

1: Plato's Myths as Psychology

Therefore, after an analysis of why Plato wrote as he did and a cataloguing and examination of every occurrence of mythos and its derivatives in the Platonic corpus, he articulates the new linguistic and philosophical principle that a myth is a genetic or causal synagogic/synoptic account, in contradistinction to logos as a descriptive or.

The following text is based on a transcript by V. As usual, I have edited his transcript to remove excessive wordiness. Beyond that, I have incorporated here some materials from the transcript of part 2 of this lecture so that all the general material on myth in Plato appears in this text. All material specific to the *Timaeus* and *Critias* will appear in the transcript of part 2. I also transformed answers to student questions into notes. Virtually every Platonic dialogue has a little narrative in it, usually a real gem of a narrative that takes up themes and images from Greek mythology and weaves them into a new kind of story. If you want to use that concept very broadly, then everything about the Platonic dialogues is mythic, because all of the dialogues are stories. However, within the dialogues are more specifically fictional stories – the myths of Plato. Every culture has myths about these five topics: Not every culture has a myth about the origin of the cosmos. The term for a creation myth is cosmogony, an account of the origin or the genesis of the cosmos. Myth is primitive in some sense. Myth is always associated with the origins of culture, the origins of civilization. Philosophy always comes later, after myth, usually, if it comes at all, many thousands of years after the origin of the civilization. And the origin of philosophy always involves a kind of gesture of emancipation, the emancipation of the mind from opinion. Opinion just means any views that are passed down from generation to generation. Those would include myths. This is true of all three independent philosophical traditions. There are three independent philosophical traditions: All of those began in some way with gestures of the emancipation of the mind from ancestral opinions and customs and an attempt to turn towards some other kind of source of knowledge in order to give us a picture of man and his nature and his place in the overall system of the cosmos and also some understanding of the right way of life. Every myth is a primitive philosophy, if you will. What does it mean to say that a myth is a kind of primitive philosophy? Philosophies all deal with these topics: Every myth takes the form of a story. They are always stories, always narratives, and they always involve concrete events and usually concrete characters. Now, sometimes these characters are gods or demi-gods. Other times they are personifications of phenomena. This is a Latin myth, and it goes something like this: Care was walking along the river. Here we have personification of a force: She bends down and scoops up some mud, and she forms it into a creature. She calls upon Jupiter to breathe life into it, and then she decides to name it. What do we name this new creature? They settle the dispute this way: Earth, because it gave its substance will receive its substance back when it is dead. And Care, because it manufactured this creature, will possess it throughout its entire life. They decided to name the creature *Homo*, man, from *humus*, earth. So, this is a myth about the origin of man, and it is specifically a myth about the fact that care possesses us throughout our lives. What does that mean? We are always concerned about things. This myth is an attempt to give us some reason, some account, some explanation for why human life is always beset by human worries and cares. Every myth has a narrative structure, concrete, specific events, and concrete characters. Yet, every myth tries to deal with something of universal significance. These are the topics that philosophy deals with as well. It would seem, therefore, that philosophy and myth are going to be quarreling with one another eventually because both are attempts using different methods to try to answer the same basic kinds of questions. Primitive peoples, people who exist entirely in the atmosphere of myth, tend to have rather uncritical minds. Some of them believe the literal truth of myths. They involve violations of easily known laws of causality. What does it mean to say Care is a person? Why is Care given a female gender? None of these things can literally be true. Many myths are clearly relative to time and place, and they undergo all kinds of transformations, sometimes for the most obvious pragmatic reasons. The reason why that question makes sense is if you look at Greek mythology you see that the Greeks were rather cavalier about changing their mythology. Why would they change it? Well, sometimes they changed it to suit their political purposes. For instance, if Athens came to dominate some other Greek city-state, one of the ways that they would legitimize

this new state of affairs would be to rewrite the founding myths of the newly dependent society to legitimate its new circumstances. Now, this seems terribly cynical, and the question then becomes how can people really believe myths if they treat them in such a cynical way? It is an important question. People were very powerfully motivated by these myths. People understood themselves and their place in the world in terms of these myths. They answer the most fundamental questions any human being can raise in terms of these things. They certainly spent lavish amounts of time and energy building temples and endowing them and worshipping at them and holding festivals in honor of these gods. So, clearly they believe them in some sense. Myths are clearly not believed to be literally true once you start looking at them with a critical mind. Or we are applying a correspondence theory of truth, which says that a story is true if, and only if, it mirrors the way the world really works. They are dealing with the same issues. Philosophy, however, deals with these issues in a much more rigorous and intellectually clear and lucid way. Philosophy tries generally to speak in terms of abstractions, not in terms of concrete stories. Philosophy attempts to become timeless, to emancipate itself from the relativity of any particular culture and historical epoch. Philosophy attempts to speak to all men. This is why mathematics has always been such a tempting model for philosophers, because has a greater universality than any natural languages, which are tinged with history and custom and relativity to time and place. It seems like philosophy is the last place that you would expect to see myths popping up. But then we reach Plato, who is the first philosopher in the Western tradition whose complete works have survived. Plato is the first philosophical thinker in the Western canon from whom any single complete work survives. And, as it turns out, all of his works have survived. They are dialogues, which are narratives. And within these dialogues are little narratives as well. The dialogues are plays of a sort, which means that they are myths in a very broad sense, because the word mythos in Greek just means a narrative or a story. Those kinds of myths are also found within the Platonic dialogues. But they are clearly not just reports on accepted Greek myths. They take up elements of the Greek mythology, and also foreign mythologies, and weave them together to come up with something that is entirely different. Why did Plato regard myth as necessary for philosophy? The Phaedrus is very beautiful. At the beginning, it has a little reflection on the nature of myth. Socrates and Phaedrus are outside the walls of Athens, and they find a shaded, sylvan spot near a stream, and Phaedrus asks Socrates if this is the particular place where Boreas bore off a certain young girl – Boreas being a wind god. The Sophists were, in a sense, an outgrowth of the earliest Greek philosophers known as the natural philosophers. Greek natural philosophy really is the beginning of Greek philosophy, and it is the most radically uncompromising in its critique of the mythic self-consciousness. Again, philosophy always begins with an attempt to emancipate thought from myth and opinion. How do you do that? You go back to nature and try to use nature as your guide. The early Greek natural philosophers like Thales, who was really the first Greek philosopher, were extremely critical of myth. One of the things that they tried to do to eliminate their rival was to show that myth was just a primitive form of science and that they were going to replace it with a less primitive form of science, namely natural philosophy, which used reason to explain things and explained things in terms of mechanical causes and forces. So they would take up the Greek myths and give them allegorical interpretations that would turn them into just fanciful accounts of natural phenomena. They would demythologize the myths in other words. This demythologizing activity was very popular, and Socrates deals with the question of demythologizing. They have a huge task on their hands, because not only do they have to explain how some little girl disappeared. If not by the wind god, maybe she was blown over the rock and drowned in the stream below. But then they have to deal with the Pegasus and the Chimeras, the multi-headed Typhon, all the strange monsters of mythology and explain those in naturalistic terms, too. Typhon is the monster from which we get the word typhoon, this extravagant, many-headed force of nature.

2: Myth and Philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus - Daniel S. Werner - Google Books

1. *Plato's reading audience. For whom did Plato write? Who was his readership? A very good survey of this topic is Yunis from which I would like to quote the following illuminating passage: "before Plato, philosophers treated arcane subjects in technical treatises that had no appeal outside small circles of experts.*

Literary form[edit] The Symposium is considered a dialogue “ a form used by Plato in more than thirty works ” but in fact it is predominantly a series of essay-like speeches from differing points of view. With dialogue, Socrates is renowned for his dialectic, which is his ability to ask questions that encourage others to think deeply about what they care about, and articulate their ideas. In the Symposium the dialectic exists among the speeches: The characters and the settings are to some degree based on history, but they are not reports of events that actually occurred or words that were actually spoken. There is no reason to think they were not composed entirely by Plato. The reader, understanding that Plato was not governed by the historical record, can read the Symposium, and ask why the author, Plato, arranged the story the way he did, and what he meant by including the various aspects of setting, composition, characters, and theme, etc. It was thought that what Socrates said was what Plato agreed with or approved of. Then in the late 20th Century another interpretation began to challenge that idea. This new idea considers that the Symposium is intended to criticize Socrates, and his philosophy, and to reject certain aspects of his behavior. It also considers that Socratic philosophy may have lost touch with the actual individual as it devoted itself to abstract principles. Plato shows off his master as a man of high moral standards, unwavering by baser urges and fully committed to the study and practice of proper self-government in both individuals and communities the so-called "royal science". One critic, James Arieti, considers that the Symposium resembles a drama, with emotional and dramatic events occurring especially when Alcibiades crashes the banquet. Arieti suggests that it should be studied more as a drama, with a focus on character and actions, and less as an exploration of philosophical ideas. This suggests that the characters speak, as in a play, not as the author, but as themselves. This theory, Arieti has found, reveals how much each of the speakers of the Symposium resembles the god, Eros, that they each are describing. It shows how an oral text may have no simple origin, and how it can be passed along by repeated tellings, and by different narrators, and how it can be sometimes verified, and sometimes corrupted. Apollodorus was not himself at the banquet, but he heard the story from Aristodemus, a man who was there. Also, Apollodorus was able to confirm parts of the story with Socrates himself, who was one of the speakers at the banquet. Dionysus is engaged to be the judge, and decides the outcome, not based on the merits of the two tragedians, but based on their political stance regarding the political figure, Alcibiades. Since Aeschylus prefers Alcibiades, Dionysus declares Aeschylus the winner. That contest provides the basic structure on which the Symposium is modeled as a kind of sequel: In the Symposium Agathon has just celebrated a victory the day before, and is now hosting another kind of debate, this time it is between a tragedian, a comic poet, and Socrates. So the character, Alcibiades, who was the deciding factor in the debate in *The Frogs*, becomes the judge in the Symposium, and he now rules in favor of Socrates, who had been attacked by Aristophanes in *The Clouds*. The Symposium is a response to *The Frogs*, and shows Socrates winning not only over Aristophanes, who was the author of both *The Frogs*, and "*The Clouds*," but also over the tragic poet who was portrayed in that comedy as the victor. Hamilton remarks that Plato takes care to portray Alcibiades and Socrates and their relationship in a way that makes it clear that Socrates had not been a bad influence on Alcibiades. Plato does this to free his teacher from the guilt of corrupting the minds of prominent youths, which had in fact earned Socrates the death sentence in BC. This section previews the story of the banquet, letting the reader know what to expect, and it provides information regarding the context and the date. The banquet was hosted by the poet Agathon to celebrate his first victory in a dramatic competition: Apollodorus was not present at the event, which occurred when he was a boy, but he heard the story from Aristodemus , who was present. Apollodorus later checked parts of the story with Socrates, who was also there. In this brief introductory passage it is shown that the narrator, Apollodorus, has a reputation for being somewhat mad, that he is a passionate follower of Socrates, and that he spends his days either listening to Socrates or else telling

others of what he has learned from Socrates. Socrates is late to arrive, after he became lost in thought on the porch of a nearby neighbor. When they are done eating, Eryximachus takes the suggestion made by Phaedrus, that they should all make a speech in praise of Eros, the god of love and desire. It will be a competition of speeches to be judged by Dionysus. It is anticipated that the speeches will ultimately be bested by Socrates, who speaks last. Phaedrus starts by pointing out that Eros is the oldest of the gods, and that Eros promotes virtue in people [19]. Next is Aristophanes, the comic playwright. Aristophanes tells a fantastical, mythological story about how humans were at one time twice the people that they are now, but this was seen as threatening to the gods, so Zeus cut everyone in half. And ever since, humans go about in search of their other half, in order to become whole. Agathon, the host, follows Aristophanes, and his speech sees Eros as youthful, beautiful, and wise; and as the source of all human virtues. Socrates asks questions of Agathon: Socrates then relates a story he was told by a wise woman called Diotima. According to her, Eros is not a god, but is a spirit that mediates between humans and their objects of desire. Love itself is not wise or beautiful, but is the desire for those things. Love is expressed through propagation and reproduction: When Socrates is nearly done, Dionysus, who is to judge the speeches, arrives, in the person of Alcibiades. Alcibiades crashes in, terribly drunk, and delivers an encomium to Socrates himself. No matter how hard he has tried, he says, he has never been able to seduce Socrates, because Socrates has no interest in physical pleasure. Under the influence of Dionysus, who is now in attendance, the party becomes wild and drunken. Aristodemus goes to sleep. When he wakes up the next morning Socrates is still talking and debating. Soon everyone at last falls asleep, as Socrates rises up and goes off to tend to his daily business as usual. Beauty belongs to this category of Forms. Phaedrus speech begins a: Pausanias speech begins c: Aristophanes speech begins c: Agathon speech begins a: Socrates speech begins d: Alcibiades speech begins e: Phaedrus[edit] Phaedrus opens by citing Hesiod, Acusilaus and Parmenides for the claim that Eros is the oldest of the gods. He confers great benefits, inspiring a lover to earn the admiration of his beloved, for example by showing bravery on the battlefield, since nothing shames a man more than to be seen by his beloved committing an inglorious act db. As evidence for this he mentions some mythological heroes and lovers. Even Achilles, who was the beloved of Patroclus, sacrificed himself to avenge his lover, and Alcestis was willing to die for her husband Admetus. Pausanias[edit] A fresco taken from the north wall of the Tomb of the Diver from Paestum, Italy, c. The base lover is in search of sexual gratification, and his objects are women and boys. He is inspired by Aphrodite Pandemos Aphrodite common to the whole city. The noble lover directs his affection towards young men, establishing lifelong relationships, productive of the benefits described by Phaedrus. He then analyses the attitudes of different city-states relative to homosexuality. The first distinction he makes is between the cities that clearly establish what is and what is not admitted, and those that are not so explicitly clear, like Athens. In the first group there are cities favorable to homosexuality, like Elis, Boeotia and Sparta, or unfavorable to it like Ionia and Persia. First Eryximachus starts out by claiming that love affects everything in the universe, including plants and animals, believing that once love is attained it should be protected [23]. The god of Love not only directs everything on the human plane, but also on the divine b. Two forms of love occur in the human body "one is healthy, the other unhealthy bc. Love might be capable of curing the diseased. Love governs medicine, music and astronomy a, and regulates hot and cold and wet and dry, which when in balance result in health a. Eryximachus here evokes the theory of the humors. It enables us to associate, and be friends, with each other and with the gods" d Transl. He comes across as someone who cannot resist the temptation to praise his own profession: Aristophanes[edit] W. Before starting his speech, Aristophanes warns the group that his eulogy to love may be more absurd than funny. His speech is an explanation of why people in love say they feel "whole" when they have found their love partner. He begins by explaining that people must understand human nature before they can interpret the origins of love and how it affects their own times. This is, he says, because in primal times people had double bodies, with faces and limbs turned away from one another. As spherical creatures who wheeled around like clowns doing cartwheels a, these original people were very powerful. There were three sexes: The males were said to have descended from the sun, the females from the earth and the androgynous couples from the moon. These creatures tried to scale the heights of Olympus and planned to set upon the gods b-c. Zeus thought about blasting them with thunderbolts, but did

not want to deprive himself of their devotions and offerings, so he decided to cripple them by chopping them in half, in effect separating the two bodies. Ever since that time, people run around saying they are looking for their other half because they are really trying to recover their primal nature. The women who were separated from men run after their own kind, thus creating lesbians. The men split from other men also run after their own kind and love being embraced by other men e. Those that come from original androgynous beings are the men and women that engage in heterosexual love. He says some people think homosexuals are shameless, but he thinks they are the bravest, most manly of all, as evidenced by the fact that only they grow up to be politicians a , and that many heterosexuals are adulterous and unfaithful e. Aristophanes then claims that when two people who were separated from each other find each other, they never again want to be separated c. This feeling is like a riddle, and cannot be explained. Aristophanes ends on a cautionary note. He says that men should fear the gods, and not neglect to worship them, lest they wield the axe again and we have to go about hopping on one leg, split apart again a. If man works with the god of Love, they will escape this fate and instead find wholeness. Agathon[edit] His speech may be regarded as self-consciously poetic and rhetorical, composed in the way of the sophists, [22] gently mocked by Socrates.

3: Project MUSE - Reading and Writing Plato

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Who was his readership? A very good survey of this topic is Yunis from which I would like to quote the following illuminating passage: Other scholars, such as Morgan, have also argued that Plato addressed in his writings both philosophical and non-philosophical audiences. It is true that in the Republic Plato has the following advice for philosophers: This interpretation is too extreme. For him philosophy has a civic dimension. The one who makes it outside the cave should not forget about those who are still down there and believe that the shadows they see there are real beings. The philosopher should try to transmit his knowledge and his wisdom to the others, and he knows that he has a difficult mission. But Plato was not willing to go as far as Socrates did. He preferred to address the public at large through his written dialogues rather than conducting dialogues in the agora. He did not write abstruse philosophical treatises but engaging philosophical dialogues meant to appeal to a less philosophically inclined audience. The participants are historical and fictional characters. Plato wanted his dialogues to look like genuine, spontaneous dialogues accurately preserved. How much of these stories and dialogues is fictional? It is hard to tell, but he surely invented a great deal of them. References to traditional myths and mythical characters occur throughout the dialogues. His myths are meant, among other things, to make philosophy more accessible. Sometimes he modifies them, to a greater or lesser extent, while other times he combines them—this is the case, for instance, of the Noble Lie Republic 359d, which is a combination of the Cadmeian myth of autochthony and the Hesiodic myth of ages. There are also in Plato myths that are his own, such as the myth of Er Republic 108 or the myth of Atlantis Timaeus 26e4. Many of the myths Plato invented feature characters and motifs taken from traditional mythology such as the Isles of the Blessed or the judgment after death, and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish his own mythological motifs from the traditional ones. The majority of the myths he invents preface or follow a philosophical argument: Plato refers sometimes to the myths he uses, whether traditional or his own, as *muthoi* for an overview of all the loci where the word *muthos* occurs in Plato see Brisson ff. However, *muthos* is not an exclusive label. The myths Plato invents, as well as the traditional myths he uses, are narratives that are non-falsifiable, for they depict particular beings, deeds, places or events that are beyond our experience: Myths are also fantastical, but they are not inherently irrational and they are not targeted at the irrational parts of the soul. Strictly speaking, the Cave is an analogy, not a myth. Most argues that there are eight main features of the Platonic myth. Most acknowledges that these eight features are not completely uncontroversial, and that there are occasional exceptions; but applied flexibly, they allow us to establish a corpus of at least fourteen Platonic myths in the Phaedo, Gorgias, Protagoras, Meno, Phaedrus, Symposium, Republic X, Statesman, Timaeus, Critias and Laws IV. Dorion concludes that the Oracle story is not only a Platonic fiction, but also a Platonic myth, more specifically: Who invented the examination of the opinions of others by the means of elenchus? We have a comprehensive book about the people of Plato: Nails; now we also have one about the animals of Plato: Bell and Naas. Anyone interested in myth, metaphor, and on how people and animals are intertwined in Plato would be rewarded by consulting it. They are used to portray not just Socrates [compared to a gadfly, horse, swan, snake, stork, fawn, and torpedo ray] but many other characters in the dialogues, from the wolfish Thrasymachus of the Republic to the venerable racehorse Parmenides of the Parmenides. Myth as a means of persuasion For Plato we should live according to what reason is able to deduce from what we regard as reliable evidence. This is what real philosophers, like Socrates, do. But the non-philosophers are reluctant to ground their lives on logic and arguments. They have to be persuaded. One means of persuasion is myth. It is efficient in making the less philosophically inclined, as well as children cf. In the Republic the Noble Lie is supposed to make the citizens of Callipolis care more for their city. Philosophy, claims Schofield, provides the guards with knowledge, not with love and devotion for

their city. There is some truth in them. But Simmias confesses that he still retains some doubt *â€”b*, and then Socrates tells them an eschatological myth. The myth does not provide evidence that the soul is immortal. It assumes that the soul is immortal and so it may be said that it is not entirely false. The myth also claims that there is justice in the afterlife and Socrates hopes that the myth will convince one to believe that the soul is immortal and that there is justice in the afterlife. Myth represents a sort of back-up: The myth blurs the boundary between this world and the other. To believe that soul is immortal and that we should practice justice in all circumstances, Gonzales argues, we have to be persuaded by what Socrates says, not by the myth of Er. Myth as a teaching tool The philosopher should share his philosophy with others. But since others may sometimes not follow his arguments, Plato is ready to provide whatever it takes *â€”an image, a simile, or a myth* *â€”that will help them grasp what the argument failed to tell them. The myth* *â€”just like an image, or analogy* *â€”may be a good teaching tool. Myth can embody in its narrative an abstract philosophical doctrine. In the Phaedo, Plato develops the so-called theory of recollection 72e* *â€”78b. The theory is there expounded in rather abstract terms. The Phaedrus myth of the winged soul, however, does. In it we are told how the soul travels in the heavens before reincarnation, attempts to gaze on true reality, forgets what it saw in the heavens once reincarnated, and then recalls the eternal forms it saw in the heavens when looking at their perceptible embodiments. The Phaedrus myth does not provide any proofs or evidence to support the theory of recollection. Since this theory the myth embodies is, for Plato, true, the myth has pace Plato a measure of truth in it, although its many fantastical details may lead one astray if taken literally. Myth in the Timaeus The cosmology of the Timaeus is a complex and ample construction, involving a divine maker assisted by a group of less powerful gods, who creates the cosmos out of a given material dominated by an inner impulse towards disorder and according to an intelligible model. The standard interpretation is promoted by, among others, Cornford, 31ff. The Timaeus cosmology, Cornford argues, is a *muthos* because it is cast in the form of a narration, not as a piece-by-piece analysis. But also, and mainly, because its object, namely the universe, is always in a process of becoming and cannot be really known. The cosmology, Brisson argues, is a non-verifiable discourse about the perceptible universe before and during its creation. The standard alternative is to say that the problem lies in the cosmologist, not in the object of his cosmology. It is not that the universe is so unstable so that it cannot be really known. It is that we fail to provide an exact and consistent description of it. A proponent of this view is Taylor, The Demiurge, Burnyeat claims, works with given materials, and when he creates the cosmos, he does not have a free choice, but has to adjust his plans to them. Although we know that the Demiurge is supremely benevolent towards his creation, none of us could be certain of his practical reasons for framing the cosmos the way he did. But why does Plato call it a *muthos*? No cosmologist can deduce these reasons from various premises commonly accepted. He has to imagine them, but they are neither fantastical, nor sophistic. The cosmologist exercises his imagination under some constraints. He has to come up with reasonable and coherent conjectures. And in good Socratic and Platonic tradition, he has to test them with others. This is what Timaeus does. They are highly skilled and experienced philosophers: The judges, however, says Plato, have to be tolerant, for in this field one cannot provide more than conjectures. It may be argued that its creationist scenario was meant to make the difficult topic of the genesis of the realm of becoming more accessible. In the Philebus, in a tight dialectical conversation, the genesis of the realm of becoming is explained in abstract terms the unlimited, limit, being that is mixed and generated out of those two; and the cause of this mixture and generation, 27b* *â€”c. But the Timaeus aims at encompassing more than the Philebus. It aims not only at revealing the ultimate ontological principles accessible to human reason, cf. These reasons are to be imagined because imagination has to fill in the gaps that reason leaves in this attempt to disclose the reasons for which the cosmos was created the way it is. Myth and philosophy In the Protagoras a distinction is made between *muthos* and *logos*, where *muthos* appears to refer to a story and *logos* to an argument. This distinction seems to be echoed in the Theaetetus and the Sophist. And later on, at c4, Socrates calls a *muthos* the teaching according to which active and passive motions generate perception and perceived objects. By calling all those philosophical doctrines *muthoi* Plato does not claim that they are myths proper, but that they are, or appear to be, non-argumentative. In many dialogues he condemns the use of images in knowing things and claims that true philosophical knowledge should avoid images. He would have had strong*

reasons for avoiding the use of myths: The eschatological myths of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo* and *Republic*, for instance, are tightly bound with the philosophical arguments of those dialogues cf. Some other times he uses myth as a supplement to philosophical discourse cf. One time, in the *Timaeus*, Plato appears to overcome the opposition between *muthos* and *logos*: It is difficult to say which one of these two readings is a better approximation of what Plato thought about the interplay between myth and philosophy. The interpreter seems bound to furnish only probable accounts about this matter. Fowler surveys the *muthos*–*logos* dichotomy from Herodotus and the pre–Socratic philosophers to Plato, the Sophists, and the Hellenistic and Imperial writers, and provides many valuable references to works dealing with the notion of *muthos*, the Archaic uses of myth–words, and ancient Greek mythology; for the *muthos*–*logos* dichotomy in Plato see also Miller , 76 He might have used a myth or two in his early dialogues, now lost.

4: Plato and Myth: Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths - Google Books

Myth and Philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus Plato's dialogues frequently criticize traditional Greek myth, yet Plato also integrates myth with his writing.

I am a student and not a scholar of Plato at this point. I started reading his works in the order of the canon of Thrasyllus and only just finished Phaedo myself. For Greeks, that meant the separation of the soul from the body at death, the judgement of particularly heinous crimes, and the continued existence in Hades. An Athenian citizen was expected to be well versed in these ideas—especially as told by Homer. So it would be expected that Socrates, if he were a wise man, would be able to talk about these myths at length. The charges against Socrates It must be remembered that Socrates was dead when Plato, his student, wrote the dialogues he appears in. Athens convicted Socrates of "failing to acknowledge the gods that the city acknowledges" and "introducing new deities". Ironically, the other charge against Socrates was "corrupting the youth". Plato is Exhibit A. So having Socrates reconfirm the myths of the city helps show him as falsely-accused. A contemporary reader might wonder if Socrates held orthodox eschatological view after all. Pythagoreanism We have evidence that Plato was strongly influenced by the cosmology of Pythagoras. A principle tenet of the system was the transmigration of souls. Unfortunately, that concept did not mesh well the Illiad and the Odyssey where death was final and souls were doomed to wander shadowy Hades forever. There was no hope for a soul to return. In Phaedo, Plato is eager to show that souls return to new bodies if they were not either especially evil so receive everlasting torment or especially philosophical so receive everlasting peace. In order to show that Socrates or Plato himself did not dishonor the existing cosmology, Plato reworked the existing images of the afterlife to fit with reincarnation. Since people already know things from birth, it follows that we must remember them from our preexistence as disembodied souls. Naturally, our souls would have needed to have access to practical knowledge common sense in addition to esoteric knowledge. Therefore, our souls must have had bodies in "previous lives". My guess is that neither were particularly pious in the traditional, Greek sense. It seems that both were far more interested in obtaining philosophical truth than in honoring the gods. But Plato, at least, was also interested in using myth to communicate truth. Technically, there is no cave and no fire and no shadows and no prisoners. The whole story is bogus if you try to take it literally. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I am fully known. As we struggle to understand the reality of the world and of ourselves we need to use language that bridges the gap between what we can understand and what we want to understand. At the time, myth was the state-of-the-art tool for accomplishing this feat. Today, mathematics has shown itself to be a powerful alternative.

5: Plato Myth of the Cave - New York Essays

The Myth of Theuth, God of Writing -- excerpt from Plato's Phaedrus (trans. Benjamin Jowett; text from Internet Classics Archive) Socrates: Enough appears to have been said by us of a true and false.

It explains the possibilities of how the feeling of love began and how it has evolved—both sexually and non-sexually. Of particular importance is the speech of Socrates, who attributes to the prophetess Diotima an idea of platonic love as a means of ascent to contemplation of the divine. The step of this ascent is known as the "Ladder of Love". Socrates defines love based on separate classifications of pregnancy to bear offspring; pregnancy of the body, pregnancy of the soul, and direct connection to Being. Pregnancy of the body results in human children. Pregnancy of the soul, the next step in the process, produces "virtue" which is the soul truth translating itself into material form. Vulgar Eros is nothing but mere material attraction towards a beautiful body for physical pleasure and reproduction. Divine Eros begins the journey from physical attraction, i. This concept of Divine Eros is later transformed into the term platonic love. Vulgar Eros and Divine Eros are both connected and part of the same continuous process of pursuing totality of being itself, [4] with the purpose of mending human nature, eventually reaching a point of unity where there is no longer an aspiration to change. Most modern people would think of Eros as a concept rather than a god. This is an example of cultural relativity, because the modern interpretation of the term is different from the ancient Greek interpretation. Virtue is the result of pregnancy of the soul. This can be seen as a form of linguistic relativity. Some modern authors perception of the terms "virtue" and "good" as they are translated into English from the Symposium are a good indicator of this misunderstanding. In the following quote, the author simplifies the idea of virtue as simply what is "good". Each step closer to the truth further distances love from beauty of the body toward love that is more focused on wisdom and the essence of beauty. Eventually, in time, with consequent steps up the ladder, the idea of beauty is eventually no longer connected with a body, but entirely united with Being itself. These two extremes of love are seen by the Greeks in terms of tragedy and comedy. According to Diotima in her discussion with Socrates, for anyone to achieve the final rung in the Ladder of Love, they would essentially transcend the body and rise to immortality - gaining direct access to Being. Such a form of love is impossible for a mortal to achieve. This is the type of love, that, according to Socrates, is practiced by animals. The love described as the one practiced by those who are pregnant according to the soul, who partake of both the realm of beings and the realm of Being, who grasp Being indirectly, through the mediation of beings, would be a love that Socrates could practice. One would be forever limited to beauty of the body, never being able to access the true essence of beauty. The offspring of true virtue would essentially lead to a mortal achieving immortality. Later in, Marsilio Ficino put forward a theory of neo-platonic love in which he defines love as a personal ability of an individual which guides their soul towards cosmic processes and lofty spiritual goals and heavenly ideas De Amore, Les Belles Lettres, The first use of the modern sense of platonic love is taken as an invention of Ficino in one of his letters. For a brief period, Platonic love was a fashionable subject at the English royal court, especially in the circle around Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of King Charles I. Platonic love was the theme of some of the courtly masques performed in the Caroline era—though the fashion soon waned under pressures of social and political change. Seven types of love[edit] Throughout these eras platonic love slowly was categorized into different subsections, which were: Eros is a sexual or passionate love, or a modern perspective of romantic love. Philia is the type of love that is directed towards friendship or goodwill, often is met with mutual benefits that can also can be formed by companionship, dependability, and trust. Storge is the type of love that is found between parents and children, and this is often a unilateral love. Agape is the universal love, that can consist of the love for strangers, nature, or god. Ludus is a playful and uncommitted love, this is focused for fun and sometimes as a conquest with no strings attached. Philautia is self-love and this can be healthy or unhealthy; which can be unhealthy if you are hubris if placed ahead of gods, and it can be healthy if its used to build self esteem and confidence. These different forms of love can be mistaken as any of the listed different loves. There is a type of porosity that allows love to filter through one type and into the next, although for

Plato love is to be of the beautiful and good things. This is due to the ownership of beautiful and good things equates into happiness. All beautiful and good things sit below truth and wisdom, for everyone looks to truthful and wise people as the truly beautiful for the effort of being considered beautifully good, and this is exactly why Plato suggests that love is not a god but rather a philosopher. Notably romantic relationships where a bond of love has been established. One of the complications of platonic love lies within the persistence of the use of the title itself "platonic love" versus the use of "friend". It is the use of the word love that directs us towards a deeper relationship than the scope of a normal friendship. Secondly, a study by Hause and Messman states:

6: Plato's Phaedrus

Overall, myths play a very large role in Plato's writings, and it seems to me that the closing myths serve as a sort of "Noble Lie," a concept discussed in The Republic. For example, the myth of Er in The Republic likely does not represent Plato's view on the matter (the myth being fairly arbitrary in the details of its epistemology in.

Studies on the Use and Status of Platonic Myths. The present volume is the result of a conference held at the University of Ottawa in May. The first part is devoted to general questions concerning the nature, function, main characteristics of myths in Platonic dialogues, their relationships with allegories and images, their status from the perspective of Platonic writing, and their reception in Neoplatonic interpretations. The second part is devoted to the analysis of specific myths. The following five chapters are devoted to myths of judgment in the afterlife: In the following two chapters Christopher Moore and Franco Trabattoni approach from different perspectives the myth of Theuth in the Phaedrus. In chapter sixteen, Kathryn Morgan focuses on theriomorphism in the mythical presentations of the soul. According to Morgan, the image of Typhon in Phdr. Most papers are strong pieces of scholarship, deal with fundamental questions, and offer interesting textual analysis. Yet, as is often the case with conference proceedings, more cross-referencing and discussion within chapters would have been welcome, since the different authors hold positions that are often at odds with each other, but rarely comment on their disagreements. The author suggests that the eight criteria he proposes are not meant to be uncontroversial and that they admit of exceptions p. The approach is interesting insofar as Most does not limit himself either to considerations of form as in criterion 1: So, for example, criterion 2 reads: It would certainly have been interesting to find the issue discussed in the book. A similar problem can be detected with respect to criterion 5: Criterion 5 would not be problematic with respect to Plato only if we took it to mean something fairly trivial, i. Appeal to tradition, however, is not necessarily what gives a Platonic myth its authority, especially when Plato has his characters tell stories that elaborate on previously known mythical examples. This point is clearly stated by Horn: Trabattoni makes an analogous point concerning Phdr. From this observation one might conclude that Socrates himself would wish Phaedrus not to yield to the authority of the myths he has been listening to in the course of the dialogue. Rather, Phaedrus and by extension we, the readers should lend those myths authority only if, after close examination, they turn out to exhibit some truth and the difficulty, of course, is: A further potentially controversial point in the list of criteria compiled by Most and not discussed in the course of the book is number 7: The final myth of the Gorgias, for example, does not simply describe judgment after death, but also narrates the transformation to which final judgments were subjected when the Age of Chronos was followed by the Age of Zeus. This is not a minor point. As I had occasion to argue,¹ Socrates intends to suggest, by 1 A. Some of these points are also noticed by Edmonds and Rowe, who, in the present volume, consider the narration of the final myth of the Gorgias as significantly linked to the interaction of the characters within the dialogue as a whole. This empirical collection of data does not apply well to certain myths, and, by admission of the author himself, does not aspire to be complete. Yet, because of the fundamental difference between a definition of a myth and a mere list of properties that happen to be shared by some myths some of the time, there is no special reason to believe that the properties listed by Most ought to be shared by all myths, or that they could allow us to demonstrate that certain stories are in fact myths. In the Apology we find Socrates addressing a crowd of jurors, not holding a casual conversation with a small number of individuals, as is usually the case. The relevant literary genre here would be forensic rhetoric, not the Socratic dialogue. If in a dialogue we find an old person speaking to one or more interlocutors whose relative youth is stressed as in the Phaedo, we are entitled to consider youth a relevant factor. If the same old person is portrayed when addressing a mostly undifferentiated crowd of jurors, our inferences concerning the age of the group of listeners cannot bear the same weight as if they had been invited by the text. If the seventy-year-old Socrates had been speaking to a group of athletes in a gymnasium the point would have been stronger. However, he does not prove conclusively that the story is indeed a myth. In the following observations I would like to highlight a few differences in the interpretative strategies adopted by the contributors to this volume. The function of myth is

thus to give a positive characterization of metaphysical objects ideas, the immortal and immaterial soul or situations the condition of humanity before history, the judgment after death which are beyond the temporal and physical conditions of ordinary life. On the other hand, Brisson argues that the myth in the *Timaeus* is called an *eikos muthos*, not because it deals with metaphysical entities ideas, but precisely because it deals with the sensible world, i. So, while Trabattoni and Brisson agree that *logos* and *muthos* complement each other, they differ on the role *logos* is supposed to play. It is debatable whether in the Platonic dialogues myths are pieces of writing directed at unprofessional audiences as for Most, who embraces the distinction between exoteric writings and esoteric teaching, or whether they can best be understood as rhetorical invitations to particular interlocutors in specific dialogic situations as for Calame and Moore. For Dixsaut, in turn, myths are utterances that involve rhetoric in the sense that they enjoin us readers not just the characters to whom they are addressed to see things from a different perspective, and hence to modify our behavior. This difference expresses itself in stylistic choices as well: Personally, I find the latter option not only faithful to the literary character of the dialogues, but also more profitable for interpretation. Attuning to different voices refines our perception of what we can consider salient. So a religious attitude precedes all kinds of social behavior and of community. If appreciating justice and feeling shame are alien to original religion, one has no difficulty imagining a religion populated by shameless and unjust gods similar to those portrayed by Homer and Hesiod and criticized by Socrates in the *Republic*. Whether this anthropological point is common to Protagoras and Plato remains, in any case, an open question. Myths can be seen to complement arguments in the sense of illustrating, developing with different means, or making emotionally persuasive a certain theory, or they can be seen to complement arguments in a negative, dialectical fashion. In the latter case, myths do not point to a solution, but rather draw attention to a problem that the theory in question does not address. In the present volume readers will find instances of both interpretative attitudes. The complementarity of *logos* and *muthos* is interpreted similarly by Rowe and Edmonds in their respective analyses of the final myth of judgment in the *Gorgias*. On the other hand, according to Gonzales the final myth of the *Republic* is best understood in juxtaposition to, rather than in continuity with, the main arguments of the *Republic*. The final myth gives central stage to luck, oblivion, carelessness, and draws attention to the importance of external circumstances such as wealth and poverty, health and sickness, strength and weakness. Gonzales is not alone in showing how myths can be in tension with arguments: It would certainly have been useful to find a discussion of the different interpretative premises underlying the contributions in this book, yet the absence of an open exchange on matters of principle does not make it less interesting. From this point of view it does not really matter whether Gonzales or Dixsaut do not agree with Pender concerning the general function of myth with respect to argument. From their papers readers will learn that Plato uses myths in many different ways, even when from a general perspective the topic is the same. Carefully observing small things is no small undertaking. Several papers in this book show how rewarding such an approach can be. Alessandra Fussi University of Pisa fussi fls.

7: Robert Zaslavsky (Author of Platonic Myth And Platonic Writing)

The twenty chapters of this volume, contributed by scholars of diverse backgrounds and approaches, elucidate the various uses and statuses of Platonic myths in the first place by reflecting on myth per se and in the second place by focusing on a specific myth in the Platonic corpus.

Further, it will discuss the similarities and differences between the responses received from my interviewees based on my discussion of The Myth of the Cave by Plato as read in *Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*. For this paper, I interviewed a group of my peers at work. I recently was promoted and moved to Fayetteville, GA. My former work unit consisted of seven 7 people. The members of this group came from different countries and I was the only American in this work unit. I felt that based on the cultural and educational differences of the interviewees involved, I would receive unique responses to the question: I chose the five 5 engineers in our group for this paper. I described the story as follows: There are a group of men, prisoners, their hands and legs are shackled by chains. Moreover, the movement of their head and face is also restricted, so that they can see nothing but the wall in front of them. This restricted movement limits their visibility to the wall, thus circumscribing the scope of any encounter beyond it. There is an enormous fire on the ground, and between the wall and the fire is a walkway meant for objects to pass. The shadows of these objects fall directly on the wall providing the sole view for the prisoners. The only way for the prisoners to get acquainted with their surroundings is to decipher the shadows and consider them to be a part of the real world. They start naming each and every object, and amongst all the prisoners, the intellect of an individual is governed by his ability to judge those objects. Later, one prisoner is freed of the shackles and gets to see the outside world. What he encounters is beyond his comprehension. He is accustomed to dim light, and the light of the sun hurt his eyes. But slowly he would get accustomed to the existence of the new world and discover true reality and the beauty of Mother Nature. But the other prisoners resist his enlightenment and condemn him. In addition, we watched a You Tube video with an animated version of The Myth of the Cave by Plato to give my interviewees a visual interpretation as well as verbal description of the story. Once my story and video were completed, we discussed the meaning of the myth of cave as a team and debated about the moral of the story. After, I asked my interviewees to write down their personal thoughts of the story for individual discussion. My first interviewee is named Graziella Spizzi. She is twenty-eight 28 years old from Zurich, Switzerland. She is an Electrical Engineer at my company. She feels the myth of the cave is a symbolic way of showing how people are enlightened. She states that there are two main characters, those making the shadows and the prisoners. The people casting the shadows are trying to pass on what their ancestors taught them. The same shadows were once cast to them. The prisoners are chained in chains that represent conformity. She believes as the prisoners learn the shadows and the order in which they go in the chains are loosened. When a prisoner is able to recite the shadows in the order in which they appear they are released in order to share that same information with future generations G. Spizzi, personal communication, May 25, My second interviewee is Markus Schaefer. He is forty-three 43 years old from Niedermollrich, Hessen, Germany. He is a Mechanical Engineer at our company. He believes it describes our fear of exploring outside our safety zone. We get locked and chained by our own fear. In his example he stated that some people need the safety of believing that they can only rely on themselves so much so that they do not see when other people needing charity M. Schaefer, personal communication, May 25, My third interviewee is Ennio Luchessa. He is forty-five 45 years old born in Zurich, Switzerland but raised in Northern Italy. He is a Technical Engineer at our company. He states the myth of the cave expresses how the prisoners in the dark cave were ignorant people and if brought into the light outside became informed individuals. Ennio feels that humans in general are trapped into they own world, not allowing outside influences that may enrich them to come in. He feels we have a duty to experience everything that the world has to offer and if possible afford this opportunity to others E. Luchessa, personal communication, May 25, My fourth interviewee is Hector Martinez-Cabanés. He is twenty-six 26 years old from Villaviciosa de Odon, Madrid, Spain. He also feels the meaning of the myth of cave was the prisoners in the dark cave represented ignorance in society in general. Martinez-Cabanés,

personal communication, May 25, My fifth interviewee is Volker Goltz. He is forty-one 41 years old from Kassel, Germany. He states that Plato was conveying that the real world can be correctly apprehended only intellectually, not physically. Goltz, personal communication, May 25, All the interviewees agreed that the myth of the cave was about enlightenment. The differences in their responses occur with how the enlightenment may come about. Most responses convey that one must experience something and not only judge something from the way it looks or what they have heard. Most importantly, never judge something by its cover and from the outside. My decision changed once I thoroughly reviewed the interview with Volker. His response to the meaning of the myth of the cave that the real world can be correctly apprehended only intellectually especially through discovery-guided learning seemed logical to me. My decision is based on children, when they are young they believe what they are told by adults never questioning. As the child grows they begin to learn and experience things about the world that may differ from what they have been taught. As teenagers, most rebel against their parents for the chance to discover the world for themselves, not as the world has been interpreted to them. As young adults and into adulthood, they are able to have their own opinions and formulate what is true, real, and important. Further, most of these opinions are commingled with the things taught to them in youth, which during their life journey have been proven to be true. Overall, the group believed that most people prefer to remain in chains and to see only shadows of the truth. Only the wise are willing to free themselves from the chains and look for the truth even if it is blinding at first. I believe through discovery-guided learning versus memory-driven education beginning in kindergarten will help develop more informed, open-minded, and outside the box thinkers in the future.

8: Greg Johnson, "The Myths of Plato," Part 1 | Counter-Currents Publishing

Introduction: Plato's Myths A SIGNIFICANT amount of Plato's philosophy is expressed in the myths which appear throughout his works.. Several good collections of Plato's myths are available in print (e.g., Partenie,).

9: Platonic love - Wikipedia

This paper will describe the learning experience of my interviewees while translating what The Myth of the Cave by Plato means to them. Further, it will discuss the similarities and differences between the responses received from my interviewees based on my discussion of The Myth of the Cave by Plato as read in Twenty Questions: [].

Creativity : integrated thinking and being Nc lahiri table of ascendants Health visiting and the elderly Great Lives From History American Series Volume 4 Mic-She Effects of agenda setting Wayne Wanta and Salma Ghanem Starting an business for dummies all in one Clergy say the darndest things! Americas Best Graduate Schools 2004 Healthy Eating-Kids Snacks and Lunches (Hawthorn Mini Series) Sex, the slump, and salvation The communications white paper And everyone shall praise A pilot study assessing the problems facing the / The chief justices second draft Chapter 10. Pierre, The Little Flower Sacristan and Guardian of Her Tomb Trusts and equitable interests Classroom management: not an oxymoron Planning and design for future informal settlements Hunters of the steel sharks Bio-psycho-social model of development April Fools Day forever. The loss of Abandonment in Sophocles Electra Denise Eileen McCoskey Managing our forests today! Women do not have the right to be prostitutes Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Rich dad poor dad file How to make your mark V. 2. Migrants, sharecroppers, mountaineers. Young peoples views about cannabis Easy to Sound/Book 7C. (Key Words) Architectural treatise in the Italian Renaissance Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry handbook Parenting partners Official Pro Football Hall of Fame Answer Book An essay on rights Backlash sarah darer littman Julius caesar in modern english The Vampire Armand (Rice, Anne, Vampire Chronicles (New York, N.Y.) Invisible enemies : the Boer War, 1899-1902 Diets For Children Pamphlet Human resource management 2013 mcgraw-hill irwin 12th edition