁰ Part of Gadamer’s agenda, then, in using art in *Truth and Method* as a starting point in his analysis of the educative place and potential of the human sciences, is to show how far the methodologies and ideologies of the natural sciences have pushed their humanistic counterparts away from what people have now come to perceive as knowledge. For just as in play, the goals attainable through art are only available through art. As opposed to Hegel, let’s say, Gadamer does not laud art only to relegate it to philosophy. Rather, Gadamer seeks to subsume aesthetics into hermeneutics, creating a unified approach to understanding. I have begun to show how relevant this is with regard to Plato throughout my last part, where the artistic elements of his works were argued as structuring, supporting, and expounding his dialectical philosophy, as opposed to simply being one or other part of it. The seriousness of art, then, must be seen here in its ability to create and embody intellectual expression like no other discipline or pursuer of knowledge. In terms of cognition, our recognition of self, of our historicity and tradition, that which we elicit from an exposure and

¹⁰ In our modern age the artist has found himself distanced from his society. Gadamer attributes this to our ever increasing reliance on the manufactured stimuli of industries. According to Gadamer, in both this and even the last century, “...great artists were beginning to find themselves to a greater or lesser degree displaced in an increasingly industrialized and commercialized society, so that the modern artist found the old reputation of the itinerant artist of former days confirmed by his own bohemian fate.” ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 6-7.

experience of art is utterly unique. Essentially, for Gadamer, what the work has to say, "...can only be found within itself" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 38). Given the importance of such recognition for Gadamer, there is no question as to how seriously art must therefore be taken.

Yet not all art is automatically of this kind. Should the artist slant his work towards a definite meaning, towards his own preconceived argument and point of view, then he is not creating a work of art but another form of motivated speech. Examples of such works would be those which are politically based, where the artist is convinced of what he thinks he understands before he has even begun the work. There is an undoubted connection here between this type of propagandist artist and the sophist, given how they both think they know that which they do not in fact know. They also both try to convince others of this unfounded knowledge by any means necessary. As we have previously seen, the artist should somewhat disappear into the audience once the work is completed, and not be propelled because of the work into a state that overshadows the work itself. Gadamer was well aware of these misuses of art, especially where it is treated like any other business, "...but this is not the proper function of art and never has been" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 50). If artists do fall for the commercial aspects of art, or the exposure connected with espousing a political message, then they can be said to be just like players who are more concerned with media coverage than with playing. In other words, they too are neglecting to take their subject seriously. Rather than allowing the work to achieve a unique identity of its own they are stamping their own identity onto it. When we decide to engage with a work we are not attempting to enter a discussion with the author, but are instead attempting to connect with the work itself. Should the author project himself above the work, then he is simply getting in the way of the work's potential and limiting what it has to say. Especially in today's climate of celebrity-worship we are often made aware of 'artists', without knowing any of their works. The opposite should, in fact, be true. However, taking art seriously can also be problematic if it is not done in an open way that takes into account our cognitive limitations. We saw this with Plato's criticisms of the Athenian educational system, where a misunderstood appropriation of the arts was treated by them as the highest reaches of moral education (pp. 37-43). In this case, an incorrect and unknowing moral conditioning had surrounded all ways towards approaching the works. The arts thereby became highly politicised, in the sense that they were being taught with

regard to a very specific moral requirement. As works of art, therefore, they were not treated in an open manner, but were instead used for a specifically catered (moral) outcome. In other words, the Athenians too had become convinced of the understanding they wanted to reach, before they or their student youth had even approached the works. The artworks were treated as a means to a carefully conditioned end. As I proposed in Section V of my previous part, it was this conditioning and approach that Plato sought to counter, as opposed to an overall banishment of the arts. Once more, then, opposing a sophistic approach to knowledge is seen as the root of Plato's treatment. Yet could we accuse Plato of a similarly pre-conditioned use of the arts, in which they are used, in accordance with my argument, ideologically within his philosophical vision? I would refute this, given the central role of dialogue within this Platonic usage of the arts. For as long as a dialogical methodology is employed in this Platonic appropriation, the arts will be allowed to speak for themselves more fully than they could possibly do otherwise. We could justifiably say, therefore, that treating the arts seriously, whereby nothing outside of the works themselves is branded on them, was a central requirement for both Plato and Gadamer, so long, also, as the works are allowed to speak for themselves.

Another important feature of play is our relationship to it, how it is we must treat it. For when immersed in play we adopt its rules and requirements as being a purposive shaper of our behaviour. We get taken in by the game, becoming a part of its world. For Gadamer, the structure of play "...absorbs the player into itself" (*TM*, 1.2.1.A.). Yet this is a world we can only attempt to belong to, meaning it is not a world we can own or govern. For Gadamer, truly to participate in the game one must belong to it. The player, "conforms to the game or subjects himself to it, that is, he relinquishes the autonomy of his own will" ('On the Problem of Self-Understanding', *PH*, p. 53). Of course, as noted by Lebech (2006), this requirement of belonging to the world of the work is not a wholly one-sided relationship which robs from the players any contributive involvement. Rather the relationship must be seen dialectically.¹¹ The very same is true of the artwork. For here too we become involved, not in an authoritative sense but in a participatory sense in which we relate to the work dialectically. Understanding, then, is not something we stamp on art from outside its boundaries, but is rather something we simply "admit" from inside the work. Given

¹¹ "The primacy of play over the players is therefore relative. Rather, that which is truly primary is the dialectical relation between, and mutual conditioning of, play and the players themselves" pp. 225-226.

how the players move and act with strict adherence to the rules of the game, we would never think of exploring the nature of this world from the perspective of the players' consciousness. For, it is the game that continues unalterably to exist throughout its varied playing, not the players, given how, with each successive playing the players grow in knowledge and thereby change. They become educated about human design and behaviour, using their knowledge when they return to their everyday existence. Much like the nature of the experience (*Erlebnis*), play separates itself from our habitual routines and stands out because of this separation. Not only this, but when we are playing we forget our social norms and adopt a self that is catered to the goals and rules of the game. So total is the attention and concentration needed when playing that we often see people act unlike their 'normal' selves. Of course, one of the motivating factors behind choosing to belong to a game is that one has this licence to act differently, where one can temporarily forget one's problems. As one might expect, this sense of belonging is also seen in the world of the artwork, where our everyday lives and worries are once more jettisoned in favour of that which is offered by the work. When one usually chooses to experience a work of art, one does so in order to escape. In this way one gladly becomes involved.

So, given how the players are undoubtedly changed by the game, we must examine all further features of play in terms of its enduring structure. In this regard it is not a world we control but is a world which controls us. The game is something one joins, not something one effectively creates in oneself. This can be shown by the fact that within a game one cannot do what one wants. The rules and regulations of the game belong to it essentially and structure its apparent freedom. Yet this limitation is not something we want to discard for it is a crucial feature of what constitutes the game. In fact, it is this subservience that is a motivational factor in the players wanting to play. By bearing witness to a world that supersedes them, the players can lose themselves to the operational mechanics that constitutes the game, a point we find asserted by Gadamer.

"The attraction of a game, the fascination it exerts, consists precisely in the fact that the game masters the players." *TM*, 1.2.1.A.

Opposition, whether in the form of other players or in a set of strict rules, is what makes the play a game in the first place. A game of football without any opposition is not a game of football. Even when one is tackling the Sunday paper's crossword on

one's own, the opposition is in the form of the accepted rules of the game, i.e. that one suppresses the desire to cheat. Without them the game perishes.¹² So what persists, then, throughout the eternal changes and permutations of playing the game, is the game itself. Yet this is not a particular persistence since, as is obvious, no two playings of the game are ever identically alike, but is instead an overall, more absolute persistence. The game itself remains utterly while its various playings, or, its instantiations, change from playing to playing. However, in no single, particular playing of the game is the game itself to be found. We cannot isolate a particular playing of the game and declare it the fundamental embodiment of everything which the game is. Yet just as the game is not to be found in any subject (the players), so too it is not to be found in any object. A game cannot exist in a book of rules. For what the rule books can never create is the event or experience of the game, events and experiences which need understanding subjects to provide them with being, making rule books unable to determine how exactly the game will be played. The only way a game can come into being, therefore, is in the interaction of all these elements. Just as the players need these rules and oppositions to play the game, so too do these rules find their expression through the playing of the players. Yet who is this person we become during play? We have already seen with the use of both *mimesis* and *anamnesis* how unrewarding, epistemologically speaking, both Plato (pp. 76-80) and Gadamer (pp. 12-16) viewed our phenomenological exposure. The player, then, just like the person we encounter in the artistic experience, by being taken from our fleeting world and partaking in a more absolute structure, could be said to be a truer self than he who lives outside this structure. Of course, it is the return to our everyday lives, and the recollected knowledge we bring with it, that is the culmination of the experience. When we do come back to ourselves, then, we feel enriched and most often enlightened by the experience.¹³ There is both the excursion from and return to self here that characterises what Gadamer calls 'hermeneutic circularity'. We become more aware of ourselves through being otherwise. What this leads us to is the recognition of a somewhat transcendent conception of play, a realisation with patent consequences for art.

¹² "In order for there to be a game, there always has to be, not necessarily literally another player, but something else with which the player plays and which automatically responds to his move with a countermove." *TM*, 1.2.1.A.

¹³ "If we really have had a genuine experience of art, then the world has become both brighter and less burdensome." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 26.

We are drawn into the artwork's world, an experience which, by its very essence, is distanced from our everyday world. Yet critically, and just as in play, this world is not one we can hope to control and classify, methodologically speaking, but just like play, is one that we can only belong to. Unlike the formulaic absolutes of the exact sciences, with regard to how they define and classify the natural world, the world of art (as well as the human sciences in general) cannot be reducible to such an inflexible structure. Basically, we do not bring our own rules to play, nor form different rules to suit ourselves, and in the very same way should not do so in art. Rather we should simply accept this world and be open to the knowledge it can help show us. So if we, as observing, appreciative subjects, are not the controlling elements of this relationship with art, in accordance with our inability to reduce the relationship to a set of laws, meaning, then, cannot rest in our consciousness alone. In this respect Gadamer rejects the claim that he is a relativist, made against him by Habermas.¹⁴ Yet, because of these rules there are as many obstacles in artworks as there are in play. These obstacles may be an initial feeling of confusion when presented with a work, if figures and themes contained in it are not immediately observable or recognisable outside of the work. However, just like in play these obstacles are somewhat necessary for the work to be significant. If the work was easily accessible then it would be no different than our own given world. Because the work is showing us something more than a simple picture, and is solidifying a meaning that is hidden in our everyday world, an opening sense of uncertainty is to be expected. Yet we could also be said to long for these obstacles in art, as much as we do in play. For, there is a self-discipline involved in an artistic experience. We do not want to know the ending of the book or film, and want to read the poem or look at the picture before we allow someone to engage us in dialogue. We do so because we want to make up our own minds first. Of course we may be defeated by the work, by not being able to glean from it any meaning whatsoever. Looking for the 'meaning' of the work from a book or 'expert', however, is like cheating in a game, whereby one is no longer interested in playing but only in 'winning'. Of course, thinking in such a way is not the proper means of either type of experience. The fact that these obstacles exist mean these works cannot be rushed through but must instead be lingered over. A worry I remember having when I first visited the Louvre was how one is forced

¹⁴ Habermas' initial critique of Gadamer, especially his concept of prejudice, first appeared in Habermas (1970).

almost to run through the halls in order to see everything one wants. Works that should really be dwelt on are merely gaped at while passing, because of their sheer volume. For Gadamer, this is simply not giving the works enough time, for the longer we submit ourselves to the work, the deeper we involve ourselves, the more receptive we will then be to the truth potential of the work.

“When we dwell upon the work there is no tedium involved, for the longer we allow ourselves, the more it displays its manifold riches to us” ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 45.

The artistic experience, therefore, is not a fleeting one that only stays with us for a brief amount of time. Rather, a true experience will stay with us for life. With regard to the obstacles of art, then, it is only through a dialogical perspective that one must approach the work, an idea I have argued for in my last part and will develop further a little later on.

Yet, as with play, the meaning of the artwork cannot be found in any object either, such as in a rulebook on how to ‘appreciate’ the piece. For Gadamer, art had just as ‘live’ an aspect as play. Just as the game itself remains absolutely while its different playings alter and change with each successive playing, so too does the artwork exist above and beyond each of its performances and interpretations. As in play it is not important, and not even possible really, for every interpretation or performance of the work to be the same, as meaning is created anew with every successive experience. As Gadamer himself asserts, “[n]o work of art addresses us always in the same way. The result is that we must answer differently each time we encounter it” (*LLP*, p. 44). As each person’s historical tradition is unique, so too is what they bring to the work and subsequently take from it. This means that no particular interpretation will completely embody the work’s full meaning, so no single interpretation, even if it is by the artist himself, is better or truer than any other. As artworks have no fixed, physical purpose they are, therefore, inexhaustibly interpretable.¹⁵ Yet, this does not mean that any experience of the work will guarantee a legitimate understanding. There is a definite danger in reading Gadamer this way, which again undoubtedly helped form Habermas’ critique of what he deemed the ‘relativism’ of Gadamer’s hermeneutics. Regardless of how open the work is to all

¹⁵ “...the work of art distinguishes itself in that one never completely understands it” (*LLP*, p. 43). Similarly we find that, “[a]n artwork is never exhausted. It never becomes empty” *LLP*, p. 44.

people and ages, there is still what Gadamer calls a “standard of appropriateness” (‘Aesthetics and Hermeneutics’, *PH*, p. 96) required by the work. Although this is, admittedly, a part of Gadamer’s treatment that should figure in a far more explicit way than it currently does, its message is, I believe, quite clear. In essence, the ‘standard of appropriateness’ required by the work is the same standard that is required in a proper dialogical exchange. What constitutes this ‘proper’ dialogical exchange is described throughout my presentation of Gadamer, but is important to keep in mind at this stage when considering the claim of relativism. So the idea that one could embody a work’s entire meaning in a ‘rulebook’ that provides a general and purportedly absolute meaning that everyone will agree to, is utterly ludicrous for Gadamer. In fact it would go a good way to showing how one could take the human sciences as a whole down the wrong path, as well as exemplifying what Gadamer is trying to counter in *Truth and Method*. For the attempt to reduce art to a demonstrable method, to a universal mode of interpretation, is exactly the wrong way of approaching both the subject itself and the more general human sciences it belongs to.

So what this section has shown is the role of play in Gadamer’s treatment of art and the significance this comparative approach has for examining the ‘world’ of art. Yet what use is this to a Platonic interpretation? What I will now outline is how Gadamer’s use of play is, in fact, reciprocated in Plato, complete with an explicit *dialogical* connection. What I mean by this is that the world of art I just examined, which Gadamer postulated by using the play analogy, will consequently be shown to be the very same ‘world’ as Plato’s dialogues. How I argue for this is by showing how a Platonic form of inspiration governs the ideological world of each of his works, a form of inspiration which can be seen to operate in the very same way as Gadamer’s world of the artwork. Of course, showing the relevance of a Platonic form of inspiration to the dialogical world of these works will necessarily include an examination of the apparently positive account given by Plato to traditional inspiration. Arguing for a consistent Platonic irony throughout these accounts will therefore structure the main section of this part of my work.

3. The Play of Platonic Dialectic

So perhaps the most pressing question to address is that of the subjective spin given by Gadamer to the interpretation and presentation of art, whereby no interpretation (in particular that of the author) was seen as necessarily better or worse than any other. As the main argument of my thesis involves highlighting the aesthetic aspects of Plato, using terms expressly incorporated by Gadamer in his handling of art, does this then mean that Plato's dialogues can be interpreted in an indeterminate amount of ways, like artworks can in Gadamer? In order to explain this one must remember how central the unique and unrepeatable nature of dialogue is to my analysis of Plato. So although one could say that the Forms most certainly structure the goal of the majority of the dialogues, and they are of course utterly singular and determined, their undoubtedly unassailable nature leaves them approachable only through our naturally flawed method of investigation. So although Plato's works all have the absolute Forms as their guide, the way towards approaching this absolutism is itself indeterminate, rooted, as it is, in our world of change. Love, for example, while being itself unchanging, is investigated in separate dialogues, namely the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. Each dialogue approaches the absolute *differently*, showing how diverse the dialogical methodology necessarily is. What unites these approaches, however, is of course the principal tactic employed by the dialogue's protagonist. Even Plato himself, then, cannot solidify a singular path to these Forms, showing the fallibility of any such singular Platonic interpretation. As we saw in my last part, dialogue was not just used by Plato as one method of many, but was celebrated as the most reliable way towards attaining truth. One cannot accept the dialogical aspect of the works without also accepting how ultimately dialogical our own approach to Plato himself must thereby be. So long as one's approach is dialogically open in nature, *an approach shown to us within Plato's works*, then one's interpretation of him will be legitimate. To believe that this is *not* the case, to believe that Plato shows us a uniform path, begs the question: why, then, did Plato choose not to simply tell us this directly? Yet a dialogically open approach to Plato is not as ambiguous or as variable as it sounds. As my examination of play hopes to show, there are definite rules that one must follow in order for one's approach to count as dialogical. Of course, this will mean that a crucial part of my argument will consist precisely in showing just what a dialogical approach entails.

In seeing the aesthetic interpretability of Plato's dialogues we notice how different our own confrontations with his works usually are. For example, our reading

of the *Republic*, what we experience and understand through it, changes with each successive reading, especially if one has been continuously involved in Platonic study. Of course, there is no doubt that one's reading and understanding of Plato will get *better* over time, but my main point is that it will never be complete.¹⁶ Because our approach to the work is embedded in our world it almost has to change, given how what we bring to the work will differ each time. Now one may very well say that this is true of any philosophical work, not just Plato. Where Plato differs is in the way his works show us the path towards understanding within their very mechanics. So fixed meaning, in terms of what we take and interpret from the work, can never occur in Plato and should never be sought. This is not such an extreme statement if we just think whether we would ever be satisfied if, one day, a senior Platonic scholar declared to the world that such a fixed meaning had been found. Although these statements are made all the time by scholars, they are never accepted as fixed but more as invitations to refine and refute. Given enough time, all interpretations of Plato, even those which may have been seen as beyond dispute, are disputed. Now this situation is somewhat unique to Plato, given his pro-paedeutic use and celebration of dialogue. In other philosophical works one can identify a more explicit statement of intent where, over time, one can find the same meaning over and over. For, after Plato the treatise became the favoured method of embodying one's philosophy in word, save, of course, for Berkeley.¹⁷

Of course, this is not the only way I am attempting to show how Gadamer's use of play to describe the functions and capabilities of the world of art can similarly be used to show the inherently aesthetic aspects of Plato's works. For, the very features of play that I outlined at the beginning of this part of my work will now be seen in Platonic terms, a comparison I hinted at earlier when seeing how dialogical Gadamer's handling of the world of art was. The first element to examine is how the dialogues draw us into them. Just as we choose one game over another, so too do we seek out a particular dialogue to be part of, depending on whatever it is that is motivating us (of course, if we are forced, or feel forced, into reading the dialogue, we will not undergo a proper experience. As I have mentioned previously in terms of art,

¹⁶ In getting 'better' I mean that our understanding will become more and more dialogical. So the standard of Platonic interpretations will consist entirely in how dialogical one's interpretation is.

¹⁷ However, Berkeley's dialogues have the design to in some ways back-up the claims he makes in his treatise *The Principles of Human Knowledge*. In this way they are not truly dialogical as they are intended to have a fixed purpose.

only a genuinely interested, open frame of mind will allow one to truly participate in the work). Once in, however, these motivational factors become subsumed into the presentation of both the dialogue itself (that is the operational mode of the dialogical form and its importance in approaching the subject matter), and that which the work hopes to understand (that is its subject matter). These motivations, and the opinions that underlie them, are then challenged by the other interlocutors and the play of dialogue in general. As in play this opposition is welcomed, given how we often detest it when someone agrees with everything we say without asking questions. When this happens we feel that they are merely trying to shut us up so that they can have their own turn to speak. This opposition, then, is truly testing for us as it is what makes the dialogue truly dialogical. Within this challenge it is the rules of a proper dialogue that is most testing. As in play, we cannot simply do or assert anything we want in a dialogue, but must rather be limited by the rules. These rules may include us refraining from sophistic uses of rhetoric and, perhaps most importantly, not blindly refusing to accept any position other than our own. Although we can and sometimes do use these tactics, they usually result in a premature end to the discussion (for example in one of the discussants refusing to continue, walking away, or simply agreeing in order for the ordeal to end). In this way we must then learn to submit ourselves to these rules in order for the discussion to progress. Of course, the biggest problem in Plato's dialogues is when interlocutors do not want to submit to the rules of dialogue, wanting instead to use degenerate forms of speech, such as long speech-making (for example in *Protagoras*, 334e – 335a especially). After having given his 'great speech', Protagoras somewhat unwittingly assents to Socrates' questions, a section that runs from 329d – 333e. However, as the discussion progresses we begin to note some slight moments of unease on Protagoras' side, (for example at 333b where Protagoras "ὡμολόγησεν καὶ μάλ' ἀκόντως") given how Socrates is leading him away from the argument of his speech. Socrates notices his unease so endeavours to proceed with the questioning at a gentler pace. It is no good, though, as Protagoras, rather than answer the question put to him at 334a, delivers another (much shorter) speech. Socrates, adopting his usual sarcastic tone, admits to Protagoras that he is rather forgetful so had forgotten during the speech what the subject matter was. The clear problem here is how the often-times multiple issues raised in a speech go unquestioned, especially if they are raised at the beginning of the speech. As Protagoras asserts that his reputation was built on giving speeches in this way (at

335a) he is somewhat unsurprisingly reticent about abandoning the method and submitting himself to Socrates.¹⁸ Yet we see here the problem. Protagoras is more worried about his reputation than the matters at hand, a perfect example of style over substance. When this style gets pushed to the fore, truth and knowledge get pushed to the background. This very same problem is seen in the sophist Thrasymachus in *Republic* Book I. For when Thrasymachus is not allowed to address Socrates in his usual manner (speech-making) from 350d-e, he sulkily asserts that he will no longer answer Socrates truthfully, but will agree without question to anything Socrates says. Again we note that Thrasymachus, as an invited guest in Polemarchus' home, had a reputation to uphold.¹⁹ As he did with Protagoras, Socrates again manages to convince Thrasymachus to continue answering his questions, though somewhat reluctantly.

Platonically speaking, the sophistic method is similarly degenerate in how polemical its protagonists are in discussion. As we have seen previously, they are neither interested in being open to the possibilities of the discussion nor in cooperating in bringing the matter under discussion into being, but are solely concerned with defeating the arguments of others. In a sense we could say that their protean arguments are a form of sophisticated cheating, given how they nullify the other discussants' attempts at playing. Perhaps the paradigmatic example of this method is seen in the *Euthydemus*, where Euthydemus and Dionysodorus display their 'craft' to Socrates and the unsuspecting Cleinias.²⁰ At the very beginning of the dialogue we are shown how Cleinias cannot win in such a discussion.

"In the meantime, Dionysodorus had leaned a little over to my ear, with a big grin on his face. 'In fact, Socrates,' he said, 'I can tell you now that whichever answer the lad (Cleinias) gives, he will be proved wrong.'" *Euthydemus*, 275e.

¹⁸ As noted by Rutherford (1995), Protagoras views his contribution in terms of competition. "Protagoras' references to competition and superiority betray his anxiety to come out on top, just as his preference for elaborate set-speeches belongs more to the combative sphere of oratory than to dialectic." p. 133.

¹⁹ In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Thrasymachus is referred to as being an expert in "rousing large groups to anger and then, with his charms, calming them again once they had become angry" (267c). This is the reputation Thrasymachus is undoubtedly trying to uphold here in the *Republic*, but is not allowed to by Socrates.

²⁰ Without a singular subject-matter (in the sense that one term is not discussed like the other earlier works), the *Euthydemus* can be seen as one of the most direct attacks on sophism. Plato shows sophism in one of its worst lights, as we see in Rutherford (1995). "The moral implications seem clear: the sophists' antics are a superficial pretence at philosophy, ingenious yet sterile, and all too easily picked up." p. 113.

This purely sophistic method of discussion acts like a 'fixed' or crooked game of play, whereby all the various machinations surrounding the event, as well as the action which occupies the event, is of no progressive consequence.²¹ Although it seems to the audience members and the unsuspecting members of the discussion that the exchange is free, this is not, in fact, the case. For, as we see with the case of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, the pre-rehearsed outcome of the discussion is of secondary importance when compared to the way in which they achieve their goal. Unlike the shadowy, concealed involvement of one who fixes games of play, these two celebrate their con, displaying pride at its effectiveness. Of course, Socrates is described by Plato as being more than capable of spotting these fixed games. Very simply, if a discussant wants to get involved with Socrates, he must submit himself to the dialogical method. For, nobody can fix a dialogical game when Socrates is involved. We have numerous examples of where interlocutors (who are mostly sophists) clash with Socrates on this very issue of methodology, a point we saw above with Thrasymachus and Protagoras. Yet it is not just the interlocutors who refuse to proceed, or get upset by proceeding in Socrates' dialogical manner. At *Protagoras* 335c we find Socrates himself making to leave because Protagoras would not submit himself to such a discussion.²² In fact, Protagoras is possibly the one interlocutor who gets away with speech-making more than any of the others. Yet it does come to a head, with Socrates simply refusing to proceed by exchanging speeches, only just being persuaded to stay by Callias. The reason Socrates makes to leave is not out of impetuosity or childishness. Simply put, Socrates does not feel speech making is his business ("ἐμὸν ἔργον", 335b). This shows how the play of dialectic is not just the most appropriate game in one's pursuit of knowledge, but from Plato's perspective (through Socrates), is the only game in which this goal can be achieved.²³ This is perhaps why we find Socrates being described in such a stubborn way, as he does not

²¹ Rutherford (1995) recognises the notion that this is all a game to the sophists. Yet it is a game without morals or thought as to its consequences, especially seen in their treatment of Cleinias in the quote above. "The sophists are showmen, playing to their admiring audience; we see their indifference to the young pupil's confidence and well-being from the start..." p. 114.

²² Socrates wants to leave because "...he (Protagoras) would not accept the role of answerer (ἀποκρινόμενος) in a debate (διαλέγεσθαι)" 335b.

²³ To show that Socrates does not simply want to embarrass Protagoras he agrees, at 338d, to be questioned by him, in order to show him how the question and answer format works. What is being highlighted, then, is the necessity of the dialogical methodology, not the egos of the discussants involved. Though he does not discuss this aspect of the dialogue at length, Vlastos (1956) disagrees, arguing that Plato designed the dialogue in this way to celebrate Socrates and, by proxy, denigrate Protagoras. As mentioned I believe it is only the method expounded by Socrates that is celebrated and exalted.

want to waste his time with exchanging speeches.²⁴ Of course, in the *Gorgias* too the dialogical method is purposefully distanced from rhetoric and its reliance on long speeches. In a similar way to what we see in the *Protagoras*, the opening exchanges between Socrates and the interlocutors in the *Gorgias* are dedicated to Socrates ensuring that it is through dialogue that the rest of the discussion will proceed, making it quite clear that he will not continue with a discussant who does not adhere to this method.²⁵ I must reiterate that Socrates does not insist on the dialogical method so that he can ‘win’ the argument but rather does not feel that any understanding can be reached without it. For, as we saw with Gadamer and the play of art (especially pp. 91-92), the ‘winning’ in the play of Platonic dialectic comes from taking part, from participating in the event itself.

Yet just as play needed players to achieve its ‘self-presentation’, its coming-to-being, so too do Plato’s dialogues. For, dialogue with no participants is not a dialogue but rather a treatise. So by participating in these dialogues ourselves we become a highly crucial part of the work’s ontological being. We become a part of the world created by the works, needing this to elicit any understanding from them. This is the key to dialogue for one would find it much harder to become part of the world of the treatise, if indeed any such world is created at all. Only as part of this world of Plato’s dialogues, by truly belonging to its mechanics, can we expect to truly understand the work. This is because of the unique relationship that exists between the method outlined in the works and the method needed to properly approach the works. For the same demand made by Socrates on his interlocutors is made on us. This demand, that dialogue be used to structure and inform one’s perspective, immediately connects us with the work. Were we to neglect this perspective and try to enforce a rigid outlook which extracts and isolates pieces of the work from its dialogical context, then we have failed to see the demand made on us from within the works themselves. Once more we see how there can be no truths ‘about’ the dialogues then, only truths *of* the dialogue. Our phenomenological world becomes forgotten as the

²⁴ Alcibiades’ remarks are similarly interesting. For he simply states that Socrates concedes to Protagoras in terms of long speech making. That, then, is not the issue. What is the issue is the matter of discourse, and how well Protagoras can stand up to Socrates. What is interesting is Alcibiades’ summary of speech making in which, he asserts, arguments are simply fired off without the speech maker wanting to give reasons for their assertions (“οὐκ ἐθέλων διδόναι λόγον”, 336c-d), where they go on for just long enough that all those listening have forgotten what has been said.

²⁵ “Then would you be ready, Gorgias, to continue our present method of dialogue, asking one question, answering another, and to put off to another time long speeches like the one Polus began?” *Gorgias*, 449b

world of the dialogues draws us in. One must not forget, though, that the specifically dominating element is not the participants but rather the over-riding and controlling art of dialogue itself. Again do we see this very thing in Plato, where it is the discussion that is given precedence over the discussants. *It is what must be catered for, not the egos and reputations of its participants. For in the *Gorgias*, even though Socrates believes he knows what rhetoric is and what it is persuasion of, he still wants Gorgias to answer him on this matter. The reason he does so is not for his own good but for the good of the discussion.*

“Now for what reason do I ask you this, when I have a suspicion of my own? Not for your sake but for the sake of the discussion, so that it will progress in the way that will make what is discussed clearest to us.” *Gorgias*, 453c.

There is yet again, then, the reciprocal reliability between the discussants and the world of the dialogue, as we saw with the players and the game. One could argue, however, that it is not the discussion that is of primary importance but the subject-matter. Although the subject-matter is undoubtedly the goal of the dialogue, it cannot be brought into being through language without the discussion of the discussants. In the above quote from the *Gorgias* we see this dialogical necessity. The definition of rhetoric, while being the subject-matter, is only available to Socrates and the others through its being discussed. I examined this idea earlier in Gadamer’s terms of play and how each game needs its players to play it in order for the game to be brought into being. Playing is primary in play as discussion is primary in dialogue. Without playing, the game fails to be brought into being. Without discussion the subject-matter fails in the very same ontological way. The ‘referee’ to guide the discussants is the dialogue’s main protagonist, which is in most cases Socrates, yet reason, the soul’s highest faculty, creates the rules of the game and is what must control all participants, including the referee. Although the referee cannot play the game perfectly himself, he is most capable of spotting infringements of the rules, given how he has made reason his life’s profession. These infringements are usually lapses in reasonable argument which result in the participant being refuted. This does not mean, however, that one can reduce the world of the works to these rules alone. We cannot reduce these worlds to rules as we are not the controlling elements. Rather we merely recognise in the discussion what is most reasonable and in a similar way can spot immediately when an unreasonable turn is introduced. So as none of the participants is regarded as being

cognitively superior, a significant element of being part of the world of play, and likewise being a part of Plato's dialogue, is not in achieving the goals of the game, e.g. scoring the point, or in reaching the 'truth' of the dialogue, but rather in the 'self-presentation' involved in doing so. It is within the 'to and fro' of the dialogue that the real goal lies. If we imagine dialogue to be like a journey, its goal is not in reaching the destination but in the movement and experiences that constituted the journey.²⁶ And just like the journey, it is an experience we seek to re-live with others. As we see in almost all Platonic works, a definitive conclusion is rarely reached and is just as rarely necessary. Rather, what constituted the 'point' of the piece was what came after the beginning and before the end. A most important consequence of the dialogues, then, is how the participants act and behave *after* the dialogue, what they take from it. This is what constitutes the morality of Platonic dialectic, an argument raised as central by Gadamer in his *Plato's Dialectical Ethics*.²⁷ However, the various points that are raised and discussed in the dialogues are almost secondary to the form taken by the discussions, for it is this form, as opposed to any conceptual ideology, that I believe Plato wanted to see developed in his society. Dialectic itself, therefore, is what constituted Platonic ethics. Although the actual arguments made in each work are, of course, a constitutive part of Platonic philosophy they can only ever be regarded within their own dialogical framework. It is like the old adage that says one should not buy an impoverished person a fish, but rather, teach him how to fish. In a similar way, to adopt the arguments made by Plato within the works as one's own without question would be the very opposite of what the works teach us. Rather, we should question the arguments as much as the interlocutors do. There are many instances in Plato's works where Socrates is only too happy to be refuted. He admits that being genuinely refuted is an educative process, where one's unfounded arguments and opinions are cleared out and replaced with what must be described as a better understanding of the matter, given the collaborative effort involved.

"And of what sort am I? One of those who would gladly be refuted if I say something untrue, and pleased to refute if someone were to say something untrue, yet not all less pleased to be refuted than to refute. For I think that being refuted is a greater good, in

²⁶ In fact this comparison of dialogue to a journey is one Gadamer himself makes in *LLP*, where he describes the movement of Platonic dialectic thus: "It is the art of thinking. But this means the art of seriously questioning what one really means when one thinks or says this or that. In doing so, one sets out on a journey, or better, is already on the journey" p. 33-34.

²⁷ As Gadamer notes in the preface to the first edition of *PDE* (1931), "I do not assert that Plato's 'ethics' is dialectical; rather I ask whether and in what way Plato's dialectic is 'ethics'".

so far as it is a greater good for a man to get rid of the greatest evil himself than to rid someone else of it." *Gorgias*, 458a.

For Socrates to try to avoid refutation at any cost would imply that he considered himself to be knowledgeable. If this was the case, however, there would be no need to enter the dialogue in the first place. It is because he does not know, that he needs his discussants.²⁸ What we learn here, then, what the dialogues do manage to convince us of, is the fundamentality of dialogue itself. Yet we often find a convergence between what the dialogue is discussing and the form taken by the discussion. For example, it is always a nurturing of soul and the culture of reason that surrounds each affirmative argument. In this way, our journey along with Socrates and the interlocutors into the heart of reason itself makes us, through our recognising it, more reasonable. In the same way, the celebration of dialogue within the works is shaped by the investigation of the work's subject-matter. What I mean is that every positive affirmation in Plato's dialogues that leads to moral conclusions, such as the structure of the soul for example, will ultimately help one become a better *discussant*, aiding one to form one's own arguments and spot the inadequacies of others more easily. So although a dialogical pedagogy is paramount, i.e. the teaching of dialogue as one's philosophical method, its practicality in discussion is witnessed within each of Plato's conceptual frameworks. A great deal of self-presentation is thereby seen in Plato's works. For, it is not only the dialogical form that is presented, as well as that of the discussants themselves, but that which is under discussion too is presented in the most reliable way available to it. Let me take Book I of the *Republic* as an example. As mentioned earlier we have here a combative Thrasymachus who is forced to submit to the dialogical method. Although he wants to make speeches, he is not permitted to do so by Socrates and those listening to the exchange. Dialogue is thereby shown in an explicit way, where it is directly presented to us. How it is presented though, is not in a theoretical way, but in a wholly practical way. It is presented in the only way we can present dialogue, by showing it in action. This mode of presentation similarly extends to the characters of the work, a feature I examined in my last part. Here, we saw how the representative features of the characters, their reasons for being in the dialogue in the first place, is presented through the characters themselves (pp. 64-67).

²⁸ Later in the *Gorgias* we find this confirmed by Socrates. "For remember I don't have knowledge any more than you have when I say what I say. I search in common with you; and so if my opponent is clearly saying something, I will be the first to concede it." *Gorgias*, 506a.

Thrasymachus' desire to make speeches, a desire which is representative of a particular methodology, is presented to us through his character. Finally, though, it is justice or right itself which is also presented to us. Through the dialogical exchange we are forced to question our own definitions of the term. Through this questioning I believe justice is helped to be brought forth into a mode of presentation which allows it to speak for itself. Justice speaks for itself in Book I of the *Republic*, not only by refuting all attempts at definition, but also by refuting Socrates' own, often-times frail, counterarguments. Of course, Socrates himself recognises these faults at the end of this Book, at 354b. He needs further to engage with justice or right, so that it will be presented in a more substantial way. This need of course constitutes the rest of the *Republic*. Of course, the presentation of each of these elements does not happen one at a time, but occurs by interacting with each other. We saw this exact feature in the interaction of the players in the play, as well as in the shaping of their motivations for playing in the first place, whereby none of these things could exist alone but needed, and relied upon, each other. The presentation of the players and the game through the playing of the game is thereby seen also in the players of the Platonic work, the dialogical game they are playing, and the goals that are brought to being in this most particular type of play.

There is a distinct bridge in Gadamer between the play aspect of art and dialogue. For, as we have seen, Gadamer's dynamic handling of art is ultimately dialogical in nature. Just as every person would enter a dialogue in an individual way, so too do they approach, present, and interpret a work of art in a similarly original fashion. Given the distinctly anamnestic draw of art, just as the work was interpreted so we were interpreted ourselves and are changed because of it. Each interpretation is unique because each interpreter is unique, each belonging to the world of the work in order to accept its truths.²⁹ Of course, some interpretations are better than others. The more one allows the subject matter under discussion to present itself, in other words, the more one allows the subject matter to speak for itself, one's interpretation will be better. As seems clear, this may involve either elucidating a Socratic argument further than is done within the work or by arguing against Socrates' positions if one feels it

²⁹ The idea that no one interpretation is necessarily better than another is seen in Sullivan's (1997) entry in *LLP*. When discussing Gadamer's argument for the dialogical interchange that is necessary for an artistic experience Sullivan concludes that "...there is no such thing as a 'correct' interpretation of the work of art, but neither is there a completely free subjectivity" (p. 236). What regulates the interchange, what ensures that there is some level of appropriateness in one's interpretations and artistic encounters is, I believe, how dialogically open one is. I examined this notion earlier in this part.

does not take an appropriate dialogical turn, or in any way represses the subject matter from presenting itself. One of the key features of play was how its 'to and fro' movement was an essential element in how the players engaged with the game. Yet, this too is how participants in a dialogue allow the thing under discussion to show itself.³⁰ It is not in one person forcing themselves on the other, but rather, in a cooperative and open act. They are not on opposing teams but are on the same team, working together for the better good. Similarly, just as we are subsumed into an artwork like players into the game, allowing it to structure our contribution to understanding, so too are participants in a dialogue utterly immersed in a world that they do not control, that overrides their individual input in an equally transcendental way. As long as one keeps within the dialogical rules, one finds oneself being guided by its method. The opposition involved is of course in keeping within these rules and in breaking down the 'hiddenness' of the thing under discussion. Of especial importance, then, is once more seeing how the participants are not the controlling elements, but are more facilitators in the coming-into-being of that which is under discussion.

"To conduct a conversation means to allow oneself to be conducted by the subject-matter to which the partners in the dialogue are oriented." *TM*, 2.4.3.C.i.

Again, it is the existence of something which exists above and beyond us, coupled with our limited capacity to understand it, that takes pedagogical precedence. But are players really 'controlled' by the rules of the game? Do they not have the control by deciding to play the game in the first place? In the same way the players could be said to have the control by having the ability to stop playing. The question, then, is whether Gadamer's theory of play lessens the worth of the contributions of the players. This objection, though, possibly stems from the misleading connotations of the words 'control' and 'conducted'. When we think of the meaning of these words, there is an element of force involved. A more fitting idea is of our participation in the game being mutually beneficial for those involved, whereby our involvement is not forced but guided by the rules. In terms of dialogue, then, we are not compelled in any

³⁰ Though fleetingly, Gadamer also connects the 'to-and-fro' of play with that of dialogue, supporting my claims in this section. "Now I contend that the basic constitution of the game, to be filled with its spirit – the spirit of buoyancy, freedom and the joy of success – and to fulfil him who is playing, is structurally related to the constitution of the dialogue in which language is a reality." 'Man and Language', *PH*, p. 66.

unnatural way to follow a dialogical approach but simply come to realise the necessity of dialogue from our deeper and deeper participation in its world. It is our own contributions, then, that can in some ways be seen to be the source of any compulsion. For the more we participate, the more we submit ourselves. The more we come to realise the extent to which dialogue is necessary the more we want to participate and the more we want to submit ourselves to it. We even see in players when the rules of the game stretch them to their limits, they do not see this as any oppressive compulsion, but rather try harder to satisfy these rules and achieve the goals of the game. They are the ones who push themselves and alter their contributions. The cooperative element which shapes this participation benefits all involved.

Yet perhaps the most apparent connection between play and dialogue is the communal involvement implied. What Gadamer shows as being a vital feature of play is the role played by the spectator.³¹ Now obviously the act of play cannot be aimed at the spectators, but they nevertheless play a significant part. Their presence bears witness to the play and can be an undeniable factor in how the game is played. Anyone who denies this should visit any large sports ground during a major event to see the most evident example of this phenomenon. It is no coincidence that the spectators are often called ‘the 12th man’ in football. The players are not playing up to the crowd, for this would make it a ‘show’, but are merely supported into playing better. In other words they help the game become fully realised. We have previously seen the importance of taking the game seriously (pp. 90-92), showing how a player who does not play for the good of the game, who shows *himself* off to the crowd, does not take the game seriously. So it is imperative to state that the role of the spectator is in spectating, and not in being the focus of the players. For Gadamer, “...contests are in danger of losing their real play character precisely by becoming shows.” (TM, 1.2.1.A) Of course, this communal aspect is wholly necessary for the dialogue too, given the necessity of the fellow participant. The only reason for entering into a legitimate dialogue is if one accepts that one does not know the matter under discussion. One therefore needs the other person in order to come to an understanding together.

³¹ “The spectator is manifestly more than just an observer who sees what is happening in front of him, but rather one who is a part of it insofar as he literally ‘takes part’”. ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, RB, p. 24.

“...the other person is needed solely for the sake of coming to an understanding about the facts of the matter – which is to say, he is needed insofar as he is able and willing to listen to reasons and to respond with reasons.” *PDE*, p. 40.

This realisation was certainly part of how Plato constructed Socrates’ motivations in the dialogues. Again in the *Gorgias*, for example, we find Socrates saying the following to Callicles: “I know well that if you agree with what my soul believes, these very beliefs are true ones” (*Gorgias*, 486e-487a). Of course part of the reason Socrates says this about Callicles is because of how reluctant Callicles is to agree with him on anything. Even though Callicles is often presented as an aggressive discussant, he is still submitting himself, admittedly with great reluctance, to the dialogical method. This is important because it shows that dialogue does not have to be a tame, self-congratulatory affair, but can have the same passion as between players. Plato makes sure to highlight this in Socrates’ praise of Callicles later in the dialogue.

“Not ignobly, Callicles, do you develop your argument. For now you speak clearly, saying that which the others think but do not wish to say.” *Gorgias*, 492d.

So it is because of Callicles’ reluctance to agree without question that Socrates knows that if agreement is reached it will be genuine. Socrates is not seeking agreement for the sake of agreement, for that would betray the importance of the matter under discussion.

Of course, spectators to a discussion are just as important and are just as involved as the participants themselves. For, they could either join in at a later stage, as we saw earlier with Philebus in the *Philebus* (p. 65), or take up the points under discussion with other people in a dialogue of their own. In both cases the communal elements of dialogue can be clearly seen. Spectators often become inspired by witnessing a game to start one of their own. We can see this especially well in children whenever a major sporting tournament is on. For during this time children will often be seen playing this game themselves. Similarly, whenever one bears witness to a particular dialogue one will often raise the issue oneself with one’s own friends. The spread of knowledge in this way has already been seen as being fundamental in the idea of a Platonic pedagogy and is similarly crucial in the way Gadamer saw understanding as ‘happening’. So bearing in mind Gadamer’s use of play to explain the world of art, we once more find a way of seeing an undoubtedly aesthetic current to Plato, a current which runs under his very method of philosophy.

However, my use of Gadamer's comparative treatment of art in terms of play in my argument regarding the essentially artistic features of Plato's dialogical method is by no means purely hypothetical. For we notice the very same, and wholly explicit, use of play in Plato's works themselves, in sections where the method of dialogue is under discussion. One such indicative instance can be seen in the *Theaetetus*, and is a fine example of how I hope to begin this section of my argument. While trying to initiate the dialogue in question Socrates asks,

'Who of us would like to speak first? He who makes a mistake, and he who makes a mistake thereafter, will sit down and be 'donkey' (ὄνος), as the children say when playing ball (σφαίριζόντες).' *Theaetetus*, 146a

Of course, this brief reference may seem like any other off-the-cuff remark made by Socrates throughout the Platonic corpus. Yet it is a remark that, when taken even slightly seriously, manages to show us a unique way of identifying the methodology of dialectic. There are rules involved in the dialogical method, then, just as there are when we play. Any lack of knowledge of these rules, or more appropriately, lack of ability within the dialogical game, will end in the participant 'losing their turn'. Importantly though, we must not speak of winning and losing the discussion as we do in terms of arguments. One could argue that those who come in last place in a test of knowledge, such as a table-quiz, benefit most from the experience given the fact that they are the ones who learn most (!) But also, a discussion is not synonymous with an argument.³² There is, perhaps, a difference between arguing and discussing one's argument. For when in a discussion, convincing one's fellow discussants of one's position by any means necessary is not the proper means of procedure, as it is when arguing. Rather, a discussion is an open-ended affair where the participants must work together in order to allow the discussion to develop and the thing under discussion to show itself. They may very well have arguments but must not defend them argumentatively. The necessity of such openness is attested to by Plato in the *Protagoras*. For during the discussion of how Socrates and Protagoras should best proceed in the discussion, given their differing methodologies, Prodicus remarks that in their discussion they should certainly not "quarrel" (ἐρίζειν) or be "hostile and

³² I do not mean this in a particularly 'Irish' way, whereby a 'good' argument is something to be sought after regularly. Rather I mean to assert that a discussion can have all the rigour of an argument, but must never serve to further the egos or argumentative desires (the desire for an argument for argument's sake) of those involved. I therefore mean to distinguish discussion from argumentation, where one is constructive the other destructive.

unfriendly” to each other. Rather, their discussion should be like that “between friends in a spirit of good will”, a remark that is agreed upon by all those present. (All quotes above are from *Protagoras*, 337b). This is the very same practice as team-mates in a game, whereby the more the participants work together, the closer they come to achieving their goal. Yet, even when participants do lose their turn in the discussion they still remain a part of the dialogue. For, an absence of direct contribution by no means entails the participants are not participating, a feature we have seen already in Plato.³³ As is seen throughout Plato’s works, a previously humbled participant can re-join the exchange at a later stage if any of the other participants give a less than adequate contribution. Yet they do not re-join as if new to the discussion but, more commonly, have been following the discussion without comment, waiting for their chance to come back in on the topic. Though not an entirely similar example, when a substitute joins a game they join with a specific agenda in mind which has been created with regard to how the game has gone so far, because they had been watching the game as spectators. We often find two or more interlocutors in Plato’s works taking turns in the discussion, such as Adeimantus and Glaucon in the *Republic*. Essentially, Socrates is not trying to beat them as they are on the same team, even when their points and opinions may differ. So long as the discussants are willing to allow the dialogue to take its course, wherever it may lead them, their goal is the same and does not lie in defeating the other, but rather, in simply ‘playing’ in the first place. For it is in this act of ‘playing’ that the potential of dialogue becomes realised.

Yet the vastly superior abilities of Socrates in the to and fro of the discussions often leaves his fellow participants without the ability to progress, trapping them in somewhat of a dialogical check-mate. This is especially noticeable in the ‘early’ Platonic dialogues where Plato has Socrates leave his fellow participants in *aporia*. Within this method, though, some traces of a game-plan can be detected, a point we find commented on by Adeimantus in the *Republic*.

“...and like those who are left unable to continue by those skilled in draughts (πεττεύειν), being shut out and not able to move, so they too (Socrates’ fellow participants) are in this way shut out and don’t have anything to say by this different type of draughts, played not with discs but with words.” *Republic*, 487b-c.

³³ We will see the participatory importance of the witness in even greater detail in my next part, where Gadamer invokes the Greek concept of the *theoros* in tragedy.

I must state again, however, that this ability of Socrates is not in any way argumentative and sophistic but is rather designed to keep his participants within the rules of the game. In this respect Socrates is again seen as being like a referee who, though unable to play the game perfectly, knows when the rules have been broken. In fact, we even find direct evidence of this role in the *Laches* where Socrates is asked by Lysimachus to join in with the discussion and “act as umpire” (ἐπιδιακρίνοντος at *Laches*, 184d).³⁴ The reason Socrates is needed is because neither Laches nor Nicias could agree on the nature of courage and whether or not it can be taught. Although Lysimachus oversimplifies the matter, asking Socrates to add his vote to either one of the positions raised previously, thus giving that view the majority vote, the point remains that Socrates is needed to help bring all discussants to agreement. A better example of this Socratic role as referee, perhaps, is in the more everyday, non-professional game-playing, whereby the players *themselves* act as the referee. Though they may not all like it, they know when the rules have been broken. We met this same characteristic in play when we saw how players will often govern themselves. Gadamer calls this the ‘non-purposive rationality’ of play, a “...self-discipline and order that we impose on our movements when playing, as if particular purposes were involved...” (‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 23). A certain degree of pliability is thereby requested where those involved cannot enforce their own rules but must rather allow their ideas, beliefs, and arguments to be shaped by the dialogical model. Reason is of course the guiding principle within which Plato shapes this method. This means that anger or any other emotional basis must not be a contributing factor. Just as in all types of game-playing, an emotional player rarely contributes well and is most likely to break the rules. Highlighting the importance of this, we see Socrates berate himself in the *Republic* for doing this very thing and falling prey to his emotions.

“I forgot”, I said, “that we were playing (παίζομεν) and so I spoke with especial intensity. For at the time of speaking I looked upon philosophy, and seeing her undeservedly besmirched I felt violent irritation and, as if angry with those responsible, I spoke most earnestly.” *Republic*, 536c.

³⁴ In the *Laches* in particular, however, Socrates does take a more visibly regulatory role. For Nicias and Laches do not pull any punches in their discussion, accusing the other at numerous times of ‘talking rubbish’. Socrates has to make sure that the participants do not get abusive (195a) but rather work together in coming to agreement.

So Socrates needed to check himself as his anger would not have contributed to the openness to discussion required for proper dialogue.

The play of dialogue is not something one can enter into lightly without training. As one would expect, then, the various levels and aspects of play figure as a fundamental part of how Plato outlined his educative programme in both the *Republic* and *Laws*. If play is as similar to dialectic as we have argued for so far, then it too must figure as a pedagogical element. We find this supported in explicit abundance in both dialogues mentioned. For just like the act of dialectic, play too is described as most useful in moulding citizens, especially children who are perhaps too young to be educated in the more advanced form of play that is dialectic. In the *Republic*, for example, we find the following:

‘Then whenever children play well (παίξειν) from the beginning, and are imbued with a good sense of law through music and poetry, it follows them in everything and nurtures their growth, correcting anything which may have gone wrong in the other city.’ *Republic*, 425a.

To show the consistency of this claim we can see it asserted again, later in the *Laws*.³⁵

‘I say that there is a lack of knowledge in every city about children’s games (τῶν παιδιῶν), that they are so important in lawgiving as to determine whether the laws be permanent or not.’ *Laws*, 797a.

Further, in terms of the play element of Plato’s dialogues we notice an interesting connection in the Greek terminology. For the verb to play, (προσ)παίξειν, can also mean to sing in praise of. As I argued for in my last part (pp. 56-61), Plato’s dialogues themselves can be seen as being paradigmatic examples of the ‘songs of praise’ he refers to in the *Republic* as the only appropriate poetic composition for his ideal state. Given our most recent examples of the clear link between Plato’s dialectic and the notion of play, a strong current of proof and chain of evidence seems apparent. So we once more see the importance of what this thesis takes a Platonic dialogue to be. By incorporating Gadamer’s theory on the correlations of the artwork with play we have further begun to outline his importance in arguing for an aesthetic quality to Plato’s works. By seeing the connection Plato himself made between

³⁵ This connection can also be seen at 643d where we find the following. “Principally, then, we say that the pedagogy of the child consists in that upright rearing in which, while playing, the soul of the child is lead to love of that which, on becoming a man, he must be perfect at.” The same sense is seen again at 797b-c.

dialogue and play, and the previous analysis of Gadamer's connection between play and art, our own argument as to the link between art and dialogue becomes fully situated. An essential part of this study was in showing how similar the transcendent 'worlds' of dialogue, play, and art were, and the pedagogical relationship between these worlds and their inhabitants.

4. Phaedrus, Ion, and the Lure of Inspiration

An interesting point was raised in a previous passage which leads us to the next part of my discussion. I mentioned, and tried to justify, how Plato's dialogues can be seen to come closer to showing us how to approach the Forms than the traditional art forms, given the role of dialogue in *anamnesis* (p. 100 ff.). This was what made Plato's works a more ideal form of art, with regard to their inevitably educative attributes. However, it is a common feature of Plato's when discussing the arts to declare traditional artists, poets in particular, divinely inspired. If their works come from the heavens, a realm closer to, if not identical with, the realm of the Forms, then it is *their* works and not the world of Plato's dialogues which must be seen as a more adequate means of pursuing the absolute. What I must now do, therefore, is outline the theory of divine inspiration and show how it is not a positive declaration of Plato's, with regard to the position of the traditional arts, but is instead an ironic criticism aimed at an incoherent system of artistic production. Once this is done I can show how my previous outline of Gadamer's use of play to explain the world of the artwork is, again, a guiding principle for my present theory on true *Platonic* inspiration. This will be done by arguing that divine inspiration is in fact something coveted by Plato, but *only* when it is achieved through his songs of praise, his philosophical dialogues. This will thus distinguish two distinct types of inspiration, one traditional and one Platonic, in which we can further identify the world of Plato's dialogues. Coupled with this particular goal will be a further examination of character. If these works are to be treated in terms of a philosophical artistry, under my present conception, then I must continue to inspect the various elements of this artistry. As I argued for previously in the section detailing the mimetic features of Plato's use of Socrates, each interlocutor is carefully chosen to represent a particular ideology or opinion (pp. 64-67). By continuing with this most general motivation, the following analysis will include a detailed outline of the specific characters involved in each of

the two dialogues which deal with divine inspiration, as I cannot examine this, or any other notion, in isolation from its context. What the next part of this section will attempt to do, therefore, is hermeneutically examine these dialogues, those places where the theory of divine inspiration receives its fullest mention. This will enable us completely to see how important it is to both relate and situate my conceptual hypothesis within the dialogues themselves. The two dialogues where divine inspiration gets its most explicit treatment are the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*.³⁶

Although it might seem that the *Phaedrus*' descriptions of a divine artistry would support my own thesis as to a positive Platonic conception of art, this is not in fact the case. Due to the level of its literary ornamentation, the *Phaedrus* can certainly be seen as the dialogue where the 'artistic' side of Plato breaks free from his more customary logical side. As I have begun to argue for in my last part, however, I do not believe these two sides are ever separated. With regard to inspiration, and as carefully exemplified in the *Phaedrus*, there are two, wholly separate conceptions of inspiration which Plato is at pains to distinguish. The first notion is the more traditional idea where, in general, a person is given otherwise unknowable knowledge from the Muses, whatever the degree of possession involved.³⁷ Yet, there is a second, Platonic conception which, although somewhat similar in that the person is again given knowledge otherwise unattainable without divine assistance, differs in a fundamental way. This difference is the degree of responsibility inherent in the Platonic conception. Also, whereas one of the traditional results of inspiration were traditional works of art, as one may expect, I believe Plato's manic enthusiasm results in his own artistic creations, his philosophical dialogues. Yet, before I argue for this Platonic conception I will first argue against the notion that the treatment of divine inspiration presented in the *Ion* and *Phaedrus* is a serious Platonic sentiment, showing instead

³⁶ Any work on inspiration must acknowledge Tigerstedt (1970) in which Tigerstedt argues that Plato's conception of inspiration as possession is wholly original. Without contradicting Tigerstedt, I argue that Plato uses a traditional belief in inspiration to help accomplish his goals. Plato's leap from inspiration to possession can be seen, therefore, as being part of this usage. Tigerstedt's (1969) other important work on inspiration is similarly helpful in critically assessing what were the current scholarly opinions on the matter.

³⁷ There is criticism that Plato paints an unfair picture of traditional inspiration. Yet the bards of Homer's works are given inconsistent accounts of their divine influence. For whereas Phemius describes himself as "self taught", he adds at *Odyssey*, XXII, 346 that the gods "implant in him their verses." Yet Demodocus was said to have received the gift in its entirety from the Muses (*Odyssey*, VIII, 43). As noted by Murray (1981), the level of total possession ascribed by Plato to the Muses is not seen anywhere else. Yet, I believe this simply shows the level of irony involved in Plato's treatment in both the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*. Murray also shows that a definite link existed between the inspired state and a state of knowledge (hence its treatment as a craft). I will discuss this link, and the consequences it had for Plato's treatment of inspiration, later in this part.

how its deep-seated irony is consistent in each work and, more importantly, is methodologically central to Plato's dialogue-specific agendas. Although the use of irony in the *Ion* is well documented by commentators, the same cannot be said for the *Phaedrus*.³⁸ Part of this section's plan, therefore, consists in showing how the very same sense of irony that pervaded Socrates' handling of *Ion* can be seen in the *Phaedrus*. This dialogical invective will be presented as stemming from the characters of Phaedrus and *Ion*, as portrayed by Plato, and the intellectual audience and ideologies these characters represented.³⁹ Consequently, I will demonstrate the flaws in taking the account in either work at face value, highlighting instead the theory's procedural significance. My argument will be divided into three adjoining sections. The first will deal with the first speech of Socrates' in the *Phaedrus* (237b – 241d) as well as the more general theme of Plato tailoring his dialogues and arguments to suit his carefully chosen interlocutors. The evidence to support this will come from the *Phaedrus* itself. My second section will show the importance of this variegated style to the *Ion* and its detailed description of the inspired condition. Finally, my third section will treat perhaps the most quoted section of the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' palinode, where inspiration is given its most (in)famous celebration.

In a most general sense, Socrates' approach in the *Phaedrus* is based on persuading Phaedrus of the inefficiencies of Lysias as an educator. As is a common feature of Plato's, these inefficiencies are presented alongside what is shown as being the more reasonable methodology of philosophy. What is so unique about Socrates' more general, Platonically designed approach, however, is how it changes according to interlocutor. Every element of Socrates' treatment of Phaedrus, and as we will also see later of *Ion*, is specifically and uniquely designed. This is no mere abstracted hypothesis but is outlined explicitly by Socrates at the culmination of the *Phaedrus*

³⁸ All of the great commentaries on the *Phaedrus*, such as those of Hackforth (1952), Griswold (1986), and Ferrari (1987) have more wide-ranging agendas, so tend to accept the references to inspiration at face value. Golden (1975) also believes that Plato conceived of the inspired state of poets as the only means possible for humans, given their natural limitations, to apprehend some aspect of the truth. Lodge (1953) too believes quite strongly that Plato's apparent celebration of inspiration is only at times ironic and remains a serious aspect of his work. "There is a suggestion of irony here and there – but that the artist is somehow 'inspired', is nowhere, even remotely, challenged" (p. 168). There is similarly no mention of irony in Gould's (1963) discussion of the work.

³⁹ The irony involved in Plato's use of inspiration is also briefly seen at *Laws* 719c, though with a somewhat similar motivation. For although it is 'lauded' as a gift, divine inspiration is declared to be the reason the poets must never be allowed legislate for a state. Since using the epic poets was a traditional method of claiming a divine origin for the laws of one's state, as seen in the very beginning of the dialogue with Cleinias and Megillus' opening remarks, Plato's criticism of such can be seen as yet another way for him to recast philosophy, in this case as the most appropriate model for statesmanship.

itself, where the newly conceived philosophically based rhetoric is offered as an ultimately more suitable method of speech-making than traditional rhetoric. Part of this new approach, though, is in understanding one's audience and so adapting one's approach to suit:

"Hence a certain type of hearer will be easy to persuade by a certain type of speech to take such-and-such action for such-and-such reason, while another type will be hard to persuade." *Phaedrus*, 271d.⁴⁰

In other words, not all ways of discussion will work on all types of audience.⁴¹ This reasoning is based on the understanding that people's souls are different, and as the nature of the soul is of concern to philosophy, the best possible approach to addressing people is through philosophical, hence dialogical means. So we find Socrates adhering to a dynamic structure where in order to persuade someone of one's arguments, "I must apply *these* arguments in *this* fashion" (272a). This claim is the very essence of the philosophical rhetoric that Plato has Socrates outline throughout the work, structuring Socrates' approach in the dialogue.

Socrates knows well the type of person Phaedrus is. This much we know from Socrates' own admission at 228a when he states,

"I know my Phaedrus; yes indeed, I'm as sure of him as of my own identity."

Accepting this familiarity, then, it should not be surprising to find a specifically catered approach from Socrates. Given the picture we get of Phaedrus both here and in the *Symposium*, a detailed diatribe on mathematics or epistemology by Socrates would simply not suit Phaedrus' nature, leaving him uninterested and ultimately unmoved by the arguments. We can see an example of this difference in the way Plato approaches the nature of the soul in the *Phaedo* when compared to this passage in the *Phaedrus*. Whereas in the *Phaedo* (as especially seen in Socrates' response to Cebes' objection from 95c – 102a) the soul is ultimately discussed in mathematical terms, to

⁴⁰ I have decided to use Hackforth's (1952) translations for all quotes from the *Phaedrus*. I have done this because Hackforth adheres to the belief that Plato is serious in his treatment of inspiration in this dialogue. By using Hackforth's translation, then, I cannot be accused of translating Plato to suit my own ends.

⁴¹ This notion is key to Rowe's (2007) argument for acknowledging the catered methodology of Plato in his various dialogues. "What he [Plato] actually says, or has his main character – usually Socrates – say, is usually only a version of what he wants to say, designed to suit a particular audience on a particular occasion, as defined by the *dramatis personae* and the setting of the individual work" (Preface, vii). As will be seen in this section of my work, I strongly share in Rowe's argument for the directedness of Plato's approach and methodology.

suit the non-religious Pythagorean interlocutors, here in the *Phaedrus* this approach is abandoned and a series of speeches takes its place. As we will argue for later, this is because the *Phaedrus* is about speech-making and rhetoric. Of course, Phaedrus himself cannot be seen as being designed as just one person but is ultimately intended to represent a certain section of Plato's audience. So, just as Phaedrus would be unmoved by unfamiliar concepts and terminology, so too would the more poetic, somewhat romantically minded section of society which Phaedrus is undoubtedly supposed to embody. We even have Socrates admit this later in the dialogue when he acknowledges that the language he used in his treatment of Love was "...perforce poetical, to please Phaedrus" (257a). As the theory of inspiration is very heavily connected to the artistic theories of the time, a definite link can be seen forming between this theory and the character of Phaedrus.

Socrates plays on Phaedrus' belief in inspiration at every available opportunity. No more so than when Socrates composes his first speech on Love (237b – 241d) taking the same subject matter as that of Lysias. For here, Socrates tells of how the speech poured into him "...through my ears, as into a vessel, though because of dumbness (ὑπὸ δὲ νωθείας) I have forgotten (ἐπιλήλησμαι) from where I heard it" (235c-d). Phaedrus' reply to this is telling indeed, declaring; "Well said! You move me to admiration" (235d). Inspiration as a driving force in this speech is reiterated by Socrates at 237a, 238c, and at 238d. So Socrates can be seen to be approaching Phaedrus in a particular way and for a particular reason. Socrates, by using the traditional theme of inspiration, is trying to show Phaedrus that his philosophical methodology is entirely commensurate with that of Phaedrus. Not only this, though, but inspiration is also used by Socrates as being the deciding factor in the ultimate *persuasion* of Phaedrus and the audience he represents. Again, we even find Socrates conceding this at 257b where he grants his intentions in the discussion were to persuade Phaedrus to "...live for Love in singleness of purpose with the aid of philosophical discourse." I believe it wholly inaccurate, then, to take any of Socrates' references to inspiration in the earlier part of the dialogue seriously. For one, this first speech of Socrates, the speech he continuously attributes to divine inspiration, is categorically refuted by him later on, calling it 'foolish' (εὐήθη) and even 'blasphemous' (ἀσεβῆ) at 242d. The paradox involved in calling a speech supposedly

inspired by the divine blasphemous is, I believe, in order to begin the process of showing both the inconsistency and unreliability of this most traditional belief.⁴²

Yet, if Socrates is so embarrassed by the speech why would Plato put it into his mouth in the first place? The reason for this relates to the theme of the dialogue as a whole which must also be posited in order to contextualise the inspiration theme. Rather than being wholly concerned with Love, I believe speech-making and rhetoric to be the crux of Plato's intention, leading ultimately to a theory of rhetoric based solely on Platonic philosophy. Of course, Love is an important feature of the speeches but is not what the dialogue is about. So, in order to examine the area of speech-making, we are presented by Plato with a number of speeches. Essentially, though, while some speeches are 'good', others are 'bad'. The reason they are included is for us to see how bad they are when placed next to speeches of a more Platonically sound arrangement.⁴³ An example of such a speech is, of course, that of Lysias which is recited by Phaedrus (230e – 234c). Even despite the subject matter, it is clumsily unstructured and rather random, even for a speech, giving the listener the sense that its ideas were transcribed as soon as they came to the composer's mind. It is thereby criticised by Socrates for this structure. Socrates' responding speech (237b – 241d), which we will examine later, attempted to re-structure the speech and argument using a uniquely dialectical arrangement. However, even this remains a bad speech, not for its structure, but because of its content. The reason I believe Plato has Socrates give this speech is to show how even the best structure means nothing as long as the subject-matter and ethical stance remains unsound. It also suggests how dangerously persuasive a good structure can be, given the fact that Socrates had Phaedrus convinced of his speech even though the argument itself was abhorrent to Socrates. Of course Socrates goes to great lengths afterwards to show his disappointment with the speech, but the point is made. So although it is important to have Socrates outline this first speech of his, it is just as important for him to refute it later. During this speech,

⁴² In part, one of the undoubted lessons of having Socrates deliver this speech is with regard to the morality of the rhetoricians and orators, who are in this case represented by Lysias. For one of the bases of their apparent skill was centred on the belief that despite their own position or ethical convictions on a matter they could defend either side of an argument equally well. Socrates, however, on doing such a thing and providing something of a contrary account of his true beliefs is deeply appalled afterwards, praying for forgiveness at 243a.

⁴³ We see this explicitly at 264c-d when Socrates outlines why his speech containing his theory of Love is better than that of Lysias. "Then ask yourself whether that is or is not the case with your friend's (Lysias') speech. You will find that it is just like the epitaph said to have been carved on the tomb of Midas the Phrygian." Each line of the epigraph in question is interchangeable with the others showing a lack of compositional quality.

however, an important way that Plato keeps us from treating the argument as genuine is by these constant references to divine influence. Inspiration is thereby used by Plato to absolve Socrates from any responsibility for the speech, while at the same time allowing Socrates to showcase the moral danger of the sophistic speech writers. It is further distanced by Socrates' reference to Phaedrus afterwards and to the "...terrible theory that you introduced and compelled me to expound" (242d-e). Although somewhat playful, we do get a reinforced message of how important it is for Plato to distance the speech from Socrates.

From the evidence we have, the rhapsode Ion of Ephesus is suitably representational of the class of rhapsodes as a whole. Although historical evidence detailing any specifics on rhapsodes is scarce, what we do have tends to lead us to consider them to have been somewhat dim, superficial and ultimately shallow individuals.⁴⁴ Yet, these rhapsodes were an important scalp for Plato. They must have been, given the fact that an entire dialogue is dedicated to them.⁴⁵ For despite their shortcomings, the rhapsodes embodied the traditional educational ideal of the Athenians. We may say this, given the fact that they recited Homer for a living, a feat which was the pinnacle of the Athenians' traditional conception of education.⁴⁶ Also, by Plato's time their profession had developed an intimate connection with Homer, making them more than fair game.⁴⁷ As Athens was still an oral culture, a considerable part of the people's exposure to Homer must have been through the rhapsodes and their lavish performances, further showing their relevance in terms of

⁴⁴ The most apparent indication of this comes from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 4, 2, 10, and *Symposium* 3, 6 where Antisthenes wonders how Niceratus can take pride in knowing the works of Homer when this is a feat done by the rhapsodes who are, he asserts, the most stupid of men. A sign that this is not just a solitary belief comes from the fact that all characters in Xenophon's work accept Antisthenes' assertion without question, even those who are presented as proponents of Homer. This point is similarly made by LaDriere (1950).

⁴⁵ Dorter (1973) similarly believes the *Ion* to be an important Platonic work, as it is, so he believes, the only dialogue in which Plato treats art in its own terms. "For this reason, careful examination of the *Ion* is invaluable as a vehicle for entering into Plato's thought on art: not only is it the one dialogue devoted exclusively to the question of art it is the only dialogue which discusses art in its own terms at all" p. 65.

⁴⁶ Amongst other evidence, we can see the educational level of Homeric recitation in Plato's own *Protagoras* at 325c – 326c.

⁴⁷ As we are told at 228b-c in a spurious Platonic dialogue entitled *Hipparchos*, under an edict from the tyrant Hipparchos in 520 B.C., rhapsodes were forbidden to competitively recite any works other than those of Homer at the Panathenaia, which was the most prestigious competition for any rhapsode to win. Not only this, but rhapsodes were also required to recite the episodes of Homer in sequence with whichever competitor preceded them, as Hipparchos had received what he believed to have been the definitive structure of Homeric tales from a clan from Chios called the Homeridae.

being worthy opponents.⁴⁸ So although Plato would not have considered them as a problem intellectually, their popularity and the content of their performance would certainly have led to his decision to direct a dialogue towards them. This will be the most significant factor in how Plato frames Socrates' approach.

Yet, if these rhapsodes were such a dangerous element, why then do we find Socrates' approach to Ion to be somewhat comical? For, does a reading of the *Ion* not show a rather flippant attitude on the part of Socrates, one which does not show urgency, or even philosophical detail? It does, of course, but that is because of the audience I believe it was aimed at. A unique aspect of this work is how it is split into two levels of attack, corresponding to the two levels of irony: (1) those who do not see the irony and so accept the ironic statement at face-value, and (2) those who see the irony and therefore look deeper into the statement for meaning. At face value, the dialogue is aimed towards the *traditionally* educated, those who would have been most influenced by these performers in terms of their exposure to Homer.⁴⁹ For one, the dialogue is very short. One does not require a particularly high level of intellectual expertise to follow the conversation and come to an understanding of the text within a short period. As the traditionally educated had no real experience in dialectic, Socrates' incorporation of the technique is elementary at most. Also, there are a number of quotes in the text from the works of Homer, quotes used by both Ion *and* Socrates.⁵⁰ Anyone with an interest in rhapsody would of course have had an interest in Homer and so would savour his inclusion as a break in some of the details of the argumentation. These quotes are also strategically used by Plato to back up Socrates' points. Although the threat and influence of the rhapsodes was great, it would not have made sense for Plato to have launched into a detailed philosophical treatise on epistemology or metaphysics against the hapless Ion, a methodological point we saw previously with Phaedrus and even admitted to by Socrates in that dialogue (at 271d,

⁴⁸ That rhapsodic recitations were popular can be seen again in Xenophon's *Symposium*, III, 6 where Niceratus' father is said to have listened to rhapsodic performances every day. Also, the fact that rhapsodic competitions survived hundreds of years similarly indicates their popularity. As noted by LaDriere (1950), the rhapsodes could be seen in terms of public lecturers just like the sophists, once more showing their relevance for a Platonic treatment. "The rhapsode in his capacity of public lecturer, as critic, was as much a professional teacher as the sophist, or as the philosopher might be whom Plato envisaged" (p. 32).

⁴⁹ For an excellent treatment of the literary aspects of the dialogue see Ranta (1967), who argues that the characters of Socrates and Ion are actually styled by Plato in the guise of what would have been traditional, contrasting comical character-types of Old Greek comedy, with Ion as an *Alazon* and Socrates as an *Eiron*.

⁵⁰ For example, Ion quotes from *Iliad* 23.335ff at 537a, while Socrates quotes from *Iliad* 11.639-40 at 538c.

for example). Plato was well aware that the rhapsodes did not pose a threat of influencing the pedagogically *advanced* tier of society, those who have specialised in the general area of knowledge, such as the followers of Pythagoras for example, so he did not use mathematics or other such intellectual tools to defeat the rhapsodes' claims to skill and knowledge. The off-hand, at times sarcastic manner of Socrates in this dialogue is most suited to those who have been educated in the traditional, Athenian way, though have gone no further. For, it is this level of learning that embodies Ion's profession. In a sense, then, just as I examined previously in the *Republic* (p. 45), here too in the *Ion*, Plato is forcing his audience to question the place attributed to the arts in society.⁵¹ I believe Plato intended a total philosophy of inclusion which dealt with as many of the most influential systems of belief as possible. Aiming a dialogue (at face-value) towards a branch of traditional art which was highly popular for those otherwise uninterested in advanced education, and which embodied the accustomed mode of education, is, therefore, a most serious effort. There was no point in Plato producing a work of intellectual depth aimed at the less-educated, as this was probably not even something that interested them anyway. We can even see Plato admit to the benefit of treating one's audience differently according to their level of intelligence once more in the *Phaedrus* where one is advised to "...order and arrange your discourse accordingly, addressing a variegated soul in a variegated style that ranges over the gamut of tones, and a *simple* soul in a *simple* style" (277c with my emphasis). The arts were the one area of Plato's time that could include all levels of society in its attraction. If concerned with the effects of these works, as Plato clearly was, then why not produce catered pieces for this varied audience?

Yet there is a second level of attack contained within this work. For, as is clear, the level of irony incorporated by Plato would most likely be lost on the traditionally educated audience I described above. The second level of attack is therefore levelled here against the poets. Clearly, rhapsodes are not the only target of Plato's attacks in the *Ion*. Socrates' comparative use of the magnetic stone analogy, coupled with Ion's readiness to be deemed divinely inspired, does not only have consequences for rhapsodes but also, more significantly, takes from the poets too any

⁵¹ This point is also seen in Osborne (1987). "What the *Ion* shows is that Ion is not in a position to give any reasoned argument for the value of poetry; but the dialogue does open the question of how poetry could be justified on literary or educational criteria" p. 60.

such claim to knowledge or expertise. I would imagine that a poet would have put up a stronger defence than Ion, given the fact that the rhapsode was merely reciting the poet's work and was not creating anything original as such himself. It was the poets who were producing something more lasting and at once appear a more intelligent set of professionals.⁵² Also, and as we see in Plato's *Protagoras* (325c – 326c), the poets were looked to for education. Yet, although the poets, and those who followed them, would surely have picked up on the degree of irony in the *Ion*, they could not profess much opposition to Plato's claims about inspiration, seeing as how the two greatest poets, Homer and Hesiod, proclaim themselves at the outset of their works to have been inspired. Inspiration was so closely connected to the poets' profession that most would see no reason to object to the claim. Could the poets have given an account of their creative processes if given the chance to anyway? There is a mystery surrounding this creative process which is just as hard to put in concrete terms today, as it was in Plato's time. Undoubtedly, part of the difficulty in pinpointing the epistemological structure of the poet's art has led to the notion of inspiration remaining even today. It is because of this inability to account for their craft, in terms of knowledge, that the claims about inspiration can be inserted by Socrates. Yet, we notice that, because inspiration is by no means a concrete account of the poet's craft, it cannot and is not formulated by Socrates as an *argument*. Because it is not an argument, then, there is no room for the poets to counter. What I believe Plato is having Socrates do here is turn the mechanics of the poets' particular profession against them, in this case exploiting the ambiguity of their mode of composition. It is almost as if Plato is showing the artists the consequences of having Homer and Hesiod as their subject's most celebrated originators. Although they can call themselves artists and be hailed all over Greece, they must also take with them those other *traditional* attributes, consequences which stem from the popular consciousness. By exemplifying the accustomed relationship between the artists and the divine, Plato simply brings the connection to its rational conclusion. Unfortunately for the poets and rhapsodes, the recourse to a divine origin takes from them any claim to skill or knowledge.⁵³

⁵² That is perhaps why they are treated directly in a more sophisticated way in the *Republic* and *Laws*, again showing how Plato's approach is suited to an intended audience.

⁵³ As Ranta (1967) concludes the *Ion* is "...a piece of writing that forces the reader to think about criticism and to make choices important to himself as a potential critic" (p. 228). Of course, this was just as important for an ancient audience as it is now for us.

So, accepting the undoubtedly tailored approach given by Plato to Socrates, we can begin to see how similarly operative the methodological approach of the *Ion* is to the *Phaedrus*. Although Phaedrus is of a superior intellect, as is reflected in the depth of that dialogue, inspiration is used in both cases as something of a slip-road to more serious Platonic agendas. Basically it is used because it is an area which greatly interests both interlocutors.⁵⁴ In *Ion*'s case, inspiration is presented as the consequence of his inability to explain, both his specific knowledge of Homer and his incapability with regard to accounting for his admittedly remarkable abilities, thus showing the rhapsode's lack of *techne*. For example, how is it that these and other artists can produce wonderful works at one stage of their careers but not at others, and how do they compose so beautifully in one style but not in others? In keeping with my assertion as to Plato's 'popular' target in this dialogue, inspiration is acknowledged as having a traditional, as opposed to Platonic, origin and is stated, not discussed. It is cleverly used by Plato to show, or more appropriately to have *Ion* show, that the rhapsode's profession has no expertise. It is purposefully absurd, as noted by Woodruff,⁵⁵ given the fact that it is literally false. For, throughout the dialogue, *Ion* recites extracts from Homer. According to Socrates' arguments, *Ion* must have been possessed during these recitations, something that is plainly absent from the dialogue. So the point of the detailed tale of inspiration, then, cannot be argumentative and most certainly cannot be a genuine Platonic belief, but is instead wholly ironic.⁵⁶ In a sense it is used to highlight for the audience how far these individuals are from having a teachable knowledge. As is clear, though, it is doubtful that this was something high on the agenda for the rhapsodes. *Ion* is portrayed as interested solely in winning prizes at competitions, not in educating the people. Yet Plato is sensitive to this. For, without

⁵⁴ This use of dialectic in the *Ion* is similarly noted by Ranta (1967) who believes it structures how *Ion* is pulled into the dialogue by Socrates. "...the underlying action or structure of the *Ion* is derived from the dialectic's functioning as a kind of force or system whose object is to pull or attract extremes towards a mean. *Ion* functions as a kind of particle that is eventually caught up in the field of this force." p. 221.

⁵⁵ Woodruff (1983): "The first thing to notice about Plato's account of inspiration is that it is literally false" (p. 8). Ranta (1967) also believes the argument of inspiration to be wholly ironic, though Dorter (1973) does not attribute any irony to Plato's use of inspiration. "Art is not a human skill or science but a divine allotment (536c), furnished by the Muse who possesses us or, if we are interpretive rather than primary artists, by the Muse possessing the artist by whom we are inspired and through whom the allotment is thereby transmitted to us (and ultimately to the audience), as the power of a magnet is transmitted through a series of iron rings (533d-e, 535e-536b)" (p. 74). Although I believe the argument to be fully ironic, the reasons for the use of irony has fully serious intentions.

⁵⁶ As noted by Ranta (1967), previous commentators have failed to notice this irony. "Their certainty about the total seriousness of this argument reveals itself in their saying little or nothing about the large vein of ironic and boastful humor that runs through the dialogue" p. 219.

the theory of inspiration the rhapsode's profession would have been completely shattered. By proposing the theory Socrates hands Ion an escape clause, one which Ion happily accepts. Inspiration, then, can be seen as Plato's way of separating what turns out to be entertainment from education, an endeavour which, through the use of irony, had the more severe repercussions for the poets.

Although the *Ion* contains, perhaps, the most extended discourse on inspiration, Socrates' palinode recanting his first speech in the *Phaedrus* is where the theme of inspiration receives its most renowned exposition. However, this speech celebrating Love and the madness that accompanies it must be divided into two distinct sections.⁵⁷ In the second of these sections (245c – 257b) we find the first instance in the dialogue of the true Platonic method where, after establishing a conception of soul, the madness of Love is shown as being, not only the highest form of madness, but also a fundamental characteristic of Plato's philosophical approach. Yet, before this original and uniquely Platonic form of madness is extolled, Plato needs to continue to induce Phaedrus into the concept and idea of the speech.⁵⁸ He does so in the first section of this second speech (244a – 245c) by describing the traditional manifestations of inspiration. However, this short description is not discussed or even argued for but is once more stated without recourse to dialogue, something we also saw in the *Ion*. Yet, although this mention of madness is included to keep Phaedrus interested in the discussion, the short and purposefully awkward description also has subversive intonations. These are geared towards distancing Plato's more accountable, more reasonable madness, from the madness of tradition. Since Socrates' description of the three traditional forms of inspiration is, again, not presented as an *argument*, (a consequence of its insubstantial epistemological make-up) there is nothing for us or anyone else to counter. However, there are certain discrepancies in this description which must be intended to show the level of irony involved. For one, the mantic prophet supposedly celebrated as the first claimant of inspiration is coupled by Plato in the *Republic* with begging-priests at 364b-c, describing them almost like conmen who claim they can use sacrifices and

⁵⁷ Griswold (1986) also splits this speech in two.

⁵⁸ An interesting element of this dialogue is the amount of time given to persuasion. We see this especially at the start of the work with Socrates, as well as at the end in the reference we dealt with in our first section (271d). Phaedrus is, therefore, shown as having philosophical potential given how he uses Socrates' love of discussions to persuade him to give his reply to Lysias.

incantations to cleanse any and all injustices conducted by the clients.⁵⁹ This ability to purify an injustice is again attributed to the second type of inspiration which also involves possession through prayer. But once more, though, we must consider how far Plato goes in the *Republic* and *Laws* to argue against the idea that the gods can in any way be persuaded by prayer and sacrifice. Surely no good can come from such a theory of worship as it undermines any rational conception of justice. Yet the third class of inspiration is without doubt the most incompatible with what we know of Plato. Are we to believe the following lines to be the true feelings of the same author as that of the *Republic*, where, as previously examined, in Books II and III the “...countless mighty deeds of ancient times” are attacked in far greater detail for the very reason that they were being used in the “instruction of posterity”?⁶⁰

“This (the inspiration of the Muses) seizes a tender, virgin soul and stimulates it to rapt passionate expression, especially in lyric poetry, glorifying the countless mighty deeds of ancient times for the instruction of posterity.” *Phaedrus*, 245a.⁶¹

Another surreptitious jibe is made at the end of this part of the speech, a section of the dialogue often taken literally by commentators. For when Socrates ‘declares’ that the poetry of the madman will eclipse that of the sane man at 245a, he makes sure to add that it is the *skilled* poets who be eclipsed.⁶² It seems the expertise and knowledge of the true, skilled professional is not needed for the social acceptance of this profession. Yet, this lack of skill was the very reason we saw Socrates degrade the rhapsode’s art in the *Ion*. As Plato’s conception of *techne* is one of his most consistent throughout his works, this admission to a lack of expertise in traditionally manic possession must be seen as strong evidence of his ironic intentions here. As a further point, just as we saw Socrates claim Phaedrus was responsible for his first speech (p. 123), so too do we find Socrates attributing this second speech to someone else.

⁵⁹ This is recognised and slightly expanded upon by Hackforth (1952) 58.

⁶⁰ Hackforth (1952) and Pieper (2000) argue that Plato is referring here to the acceptable poets argued for in the *Republic*. I disagree, however, given the total absence of such a qualification and the direct reference to the poets’ educational connection.

⁶¹ This description of poetic inspiration was quite influential in later artistic periods. Medwin (1913) once described the poet Percy Shelley thus: “His eyes flashed, his lips quivered, his voice was tremulous with emotion, a sort of ecstasy came over him, and he talked more like a spirit or an angel than a human being” p. 27-28.

⁶² “But if any man come to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, persuaded that skill alone will make him a good poet, then shall he and his works of sanity with him be brought to nought by the poetry of madness...” The emphasis is again my own.

“Now you must understand, fair boy, that whereas the preceding discourse was by Phaedrus, son of Pythocles, of Myrrinous, that which I shall now pronounce is by Stesichorus, son of Euphemus, of Himera.” *Phaedrus*, 243e-244.

It is clear that Stesichorus is invoked because of the nature of the palinode involved and the myth that he had once had his sight taken away after composing a ‘false’ tale about Helen of Troy, only to have his sight returned upon his recantation. Of course, Stesichorus was a noted poet who was himself influenced by Homer. Because of this, another reason for Socrates’ ascription to Stesichorus could be making sure that the audience be aware of the purposefully artistic process he was incorporating, and so should not take the discourse which followed literally. That the poets are a definite target in Plato’s sights can be seen towards the end of the dialogue when Socrates is telling us of those who should take heed of the preceding discourse:

“...tell Lysias that we two went down to the stream, where is the holy place of the Nymphs, and there listened to words which charged us to deliver a message, first to Lysias and all other composers of discourses, secondly to Homer and all others who have written poetry whether to be read or sung...” *Phaedrus*, 278b-c.

Plato clearly wanted to send the poets a message with his passing outline of traditional inspiration, much as in the *Ion* and *Republic*. Why else would he place them sixth on a line of inspiration if not to show them the inherent flaws in their subject’s procedure of operation?

From an intellectual position, Plato’s biggest problem with traditional inspiration must have been its aspirations to knowledge. Homer himself, as well as the bards he characterises, is duly rewarded by the Muses with the knowledge he requests in his works. On hearing such a detailed and intricate description of the various ships and captains sent by the Greeks to the shores of Ilium, in *Iliad* Book two, divine possession seems the only way such information could have been ascertained. How could Hesiod, himself just a man, know the origins of the gods themselves if not told so by the Muses? It seems clear from this textual evidence that the call for inspiration is not a simple call for remembrance. This oversimplification neglects to see the definitive appeals by the poets to *knowledge* of the past, knowledge in Demodocus’ case which is so accurate it reduces Odysseus to tears. Demodocus is not remembering the exploits of Troy because *he was not there*. Although memory is an undoubted part of the process of poetic composition, having its own representative Muse, it is not a byword for the term. Inspiration, then, needed to be a definite target

for Plato, given these claims to knowledge. Of course, given the religious intonations of inspiration (the inspiration of the Pythia being one example), a direct attack on it may have been considered irreligious, thus necessitating Plato's ironic approach.

So, under the pretence of simply continuing with a fourth 'type' of madness, Socrates can bring Phaedrus round to his sounder conception of the term. There is an undeniably clear difference between Socrates' approach from 243e – 245c and that which follows, which I believe adequately corresponds to the difference between the ironic lauding of inspiration and the far more serious, philosophical treatment of the term. Part of this is how Socrates first establishes a conception of soul to frame his speech. We saw in my last part how important the conception of soul was for Plato in the *Laws*, suggesting its place as an almighty deity. As noted by Hackforth, although this part of Plato's approach is still a speech, it is 'essentially dialectical'.⁶³ This is needed in order for the speech to have a sound foundation, an attribute which was lacking in all of the preceding speeches. This, then, is where the dialogue proper begins, where a proper understanding of soul is argued for as the best possible source for speech-making and for trying to discuss with someone one's own position. It is also where a Platonic sense of erotic inspiration is established. The distance between this Platonic sense of divine inspiration and the traditional sense exemplified by the poets is apparent when Socrates warns us that, "...of that place beyond the heavens none of our earthly poets has yet sung, and none shall sing worthily" (247c). Also, and finally, a further definitive way Plato distances his erotic conception of inspiration is in how he describes the realm his inspiration comes from as 'supra-heavenly', a realm which can only be seen as being identical with the Forms and comparatively 'truer' than the traditional, Olympian realm. In essence, then, Plato's use of traditional inspiration is simply another way of arguing for and explaining the detailed intricacies of his philosophy, distancing the established concept from proper knowledge. By his initial feigning of this traditional stance, Plato can then lead both Phaedrus and the audience towards Plato's newly emerging subject of philosophy.

So by analysing how the characters of Phaedrus and Ion are presented by Plato in each work, I have attempted to show how operative the inspiration theme is, not only in bringing these characters towards a new, shared understanding, but more importantly, in bringing round the audience that these characters represented. This

⁶³ Hackforth (1953) 64.

was presented as endemic to the Platonic method as a whole where the ideologies of every section of society are considered important in the broadly conceived scope of Platonic pedagogy.

5. Plato's True Muse

Yet this is only half the story of inspiration. There is what I believe to be a 'true' Muse that we will see as being the source and influence of Plato's works. This Muse, which we even find referred to at *Republic* 548b,⁶⁴ is wholly different to the Muse of tradition which we have just seen Plato discard. In essence, I argue that this Platonic form of inspiration is the draw exerted by *dialogue*. The 'madness' it brings is the same as that fourth type outlined in the *Phaedrus*, which I argued was purposefully presented by Plato to distance the claims of traditional artistry from Platonically conceived knowledge (especially pp. 128 – 131). Once more, this Platonic conception of inspiration will be shown as being similar to the world of art described previously by Gadamer, resulting in Plato's case in the philosophical dialogue. As evidence for this claim we find an explicit example of this new, Platonic form of inspiration presented in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium*. This wholly explicit feature of these dialogues' presentation of Socrates will go some way to showing yet another feature of Plato's unique aesthetic.⁶⁵ Of course these explicit references to the effects of dialogue, while brief, will be used more as the starting point from which my argument will again treat the implied lure of dialogue.

In my previous outline of play in Section II I established dialogue as being the key feature in connecting Gadamer's use of this concept to the 'world' of art, and ultimately, to the world of Plato's works. Yet the draw of dialogue, how it operates on its subjects who engage with it openly, is I believe, a Platonically conceived form of 'possession'. The first dialogue I will discuss in which this Platonic inspiration is described, is the *Protagoras*. While on their way to the house of Callias, Socrates and

⁶⁴ "[S]ince they've neglected the true Muse – that of discussion and philosophy – and have valued physical training more than music and poetry, they haven't been educated by persuasion but by force."

⁶⁵ A detailed examination of the concept of a Platonic Muse can also be found in Murray (appearing in Spentzou 2002). Although Murray argues for her own Platonic Muse, which she names as Calliope and Urania, as I will establish here, my own conception of Plato's Muse is one which is purely based on the draw exerted by philosophy. Although the tradition associated with the Muses is undoubtedly incorporated by Plato in this establishment, it is done so in order to distance his own *conception* of Muse from those of tradition.

Hippocrates are discussing some matter. Rather than break off the discussion when they reach Callias' house, the pair "stood in the doorway talking until we reached an agreement" (314c). Their discussion, then, was not idle chat, but was a matter of importance. In other words, it was something which involved them in such a way as to make all other matters fade in importance. Although their intention was to walk to the house of Callias, this intention was usurped by the draw of their ensuing dialogue.

"When we got to the doorway, we stood there talking about some subject which had come up on the way. As we didn't want to break off the discussion, but preferred to reach a conclusion and then go in, we stood in the doorway talking until we reached agreement." *Protagoras*, 314c.

As seems clear, this possession is not of a purely physical nature but is still consuming. It consumes its participants in the sense that they feel compelled to reach understanding and allow the matter at hand be brought to being. Crucially, though, it is a possession which Socrates and Hippocrates choose to embrace. Either one could break off the possession by simply refusing to continue the exchange, showing an essential level of control on behalf of the subjects. The subjects are also fully conscious of their own contributions. Unlike the artists, the discussants can be seen to be responsible for their own outputs, with a clearly observable knowledge claim. As I showed previously with Gadamer, this claim to knowledge simply rests in the progressive elements of a true dialogue, and the level of understanding reached *between* the discussants (pp. 94-95).

Yet, the draw of dialogue does not have to exist with just two or more discussants, but also exists when one is in discussion *with oneself*. For example, if one were to be a witness to a discussion in which various interesting points are raised, one may very well continue this discussion with oneself afterwards. In this way one's fellow discussant is the subject matter itself. Evidence of this type of insular possession can be seen in the second Platonic example to be discussed here, the *Symposium*.⁶⁶ For at the beginning of this work we find Socrates on his way to the house of Agathon when suddenly he is struck by a thought. This thought so consumes him he cannot even walk but must stay still in order to work the thought through.

⁶⁶ Rutherford (1995) recognises the similarities between these instances in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* (p. 125), but does not draw a parallel with any type of inspiration.

Aristodemus, who is walking with Socrates, recognises what is happening and advises the others when he arrives ahead of Socrates.

“This is a habit (ἔθος) he has: Sometimes he just goes and stands removed (ἀποστὰς), wherever he happens to be.” *Symposium*, 175b.

Socrates is referred to in this instance as literally turning himself inwards towards his own mind (“προσέχοντα τὸν νοῦν”, 174d), whereby nothing else truly matters. The verb ‘ἀποστὰς’ (the aorist of ἀφίστημι) has the connotations of departing or removing. Socrates is removing himself from the physical world by turning himself inwards towards his mind’s eye. This conception of ‘removing oneself’ lends itself well to my argument as to the unique form of inspiration being outlined here.⁶⁷ Later in the dialogue Alcibiades describes a similar occasion while on campaign, when Socrates spent an entire day and night glued to the same spot, utterly engrossed in some problem.⁶⁸

“For, while immersed in some problem at dawn he stood in the same spot meditating. And when he could not work it out he did not give up but simply stood there trying.” *Symposium*, 220c.

So while this type of dialogical possession is not purely physical, in the sense of an oracular possession let’s say, it can certainly affect us physically.⁶⁹ Yet it is the term used by Alcibiades to describe the hold Socrates had on him that shows further support for my argument. For he calls it “τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας” (218b), the possession of philosophy. I will discuss the *Symposium* in far greater detail in my next

⁶⁷ Plato plays with the tradition of inspiration in the *Symposium* by using the phrase ‘τὸ μανικός’ at 173d to describe the narrator of the speeches, Apollodorus. Why this is interesting is because Apollodorus is reciting a rather long and detailed account of the speeches in question. Under the more traditional conception of inspiration, Apollodorus can carry out such a feat because of his divine possession. Of course in the *Symposium* he is referred to in this way because of his devotion to Socrates. We see, then, the switch which I believe Plato is intending to establish between tradition and philosophy.

⁶⁸ For Bury (1969), the way in which Alcibiades’ description of Socrates in this way supports Aristodemus’ earlier utterance highlights the literary skill of this work. “The corroboration thus effected is one of many examples of the literary care and ingenuity with which Plato in this dialogue interweaves incident with speech” (Introduction, xix). Of course, this corroboration also means that there is something being emphasised. Given my argument here, I believe a fully intentioned Platonic inspiration is what is being emphasised.

⁶⁹ We note also that Agathon misunderstands the type of inspiration offered by philosophy. For upon his arrival, Socrates is beckoned to the couch of Agathon so that he could perhaps benefit from Socrates’ wisdom *by touching him* (“... τοῦ σοφοῦ ἀπτόμενός σου ἀπολαύσω”, 175c-d). Socrates comments on this deficiency in Agathon’s thought immediately, noting “how fine it would be, dear Agathon, if wisdom were like this, flowing from one who is full into one who is empty by mere contact with one another” (175d).

section, but this reference to a philosophical inspiration certainly lends credence to my argument. Of course, Alcibiades is not referring to a type of possession exerted by Socrates the man, but to a type of possession that comes *from what Socrates says*. This is a possession, then, an inspiration that is intimately bound to the Socratic method and, therefore, to dialogue. Although the example of Socrates being lost in thought while on campaign is somewhat of an extreme example, we may often find ourselves engrossed in an internal dialogue, whereby we may seem to others to be ‘lost’ in thought. The idea of being ‘lost’ while being somewhat helpful in hinting at our lack of control while involved in the dialogue (linking an inability to find one’s way out, with an inability to reach understanding) should not be interpreted to mean that we are beyond help. For we would only call someone lost who had the potential to be found. So only by first being lost in thought can we then hope to in some ways ‘find’ the subject matter. We find it by engaging it in dialogue and allowing it to present itself to our understanding.

Of course, we may very well be unable to find this subject matter and seek help from others. We do not seek help by telling them a story or making a speech or by outlining our own beliefs on the matter. Rather, we engage them in dialogue. Though a story or speech or outline may figure at some point, it is not through these means alone that understanding can be found. We notice here, then, a need for others. This need can be seen to establish a communally based education and dissemination. The discussants who are engaged in dialogue are bringing the matter under discussion into being in the same way as the player brings the game into being. We saw how, “[w]hat holds the player in its spell, draws him into play, and keeps him there is the game itself” (*TM*, 1.2.1.A), in the very same way as the things themselves draw us into dialogue. Most importantly, though, and as I have previously mentioned, “...the player experiences the game as a reality that surpasses him” (*TM*, 1.2.1.A), showing us once more the supremacy of the dialogue and the thing it attempts to bring into being. Although Plato’s interlocutors all have an agenda when they agree to discuss with Socrates, an agenda which stems from an inherent opinion or conceptual ideology, they soon find these motivations slipping away from them. We often note how, within the course of the dialogue, an interlocutor’s original position is either reduced to an incongruous particular (such as Polemarchus’ definition of justice or right as being the depositing of money at *Republic* 333c), or is unrecognisably changed. Now this is not carried out because of some desire of Socrates to embarrass

the interlocutor, but is rather the result of the dialogue itself being adhered to by Socrates' questioning. When a player accidentally scores in their own net we do not blame the referee. Rather we simply see the challenges of the game being shown in their full capacity. The game itself, just like the dialogue itself, is what governs its participants. This is of crucial importance for Gadamer.

"We say that we 'conduct' a conversation but the more genuine a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner." *TM*, 3.5.1.

Importantly, however, this is exacted through compulsion, not total possession because, just like in play, although none of the participants know what the outcome of the dialogue will be, they are still in control of their movements and general contributions. As we see again, any attempt to point the discussion towards a particular outcome is sophistic and thus a degenerate form of approach which hinders any genuine understanding. So in the very same way an artist is said to be compelled into composing a verse, or painting a picture, so too are discussants compelled into creating or entering a proper dialogue. Of course, I am not suggesting that all people who discuss are Platonic artists. Rather, I am intending to show in this instance how Plato's dialogues, by themselves illustrating how central the play aspect of dialogue is to the success of the work, share the same conception of world as that created by an artwork. This is a central claim of this part of my work. Of course, I am not arguing that Plato saw his works as the same type of play as I have described above in Gadamerian terms. Rather I simply used Gadamer's exposition on play to highlight for *us* the potentially aesthetic features of Plato's works.

In terms of inspiration, one of the key differentiations I must make between what has previously been described as traditional inspiration and this newly conceived 'Platonic' form, is its pedagogical capacity and how the 'players' in Plato's dialogues are led by Socrates to allow the subject-matter under discussion to 'come-to-be' through the play of words of the resulting dialogue. As the discussants will all learn from the discussion, Socrates and even Plato included, there is none of the unaccountability of the traditional arts. The means towards which the dialogue was created is clearly outlined at every step, unlike the creation of, let's say, a poem. This need for discussion is the very essence of what I am asserting Platonic inspiration to be. To show the power of this inspiration we see how, for Socrates in the *Symposium*, it could not even be stopped by such distractions as bitter cold, hunger, alcohol, or

even sleep. Within the work Socrates is described as overcoming all of these things when immersed in the pursuit of understanding. Of course, the relevance of having the character of Socrates overcome the human needs of cold and sleep is, in purely Platonic terms, to show how one must never give in to the body but must train oneself to overcome one's physical needs and desires, a point we find in Nussbaum (2001).⁷⁰ So although the beginnings of the dialogue may be within Socrates' head alone, it nevertheless results in him bringing the issue up with others. In other words, the dialogue finds its ultimate expression in a communal embrace.⁷¹ Throughout this thesis I have tried to show the importance of Gadamer's concept of the 'common sense', the community spirit from which a society teaches itself, to the educative aspects of Plato's dialogical methodology (especially pp. 46-47). Not just portraying dialogue but *initiating* it too has, therefore, always been a most central phase in this process.⁷² Getting lost in thought is a phenomenon which surely everyone has experienced at some stage, whereby we wrestle with an issue in the attempt to let it come through to our understanding, utterly oblivious to the 'outside' world. Yet the need to communicate this thought with others is an almost unquenchable human need. True Platonic inspiration, when properly attuned, can help and guide one in formulating, expressing, and discussing one's attempts at understanding. Just like the way the players of a game are not completely possessed by the game (in the sense that it is not the game which controls their movements), but merely allow the game to come-to-be through their involvement, so too do the Platonically inspired simply allow the subject-matter to work *through* them, without possessing them totally. Although we saw Socrates slightly overcome during his 'possession' in the *Symposium*, the deity in no way controlled his subsequent discussion with his fellow participants. Unlike its traditional form, Platonic inspiration is something to be explored, to be reasoned through. Yet, this very journey, this exploration of the inspiration itself, is what constitutes the dialogue in the first place. Essentially, the better one plays the game the closer the connection becomes with the divine as it

⁷⁰ With reference to the descriptions of Socrates' imperviousness to pain in the *Symposium* Nussbaum writes: "He (Socrates) really seems to think of himself as a being whose mind is distinct from his body, whose personality in no way identifies itself with the body and the body's adventures." p. 183.

⁷¹ I do not mean to say that Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* was what he was thinking about while he stood outside on the neighbour's porch at the beginning of the dialogue. I simply mean that whatever subject matter he was pursuing, will undoubtedly be brought up in later discussions.

⁷² This fact is mentioned in Smith's (1980) introduction to *DD*: "Good discussions are provocations to think further and precisely therein lies the pedagogical genius of Socrates' 'elenchos'" Introduction, x.

comes more and more into being. Ultimately, the greater the degree of inspiration the closer one comes to one's goal of understanding.

Yet if Plato does describe a uniquely philosophical inspiration in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* which can be attributed to the draw of all true dialogues, as I believe, and this inspiration results in the expression of philosophy, paradigmatically and aesthetically embodied by Plato's dialogues, then there is one apparently problematic part of the *Phaedrus* that we must return to now and address. The dialogical feature it refers to will also lead us to my third and final part. The section in question is at 274b-278b where Socrates details at length the inadequacies of the written word over the spoken. In trying to explain this apparent contradiction in terms, I will also be addressing an element of ambiguity that may have raised itself when I was describing my theory above. Though I did touch on the issue, how do I distinguish actual, real life philosophical discussions from Plato's dialogues? Is it to all such human dialogues that I am attributing an aesthetic framework? Well, during my work so far I have frequently referred to how Plato intended dialogue to be an unerringly educational feature of philosophy. Given this, one cannot see Plato's written dialogues as being self-contained. Just as Gadamer believed was true for artists (that they should not be held over and above their works), once Plato's works were embodied in the written word I believe Plato himself became part of his own audience. In this way the dialogues themselves become the sole catalyst for the communal expression of the ideas therein contained. In this respect, the written word is only negated, then, when compared to the spoken word.⁷³ For Gadamer, the very essence of dialectic is bound to the spoken word, so much so that man's whole relationship to this world is described as "...absolutely and fundamentally verbal in nature" (*TM*, 3.5.3.C.). For, eventually, all understanding is verbal, whether it happens in one's own mind or when expressed with others.⁷⁴ Of course one must work out a

⁷³ For example, the written word is not completely criticised. For in the *Laws* we find an interesting job for the Minister of Education when discussing the role of the philosophical discussion in the new state. "And if he [the Minister] comes across similar and related material [to Plato's] while working through prose writings, or the verse of poets, or when listening to unwritten compositions in simple prose that show a family resemblance to our discussion today, he must on no account let them slip through his fingers but have them committed to writing." *Laws*, 811c.

⁷⁴ Just how important language is to Gadamer can be seen in the following quote: "Language is the fundamental mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all-embracing form of the constitution of the world." 'The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem', *PH*, p. 3.

common language first with all discussants, a point which seems clear and obvious.⁷⁵ Yet, part of this common language can also be the terminology used (whether it's technical, subject-specific, or jargon-laden) and the degree of technicality, i.e. the level of difficulty of the discourse. As we saw in my examination of the *Phaedrus* and *Ion* earlier, this variegated approach was used to great effect by Plato (especially p. 125). Just as one would not speak Greek to someone who did not understand it, so too must one refrain from using mathematical terms and notation when speaking to, let's say, an artist, who does not have this language. For Gadamer, it was through spoken language that man investigated the world as well as relating himself and his historical being to this world.

"It is the medium of language alone that, related to the totality of beings, mediates the finite, historical nature of man to himself and to the world." *TM*, 3.5.3.B.

This means that, just like Socrates' eventual expression of his thoughts through dialogue (having been 'possessed' then compelled by the subject matter), so too must all experiences be necessarily expressed through language, including works of art. For Gadamer, however, language is not just a feature of our being in the world, but actually helps constitute this very being. I had mentioned previously how our own incorporation of language, including that of Plato's, was essentially mimetic in nature (pp. 73-74). As our language is something we inherit from our own particular culture, socio-historical environment, and tradition, it is a manifestation for Gadamer of just how situated our being-in-the-world actually is. Language, then, is by no means a simple object in our hands but is instead "the reservoir of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive our world" ('On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection', *PH*, p. 29). Yet part of the reason language is hailed to such an extent by Gadamer is, undoubtedly, its mode of expression through dialogue. In this way, language is by no means a solitary affair but becomes, instead, another aspect of the *communality* that is necessary for understanding. When we speak we usually want to be heard, showing the inclusive element inherent in language. For Gadamer, "speaking does not belong in the sphere of the 'I' but in the sphere of the 'we'" ('Man and Language', *PH*, p. 65). To connect this to art one might argue that the very nature of an artistic experience is the way in which it almost demands

⁷⁵ "Hence reaching an understanding on the subject matter of a conversation necessarily means that a common language must first be worked out in the conversation." *TM*, 2.4.3.C.ii.

discussion. We often feel so close to favoured pieces of art, that we experience a strong sense of vicarious pride if someone else, who was not aware of the work, seeks it out after our recommendation and is just as moved. Even though we had nothing to do with the work's creation, we nevertheless have a sense of justification and overt satisfaction. But this discussion of the work is not a mere by-product of the artistic experience but is, in fact, its most accomplished feature. For here, the work is truly allocated with the unique ontological identity we examined earlier. In language, then, the work finally becomes realised, because it is only through its being discussed that it can effectively come-to-be. Similarly, Plato's dialogues, while being the paradigm of ideal artistry, only find their full achievement in their being discussed. This is a crucial part of my argument, being a further connection between Plato's works and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. So when Plato relegates the written word towards the end of the *Phaedrus*, he is indicating how his works must not be studied like a scientific treatise, but must be discussed. The treatise cannot answer questions, unlike the dialogue that not only attempts to cover any possible questions, but also shows how best to conduct any future discussions, should the text not happen to cover the question one has in mind. Although Socrates often plays the devil's advocate in order to cover any possible objections, it would be impossible to cover them all.⁷⁶ It is for this reason that the dialogical form taken by Plato is so crucial, given how it attempts to show its audience how best to address these unmentioned points. So it is only when discussed, then, that the potential of Platonic philosophy becomes recognised.⁷⁷

Yet, as we saw earlier when discussing the notion of prejudices, and the inherent conditions of our understanding (pp. 21-23), there is a definite socio-historical perspective from which our contributions to dialogues come. This perspective is called by Gadamer our 'horizons'. This notion is explained best by Gadamer himself.

⁷⁶ It is not always Socrates who plays devil's advocate. If we think of Glaucon's re-stating of the case for injustice in *Republic* Book II. From 358bff Glaucon presents a convincing case in favour of injustice, *even though he does not believe this case himself*. Essentially, he did not feel that Socrates' response to Thrasymachus was adequate, thus necessitating his re-stating of it.

⁷⁷ Another, perhaps more historical reason why Plato chooses to exalt the spoken word over the written may be seen by the fact that Isocrates, who was critical of Plato and ran his own rival academy, apparently had a career in oratory curtailed by a fear of public speaking, meaning he had a strong reliance on the written word. Evidence for these assertions, including the claim that Plato and Isocrates were friends, can be found in Diogenes Laertius', 'Life of Plato', in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, IX.

“The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. Applying this to the thinking mind, we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth.” *TM*, 2.4.1.B.iv.

In other words a horizon is a thing's past and ever-flowing present, which projects indeterminably into the future. Although it is our historical embeddedness which creates our horizons, as noted by Lebech (2006), this embeddedness provides the means by which we may critically examine our prejudices, thereby expanding our horizons and broadening our knowledge.⁷⁸ Yet, precisely because our history is continuously moving, so too are our horizons, meaning they are not rigid.⁷⁹ When we engage with a fellow discussant, or thing, we must take their horizon into account, making sure to remain open at all times. So when we engage in conversation, then, our world-view is encountering that of another.⁸⁰ What happens in agreement, therefore, an agreement which can only come about through language, is a fusion of horizons, a truly common horizon which does not belong to either one of the discussants by themselves, but rather, comes to exist *between* them. When I say that I understand someone, I do not mean that I actually understand them in terms of their absolute being, but rather, that a communion of thought has occurred. This agreement does not solely exist in one or other of the discussants but in both.⁸¹ As is becoming clear, this also typifies the Platonic mode of education described above, where it is the horizons of each interlocutor which is used by Plato to form this Gadamerian fusion in the form of a dialogical understanding. Staying with this concept of Gadamer's, we can say that by creating his works in such a way as to draw an audience into engaging

⁷⁸ “...the understanding individual experiences in every situation of understanding a strange horizon before them, a strangeness they must overcome. In the concrete act of understanding within which the understanding individual overcomes the tension of the familiarity of their pre-understanding and the strangeness of the other ‘a real fusion of horizons occurs’ (*TM*, 306)” p. 230.

⁷⁹ The importance of history in the formation of our horizons is pivotal for Gadamer. “But it seems to me there can be no doubt that the great horizon of the past, out of which our culture and our present live, influences us in everything we want, hope for, or fear in the future.” ‘The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem’, *PH*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Gadamer explains this in a short essay entitled ‘The Incapacity for Conversation’. “When two people come together and enter into an exchange with one another, then there is always an encounter between, as it were, two worlds, two world-views, and two world pictures” Vessey & Blauwkamp trans., 2006.

⁸¹ However, an important element of this communal agreement is that it must begin in oneself. For Gadamer, all understanding is ultimately an understanding of oneself. So although the agreement is communal, in that it exists between the discussants, it must still come from an understanding within each individual. “And the understanding that emerges is not primarily an understanding resulting from agreement with others but an understanding with oneself. Only people who have reached an understanding with themselves can be in agreement with others.” *PDE*, p. 65.

with the work, Plato sought to have a continual fusion with this audience.⁸² As follows, this fusion of horizons is what takes place when we engage with any work of art. The understanding we reach, if any, is again, not within us or within the work, but is created *between* us and the work.⁸³ Just as an artwork raises new questions to each successive audience it encounters through time, so too do Plato's dialogues attempt just such a life-span, a point which will now be developed in terms of the ever present, or *contemporaneous* nature of art and the Platonic dialogue.⁸⁴

⁸² We can see this especially well in the *Phaedrus*' discussion of the written and spoken word. For Socrates clearly outlines that the route of dialogue is a long one, one which cannot be rushed through or forced. "The dialectician chooses a proper soul and plants and sows within it discourse accompanied by knowledge – discourse capable of helping itself as well as the man who planted it, which is not barren but produces a seed from which more discourse grows in the character of others. Such discourse makes the seed forever immortal and renders the man who has it as happy as any human being can be" (276e-277a). So we can see that all types of dialogue, including Plato's works, are part of a continual process.

⁸³ Mitscherling (2002) recognises this fusion of horizons between us and the artwork. "Indeed, the 'play' in which the (potential) work and the (actualizing) viewer engage may be regarded as itself a sort of 'fusion of horizons', a 'dialogue' between two 'subjects' that gives rise to the intersubjective constitution of new values, new beliefs, new ways of looking at the world" (p. 156 – 157). As I have argued for in this section, and indeed throughout my work so far, the use of *dialogue* is not only key to understanding Gadamer's aesthetics, but in seeing my own use of Gadamer in interpreting Plato and the Platonic method. In his introduction to *LPD*, Paslick (1994) emphasises the importance of this one word to Gadamer. "Dialogue – no other word captures quite as well the content, the method, and the envisioned ideal of Gadamer's hermeneutics." Introduction, viii.

⁸⁴ Of course, any dialogue *about* a work of art is, invariably a dialogue *with* a work of art, which changes all involved. That a fusion of horizons occurs in art, just as it does in dialogue, is agreed by Sullivan (1997) in *LLP*. "Gadamer seems to be arguing that *the experience of art* is neither subjective nor objective. Rather it is a dialectical interchange between the objective work of art and the subjective viewer, and what transpires in the metaphorical conversation is a fusion of horizons which changes both the work of art and the viewer" p. 236.

Part III:

The Actualisation of Art and Dialectic in the Interpretive Grasp of the Spectator: The Comedo-tragic Ideal

1. Introduction

In my last section I examined the notion of play in Gadamer's treatment of art, showing his incorporation of a transcendently conceived world of play in positing a unique and ontologically whole notion of existence for art. Just as play was seen as being governed by its own time-world, with its inherent rules and regulations shaping the contribution and method of operation of the participants, so too was the world of the artwork shown to contain an autonomous time which drew its participants into its own regulatory structure. I argued that one must belong to an artwork in the same way as one must belong to a game, in the sense that one needs to acknowledge an overall and persistent existence if one is to truly recognise what each world has to offer. I then isolated the concept of play in its incorporation by Gadamer and extended its use in illuminating the essence of Platonic dialectic. This was achieved using explicit examples from some of Plato's works, where a definite comparison was seen in how play and dialogue worked on and affected their participants. Given Gadamer's initial use of play in terms of art, I then argued for an essentially aesthetic foundation to Plato's works, whereby the paradigmatic way to approach an artwork was seen in the Platonic dialogue and the dialogical methodology described therein.

The discussion of a Platonic approach to art necessitated an examination of artistic inspiration, an area of traditional art that Plato seemed to extol in some of his dealings with the artists. I pursued this line of inquiry by showing the dialectically motivated irony involved in Plato's treatment of the traditional form of inspiration in the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*. The *Ion*, I argued, highlighted the professional unaccountability of the rhapsodes and poets, whereby inspiration is strategically positioned as a lifeline for the hapless Ion. This lifeline, which Ion eventually embraces, resulted quite intentionally in the poets and rhapsodes losing any claim to knowledge. In the *Phaedrus*, however, a traditional stance on inspiration was argued as being feigned by Socrates in order to coerce Phaedrus towards another, wholly Platonic basis of the concept. An important part of my examination of these dialogues included Plato's use of characterisation, where the design of both interlocutors hinted at the section of

audience the works were intended to address. Plato's alternate inspiration was then centred on Platonic philosophy and was presented as a cognitively more satisfying, and artistically more rational, foundation of endeavour. Evidence to support this idea of a Platonic form of inspiration was seen in the presentation of Socrates in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium*. Finally, the aesthetic consequences of this Platonic inspiration were once more revealed by linking the argument back to my original Gadamerian examination. For, within this unique form of inspiration participants were said to be controlled in the same way as the game and artwork of Gadamer's analogous theory, not through possession but more through belonging to an overall and continual structure.

Yet the *Symposium* also holds the key to illuminating a Platonic critique of perhaps the most popular of the traditional arts. For I believe a central part of this dialogue to be concerned with dismantling what was the contemporary forms of tragedy and comedy, and replacing them with Platonic content that celebrated the comedo-tragedy of life as rooted in the human condition. Although there are undoubted aspects of these art forms rejected by Plato there are, nonetheless, a few key features kept by him and used to propel the philosophical art. One of the most important of these features kept by Plato was, I believe, the emphasis on, and directedness towards, an audience. I will thereby extend the idea expressed towards the end of my last part, in which Plato's attack on the written word in the *Phaedrus* was only seen as stemming from an absolute promotion of the spoken word and the necessity of dialogical transmission for the accomplishment of the works. The Gadamerian influence on this argument is clear. Although he does not mention comedy, Gadamer held tragedy to be an ideal expression of art because of the direct presence of the spectators. Yet as comedy shared in this direct presence it is not too much of a stretch to use Gadamer's celebration of tragedy for both art forms. There will, nonetheless, be a split in this part of my work. While my arguments for the tragic elements of Platonic dialectic will come from a Gadamerian celebration of tragedy, my argument for the comic features will be solely my own. Also, when I discuss Gadamer's celebration of tragedy I will only extend it to comedy when discussing the structural features that are common, i.e. the fact that they were both performed live by actors for an audience. Of course, in terms of the content of tragedy, no such extension will be possible. In sum, though, what I hope to examine in this final part of my work is, once more, how Gadamer's paradigmatic conception of art, seen here in

tragedy and extended by me to comedy, shares a similar method of operation and mode of expression to Plato's dialogues.

I begin by outlining the reasons why Gadamer lauded tragedy (and comedy by extension), combining his varied encounters with this art form into a singular account, dealing with such features as art's transformation into structure in performance and the significance of the festival, finally showing the cognitive potential that is exemplified in this art form. Turning then to Plato and the preliminary similarities between his works and the structure of tragedy and comedy, I show how the reasons given for his rejection of tragedy in the *Republic* and *Laws* are based on how heavily politicised tragedy was in his time. As is clear, this has been a common thread to all of my dealings with Plato and the arts. In terms of comedy, I will present a similar outline of the reasons Plato gives for altering this art. Essentially, though, his criticisms of comedy do not conclude in total banishment but once more end in alteration. I will show how Plato in fact utilised key comedic features in his works, as especially seen in his presentation of Hippias in the *Hippias Major*. Turning then to tragedy I argue that Plato's *Phaedo* contains a similarly intentioned use of some of the base elements of this art form in the ultimate celebration of philosophy's own tragic hero; Socrates. The *Phaedo* is undoubtedly the best example of a Platonically conceived artistry, given its masterful weaving of the philosophical with the literary. Yet it also highlights the central notion of my thesis, whereby it shows all that Gadamer hailed in art within the expression of this weave. Finally, then, I combine the comedic elements examined in the *Hippias Major* with the tragic elements found in the *Phaedo* to offer a unique analysis of the *Symposium*, in which both tragedy **and** comedy are treated. As seen in the representative thrust of the characters Agathon and Aristophanes, it is in the *Symposium* where we find Plato comment on the tragi-comedy of life and learning. What I hope to show in each of these analyses is how, once stripped of their contemporary connotations and associations, the arts of comedy and tragedy, what they essentially were, held great significance for Plato and were used as facilitating parts in his philosophical methodology.

2. Gadamer on Tragedy and Art's Transformation into Structure

In my last part I examined the parallelism that is argued by Gadamer as existing between the world of art and the world of play. In terms of their ontological structure

and method of operation, both worlds drew their participants into them and governed their actions within their wholly autonomous and somewhat transcendently conceived being.¹ In this regard, both worlds were seen as something that we must belong to if we wish to garner their cognitive potential, where no separation was seen to exist “...between the work of art and the person who experiences it” (‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, *RB*, p. 28). However, these worlds are not just posited as being comparatively significant for Gadamer. For a total convergence can be seen when the play of art becomes itself a play. This connection between play and a tragic, or indeed comedic, performance is not so contrived if we recognise how performers in plays are often called ‘players’. Just as a player plays their role in bringing out the successful representation of the game, whether as part of a team or on their own, so too do players in a drama or comedy attempt just such a representation, bringing forth the work itself. For Gadamer, tragedy is thereby presented in terms of an ideal accomplishment of art, given its direct incorporation of play. We saw previously how art was to be viewed just like play as a live, dynamic event that created new meaning with every successive experience, so long as this meaning was evoked from a dialogical approach to the work (especially pp. 94-98). As is clear, these active elements are necessary parts of tragedy and comedy. Of course tragedy still retains its seriousness, as well as its mode of access for self-presentation, but is more obviously directed towards an audience. Although I had briefly suggested in my last part that the spectator was an important part of play, it is in fact because of the direct presence of the spectators that tragedy is the ideal art form for Gadamer. I do not mean this in a qualitative way, that tragedy is somehow ‘better’ than the other art forms for Gadamer, but rather, that tragedy highlights in a more obvious and direct way the elements of art that made it so paradigmatic in showing the truth values manifested in the human sciences. It is the most explicit example of art’s ‘transformation into structure’, whereby the identity and world of the work become wholly autonomous. For, in this transformation, it is the audience and spectators of the play who become the players, not the actors, as they are the ones through whom the play is understood.

“A complete change takes place when play, as such, becomes a play. It puts the spectator in the place of the player. He – and not the player – is the person for and in whom the play is played.” *TM* 1.2.1.A.

¹ By ‘transcendent’ I simply mean that the world of the artwork existed above its physical manifestation, thereby transcending its physicality.

Of course, because of this shared mode of presentation, we can imagine a similar celebration for comedy, in the sense that it too puts the spectator in the place of the player, as the whole approach of the comedic performance is to find an end in the spectators. So whereas in other arts the audience who ‘play’ the work give meaning and structure to it after the fact, in both tragedy and comedy this meaning and structure is given immediately. The work is presented directly to the audience who attribute meaning to it as it evolves.² With a work of literature or a picture, for example, this instantaneous type of presentation for the spectator is not possible because its audience is not confined to a particular time or space. Rather, the work of literature or painting presents itself anew to each successive audience across different time-periods and places. With tragedy and comedy, however, although the work itself as an intellectual whole is stretched in a similar fashion, its mode of being is fixed to each particular presentation. So it is this factor of presentation, then, that is a central aspect of the work. Like the other performance-based arts, such as music and poetry, the work only exists in its being presented. It therefore relies on presentation, which of course includes the element of interpretation, to exist. If we think of our favourite piece of music and ask ourselves where and in what ways this piece exists, we will almost always immediately think of it while being performed. In fact we cannot even think of it otherwise.³ Performance now becomes the means by which the work comes into being. One cannot separate the work from its performance as if it were a mere use of the work. Rather, it is in the performance, its presentation to an audience, that tragedy becomes fully realised. It is here that, for Gadamer, “...we encounter the work itself, as the divine is encountered in the religious rite” (*TM*, 1.2.1.B).

However, just as we saw that the game loses its identity if it becomes a show that caters solely for the spectators (pp. 111-112), so too must a play be similarly careful. In other words the play must not pander to the crowd and its current sensibilities. If the play is to be truly regarded as a work of art it must never appear as if it is aimed simply to please us, as this keeps us aware of ourselves and in our own world. As we saw previously, the transformative features of art involve us temporarily

² The important role of the spectators is acknowledged by Lebech (2006). “The spectator is not simply a disinterested observer, but a participant who belongs to play and is active in playing” (p. 226). That the play must not be solely for the spectators, in the sense that the players cater their involvement specifically for them, is similarly attested to by Lebech.

³ Even if one thinks of sheet-music for one’s favourite piece, one can only read this in terms of how it will be played. Once more it is in the performance of the piece that meaning is constituted.

losing ourselves in its world. If we feel the work is designed to please us, in the sense that it is *trying* to draw us in, then it is not a genuine experience but is more akin to simple titillation. Yet, is this problematic for a discussion of comedy? Does comedy not set out to satisfy its audience? Although the motivation of the comedic writer and performer is to satisfy their audience, it should not pander. The satire and even personal attacks of Aristophanes would undoubtedly have split his audience. Some would have agreed with the portrayals though some would not. Aristophanes would undoubtedly have been aware of this polarising effect, but did not let it affect him as it is a common theme in his works (a simple example of this are the names of the characters Philocleon and Bdelycleon in his *Wasps*). Crucially, then, there is nothing watered down about his comedies, as there should not be in any true comedy. In this sense, then, it is a comedy which does not compromise for its audience which is the truest expression of comedy's transformation into structure. For this way, the audience does not feel that the piece is deliberately trying to please them. On the other hand, we too must never expect to feel a certain way when experiencing the artwork. If we do anticipate a particular emotional stimulus, even if we receive it, this is, again, in no way transformative. As Gadamer notes, it is instead "...total obliviousness to the real appeal that the work of art addresses to us in favour of a quite secondary level in which we delight in aesthetic taste for its own sake" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*).⁴ So, in other words, the work must always go beyond our expectations. This of course means that the interpretation of the actors, whether of the work as a whole or of their particular roles, while contributing to the success of the play as an artwork in its being brought forth, does not determine the *meaning* of the play. Again we see how in the play's 'transformation into structure' the play *itself* gets "absolute autonomy" even over the actors and the creator of the play. The actors, then, are treated like all other artists who must not propel themselves above the work. Rather, they must sink into the play and ultimately disappear. For Gadamer, "[w]hen we become aware of an actor or singer or any creative artist as mediator, we exercise a secondary level of reflection" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 52). Their job, then, is to allow the work to exist through their performances. Should they try to put themselves ahead of the work, they will simply block the meaning of the work

⁴ We can see this point taken up again in a later essay. "The only relevant thing is whether we encounter a spiritual and ordering energy in the work, or whether we are simply reminded of some cultural motif or the peculiarities of this or that particular artist." 'Art and Imitation', *RB*, p. 95.

from coming into being. The audience will not be able to subsume themselves into its world because of the actor's desire to supersede the work's identity. Good actors, therefore, are those people whose faces we know but whose names we don't (or whose names we know but whose personal life we know nothing about).

"They (the actors) do not display themselves, but succeed in evoking the work and its inner coherence with a kind of unforced self-evidence." 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 52.

Once more it is the work that is shown as being the most important feature of art, with all involved elements of the work needing to fade into its transformed structure in order for it truly to live up to its potential.

So within the interpretive grasp of the spectators the work achieves its most direct fulfilment. In order to explain the relevance of the spectator to tragedy, Gadamer invokes the Greek concept of the *theoros*. For the *theoroi* were the delegates who were sent to a festival as representatives of a deme or tribe. In this way they are just as relevant in a discussion of comedy as tragedy, given how both would have been performed at the festivals they attended. Essentially, the only function of the *theoroi* was to be there. They simply bore witness to the festival by their being present, much like witnesses to a wedding ceremony. Having no other involvement than to be there gave the *theoros* a special function.

"*Theoria* is a true participation, not something active but something passive (πάθος), namely being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees." *TM*, 1.2.1.C.

So although the spectator will not contribute to the performance of the play, their presence is utterly mandatory for the completion of the play. They are participating, therefore, by being present. It is without question for Gadamer that, "...to be present means to participate", and that "...watching something is a genuine mode of participating" (*TM*, 1.2.1.C). Yet the idea of participation has been a central part of every aspect of Gadamer's thoughts on art so far, especially with regard to the notion of belonging to the world of the artwork and thereby participating in its emergence into being. The *theoros* is such an important feature of Gadamer's concept because its participatory nature is the core root of our present word 'theory'. As is explained in the various speeches and essays of another of Gadamer's works, *Praise of Theory*, it is through this etymological trace that the concept of theory can be re-situated, not in

terms of a rationalising of nature, but rather, in terms of this participation. Once more we see how we cannot objectify the world in the attempt to elicit truth claims from it, but must rather see our own involvement in these claims. So just as the delegates to the Greek festival, the *theoroi*, gave significance to the performances by their presence, so too is 'theory' something we witness. Gadamer explains this role more clearly in the essay from which the work gets its title, 'Praise of Theory'.

"The word (*theoria*) means observing (the constellations, for example), being an onlooker (at a play, for instance), or a delegate participating in a festival." 'Praise of Theory', *PT*, p. 31.

The participatory element of theory is a fundamental part of Gadamer's agenda for the human sciences in *Truth and Method*, and was described in greater detail earlier in my first part (especially pp. 24-25). With regard to tragedy and comedy, though, and in a much simpler way, a performance without any spectators loses its credentials as a performance. Now, to be sure, a difference must be seen here between a spectator and someone who looks at something out of curiosity.

"Obviously there is an essential difference between a spectator who gives himself entirely to the play of art and someone who merely gapes at something out of curiosity." *TM*, 1.2.1.C.

Gadamer establishes this difference in terms of the interest needed to have an artistic experience. Especially in our modern age, Gadamer believed us to be impatient too quickly with phenomena, an impatience that is drawn from the flood of stimuli we are presented with on a daily basis. This has made us less and less receptive to the demands made on us by, amongst other things, works of art. Curiosity, then, described by Gadamer as a "mindless gaping that is always drawn in by the newest thing and never dwells on or gets absorbed in anything" ('Praise of Theory', *PT*, p. 22), is a symptom of this impatience, whereby we expect an immediate experience or simply move on. This will never characterise an artistic experience. This curiosity, then, though seemingly harmless, is, I believe, an ultimately illegitimate way of approaching art. An initial desire is mandatory, therefore, given how those who are taken to the theatre or to a gallery out of anything other than genuine interest will rarely (want to) appreciate and undergo this artistic experience.

Yet the essential nature of performance in both tragedy and comedy also shows us in clearer terms how each representation of the work will be uniquely

different. With different actors, different (choral) directors, different audiences, and even different languages (today), all that remains in the presentation of the work is the work itself. For Gadamer, this highlights in great detail what he calls the *contemporaneous* nature of art where "...every repetition is as original as the work itself" (*TM*, 1.2.1.B). The contemporaneous aspect of art is an extremely significant element to Gadamer's aesthetic theories. Let me take Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* as my example. As this play has been performed for thousands of years all over the world, it is only the essential being of the work that remains as any type of absolute.⁵ This essential being which constitutes the work's ontological identity rests in name alone *until* performed. We say we know this work, we can identify it and even analyse it yet what *is* it that we identify? This is the essential problem with the performed arts, though it is what gives these arts their significance for Gadamer. For they move from existing in name alone to a more phenomenal existence through their being performed. In and through the performance the name of the work becomes embodied in the only way available to it; performance. Essentially, though, none of these presentations are better or more original than any other, even its first performance in 428 B.C. This is a key point for Gadamer. Every performance is based on the individual interpretations of all those involved so every performance will be unique. The historicity of the work is not something to be abandoned completely, but simply does not add to the meaning of the piece or the understanding that it has the potential to evoke.⁶ Gadamer writes that "an absolute contemporaneousness exists between the work and its present beholder that persists unhampered despite every intensification of the historical consciousness" ('Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', *PH*, p. 95). What this means, then, is that, for Gadamer, it is the essential being of the work itself that confronts us in each successive encounter. As mentioned, this essential being is located in word and name until performed. For example, Beethoven's ninth symphony, like Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, or Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* exist only in word and name until performed. Then these works are brought to exist through the

⁵ Although the original Greek text may be said to remain the same, there is no *one* original text, like there is with a painting let's say. So because of the absence of an original work that we can point to as being the work, the essential being of *Oedipus Tyrannos* rests in its performance alone.

⁶ Despite this, though, the work of art does still speak to the historian. But it does so in the same way as it does for all people. "The work of art says something to the historian: it says something to each person as if it were said especially to him, as something present and contemporaneous. Thus our task is to understand the meaning of what it says and to make it clear to ourselves and others" 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', *PH*, p. 100.

performance. Gadamer's argument is that the linguistic existence of the works, their existence while not being performed, is the only thing that stays as any type of absolute. Since their more phenomenal existence is brought about through their being performed, it is an essentially dynamic existence. As I noted in my last part, even the author of the piece is not the prescribed and only interpreter of his work, showing again the vibrancy of how Gadamer conceived of art. As historical beings who inevitably become history ourselves, the idea of an absolute interpretation of a work seemed absurd to him.⁷ However, it is still the same work that speaks to us each time. It is the same work because, as mentioned, the name of the work remains. Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, in terms of the work's name, has not changed since it was written, continuing to exist unchanged today. When we talk of this work we need not necessarily be talking about a particular performance of it. The text of the work will only remain the same in a representative sense, not in any actual sense. What I mean is that each text is a copy of an original, more essential text that exists in an ontological realm that is above and beyond its copies. I can destroy my copy of *Oedipus Tyrannos* but this will not take away from the essential being of the text itself. When I talk about the same work speaking to us each time, then, I am talking of its essential being. What does change, though, is how the work is performed. Each performance is thereby contemporaneous with the work, bringing it into whatever age it is performed in. Gadamer does not mean that each new age should put a 'modern' spin on their interpretation. They do not have to try because they cannot help but do so. Even a performance that strives to be as close to the work as possible is still a contemporaneous interpretation, although, as I mentioned, it is not a 'better' interpretation because of this focus on some perceived fidelity. As the identity of the work is present in all interpretations, "[t]hey (the performances) are all contemporaneous (*gleichzeitig*) with it" (*TM*, 1.2.1.B). So there is a definite positivism here with regard to the inclusiveness of the work. For it is not only each participant in the work that becomes contemporaneous with it, but the spectators too become similarly contemporaneous. The spectators and participants are thereby seen to exist along with the work every time it is presented. For Gadamer the work, "says something to each person as if it were said especially to him, as something present and contemporaneous" ('Aesthetics and Hermeneutics', *PH*, p. 100). We often hear of

⁷ "In view of the finitude of our historical existence, it would seem that there is something absurd about the whole idea of a unique, correct interpretation." *TM*, 1.2.1.B.

artworks ‘speaking’ to people, but in a way that makes them feel that they were the sole recipients of its message. This was an undoubted part of art’s draw for Gadamer, where the ability of the works to transcend their original circumstances and present themselves anew to each successive age, hinted at the unique capabilities of art.

“The language of art is constituted precisely by the fact that it speaks to the self-understanding of every person, and it does this as ever present and by means of its own contemporaneousness.” ‘Aesthetics and Hermeneutics’, *PH*, p. 102.

As is clear, it was this ability of the artwork to speak to each person who chose to experience it that constituted the anamnestic draw of the work. There is also an undoubtedly communal achievement of the work in this respect as well, which will be discussed in greater detail a little later on.

In the final section of my last part (pp. 138-140), I argued through an examination of Plato’s claim in the *Phaedrus* that the spoken word is superior to the written word, that the accomplishment of all works of art, not just the transitory arts, lay in their being discussed, presented, and interpreted. Tragedy and comedy once more exemplify the necessity of this in its contemporaneous nature. For, it *must* be interpreted if it is to be performed. Each participant in the performance of the work needs to interpret their part in the work in order for them to successfully perform. Even the worst performers need to have some element of interpretation of their parts or else they would not know when and where to place the various unwritten elements of performance, such as when to pause and where to emphasise. This is a necessary part of the performance but is, as I have suggested, an ultimately unique and personal interpretation. So although each performance will be unavoidably unique, they are contemporaneous with each other because of the subject-matter they share in the work itself. In order further to explain this almost paradoxical combination of tragedy and comedy’s transcendent persistence with their works’ particular existence, Gadamer used the example of the festival, a highly significant comparison for my later usage of Gadamer in Platonic terms.

3. The Ontological Significance of the Festival

So no ‘original’ interpretation of the work is to be seen as paradigmatic. In a similar way, an interpretation should not focus itself on some previous interpretation simply

because it came first. Gadamer uses the example of festivals to illustrate this point. For when we celebrate some festival, St. Patrick's Day for example, we do not celebrate any previous celebration, or even the first celebration, but instead are celebrating an original ideal which never changes over time. Although these ideals may themselves be timeless, each celebration will undoubtedly be different. Because the people will change year by year, so the celebration will reflect this change. Also, just as the tragicomic and comic work only comes into being when performed, so the festival too only comes into being when celebrated. Its very existence is thereby intrinsically tied to its being celebrated. "Enactment", as Gadamer notes, "is the festival's mode of being" ('The Festive Character of Theatre', *RB*, p. 59). Yet, just like the artwork, the festival too is governed by its own time-world. What Gadamer means by this is how the time occupied by celebrating the festival is automatically 'festive'. Perhaps this can be better shown in the example of Easter, whose dates are not fixed year by year. The time it occupies has nothing festive of itself yet becomes festive once attributed as the requisite dates. Gadamer himself uses the example of 'youth' to explain this, a phenomenon he calls 'autonomous time'. For, our youth is a similarly indeterminate time-period that nevertheless exists and constitutes its own non-specific period of time. Of course, this was seen as being one of the governing features of art, whereby, just like a living organism, the artwork is "...similarly determined by its own temporal structure rather than by the quantifiable duration of its existence through time" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 43). With music or poetry, for example, the 'time' of the work is an essential feature. If one gets the time wrong, it can have disastrous effects on one's presentation and performance. For, the performance can 'fail' if it does not bring the work into being. For Gadamer, then, "[e]very work of art imposes its own temporality upon us" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 45).⁸ Of course, by having its own time-world the festival is, again, naturally separated from our everyday lives and experiences. For the duration of our exposure to the artwork we belong to its time-world, in the sense that it transports us thus and keeps us within its reaches. As I have been showing, this separation enables a more accessible presentation of its subject-matter, a key aspect of the unique capabilities of art for Gadamer.

⁸ This unique temporality was a significant factor in Gadamer's connection of the festival to the world of art, as well as highlighting the utterly unique features of each. "An entity that exists only by always being something different is temporal in a more radical sense than everything that belongs to history. It has its being only in becoming and return." *TM*, 1.2.1.C

However, the notion of the festival is not included by Gadamer as a mere exemplar. For the very roots of theatre are seen as coming from the ritual moving, dancing, and singing of the religious festivals. Greek theatre was, after all, not the permanent theatre of today but was, instead, dependent on the presence of certain festivals for their enactments. Yet one of the most important features of these festivals, and all festivals, is not just the ideals they are based on or even the theatrical elements they employ, but instead, the sense of community they create.⁹ For example, although the introduction of Christianity to Ireland is the original ideal upon which St. Patrick's Day is based, and is, thereby, what remains absolute in the differing annual festivals celebrating this fact, it is not realistically what is on everybody's mind. What is on people's mind, however, and can be seen much clearer in the small villages and towns outside of the main cities, is getting together with the other members of the community and enjoying a celebratory parade and a drink or two. We need only look back to how the Greek theatre was born and the cult of Dionysus to see how this is not a contemporary happenstance. For the parade, the dancing, and the alcohol are all explicitly present here too. The festival is much like the idea of the 'experience' in that it is essentially different from our everyday lives. With the festival, however, this separation is an uplifting sensation that lifts all participants, with the spectators included as participants, into what truly defines a community, given how they are brought together for this common purpose. For Gadamer, the festival "...raises the participants out of their everyday existence and elevates them into a kind of universal communion" ('The Festive Character of Theatre', *RB*, p. 58). So we can see once more here why tragedy is so ideal. Whereas in my last sections I described the benefits of the individual's artistic experience combining with others into a 'common sense', in tragedy this common sense can be created almost immediately, a feature seen most clearly in the collective happening of Greek theatre.¹⁰ Tragedy (and comedy by extension) is not just an individual's artistic experience but becomes a community's artistic experience. As we see in the festival, our willing participation contributes to its success, where the spectators are central once again. Feeling that we belong to our community and sharing the festive experience with this community becomes a defining, comparative example of the transformative potential of art. It is

⁹ As Gadamer notes, "[a] festival is an experience of community and represents community in its most perfect form. A festival is meant for everyone" 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', *RB*, p. 38.

¹⁰ This importance of the community participating in Greek theatre will be addressed later in this part.

not uncommon to feel this sense of collective transportation when one is a spectator in a live artistic experience, such as when witnessing a play or opera. We feel lifted in a far more definite sense than when having a solitary experience. It is not that we just feel part of the work, or even part of the crowd, but rather that these elements combine into a communal becoming. We feel a part of something that truly transcends us.

4. The Cognition of Tragedy and Comedy

Yet is this transformative experience a cognitive one? In tragedy we can see most clearly how the recognition of our ultimate finiteness comes to the fore. As I examined in my first part (especially in Section III), it was this recognition which formed part of what Gadamer described as the cognitive capacity of art. When discussing this potential of tragedy, Gadamer incorporates Aristotle's much feted theory of *eleos* and *phobos* as being part of the cognitive facility of tragedy. Given how Aristotle included this theory to describe the effect of tragedy on the spectator (*Poetics*, 1452a-b), it is perhaps unsurprising that Gadamer would trace such an influence here.¹¹ Yet, for Gadamer, *eleos* and *phobos* are not subjective emotions that emerge from, and are felt by, the spectator, but are, rather, part of the wave that washes over them from the work. *Eleos* and *phobos* are "...events that overwhelm man and sweep him away" (*TM*, 1.2.1.C) and are what strike us during the moment of recognition. Why we pity the tragic character is the same reason we fear for their situation. Because their fate is ultimately our own.

"What is experienced in such an excess of tragic suffering is something truly common. The spectator recognizes himself and his own finiteness in the face of the power of fate." *TM*, 1.2.1.C.

The tragic experience is thereby most potent because of this anamnestic realisation on behalf of the spectators, where our finiteness is shown to us and recognised in its most apparent form. For Gadamer, Aeschylus was a master in showing this to us, where the artistic experience is presented as something to be suffered. Yet this is the paradigmatic notion of an experience. As Gadamer argues, "[r]eal experience is that

¹¹ "In the particular sense in which *phobos* is connected to *eleos* in this definition of tragedy, *phobos* means the shivers of apprehension that come over us for someone whom we see rushing to his destruction and for whom we fear." *TM*, 1.2.1.C.

whereby man becomes aware of his finiteness" (TM, 2.2.3.B). Our own experiences of grief especially, remind us of the delicate nature of life. Our empathetic reach for the tragic character and their desperate attempts to escape their fate materialises as a definitive self-knowledge. For, in the end it is life itself that ultimately condemns both them and us. Again, this is not a melancholic embrace of death but is rather an enlightened affirmation of life. Even after the most intense of tragedies we often feel that the burden of the human condition has somehow become lightened, by simply acknowledging its presence. Our place in history as historical beings is asserted with sometimes brutal certainty, showing us how implicated our historicity is to our place in the world and, more importantly, to our attempts at understanding.

Yet is this epistemological draw exerted by comedy as well? Though unmentioned by Gadamer, I believe comedy shares a remarkable similarity with how Gadamer describes tragedy and the claims it makes for knowledge. This link is remarkable because it is through *anamnesis*, I believe, that comedy can be seen to operate. An important feature of my earlier examination of *anamnesis* in art was the Gadamerian notion of the work as being revealing for us. I believe this notion is exemplified in comedy. Especially seen in the modern comic, but just as apparent in Aristophanes (a point I will show later), the force of the comedy lies in how much of ourselves we recognise. We seem to find most funny something in which we see ourselves. This could be some social mannerism or cultural phenomenon which becomes funny when shown to us by the comic. As an example of this feature of comedy, let me use the popular English comedian Peter Kay, who excels at this type of approach. Although there is a fundamental difference between the performed comedy of Aristophanes and that of a solo comic performance, Kay does both, performing stand-up and writing and performing in scripted performances. To show what I mean let me take the following. There is a list attributed to Kay called 'Peter Kay's Universal Truths', which consists of some simple utterances which Kay has used over the years in his act. The following are an example:

- (1) There's no panic like the panic you momentarily feel when you've got your hand or head stuck in something.
- (2) You're never quite sure whether it's against the law or not to have a fire in your back garden.
- (3) You never know where to look when eating a banana.
- (4) It's impossible to describe the smell of a wet cat.
- (5) Prodding a fire with a stick makes you feel manly.
- (6) Rummaging in an overgrown garden will always turn up a bouncy ball.

- (7) You always feel a bit scared when stroking horses.
- (8) Everyone always remembers the day a dog ran into their school.
- (9) It's impossible to look cool whilst picking up a Frisbee.
- (10) The most painful household incident is wearing socks and stepping on an upturned plug.

Though these are simple enough, when combined with the element of performance they quite suitably describe what I mean by recognition. For in each of the above statements we are not being told anything new. Rather we are in some ways simply being reminded of things we already knew. The success of the British sitcom 'The Office' was initially engineered around the fact that audience members could recognise the characters portrayed on screen with either themselves or their own work-mates. It is in this act of recognition, of remembering when these things happened to us or of recognising a particular character type that the essential power and draw of comedy comes to the fore. In a sense, comedy relies on its audience recognising either themselves or someone else in the performance. As noted by Nussbaum (2001), this very same level of recognition is seen in Aristophanes, whereby the absurd behaviour shown to us is suddenly revealed as our own.

"It is like those moments in Aristophanes' actual plays, when we are shown some absurd or even base behaviour and then, all at once, are made to see that it is our own." p. 173.¹²

Aristophanes achieves this recognition in part by using well-known characters, such as Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs* for example. By accepting the fact that these characters will be recognised by the audience, Aristophanes can use them to help portray his meaning and achieve his comedic effect.¹³ I will focus more on Aristophanes in my later section on Plato and comedy. So whether used directly to elicit comedic effect or as a mechanism towards achieving this effect, *anamnesis* can be taken as being a key feature of comedy.

Although the world of the artwork has been argued at length as being an ontological whole, it is nevertheless our world that is recognised in its revealed reality

¹² Nussbaum (2001) goes on to mention a particular example in the *Clouds*, where the audience is directly brought into the play in order for them to recognise themselves in the character. "[A]fter some typical jokes at the expense of passive homosexuals, at which the audience has been laughing with superiority, the character mocked turns his mocker around towards the audience and asks him what sort of people, after all, are sitting out there." p. 173.

¹³ Of course, this very same mode of recognition was argued earlier as being operative in Plato's methodology, with regard to the fact that he too used either well known characters, or representative character types, in order to establish an initial point of engagement for the audience.

in both the tragic and comic forms. The spectators must be aware that the world on stage is continuous with their own, and that it is not some distant, fictitious world that they can distance themselves from. If we do not feel that we could potentially be in the world presented to us, if we do not feel that the tragedy unfolding could be our own, then it is more with curiosity that we experience the work than with any purposeful intending. Of course we may be glad that we are not the tragic character but this is rather beside the point. We empathise with the situation unfolding in front of us is because of how much of ourselves we see in even the most unique and extreme of characters and situations. It is the recognition of this fact that constitutes the self-knowledge that is available through the tragic experience in particular. Of course, as has been seen in all of Gadamer's previous analyses of the cognitive aspects of art, especially in the examination of *anamnesis* in my first part, the knowledge we attain through the experience is wholly practical and will be used by us on our return to our everyday lives. By recognising ourselves in the tragic character, by being moved into a communion with them and their situation, we see the certainty of fate and the inevitability of history. From a Platonic perspective, the notion of dedicating oneself to the attachments and superfluities of our lives is radically questioned, and the draw of a non-sensory existence, epitomised by death, is seen as being the only respite in this recollected knowledge. Of course, for Gadamer, the importance of a dialogical approach to the work is paramount in helping one counter the pessimism implied in this recollection. As the essence of the tragic experience is a communal experience, we similarly realise that we are not in this situation alone. Rather, we are one of many. Knowledge, therefore, cannot be a solitary affair but must instead come from the discussions that emerge from what we find presented in tragedy and comedy; the human condition. As I will argue for later in Section IX, the very essence of this endeavour is exemplified in Plato's *Symposium*. Yet, before this is argued for I must outline how it is that the above analysis of Gadamer's treatment of tragedy, and my own treatment of comedy, can be seen in Platonic terms. This next section of my work will, therefore, examine Plato's treatment of tragedy and comedy, outlining how Gadamer's theories can be seen once more as being illuminating factors in the inherent aesthetic of the Platonic methodology.

5. The Preliminary Incorporation of Comedo-tragic Structure in Plato

I have mentioned in my introduction to this part that I will only collate discussions on tragedy and comedy when referring to the basic, structural methodology they share (that they were written for the religious festivals and were performed by actors in front of an audience). Although I have argued that they share an anamnestic draw on their audiences, this was shown to be achieved in very different ways. What I will examine now will involve a discussion of the structure shared by tragedy and comedy, with how this structure can be seen in Plato and what this entails. A separate discussion on the *content* of tragedy and comedy will follow. For perhaps more so than any of the other art forms, it is in the structure of tragedy and comedy that Plato's dialogues can find their most evident comparison, and in which the idea of an aesthetic aspect to Platonic dialectic can find its most recognisable form. For there are some undoubted similarities between them. Before I attempt to demonstrate how Gadamer's use of tragedy, and my own argument on comedy, can be seen in Plato, I will first describe some of these more obvious similarities, in order to in some ways facilitate my later argument as to the tragic and comedic influence on Plato. For, if one believes the oft-times used anecdote of Diogenes Laertius, Plato began his adult life immersed in the arts, composing both poetic and tragic verse.¹⁴ On hearing Socrates discoursing in his usual manner one fateful morning, we are told that Plato consigned his artistic works to the flames, declaring the pursuit of wisdom through Socratic teachings to be the only worthwhile activity. This act is seen as one of the first blows struck in the so-called "ancient quarrel" between the poetic arts and philosophy in the battle for the hearts, minds and, indeed, souls of the people. There are, of course, serious concerns in taking the reports of Diogenes Laertius at face value. Regardless, though, I take it as beyond doubt that the form shared by tragedy and comedy exerted at least *some* influence over Plato's mode of philosophical construction. One simply cannot deny that, just like any traditional tragedy or comedy, Plato's dialogues all have a cast of characters as well as a distinguishing setting, a setting usually connected to one of the main characters or themes.¹⁵ For

¹⁴ "It is also said that he (Plato) studied painting and wrote poems, dithyrambs at first and afterwards lyric poems and tragedies." *Diog. Laert.* 3, 6.

¹⁵ This connection between the theme and setting is seen in Blondell (2002). "The settings of the dialogues are important since they convey the milieu (physical, social, temporal) in which these persons and their conversations are embedded" p. 63.

example, a rather direct connection with the setting can be seen when the action takes place in one of the interlocutors' homes, such as in the *Republic*. Yet there are thematic connections also, such as having the action of the *Symposium* take place after Agathon's first tragic victory (a point I will discuss later in this part), or presenting Ion on his return from a rhapsodic contest in the dialogue bearing his name.¹⁶ The fact that these most elemental features were held in common between Plato's mode of philosophy and tragedy and comedy, must have in some way necessitated his attack in the *Republic*, where the Platonic use of character is distanced from both the tragic and comedic. In the same way I previously argued that an important part of understanding each dialogue is in recognising the representative thrust of each interlocutor (pp. 64-67), so too do the settings of the works play their representative part. Although a connection between setting and action is, perhaps, not as philosophically important as that of interlocutor and mode of approach, it nonetheless shows a definite awareness on the part of Plato of the artistic, and ultimately intellectual benefits of scene-setting. For if it was a setting which Plato's intended audience would have been aware of, such as the detailed description of the river Ilissus and its surrounding countryside in the *Phaedrus*, then a certain empathy and sense of identification is created before the argumentation even begins. In a similar way to how Plato varied his mode of approach towards his interlocutors in order to draw them into his argument, so too does the process of scene-setting invite a particular section of audience. Scene-setting is also important when it is connected to the theme of the dialogue. Staying with the *Phaedrus*, for example, we find Socrates venturing outside his usual comfort zone of the city by taking his walk by the river. This of course corresponds to the nature of the dialogue contained therein and Socrates' apparent adoption of positions he would not usually adopt.¹⁷ Similarly, the four dialogues which detail the last days of Socrates are set in carefully constructed scenes. Especially seen in the *Phaedo*, where we can certainly picture the sparse room with bed and shackles, the small details given throughout the works really add to whatever sense Plato wants to lead us to. As previously proposed, an audience identifying with

¹⁶ Plato makes sure to establish everything we need to know about Ion in the setting he constructs within the first ten lines of the dialogue. Within this short space we learn of who Ion is and where he has come from.

¹⁷ As I argued for in the last chapter, though, these so-called 'unusual' positions of Socrates are feigned, being used much like the setting to draw the audience in.

the interlocutors and their points of view is a key component to the successful pedagogy of Plato's dialogues.¹⁸

An objection to this, however, could be that as Plato did not invent the dialogical method he cannot be totally accredited with being purposefully artistic. One might in fact argue that the use of character and scene-setting was a necessary evil, so to speak, for his successful incorporation of dialogue as his method. Yet it is rather doubtful that the detailed and perfectly nuanced features of Plato's characters and scenes would have been included to such a great detail had this been the case. Were Plato solely concerned with the details of the arguments he would surely have given his interlocutors only the most basic of character traits, and resigned all his dialogues to the setting of the Agora, for example. This is not the case, however, as one cannot deny the vividness of Phaedrus' youthful naiveté or Alcibiades' brash arrogance. At the beginning of the *Symposium* we find that Apollodorus is only asked to recount the speeches of those present. Rather than do this, though, Apollodorus feels it would be best to "...tell you the whole story from the very beginning" (*Symposium*, 174a). What surrounds the basis of the dialogue, then, is quite purposefully included by Plato. Given that, as far as we know, the majority of Plato's interlocutors were also real people, the various character designs can be seen as a reinforcement of how these people were thought of. Every character is carefully chosen in order initially to facilitate a mode of recognition for the audience. I suggested earlier how this very feature can be seen in the anamnestic features of Aristophanic comedy (pp. 157-158). If a character is especially well known, Alcibiades for example, a stage can be seen to exist from which Plato can operate. What better way to show the benefits of living in harmony with one's soul, as well as the superiority of the philosophical life over that of sensuous abundance, than to have Alcibiades, the renowned sensualist, extol it? Some of the dialogues even have interludes, breaks in the discussion, which, when deemed necessary, successfully delay any sense of philosophical overload and meltdown on the part of the audience. These interludes are usually ways of either

¹⁸ This incorporation of popular themes in order to have the work presentable to the community at large is very much a common element of Irish art. For example the most prominent Irish poets of the last sixty years or so such as Kavanagh, but perhaps with the exception of the later period of Yeats, had everyday country themes as the structuring feature of their works. Playwrights such as Synge, painters such as Jack Yeats, as well as of course the literary works of Joyce, shared in this endeavour. Yet, what made them artists was how this mode of approach was merely the shell into which a universal theme was addressed. To a less explicit extent, though just as operative, this can be similarly seen in works such as Plato's *Phaedrus*, *Symposium* and *Phaedo*.

recapitulating the main positions of the dialogue or of setting the scene for the dialogue's philosophical crescendo, such as in the *Phaedo* and *Euthydemus* for example,¹⁹ a technique with patently dramatic connotations.

However, although these aspects of Plato, as well as their importance to Plato's general method, cannot be denied, I am in no way arguing that these elements should be examined exclusively. Just as one cannot successfully understand Plato by focusing solely on the details of his arguments, so too will one misunderstand if one focuses too intently on these dramatic features. Part of the main thread of my argument has been in showing how essential these aesthetic qualities are to Plato's dialogical method. I do not believe that any form of a 'Platonic' philosophy of art can be separated or excised from Plato's works, but must rather be analysed as to how it surrounds, supports and even structures his argumentation. Essentially, this is perhaps the main point of my thesis.

6. The Platonic Rejection of the Traditional Form of Comedy and Tragedy

So far I have entered only into a very basic and superficial examination of the similarities that exist between Plato's works and the approach of tragedy and comedy. Never the less, these similarities are there. Let us ask, then, what it was exactly that Plato found so distasteful in these art forms. Of course this means we must once more separate comedy from tragedy. Although we will see some of Plato's structural criticisms of tragedy extended to comedy (such as at *Republic* 394d), he does offer some independent criticism of the comedic form.²⁰ I start, then, with an attack which incorporates both tragedy and comedy, and a return to somewhat familiar ground in the shape of *mimesis*. For, as seen in the *Republic* and *Laws*, it was the unknowing imitation of another's character, seen in the physical and emotional immersion of the actors in their roles, which Plato took great objection to. Interestingly, the English language's etymological conception of actors shares more with Plato's arguments in the *Republic* than we may like to think. For, the transliteration of the Greek word for actor is 'hypocrite', a word which we use today in an unflinchingly negative sense. It

¹⁹ The interlude in the *Phaedo* is a brief discussion between Echecrates and Phaedo from 88d – 89a, while in the *Euthydemus* it is a similar type of discussion between Crito and Socrates from 290e – 293b.

²⁰ The reference in the *Republic* goes as follows: "I suspect", he replied, "that you are wondering whether we should allow tragedy and comedy in our state or not" (394d). I will examine the separate treatment of comedy by Plato later.

is also significant that the word 'hypocrite' usually refers to someone who proclaims an ideology in word but does not truly believe in this ideology and acts accordingly. This is the very basis of Plato's criticism. One could also argue that Plato's treatment of the rhapsodes in the *Ion* could be equally relevant to his conception of actors. For example, rhapsodes were accused of not having any knowledge of those things they were saying, just like actors, of imitating various different characters, just like actors, and of becoming emotionally engrossed in these characters to such an extent as to become physically moved or terrified by their own recitations, again, just like actors. As I have previously proposed there to be, both, an unknowing imitative sense and a more knowing representative meaning of the term *mimesis*, in both its Greek and English usages, Plato's incorporation of the term with regard to the structure of tragedy and comedy seems wholly used in its negative, imitative sense.²¹ Although the actors would take on more than just the physical attributes of the characters, they did so without truly knowing what it was that these characters represented, in terms of the transmission of virtue. As I proposed in my first part, knowledge was the key difference between an imitative and representative approach (especially pp. 30-31). Without a solid basis of knowledge, therefore, a knowledge which informs and orders one's moral outlook, the actors could not be said to be representative in their methods. In one sense, then, we could say that these artists were not treating the capabilities of art seriously, but conceived of the performances more in terms of competition than of self-betterment. Although the majority of those involved in tragedy and comedy would argue that entertainment is their main agenda, Plato could counter that this simply neglects the inherent, educative power of these arts. Plato simply recognised the discrepancy involved in saying that these performances were 'only entertainment'.²² In comedy, the author would offer advice to the audience, which was usually moral advice, in the parabasis.²³ As noted by Harriott (1986), the parabasis, which of course is unique to comedy, was delivered using skills of rhetoric,

²¹ However, this negative use of *mimesis* towards tragedy and comedy would not have extended to scene-setting. In other words I do not believe Plato was concerned with the illusory effects of the stage. For as Dover (1972) notes, there was no stage curtain, which meant that all scenery and props needed for the opening scene would have been brought on in full view of the audience. In this way, I feel Plato was wholly concerned with the mental effects of performance and performance transmission.

²² We note how in the *Symposium*, Agathon tells us his speech on Love was told partly for entertainment. He is singled out by Socrates in this dialogue, as we will see later, and treated in a most serious manner. We clearly see here that calling one's art 'entertainment', especially tragedy, merely belies the danger involved.

²³ At *Frogs* 1007-1012, the ghosts of Aeschylus and Euripides agree that a poet should be admired above all for the good effects of their moral teaching on their fellow citizens.

which indicates a further reason as to why Plato took it seriously as a mode of expressing preconceived knowledge.²⁴ The audience were also spoken to directly in the prologue. In this way, there was a definite forum for teaching without room for discussion in comedies, which, for Plato, surely made it more than just entertainment. Comedy also necessitated suspension of disbelief in approaching the work in the first place. Were we to ask just how the city of the birds rests in the air in the *Birds*, we could be accused of bringing something foreign to the work. The foreign thing we bring with such a comment, though, is surely our reason. To abandon such a thing is to give rise to our appetite, to allow it temporary unrestrained reprieve. The fact that comedy needs this abandonment of reason must have in some ways necessitated Plato's censure. For we see in the *Republic*'s tri-partite division of the soul how it is reason which should lead the soul not spirit or appetite.²⁵ Anything which gives rise to our appetite, then, which attempts to topple the rule of reason, must be avoided.

Plato's stated objections to tragedy and comedy in Books II and III of the *Republic* have a strong focus on the representation of the gods. In comedy, for example, the gods are presented in an almost unflinchingly negative light. Dover (1972) shows that these deities are "...not only worsted by aggressive humans, as in *Birds*, but also as stupid, greedy and cowardly; Dionysos at *Frogs* 479 faints and dirties himself in fright..." (p. 32). Tragedy is of course not much better. In these early Books of the *Republic*, Plato finds fault with the following: (1) the specific example of what Hesiod says about Ouranos, Cronos, and Zeus – at 378a, (2) tales of the gods battling each other – at 378b, (3) descriptions of god as anything other than good – at 379b, (4) descriptions of the gods changing shape – at 381e, (5) anything which would make the Guardians fear death – at 386b, (6) descriptions of excessive laughing – at 389a, disobedience to authority – at 390a, lustfulness – at 390c, or being swayed by money – at 390e. Using Gadamer, I have previously argued for the specific intended nature of these criticisms, in terms of their implicit educative thrust (pp. 37-

²⁴ As also noted by Harriott (1986), the sausage-seller is praised by his partisans at *Knights* 457-9 and at 836-40 for his ability to defeat arguments. So a rhetorical ability is also seen in some of the characters of comedy. Of course the best example of this is the discussion between the personified 'Better' and 'Worse' argument in the *Clouds*. This satire on sophistry, though, could certainly be seen to further Plato's cause, so long as the audience recognised the satire, that is. As Harriott states, "Worse Argument's dismissal of virtue is explicitly amoral and is accomplished almost playfully, as he gleefully outsmarts the old fuddy-duddy who has praised self-control" (p. 173). This same type of satire of the sophists appears, I believe, in the *Hippias Major*, a point I will discuss in a later section.

²⁵ We note how this division is founded on the principle that "...one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object" (436b). So if reason show us the flaws in the work, by definition the work must be unreasonable.

47). What is certainly worth mentioning again, then, is how dangerous an uninformed mimetic transmission was for Plato. An extension of this use of *mimesis* by Plato can be seen in his treatment of the form taken by tragedy and comedy, and the fact that they both use indirect speech (through their use of characters). In a sense this underlies the above criticism as it is the very nature of the danger. There is a two level structure to Plato's criticisms here. On the one hand the content is attacked due to its unknowing (and unquestioning) propagation of a questionable moral ideal, while on the other hand the form taken by tragedy and comedy forced the actors (and audience) to put themselves more fully into the mind-sets of these characters, than if they were simply reading them off a page.

Yet, if Plato did indeed intend to use some aspects of the structural approach of tragedy and comedy, (something which I will argue for in detail in the forthcoming sections), though filling it with the dialogical workings of philosophy, a contradiction appears to loom large. For, as I mentioned, Plato retains the use of characters, characters that hold differing views and ethical positions than his conception of what is morally 'good'. He also carries out his philosophical dialogues using the same form of indirect speech (by speaking through characters) that he attacks in *Republic* Book II. By keeping this form and these characters in his works, is Plato not setting himself up to fall foul of the very same criticism he lodged against traditional tragedy and comedy in the first place, namely, that these characters may convince an audience to follow them and not follow the lead of Socrates? Yet, what must be remembered is, firstly, that these characters are usually convinced and persuaded *themselves* by Socrates' arguments. As I have already mentioned, these characters are *supposed* to represent followers of other beliefs, meaning their conversion to Socrates' way of thinking by the end of the dialogue was intended to correspond to a similar realisation on the part of their followers. As we see in the character of Callicles in the *Gorgias*, the more forcefully antagonistic a person's point of argument is the better, as this means that, if agreement is found, that it will have a strong claim on knowledge. This way we find that it is *expected* that people will associate themselves with the characters, as this facilitates Plato's programme of re-education. Secondly, I am not suggesting that Plato's dialogues were intended to be reproduced exactly, word for word, like traditional tragedies or comedies. The dialogues are mere templates to discussion, in the sense that they show us *how* to discuss properly, and not what exactly to say should one find oneself in a similar discussion. It is the dynamic

element of proper discussion, then, that is being celebrated. I have tried to show how fundamentally important this was to Plato when compared to the rigid, inflexible methods of the sophists, rhetoricians, and most importantly for us here, the artists. It is the Forms which will never change, not the ways of approaching them. In this sense, the message of every character is the same: regardless of personal belief the only way to true understanding is through engaging oneself in discussion. For once this is accepted, philosophy can begin to emerge as the most appropriate guide, exemplified in Plato's dialogues.

In terms of both tragedy and comedy, an undoubtedly significant part of Plato's objections stems from how extensively popular and politicised the performances were.²⁶ For nowhere in Greece was the communal aspect of society seen more clearly than in the festivals which held these contests. Almost every Athenian citizen would have been involved in some way in the main Greek festival, the City Dionysia, whether in preparing the festivities or more directly in choral performance. Even prisoners were reputed to have been given temporary release just to attend, and those who could not afford the entrance fee were said to have been subsidised by the government.²⁷ This was to be an event which truly brought the city together, an undoubted reason why Greek tragedy in particular held exemplary status for Gadamer, as discussed above. However, in his treatment of tragedy in particular Plato identifies an inherent danger in having such a massive and willing crowd. For, any improper sense of virtue disseminated via the works of tragedy could find itself implanted in the psyche of the audience. Without any type of informed discussion on the subject-matter that underlay the works, the danger of the actors' uninformed imitations becomes realised. In Book VI of the *Republic*, Plato clearly outlines the extent to which he saw the influence of the crowd.²⁸ It is here that he has Socrates argue that it is not the individual sophists or rhetoricians who are to blame for the

²⁶ That these festivals were political events is agreed upon by Nightingale (1995) p. 68, and Zelenak (1998) who states the following about tragedy: "Any attempt to understand Greek tragedy should begin with an examination of its essential and primary motives, which were not literary or aesthetic but social and political" p. 9.

²⁷ In Demosthenes' *in Androt.* 68, we are told that prisoners were released on bail for the festivals, an occasion which some used as a chance to escape. The entrance fee to the festivals was covered by a government fund called τὸ θεωρικόν. Mention is made of this fund again by Demosthenes in *Olynthiac* i 20, and in *Philippic* iv 36.

²⁸ "When they crowd into the seats in the assembly or law-courts or theatre (...) and with a huge amount of noise and lack of moderation, holler and clap their approval or disapproval of whatever is proposed or done, till the rocks and the whole place re-echo and doubles the noise of their boos and applause. Can a young man's heart remain unmoved by this?" 492b-c.

current bad environment. Rather it is the people, the polis who are to blame. Using the analogy of 'the wild beast' at 493a-c, Plato shows how the sophists and rhetoricians merely compound the problem by tapping into the common or conventional opinion and teaching it as moral truth. I examined this phenomenon earlier in terms of the *sensus communis* that 'secretly moulds human beings'. I make mention of it again here because, in his examples of where the crowd can overpower the individual, Plato includes the theatre. With any spread of booing, cheering, or clapping, the individual gets washed away in the wild, contagious flow of 'the crowd'. The danger of this for Plato is clear to see. Crucially, though, the City Dionysia was not solely an Athenian event but had representatives from all over Greece present, a factor which the Athenian officials used for propaganda reasons.²⁹ For, during the Peloponnesian War delegates from states allied to Athens would be paraded in front of the crowds, as would war-orphaned child cadets. Distinguished citizens and visitors were also crowned at this time showing the intrinsically 'Athenian' association.³⁰ It is clear, then, that tragedy was not an independent activity but had all the trappings of a political event. Yet because of how truly communal these events were, the dangers of transmitting an inappropriate sense of virtue became apparent. The unquestionably educative *sensus communis* would thereby be tainted and spread throughout by the sophists. For although the above reference to *Republic* 492b-c asserts that it is the crowd who are the greatest influence on a person, as mentioned, it is the sophists who spread this conventional wisdom. Similarly, though, on recognising this danger I believe Plato endeavoured to use this collective feature that is embodied by the festivals to portray his own sense of virtue. For the very basis of the dialogical method is geared towards eliciting such an informed and potentially pedagogical sense.

The popular and expectant nature of the festivals which held tragic contests were of course the very same festivals as those which held the comedic contests too. What was particular to comedy, though, was its presentation of vulgarity and buffoonery, two aspects which drew Plato's attention. In Book X of the *Republic*, for example, Plato has Socrates argue that the crudeness we laugh at on stage 'gives rein' to one of our baser instincts. The faculty which tries to rein this in is argued to be our

²⁹ Aeschines, in his speech *in Ctes.* 43, tells us that the City Dionysia took place 'in the presence of all the Greeks'.

³⁰ In his authoritative work, Pickard-Cambridge (1968), tells us that, in Thucydides, V, 23.4, the oath of alliance between Athens and Sparta is described as being renewed annually by the ambassadors of Sparta at the Dionysia. The practice of parading war-orphaned children had begun to die out by 330 B.C., according again to Aeschines' *in Ctes.* 154.

reason. This base instinct of ours is, therefore, of a different faculty to reason, so must be avoided. This type of opposition is taken up again in the *Laws*, where our serious side, which must be nurtured, is opposed to our comic side. This comic side is again something to be avoided.

“But if we intend to acquire virtue, even on a small scale, we can’t be serious and comic too, and this is precisely why we must learn to recognise buffoonery, to avoid being trapped by our ignorance of it into doing or saying anything ridiculous when there is no call for it.” *Laws*, 816e.

Yet as we see with tragedy, Plato is by no means ‘banishing’ comedy. For later on in the *Laws*, comedy is split by the Stranger into that which is good-natured, and that which is spurred by anger. Whereas that form of comedy which is spurred by anger is described as worthless, that which is good natured is perfectly allowable. People can certainly poke fun with comedy, so long as it is without rancour, and so long as the audience are clear that the immoral characters are to be laughed *at* not *along with*.³¹

“Then we could allow the playful comedian to joke about something, without anger, but forbid, as we’ve indicated, anyone whatever to do so if he is in deadly earnest and shows animosity.” *Laws*, 935e.

This anger-less comedy can certainly be seen in the modern comedy I described earlier which was based almost purely on *anamnesis*. There is nothing vicious or personal in this comedy and certainly nothing rancorous. Of course, this surely cannot be extended to the likes of Aristophanes who would appear to be the target of Plato’s criticisms here. None the less, we can still see here how Plato was by no means outright in his censorship.

So, as with all of Plato’s dealings with the arts, his criticisms are not directed towards the essential fabric of the particular art itself but with how the art was being used at the time.³² In terms of tragedy, it was not just in the external trappings of the festival that the politicised nature of Greek tragedy was operative. For, far more than any other city, ancient tragedy can be seen to promote very Athenian ideals within the

³¹ Halliwell (2002) acknowledges this qualified acceptance of comedy in the *Laws*. “There is an acceptable form of comedy, one in which the moral deficiencies of the agents are made unambiguous, so that an audience is invited to laugh *against* them, with clear recognition of their faults, and not in any sense *with* them” p. 82.

³² This same argument is again seen in Nightingale (1995) when discussing tragedy. “Rather, Plato is concerned with, on the one hand, the false set of values that (he thinks) tragedy promulgates and, on the other hand, the way in which this value system reflects and reinforces the social and political practices of the Athenian democracy” p. 68.

very works themselves. As explored by Taplin (appearing in Goldhill & Osborne 1999), ‘Greek’ tragedy contains as a key feature the propagation of democracy. As drama progressed, Greek heroes such as Achilles were to become supplanted by Athenian heroes such as Theseus. An example of this propagandist celebration of Theseus and Athens can be seen in Euripides’ *Herakles*, where Theseus is presented as comforting the great Herakles and offering him comfort in Athens, and in Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus*, where the desperate Oedipus is granted peace and refuge in Athens. Also, in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, Orestes is told to seek refuge in Athens from the pursuing Furies³³, and in Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* Athens is shown as intervening on the side of righteousness in the tale of their eventual friendship with Argos. Because of the hugely popular and widespread appeal of tragedy, any non-democrat or, indeed, critic of the Athenian system, may see a tacit danger in tragic performances. What is perhaps more surprising is how these ‘Atheno-centric’ plays were even performed in festivals outside of Athens, in places such as Argos and Syracuse, showing the extent to which these works had penetrated the psyche of the entire ancient Greek world. One of the undoubted reasons why modern audiences, including Gadamer, could celebrate Greek tragedy is because its contextual power has been removed, leaving only the work itself. Ancient Greece was also an oral culture, meaning any non-written mode of communication stood a far greater chance of propagating its message than a written mode, a worry of Plato’s we saw with the rhapsodes (p. 124). Tragedy and comedy, being the most sensual forms of communication at the time, can be seen as a highly popular and potent mediums of expression, indicating both how in need they were of censure, Platonically speaking, but also how useful their structural form could be.

7. Plato and Comedy in the *Hippias Major*

Plato’s opposition to the content of comedy, especially the ‘old comedy’ of Aristophanes, was based, as we saw, on its malicious and angry nature. Yet, the idea of comedy, of humorous events or happenings shaping the action, held undoubted importance for Plato in his method of philosophical engagement. Plato’s lauding of female Guardians, common property, common meals, and common wives in Book V

³³ While in Athens it is a jury of twelve Athenians who try Orestes’ case, strategically suggesting, perhaps, the benefits of democracy and how able-minded and just the average Athenian is.

of his *Republic* can be seen as a comment on the same themes in comedy, especially seen in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*.³⁴ Nightingale (1995) even argues for a similar connection between Plato's *Protagoras* and Eupolis' *Flatterers*, as well as between Plato's *Gorgias* and Aristophanes' *Knights*. As stated by Greene (1920),

"One need turn over no great number of pages in the dialogues to find passages interlarded with amusing phrases, homely proverbs, and racy metaphors, which give a lively conviction that we are listening to the talk of men of flesh and blood not sticks and stones." p. 64.³⁵

Throughout the Platonic corpus we find instances of undoubted comic substance.³⁶ But how does this relate to the art of comedy as Plato would have seen it? By focussing on one of his dialogues, the *Hippias Major*, I argue in this section that Plato purposefully dealt with the nature of comedy. In this work the usual comedic elements of Plato (as mentioned in the above quote from Greene and which will be expanded upon here) are all present, though are infused with a Platonic drive which gives the entire work its emphasis. In other words, in this work the comedic elements are not merely secondary to the philosophical subject-matter, but instead structure and propel the subject-matter.

The first issue to note in the *Hippias Major* is its topic. As an early work of Plato's (though verging on a transitional work), the *Hippias Major* takes the traditional shape and format, being concerned with the definition of a theme through the refutative question and answer format of Socrates and his 'expert'. In this case the expert is Hippias and the theme is καλός (fine or beautiful) or τὸ καλόν (the fine or beautiful). The first comedic feature of this work concerns its central theme and the use of the term under discussion by both Socrates and Hippias. Even though the dialogue is an attempt to define καλός, an attempt which ends in ultimate failure, the term itself is used throughout the dialogue in situations *besides* its investigation.

³⁴ Nightingale (1995) argues, though, that both Plato and Aristophanes were working from a common, though unknown, original source. "Rather, it is generally agreed that both authors are reworking material from a philosophic source from the late fifth / early fourth century." p. 177.

³⁵ Greene finds three common comedic features which dot Plato's works. Briefly, the first is the use of language, for example Socrates' use of 'by the dog!'. The second is the use of characterisation and adjective use, for example the love-sick Hippothales who at *Lysis* 204b is said to "write bad verse and talk in his sleep" (p. 65), while the third is the comedy of incident, such as the description of the clambering for seats at the beginning of the *Charmides*. Greene's account is an exhaustive one, though it does not tackle the issue of how these comedic features relate to Plato's method or arguments.

³⁶ That Plato used comic elements in his work is agreed upon by Brock (appearing in Craik ed. 1990) who suggests that, "while Plato regards comic drama with suspicion, perhaps for personal reasons, he also makes wide and skilful use of its techniques and sometimes of its ideas too" (p. 39). Besides the *Hippias Major*, Brock believed a comic approach to appear especially in the *Cratylus* and *Euthydemus*.

There are literally dozens of examples of this usage in the dialogue, including the very first line at 281a, where Socrates greets Hippias, referring to him as both “fine and wise”.³⁷ Here lies the point of the dialogue and the Platonically conceived comedic thrust. For we are confronted with a term we undoubtedly know, given the fact we use it to describe the things of the world. Yet when faced with definition, as Hippias is, we find ourselves at a loss. In Platonic terms, this of course exemplifies *anamnesis*. We, like Hippias, recognise the term and its appropriateness. According to the theory of *anamnesis*, this recognition signifies a pre-birth existence in which we partook in the Forms, therefore knowing their essential natures. Yet Plato uses this phenomenon for comedic effect here in the *Hippias Major*. As we saw earlier in my discussion on the anamnetic aspects of comedy, the audience would recognise themselves in the performance or utterance (pp. 157-159). By using the term under discussion many times, by showing the audience its own inability, its own floundering attempts at definition, Plato presents an undoubtedly comedic tint to this centrally important philosophical theory. Of course, part of the comedy is in the way Hippias does not notice both Socrates and even his own use of the term outside the attempts at definition. We see Hippias struggle to define a term he freely uses without noticing this as problematic.

The character of Hippias is another aspect of Plato’s comedy. His is a character who stands for so much that Plato disliked in a professed intellectual. His qualification as a sophist *par excellence* is established almost immediately. The two essential characteristics of the sophists, that they taught for money and mostly taught the young, are shown to belong to Hippias within the first few lines. At 281b Socrates notes that “...in your private dealings you are able to earn much money from the young...”³⁸ Of course, Hippias was no ordinary sophist but would have been an especially well-known figure, being held in high regard amongst ‘the many’ (“τοῖς πολλοῖς”, *Hippias Major* 281c). Of course, a common feature of comedy is the satire

³⁷ Other examples of this usage *before* the discussion turns towards examining what exactly the fine is are at 282b, 282e, 283a, 286a, 286b. There are also dozens more examples littered throughout the work when the word is used outside of the discussion on the nature of the word.

³⁸ Socrates makes sure to mention that Hippias was not alone in this endeavour, but that Gorgias and Prodicus also came to Athens as political envoys, both giving displays (“ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος”, 282b) and associating with the young (“συνῶν τοῖς νέοις”, 282b) while earning lots of money in the process. Hippias thereby stands as a suitable representative in terms of the set of professionals he represents. The *character* of Hippias, though, is undoubtedly a unique portrayal. His pomposity is perhaps never more apparent than when he boasts that he has made more money in his time than any two sophists put together (282e).

on the sophists and their methods, a point we saw earlier in the *Clouds*' description of the discussion between Better and Worse Argument. The eventual victory of Worse Argument, as Harriott (1986) tells us, "...results not from eloquence or the adequacy of his case, but from the way he exploits his opponent's answers..." (p. 172). It seems clear that Plato is satirising the sophists here by presenting Hippias as almost an exaggeration of all that the sophists were known for.

Hippias' importance can be seen in his role as ambassador for his home town of Elis. This political connection is of especial concern for Plato, given the claims of the *Republic* that the political must be subsumed in the philosophical. So what is essential to state here is a reminder, especially if we use Aristophanes as an example, of how comedic content will almost always be underlined by serious matters or arguments. Of course Plato did not want to construct a traditional, vulgar portrayal of the inability of Hippias to define καλός, but is simply using a comedic approach and structure to overlay a serious matter. This serious matter can actually be seen most clearly in the comedic aspects of the work. For example, the use of *anamnesis* to showcase the inability of Hippias to define a term he deemed almost unworthy of discussion (because he was so sure of it), is supported by the very serious matter of recollected knowledge. The pompous, verbose character of Hippias himself is of course underlined by the role and position of the sophists. The fact that Socrates mentions the respect Hippias is held in by 'the many', and the ultimate lampooning of Hippias and his positions, is used to show how unsuited Hippias is as any type of informed pedagogue. Hippias' unsuitability in this respect is heightened to a memorable comedic extent. Hippias admits to Socrates that the reason the 'seven wise men' were not involved with public matters is because Hippias' art has exceeded theirs, and their concern for wisdom is nothing when compared to his. On hearing this Socrates admits that the ancients really were simple-minded (εὐήθεις) for not taking money in return for their knowledge, to which Hippias readily agrees. Socrates' goading continues when, from 284d – 285c, he has Hippias admit that the Spartans were actually breaking the law (παράνομοῦσιν) by not paying him for his services (even though it was against Spartan law to pay any foreign 'teacher'). His unsuitability as a serious interlocutor is confirmed (as if confirmation is needed), by his response to Socrates at 285b. Although Socrates is wholly ironically proposing the Spartans acted illegally by not paying him, Hippias asserts,

“I agree with that; for you seem to me to argue in my favour, and so it is not necessary for me to oppose it.”

So rather than picking up on the irony, Hippias is happy to agree with the conclusion simply because it makes him look good.³⁹ Hippias’ belief in the ‘fineness’ of his discourse (παγκάλως λόγος) at 286a leads then to the heart of the discussion and to the definition of the fine. By beginning the dialogue with Hippias in this self-important and haughty position, Plato can have Socrates slowly break him down. Like most comic characters, Hippias is an exaggeration in every way, though he presents these exaggerations as a matter of course. By being completely unaware of these exaggerations, by being without shame, Hippias is turned into a focal point of ridicule. At no stage does Hippias realise the ridicule being directed towards him by Socrates, thereby making him a classic comedic character. Of course, Hippias would not be a source of ridicule for Plato were it not for his claims to knowledge. It is almost purely in terms of these claims that Hippias is ridiculed. For example, the characteristic sarcasm of Socrates in his praising of his fellow discussant reaches I dare say an unequalled height in this dialogue. Hippias’ qualifications for being an interlocutor of course come from these claims to knowledge. When the theme of the discussion is raised, however, these claims are almost immediately dealt with as a source of comedy. Part of the reason for this particularly unrelenting treatment by Plato is how Hippias claimed expertise in so many areas of knowledge. It is because of this claim to omniscience that Socrates feels ‘confident’ of weaning the small matter of the definition of the fine from him.

“For I’m sure you know clearly, it being but a fraction of the many things you know.” 286e.

Hippias is more than happy to take the bait from Socrates and live up to the wholly ironic hype that Socrates is creating.

“As I just said, the question is no great matter, for I could teach you to answer much harder ones than this, so that no man would be able to refute you.” 287b

³⁹ The heavy Socratic irony is even seen in what Brock (appearing in Craik ed. 1990) terms a ‘philosophical joke’ at 283a, in which Socrates calls Anaxagoras’ wisdom senseless (ἄνόητα) because he lost all of his money. As is clear, Anaxagoras’ wisdom was indeed ‘senseless’, given his idea of *nous* as first principle.

In order for Socrates to carry out his ridicule, he introduces the literary device of a re-told story with an imaginary discussant. Socrates proposes to question Hippias in the same way this imaginary discussant would. This way Socrates positions himself as merely a humble messenger, who is simply playing devil's advocate. Of course, Hippias is only too happy to enter this discussion, believing it to be a simple one to explain. The complete unsuitability of Hippias as a discussant is a feature which is seen throughout each of Hippias' contributions. By defining the fine as a fine maiden at 287e, as gold at 289e, as appropriateness at 290d, and as being rich, healthy, honoured, reaching an old age and having a fine funeral at 291d-e, we can only laugh at Socrates' exasperation. For, he notes his worry at being beaten by the imaginary discussant for giving such definitions which are simple examples of the fine and are not universal. Once more Hippias fails to pick up the point that Socrates is basically saying that he, Hippias, is the one who deserves the beating, that he is the one who is like a stone without ears or brain, given his inability to follow simple instructions (292d). At each of his definitions, Hippias asserts with assured certainty that this time he has it, only to fall prey to Socrates' simple counter-arguments time and again. The comic colouring of Hippias is also brought out at his professed indignity at some of these counter-arguments (which of course Socrates is attributing to the imaginary discussant he feels he needs to report to). For when pushed at 288d by Socrates that the imaginary discussant could say that a pot could also be called fine, Hippias is shocked at such a 'common' example. Yet "that's the type of person he is" declares Socrates in return, "not cultivated but vulgar, thinking of nothing but the truth!" When Socrates counters that a fig-wood ladle would be more appropriate than a gold ladle to pour soup, Hippias is again appalled by the indignity declaring, "Herakles! What a man you speak of Socrates! Will you not tell me who he is?" (290d-e). If it were him, Hippias asserts (at 291a) he would not even enter into discussion with such an uncouth and uncivilised wretch. Hippias' ire at Socrates' alter ego is presented in a purely comical way, calling the man most simple-minded (εὐηθέστατος) at 289e, ridiculous (καταγελάστω) at 290a, and an ignoramus (ἀμαθής) at 290e. As seems clear, these terms are more appropriate descriptions of Hippias himself. In this way, one could see a reverse theory of *anamnesis* that is directed towards the comic character. For it is Hippias' inability to recognise himself as the butt of Socrates' humour that is so funny. When Socrates attempts to reveal the identity of the imaginary discussant as being none other than himself, at 298c (and later at 304e

when Socrates reveals that the man lives with Socrates), Hippias fails to pick up on the substantial hint. This failure of recognition characterises the lack of knowledge and inability to learn that Plato is undoubtedly trying to foster in his portrayal of Hippias. Yet this inability to recognise oneself as the butt of humour is an oft-used mechanism in comedy. The pomposity of Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* is a good example of this.

The language used by Socrates throughout the dialogue is another aspect of the comedic structure of the work. I have previously shown the use of 'the fine' in terms of its use by both Socrates and Hippias in situations outside of its attempted definition. The fact that Hippias constantly uses the word 'fine' within his attempted definitions, further shows my meaning in describing the comedic effect as one that stems from *anamnesis*. Yet there are other key comedic issues in the language used in this work. Socrates uses many colloquialisms in his retorts such as "ἰοὺ ἰοὺ!" at 291e and "βαβαί!" at 294e, while frequently making use of exaggerated proclamations to the heavens at 281d, 285b, 286e (by Zeus), 287a (by Hera), 291d, 291e, 295b, 296a, 297c (by Zeus), 297d (by Zeus).⁴⁰ Yet, as I have been showing in each of these comedic instances, an underlying thread of seriousness belies Socrates' approach. This is once more the case in the use of language. For part of Hippias' remit as a sophist was a strong reliance on language, especially in his 'displays'. In his dealings with Hippias, Socrates is shown to present his arguments in an uncharacteristically convoluted way, in which the language twists and folds in upon itself. For example,

"But surely the cause, Hippias, and that of which the cause is the cause are different, for the cause could not be the cause of the cause." 297a⁴¹

Importantly, though, Hippias is not perturbed one bit by this method and even uses it himself in a later response.

"And how could that be, Socrates, when neither of them individually is affected by some affection or other, that then both are affected by that affection by which neither is affected?" 300b⁴²

⁴⁰ According to Brock (appearing in Craik ed. 1990), "Plato has a comic poet's ear for colloquial language" (p. 43). Brock also agrees on this use of colloquial language in the *Hippias Major*, particularly on the senses of καλός and its cognates.

⁴¹ Fowler's (1953) translation.

⁴² Ibid.

The use of language in this way, while understandable, can be seen as a sophistic method of overpowering one's discussant and hiding the intended meaning (if one exists) within the folds of the language. This methodology is one which does not express openness but instead seeks to display verbosity and linguistic expertise. I believe it to be a comic effect in the sense that an audience need not understand the meaning of what is being said to pick up on its ridiculousness. Although the meaning entailed within these twists of language is clear once one looks closely, and although they do certainly function within the discussion, it is how these meanings are conveyed that is where the comedic effect lies.

So what my examination of the *Hippias Major* has led us to is the presence of comedy in three areas of the work. These were (1) its reliance on recognition on the part of the audience (in terms of the term under definition being used many times by both discussants before the decision, and ultimate failure, to define the term is made), (2) its unique comic portrayal of the pompous and self-important sophist Hippias, and (3) its use of language to comic effect. Yet in all of these three comic areas lay a serious Platonic intention. In terms of point (1), our inability to explain the fact that we use words everyday, recognising their presence and absence, yet are often at a complete loss to define these terms, points to (or precedes) Plato's epistemological use of the Forms, in which this recognition indicates a pre-birth experience of the Forms themselves. Point (2) highlights the unsuitability of the sophists as educators and the inappropriateness of their 'knowledge', while point (3) shows us how language can be used to disguise truth in favour of the speaker. In other words, Plato was shown to promote his serious, philosophical intentions through the comic effects. Of course it was not just through comedy that I believe Plato shaped his philosophical methodology. For tragedy too was used by Plato to propel his message. In the usage of this in Plato's *Phaedo*, the tragic becomes transformed by the philosophical into the celebration of philosophy's own tragic hero.

8. Plato's *Phaedo*, the Tragedy of Life and the Tragic Hero of Philosophy

For Nussbaum (2001), there is one question we must ask ourselves when discussing Plato's complicated relationship with the arts; why did Plato not write tragedies?⁴³ Kuhn (1941) similarly asked whether tragedy is not the logical antecedent of Platonic philosophy.⁴⁴ In fact many commentators over the years have examined the relationship between Plato's dialogues and tragedy. Nightingale (1995), for example, argued that Plato incorporated elements of Euripides' *Antiope* into his own *Gorgias*.⁴⁵ It is in the *Phaedo*, however, that the most sustained search for this tragic influence rests. Golden (1975),⁴⁶ Halliwell (2002),⁴⁷ and Rowe (1993)⁴⁸ & (2007) recognise the importance of the *Phaedo* in this regard. Of course, in Plato's hands tragedy becomes subsumed within the mechanics of philosophy. This too is a given. So rather than rehash old arguments as to the level of influence between the *Phaedo* and the tragic form, I will incorporate my usual method of viewing the *Phaedo* as something of a Gadamerian tragedy. What I mean by this is that I will argue that the *Phaedo* celebrates the tragedy of life and learning in a way that can be seen in the idealised way that Gadamer celebrates tragedy. This will be balanced, amongst other things, on the 'transformation into structure' that happens for Gadamer in the interpretive grasp of the audience.

The works which directly precede the *Phaedo*, namely the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*, have, I believe, a shared tragic element. The shared tragedy lies in

⁴³ Of the many similarities between Plato and tragedy, Nussbaum (2001) argues that a dramatic work, much like a Platonic dialogue, "...can contribute to our understanding of an ethical issue by motivating an argument or an inquiry" (p. 127). She uses the *Protagoras* in particular to highlight these similarities further.

⁴⁴ Kuhn's question ran as follows: "Can we discover a line of development leading from Aeschylus and Sophocles to Plato?" p. 1.

⁴⁵ As I too argue, Nightingale (1995) believed that Plato used elements of tragedy, though shaped them philosophically. "In the *Gorgias*, as I have argued, the tragic subtext is made to serve Plato's purposes in a number of ways. For Plato criticizes his model even as he imitates its themes and structure" p. 91.

⁴⁶ The importance of characters in the *Phaedo* driving the philosophical action, as well as their tragic undertones, highlights for Golden the unique influence which is exerted on this dialogue by tragedy. "In this dialogue, as much as in any tragedy, three-dimensional characters interact with each other; in the Platonic view, however, their words and actions, suggesting more accurately the nature of true reality, are of far greater significance than those which regularly graced the theatre of Dionysus" (p. 129). Golden then goes on to draw a more explicit comparison between the *Phaedo* and traditional tragedy.

⁴⁷ Halliwell (2002) argues that the *Phaedo* is somewhat of an anti-tragedy, celebrating Socrates as a Platonic type of tragic hero. I share the very same view though will argue for this in Gadamerian terms.

⁴⁸ Although Rowe (1993) warns against pressing the analogy with tragedy too hard, he nevertheless notes that "...there are indeed features which the dialogue shares with tragedy, for example the chorus-like presence of Phaedo and Echecrates, and an Aristotelian type περί πένεια or reversal of fortune." Introduction, p. 1.

the way Socrates' fate had already been sealed long before the works had been written. Audience members witnessing a drama such as Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* would have had the same fore-knowledge of the drama's outcome. In fact this fore-knowledge can be seen as something of a traditional aspect of tragedy in the sense that the general themes associated with characters such as Hecuba, or Electra, or Herakles, would have been common (mythical) knowledge. In this way there is an undoubted inevitability associated with tragedy, in terms of the workings of fate. Of course, a further traditional aspect of these tragic characters is their ultimate end. In the dialogues detailing the last days of Socrates we are shown what was for Gadamer the essence of tragedy in terms of its cognitive appeal. For as we saw in Part I, the revealed recognition of man's ultimate fate is brought out best through art and exemplified in tragedy.

"What is experienced in such an excess of tragic suffering is something truly common. The spectator recognizes himself and his own finiteness in the face of the power of fate." *TM*, 1.2.1.C.

Socrates' fate is that of our own. Gadamer calls this pre-knowledge "tragic pensiveness", whereby, even though we know the result of the action, we nevertheless fear for the character and helplessly hope that the outcome will be different. Of course, there is one key difference between Socrates and the other traditional tragic characters of fate. Socrates is historical not mythological. Not only this, but his fate was sealed for Plato's audience in recent history. We see here, then, the initial shift involved in Plato's presentation. This will be shown to be a shift away from the tragedy of myth towards the tragedy of life and learning, the culmination of which being seen in the *Phaedo*.⁴⁹

Perhaps more so than any other dialogue, Plato's *Phaedo* showcases the essence of Plato's aesthetic qualities, given its seamless incorporation of elements of an accustomed artistic form with Plato's own, and wholly unique, philosophy.⁵⁰ For

⁴⁹ Quite symbolic of this shift is the manner in which Socrates addresses the court in his defence in the *Apology*. For rather than attempt an oratorical address, Socrates asks to speak in his "usual" manner. This usual manner, though, does not refer to a colloquialism but to a distinct philosophical methodology; dialectic. The overly-emotive wailing of doomed tragic characters is similarly absent from Plato's portrayal of Socrates, a point he mentions to the court. Of course, Socrates also makes sure to note that should he meet the tragic character Ajax in the underworld he would love to submit him to *questions*, the same type of questions that characterised his life. Another clear difference is made then between Socrates and the traditional tragic characters.

⁵⁰ As we will also see in the *Symposium*, the first aspect of the *Phaedo* which hints at this non-traditional use of literary means is the way in which the entire dialogue is a retold story. The usual

this reason, however, it is a dialogue which should not be read in two ways, that is, as philosophy and as drama, but should rather be experienced as a composition which breaks the barriers of classification, highlighting the masterful way in which Plato uses the dramatic to facilitate, control, and ultimately heighten the philosophical.⁵¹ In fact, we do not have to look too far into the *Phaedo* to see the extent to which Plato acknowledged the role of the arts in his philosophy. For Socrates tells us at the beginning of the work how he had spent his last days composing traditional hymns and poems, because he had had a recurring dream telling him to “make and work at the arts (μουσικὴν ποίει καὶ ἐργάζου)” (60e). Socrates had always thought previously that he had been obeying the dream by practising philosophy, but thought he had better try out the “popular form of art” in case this was what the dream had intended. The grounds Socrates gives for believing that he was already obeying the dream before trying the popular arts was because, as he declares at 61a, “philosophy is the greatest of the arts (φιλοσοφίας μὲν οὐσης μεγίστης μουσικῆς).”⁵² To have Socrates say such a thing on the day of his death helps support the notion that an undoubted level of convergence lies between Platonic philosophy and Platonic artistry. For philosophy to be deemed the greatest of the arts necessarily means that philosophy has a perceived common basis of operation, albeit a basis which intended to change the very conception of artistry. Nevertheless, there is clear support here, I believe, for my argument as to an aesthetic core to Plato’s dialectic.

The theme of pollution is a central feature of Plato’s arguments in the *Phaedo*. It is preceded of course by the *Euthyphro*, whereby the pollution (τὸ μίαισμα)

narratorial omniscience is thereby rejected in favour of a more realistic, and consequently flawed, approach. For Burger (1984), this points to the unique form of Platonic artistry. “While these lapses in *Phaedo*’s memory might seem to reflect the accidental character of spontaneous speech, they prove to be a sign of the artfulness of the Platonic dialogue, for they point to the way in which this representation of Socrates’ last conversation is determined by the perspective of its narrator” p. 15.

⁵¹ Golden (1975) also uses the *Phaedo* as an exemplar in showing Plato’s implicit usage of *mimesis*, splitting this mimetic usage into three areas, namely metaphorical language, myth, and the dialogue form. This is a useful distinction which goes some way to showing the special nature of the *Phaedo*, in terms of its reception as a Platonic ‘type’ of artistry. This method of examining the literary aspects of the work as central to the philosophical is supported by Rowe (1993) who, when referring to any type of myopic approach argues that “[i]t is as perverse to equate reading the *Phaedo* with reading certain portions of it as it would be to stage excerpts of *Oedipus Tyrannus* and call it a performance of Sophocles’ play, or to claim to have read *War and Peace* on the strength of having read the first or the middle three hundred pages” (Introduction, p. 2). Not all commentaries on the *Phaedo* are of this kind though. Bostock (1986), for example, admits that he “...concentrates entirely on the philosophical interest of the dialogue and has nothing to say of its considerable literary merits and dramatic power” (Preface). As I hope is clear at this stage, I do not believe that the philosophical aspects of the *Phaedo*, or of any other Platonic works, can be separated from these literary and dramatic aspects.

⁵² Golden (1975) again recognises the artistic relevance of this statement. “Here the beautiful harmony of audible music is used to suggest the exquisite, intelligible harmonies of philosophy” (p. 125).

involved in not prosecuting one's family if guilty is described by Euthyphro as being just as great as if one had committed the murder oneself (4c). The theme of pollution (τὸ μίᾱσμα) however, is another mainstay of traditional tragedy. More so than any other characters, we can see this theme surface in the descriptions of Oedipus and Clytaemnestra.⁵³ On recognising such pollution in his own family, Euthyphro considers himself an expert in piety. Breaking down such a character and forcing us to question such themes as pollution, Plato can once again be seen to use a traditional tragic theme in order to shift it along his philosophical path. The theme of cleansing oneself figures even more strongly though in the *Phaedo*. To begin, we note that Socrates has been kept alive for a longer than usual amount of time because of the Athenian mission to Delos, a mission which originated in the mythical exploits of Theseus, a particularly Athenian tragic character.⁵⁴ For during this mission to honour the god, no executions were to take place. In other words, the city was to be kept 'pure' ("καθαρεύειν τὴν πόλιν", 58b). This idea of purity, though, while having these traditional connotations, is transformed by Plato into a philosophical theme which drives the early action of the *Phaedo*. It is a theme which is worked by Plato into structuring the distance of the body from the soul. Through the discussions with his Pythagorean interlocutors, Simmias and Cebes, Socrates will argue for the soul's immortality by highlighting its implicit distinction from the body.⁵⁵ In order to keep this distance, Socrates suggests we "keep ourselves pure (καθαρεύωμεν)" (67a) until god decides to set us free. There is evidence to suggest that this purity could also

⁵³ For example, at Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* 1012 we find: "ἢ μὴ μίᾱσμα τῶν φυτευσάντων λάβῃς;" The same is said of Clytaemnestra at Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* 1028: "...πατροκτόνον μίᾱσμα καὶ θεῶν στύγος"

⁵⁴ Burger (1984) notes a further use of the Theseus myth by Plato. For the same number of people who accompanied Theseus on his fated journey (14), are present at Socrates' fated hour. Burger posits *Phaedo* as playing the role of Ariadne "...an ally necessary for the success of the mission" (p. 19). Yet Burger pushes the significance of the myth to the very heart of the *Phaedo*. For the Minotaur is represented by our 'childish fear of death', which can only be killed by the logos. "To confront this monster, Socrates / Heracles must transform the fear of death, and of his death in particular, into the fear of the death of the logos" (p. 115). I think this highlights once more the ability to see the philosophical insights of this work through its implicitly literary means.

⁵⁵ Rowe (1993) argues (on p. 7 & p. 124) that Simmias and Cebes were not Pythagoreans at all, but were actually part of Socrates' circle. Part of Rowe's argument against the notion that they are Pythagoreans is the indecisive vocabulary used by Plato and the fact that they were not aware of the religious aspects of the sect. As I examined earlier with Gadamer, though, their lack of knowledge on the religious aspects could merely show that they were a new breed of Pythagorean sympathisers who were not interested in the religious aspects. Although the indecisive vocabulary may indeed show that they were not Pythagoreans in the strictest sense, I believe they are certainly *representative* of Pythagorean perspectives. Even with the indecisive vocabulary, why would Plato go out of his way to mention their association with Philolaus? Although Rowe does show that the verb used (συγγίγνεσθαι), meaning 'associating with', does not necessarily make Simmias and Cebes *followers* of Philolaus, I believe it nevertheless shows their representative function.

mean purity from pollution, as we see at Book 22 of Homer's *Odyssey* where the honourable death “καθαρῶ θανάτῳ” (l. 462) is one that is pollution free. This notion of purity is repeated at numerous points from 67a – 68b of the *Phaedo*, whereby a pure knowledge is one which is only attempted by purifying the soul of its bodily attachment. Not only is the body different from the soul, but its very being clouds and distracts us from that which we essentially are. What is generally considered to be bodily knowledge, a knowledge based on sensation, must, therefore, be traded with a Platonically proper knowledge based on the elements of our souls.⁵⁶ As the body corrupts this knowledge, it can be seen in terms of a pollution of the real. By embracing the ‘soulful’ aspects of oneself, one can cleanse oneself of the temporal, the fleeting, and the corporeal. The tool one uses to achieve this ‘cleansing’ is, of course, philosophy and the pursuit of the philosophical through dialogue. As we find stated at 69c, “wisdom itself is a sort of cleansing agent.” If the work of Socrates’ life is based around the creation of this polemic, then we may consider him to have lived in terms of ridding both himself and his followers of a debilitating pollution. Proof of Plato’s use of this theme comes at 81b, where Socrates again comments on the corruptive elements of the body. For the person who does not attempt to purify their souls, who clings to the body for as long as possible, is seen to have polluted their soul, whereby the soul is described as “μεμιασμένη καὶ ἀκάθαρτος”.⁵⁷ Socrates, therefore, much like Oedipus, is attempting to banish ‘μίασμα’. Although Oedipus attempts it in the state, Socrates attempts it in the soul.

If we remember, though, Gadamer believed the *artistic* experience to be a catharsis in which the constitutive elements of our reality are presented to us in a more understandable form, a form we must engage with dialogically (pp. 23-26). By showing us ourselves and our world in the works, we experience the truth of the work. The change that happens in tragedy for Gadamer in which the spectators become the players, shows that the catharsis happens as part of our participation in the work. Of

⁵⁶ “The philosopher’s occupation consists precisely in the freeing and separation of soul from body.” 67d.

⁵⁷ The ‘ghostly apparitions’ whom Socrates describes as being those who cling to the body too long might also be seen as parallels to the ghosts of traditional tragedy. The main difference of course between these two conceptions of ghosts being the vast difference in cognitive ability. For in Aeschylus’ *Persians*, the ghost of Darius tells the Queen of Persia why Xerxes’ army was defeated. In Euripides’ *Hecuba*, the ghost of Polydorus informs us, the audience, of what happened to him. In both these instances, the ghosts are sources of knowledge, knowledge we would not have had without them. Of course, Plato’s ghosts are the very opposite in terms of their cognitive ability. For it is their inability to cater for pure, soulful knowledge that has led them to this state.

course, this participation has been shown to be *dialogical* for Gadamer. What does this mean then? Well this dialogical immersion in the work, which helped characterise the cathartic element of tragedy for Gadamer, can be seen as being similar to the type of catharsis we see here in the *Phaedo*. For the way towards the soul that Socrates is describing here, is one which is wholly set in the dialogical mould. As we see in Book VII of the *Republic*, dialectic is the highest way towards reaching knowledge, the essential feature of the education of the philosopher. One can only attempt to purify one's soul through dialectic for Plato in the same way that Gadamer believes tragedy purifies our prejudices and self-knowledge. What we can see in this similar methodology, then, is yet another way in which the aesthetic theories of Gadamer can be used to elicit a similar, aesthetic core to Plato's works, in terms here of knowledge. Yet what exactly is this knowledge and how is it aesthetic?

We find in the *Phaedo* that this knowledge is none other than *anamnesis*, a foundational aspect of Platonic philosophy that we examined earlier. Man must rely on himself and his fellow man to attain the ultimate answers, not supernatural or mythical beings. As Plato describes with regard to the 'ghosts' mentioned above, our re-cognitive faculties are not reliant on a sensuous dependency, but instead are illuminated by forgetting our bodily attachments and pointing ourselves towards a more essential knowledge. Yet the use of *anamnesis* in the *Phaedo* needs to be commented on here, given the current line of my argument. For of course, the traditional interpretation of this dialogue cites *anamnesis* as being an argument used by Plato to demonstrate the immortality of the soul. However, as I mentioned in my first part with reference to Gadamer's dialogical interpretation of the *Phaedo*, I do not believe that proving the immortality of the soul is part of Plato's agenda here. Although an exposition on the nature of the soul is paramount, proving its immortality is not. How then do I account for the theory of *anamnesis* if it is not used to prove the soul's immortality? I believe that *anamnesis* is used by Plato here to forever tie the methodology of Platonic philosophy to the requirements of dialogue. For *anamnesis* can only reveal itself in full through dialogical engagement. Although *anamnesis* is initially sparked by a mere phenomenal exposure, for example the witnessing of examples of equality, it is only through dialogue that the underlying truth behind this recognition is revealed. Philosophy and the philosopher must have this as their tool. What *anamnesis* also shows us though, is how anyone has the *potential* to become a philosopher. The *Republic* establishes the requirements of the right education and

environment, as well as a necessarily inherent capacity, yet is not proscriptive of gender, race, or economic class. If we recall, it is a slave boy who in the *Meno* is shown to elicit a highly purified piece of knowledge (purified in the sense that it is worked through mathematical reasoning) through the geometrical dialogue with Socrates. Socrates does not treat this boy differently simply because he is a slave. Rather, the boy is just another interlocutor who is treated just as individually as any other interlocutor. *Anamnesis* is only ever revealed through dialogue, a method of investigation which is philosophy for Plato. The nature of the soul is described in the *Phaedo* as only being revealed through *anamnesis*. What this shows us, therefore, is that only those who philosophise, who explore knowledge through proper dialogue, are the ones who will be able to recognise this knowledge when they happen upon it. *Anamnesis* is used to stamp the necessity of dialogue on knowledge. *Anamnesis* is not described as a process by Plato, as a method of approaching the world. Rather it is a *consequence* of one such method, being what will happen once one engages oneself philosophically. As opposed, then, to being a mode of proof for the soul's immortality, *anamnesis* becomes a mode of proof for the necessity of dialogue and, by proxy, of the necessity of philosophy. The implications of the potential of *anamnesis* lead us, of course, to its use by Gadamer. I have shown in Section III of my first part the degree to which Gadamer used *anamnesis* as an integral part of his theories on art. Yet it is the *Phaedo*'s binding of *anamnesis* to dialogue which warrants attention here. Unlike the natural philosophers and their search for knowledge in the world around them, *anamnesis* roots the search within the searcher. This is as important for Gadamer as it is for Plato. For Gadamer, though, this recognition makes us the beginning and end of the artwork. Through dialogue, and because of dialogue, we experience the artwork, yet in the very same way we experience Plato's dialogues. This is what Plato tells us by tying *anamnesis* to dialogue in the *Phaedo*. The consequences of this connection between *anamnesis* and dialogue helps once more bridge the question of how Plato's dialogues can be deemed aesthetic. For through Gadamer we have again seen how the way towards the artwork is the very same way towards truth and wisdom for Plato. What the *Phaedo* presents most clearly through its use of *anamnesis*, therefore, is what the artwork, for Gadamer, is ultimately telling us.

I mentioned earlier the interlude of Echecrates and Phaedo as being a potentially dramatic part of this dialogue (p. 163).⁵⁸ I will explore this more fully now in terms of how Plato presents Socrates as a tragic hero for philosophy. That Socrates is suffering for philosophy is certainly clear.⁵⁹ His willingness to continue this suffering, though, is established quite early on in the dialogue. When warned by Crito that talking at length might slow down the process of the poison Socrates responds, at 63d, by saying that he would gladly ingest two or three doses, so long as he can converse in his usual manner. It is clear, then, from very early on that Socrates is like no other, and is a beacon for all future philosophers. When the dialogue breaks, at 88c, Simmias and Cebes had just outlined their objections to Socrates' arguments on the immortality of the soul. These strong objections represented the theories of the Pythagoreans and, we must assert, other Greek intellectuals as well, hypothesising the soul to be a mere 'attunement' of the body, or capable of outliving one body but not necessarily being immortal. The interlude is clearly intentional. For Socrates, somewhat uncharacteristically, waits until both Simmias and Cebes have outlined their arguments before offering his rebuttal. We would have expected Socrates to have offered his response to Simmias as soon as he had outlined it, and only then gone on to Cebes. Although this would surely have been simpler (responding to one argument as opposed to two at a time), it is not done. What is worth mentioning of this interlude before Socrates' eventual response is the way in which dramatic tension is created, not to mention the undoubtedly dramatic language used by both Echecrates and Phaedo. For example, at 88d Echecrates asks Phaedo to speak of how Socrates, "advanced upon (μετῆλθε) the argument", after the objections had been delivered.

⁵⁸ Echecrates represents us, the audience. At the beginning of the dialogue it is he who, like us, wants to know "[w]hat took place at his (Socrates') death Phaedo? What was said and done?" (58c). He speaks for us once more later in the work at a second interlude at 102a. For at this stage Socrates had outlined his detailed response to the objections of Simmias and Cebes. Phaedo tells Echecrates that all those who were present thought that Socrates did a great job in detailing his objections. "And so do we who were not there", replies Echecrates, "and who are hearing about it now" (102a). Of course, we the audience are again acknowledged at 103a, though in a different guise to Echecrates. By this stage Socrates has outlined his objection to Cebes' objection using the notion of cause (αἰτία). Yet an objection to this position of Socrates' is then launched from the audience. The key issue here is that Phaedo cannot remember who stated the objection in question. Given this, we, the faceless, nameless audience, are brought directly into the dialogical exchange as this nameless objector. It is a clear way in which the dialogue is opened up to us.

⁵⁹ The traditional notion of hero's suffering can also be seen in the *Symposium*. When Alcibiades is describing the famous instance of Socrates standing outside on the same spot while on campaign, he compares him directly, at 220c, to Odysseus, a point recognised by Rosen (1968). The perseverance through physical hardships is certainly an interesting parallel. Of course, Socrates is not affected by these physical hardships because of his movement away from the physical towards the intellectual and soulful. I examine the *Symposium* in greater detail later in this part.

Phaedo's reply, at 89a, is no less dramatic, describing his admiration at "...the skill with which he (Socrates) healed us (ἰάσατο), recalled us from flight (πεφευγότας), restoring us to health (ἀνεκαλίσσατο) and urged us forward (προύτρεψεν) to join him in pursuing the enquiry." These verbs all have clear Homeric intonations, and are clearly used to give Socrates a particularly heroic air. Phaedo then tells Echecrates of how resolute Socrates was in rescuing the argument, swearing at 89b that "...if our argument dies and we fail to bring it back to life again (ἀναβιώσασθαι)" he shall cut all of his hair off. Yet Socrates goes further still, telling his followers at 89c how he will, "...make a vow like the Argives never to let my hair grow again until I had defeated the argument of Simmias and Cebes in a return battle (ἀναμαχόμενος)." The use of militaristic terminology is quite unmistakeable here and furthers the heroic intonations.⁶⁰ Philosophy's new tragic hero, it seems, will not take part in wars but in discussions, will tackle not men but moral issues, and will defeat not armies but arguments. Philosophy's battle would be for the hearts and minds of the people, helping them lead themselves and each other towards an enlightened realisation of self.

Yet, as we might expect, Socrates is not a traditional tragic hero. For Socrates to covet a title, for Plato to explicitly position Socrates on such a pedestal, would surely go against everything of which both Socrates and Plato himself stood for. We should not live the philosophical life simply because Plato or even Socrates tells us to. In the same vein, to place Socrates as some sort of philosophical messiah would be to negate the importance of dialogue. Socrates must be questioned just as much as any other interlocutor. Before the objections of Simmias and Cebes, at the stage when they are seen by Socrates whispering to each other, all Socrates asks, at 84d, is that they take him with them in wherever they want the discussion to go. Rather than being insulted or upset at having what must surely be considered an intimate belief (especially given the circumstances) on what will happen to him after death questioned, Socrates subordinates both himself and his role in the discussion. For he only asks to hear what Simmias and Cebes have to say if they think he could be of help ("μετ' ἐμοῦ εὐπορήσειν", 84d). Socrates is presented as negating the idea of himself as any type of focal point. This point is further corroborated by an earlier instance in which the attempts of Cebes and Simmias to propel Socrates towards this

⁶⁰ At 89c Phaedo even worries that Socrates is taking on too much by trying to take on two arguments at once for "they say that not even Herakles is a match for two."

traditional, somewhat heroic focal point, is once more repulsed. At 78a of the *Phaedo*, Cebes describes his worry that when Socrates dies, the mode of question and answer will die with him. Where, Cebes asks, will they find someone like him? The answer offered by Socrates is that Greece is a big place. They should, he believes, spare no expense or effort in looking for the right 'charmer' ("ἐπωιδόν", 78a). Of course, they must also search 'amongst themselves'. "For perhaps it is you yourselves who are best able to do this" (ibid.). What this undoubtedly means is that philosophy does not begin and end with Socrates. His death does not even bring to an end his teachings. The concept of the tragic hero, then, is once more changed considerably under this treatment by Plato. Throwing off the traditional binds of the hero, dialogue is inserted in his place whereby no participant in such dialogues can be celebrated above the method and what the method reaches for. Simmias and Cebes should not worry about him but should only worry about the truth. Uneducated (ἀπαιδευτοί) people care not for the truth but with only what seems to be true. Socrates cares not for what seems but only for what truly is. In this way Simmias and Cebes should not fear their own arguments. If they disagree with Socrates they must oppose him with every argument they can muster (91c). This opposition, though, will be welcomed by Socrates as he will benefit from it, being a part of the discussion. Of course, the position taken by Socrates here, of subordination in favour of the logos, has the very same effect as our earlier discussion of Gadamer and the world of the artwork. We saw here too how the participants subordinate themselves to the world of the game in order to partake in its playing (pp. 94-98), in the same way as the audience members of a tragedy partake in the 'playing' of the drama (pp. 146-147). Just as when we "become aware of an actor or singer or any creative artist as mediator we exercise a secondary level of reflection" ('The Relevance of the Beautiful, *RB*, p. 52), so too must we not let a dialogical participant overwhelm us by their reputation alone. In other words, just because a work is by a well known artist does not necessarily entail it is any good, in the very same way as a contribution from a 'famed' or expert discussant must not be taken as any higher or unquestionable form of contribution. Rather, the logos, in the same way as the artwork, must be taken for what it is in itself, with no special heed given to its mediators. If we remember, though, the audience of tragedy held great significance for Gadamer. For it is in them that the 'transformation into structure' happens in tragedy. In Plato's *Phaedo* I believe we find this exemplified. For one of the reasons the audience plays such an important role for Gadamer is the way in which the themes

covered in the drama can be taken on by each member of the audience and discussed later. The effect of the work is thereby spread in a purely dialogical manner. Of course, we find this very process as the structuring feature of the *Phaedo*, given how the dialogue is itself a third-party re-telling. Phaedo, who bore witness to the events, portrays the themes in conversation with Echecrates, who we can imagine himself recounting the themes covered to his own circle of friends. Here we find Gadamer's notion of *theoria* come to the fore, whereby Phaedo's role as *theoros* enables the dialogue to exist. Phaedo was not a passive audience member, in the sense that he was not simply a passer-by gazing at the events around him. The role of the spectator is of paramount importance. Now, as is clear, Phaedo did not write the *Phaedo*, Plato did. What I mean, then, by saying that Phaedo enabled the dialogue to exist is simply in terms of the dialogical world of the work. What Phaedo's role shows us, then, is our own role in the work's transmission. Phaedo enables the dialogue to exist by showing us what is needed for the work to exist; dialogue. Just as "enactment," was, "the festival's mode of being" ('The Festive Character of Theatre', *RB*, p. 59), so too is dialogue the dialogue's mode of being.

Yet the final word on the tragic elements of the *Phaedo* comes, not from examining any more tragic allusions made directly in the text, but in exploring the overall picture we get from the presentation of Socrates. For by the very end of the dialogue, when all arguments are over and the hemlock has been brought in, we are reminded of what it is we are doing here. We, like Socrates' friends, have ultimately come to witness his death. Although the potential is there, Plato does not exploit this fact. For example, Socrates' farewell to his wife and children is merely alluded to and is not used to emotionally manipulate the audience in any way. Throughout the work we are not led to feel sorry for Socrates at all, but are, on the contrary, made feel happy for him. When Socrates finally drinks the hemlock he gently castigates his companions for crying. The tragic significance of this action, though, is by no means lost on Plato. For at 115a, when it was time for Socrates to drink the poison, Socrates says the following:

"For now I am summoned, as a tragedian might say, by fate (ἐιμαρμένη), and near is the time for my bath." 115a.

We can certainly see this as Plato playing with the notion of tragedy and fate, a notion I discussed earlier. Yet, for Gadamer, it is this picture of Socrates which works as the

dialogue's most persuasive argument. The fear of death is something which is unlikely to be assuaged by any argument, no matter how reasonable it seems. It is Socrates' utter conviction as to the verity of his belief, and his total dedication to the logical bases of his arguments, which is more successful in trying to convince us of Plato's truth than what the arguments contain in themselves.

"We are dealing here with a poetic presentation which should never be measured against a one-sided criterion of logical consistency" ('The Proofs of Immortality in Plato's *Phaedo*', *DD*, p. 21). And following, "Thus the *Phaedo*'s poetic power to convince is stronger than its arguments' logical power to prove." *ibid*.

Of course, with the above quotations one must bear in mind the cognitive power which Gadamer attributed to poetry and the arts. When he describes the "poetic power" of the *Phaedo*, then, he does not mean it in what might be described as a traditional way. I have shown previously how the element of "tragic suffering" witnessed in Socrates' death leads us to recognise ourselves and our own finiteness "in the face of the power of fate" (*TM*, 1.2.1.C). That we recognise ourselves in Socrates is what makes him a truly tragic character. With specific reference to the *Phaedo*, Gadamer also believed that there was a newly emerging scientism in Plato's time which believed it had the key to unlocking the secrets of mankind. Socrates tells us himself of his disappointments with 'natural' philosophy and with Anaxagoras. What the *Phaedo* shows is that there are some things this new scientism cannot account for. Could we conceive of any 'science' or scientific argument that could convince us of what happens to us after death? The only knowledge one could have in this regard is that one does not know, an admission which is made clear with Socrates' hesitancy at the end of the work in declaring support for his own arguments. For Gadamer, then, the dialogue can only be seen to contain a stimulant for further discussion, as opposed to any definite Platonic conceptual framework.

"As convincing as the discussion might have been, the conclusion is drawn that the proofs are not sufficient and that one must continue to test their premises insofar as is humanly possible. Evidently, in questions of this sort, one cannot expect greater certainty." 'The Proofs of Immortality in Plato's *Phaedo*', *DD*, p. 36.

So the dialogue, then, is only completed in its being discussed, where "...all that remains of these demonstrations is their application in the moral realm" (ibid.).⁶¹ By even initiating discussion on the soul, or even on death, Plato is directing us towards an area of knowledge that our senses cannot account for. Ultimately this is the *Phaedo*'s goal. The 'transformation into structure' that Gadamer saw in tragedy can be seen just as vividly in this dialogue, then, with regard to the fact that the themes it addresses are, by nature, themes that are relevant to every person, meaning they are themes that ultimately go beyond us. The fact that no 'answers' can be provided to the questions posed means the work will continue to address itself to new audiences. By discussing the *Phaedo* we are therefore akin to participants in a festival who bring the idea behind the festival into being by celebrating it, or more appropriately, are like witnesses to a work of art who complete the work by discussing it and the themes which lie behind it. Each of our interpretations of Plato's work become contemporaneous with it. Of course this approach is spelled out for us in the work itself. With every unique approach, interpretation, and presentation of the work distinctive and individuated, all that remains is the *Phaedo* itself, a key element of Gadamerian art. Where the *Phaedo* distances itself, however, is in how its carefully crafted subject matter forces you to have an opinion and therefore engage with the work. One does not necessarily need training to have an opinion on one's soul or on death. Where the work achieves its ideality in my opinion, in terms of Platonic works, is in how dialogue is not only presented as facilitating the discussion, but is indirectly shown to be the only way towards an acquaintance with one's soul, to becoming at peace with the inevitability of death. It not only thematises the notion of knowledge being ultimately knowledge of self, it shows us that, although we all have the potential to approach this knowledge, we need a certain special tool to do so. The 'answers' of the work, then, are not what we are directed to believe within the text, but are seen more in the art of asking the right questions. This, for me, is the essence of the art of Platonic philosophy. So although we may not believe Socrates' arguments we are nevertheless happy that at least he believes them. And at the fated hour there is no *deus ex machina* to save him, no legendary king to grant him sanctuary. Socrates drinks the hemlock and slips quietly into death. And immortality

⁶¹ Rowe (1993) agrees with viewing the dialogical context of the *Phaedo* as paramount. When we enter into its fictional context "...we become like the audience of a conversation, able like them to learn from it and to share in (or reject) its conclusions" p. 4-5.

is granted to him after all. For Socrates will live forever thanks to the enduring legacy, philosophically and dramatically, of his followers.

9. Plato and the Tragi-comedy of Life and Learning: the *Symposium* Revisited

Having previously examined Plato's use of comedy in the *Hippias Major*, and tragedy in the *Phaedo*, it is in the *Symposium* where I will now argue that both of these fonts of influence coalesce. As with my examinations of the *Hippias Major* and the *Phaedo*, what these areas of influence coalesce into, is neither tragedy nor comedy, but rather the philosophical dialogue. Throughout my work I have tried to show how deceptively simple a word dialogue is. Of course, the *Symposium* is a somewhat anomalous Platonic work, given its unique agonistic structure. In my previous examinations of the *Phaedo* and *Hippias Major*, dialogue was a fundamental feature of my arguments as to the Platonic encounter with tragedy and comedy respectively. What is key to this last section of my work, then, is in showing how both the presence of and absence of dialogue is a shaping feature in Plato's approach. Yet this is by no means the only method of analysis I will use. For, in the same way as I examined earlier, the *Symposium* is propelled by a carefully designed set of characters. The comedic effects of the work, then, are very much centred on the presentation of Aristophanes. The tragic effects, on the other hand, while being similarly set to the character of Agathon, are more pervasive and will be shown to once more extend to the presentation of Socrates as the philosophical 'hero' of the piece, a culmination witnessed in the 'satyr-play' of Alcibiades.

As I mentioned in my last part (pp. 138-140), Plato's works only became fully realised when they are discussed, an essential and altogether practical usage. In my previous arguments the serious aspects of the Platonic agenda was placed in contrast to the notion of tragedy and comedy as only entertainment. This altogether more serious perspective, whereby the goal of the Platonic dialogues lay in wholly serious intonations, will be similarly seen here in the *Symposium*. The first and perhaps most noticeable instance in the *Symposium* where we can see this more realistic, Platonic alternative to the traditional form of tragedy and comedy, is in how the dialogue opens in mid-conversation. As I examined in the *Hippias Major* and *Phaedo*, Plato's treatment of both tragic and comedic ideals rested on the tragi-comedy of life, with such features as the traditional omniscience of the narrator and unquestioned virtue of

the protagonist transformed utterly. The significance of this more practical aspect of Plato's dialogues was shaped by Gadamer's similarly practical treatment of art. If we remember, for Gadamer, the spectators needed to feel that the world on stage was continuous with their own. Anything less would cause a wedge to develop which would distance the spectators from the work. In Plato, however, there is no question that the world presented to us is our world, a world we can certainly recognise. Highlighting this is the emphasis on reality and the rejection of style for the sake of style. By opening the work in mid-conversation, then, the audience is immediately thrown into the piece. The world the work presents does not stop for the audience to get on and adjust itself for them, but rather keeps running as normal, forcing the audience to jump on and adjust themselves to it. This closes the gap between art and reality, and between the work and the audience. We even see a further sign of this somewhat uncompromising approach to the audience in how the entire dialogue is a third-party retelling. Yet precisely because of this, the traditional omniscience of the narrator is rejected in favour of a more realistic though purposefully flawed approach. For Apollodorus, who is telling the story to a friend, regrets that Aristodemus, who was Apollodorus' source for the tale, "couldn't remember exactly what everyone said" (178a).⁶² Plato seems to be once more distancing the treatise and its limited potential for an acceptable truth from dialogue and its communal perspective. One could even say that Apollodorus' admission is included by Plato to show the superiority of discussion *over Plato's works themselves*. The uncertainty of the whole dialogue, the idea that what we have before us is not certain, historical fact, is thereby ascribed in order for us to realise that we must not take these written works as the end of the matter, but must rather have the works completed ourselves in our own lives.

It is in the representative function of the characters of this dialogue where I believe Plato's philosophical intentions are carried out. Even though he is the 'father' of the discourse, (for the traditional requirements of an encomia see Dover 1980, p. 12), Phaedrus' speech lacks consistency, is "simple-minded" according to Gould (1963), and is little more than a conventional account of Love.⁶³ For Bury (1969),

⁶² As noted by Bury (1969), though, the mode of narration has further significance given how inappropriate it would be to have Socrates retell a dialogue in which he is eulogised (just like in the *Phaedo*). It is by no means a unique framing of the dialogue. As seen in Hunter (2004), a similar type of framing occurs in the *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, and *Phaedo*.

⁶³ As noted by Dover (1980) the word used in the *Symposium* for Love, *Eros*, can have wide-ranging connotations. "This word, which can denote any very strong desire (e.g. for victory) and is used also by Homer (in the form ἔπος) to denote appetite for food and drink, usually means 'love' in the sense

“the moral standpoint is in no respect raised above the level of the average citizen; the speaker pays little regard to consistency, and the method of argument, with its want of logical coherence, savours much of the sophists” (Introduction, xxv). Phaedrus’ respect for the sophists was seen in the *Phaedrus* where he is shown as being an ardent follower of Lysias and is certainly continued in this speech with his use of such rhetorical ornamentation as that of chiasmus at 178d, of paronomasia at 179c, and his use of special compound verbs at 179c, 179e, and 180a. Yet more so than this connection to the sophists, is Phaedrus’ total reliance on the poets to back up and ‘prove’ his account, a point noted by Bury (1969) and Sheffield (2006).⁶⁴ By using instances from Hesiod, Acusilaus, and Parmenides, Phaedrus thereby asserts that “all sides agree (πολλαχόθεν ὁμολογεῖται)” (178c). This comes after Phaedrus’ statement that ‘proof’ (τεκμήριον) of Love’s age is to be found in these poets. He later uses the example of Alcestis at 179b as further ‘evidence’ (μαρτυρίον) for what he is saying.⁶⁵ What this reliance on the poets shows is the undoubtedly conventional approach adopted by Phaedrus. As both tragedy and comedy used the poets as sources for their art, a certain degree of intention can be spotted here. As with Polemarchus’ use of Simonides in *Republic* Book I as his source material, Plato is once more showing us the inadequacy of such sources for true philosophical investigation.

The sophistic influence can also be seen in Pausanias’ speech.⁶⁶ Bury (1969) spots this influence in the use of paronomasia at 181a, 182e, and 183a, and in the rhythmic correspondence from 180e *ad fin* – 181a. Of course, this sophism is most apparent in Pausanias’ belief in the supremacy of law or custom over nature.⁶⁷ We can

which that word bears in our expressions ‘be in love (with...)’ (ἐρᾶν, epic and poetic ἔρασθαι) and ‘fall in love (with...)’ (ἐρασθῆναι): that is, intense desire for a particular individual as a sexual partner” (Introduction, p. 1). These appetitive connotations make the word of especial importance for Plato, given the role of appetite in the *Republic*.

⁶⁴ Hunter (2004) states that the discussion of poetry was a common feature of symposia. In this way the format of the symposium can be seen to facilitate Plato’s discussion of poetry, in terms of those who use it as a basis for how they live, and those who use it as the basis for their profession. “In Plato’s day the recitation of famous speeches from Attic drama would have been a standard sympotic entertainment.” p. 6.

⁶⁵ Phaedrus also uses the legend of Orpheus and Achilles as support at 180a.

⁶⁶ As noted by Rosen (1968), Pausanias was a student of Prodicus, a moral sophist who was concerned with “linguistic distinctions and terminological precision” (p. 60). However, Rosen in my view over-emphasises the connections between the speeches, describing them in terms of an almost linear progression.

⁶⁷ Bury (1969) also charges Pausanias with “inconsistency and self-contradiction.” For “the section on the καλὴ ἀπάτη (181e) stands out in curious contradiction with the section immediately preceding, in which fidelity and sincerity (τὸ βέβαιον) are put forward as the necessary conditions of a love that is fair (καλός) and irreproachable (οὐκ ἐπονείδιστος)” (Introduction, xxvii). This endeavours to show us the holes in the sophistic education.

see this belief of Pausanias' in the importance of popular wisdom at 183b where he uses the phrase "λέγουσιν οἱ πολλοί" as the basis of his belief.⁶⁸ He too uses descriptions of the gods for his evidence remarking at 180d that, "we know (ἴσμεν)" that there is no Aphrodite without Love. Pausanias' representative function as both a student of sophistry and as an undoubted sensualist is contrasted by Eryximachus who is both a physician and a champion of moderation. Eryximachus cannot distance himself or his response from his profession taking every opportunity to display his, as Bury (1969) calls it, "medical lore, now with a lecture on μέθη (176d), presently with another on λύγξ (185d,e)" (Introduction, xxviii). His is a discourse filled with physical doctrine, in which, in stark contrast to the previous speeches, no time is given to literary ornamentation.⁶⁹ Especially as the subject matter is that of Love, the scientific pedantry of Eryximachus seems representative of a newly emerging scientism, embodied here by the medical writer, in which physical doctrines are applied to all matters.⁷⁰

So if these characters are representative of particular approaches, it is not too difficult to see where my argument is leading in terms of the *Symposium's* treatment of comedy and tragedy. For after the speech of Eryximachus comes that of the comic poet Aristophanes who, according to Bury (1969), "supplies the comic business of the piece with admirable gusto" (Introduction, xxx).⁷¹ This speech is full of allusions to the comic art and is used, I believe, to showcase Plato's ability to himself write comedic speeches. Crucially, though, as argued by Dover (1980), Aristophanes' speech does not resemble any of his extant comedies.

⁶⁸ At 184a – b, Pausanias argues that their customs in Athens are designed to separate proper love from common love, showing once more his celebration of custom over nature.

⁶⁹ Bury (1969) notes the following as showing Eryximachus' monotony of expression: ἔστι δὲ at 187b; ἔστι γάρ at 186c, and ἔστι δέ at 186d and 187a.

⁷⁰ This notion pervades Eryximachus' speech, where Love is described as the harmony in all things. As medicine attempts to bring harmony to the body, it too is guided by Love. Hunter (2004) argues that Doctors, much like sophists, were "in the habit of giving 'public displays' of their talents, in part to attract clients, and Eryximachus' 'performance' should be seen in that light" (p. 33). So it would not have been strange to have Doctors using their linguistic powers in order to persuade people. As I have mentioned previously, this notion of persuasion is of key importance to Plato, giving us good reason as to why a Doctor is included as one of the speakers.

⁷¹ That Aristophanes is designed by Plato in a comedic way is further supported by Strauss (2001). "To summarize: Plato comedizes (*sic*), if I may say so; he makes Aristophanes the subject of a comedy, just as Aristophanes made Socrates an object of comedy." (p. 149). I do not believe, however, that the portrayal of Socrates in the *Clouds* was of *too* great a significance for Plato. For philosophers were a common source of ridicule for comedy meaning it is unlikely that Aristophanes was alone in his comic portrayal.

"Aristophanes' story does not resemble the plots of his extant comedies except in being amusing and fanciful, nor, as far as our evidence goes, had anyone composed a comedy on a comparable theme." p. 113.

For me, this fact highlights how Plato is not parodying an existent comedy of Aristophanes, but is attempting to construct a speech which covers comedic themes. The allusion to physical comedy is brought in immediately with Plato's characterisation of Aristophanes. For, he was supposed to give his discourse directly after Pausanias, but succumbed instead to a bout of hiccoughs.⁷² This meant that he had to allow Eryximachus to take his place. The fact that Aristophanes now comes after Eryximachus gives Plato the opportunity to display his own comedic effects.⁷³ As noted by Clay (1983), the fact that Aristophanes was given a number of treatments by Eryximachus intending to cure his hiccoughs meant that during Eryximachus' speech "his unfortunate neighbour is hiccoughing, gasping, gargling, wheezing, snorting, and sneezing" (p. 188). When eventually cured of his ailment, and given his opportunity, Aristophanes takes at once to making fun of Eryximachus' discourse.⁷⁴ For being cured of his hiccoughs, Aristophanes notes that it must have been the 'ordered' Love ("τὸ κόσμιον", 189a) spoken of by Eryximachus that must have called on the sneeze he needed to stop the bout. Eryximachus admits his fears that Aristophanes will say something 'funny' ("τι γελοῖον", 189b) in his discourse. Aristophanes counters that he is by no means worried about saying something 'funny', given as it is his profession. What he is worried about, however, is saying something ridiculous ("καταγέλαστα", 189b). This play on words is a common feature of Aristophanic comedy, as is the fairy-tale motif (e.g. in *Birds*) and rather negative appraisal of the gods he proceeds to give. For, even though the circular humans (who are, Bury (1969) asserts "intensely comic") of Aristophanes' tale craved power and attempted to topple the gods, the gods could not bring themselves to destroy them, as that would bring a swift end to the worship and sacrifices they

⁷² Bury (1969) describes Aristophanes' hiccough as itself being a comedic effect. "The incident shows up Aristophanes in a ludicrous light, and at the same time it gives further occasion to Eryximachus to air his medical lore" (Introduction, xxiii). The reception of the hiccough as a comedic effect is seen in Olympiodorus (vit. Plat. 3) and in Aristides (or. 46, II. P. 287). As Dover (1980) explains, "much humour in Old Comedy is founded on bodily processes, and it is appropriate that Aristophanes, rather than anyone else, should have hiccups" (p. 104). As Dover continues, though, Plato lets Aristophanes off rather lightly by giving him this particular consequence of over-eating, as there were other less flattering bodily functions available to him.

⁷³ Even Eryximachus' name is somewhat comedic meaning, as it does, 'hiccough-fighter'.

⁷⁴ This much is stated by Sheffield (2006) who believes "it is difficult not to read much of Aristophanes' speech as a parody of Eryximachus" p. 17.

received.⁷⁵ To solve the problem, Zeus has them cut in two. Not only will this lessen their strength, but it will mean the number of sacrifices will automatically double. In other words it will be more 'lucrative' ("χρησιμώτεροι", 190d) for them. Bury (1969) thinks that the phrase used by Aristophanes to describe the perplexity of Zeus in trying to come up with a suitable solution ("μόγισ δὴ ὁ Ζεὺς ἐννοήσας", 190c), is another 'comic touch'.

The comic strain of Aristophanes' discourse is carried further towards another traditional focus of the comedian: the politician. According to Aristophanes' discourse (at 192a), boys lie with men, not because they are shameless, but rather because they are bold ("θάρρους"), manly ("ἀνδρείας"), and masculine ("ἀρρενωπίας"). Sure sign evidence of this (τεκμήριον) is how these types of characters are mostly politicians.⁷⁶ There is an undoubted bawdiness to Aristophanes' discourse, especially in its central message. For the goal of Love is to drive us back together with our separated other half. Intercourse, in this way, is the accomplishment of Love, its only goal. Love is only, then, a pursuit for wholeness but a very *physical* wholeness. Love becomes fused with desire, with no room left for intellectual considerations. Of course, the notion that Aristophanes' speech is meant to be comedic is refuted by Aristophanes himself directly after he gives it at 193b, when he asks that Eryximachus does not "make a comedy of it." Yet this must surely be taken with a liberal pinch of salt, especially given all of the comic effects of the speech.

What, though, does this mean in terms of Plato and comedy? As I mentioned earlier the lack of a dialogical framework makes this part of the work anomalous. Usually, we can take Socrates' probing questions as being used by Plato to isolate any of the underlying methodological or ideological problems with an interlocutor. Without such a framework, though, we cannot say that Plato is *treating* comedy, in the same way as he treats the rhapsodes in the *Ion* for example. What I believe we can say about Plato and comedy in this speech of Aristophanes', however, is not that Plato is treating the art form of comedy, but that Plato is simply writing a comedic speech.

⁷⁵ As noted by Clay (1983), Aristophanes' speech has echoes in the later *Philebus* also. For in the *Philebus*, "the comic (τὸ γελοῖον) arises (for Socrates) in the incongruity between the weak who fancy themselves powerful and their inability to get even if they are injured or abused (*Philebus*, 49b)" (p. 195). It is the humans, then, in Aristophanes' story who are the comedic focus given their lust for power though weak, and their inability to get even with the gods who have cut them in half.

⁷⁶ Dover (1980) agrees that "it is a taunt in Old Comedy (e.g. *Knights* 875-80, Plato *Comicus* fr. 186) that eminent politicians in their youth submitted shamelessly (or for money) to homosexual importunities..." (p. 118). Dover goes on to assert that Plato must have been aware of this taunt.

This in itself has great significance as it is not a comedic treatment of comedy. For Bury (1969), Aristophanes' speech is a jibe at writers of physiology like Eryximachus. Bury shows this by comparing a piece by Hippocrates on generation and sex-evolution with the speech of Aristophanes.⁷⁷ The similarities are quite clear. What this shows, then, is that Plato can use different elements of tradition in his philosophical method, in this case quite successfully incorporating the variable cadre of comedy.

Of course, the problem of not having dialogue to form a clearly conceived Platonic stance on his interlocutors is not true of Agathon. Agathon has a far more prominent position in this dialogue than any of those previously discussed, even Aristophanes.⁷⁸ Not only is the work set in his house, it is framed around the celebrations for his first tragic victory. Testament to Agathon's importance is the fact that he is the only participant questioned by Socrates after having given his speech. Although Bury (1969) concentrates on the fact that Agathon is clearly influenced by Gorgias in his approach, I believe Plato's intentions lay in showing Agathon to be representative of a merely conventional wisdom. Unlike Phaedrus and Pausanias, though, Agathon's approach is representative of a craft: the tragedians. What I argue here, then, is that, despite his pretensions, Agathon, as someone whose profession aims solely at pleasing the crowd, delivers a speech based on this same endeavour.

Having sat through a number of speeches (we aren't told how many exactly) on Love, Socrates is shown to be anxious to direct the evening's speeches towards discussion. For as soon as Aristophanes had delivered his speech, Socrates (at 194d) attempts to goad the next speaker in the series, Agathon, into one such discussion. This move by Socrates is spotted, though, by Phaedrus, who stops Socrates in his tracks and encourages Agathon to start his own speech. In this short, somewhat comic instance, we note two central features. The first is Socrates' insistence on engaging Agathon, as opposed to any of the others, in dialogue. The second is Socrates'

⁷⁷ The problem with Bury (1969), which is highlighted in the part which deals with Aristophanes, is how little he comments on the significance of the speeches from a Platonic perspective. On more than one occasion he writes that "Aristophanes intended..." (Introduction, xxxiii), and "Aristophanes is directly aiming..." (ibid.), without recognising explicitly enough that it is not Aristophanes who wrote the speech. That Plato could carry off such a traditionally Aristophanic speech is not mentioned in this otherwise authoritative work.

⁷⁸ We note that the subtitle for the *Symposium* is 'On the Good'. As the *Symposium* does not really deal with the Good in a direct, prolonged, or explicit way, this subtitle could certainly be a play on Agathon's name, supporting the idea that he is of central importance.

sarcastic jibe at the usual recipients of Agathon's addresses. For, Socrates establishes a clear distinction between the large, though unlearned, crowd at a tragic contest, and the small, though (somewhat) learned, crowd at their symposium. To his credit Agathon picks up on the distinction being made by Socrates, but this will feature in Socrates' further dealings with the young tragedian. The type of knowledge Plato sees typified in the tragedian is of course exacerbated by the sophists. We see this connection between the conventional wisdom of the people and the teachings of the sophists most clearly from *Republic* 493a-d and the simile of the wild beast. As I mentioned earlier, under this conception, the sophists merely tap into the common consciousness and then teach this back to the community as knowledge. Agathon, while being part of a profession which is geared towards pleasing the unlearned crowd (as opposed to the learned few) is also a student of Gorgianic sophistry.⁷⁹ This clear and undenied influence is seen at the formal introduction given by Agathon to his speech:⁸⁰

“ἐγὼ δὲ δὴ βούλομαι πρῶτον μὲν εἰπεῖν ὥς χρή με εἰπεῖν, ἔπειτα εἰπεῖν.” 194e.

When later arguing his case for the characteristics of Love at 196d, (that Love is moderate and brave), Agathon employs a noticeably sophistic structure. Let us use the argument for Love's bravery as an example.

Premise 1: Ares, as the god of war, is the epitome of bravery so is brave
 Premise 2: Ares cannot control Love but is rather controlled by Love
 Premise 3: He who holds is more powerful than he who is held
 Conclusion: As Love has power over the bravest, Love is therefore brave

One of the problems with the argument is the source of 'evidence' used for premise 2. For Agathon uses *Odyssey* VIII 266-366 as evidence of this. We have then, within this simple argument, the epitome of Plato's problem in its use of the poets as source

⁷⁹ Bury (1969) refers to Gorgias as Agathon's "rhetorical master and model" (Introduction, xxxv). He notes further how Agathon summarises the results of each section of his argument once finished and includes some verses which are "marked by the same Gorgianic features of assonance and alliteration" (Introduction, xxxvi).

⁸⁰ Referring to Agathon's speech, Dover (1980) states that it is "appropriate to a man whose business in life is the manipulation of language" (p. 123). Even without his sophistic impulses and training, then, Agathon, as a representative of the tragedians, has a certain reliance on using (and misusing) language.

evidence. Yet Agathon goes one step further than the others in his use of the poets.⁸¹ For, just as Eryximachus connected Love to his medical art, so too does Agathon call Love a poet. So skilled a poet is Love, that he has the ability to turn anyone into a poet. And what evidence is there of this? Once more Agathon turns to the poets, this time to one of his own in Euripides at 196e, using one such quote of his as ‘evidence’ (“μαρτυρίῳ χρῆσθαι”) that Love is a good poet and good at all types of artistic production (“ποίησιν τὴν κατὰ μουσικὴν”). The use of the poets as ‘proof’ of his arguments is truly littered throughout Agathon’s speech. That Love is actually the youngest of the gods is ‘proven’ (“μέγα δὲ τεκμήριον”, 195a-b), according to Agathon, by how Love flees from old age. Only a poet like Homer can show just how delicate (ἀπαλός) Love is. Referring to *Iliad* XIX 92-93 Agathon remarks, at 195d, that it seems “a nice proof” to him (“καλῶ οὖν δοκεῖ μοι τεκμηρίῳ”) that, much like Mischief (Ἄτην), Love too is of a delicate nature. As for Love’s form, “clear evidence” (“μέγα τεκμήριον”, 196a) of his gracefulness comes from his fluid form. This use of increasingly definitive assertions on the characteristics of Love is used to show the connection between Agathon the tragedian and the poets who influence his art. The culmination of this poetic influence on Agathon’s speech is his finale, where, at 197c, he is “suddenly struck” by the need to talk in meter. This metered delivery is finished off with poetical rhymings:

“...κενοῖ...πληροῖ; ἡγεμόν...πορίζων; εὐμενείας...δυσμενείας; σοφοῖς...θεοῖς”
197d

I believe the sophistic influence coupled with the constant references to the poets as ‘evidence’ and ‘proof’ for his arguments, make Agathon’s speech a clearly intentional representation of the tragic art.⁸² The clear problem with this, from a Platonic perspective, is how this conventional type of approach stems from, and is aimed towards, the public. It stems from the public in the sense that Agathon similarly uses

⁸¹ For Strauss (2001), Socrates’ encounter with Agathon (and some of the other guests too no doubt) is a meeting between philosophy and poetry and is the subject-matter of the *Symposium*. “The meeting of Socrates with poets, the contest of Socrates with poetry, is the *Symposium*.” p. 8.

⁸² For Jowett (1892), Agathon’s speech is “the speech of the tragic poet and a sort of poem, like tragedy, moving among the gods of Olympus, and not among the elder or Orphic deities” (p. 531). Similarly, for Dover (1980), “Plato has taken considerable trouble to give Agathon’s peroration a poetic character in addition to caricaturing its ‘Gorgianic’ structure” (p. 124). There is agreement here, then, as to the sophistic and poetic structure to Agathon’s speech, key features of the tragedian’s art. That Agathon draws on this skill is stated by Sheffield (2006): “Much of the speech is constructed in equal units and parallel clauses, and he clearly draws on his playwriting skills in his ample use of poetic rhythms.” p. 25.

phrases like “everybody agrees (πάντων ὁμολογουμένως) that Love is good-looking” at 196a, again as some sort of evidence for his arguments. In Socrates’ remarks to Agathon after his speech he respectfully notes that Agathon’s speech on Love would only ring true for “those who do not know (τοῖς μὴ γιγνώσκουσιν)” (199a). Love would not look that way to those who knew. The notion that Agathon only cares about the unlearned crowd is once more attested to here, a point agreed upon by Sheffield (2006). That Agathon’s approach is aimed towards the public stems from how popular tragedies were, and how in need they were of the public’s approval, a point I discussed in detail previously. There is something of a vicious circle here, then, that was undoubtedly of high concern for Plato. How, then, was Plato to address this? By having Socrates address Agathon through dialogue, the methodology which not only underlay Agathon’s approach but underlay all of the previous speeches, can be undermined at once.

As soon as Agathon had finished, the room immediately burst into applause. It is at this stage of the dialogue where Plato must draw a line under the preceding approaches and once more present the dialogical method as the only method worthy of praise. Dover (1980) argues that Plato has Socrates learn about Love from Diotima so that he avoids preaching to his guests from a superior position, while Bury (1969) and Jowett (1892) argue that Plato has Socrates invent the discussion with Diotima so as not to insult his host. Yet Socrates has done nothing but insult his host since his caustic greeting at 175e.⁸³ The reason I believe Plato designs the Diotima discussion is because Agathon is not dialectically equipped to handle the type of discussion required by Socrates. This much is established by Socrates before the Diotima episode. At 199c, having told his fellow guests that he will not be partaking in their method of praise as he has more concern for the truth of Love, Socrates attempts to engage Agathon in dialogue. However, it soon becomes clear that Agathon is utterly unsuited to such a method. Within a few lines Socrates has Agathon agree (at 201c) that Love is neither good nor beautiful. These were key aspects of Agathon’s speech which Agathon abandons without any discernible counter-arguments at all. This is not all. For Socrates gets Agathon to agree that Love is neither good nor beautiful on the basis that Love is the desire of goodness and beauty. Given this desire, Love must not have goodness or beauty for if it did, then it would not desire them. Yet earlier on in

⁸³ “Why, young as you are, you’re so brilliant I could call more than thirty thousand Greeks as witness.”

their short exchange, Socrates had described how desire for something does not always need to be for something we do not have, but can also be for something we have now but want to have again and keep in the future. Agathon does not pick up on this contradiction, though, and freely admits to Socrates' points. I believe it is this inability to discuss that leads Socrates to the invented discussion with Diotima. What we see here, then, is a clear comment on the tragic art. Through the representative function of Agathon we have seen its association with the unlearned many as opposed to the learned few, with the conventional wisdom taught by the sophists, with a reliance on the poets for 'evidence' and 'proof', and now here with an inability to discuss their own themes. There can be no doubt that these are damning criticisms indeed.

In Socrates' discussion with Diotima the philosophical method is established as the most appropriate for discerning the nature of Love. Socrates' criticisms of Agathon are furthered in this discussion as, rather serendipitously, Socrates had proposed the very same arguments to Diotima as Agathon had raised with him.⁸⁴ One of the key movements of Diotima's discussion with Socrates, and which shows how important Agathon was as a target, is how she warns at 202b about talking about "everyone (πάντων)", distinguishing those who know from those who do not. As opposed to what the 'ordinary folk' think ("οἱ πολλοί", 203c), Love is actually poor (being the son of Poros and Penia) and is far from being delicate. This is another direct reference to Agathon who, if we remember, used the conventional wisdom based on the poets to argue for Love's delicate nature. Love is not a poet, as Agathon declared, but is actually a philosopher (204b). That the establishment of Plato's conception of philosophy is Plato's agenda here, comes when we find the scale of beauty leading from the beauty of physical bodies towards the unchanging Form of Beauty.⁸⁵ The 'rites of Love' described by Diotima start by dedicating oneself to

⁸⁴ The Diotima episode contains an interesting comment on the dialogical method. For we note that in the invented discussion Socrates is the one being led. Yet here in his retelling of the discussion, he is the one who becomes the leader. This is important as it shows the pedagogical nature of dialogue. It shows that although one may not figure prominently in a discussion, without offering much in the way of insights let's say, one may learn from this discussion and in a future discussion take up the same themes and explore them again with a fellow discussant, though in a fuller way. I do not mean that one simply repeats whatever one has heard previously. For, given the rigours of dialogue, one would surely be caught out if one did not understand one's own arguments. Rather, one learns about the dialogical method itself, how to test one's assertions in a bid to further the subject matter as opposed to one's own ego.

⁸⁵ As noted by Hunter (2004), symposia were also places of education. "The symposium was, however, a central site for the transmission of a shared cultural and intellectual heritage, in other words for

beautiful bodies, then to the beauty of all bodies and the realisation of the inadequacy of dedicating oneself to just one beautiful body. The Platonic mark is branded on the discussion when at 206a the Good is described as that which Love desires to possess forever. This is crucial, not just in terms of the establishment of the theory of Forms, but in refuting an earlier speech. So far I have presented Agathon and the tragedians as being the main focus of Socrates (and Plato) at this stage in the *Symposium*. However, Aristophanes and the comedians do not fall completely from the radar. I previously argued that Aristophanes' speech had some essentially comic touches, such as its play with words, its negative appraisal of the gods and politicians, and its bawdiness. Yet an essential aspect of it was how it accounted for Love without any mention of goodness. At 205e, Diotima, with a clear reference to Aristophanes' speech, counters that lovers only seek their other halves if they are *good*. We want to be together with our arms and legs but would gladly cut them off if they turned bad. The intercourse / reproduction which characterised the end of Love for Aristophanes is similarly treated by Diotima, though with an important difference. The physicality envisioned by Aristophanes is replaced by Diotima with the intellect. By replacing the reproduction of bodies with the reproduction of ideas, the necessity of dialogue is once more centred at the heart of Platonism. The contact, then, which Aristophanes envisioned us striving for and which Agathon sought from Socrates so that he might be filled by his wisdom, is not of bodies but of minds. What is interesting is how Diotima, in my view genuinely, asserts that the poets have helped give birth to ideas in this way. This shows us how Plato wanted the poets to be treated. For it is through the mental contact with the poets that ideas have been born. That the poets have a place for Plato, so long as they are discussed, is shown here clearly. As always, though, the praise of the poets does not go too far. For when Diotima starts getting a bit poetical at 210d-e, Socrates describes himself as having drifted off. He is called to attention though by Diotima: “πειρῶ δέ μοι’, ἔφη, ‘τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν ὥς οἶον τε μάλιστα’” (210e). Although Aristophanes attempts to address Diotima's previous admonition, he is drowned out by the thunderous applause that greeted the end of Socrates' contribution.

(male) education in the broadest social and political sense” (p. 15). Plato's description of Socrates being taught about Love by Diotima can be seen in this context. Of course, it is Socrates who becomes the teacher of the group, again highlighting this educative element.

At this stage I have argued that (1) Aristophanes' speech is designed by Plato to characterise and represent comedy, (2) that Agathon is similarly designed, though to characterise and represent the tragedians, and that (3) Plato treats both the comedic and tragic approaches of Aristophanes and Agathon in his design of Socrates' discussion with both Agathon and Diotima. What has been the key to my thesis, then, has been showing how Plato has the skill to represent the comedians and tragedians in his character design. The nature of the speeches, that they did not contain dialogue, enabled Plato to show his ability to represent such arts. In the final part of my work I turn to the last speech, that of Alcibiades. In this 'satyr-play' of a speech, we find comedy and tragedy combined into a singular encomium of the hero of the work, Socrates.⁸⁶

Just as Aristotle said all good tragedies should have a 'reveal' and a 'reversal' (*Poetics*, 1450a), so we have both these features in the entrance of Alcibiades. Upon entering, Alcibiades declares his reasons for coming are in crowning Agathon with a wreath for his winning tragedy. Yet, given his level of inebriation, the wreath, which he had upon his own head, merely slipped down his head further, the more he tried to remove it. The fact that the wreath was over his eyes allows the revelation of Socrates all the more power. For on removing the wreath Alcibiades lets out a cry as the person sat next to him is revealed as Socrates. Of course this wreath will not (only) end up on Agathon's head, but on that of Socrates' too. It is in this reversal, the crowning of Socrates, that the reason for Plato's inclusion of Alcibiades becomes prominent. Citing Socrates' jealousy, Alcibiades could not possibly offer an encomium of anyone (or anything) other than the man himself. In the speech which follows the serious is mixed with the comic in one of the most intimate and telling portraits of philosophy's own hero.

Alcibiades famously begins his speech by comparing Socrates, at 215a, to the satyr Marsyas. It is through this comparison that the dual effect of Alcibiades' speech will be strongest felt. For almost immediately this comic description is filled with a most serious meaning in the statement that, although perhaps physically similar,

⁸⁶ I agree with Sheffield (2006) that, although this reference to a satyr-play is important to interpreting Alcibiades' speech, it should not be taken too literally. "Socrates himself characterizes Alcibiades' speech as a 'satyric' or Silenic drama (222d3-4). This clearly refers, at the very least, to the portrayal of Socrates as a satiric character, but satyric drama also means 'satyr play' and reading the speech with this in mind will allow us to appreciate the particular tone of the speech" (p. 185). In other words the speech merely exploits some features and aspects of the genre. The satyric tone is certainly introduced with Alcibiades' drunken entrance.

Socrates' effect on the individual is purely intellectual. Socrates manages through words alone what Marsyas effected through musical instrument. It is interesting to note the way Alcibiades describes the draw exerted by Socrates over those who are listening. For, when engaged in his usual manner Socrates is said to have the ability to hold fast ("κατέχεσθαι", 215c) those who are listening, to almost possess them.⁸⁷ Yet if we remember, I argued in my last part for a Platonic form of inspiration which was based on the draw of dialogue (p. 132 ff). I used the Gadamerian notion of 'play' to tease out the significances of this inspiration. What we find here, then, is further evidence of this Platonic conception. For Alcibiades is quick to note that the 'mania' he is describing, "τῆς φιλοσόφου μανίας" (218b), (a point I examined earlier at p. 135) has been felt by everyone present at the banquet. Eros, as noted by Hunter (2004), is overpowering.⁸⁸ What Plato is doing with this notion, then, is once more turning the traditional connotations of the term on its head, filling it with a purely philosophical meaning. Much like snakebite victims, only those who have experienced the phenomenon can truly understand what he is talking about. Yet this power is not solely kept for those who have experienced it directly from Socrates himself. Earlier, at 215d, Alcibiades had noted that the draw of Socrates can even hold power over those who are merely listening to a poor account of what he said. This is a significant claim for my thesis. One can say that this claim is aimed towards Apollodorus and his admittedly shaky account of the symposium. Yet it could also refer to Plato and the dialogues which contain Socrates as an interlocutor. What this shows is how, even through various times and media, the power of Socrates and the dialogical method he championed is emitted and felt. That dialogue can be transmitted in this way at all, that the possession Plato and Alcibiades felt when engaged in discussion with Socrates can still be felt by us here and now, does not just show the power of dialogue, but shows its perpetual nature. Alcibiades is clear that no other professional had affected him in the same way.

⁸⁷ Alcibiades even compares this type of possession to that of the Corybants. The effects he felt were not just intellectual, describing, at 215e, how his heart was beating wildly and his eyes streaming uncontrollably. Crucially, though, this was not just Alcibiades' reaction, but was, according to him, felt by others also.

⁸⁸ As Hunter (2004) notes, Paris is seized by eros to make love to Helen at *Iliad*, 3.441-46, as is Zeus with Hera at *Iliad* 14.294-353. "Eros, moreover, regularly forces people to do things which they, in more considered moments, know to be wrong or socially disapproved" (p. 17). We can see here the notion of possession and inspiration, notions which I have argued are used by Plato to exact his meaning.

The mix of the comic with the serious is further seen in the attempted seduction scene. Once more we find a reversal in roles with the younger Alcibiades turning into the lover and the older Socrates his beloved. In the hands of Plato, though, these traditional features are subsumed and transformed into the expression of philosophy. For the comic scenario of the notoriously attractive Alcibiades vainly pursuing the less than attractive Socrates is used to express the type of beauty typified by Socrates and the mode of philosophical inquiry he champions.⁸⁹ The very same disparity between truth and appearance is perhaps the most essential element of Platonic philosophy, a theme which characterised Socrates' earlier speech with Diotima (especially the movement from the first stage to the second in the 'rites of love' at 210b). As noted by Sheffield (2006), though, satyr plays often drew on the plot structure of the previous tragedies, treating their serious subject matter in a comic light.⁹⁰ Plato's use of the satyr genre, then, directs it towards the previous theme, whereby the appearance of beautiful bodies was seen as but a starting point in the rites of Love, rites which ended in the truth of all beauty in the Forms. The disparity of truth versus appearance, then, figures prominently in Alcibiades' speech. Of course, this disparity is not confined to Socrates the man but is continued thematically by Alcibiades in his description of the arguments used by Socrates. For these too may appear coarse, vulgar, and simple on the outside, what with the frequently used examples of cobblers and fishmongers. Yet once you get past this exterior, Alcibiades tells us, you are exposed to the finest and noblest of interiors. The unreliability of appearance, that it can in fact mislead us and take us away from truth if we focus solely on it, is what guides all initiates in the rites of love, and what permeates Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates. What is perhaps most tragic of Alcibiades' speech is the knowledge we have of his ultimate fate. For even though he knows that all Socrates teaches him is for the best, even though he knows that the Socratic life will help his own, Alcibiades cannot help but revert to his usual ways once Socrates has left. Not even the love felt by Alcibiades for Socrates could help him mend his ways. And the price Alcibiades pays for this is, ultimately, a terrible one. We know all this, as would Plato's audience. The air of inevitability surrounds Alcibiades and certainly

⁸⁹ As noted by Sheffield (2006), this mix of comedy and tragedy is again characteristic of the satyr play. "It is the incongruity between how Socrates appears – as a lowly, comic character – and his beautiful inner nature that generates a humorous collision between the comic and the serious so characteristic of the satyr play." p. 189.

⁹⁰ "The serio-comic manner in which Alcibiades explores the virtues of the philosopher is characteristic of the way in which satyric dramas explored serious themes in a different, humorous, spirit." p. 194.

lends a tragic air to his speech (especially as it was from a symposium that the mutilation of the hermes came). Yet it is a tragedy felt through laughter, a definite ingredient in Plato's portrayal. Although, once finished, Socrates compares Alcibiades' speech to a satyr-play ("τὸ σατυρικόν σου δράμα") at 222d, it is a loose accusation which simply shows how the comedic and the tragic are crucial features. Yet they are not simply crucial features of Alcibiades' speech. The comedic and the tragic are crucial features of life itself. We rarely lead lives without seriousness or without laughter. Rather, our lives are a continuous mixture of both.⁹¹ Because this is life, the serious and the comic become necessary elements of the dialogical method. When the party is over and most of the guests have gone only Socrates, Aristophanes, and Agathon remain talking. And although Aristodemus could not ascertain the whole conversation, what he did manage to hear is a striking finale to the dialogue. For Socrates was arguing that the same person could be both a tragedian and comedian, at 223d, and that the skilled dramatist could also be a comedian. And with both his discussants falling asleep Socrates makes to leave. Only after going about his day in the usual manner does Socrates then go home to rest. For Clay (1983), there is no question as to who this particular type of poet is. "The tragic and comic poet of the *Symposium* is Plato and the object of his imitation, Socrates" (p. 196).⁹²

I have tried to show the ways in which the *Symposium* deals with both tragedy and comedy, through the representative use made by Plato of his characters, and the way Socrates is designed to subsume certain themes of these arts into his treatment of these characters and his own encomium of dialogue.⁹³ There are, however, some other elements of the *Symposium*, elements which occur outside the bounds of the discussions just examined, which help show the importance of tragedy and comedy to the theme of the dialogue. To begin, we notice how, although a symposium, no wine is involved. The participants agree that they are too hung-over from the previous night's revelries to drink again, meaning that the ensuing discussion is conducted totally sober. The only intoxicant Plato wants his followers on is the ecstasy of

⁹¹ In terms of *Eros*, Sheffield (2006) finds this mixture as most necessary. "The true nature of *erōs* is a needy, yet productive aspiration towards a divine state and is best captured by a combination of the low and the high, the mortal and the divine, the comic and the tragic." p. 200.

⁹² Rosen (1968) draws a similar conclusion from this section of the *Symposium*. "After all, as is implied by Socrates' final discussion, Plato's dialogues are tragedies as well as comedies." Preface, xxxvii.

⁹³ The way Plato mixes the comedic and tragic with the philosophical is noted also by Clay (1983). "The only proper description of the *Symposium* is that it is a tragic-comedy. Or a new form of philosophical drama which, in the object of its imitation comprehends and transcends both tragedy and comedy." p. 194.

philosophical engagement, a point I examined earlier in Alcibiades' description of the 'mania' of philosophy. Secondly, it is significant that no dancing occurs. Just as the men are too tired for drink so too are they not in the mood for the dancing girls, who are ushered away at the beginning of the dialogue. So the main part of the discussion is conducted without any form of stimulant other than speech making and discussion. It is important, then, that the more traditional elements of the symposium, dancing and drinking, are not present in this particular symposium. This is not so surprising if we look at an earlier reference made in the *Protagoras*.

"For these people, who, due to their lack of education, are not able to engage each other over wine in conversation with their own voices and discussions, honour the flute-girls, hiring the voice of the flute at a high price instead of their own talk, and entertain each other that way." *Protagoras*, 347c-d.

As I have just shown, though, none of these traditional elements feature in Plato's own symposium. Yet, to continue the above passage in the *Protagoras*, we find Plato outlining what would be for him a more appropriate form of drinking-party. As one can see, this ideal Platonic symposium, which is led throughout by the pursuit of discussion, is the very same party as that featured in the *Symposium*.

"But in a party of well-bred people with a proper education, you never see dancing-girls, or girls playing the *aulos* or the harp, but they can entertain one another with their own conversation without any such childish superfluities, speaking and listening in turn in a dignified fashion, even if they drink a great deal of wine." *Protagoras*, 347d.

It is clear, then, that Plato had in mind a very definite type of symposium with which to associate his philosophy. Coupled with the fact that in the *Symposium* the god celebrated is Love and not Dionysus and that, as mentioned in my last part, Socrates is shown at the beginning of the dialogue suffering from a Platonically conceived sense of divine inspiration, something which artists were traditionally thought to suffer from before and sometimes even during their creations, the *Symposium* must be regarded as promoting a specific type of intellectual pursuit that is distinguished from, though still influenced by, the traditional artists. This level of influence, with particular reference to tragedy, is attested to in the *Laws*, where Plato describes himself as a tragedian and his works as more suited to represent the human condition than those of traditional tragedy.

““Most honoured of foreigners [addressing the imaginary tragedians] we ourselves compose tragedies, the best we are able to, that are fairer and best. At any rate our state is a representation (*mimesis*) of the fairest and best life, which appears in reality to be the truest of tragedies.” *Laws*, 817b-c.

And following,

“So we compose the same things as you, being your rivals and competitors in the fairest of dramas, which true law alone can produce to completion.” *Ibid.*⁹⁴

Yet again, then, do we see a definite desire from Plato to state how his conflict with tragedy may have led to an inexorably changed content and educative thrust, but nevertheless kept a semblance of structure and association.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ There is also an interesting use of character here in the *Laws*. For when the Athenian begins his discussion of the nature of the soul in Book X, he does not discuss the subject with either Clinias or Megillus, the dialogue's only interlocutors. Instead he makes a big point of questioning *himself*. He does this because, I believe, although these men were suitable participants for the discussions on the formation and legislation of a state, they are not philosophers. It once more highlights the representative importance of the interlocutors, whereby they cannot be used to discuss something completely alien to their intellectual perspectives.

⁹⁵ Clay (1983) uses the same instance from the *Laws* to draw somewhat similar conclusions to my own. “In the *Republic* and *Laws* a new form of poetry is envisaged, as is a new function for truly political poetry.” p. 197.

Conclusion and Consequence

In conclusion, this work has attempted to argue for an inherently aesthetic structure to the Platonic method of dialectic, using a two-tiered level of Gadamerian exegesis. On the first level I examined Gadamer's direct treatment of the dialogical aspect of Plato to show how Plato's explicit handling of the arts is not as straight-forward, or as negative, as first imagined. My second level of examination took Gadamer's theories on art and artistry, an area which is traditionally distanced from any Platonic consequence, and showed how this more essential positioning of art could lend an implicitly aesthetic structure to the varied elements of Plato's philosophical method.

In my first part *mimesis* was shown to hold a dominant position in how Gadamer argued for the ontological identity of art and the distance of this identity from our phenomenological world (especially pp 10 – 18). In this way the notion of *mimesis* in art as an imitation of nature was utterly rejected. In order to show the significance of this for Plato, an explicit differential was shown between *mimesis* as 'imitation' and as 'representation' (pp. 26-35). Once the irony of Plato's infamous, yet wholly dialectical, incorporation of *mimesis* in the *Republic* was posited using Gadamer's hermeneutic method of interpretation, the implicit necessity of *mimesis* within Plato's use of Socrates and the interlocutors, as well as the mimetic centrality of language in his return to the *logoi* and the representation of philosophy itself through the dialogues' celebration of dialogue, was truly seen to embody the essence of the mimetic as seen in Gadamer's artistic conception (pp. 67-74). The distinctive truth values derivable from art were then shown as being governed by another Greek term for Gadamer, in his theory of *anamnesis*. The recognition elicited from a proper artistic experience was seen to show one one's self in a more essential way. The inescapability of our history and tradition, as well as the epistemological limits of our phenomenological existence are those aspects of ourselves that are shown to us, so long as our approach to the work is dialogically proper. The consequence of this recognition of our limits was argued as being the requisite need of others in one's attempts at understanding. In other words it was only through dialogue that understanding was possible. Of course, *anamnesis* is also a fundamental part of how Plato saw understanding as something which 'happens'. Although it is a process described in detail by Plato in such works as the *Meno* and *Phaedo*, I showed how it worked through all of the dialogues, given how Plato too saw it happening through

dialogical exchange. In this way, both the ontological valence and epistemological worth of art, as described by Gadamer in terms of *mimesis* and *anamnesis*, was shown to operate in a similar way through the Platonic dialogue.

In my second part I turned my focus to the transcendently conceived world of art, which was described by Gadamer in terms of play. Once more I showed how this seemingly distanced concept is actually an essential part of how the philosophical governed the philosopher, not in terms of possession, but in terms of participation (especially pp. 105-109). Using my own hermeneutic treatment of the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*, I argued that divine inspiration was actually an ironic part of the dialogical method, used by Plato to coerce Ion, Phaedrus, and the audience these interlocutors represented, into a dialogue in which the philosophical is shown to be a more legitimate way to approach those features that underlie the artistic experience. The world of play, used by Gadamer to illuminate the world of art, was finally shown in textual format in the description of Socrates undergoing a philosophical experience in the *Protagoras* and *Symposium* (pp. 133-135). This was, perhaps, the most conjectural section of my work. However, as I made clear in my General Introduction, aspects of my argument were designed to show us, as a modern audience, how the base elements of how we conceive of an artistic experience can, in fact, be seen in the Platonic dialogue.

In my final part the central importance of the spectator was examined with reference to Gadamer's theory on the completion and accomplishment of the artwork in the interpretive grasp of the spectator. In this regard tragedy was shown to be an ideal art form for Gadamer given the direct presence of the spectator. Through Gadamer's use of *anamnesis* I extended the discussion to comedy, where I argued that the very same interpretive grasp was made by the spectators, and a similar level of *anamnesis* was present (pp. 157-159). Directing this notion towards Plato, I initially argued for a definite comedic influence in his presentation of Hippias in the *Hippias Major*. I presented here a theory that it was Hippias' failure at recognition which sparked the comedic effect, thus linking my examination with Gadamer. I then turned to Plato's *Phaedo* where an implicit tragic influence was again argued for. This influence was rooted in the linguistic construction of certain sections and Plato's presentation of a re-imagined tragic hero: Socrates (pp. 180-191). This treatment of the *Phaedo* was linked to Gadamer via the celebration of dialogue and the connection made in this work between *anamnesis* and dialogue. In my final section I turned to the

Symposium, where I argued for both a tragic and comedic influence in the presentation of Aristophanes and Agathon. This influence was further seen in the speech of Alcibiades, where both comedy and tragedy keenly feature.

I would hope that the main consequence of my work is that it has asked its readers to reassess what constitutes a work of art or an artistic experience. Plato's works have always been regarded as works of art, yet, if one is to focus on this as part of one's treatment of Plato, one is automatically categorised and distanced from those who view these 'artistic' aspects as inconsequential, or, at least, as secondary in importance to the analytical content. In essence, I hope my arguments show how limiting this categorisation can be, and how essential these 'artistic' elements are to the method of argument that permeates every single aspect of Platonic philosophy. For a contemporary audience, I have tried to highlight how the way one approaches art, and the way it affects us, can be seen in the way Plato constructed his dialogues. Yet if, after the findings of my thesis, a current of aesthetic thought or artistic sensibility can be detected within and throughout the Platonic dialogue, it is not our conception of Plato that needs to change, but rather our conception of philosophy itself. For, Plato was, after all, the originator of all that now constitutes Western philosophy. So if the founder of the very notion of philosophy has this aspect to his thought, an aspect which expressed and facilitated his analytical content, then our own mode of philosophical investigation must accept this aesthetic structure. What most drew me to Gadamer's thought was the way everything he discussed seemed to be connected, in the sense that one felt that the same method of approach was adopted in every instance. When he treated art, therefore, it was never set apart from his more general philosophy, but was always bound to it. What I have tried to show is the extent to which this unitarian approach was actually developed by Plato, whereby his methods did not change simply because the topic of discussion had changed to art. Although his approach was different in each instance, it was always towards the *logoi*, and the expression of this turn in dialectic, that framed his methodology. It is only in our own age that ideologies are forcibly categorised and subjectified. In the end, what my use of Gadamer has hopefully done is show how, for Plato, there were no categories of philosophical investigation, only categories of people, arguments, and beliefs. Yet throughout these varied perspectives there was only one method of engagement which allowed the things under discussion to talk louder than those

talking about them. For through the Platonic dialogue, the artistic and the philosophical become two parts of the one agenda; the pursuit and love of wisdom.

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