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THE CAVE REVISITED

In 1962[1] I offered an analysis of the Line and Cave which (1) maintained that the four main divisions of each are parallel and (2) interpreted the three stages of ascent in the Cave allegory as representing the three stages in Plato's educational programme: music and gymnastic, mathematics and dialectic. At that time a major portion of my task was to counter arguments which purported to show that the Line and Cave could not be parallel. The present situation is quite different since recent writers, for the most part, not only take the four main divisions of the Cave as parallel to those of the Line,[2] but also accept the restriction of the Cave allegory to moral and mathematical education as a crucial step in the establishing of this fact. This last move, which is clearly in harmony with the form and content of the *Republic*, enables us to allow for the ordinary unenlightened man to be at the bottom level of the Cave without our having to suggest that he confuses the shadows of visual objects with their originals, which could well be the case if the Cave were taken to represent all sense perception as such.[3]

Despite fairly general agreement on these basic points of interpretation there remains, however, a wide divergence of opinion as to the significance of the various levels of education or moral awareness portrayed by the Cave. In keeping with several recent papers on this topic I shall focus my attention on the bottom two stages of this allegory: the state (C_1)[4] of the prisoners viewing shadows on the cave wall and that (C_2) of the released prisoners, still in the cave, but turned around and looking at the puppets which cast these shadows.

The interpretation which I offered in my earlier paper was that the prisoners watching the shadows on the cave wall represented the ordinary unenlightened moral consciousness, due in no small part to the influence of the poets and sophists and to be characterized as a state of false belief. The converted prisoners who, in contrast, see the originals of these shadows, have made an important step forward in the realm of belief or opinion (*doxa*) and this is to be regarded as the attainment of true belief on moral matters – the degree of enlightenment to be gained by the first stage of Plato's educational process, music and gymnastic. I suggest there can be no doubt of the simplicity and straightforwardness of this account for there is general agreement that the two stages of progress outside the cave, which represent achievements made through the use of the intellect, must, if the parallel with the Line is to be maintained, signify the insights gained through the practice of mathematics (C_3) and dialectic (C_4). We are then left with an advance within the realm of belief and one Platonic educational activity as a candidate, music (and gymnastic), the very one which is designed to give true belief, but not knowledge, on moral issues. The question remains,

[1] John Malcolm, 'The Line and the Cave', *Phronesis* 7 (1962), 38–45.

[2] That is to say they accept the parallelism in principle. I hope to show that, in several cases, they endanger it in practice.

[3] J. E. Raven, *Plato's Thought in the Making* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 171, argues that the Line and Cave cannot be parallel because of this problem.

[4] I shall designate the four main divisions of the Cave as C_1, C_2, C_3, C_4 and those of the Line as L_1, L_2, L_3, L_4. In each case the numbering begins with the lowest division – the prisoners chained viewing the shadows on the wall of the cave and the section of the Line comprising copies (shadows, reflections, etc.) of sense objects.

of course, whether this reading, despite its *prima facie* attractiveness, can withstand critical examination.

As a first move in its favour let me say that I do not believe one can successfully challenge the contention that Plato would regard false, or very inadequate, beliefs as copies of true beliefs. This could, indeed, be seen as an application of the general Platonic principle that truth and being, or reality, vary concomitantly (e.g. *Rep.* 585c) and so false things (including opinions) may be viewed as copies or imitations of true ones. At *Rep.* 586b, for example, the inferior, or false, pleasures are presented as images or copies of true pleasures. I find the best direct evidence for my interpretation, however, in a later dialogue, the *Sophist*, where false opinions are explicitly described as images in a passage (234 cd; cf. 264 cd) which has reminded many of the Cave. Here the Eleatic Stranger, having given the example of the painter who may induce slow children to mistake his imitations for the corresponding real things, suggests that there may be an art of words, that of the sophist, which, though it offers (spoken) images, i.e. falsities, may persuade young people to take them for truths. The result is that when these people grow older they will reject their earlier opinions (*doxas*) as these will have been completely overturned by the facts of experience. In going from image to corresponding reality they are going from a false belief to a true one.

The primary way, however, in which I wish to support my understanding of the relation of C_1 to C_2 is by contrasting it with the views of four recent writers[5] who are, for the most part, proceeding from positions with whose basic presuppositions I am in fundamental sympathy. I shall suggest that my own account shows to advantage in that it allows for much that is of value in these alternatives while avoiding certain unfortunate consequences to which they are subject. At the end of the paper I shall attempt to meet an explicit objection to my thesis from one of these scholars.

Let me begin with Tanner[6] who (p. 86) takes the prisoners at C_1 to have been bound by the methods of contemporary Greek education, primarily music – the study of the poets and the playing of harp or lyre. He supports this claim by showing how Plato regards Homer and other poets as imitators of outward shapes or images. This fits very well with the Cave allegory, and we may readily concur with the contention that those subjected to the traditional study of music will be at C_1. It is not so apparent, however, what Tanner will have at C_2. On p. 87 he contrasts the boys studying the harp at C_1 with the *virtuosi* of the concert hall at C_2. (Is this meant to imply that Homer was not a master poet, or, to preserve a more precise parallel, that a master reciter of his works would be at C_2?) On p. 88 we find: 'The prisoner's initial experience in being turned to face the fire and the objects on the wall represents the study and observation of actual things in nature.' But when we come to his explanation of the Cave in terms of the ideal educational curriculum for the Guardians (p. 89), an approach with which I am in complete agreement, C_1 is taken to represent music while C_2 involves mensuration and arithmetic, studies which may stimulate thought (*dianoia*) to transcend the limitations of sense. But this latter activity is much better placed at C_3, since it goes beyond the cave (521 d–522 c) and corresponds directly with the conditions described at L_3 (510 b–e).[7] Furthermore, on Tanner's interpretation (p.

[5] These, in the order in which they are considered, are: R. G. Tanner, '*Dianoia* and Plato's Cave', *CQ* N.S. 20 (1970), 81–91; J. S. Morrison, 'Two Unresolved Difficulties in the Line and Cave', *Phronesis* 22 (1977), 212–31; C. P. Sze, '*Eikasia* and *Pistis* in Plato's Cave Allegory', *CQ* N.S. 27 (1977), 127–138; J. R. S. Wilson, 'The Contents of the Cave', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, supp. vol. 2 (1976), 117–27.

[6] See footnote 5 for the reference here and similarly in the case of the three subsequent articles to be discussed.

[7] See p. 62 below for an exposition of the standard parallelism between Line and Cave.

89), C_1 must include both those bound by the deficiencies of music as actually practised and those benefited by the bowdlerized discipline of the ideal curriculum. I believe a reading which distinguishes these states would be more in keeping with the Cave as an avowed portrayal (514a) of the various degrees of enlightenment of the soul.

The second person to be considered is Morrison who (p. 227) takes the puppets at C_2 to symbolize 'moving *eide* [forms]', the common characteristics of physical and moral particulars, whereas the shadows at C_1 are the moral and physical particulars 'which we accept at face-value in our uneducated state'. Since these immanent characteristics, or moving *eide*, are to be regarded as an integral part of Plato's metaphysics in the *Republic* we would then have these three ontological levels: the separate Forms, the immanent forms, and the particulars.

The first problem to be noted is that Morrison does not follow the simple parallelism between the Line and Cave where the Line gives the various ontological levels literally and the Cave shows them by analogy. That is to say: (1) The Forms at L_4 are represented by the real physical objects at C_4. (2) Particulars, being copies of the Forms at L_4, are in the realm of the intelligible at L_3 since they are used, for example in mathematics, to stimulate thought. They are represented in the Cave at C_3 by reflections, or copies, of the objects at C_4.[8] (3) The particulars at L_2, now treated merely as sense objects, though still copies of the Forms at L_4, are represented by the images at C_2 – which are copies of the real objects at C_4. (4) The particulars given at L_2 have their shadows at L_1 and these are represented at C_1 by the shadows of the images given at C_2. Morrison's interpretation, however, does not allow for this, owing to the fact that (pp. 222–3) the items of L_2 are the moving *eide* or common characteristics and at L_1 we have their instances. So the Line must be forced into allegorical labour, with the particulars of L_2 symbolizing immanent forms and their shadows at L_1 symbolizing the instances of these forms, and the Cave becomes an allegory of an allegory for it symbolizes not what the Line states but what it, in turn, symbolizes.

Another questionable feature of his reading is that it takes the threefold ontological gradation of original, copy and copy of copy to stand for separate Form, immanent form and particular respectively. But this makes a particular the copy of a copy of a transcendent Form and not, as is Plato's custom, its copy or reflection. The standard instance of Platonic paradigmatism is where the separate Form is the model and the particular its imperfect copy, one step removed, as it were, from the original. This does not encourage us to regard an intermediate immanent form, common to the many particulars which resemble, or copy, the transcendent counterpart, as something which, in turn, the particulars also copy.

As a result of these considerations one may well ask whether Plato does in fact introduce the moving *eide* into the *Republic* and, if so, whether they can be assigned to the realm of the visible. To affirm the first possibility Morrison refers us (pp. 216–18) to *Republic* 476a and 402bc. The former passage, albeit a vexed one, speaks of the Forms, each in itself one, appearing as many because of their communion with actions, bodies, etc. This leads to the contrast between the many beautifuls of sense, beloved of the lovers of sights and sounds, and Beauty itself. It cannot be said to give us a multiplicity of moving *eide*, but only many instances, many things which share in the one Form (476b–d). The second passage, 402bc, is where Plato stresses that no one will be truly educated (*mousikos*) until he recognizes the forms of temperance, courage and other moral qualities. Since Plato goes on to speak of the things these forms are *in* it may be prudent to take him as dealing here with immanent qualities only. It would

[8] The 'mathematicals' are often introduced in L_3, to be symbolized at C_3.

appear to be less prudent, however, to suggest, on the basis of this passage alone, that immanent forms are of prime ontological importance in the *Republic*, that is, on a par with transcendent Forms and sense particulars. But, even if we grant this implausibility and give them a chance to be represented in the Line and Cave, Morrison must still place these immanent forms in the realm of the visible and not in that of the intelligible. He believes that the *Timaeus* helps put them there.

At *Timaeus* 52a Plato presents us with a threefold distinction between (1) the Form, (2) a second type of thing, described as homonymous with the Form and similar to it and (3) Space. The second sort is not named, but is characterized further as having come into being, always in motion and an object of the senses, to be grasped by belief (*doxa*) with the aid of sensation. Morrison (p. 219) takes this second type to be the immanent form or 'moving *eidos*', but the passage does not warrant such an inference. The entity homonymous with the Form, and having the other characteristics mentioned, can just as easily be the sense particular as the common character. He has, therefore, to base his claim on his reading (p. 218) of *Timaeus* 49d ff. where Plato asks us not to see the elements, for example fire, as independently existing objects but as qualities of the Receptacle which admits them in a way somehow analogous to gold taking on various shapes. But, again, there is no conclusive evidence from this much-disputed passage that these qualities are to be understood as universal rather than particular.[9]

At *Timaeus* 50cd, as at 52a, Plato lists three kinds (*gene*) of thing: the separate Forms, the Receptacle in which they are copied or mirrored and their copies which, in turn, constitute the world of Becoming (*to gignomenon*) or sense experience. As we saw, Morrison does not interpret these copies as individual reflections of the Forms, or individual sense particulars, but as immanent forms or common characteristics. What then of their individual instances? Morrison cannot deny they have such, for in that case he would have nothing with which to populate C_1 in the Cave allegory and his distinction between C_1 and C_2 would be imperiled. He has, therefore, to introduce a fourth classification, not mentioned by Plato in the *Timaeus*, but presumably allowed for by his account there. This is, according to Morrison, the 'end product'. I quote from pp. 218–19: 'The end product is not included in the analysis of kinds because it is not a kind but an individual particular. *Τὸ γιγνόμενον* [Becoming] is not the end product, it is a moving *eidos* which is reflected in the particular.' I do not find this reasoning convincing. A distinction between Forms and particulars is as much a distinction between two kinds of thing as is one between separate and immanent Forms – unless one assumes that Plato is only classifying kinds of things that are not particular. But that gratuitous supposition is precluded by the fact that Space, classified by Plato as a kind, is, according to Morrison himself (p. 218), the only particular thing. Since, then, there is no sufficient reason to introduce immanent forms or exclude particulars, why not follow the simpler course and maintain that if Plato, in the *Timaeus*, believes there are such things as sense

[9] Since I believe I have shown that Morrison's thesis is in serious trouble even if we were to grant him the point here at issue, I shall not go into a lengthy examination of the relevant passage, which would introduce an inappropriate imbalance into this article, but shall content myself with this brief, and perhaps cavalier, intimation that the status of the qualities, or images, is open to question. Morrison, however, cannot regard the matter as unresolved, for the presence of immanent forms here is necessary, though by no means sufficient, for his interpretation which is not strengthened by having to stand on so controversial a base.

A bibliography on this topic is to be found in Richard D. Mohr, 'The Gold Analogy in Plato's *Timaeus* (50a4–b5)', *Phronesis* 23 (1978), 250.

particulars, he has no cause to ignore them, but would assign them to the sphere of Becoming?

We are forced to conclude that the *Timaeus* cannot be decisive in locating immanent forms in the realm of the visible. If this is so, Morrison cannot place the moving *eide* at C_2. This fact, together with the difficulties which would result if they could be so situated, leads me to believe that there is ample justification for regarding his exposition as inadequate.

I now turn to an interpretation with whose basic point of departure I am in complete sympathy. Sze (pp. 127–30) gives us an extremely clear and convincing exposition of the fundamental framework within which a successful account of the Cave allegory must be found. Given that the visual (sense) world portrayed by the cave in the allegory stands for the realm of opinion, the key problem, as she puts it (p. 128), is that of 'maintaining a distinction between the two mentalities within the realm of opinion' by 'showing that Plato intends two distinct classes of objects of opinion comparable to the sharp distinction between shadows and objects' (p. 127). She calls attention (p. 129) to the significant fact that the Cave, concerned with the education of the philosopher, is followed by a discussion of the specific course of studies. All this points directly towards the reading I favour, but Sze understands the difference in the world of opinion between C_1 and C_2 as due to distinct *sources* of opinion (p. 130). She sees (pp. 130–4) the prisoners at C_1 as the multitude perverted by the poets and limited by the oral poetic tradition. In contrast, the turning at C_2 to view the images represents the teaching of the sophists – an effort 'to overcome the limits of understanding imposed by a view of reality based on insight and poetry' (p. 134).

The first problem with such a suggestion is that it denies that the progression in the realm of opinion from C_1 to C_2 would give us something that Plato was satisfied with even as opinion. It cannot, therefore, be seen as part of *his* educational programme but must, as Sze admits (p. 130), be viewed from his perspective as a 'false start'. Indeed she goes so far as to acknowledge (p. 137): 'Though it represents an advance, the vision of originals, if totally realized, would present an obstruction in the path toward the Good.'

The view that the step to C_2 represents a potential danger rather than a positive advance is not an easy reading of the Cave allegory. In the light of this initial difficulty we would need *very* strong evidence that Plato thought the sophists to be clearly superior to the poets as sources of moral opinion. But the testimony of the *Republic* is indeed to the contrary. Sze suggests (p. 135) that, in Book VI, 'Plato appears to consider the sophists' influence as private teachers to be less blameworthy than that of the mob'. But this does not do credit to the understanding of the sophists; it only reflects their lack of power. If (493a–c) they can only reinforce the opinions of the many, and hence are like the keeper of a great beast who follows its moods and desires, knowing not whether these are good or bad, just or unjust, then they are hardly better than the poets who, unedited, do not improve the multitude. Poetry, moreover, is retained by Plato in his ideal curriculum. Properly supervised, it can produce the appropriate moral order in those who do not yet have reason (401d). There is no suggestion that rhetoric and eristic, the *forte* of the sophist, are in any way an advance over this.

I submit that what is needed is an interpretation which allows for both the poets and the sophists to be influencing those at C_1, while C_2 is reserved for a higher stage of enlightenment possible within the realm of opinion.

The last view to be considered is that of Wilson who, in my judgement correctly,

restricts the difference between C_1 and C_2 to the area of opinion (*doxa*) on moral matters. The images at C_2 are to be understood as representing moral qualities in the soul and their shadows and reflections at C_1 as standing for these moral qualities manifested in outer appearance or behaviour (p. 119). He refers us (p. 122) to 443c where Plato asserts that the principle that each person 'does his own' is an *eidolon* or image of the truth, which is that justice is not external behaviour, but inner harmony of soul.

Wilson then offers evidence to support his contention that Plato, in the *Republic*, does speak of outer behaviour as an image or reflection of the inner self. His 'most striking instance' is 402a–d, but I do not find his reading of the passage to be conclusive. At 402bc[10] Plato maintains that we cannot be truly educated until we recognize the forms (*eide*) of temperance, courage, etc. and their images. The context seems to suggest that we understand this as the grasping of common moral qualities and their instances, be these bodily or spiritual (cf. the earlier example at 402ab of the letter and its instances). There is no compelling reason to see here a contrast between inner qualities and outer behaviour. Wilson also appeals to 586b where Plato describes the pleasures of the body as images of the pleasures of the soul. At this point, however, Plato is not opposing external behaviour to inner spiritual quality, but is separating the less real or true pleasures, belonging to the lowest part of the soul, from the truer and more real satisfactions to be gained when reason guides (586c–e).

I believe the common factor in the passages where originals, be they forms or not, are contrasted with their images or copies, is the emphasis on the truth or reality of the original as opposed to the relative lack of such in the image. This is the aspect I stress in my interpretation of the relation of C_2 to C_1 which takes the originals (the puppets) to be the objects of true belief and their copies to be the objects of false belief. This view will accommodate those cases, in the realm of opinion, where an undue concentration on externals deflects us from the more true, or real, to the less so.

Wilson (p. 124) confines the whole Cave allegory, and not only C_1 and C_2, to the apprehension of moral qualities. He makes the interesting suggestion (p. 125) that, whereas at C_2 we are shown the Socratic method of the early dialogues and *Republic* I, at C_3 we are presented with the more constructive method, much dependent on the use of images and analogies, which obtains in *Republic* II–X. Let me first say that it is puzzling to find the very passages (402a–d; 443c), which were used as evidence for the claim that the puppets at C_2 represented inner moral qualities, to have become part of the section assigned to C_3. Apprehension of Justice through an image, as at 443cd, is now placed out of the cave at C_3. This makes it very difficult to understand the position of someone who has moved from a concern with externals (C_1) to see, by means of the imagery of Book IV, that justice is a well-ordered state of soul. He cannot be failing to reach C_3 because of a reliance on Socratic dialectic for it, *ex hypothesi*, does not enter the picture. Does he then skip C_2 and go directly to C_3 with the result that the very section of the *Republic* which Wilson relies on to expound C_2 does not involve C_2 at all? Another problem arises here from the placing at C_2 of Socratic dialectic which is primarily an activity of thought and intellect, not sense. Its purpose is to enable its practitioners to give an account of their beliefs in contrast to those who lack this ability and who, represented as perceiving or acknowledging only particulars (*Rep.* 476b–d; cf. *Euthyphro* 6d) are labelled doxophilists in the *Republic*. Socratic dialectic – if, indeed, it is to be related to the Cave allegory at

[10] This is the same passage to which Morrison appeals (p. 62 above) for evidence that Plato introduced immanent forms or 'moving *eide*' into the *Republic*.

all – should not be placed in the cave, the region of *doxa*, but in the upper world which symbolizes the realm of intellect. It should be, moreover, at the higher level thereof (C_4), the domain of dialectic, since it does not appear to differ essentially in method from the so-called ascending dialectic (511 b), the first stage of the Platonic dialectic as presented in the *Republic*.

I also find Wilson's restriction of the Cave allegory to the apprehension of moral qualities unfortunate in that it excludes the study of mathematics and thereby undermines the parallelism between Line and Cave. Mathematics is clearly found at L_3 and it would be necessary to have something in the Cave, preferably at C_3, to signify its study if a parallel reading is to be retained. I believe that Wilson could preserve his position on C_1 and C_2 without having to exclude mathematics from C_3. *Rep.* 532 bc states that the 'whole course of study in the arts' (clearly including mathematics) has the power to lead the soul to the contemplation of the best among realities just as in the allegory the eye was led up to the brightest visible object. Wilson (p. 127), however, divorces the study in the arts from the progress of the prisoners and claims that Plato is merely saying that mathematics can take one to the same place (C_3) by an alternative route and does not appear in the Cave at all. But this is not the most natural way to take the passage and, moreover, such an account sacrifices the unity of Line, Cave and subsequent educational programme.

Wilson is likely to reply that, though his view may include some unorthodox features, the version I am fostering will not do at all. As noted above (p. 61), in order to integrate the Cave with the educational system of the *Republic* I take the move from C_1 to C_2 to be the attainment of true belief, and true belief may be acquired through music and gymnastic.[11] I see the reaching of C_3 as due to the study of mathematics and C_4 as the area of dialectic. Wilson objects (p. 126) that to see music as involved in the turning from the shadows at C_1 to the images that cast them at C_2 'would imply that the children in the ideal polis began life as prisoners'. He continues: 'Furthermore the release described at 515c ff., with its dazzling and bewilderment and reluctance of the prisoner to advance cannot represent the educational system of the *Republic*.'

I quite agree that we ought not to assume that the children to be educated in the Ideal State have to spend a significant part of their lives imprisoned in false beliefs. I do not believe, however, that my interpretation involves this consequence although it was not formulated in a way which would have definitely precluded it. In an attempt to rectify this situation let me now stress that I take C_2 to be the degree of enlightenment of those who have true beliefs on moral matters. C_1, in contrast, represents the lesser degree possessed by those whose beliefs are mistaken. For Plato this is the vast majority of us. To advance from C_1 to C_2 would require, for such people,

[11] This means that I take the reference to the whole course of study of the arts at 532c which, *pace* Wilson, is symbolized in the Cave allegory, as including music and gymnastic. Wilson (p. 126) calls our attention to Bosanquet (Bernard Bosanquet, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* [London, 1895]) who suggests (p. 298) that it is just conceivable that music and gymnastic be comprised among the arts referred to. He notes the difficulty, revived by Wilson (p. 126), that Plato begins not with training in the shadows but with conversion from them. That is to say we would seem to have to suppose that those beginning music and gymnastic would have to be confirmed prisoners already. But, in contrast to Wilson, Bosanquet is aware that this point 'does not gravely affect his [Plato's] intention' – an insight I hope to confirm (p. 67 below). He does not, however, take the advance from C_1 to C_2 as that from false belief to true belief, but as a move from an uneducated consciousness 'sunk in mere association and superstition' to commonsense criticisms of customary associations (pp. 263–6). Bosanquet sees the images of justice at 517d as the realities of the commonsense world of practice, perhaps the actual laws of the state, and the shadows of these images as 'the interested and distorted representation of these in the pleaders' arguments' (p. 269).

a painful and bewildering conversion (cf. *Gorgias* 481 c). The children in the Ideal State, on the other hand, are not in the position of having to replace well-established false beliefs with true ones, and their attainment of C_2 need not be as discomforting as it would be for those who must be brought to see the deficiencies in their former convictions. Very young children may be regarded as being at a point where they can be directed to either C_1 or C_2. They have a natural inclination towards C_1 to which Plato calls attention at 519 b where he speaks of the bodily pleasures which, like leaden weights, turn the soul's vision downwards. These tendencies, unfortunately only reinforced by the prevailing faulty education, have the multitude fettered from childhood (514 a). In the Ideal State the children would reach C_2 without having to begin at C_1 but Plato, in order to show how far contemporary views as to the good and the value of the philosophic life are from this ideal, does not start his allegory from the position of a beginner in the ideal educational scheme, but from the actual situation as he saw it. In short, C_1 and the transition from C_1 to C_2 as described in the Cave do not apply to the children of the reformed society but to those who are not fortunate enough to have their advantages. C_2, the level of true belief, represents the degree of enlightenment that those privileged to follow the Platonic curriculum would get from music and gymnastic although they do not get there from C_1.

My view then commits one only to the thesis that you attain true belief if and only if you reach C_2. It does not imply either that you must use music to get there or that you must get there from C_1. It does, of course, imply that if you do go from C_1 to C_2 you have achieved true belief. Plato sees three possible levels of moral enlightenment or its lack: knowledge (C_4), true belief (C_2) and false belief (C_1). He wishes, in fact, to involve only the first two in his educational programme but, in order to show its superiority over contemporary practices, he includes all three in his allegory. As a result the transitions from C_3 to C_4 and from C_2 to C_3 are parts of the ideal curriculum, but that from C_1 to C_2 is not.

Now one may still find this result a little jarring, but it is not, I submit, of negative import, especially when compared to the consequences attendant on the alternatives I have considered, for they (1) sacrifice, albeit involuntarily, the parallelism between Line and Cave (Tanner, Wilson) or preserve it by making the Line in part allegorical (Morrison); (2) place the Socratic dialectic and/or the recognition of immanent forms in the realm of opinion (Morrison, Wilson); and (3) take the step from C_1 to C_2 to be a false start (Sze). In contrast, the reading I endorse, if defensible, avoids these deficiencies and approximates more closely to the ideal of a unified interpretation of Line, Cave and Ideal Curriculum.

Given that the burden of my paper is polemical, it may be helpful to try to summarize briefly my own account of the three levels of moral enlightenment, or lack thereof, which I mention above: knowledge (C_4), true belief (C_2) and false belief (C_1).

The most desirable position for someone – a statesman, say, who is wrestling with a complex political problem – would be that of having access to the Form of Justice and, perhaps, other allied Forms. Those who have insight into these Forms (plus, of course, an adequate grasp of the relevant facts) would, one assumes, by using these as paradigms, be able to apply the appropriate principles to the situation and not only determine the proper course of action but also be able to justify this by showing why what they propose is correct. Only people so equipped would be entitled to claim knowledge of what ought to be done. (I shall not get involved in the problems arising from the restriction of the objects of knowledge to Forms alone which Plato appears to favour in the *Republic*.)

In contrast to those with knowledge there are those with mere belief or opinion.

These fall into two categories: those with true belief (C_2) and those with false belief (C_1). Someone with true belief will have the correct opinion as to what ought to be done but will not be able to give any account or justify this opinion. His position is on a par with those who have been indoctrinated through music and gymnastic to have the proper attitudes on moral matters (*Rep.* 401e–402a, 429bc). Such people accept the authority of those with knowledge and do their duty without reasoning why. True opinion, as I see it, does not need to involve any examination of moral issues or critical discussion about what ought to be done. Hence C_2, the looking at the puppet show, does not involve critical inquiry be it in the Socratic mode or otherwise. Such activity is most easily placed, I submit, at C_4 in the realm of the intelligible and there in the ascending dialectic which is a prior state to the final systematic synthesis of moral knowledge based on insight into the moral Forms (see p. 66). I realize that one may well be engaged in rational argumentation without explicitly involving the Forms, but it is certainly not readily apparent what Plato would have made of this and I suggest that he means the steps of the Cave to relate to stages which he does explicitly discuss in the *Republic*.

The bottom section of the Cave represents the inadequate and false beliefs about moral questions. Since I have given evidence above (p. 61) for the contention that Plato took false beliefs to be images or copies of true beliefs I believe my interpretation to be true, but I do not mean to suggest that its implications are in all respects clear. For example, it is not obvious in what sense falsities are 'copies' of truths. When Plato (*Rep.* 520d) speaks of those who fight over shadows, thinking that holding public office is a great good, are we to say that they have a very faint perception of the good in that office-holding could, in certain circumstances, be desirable? Is the doctrine that pleasure is the good a dim discernment of the true belief that pleasure is often a good? Plato tells us (*Rep.* 517e) of shadows of justice and the images which cast those shadows. One may well note, however, that certain false beliefs about justice may resemble the true in a shadowy way whereas others might seem to have no such relation at all. There would appear to be a difference in kind between someone who believed falsely that excessive torture of the guilty was justified in a few cases and someone who thought it was right to torture the innocent.

I tend to believe that all one can say in this regard is that false beliefs about justice are still beliefs about justice and are distortions and misrepresentations of true beliefs about *it*. Granted that some false beliefs seem much closer to the true, this facet of our moral experience cannot be accounted for on Plato's analogy unless we suppose that some shadows flicker more faithfully than others on the wall of the cave.

The difference between C_1 and C_2 is then, on my interpretation, not that of unreflective acceptance of moral beliefs (C_1) vs. a more reflective stage (C_2) where these come under question. C_2 is an advance over C_1 simply because the beliefs there are *true*. A person at C_1, a sophist for example, may have much more argumentation at his disposal than a well-brought-up innocent at C_2, but he is further from the realities of the situation because his beliefs are *false*.

The ascent portrayed in the Cave Allegory would picture one either starting at C_1 with false belief and advancing to the true or, in the ideal educational situation, starting at C_2 (see pp. 66–7) with true beliefs inculcated by music and gymnastic. The next stage, C_3, the training in mathematics does not *per se* represent an advance in moral enlightenment but is a period of necessary training in abstract thinking preparatory to the critical examination of moral issues through dialectic at C_4 which, it is hoped, will result in knowledge – whatever its relation to justified true belief.

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