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REVIEW ARTICLE

# Classical Roots of Psychoanalysis: Brief Reflections on Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Ethics

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## ABSTRACT

Both Plato and Aristotle articulated conceptions of the psyche (soul) as complex, composed of discrete functional constituents in reciprocal dynamic relationships, and posited personal virtue (excellence), happiness, and justice, in relationship both with one's self and with others, as consisting in a best-ordering of the psyche, by which the internal relations among these distinct functions are most harmoniously integrated. Socrates argued that justice in the individual and in the city is the same thing. A clinical case presentation illustrates how psychoanalytic structural theory overlaps considerably with Aristotle's discussion of the conflictual relationship between the desirous and rational aspects of the psyche, while salutary shifts in the patient's internal object-relations illustrate a movement toward greater "justice" among the "community" of psychic functions, as described in Plato's Republic. Although not identical, Socrates's approach in the Platonic dialogues has much in common with the psychoanalytic method. Both focus on awakening the interlocutor's self-observation, self-questioning, self-discovery, and psychological mindedness. Both are inherently relational, focusing on the immediacy of the interactions between the two interlocutors, and inducing change through an internalization of the discussion, if not the relationship. Both assume that the knowledge their interlocutor needs to attain is already present within at the start, though not yet uncovered or "recollected". The scope of the essay stretching from the ancients to the moderns, and from individual psyche to the body politic, our aim is to elaborate the proposition that the internal structures of an individual psyche and a republic are more or less analogous, and to clarify how, though not perfectly achievable, Platonic "justice" and the ideal outcome of a psychoanalysis can be models for one another. Both require the most adaptive compromise between conflicting functional agencies. In the discussion, I will briefly review some writings rejecting classical roots, and others extolling them. Friedrich Nietzsche in particular, criticizing previous philosophers, opened the way for modern psychoanalytic ideas.

## Introduction

Since 1895, psychoanalysis undoubtedly has established itself as the psychotherapy that is most sensitive, thorough, humane, and profound. Grounded in free-association and a therapeutic relationship of safety, trust, confidentiality, and respect, the first "talk therapy" has given voice to the multidetermined complexities of the human psyche, including powerful unconscious dynamics never before suspected.

The phenomenology of and understandings derived from psychoanalysis have struck many as dubious, others as revelatory. It has not been adequately appreciated, however, how deeply rooted are psychoanalytic conceptualizations in the history of Western philosophy. As early as 399 BCE, Socrates reminded the Athenians, "The unexamined life is not worth living[1]." His student, Plato, showed Socrates explaining why he did not bother with questions of history or physics as follows: "I have no leisure for such enquiries… I must first know myself, as the Delphic inscription says; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous…I want to know … am I a monster more complicated and swollen with passion than the serpent Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler kind…[2]?" Socrates's imperative to "know thyself" leads inevitably to an investigation of human nature in general.

One problem is that the concept of "human nature" has undergone profound revisions in the past 2400 years, especially since the seventeenth century advent of modernity, to which psychoanalysis belongs. The very notion of a "soul" is ignored by modern neuroscience. Another controversy follows from the first: Values, conceptions, and cultures vary widely across geography and epochs. If there is no "human nature" that all people have in common, then it is difficult to conceive an understanding of human excellence (virtue) and a "best life" grounded in principles more fundamental than varying parochial if not arbitrary customs and beliefs.

My aim here, through discussion of brief portions of Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Ethics, is to demonstrate the relevance of their understanding of a universal human nature for the modern practice of psychoanalysis. The scope spans from the ancients to the moderns, and from the structure of the individual psyche to that of a city. We will start with the elemental issue of how we deal with pleasure and pain.

## Aristotle's Ethics: Pleasure, Pain, and Dynamic Conflict

Absent-mindedly, I reach for a cookie and take a bite. Immediately I'm seized with delectation and something new, a powerful desire for another bite. (Today, we might say this derives from a physiological reaction in my brain, probably involving a surge of dopamine from the midbrain's ventral tegmental area to the nucleus accumbens.) I permit the indulgence only so far, but then, remembering my prior commitment to bodily health, choose to resist the inner craving, which palpably persists for a minute or two before subsiding.

Aristotle in his Ethics would say that a vegetative bodily desire shared with the lower animals has been superseded by a rational principle peculiar to human beings[3].It was

activity of the soul in accordance with a rational principle that took cognizance of my situation and used foresight to calculate and compare the likely consequences of the different potential behavioral choices. It was this superordinate function of rationality that made a judgement, exhorted and persuaded me toward temperance, and executed the choice to abstain from excessive indulgence. (Today, we would say this required complex neuro-physiological activity of the prefrontal cortex.)

Aristotle observed that the desirous subdivision of the psyche, while resistant, may be reasoned with and placated to the point of becoming passively obedient to the soul's reasonable subdivision, which has the rational principle in the strict sense. The desirous function may obey reason, "as one does one's father[4]." Aristotle thus clearly described what psychoanalysts today call "internal dynamic conflict" between functionally distinguishable psychic agencies, conflict potentially resolvable by internal persuasion, obedience, or compromise.

Plato's greatest student could not have emphasized more strongly the centrality of pleasure and pain in the functioning of our minds and in our lives. Pleasure accompanies all objects of choice. Pleasure and pain accompany our every passion and action. Ultimately, even our social and political relationships are determined by how we manage these elemental constituents of behavior and experience. Pleasure and pain accompany virtue, but we also do bad things because of pleasure, and abstain from noble things because of pain, so it is because of pleasure and pain that men become bad. "Pleasure is ingrained…. in our lives and has grown up with all of us from our infancy[5]."

## A Psychoanalytic Interlude: Structural Theory

We thus easily can draw direct implications from Aristotle to Freud, merely by looking at the internal relations of the mind with itself. In describing the vegetative, desirous aspect of the soul as resistant yet potentially amenable to the rational principle, as a child comes to obey his father, Aristotle conceptualized what psychoanalysts today would call an "internalized object relationship". It's possible he considered this an internalization of actually-lived interactions between a child and an authority figure. In the purposely-oversimplified terms of psychoanalytic structural theory, it may be called a conflict between the superego and the id, for which the ego must negotiate a compromise solution. In any case, the concept of distinct psychic agencies with mutually opposing functions clearly did not spring whole-made from Freud's mind, like Athena from the head of Zeus.

From the psychoanalytic perspective, the anticipation and immediate experience of pleasure and pain insinuate themselves into the fabric of our psychological process at every moment, even if unconsciously. According to Freud's earliest drive-theory, desire for pleasurable gratification exerts a constant pressure within the mental apparatus toward active fulfillment. The pleasure/desire—pain/aversion dynamic accompanies every external object of salience, but also every internal object that the mind presents to itself, whether in memory, wish, fear, or plan,

often in the imaginative form of fantasized interactions. According to Freud's early topographic theory, repression by the conscious ego keeps much of that process and content out of awareness. In his later structural theory, anticipated or fantasied potential consequences may unconsciously elicit signal-anxiety, which prompts defensive activity inhibiting or disguising the pursuit of object-related gratification in accordance with internalized moral prohibitions and ideals[6,7].

Here is a fictional but typical illustration of how dynamic intrapsychic relations may go awry. In this vignette, conflicting psychic functions (motives) result in a compromise that is dysfunctional (symptomatic): excessive inhibition and misery in an otherwise stable individual. A 21 year-old college senior has yet to have a serious sexual relationship with a woman, despite his strong wishes and desires. "I see a girl from my class at a beer-party, and I want to approach her, but I get scared and can't do it. She'll be turned off and will dislike me. I've heard girls talk about how 'that guy was such a pig, hitting on me.' I don't want to be seen like that, but I'm sure I will be, even if I'm just trying to be friendly. That hangs over me. Every time I try to get close to a girl I'm attracted to, I get anxious and guilty, as if I'm doing something shameful and wrong; I'll be despised and laughed at. My parents always held me to such rigid standards: I should never try to get what I really want. Sex is bad. No wonder I'm a nervous little jerk!"

Externalizing ("projecting") the critical, even scornful, scrutiny of his desires and urges, he does not recognize that the prohibitive attitude "hanging over him" represents his own unconscious activity, internally threatening, shaming, diminishing, and inhibiting himself for natural hedonic strivings that probably would be socially acceptable and capable of gratification. We will return to this vignette in the section on Plato.

## Aristotle: Habits and Character

According to Aristotle, while everything we do is for some perceived good, these are almost always intermediate goods, a means toward a higher end. Working at a job achieves an intermediate good (money) in the service of a higher good, buying medicine, and we buy medicine as a means toward a yet higher end, health. The highest end or good, never pursued for the sake of something else but for the sake of which all other activities are undertaken, is happiness[8]. Happiness by definition seems to consist in a state or ordering of the soul. The goods that are truest and most valuable, therefore, would be what most benefit the soul, but how to identify specifically what they are remains open to investigation.

The propensity for pleasure and pain is given by nature, but the situations, objects, or actions with which they will be associated is determined by experience, to some extent through what today we would call "conditioning". Pleasure rewards and promotes certain behaviors while pain punishes and discourages others, training the individual to particular habits. The sum of one's habits, which we say have become his "second-nature", we call his character. Vice and virtue in one's character resides in the attitude toward the pleasure and pain associated respectively with bad or good actions.

What is right or wrong, virtuous or the opposite, can be discerned by reason, but

most people most of the time behave according to unreasoned habits usually conditioned in early life by the circumstances, experiences, training, and relationships at home with their caregivers. Thus, Aristotle says people learn to delight or be pained by the things that we ought or ought not to be delighted or pained by[9]. While humans by nature are habit-forming creatures, human virtue is not given by nature, for it is not possible to form a habit contrary to nature, but humans do form habits contrary to virtue.

Our being habit-forming creatures, therefore, bestows the potential for either virtue or vice. Neither is determined by nature, however, but rather by experience and education. We can see that an individual born with "a powerful nature", eg, strong drives, talents, and intelligence, may become the very best type of person, a benefactor to society, or the very worst, a tyrant. As to character, "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather, all the difference[10]."

## Aristotle: Virtue and Happiness

If an eye and a foot each has a function, and in each job taken on by a person, all of his organs have their respective functions, should we not then say that the person as a whole also has a function? Aristotle states that the function of a human being is not merely to live, but to live well, ie, to have a certain kind of life, "an activity of the soul implying a rational principle." Important as they are, we may gather that mere habits are not enough, for habits are automatic and passive, while rational activity implies flexibility and freely self-governing volition. Habits are blind, while rationality is discerning. Happiness and virtue also cannot result merely from a state of mind, which may exist without producing any good result, but require action, because "those who act win, and rightly win, the noble and good things in life[11]." The virtuous life is in itself pleasurable, since one who loves virtue by definition rejoices in noble deeds. Men and women who have developed such a character have become friends to themselves, willing, doing and being what they love. The function of a good person, then, will be the good and noble performance of virtuous actions. The human good turns out to be "activity of the soul in accordance with (rationally determined) virtue… in a complete life[12]."

Learning and training assist in discerning both what would be the virtuous thing to do and also the virtuous thing to abstain from, abstention being a kind of action. What we do shapes who we are: One becomes just by performing just acts in her transactions with others, just as one may become unjust by performing unjust acts[13]. Thus, study and care can win human excellence for all whose potentiality for virtue has not been destroyed, eg, by brain injury, neglectful upbringing, traumatic experience, or corruption. Conceiving virtue and happiness as potentialities grounded in human nature establishes them as equally accessible to all human beings, which promotes the ideals and possibility of democracy. (It is no accident that the city of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle was Athens, the birthplace of democracy.)

To summarize, Freud did not invent without precedent the concept of a dynamic community within the mind among conflicting functional agencies, whose mutual relations

determine the character of a person. What the different psychoanalytic theories have in common---whether structural, object-relations, or intersubjective --- is a conception that our personalities are not unitary. Psychological experience, behavior, and character emerge from the constantly recycling communication between distinct intrapsychic structures, developmentally influenced by if not internalized from relationships with other people of emotional significance.

Granted, there are important differences in how the ancients and the moderns have understood the ultimate nature of mind (for example, in articulating how or to what extent we may or may not be able to know the external world). Nevertheless, regarding ordinary psychological functioning, we find a broad overlap and compatibility in the conceptualizations proposed respectively by Aristotle and psychoanalysis. While Aristotle objectified his observations for philosophic clarity, Freudian psychoanalysis for clinical purposes focuses on the internal experience of the subject as explored through introspection in the context of a significant interpersonal relationship. We will see that this aspect of psychoanalysis also finds roots in the thought of ancient Greece.

## Platonic Dialogue as an Early Model for Psychoanalytic Dialogue

Let us first remark that unlike Aristotle, who wrote treatises, Plato, his teacher, wrote only dialogues, the very form of which is deeply significant. By never speaking in his own voice, Plato remains hidden and leaves it quite uncertain whether statements in the dialogues ever truly represent his own opinions. Even Socrates, the chief protagonist often taken as the mouthpiece for Plato, usually speaks ironically, so that one also can never know to what extent *his* statements are intended to reflect his actual beliefs. Leo Strauss commented that what Socrates leaves unsaid may be what's most important. What then is the point of a Platonic dialogue? Evidently to awaken in others thoughtful internal questioning. "Perhaps Socrates does not primarily intend to teach a doctrine but rather to educate human beings---to make them better, more just or gentle, more aware of their limitations," Strauss wrote[14]."

Moreover, as Plato has Socrates pointing out in the "Phaedrus", writings are like paintings. "If you ask them a question, they preserve a solemn silence[15]." The written word cannot adjust its manner of presentation to the specific reader, but says the same thing in the same way to every reader indiscriminately. By contrast, evidently referring to a real conversation between two people actually present together, Socrates describes "another kind of word or speech… having a far greater power[16]." Spoken words can be like seeds planted in the soul of the interlocutor, in which fertile soil they may take root and develop a life of their own. A living word engraved not on paper but in the mind of the learner will afterward know when to stay silent and when to defend itself. A Platonic dialogue, written to evoke such a process in the reader, is an imitation of live conversation. It aims to avoid the pitfalls of common expository writing, instead drawing the reader into active participation, his or her mind set to work upon the problems discussed with the immediacy of a lived experience. We are there with Socrates.

Despite significant differences, we can already see much in Plato's dialogues that corresponds to the method and approach of modern psychoanalysis. True, the Socratic dialogues proceed much of the time by careful reasoning, seasoned with stories and myths, and generally deal with large questions of ethical/societal/philosophic concern. By contrast, psychoanalysis explores a patient's uniquely personal internality, his "psychic reality", largely dreamlike, brimming with memories, feelings, and imagination. Socrates seeks to define and elaborate intelligible universals, a psychoanalyst to uncover and explore the organizing fantasies of an individual[17].

Nevertheless, both forms of dialogue are inherently relational. Neither the analyst or Socrates speaks to a crowd, but almost always with one individual at a time, the two characters embedded together in an unfolding dramatic process. Socrates and the analyst both address their interlocutor with exquisite sensitivity, tailoring their mode of discourse to his uniquely individual capabilities, personality, and fluctuating receptivity. Both focus on the interlocutor's immediate here-and-now experience within the interaction, where the mind is directly engaged. The two dialogues share the same primary intention: not to fix the interlocutor's external life, but to free the mind that makes the life.

In a Platonic dialogue, the two people typically try to clarify a question of uniquely-human interest, such as "what is piety?", "what is virtue?", or "what is justice?" A person gains wisdom through continuously interrogating his accustomed beliefs, and recognizing what he does not know. Socrates, constantly professing his own ignorance, is expert at helping his interlocutors see the self-contradiction and inadequacy of their previous assumptions. Stymied, seeing "no way out", they come to acknowledge their ignorance as well. That moment of "aporia" opens the way to thinking about a question in a genuinely new light.

Those rich Socratic impasses have much in common with pregnant moments in psychoanalysis, when the analyst's comment to a patient feeling hopelessly stuck may destabilize a previously fixed compromise-formation and facilitate a structural shift in his psychological and interpersonal functioning, as described by Charles Brenner and Dale Boesky[18,19]. For example, in the previously described case vignette of the severely inhibited young man, the analyst might say, "You seem to feel you don't have the right to ask her." Suffering, blocked, and needing help, the patient might be moved not only by the acumen of this comment but also by its implicit encouragement and permission, offered by a trusted professional upon whom he has come to rely. Why wouldn't he have the right?

Though they may be largely unconscious to the patient, a number of salubrious psychic developments might result from the internalization of such an interaction.

"Given permission", the patient may become better able to relax the intensity of his self-criticism and inhibitions, while at the same time altering internal "self and object representations". The scolding forbidding "parental object" shifts toward a representation that is warmer, heartening, and reassuring, while his "self-representation" moves toward greater confidence, comfort, and assertiveness.

The internal "object relationship" becomes less fantastic and more realistic, less of a cowed son submitting to a cruel authority, and more one of equality and friendship. This process of integrating good and bad self and object images is thoroughly described by Otto Kernberg[20,21]. Perhaps most significantly, the patient might internalize the caring attention and concern of the analyst, which thereafter would remain a constant reassuring presence within him through the vicissitudes of life, what Adler and Buie called a "holding-soothing introject[22]." Thus, the bipersonal analytic process could modify his psychic structure, the internal community of functions, toward greater moderation, stability, effectiveness, and happiness.

The analysis also maximizes the internal freedom and independence of the patient by helping him realize that his mind is his own, his "private place", where he might gain what Keats called "negative capability", the capacity to permit uncertainty. Hopkins[23], citing Winnicott[24], analogizes this to the "capability that a child manifests in the act of creative 'play',…of leaving itself open, in the presence of its trusted mother…to whatever sensations, either internal or external, may come along, the capability, in short, of allowing itself to feel real… without the need to meet external expectations, (or) to fabricate what Winnicott calls a 'false self'."

The patient internalizes the total analytic situation, in which he is encouraged to free-associate and say everything without restriction, counting on the analyst's unconditional positive regard, thus gaining greater tolerance for allowing into awareness thoughts, feelings, urges, and fantasies that previously had seemed unthinkable, forbidden even to imagine consciously. He realizes instead that they are "only thoughts", safe to be given full play on the stage of his mind, not external actions with real consequences. What has seemed prohibitively frightening or shameful may now be examined, placed in context, analyzed, judged, mastered, and integrated. Of course, what gains mastery is Aristotle's "activity of the soul in accordance with a rational principle". The re-appropriation and integration of what has been previously repressed, along with the "psychic energy" previously consumed in repressing it, promotes the expansion, animation, and enrichment of the person's conscious life.

The analyst furthers these developments by helping the patient become more objectively self-observing, eg, able to recognize various defensive measures entrenched in his character, what Aristotle might have called psychological habits forbidding awareness of what most needs to be understood. Through what Paul Gray called close- process attention, the patient learns moment-by-moment both how he is defending, what he is defending against, and why he needs to defend *right now* in the process of his emerging thoughts, ultimately gaining the volitional latitude not to persist in those defensive measures[25,26]. On each occasion of recognizing and relaxing its defensive operation, "the ego" allows a bit more of what had been warded off to come forward, thus gaining in its own strength, flexibility, and tolerance. The patient no longer needs to avert his vision, but may look and see. There results a naturally progressing process of self-discovery, by which he can acknowledge and integrate what he may have spent a lifetime avoiding.

To further understand the commonality between the psychoanalytic process and the Socratic dialogue, notice that in the phenomenological unfolding of the patient's mind to his own observation, there is little need for the analyst to "inform" him of what he's discovering. As Socrates said, "There is no teaching, but only recollection[27]." His statement is consistent with the psychoanalytic assumption that the patient who is unconscious of certain truths within himself nevertheless possesses and is shaped by those truths. Like the questions of Socrates, the analyst's questions reorient the patient's perspective toward himself, pointing to something as yet unseen, at the threshold of awareness.

For Sara Ahbel-Rappe, Socratic questioning acts as a mirror for the psyche, and virtue consists less in actions than in a contemplative self-aware presence to oneself[28]. (In this, she disagrees with Aristotle). In his Apology at his trial in Athens, Socrates told of his initial bewilderment at the Delphic Oracle's statement that there was "no one man wiser" than Socrates, because he knew that he had "no wisdom, great or small[29]." He thus went about examining those purported to be wise, to see if the oracle might be mistaken, and provoked in them a process of self-questioning by which they came to recognize that they were ignorant also, a process that enhanced self-knowledge. Socratic wisdom is self-wisdom especially acknowledgement of what one does not know.

We can see that psychoanalysis thus aligns itself with both Platonic dialogues and Aristotle's Ethics in having as its chief aim to maximize the self-awareness, autonomy, competence, integration, and well-being of the individual psyche, what today we term "mental health". We note by analogy that the very concept of "integration" can apply not only to an individual psyche but also to a republic, in which, ideally, conflicts and barriers are reduced, and internal constituents are intermixed and knitted together, communicating freely. Those who previously may have been denied full participation are accepted and treated as equal. The whole, rather than opposing and obstructing itself, losing the productive contributions of excluded elements, instead can work with all its powers in unison most effectively. Let us now examine how Plato, by comparing the individual soul to a republic (a city or polis), elaborated an understanding of this ideal internal state, along with the difficulties in achieving it.

## Plato's Republic: Justice as the Healthy Ordering of the Soul

Analogously to virtue and happiness for an individual, it is generally asserted that the ultimate good for a political body (for the ancient Greeks, the polis, or city) is justice. But what exactly is justice? It appears to require a certain set of understandings, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in the citizens as individuals. That is, the individual citizens must have justice as an internal form or organization of their psyches, ie, they must "be just".

Some thinkers, such as the sophist, Thrasymachus, however, have argued that it is perfect injustice that will bestow upon an individual the greatest possible profit, power, pleasure, public esteem, and happiness[30]. All this can be obtained by individuals exercising sufficient "strength" through such nefarious

means as dishonesty, lawlessness, robbery, intimidation, violence, and hypnotic persuasion of the masses. There are many historical exemplars of perfectly-unjust people such as Thrasymachus described who have become "successful" tyrants. History likewise tells of many perfectly just people who have been slandered, robbed, tortured, and murdered for being just. Glaucon, asks: Why then should we prefer justice?

The question of which is better, justice or injustice, depends upon the kind of profit being considered. Perhaps unjust actions, even those that maximize material profit, can be shown most to damage the soul, while activities that are just, even those that are materially unprofitable, can be shown most to benefit the soul. If benefitting the soul is proven the profit that is truest and most valuable, (happiness, the ultimate human good, being a state or ordering of the soul), then being just, activity shaping the soul toward that harmonious state, would emerge as the best life. For Plato, knowledge of the soul has become requisite for knowledge of justice.

Can we prove that justice is a good for its own sake, not merely as a means to some external end? Glaucon demands of Socrates to explain "What power justice has all alone by itself when it is in the soul--- dismissing its (external) wages and consequences[31]?" He already accepts that justice is a state, idea, form, or ordering of the soul. What else could one mean by referring to its being "in the soul"? Immediately implicit in his question, then, is an understanding that a soul may be well-ordered or disordered. The soul cannot be anything simple and immutable. It must be complex, of parts in relation to one another, the arrangement of which may shift, opening it to the possibility of change for better or worse. The soul may be "reformed".

With mathematical clarity, Glaucon presents an argument believed by the many, a theory of the origins of political arrangement: "Doing injustice is naturally good, and suffering injustice bad…[32]", from which a reasonable social contract is formed "neither to do injustice, nor to suffer it." Justice, then, emerges as a mean, a compromise. Seen cynically---the view of Thrasymachus--- justice, through law, perverts nature by insisting on a kind of equality between people. None will suffer injustice, while nature otherwise would permit the stronger to pursue his own interests at the expense of others, freely if unjustly.

Glaucon tells the story of the Ring of Gyges, by which a man could become invisible and get away with anything, showing how even a just person would revert to injustice, his natural state, if external oversight, convention, and law were removed[33]. All moral restraint abolished, one could then be "as a god among humans"; the gods have no need for justice. The story implies that only the fear of external punishment motivates one to be just. Justice is a good only in public, where one wants the reputation of being just. Glaucon presses the question: what would be the benefit of justice for a person alone, when he is in private, to himself, without regard to the material, public, or external consequences? We will need to consider the primary effects of being just or unjust in the soul.

Socrates reminds us that to reply adequately to Glaucon's challenge, we would need first to discover what justice is, and how it comes to be in the soul. Since the form of the individual soul is too small to make out its articulations,

we might look at an expanded version, the city, in order to see the form and genesis of justice most clearly. He thus introduces the magnificent, sweeping insight, of which the rest of the dialogue is an elaboration, the idea that justice (what it is, its "eidos", shape, or form) is the same in a just man as in a just city. Both the individual psyche and the city itself would be governed and reformed, intrapsychically or politically, by looking to the same model or idea.

But is this analogy valid? Is the "form itself of justice" truly the same both in the individual and in the city? One chief support for this premise lies in the observation that the forms and affections in a city derive in the first place from what is in the souls of individuals. We say from direct observation, for example, that a city is courageous, wise or temperate. From where else could these traits arise, except from the courage, wisdom and temperance of the individuals who compose it? Socrates finds it "quite necessary for us to agree that the very same forms and dispositions as are in the city are in each of us[34]."

For the city to be ruled justly, we seek the best organization of the relationships among the different classes: the desirous craftsman-mercantile, the military or spirited, and the intelligently ruling executive, by which the city as a whole will deal both with itself and with other cities most effectively. By analogy, the just man or woman will attempt most fully to reconcile the differing functional constituents within, such as the desirous and the reasonable functions, so that his soul may become simple and sympathetic, less divided against him or herself, less conflicted. Competency in an individual requires significant collaboration of the soul with itself. Justice emerges as the salubrious ordering of the soul, the excellence of the soul for its specific work, "managing, ruling, deliberating… living[35]."

In our discussion of various ways that psychoanalysis may benefit a person, we have argued in effect that it helps an individual put her soul in order, so that she arrives at a just and harmonious arrangement among its inner constituencies, maintaining appropriate ratios and proportions, the whole becoming most unified, integrated, and effective[36]. But while the parts are harmonized, they are not obliterated. Each has its own "expertise", its distinctive function which may have been been subsumed into the whole, but which still remains necessary. For both the individual and the city, justice requires developing and maintaining the distinct functions as each separately attends to its own concern. "For each of us too, the one within whom each of the parts minds its own business will be just and mind his own business[37]." Most importantly, the desirous or spirited-impetuous parts should not usurp the ruling executive functions, which properly belong to the rationally judicious part.

Wisdom, moderation, and justice in both the private citizen and in the city as a whole are thus due to the same thing. There remains the question, though, about whether such a consistently harmonious arrangement can ever be perfectly achieved. Socrates is realistic about human nature. The desires, "most of the soul in each… filled with the so called pleasures of the body, may become big and strong… and attempt to enslave and rule what is not appropriately ruled by its class and subvert one's entire life[38]." A man who lets

himself become corrupted by excessively striving for pleasure, wealth, fame, or power permits the ruling part of himself to be unduly influenced by the desirous part. Reason is "the little part" that is potentially overwhelmed by the desires. Yet, "it possesses within it the knowledge of that which is beneficial for each part, and for the whole composed of the community of these three parts[39]." Moderation, "the friendship and accord of these parts," is the agreement among the three that the calculating part ought to rule. Socrates allows that there could be other parts too, but in any case, the perfectly just man, if one can exist, "binds them together and becomes entirely one from many, moderate and harmonized[40]."

What truly concerns a person, what is most "one's own", lies within himself. The phrase, "minding one's own business" can refer both to being just in one's relations with others, but also to attending to what is one's own and truest interest, an internal state of one's soul. The external manifestations, just actions, bring about a just order within, balance and friendship with oneself, for, as Aristotle asserted, actions produce and maintain an internal condition and character. It may take much effort to reform the soul through practice, but justice is something that can be acquired, just as injustice can be banished[41].

As in a city, injustice intrapsychically is the greatest evil, for it consists in increased conflict and faction, "meddling, interference, and rebellion of a part of the soul against the whole[42]." No one knowingly would want to have injustice in his soul, that is, to have his soul so configured. As Glaucon put it, "If life doesn't seem livable with the body's nature corrupted… will it then be livable when the nature of that very thing by which we live is confused and corrupted…[43]?" Vice and injustice are intrinsically unhappy states of the soul and the city alike. The unjust man may go undetected and "enjoy" the external rewards of his unjust acts without punishment, but ultimately, he must live with himself.

Conversely, if justice is the greatest good, then everyone who recognizes that fact will want "to be" just, that is, to have his soul so configured. For one most possesses what one is. The surest possession of the good is to be good. This cannot be taken away unless one is persuaded or forced to be otherwise, but no one would ever willingly make himself worse[44].

Justice thus has emerged as equivalent to the goal of psychoanalysis: the well-ordered, balanced, and harmonious integration of the whole soul by both conscious and unconscious activity of what Freud called "the ego", which, while allowing their vibrant life, has mastered and ordered all the psychic constituents. "Where id was, ego shall be[45]." Justice, the outcome of a successful psychoanalysis, is not arbitrary, but according to nature.

## The Dismissal and Rediscovery of Classical Roots

We might wonder how the foundational contributions of Plato and Aristotle to psychoanalysis have gone underappreciated. Some writers have attempted to "interpret" both the work and personality of Aristotle's teacher, Plato, through a psychoanalytic lens. Thus, Charles Hanly wondered about the extent to which "unconscious ideas and fantasies …play(ed) a part in motivating Plato[46]." He wrote, "Plato's idea of intellectual

activity seems to be shaped in part by repressed conflicts…Plato grounds his philosophical dialectics in a partially sublimated, homosexual relationship between mentor and pupil…It can be assumed that Plato's views on the censorship of literature were formed in part by the work of his superego…In this displacement to Glaucon, we come upon the unconscious irony. Plato says, without knowing that he has said it, what he states should never be said."

Likewise, referring to Socrates's arguments later in The Republic, Harry Blinkman wrote, "Plato considered poetry and indeed any other form of liberated emotional expression as subversive[47]." Plato's "view of the world was seriously skewed by his personal neurosis." He attributed to Plato a "wish to abolish the family as an institution," and cited Bennet Simon, who "suggests that Plato was personally plagued by primal scene fantasies, … contempt for heterosexuality and… mistrust of the family."

For those seeking serious study of Plato, such writings are bound to be a disappointment. In "psychoanalyzing" the philosopher, these authors failed to acknowledge the obvious fact that they had no clinical data required to substantiate such conjectures. Moreover, even if true, their psychological speculations would say nothing about the meaning, validity, or importance of the arguments made in the dialogues, which stand for themselves. Both writers confused the dramatic figure, Socrates, with the real person, Plato. In his certainty that Plato did not know what he said, Hanly ignored the fact that Plato was a dramatist writing dialogue for distinct characters with differing opinions, none of whom were named Plato. Their criticism is analogous to attributing to Shakespeare---and drawing psychoanalytic conclusions about him from--- the sentiment expressed by Macbeth: "Life's but…a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Just as egregiously, Blinkman fails to see the immense irony implanted in The Republic's explicitly hypothetical frame: Socrates in effect is saying, "If we want in our speech to construct a city founded exclusively to manifest perfect justice alone, in isolation from all other considerations, this is how it would look. Actually to establish such a city would be next to impossible, nor would it necessarily be desirable, as the idea of perfect justice involves intrinsic tensions. Other needs inevitably also demand a voice. Much as we might wish for perfect equality, people inevitably are born differing in their natural endowments and into differing familial, social, and economic circumstances, unequally advantaged. They fall in love irrationally, and naturally want what is best for "their own" family, even at the expense of others". Perhaps the best we can hope for is equality before the law. We might well prefer to live with some degree of injustice in order to preserve the life of poetry, eros, and family relations. As Allan Bloom has written, in showing the necessary impossibilities and absurdities of a utopianism that depends upon reforming human nature, Plato's Republic "is the greatest critique of political idealism ever written[48]."

To cite only one more example, consider how Stephen Reid discussed the Apology. Reid wrote that Socrates "embody(s) values and commit(s) acts which we would be ashamed to acknowledge as ours …Socrates' message is

that (the idle youth of the city) should mock their parents and educators…Masked by a studied humility, (Socrates had a) supreme egotism manifested equally in self-love and in a marked disinterest in the welfare of others… a conscience devoid of any real moral obligation… It is antisocial in the purest possible way… But that conscience… is at the heart both of the mystery of Socrates' enduring power over the Athenian youth and of the innocent love and admiration he has elicited from Jaspers, Fromm, and countless others[49]."

Of the founders of Western civilization, those of equal weight to Plato can be counted on the fingers of one hand, yet critics such as those cited above assume they understand the matters under discussion better than he, or that the substance simply doesn't matter. They assume they can "psychoanalyze" a philosopher who died nearly 2400 years ago, about whom little can be known. They fail seriously to study the text on its own terms, missing the thoughtfulness embedded in every word, the complexities of its drama and arguments, its intentional ironies and profound insights.

On the other hand, so serious a thinker as Friedrich Nietzsche has questioned the underlying premises of philosophers in a manner not at odds with psychoanalysis; in fact, Nietzsche can be seen as another, if contrasting, precursor to psychoanalysis[50]. He wonders if the philosophers' "will to truth" may not derive from the "will to deception", just as selfless deeds may derive out of selfishness[51]. The "drive to knowledge" of philosophers may be a displacement or disguise for "another drive" which employs understanding "as a mere instrument"[52]. Even the vaunted subject that freely wills and chooses to be guided by rationality may be misunderstood as a unitary "I". (Of course, Plato's Republic also questions the unity of the "I"). For Nietzsche, it is perhaps erroneous to assume even "that there must necessarily be something that thinks," for maybe it is not "I" who thinks, but "it"[53]. The very concept of "psyche" or "soul", and the assumption that "thinking" must have a subject who performs the act, may result merely from the seduction of grammar[54]. Nietzsche is completely consistent with psychoanalysts' observation "that a thought comes when 'it' wishes, and not when 'I' wish[55]. It seems likely that Freud and his followers must have been at least indirectly influenced by Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil, written in 1882, only thirteen years before Freud's first book of psychoanalysis.

By contrast with Hanly, Blinkman, and Reid, though, a number of published psychoanalysts have recognized the great philosophers' contributions. For example, Jacques Lacan, in discussing the transpositions of internal objects of desire, wrote, "The recognition of objects and of the ego itself must be subjected to constant revision in an endless dialectical process. Just such a process was involved in the Socratic Dialogue: whether it dealt with science, politics, or love, Socrates taught the masters of Athens to become what they must by developing their awareness of the world and themselves through 'forms' which were constantly redefined[56]." Likewise, Edward Harcourt, sees much of psychoanalysis as moral philosophy, and linked Freud's ethical thinking to Plato and Aristotle, who asserted that to possess virtue is to be healthy; doing the right thing is a necessary part of health[57].

Jonathan Lear[58] also in recent decades has made major contributions toward correcting the long history of what he's called "a repression of a tradition" by the field of psychoanalysis, working toward our "inherit(ing) the tradition in a fresh way." His depiction of the Republic and its unified grasp of both the individual and the city in one conception seems generally compatible with the views presented here. Going beyond the description of individual psychic structure as analogous to that of the city, he asserts that for Plato, the city is responsible "for the very constitution of our psyches."[59] Recall that according to Aristotle, we are social animals by nature. Lear points out that we are endowed with what he calls "a capacity to internalize cultural influences." Parents act as the proximal medium for the transmission of their culture to their children, eg, in teaching and sharing myths, songs and rituals; their children transmit what they internalize to the next generation. Lear says, "At stake is the shape and content of the human psyche….The social-cultural world is the joint externalization of the psyches of those who live within it….an enlargement and reflection of the structure of the psyches..." As Gerard M. Gallucci put it, "For Plato, the nature of the soul is intrinsically a political matter[60]."

Regarding the question of how we should live, Cunningham acknowledges a revival of "virtue ethics" in the 20th century, its chief principle being Aristotle's notion that rationality can guide self-training toward such virtues as courage, temperance, etc.[61] "Virtue" thus emerges again as what Aristotle called "activity of the soul in accordance with reason." The central assumption is that what determines the human good is human nature, but, as mentioned, in modern times the universality and permanence of Aristotle's "human nature" has been questioned, and thus the paradigm of what "by nature" constitutes virtue and happiness grows uncertain. We may aim for "moral wisdom" by acting in accordance with our conception of a good life, but we must contend with what has been called "the fragility of goodness" in the skeptical and tempestuous currents of modernity.

## Conclusion:

I have argued that Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions regarding the structure and functioning of the human psyche are relevant to and compatible with those of psychoanalysis, and find Plato's description of the isomorphism between the individual and the city to be an enlightening precursor to psychoanalytic structural and object-relations theories. The process and goals of a Platonic dialogue appear to be largely consistent with those of psychoanalysis.

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