

WINE AND CATHARSIS OF THE EMOTIONS IN PLATO'S LAWS

Plato's views on tragedy depend in large part on his views about the ethical consequences of emotional arousal. In the *Republic*, Plato treats the desires we feel in everyday life to weep and feel pity as appetites exactly like those for food or sex, whose satisfactions are 'replenishments'. Physical desire is not reprehensible in itself, but is simply *non-rational*, not identical with reason but capable of being brought into agreement with it. Some desires, like that for simple and wholesome food, are in fact 'necessary' and approved by reason. Other appetites, like lust and gluttony, are 'unnecessary' and *anti-rational* in that they are actively opposed to reason. According to the *Republic*, the satisfaction of these 'unnecessary' desires inevitably strengthens the elements in the soul that oppose reason. The desire to weep at the theatre is treated in this dialogue as just such an anti-rational desire. Even a temporary indulgence in tragic pity and fear has a permanent deleterious effect on the soul, although it does not lead directly to any action.

This paper argues that a radically different psychological theory, with important aesthetic implications, appears in the discussion of wine-drinking in Books 1 and 2 of Plato's *Laws*.¹ Though this long passage has been much scorned and neglected,² it is of considerable philosophical importance. While in the *Republic* Plato condemns drunkenness and other anti-rational states, in the *Laws* he extols the benefits of a hypothetical 'fear drug' that could induce a temporary state of anti-rational terror and of wine to produce other anti-rational emotions and desires. Used correctly, Plato writes, these drugs can actually help to produce virtue. Though he still believes, as he did in the *Republic*, that emotions must be properly regulated in a virtuous person, he now thinks that deficiency of anti-rational emotion can be as harmful as excess. In certain circumstances, he argues, we can help to produce virtue by first temporarily

¹ For the *Republic* I follow the text of J. Burnet, *Platonis Opera* 4 (OCT 1902) and for the *Laws* that of E. des Places and A. Diès, *Platon, oeuvres complètes, XI–XII, les Lois* (Budé, Paris, 1951–6). Hereafter, these and the following works will be referred to by author's last name only: E. Barker, *Greek Political Theory* (1918, 5th ed., London, 1960); J. Bertier, *Mnésithée et Dieuchès* (Leiden, 1972); P. Boyancé, 'Platon et le vin', *BAGB*, 3rd ser., no. 4 (1951), 3–19; Y. Brès, *La Psychologie de Platon* (Paris, 1968); J. Croissant, *Aristote et les mystères* (Paris, 1932); E. England, *The Laws of Plato*, 2 vols. (Manchester and London, 1921); H. Görgemanns, *Beiträge zur Interpretation von Platons Nomoi, Zetemata* 25 (Munich, 1960); G. Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates* 3, 3rd ed. (London, 1875); A. Hentschke, *Politik und Philosophie bei Platon und Aristoteles* (Frankfurt, 1971); W. Jaeger, *Paideia* ii and iii, trans. G. Highet (Oxford, 1943–4); G. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City* (Princeton, N. J., 1960); H. North, *Sophrosyne* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966); T. Pangle, *The Laws of Plato* (New York, 1980); A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed., revised by J. Gould and D. Lewis (Oxford, 1968); J. Pigeaud, *La Maladie de l'âme* (Paris, 1981), pp. 477–503; L. Post, 'The Preludes to Plato's *Laws*', *TAPA* 60 (1929), 5–24; T. Robinson, *Plato's Psychology* (Toronto, 1970); R. Stalley, *An Introduction to Plato's Laws* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1983); T. Tracy, *Physiological Theory and the Doctrine of the Mean in Plato and Aristotle* (The Hague and Paris, 1969). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

² Stalley, p. 5, remarks that 'Many readers have found this section tedious'; Post, p. 16, views it as a device to 'entice the unsuspecting drunkard into hearing a sermon on temperance'. Among the few who see it as a serious and important psychological study is P.-M. Schuhl, 'Platon et l'idée d'exploration pharmaco-dynamique', *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* 43 (1950), 279–81.

and artificially increasing the anti-rational emotions, and then bringing order to them through a process of allopathic *catharsis*. The arousal of fear, Plato now believes, can be used to strengthen our bravery, and temporarily intensifying the passions and desires can help to produce self-control (*sôphrosynê*).

Plato's new psychological views have important aesthetic implications. The view taken in the *Laws* of emotional arousal in aesthetic situations is much more favourable than that taken in the *Republic*, and it led Plato to reconsider some of his ideas about tragedy. The *Laws* does not, however, contain the apology for imitative poetry asked for in *Republic* 10 (607d). Most tragic poetry is no more welcome in the second-best state of the *Laws* than in the ideal state of the *Republic*, because Plato continued to believe that a poet who is not also a philosopher or a servant of the laws cannot arouse emotions correctly.³ Though Plato's new psychology did not lead him to recall the banished poets, it could have helped open this possibility to Aristotle. *Catharsis* in the *Laws* may have a great deal to do with *catharsis* in the *Poetics*.

Plato's condemnation of poetry in *Republic* 10 is based in part on his negative views of the tragic emotions, pity and grief.⁴ One part of the soul, he writes, 'is starved for weeping and for wailing sufficiently and being filled, being by nature such as to desire these things. This is the part filled and pleased by the poets'. The poet harms the soul by causing 'that which is best in us' to 'let down its guard' so that we pity and praise the man who 'grieves unseasonably'. When poetry has 'fed and strengthened the pitying element' on others' experiences, 'it is not easy to restrain it in one's own sufferings' (*Rep.* 10.606a3–b8). Comedy and other forms of imitative poetry have emotional effects similar to those of tragedy: 'And concerning lust and anger and all the desires and pains and pleasures in the soul, which we say accompany every action of ours, poetic imitation has the same effect on us. It nourishes and waters the elements that should be dried up and makes them rule over us, when they should be ruled' (*Rep.* 606d1–7). If we welcome the 'sweetened Muse', 'pleasure and pain will be kings in the city' instead of reason (*Rep.* 607a5–8). Poetry, in sum, satisfies and strengthens the anti-rational element (*alogiston*) in the soul, 'that which leads us towards remembering our suffering and towards wailing' (*Rep.* 604d8–10), and weakens the element obedient to reason and law that bids us resist pain (*Rep.* 604a10–b7).

The psychological theory on which these passages are based is outlined in Plato's discussion of desires earlier in the *Republic*.⁵ In *Republic* 8.558d8–559c1 he distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary desires. The necessary desires, such as hunger for the food needed for health, are those that cannot be suppressed and whose satisfaction is beneficial to us. Unnecessary desires are those that can be entirely

³ That Plato did not substantially revise his views on poetry and art in the *Laws* is argued by many with very different points of view. See, for example, M. Partee, *Plato's Poetics* (Salt Lake City, 1981), esp. pp. 106–7; G. Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art* (Bonniere, 1966), p. 171; E. Schipper, 'Mimesis in the Arts in Plato's *Laws*', *JAAC* 22 (1963), 199–202; J. Tate, 'On Plato: *Laws* X 889CD', *CQ* 30 (1936), 48–54; R. Collingwood, 'Plato's Philosophy of Art', *Mind* 34 (1925), 167–8. Morrow, pp. 373–6, holds a different view.

⁴ For a more detailed account of Plato's views on the tragic emotions see my 'Plato's Greatest Accusation Against Poetry', *CJP*, suppl. v. 9 (1983), 39–62.

⁵ Some helpful recent discussions of Plato's account of the desires in the *Republic* are those of J. Cooper, 'Plato's Theory of Human Motivation', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1 (1984), 3–21; J. Gosling and C. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 97–128; J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 128–52; T. Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 191–248.

eradicated, or nearly so,⁶ and whose satisfaction either does no good or actually harms us. They include the glutton's desire for excessive quantities and varieties of food, which is harmful to body and soul (*Rep.* 559b8–c1). Plato believes that satisfaction, contrary to reason, of the unnecessary desires is a vicious act that has a lasting effect on the soul, strengthening and nourishing its anti-rational elements. Reason, Plato writes in Book 4 of the *Republic*, must always strictly control the anti-rational desires, lest the appetitive element in the soul 'by being filled with the so-called pleasures of the body and growing big and strong should fail to do its own work but instead attempt to enslave and rule that which it is not fitting for its kind to rule' (*Rep.* 4. 442a7–b2).

A metaphor illustrates this psychological theory. At *Rep.* 6.485d6–e1 Plato writes that 'whenever someone's desires strongly incline towards some one thing, we know that they are weaker for other objects, like a stream that has been channelled off in one direction'. For example, when someone's desires incline towards learning, the desire for physical pleasure is weakened.⁷ The metaphor implies that just as any diversion of water into one channel deepens that channel, and thus increases the tendency of a stream to flow in that direction, so even a temporary yielding to a particular kind of desire strengthens that desire permanently and weakens opposing desires. The 'channelled stream' theory also indicates, as Cornford writes, that 'only a limited quantity' of psychic energy is available and that virtue consists in the 'right distribution of the available energy'.⁸ What Plato seems to mean is that in a virtuous person all of the stream will flow into the single channel controlled by reason.⁹ This does not mean that a virtuous person will never experience any physical appetites or desires; it instead indicates that reason alone will determine the overall goals of this person's life.¹⁰ The drives of appetite and spirit will be satisfied only as reason determines, and the desires of these parts of the soul will never in themselves be the basis for the choice of a life goal. According to the *Republic*, then, when reason rules and all our energy is channelled into the one stream, we will satisfy our necessary desires, those in accord with the life goals determined by reason, but never our unnecessary, anti-rational desires, those in accord with the goals determined by physical pleasure and pain.

This is the psychological theory that underlies Plato's condemnation of tragic pity and fear in the *Republic*. Feeling these emotions at the theatre involves a satisfaction of unnecessary, anti-rational desires and a weakening of reason, which is induced by the poet to let down its guard. Even temporary yielding to these desires permanently strengthens them, diverting energy into a channel opposed to that governed by

⁶ Our passage in *Rep.* 8 states that the unnecessary desires can be entirely removed, if a person is properly trained. Plato thinks that this is only an ideal, however, for in *Rep.* 9 (572b) he states that everyone has some 'savage and lawless' desires. Cf. 571b–c, where these desires are said to be *either* gotten rid of *or* weakened in a virtuous person.

⁷ 'Desires' (*epithymiai*) in this passage are not limited to the impulses of the appetitive part of the soul but belong to each of the three 'psychological determinants of choice and voluntary action', as Cooper points out, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Cf. *Rep.* 9.580d8, where each of the three parts of the soul is said to have its own pleasures and desires.

⁸ Cornford, 'The Doctrine of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*', in *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. W. Guthrie (Cambridge, 1950), rpt. in *Plato II. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. G. Vlastos (New York, 1971), pp. 123–4.

⁹ Though we should perhaps not press the details of Plato's metaphor too far, I believe that this view represents his ideas better than Cornford's belief that 'the energy must flow along all the channels in due measure' (*op. cit.*, p. 124).

¹⁰ I follow Cooper, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 4–8 and notes 9 and 18.

reason. Thus, the common modern defences of the theatre as a 'special', 'aesthetic' situation would not be adequate, in Plato's opinion.¹¹ 'Aesthetic' emotions are said to differ from 'real-life' emotions in that they do not have lasting or serious effects. They do not lead us, for example, to run screaming from the theatre or to attack the stage villain. This makes no difference, in Plato's view, for he believes that our yielding to anti-rational emotion is harmful in itself, helping to create in our souls a permanent tendency to be controlled by this kind of emotion. In Aristotelian terms, even a momentary *pathos* (emotion) helps to create a permanent *hexis* (disposition).

The *Laws* departs radically from the psychology of the *Republic*, for it advocates the temporary strengthening, by means of carefully controlled drunkenness, of anti-rational desires and emotions. Plato is well aware of the shocking and paradoxical aspects of this idea. The Athenian Stranger notes that wine intensifies 'pleasure and pains and angers and lusts' while completely depriving the drunk of 'perceptions and memories and opinions and good sense'. He says that the drunk is like a child, least in control (*ἐγκρατής*) and 'most evil' (*Laws* 1.645d6–646a2). Kleinias replies that it would be 'marvellous and strange' to say that someone should voluntarily throw himself into 'complete degradation' (*Laws* 646b4–5). The Stranger goes on to compare the base condition of the soul produced by wine to physical weakness and ugliness (*Laws* 646b9–c1), and to compare wine to a 'fear drug' (*Laws* 647e1 ff.) that could produce 'complete terror in even the most courageous person' (*Laws* 648a1–2). In a final damning statement, wine is said to affect people like 'anger, lust, insolence, ignorance, greed and cowardice' and 'everything that drives us out of our minds with the intoxication of pleasure' (*πάνθ' ὅσα δι' ἡδονῆς αὐτὸ μεθύσκοντα παράφρονas ποιεῖ, Laws* 649d4–7).

Because of these same ill effects, the *Republic* had strictly forbidden drunkenness to the guardians (*Rep.* 3.398e6–7, 403e4–6).¹² In *Rep.* 9.571c–d Plato writes that even drunken sleep (*μέθη*: 571c5) is bad, for wine is likely to arouse the 'bestial and savage' part of the soul, causing it to seek satisfaction in dreams about shameful deeds. How, then, can Plato advocate drunkenness in the *Laws*?

Drunkenness confers three benefits in the *Laws*. In Book 1 (649d7–e2) it is said to provide (1) training in resisting pleasure and desire and (2) a test of dispositions, while in Book 2 (652b3–653a3) it is said to (3) safeguard correct education. However, wine, like a medicine, is only beneficial if administered in carefully controlled situations. Groups of drinkers must be governed by a sober symposiarch (*Laws* 1.640d4–7, 2.671d5–7).¹³ Children under eighteen, who make up the Chorus of the Muses, are not

¹¹ That the *Republic* fails to take into account adequately the 'special' aspects of art is argued by E. Schaper, *Prelude to Aesthetics* (London, 1968), pp. 42–55; M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 8–9; D. Grey, 'Art in the *Republic*', *Philosophy* 103 (1952), 291–310; N. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford, 1951), pp. 224–37; B. Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic*, 2nd ed. (1904; rpt. London, 1966), pp. 10–55.

¹² Aristotle's *Politics* 8.1342b17–34 states that certain music critics condemned Plato's rejection of sympotic musical modes in *Republic* 3. 389e. Grote, p. 328, note, and J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* 1 (1902; 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1963) ad loc., speculate that these criticisms may have been partly responsible for Plato's changing his mind about *methê* in the *Laws*. The authenticity of the *Pol.* passage has recently been questioned by C. Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca and London, 1982), pp. 215–9.

¹³ The statement at 648d1, that people might practise drinking alone, is no exception to the rule. This passage is concerned with the 'fear drug' and not with wine, and it would in any case be no contradiction for Plato to allow solitary, unsupervised drinking but to require a symposiarch to rule groups of drinkers. I agree with Stalley, Görgemanns and Hentschke, that the *Laws* is a fundamentally united work. For opposing views see M. Vanhouette, *La Philosophie politique de Platon dans les 'Lois'* (Louvain, 1954), esp. p. 26, on drinking, and G. Müller, *Studien zu den platonischen Nomoi, Zetemata* 3 (Munich, 1951).

to taste wine at all, since they should not pour the fire of wine into the fire of their bodies and souls but should guard against the mad disposition (*ἐμμανῆ...ξίν*) of youth (*Laws* 2.666a3–8). Between eighteen and thirty, when they join the Chorus of Apollo, young people may drink with moderation, but are never to indulge in drunkenness. Only 'after reaching forty' (*τετταράκοντα δὲ ἐπιβαίνοντα ἐτών*), at about the age at which an older person joins the 'Third Chorus', that of Dionysus, is a person permitted drunkenness at symposia (*Laws* 2.666a8–b3).¹⁴

This passage makes it clear that in Book 2 of the *Laws*, all of the benefits of drunkenness are intended for older people. This is consistent with the account of Book 1. Though it is often argued that in Book 1 wine provides the young with practice and tests their dispositions, Plato's text offers little support for this view.¹⁵ While Book 1 of the *Laws* does discuss wine within the context of an examination of education and mentions children specifically, at 641b3 and 643b4–d4, it is certainly not exclusively concerned with the education of the young. Education is a lifelong process whose various stages have not yet been distinguished. In fact, there are several positive indications that the drinkers in Book 1 are older people. In a famous passage (*Laws* 1.644d7–645c6), a human being is compared to a puppet controlled by the iron pulls of the emotions, which should be resisted, and by a 'golden and sacred' pull of calculation, which ought to be obeyed, but which stands in need of 'helpers'. This puppet is most naturally taken to represent an older person, for young children do not yet have the 'golden and scared pull of calculation' that may plausibly be identified with the good sense and firm true opinions that appear only in old age (*Laws* 2.653a7–9). This interpretation is supported by the context. Just before he introduces the puppet image, Plato states that if education ever departs from us, it must if possible be corrected 'throughout life' (*Laws* 1.644b2–4). After the description of the puppet, Plato concludes that this image can help us to understand education and in particular (*καὶ δὴ καί*) wine-drinking (645c1–6). It is likely, then, that when he mentions the 'help' needed by the golden pull of the puppet (645a4–b1) Plato has in mind the symposia, which are the safeguard of correct education for older people in *Laws* 2 (653b3–a3).¹⁶ Other indications that the drinkers in *Laws* 1 are older people are provided by Plato's examples of the vicious tendencies wine exposes: those that lead to violations of contracts and the seduction of sons and daughters (*Laws* 1.649e2–650a5). These vices are normally associated with mature adults.

The restriction, in *Laws* 1 and 2, of the benefits of wine to those over forty makes excellent sense within Plato's psychology. The young have within themselves enough natural 'fire' to give them ample opportunity for practice in resistance to pleasure. Only older people require the artificial heat of drugs. Moreover, Plato's emphasis on the ability of wine to produce particular kinds of temporary changes in the disposition (*êthos*) of the drinker is only understandable if he has older people in mind. Wine,

¹⁴ The three Choruses are described at 2. 664c ff. Plato is consistent in forbidding drunkenness to the young, however much his statements vary about specific ages of different groups, especially that of the Chorus of Dionysus. On these varying accounts see Morrow, p. 318 and Stalley, p. 125.

¹⁵ This is the view of England, p. 12; Morrow, p. 442; Stalley, p. 124. Hentschke, p. 224, correctly argues that all benefits of drunkenness are reserved solely for the Third, Dionysian Chorus of older people. This is one reason why the symposia of the *Laws* should not be too closely connected with the tests for the young discussed in *Republic* 3.413c–414b, as is done, for example, by Diès, XI.xii and Adam, pp. 191–2.

¹⁶ Görgemanns' view, pp. 119–21, that the golden pull represents respect for law imparted by early education and that the 'help' is given by one person to another fails to take this context into account. I agree with Hentschke, p. 208, that the puppet represents an adult. On the image of the puppet see H. Rankin, 'Plato and Man the Puppet', *Eranos* 60 (1962), 127–31.

writes Plato at *Laws* 1.649a9–b6, first makes people more cheerful, then more hopeful and sure of their own powers, and finally produces complete freedom of speech and lack of fear of doing and saying anything. It intensifies emotion and weakens reason, giving adults the disposition of young children (*Laws* 1.645d5–646a5). The same effects are described in *Laws* 2. Wine rejuvenates older people, softening and cheering them, making them less ashamed and more bold, as malleable as young children (*Laws* 2.666b5–7, 671b8–c2). Dionysus, Plato writes, provides ‘the initiation rite and play of the old, which he gave to the human race as a medicine (*pharmakon*) to remedy the dryness of old age, so that we might become young again, and so that through forgetfulness of despondency (*dysthymias*) the hard and dry character of our soul might become softer, like iron put into fire, and so made more easy to mould’ (*Laws* 2.666b5–c3).¹⁷

Only when thus ‘melted’ will those over forty be ready to play their role as Chorus of Dionysus (*Laws* 2.666a2–d1), for only then will they be as easily trainable as the young (2.671b8–c2). Plato means quite literally that older people must dance and sing, in a renewal of the education they received as children. The whole community, divided into the three Choruses of the Muses, Apollo and Dionysus, he writes, must ‘enchant’ (ἐπαῖδεν) the children with noble and true accounts of virtue and of the gods (664a–b). Because older people are ashamed to sing and dance, Plato gives an argument (λόγου) to prove that it is reasonable (εὐλογον) for them to do so (665b7). The heart of this argument is the account of the psychological and physiological effects of wine given at 666a–c. It allows Plato to conclude that the function of wine is indeed to make the old ‘less ashamed’ and more willing to ‘sing and enchant’ (ᾄδεν τε καὶ . . . ἐπαῖδεν), at least among their peers. Plato believes that wine is beneficial to older people because it gives them, temporarily, the ‘mad’ qualities of young children that are conducive to education by the Muses.¹⁸

Plato’s view that wine helps to educate adults can only be understood in the light of his theory of education as a whole. In both the *Laws* and the *Republic* the goal of education is to produce *aretê*. However, the *Laws* differs significantly from the earlier dialogue in its concept of *aretê* and in its account of the process of education.

Laws 2.653a5–c4 defines education, *paideia*, as the production of that part of *aretê*, correctly trained pleasures and pains, of which children are capable before they are able to reason.¹⁹ This training is given largely by music and dance. By nature, Plato writes, at *Laws* 2.653d7–654a5, all young creatures cry out and move about as though dancing with pleasure. The gods have given to humans alone the pleasant perception of order and harmony in these movements, and they use this perception to move us in dances (χοροὺς), which derive their name from that of pleasure (χαρᾶς).²⁰ If children are trained in good music, then, they will take pleasure in what is good (*Laws* 2.654c4–d3).

¹⁷ On this passage see further below, p. 433.

¹⁸ Jaeger, iii.340 n. 88, writes that ‘Drunkenness is educational simply because it makes an adult into a child (παῖς) *Laws* 646a4. For thus it enables the educator to continue all the way from childhood into maturity the basic function of all education, the formation of the proper attitude to emotions and impulses in the soul’. I cannot agree with Morrow, pp. 313–18, that the Chorus of elders is largely symbolic.

¹⁹ Two accounts of the different kinds of *aretê* in the *Laws* are those of T. Saunders, ‘The Structure of the Soul and the State in Plato’s *Laws*’, *Eranos* 60 (1962), 37–55 and Görgemanns, pp. 113–55, discussed and criticized by M. Ostwald, *Gnomon* 34 (1962), 236–9.

²⁰ The general idea of this difficult passage is clear enough. On the textual problems see England, ad loc.; Morrow, p. 353; T. Saunders, ‘Notes on the *Laws* of Plato’, *BICS* suppl. 28 (1972), 6–7; O. Reverdin, *La Religion de la cité platonicienne* (Paris, 1945), pp. 69–70; P. Boyancé, *Le Culte des muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris, 1937), p. 171.

Thus far, the account of early education in the *Laws* does not differ essentially from that of *Republic* 3.401b1–402a4.²¹ In the earlier dialogue Plato writes that 'the best education is given by music, for rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the interior of the soul and most strongly attach themselves to it, bringing grace and making it graceful also, if someone is brought up correctly' (401d5–e1). The *Republic*, like the *Laws*, holds that music trains children to love and hate correctly even before they can reason (401e1–402a4).

Unlike the *Republic*, however, the *Laws* stresses the importance in education of the elements in the soul opposed to reason. At *Laws* 2.672b–d, when Plato again discusses the origin of music and dance in the natural desire to move about, he explicitly characterizes these movements as disordered and mad, and he believes, moreover, that these anti-rational qualities are valuable in themselves. In this passage Plato argues against the view that mad dances and wine are evil gifts of Dionysus. Mad movement, he states, in a reference back to the earlier discussion at *Laws* 2.653c–654a, is the source of music and gymnastics: 'No creature is born having as much intelligence as it is fitting for it to have when it is grown. In that time in which it has not yet acquired the good sense proper to it, every creature is mad (*μαίνεται*) and makes disordered noises, and as soon as it becomes active, it also makes disordered leaps. Let us remember that we said these are the sources of music and gymnastics' (*Laws* 2.672c1–7). The natural anti-rational dispositions of the young are, then, beneficial, according to the *Laws*. Similarly, Plato's logic runs, the wine that can artificially restore these mad dispositions is beneficial to older people. Wine, he concludes at 672d5–9, is a drug to produce *aidôs* in the soul and health in the body.

Thus, the *Laws* differs from the *Republic* in its emphasis on the positive contributions to education made by the anti-rational, 'mad' elements in the soul.²² These elements are *anti-rational* in that they are not in themselves amenable to reason, but always oppose it. In the *Laws*, paradoxically, they contribute to a well-ordered soul by means of their very opposition to order and reason. These anti-rational tendencies are never in themselves beneficial in any dialogue other than the *Laws*. The *Republic*, in contrast to the *Laws*, holds that everything in the soul other than reason is of value only in so far as it is capable of being brought into accord with reason. This dialogue approves only the *non-rational* elements, that is, elements such as the desires and appetites that are not identical with reason but are capable of being trained to agree with reason. For example, the non-rational desire for food is of value because it can be trained to become the necessary desire for simple and wholesome food that reason approves, while the anti-rational desire for gourmet meals is always 'unnecessary' and must be eliminated from the harmonious soul in which reason rules. The *Timaeus* (43a6–44d2) also views the disordered movements of the child's soul as purely undesirable elements for which rational movements must be substituted. There is never any question of their being the sources of music, much less of deliberately reproducing them in adults.²³

²¹ The parallels are noted by E. des Places, 'L'Education des tendances chez Platon et Aristote', *Archives de philosophie* 21 (1958), 412–14. The account of education in the *Laws* is discussed by Morrow, pp. 297–389; W. D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), pp. 64–110; E. Moutsopoulos, *La Musique dans l'oeuvre de Platon* (Paris, 1959), pp. 198–216; R. Bury, 'The Theory of Education in Plato's *Laws*', *REG* 50 (1937), 304–20.

²² On the importance of psychic elements other than reason in Plato's late dialogues and in the *Laws* in particular, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), chapter 7; North, pp. 186–96.

²³ These statements apply only to Plato's theory of individual psychology. His cosmology perhaps assigns a more positive role to the disordered movements of the World Soul(s), in the *Timaeus* and in *Laws* 10. On this difficult topic see J. Skemp, *The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues* (Cambridge, 1942) and the bibliography listed in the section on cosmology in T. Saunders, *Bibliography on Plato's Laws, 1920–1970*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1979).

Plato's usual negative view of anti-rational elements in the soul is summed up by Cephalus, in *Republic* 1.329c. Quoting Sophocles, the old man states that one advantage of old age is that it is a time when we are freed from slavery to the 'mad and savage master' of desire. It seems, however, that when Plato actually arrived at old age, at the time he wrote the *Laws*, he found this freedom somewhat less desirable. He then believed that the excessive coldness and sobriety of old age has its own dangers.

Plato's new view that anti-rational emotion is valuable in itself depends on a new view that *sôphrosynê* involves constant strife.²⁴ In the *Republic*, Plato is primarily concerned with the ideal: 'We were trying to find what justice itself is in order to have a pattern...and not in order to show how these things might possibly come about' (5.472c4–d2). Accordingly, complete *sôphrosynê* is treated idealistically as the complete absence of anti-rational emotion. Socrates remarks that the popular view of *sôphrosynê* as the state of being 'stronger than oneself' is laughable (4.430ell) stated without explanation. The correct account is that someone is *sôphrôn* 'because of the friendship and harmony of these parts of the soul, when the ruler and the ruled both agree that reason should rule and do not fight with it' (442c10–d1; cf. 432a7–9). In the *Laws*, however, Plato is much more convinced that this situation is an unattainable ideal. He still believes that the best situation for individuals or cities is complete health and harmony that has never been weakened by sickness or strife, and that a restoration to health and harmony after sickness or combat is only second best. It would be foolish, Plato writes, 'if someone should think that a sick body that has received medical purgation (*catharsis*) is in the best possible condition and should give no thought to the body that has no need at all for a purge' (1.628d2–4). However, in this as in other respects, the *Laws* is concerned with second best.²⁵ It therefore treats *sôphrosynê* not only as a state of health after sickness has been cured, but also as a somewhat precarious condition in which there is constant need for rehabilitation. The concept of strife is much more important in the ethical theory of the *Laws* than in that of the *Republic*. Courage is now defined as 'combat against fears and pains and also against desires and pleasures' (1.633c8–d3). Only the soul that successfully combats the cowardice within itself can be completely brave. Similarly, only someone who has to struggle continually against pleasure and desire can become perfect in *sôphrosynê*, defined not as harmony and agreement but as 'victory over oneself'.²⁶

Another hydraulic metaphor, somewhat different from that of the channelled stream of the *Republic*, helps to clarify the new psychological theory of the *Laws*. At 6.773c8–d4 Plato states that 'a city should be mixed like a wine bowl, in which mad wine boils when poured in, but when it is punished by another sober god [sc. water] and joins in a good combination makes a good and measured (*metrion*) drink'. In this mixing-bowl metaphor, *aretê* is a proper psychic mixture (*krasis*), just as the beverage drunk at symposia is a proper mixture of wine and water. The general idea that virtue, like physical health, is a correct mixture occurs in Plato's earlier dialogues, as well as in the *Laws*. Eryximachus discourses at length on the idea in the *Symposium*. In the *Republic* virtue is 'health in the soul' (4.444d13–e2) in which there is a harmony

²⁴ On Plato's concept of *sôphrosynê* in the *Laws* see Barker, pp. 343–5; North, pp. 186–96; Stalley, pp. 54–6; R. Hall, *Plato and the Individual* (The Hague, 1963), pp. 187–215.

²⁵ The polity of the *Laws* is called 'second' at 739e4 and 875d3–4.

²⁶ 626e2–6, 634a6–b6, 647c7–d8. M. O'Brien, *The Socratic Paradoxes and the Greek Mind* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1967), p. 183, writes that courage in the *Laws* is needed by a 'soul in which strong emotions imply some danger of disorder'. England, *ad* 626c6–d2, notes that Plato begins by describing life as a fight, and (*ad* 630a5) that he treats *sôphrosynê* as a fight against oneself.

of reason, spirit and appetite (443c9–444a2). The 'channelled stream' passage uses a water-blending metaphor to express this idea.²⁷ In the *Laws*, however, two new elements enter into the concept of virtue as a *krasis*: madness and combat. In the metaphor of Book 6, wine is 'mad' and it is moderated by water, which 'punishes' it. Wine is the primary element in this brew. It is poured first into the bowl and it gives its name to the mixture, which retains the essential 'mad' quality of the unmixed wine. Water does not change wine and then coexist peacefully with the other liquid; it continually combats wine. This mixing-bowl metaphor thus helps to clarify the theory of education in *Laws* 2. In *paideia* a 'mad' element, the tendency to make disordered cries and movements, must be mixed by a wise teacher in proper proportions with a 'sober' element, perception of order and harmony and obedience to the law, to produce music and dance. Just as the good and measured drink remains wine, so dance remains movement when *aretê* is produced in children: *aretê* is madness successfully combatted.

Plato's views on the benefits of drunkenness can now be better understood. He views *sôphrosynê* as constantly renewed combat against the anti-rational. The young have a naturally fiery, wine-like disposition that requires the addition of much 'water' (sobriety and control). In older people, too cold and watery a disposition can threaten the more perfect self-control (the accord of emotion with reason) of which they are capable (*Laws* 2.653a5–c4). Because older people have less need to fight the shamelessness in themselves, they risk becoming slack and out of practice, like soldiers in time of peace, for the education that consists in correctly trained pleasure and pain tends to become 'slack' and 'corrupt' in the course of a lifetime (2.653c7–9). The excessive coldness and sobriety of older people also leads them to be too ashamed to take part in the songs everyone must sing (2.665d8–e3). To remedy this, Plato prescribes wine as a *pharmakon* to put *aidôs* in the soul (2.672d7–9) by, paradoxically, making the older people 'less ashamed' (2.666c4). As a medical purge (*φαρμακο-ποσία*: *Laws* 1.646c4) temporarily weakens the body in order to produce the conditions necessary for greater permanent health and strength, so wine temporarily makes the soul more 'vicious', providing the conditions required for greater permanent health and virtue. By restoring to those over forty the fiery disposition of the young, wine helps to renew the combat that virtue requires. Under the direction of a wise and sober symposiarch this combat can be successful, just as battles are won only when calm and rational generals lead soldiers who are in the grip of all sorts of disturbing emotions (*Laws* 2.671d–e).

It is clear now how drunkenness confers its three benefits. It is a safeguard for education because it corrects a dangerous deficiency in those over forty that imperils what they have learned as children. It provides a pleasant and harmless situation in which those past youth can practise combatting the vice of shamelessness within themselves – a vice which, in their case, must be artificially recreated. Third, by producing a temporary disorder in the soul, it allows those who are victorious in the combat to be distinguished from those who are not. In sum, Dionysus provides older people with the same training given to children by the Muses.

Plato's advocacy of drunkenness has shocked modern critics as much as the

²⁷ *Laws* 636d6–e3 and 736a–c use similar water-blending metaphors; *Statesman* 305e–311c uses a weaving metaphor to describe a correct blend of opposites; *Timaeus* 41d4–7 describes the Demiurge combining elements for the creation in a mixing bowl. On Plato's concept of mixture, especially important in the late dialogues, see Boyancé, pp. 8–10; Morrow, pp. 521–43; Stalley, pp. 74–9. On the connections between Plato's views and Greek medical theory see further below, p. 431.

proposition of the Athenian Stranger shocked his Spartan and Cretan interlocutors within Plato's dialogue. We must, however, avoid the desperate expedient of arguing, with England, that Plato did not really mean what he seems to be saying: 'We must remember that the Greeks drank nothing stronger than wine, and nearly always drank that mixed with water, and hence that the word μέθη had not the disgusting connotation that its equivalent has among us'.²⁸ The evidence does not support this view. The text of the *Laws*, Plato's other dialogues and other sources all suggest that the Greeks got, if anything, even more drunk than do modern imbibers of distilled spirits.²⁹ If Plato intended to shock, he also expected his Greek audience to take him seriously. They would have done so the more readily because Plato's unorthodox views have a firm foundation in Greek religious traditions, medical theory and popular beliefs.

While the late dates of some of our sources make it impossible to distinguish with certainty pre-Platonic ideas from Plato's own influence, the evidence strongly suggests that Plato's ideas about wine owe much to traditional beliefs. His description of wine as 'mad' (*Laws* 6.773d1) has parallels in Herodotus, who writes that the Spartans attributed Cleomenes' madness to wine (6.84), and in Homer, who blames wine for the madness of the Centaur in the house of Perithoos (*Od.* 21.293–8). Homer associates wine with the very activities Plato prescribes for the Chorus of Dionysus, for *Odyssey* 14.463–6 states that wine drives even a thoughtful man to sing, laugh, dance and speak very freely.³⁰ Plato's old men of the Chorus of Dionysus also have parallels in Greek literature. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, Teiresias argues that he is not ashamed to dance in old age, since Dionysus requires both old and young to dance (204–9).³¹ Athenaeus (10.428a) quotes the popular saying that wine makes an old man dance even if he does not wish to.³²

Plato's mixing-bowl metaphor at *Laws* 6.773c8–d4 also has numerous interesting parallels. As Boyancé remarks, Plato's metaphor should be connected with a traditional myth in which the mixture of wine and water is represented by the child Dionysus (wine) corrected by his nurses, the Nymphs (*nymphê* = water).³³ Diodorus Siculus describes the mixing of wine in terms very similar to those used by Plato: 'When wine is drunk unmixed it produces mad dispositions, but when mixed with Zeus' rain, joy and pleasure remain, and the harm of madness and stupor is corrected.'³⁴ Dio Chrysostom (32.58) writes of the mixture of wine with music: 'No

²⁸ England, *ad* 637d4. Stalley, p. 124, writes that the symposiasts are 'mildly intoxicated'.

²⁹ Especially interesting sources for ancient attitudes towards drinking are, in addition to Plato's *Symposium*, the Aristotelian *Problems* 3 and 30, discussed by Croissant, pp. 76–111 and H. Flashar, 'Die Lehre von der Wirkung der Dichtung in der griechischen Poetik', *Hermes* 84 (1956), 12–40. Some of the immense bibliography on wine in antiquity is listed in Bertier, pp. 56–86; Boyancé; Pigeaud; A. McKinlay, 'Attic Temperance', *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 12 (1951), 61–102, and R. Wasson, A. Hofmann, C. Ruck, *The Road to Eleusis* (New York and London, 1978), esp. pp. 89–93. Wasson makes the intriguing but controversial suggestion that Greek wine was mixed with hallucinogens as well as with water. On this idea see also W. Burkert, *Griechische Religion* (Stuttgart, 1977), trans. J. Raffan as *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA, 1985), pp. 277 and 455 n. 10.

³⁰ I owe these examples from Herodotus and Homer to Bertier, p. 79.

³¹ North, p. 84 n. 135, has some good remarks on the parallels between the *Bacchae* and *Laws* 1 and 2.

³² On the theme of old men dancing when drunk see also Athen. 134c (Eriphus) and Aristophanes, *Frogs* 345, cited by C. Gulick, *Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists* (Harvard and London, 1930) *ad loc.*

³³ Boyancé, pp. 9–10. See also his references to ancient sources that cite *Laws* 773c–d. The best known version of this myth is Athen. 11.465a: Phanodemus 325 F 12 Jac., cited by Pickard-Cambridge, p. 6.

³⁴ Diodorus Siculus 4.3.4, cited by Bertier, p. 78.

less does the power of music seem suitable to gatherings. For of its own accord it brings harmony and order to the soul and admonishes with a kindred power the staggering caused by the enjoyment of wine which, being mixed with this power, becomes tuneful and measured.' Rufus of Ephesus has some similar remarks about wine and music, stating that light wine 'by its moderate heat... can... calm the human soul and make it fit for dance, giving it an harmonious and settled motion'.³⁵

Greek medical theory has an especially close connection with Plato's symposia. It is well known that Plato was influenced in many ways by medical ideas.³⁶ Behind his frequent descriptions of *aretê* as health of the soul lies a psychological theory that owes much to medical theories of health as proportion, harmony and correct mixture of different elements. In the *Republic*, *aretê* is analogous to physical health viewed as harmony and absence of strife. The psychology of the *Laws*, however, has connections with a different medical theory. According to Alcmaeon, physical health is an *isonomia*, 'equilibrium', between opposing *dynameis*, 'powers', within the body. The absence of opposition created by the *monarchia* of one overmastering 'power' destroys this balance, creating sickness. Similarly, as we have seen, *sôphrosynê* in the *Laws* involves a concept of psychic health as a similar kind of equilibrium by means of opposition.³⁷

Plato's views on the use of wine have particularly close parallels in Greek medical writings. Plato's view (*Laws* 1.638c2–e6) that wine can be both good and bad has often been connected with *Ancient Medicine* 20.³⁸ When Plato states that Dionysus gave us wine as a medicine for body and soul (*Laws* 2.672d7–9) he is also in line with medical tradition. Mnesitheus states that Dionysus is a doctor (fr. 41 and 42: Athen. 2.36a ff. and 1.22e) and that excessive drinking can produce 'purgation' (*catharsis*) of the body and relaxation of the soul' (fr. 45=Athen. 11.484a). Popular belief accords well with medical theory in this respect. Honestus, in the *Greek Anthology*, writes that drunken Bacchus teaches *sôphrosynê*: ὁ μεθύων ἄστον ἐσωφρόνισεν.³⁹ Critias' statement that moderate consumption of wine produces health and *sôphrosynê*

³⁵ Rufus of Ephesus, *Oeuvres de Rufus d'Ephesus*, C. Daremberg and C. Ruelle (Paris, 1879), p. 370; cited by Pigeaud, pp. 498–9.

³⁶ There is an extensive bibliography on Plato's connections with Greek medicine. Some interesting discussions are those of Bertier, pp. 57–143; Brès, pp. 287–300; Jaeger, iii.3–45; Pigeaud; Tracy; Flashar, op. cit.; W. Jones, *Philosophy and Medicine in Ancient Greece*, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine, Supplement* 8 (Baltimore, MD, 1946); R. Joly, 'Platon et la médecine', *BAGB* 20 (1961), 435–51; P. Lain Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity*, ed. and trans. L. Rather and J. Sharp (New Haven and London, 1970), pp. 108–38; J. Jouanna, 'Le Médecin modèle du législateur dans les *Lois* de Platon', *Ktema* 3 (1978), 77–91. R. Joly gives comprehensive bibliographies on the problem of the connection between *Phaedrus* 269–272a and the Hippocratic corpus in 'La Question hippocratique et le témoignage de Phèdre', *REG* 74 (1961), 69–92 and 'Platon, Phèdre et Hippocrate: vingt ans après', in *Actes du quatrième colloque international hippocratique, Lausanne 21–26 sept., 1981*, ed. F. Lasserre and P. Mudry (Geneva, 1983), pp. 407–22.

³⁷ On the concept of *isonomia* as balance of opposites in Greek medical thought and cosmology see G. Vlastos, 'Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies', *CP* 42 (1947), 156–78 and L. MacKinney, 'The Concept of Isonomia in Greek Medicine' in *Isonomia. Studien zur Gleichheitsvorstellung im griechischen Denken*, ed. J. Mau and E. Schmidt (Berlin, 1964), 79–88. Tracy, pp. 22–156, also discusses this concept in Greek medical thought and argues that Plato's physiological and psychological theories are based on a similar notion. For an opposing view of Plato's theories see G. Cambiano, 'Pathologie et analogie politique', in Lasserre and Mudry, op. cit., pp. 441–58.

³⁸ See Bertier, p. 65; des Places, ad loc.: A.-J. Festugière, *Hippocrate, l'Ancienne médecine* (Paris, 1948; rpt. New York, 1979), p. 65.

³⁹ *Greek Anthology* 11.32, cited by North, p. 83.

is especially interesting, for Critias, as Jaeger reminds us, was related to Plato, who would certainly have read his relative's poems.⁴⁰

The *Regimen* of the Hippocratic corpus provides some good examples of the ways in which Plato's *Laws* conforms to widely accepted Greek medical theory. Whether or not it directly influenced Plato, the *Regimen* is in line with a long tradition; its parallels with Plato provide further evidence that the mixing-bowl theory of *Laws* 1 and 2 was firmly rooted in medical tradition.⁴¹ *Regimen* 1.32–6 argues that a healthy body and *phronêsis* in the soul⁴² are produced by a correct mixture of hot, cold, moist and dry. In human beings this blend varies with age, children being warm and moist, adults cold and dry, and the old cold and moist (33).⁴³ A doctor, according to *Regimen*, can correct this blend by prescribing a proper diet of hot or cold food and drink. Wine is a hot drink (2.52 *init.*) which can produce madness in certain situations (1.35 *fin.*). It possesses the sort of heat by means of which fire melts iron.⁴⁴ The same general idea appears in the *Laws*, in which the child is moist and warm, while those over forty are cold and dry, having lost with increased age the original heat for which wine can compensate.⁴⁵ The *phronêsis* (*Laws* 2.665d2) of older people can benefit Plato's city only when they are reheated in this way. Thus, in Plato's view, as in that of the author of *Regimen*, a proper mixture of hot and cold will produce *phronêsis*.

Plato's most interesting debt to medical theory in *Laws* 1 and 2, however, is his theory of *catharsis*. Plato's symposia provide in effect an allopathic *catharsis* of the emotions. At 1.628d2 Plato compares the reestablishment of health in a sick soul or city to a medical *catharsis*. This reestablishment, as has been shown above, results in the kind of *sôphrosynê* that is possible in the second-best state, which wine helps to produce. The connection of this *catharsis* of the soul with wine is made clear at 646c3–8. Here, Plato compares the effects of a fear drug, the analogue of wine, to those of a medicine (*pharmakoposia*) that first temporarily weakens the body in order to help create the conditions necessary for greater permanent health and strength. A medicine might, for example, purge the body of noxious elements by causing vomiting and other effects that are, temporarily, more debilitating than the disorder the drug helps to cure. Wine helps to produce similar effects in the souls of the Chorus of Dionysus. Wine, as Plato writes at 672d7–9, was given to us as a medicine, *pharmakon*, to produce the good kind of shame, *aidôs*, in the soul and health in the body. When we want to make people fearless, Plato writes at 1.647c3–10, we lead them into fears,

⁴⁰ Jaeger, iii.222. Critias, fr. 6.20–21 West.

⁴¹ The author and date of this influential work are much debated. W. Smith in *The Hippocratic Tradition* (Ithaca, 1979), pp. 44–60 has recently argued for its Hippocratean authorship. This idea is rejected by R. Joly, *Recherches sur le traité pseudo-hippocratique Du Régime* (Paris, 1960); G. E. R. Lloyd, 'The Hippocratic Question', *CQ* n.s. 25 (1975), 171–92; J. Mansfeld, 'Plato and the Method of Hippocrates', *GRBS* 21 (1980), 341–62. However the question is resolved, the *Regimen*'s ties with tradition are clear, as W. Smith argues in 'The Development of Classical Dietetic Theory' in *Hippocratica, Actes du Colloque hippocratique de Paris (4–9 septembre, 1978)*, ed. M. Grmek (Paris, 1980), pp. 439–48.

⁴² *Regimen* 35–6. See the study of F. Huffmeier, 'Phronesis in den Schriften des Corpus Hippocraticum', *Hermes* 89 (1961), 51–84.

⁴³ In viewing the old as moist, the *Regimen* departs from generally accepted medical views, and from Plato. On this question see S. Byl, 'La Vieillesse dans le *Corpus hippocratique*', in Lasserre and Mudry, op. cit., pp. 85–96.

⁴⁴ *Regimen* 1.13; cf. *Laws* 666c1–2 and 671b8–9, where a similar metaphor is used. On the properties of wine in *Regimen*, and the underlying medical theory, see G. Harig, 'Anfänge der theoretischen Pharmakologie im Corpus Hippocraticum', in Grmek, op. cit., pp. 223–45, esp. 241.

⁴⁵ *Laws* 2. 666a2–c3, 7. 789e2–3. I am indebted to Bertier, pp. 66–7, 121, for these parallels.

in accord with the law. And when we want to make them feel shame, *aischynê*, the proper kind of fear (646e10–647a6), we lead them to shamelessness (lack of fear of doing wrong). The artificial arousal of fear by a fear drug helps to strengthen us permanently in bravery, and the arousal of shamelessness by wine helps to purge us of vice and to produce *sôphrosynê*. The process is allopathic.

Plato is clearly indebted to Greek medical theory, according to which wine was allopathic and cathartic.⁴⁶ But Plato adapts medical theory in accord with his own beliefs about the interconnection of body and soul. The physical deficiency of old age makes the body cold, hard and dry. Wine supplies these physical deficiencies and thus acts as a physical purge, driving out excess cold, dryness and hardness. But wine affects the soul as well as the body. Plato continued to hold, as he did at *Timaeus* 86b–87b, that a physical excess or deficiency can produce psychic disorder. The physical dryness, hardness and coldness of the old people of the *Laws* produces the psychic disorder of despondency (*dysthymia*). Wine helps to remedy this disorder by making the soul more fiery and liquid, creating a condition in which an individual's own reason is no longer in control, that is, a temporary 'viciousness', and also making the soul more malleable, more ready to accept another's control.⁴⁷ In *Timaeus* 89a–d, Plato wrote that the kind of *catharsis* brought about by drugs should be used only as a last resort. The best way to produce health, he believed, is by means of correct diet and exercise. In the *Laws*, however, he has more positive views about the general usefulness of drugs when skilfully applied by a symposiarch–doctor.⁴⁸ Wine is a useful drug because it helps to create the conditions under which the soul can be reeducated and moulded by the wise symposiarch. It thus contributes to the process of emotional *catharsis* that results in psychic equilibrium. In this process, the soul is first purged of excessive shame and despondency and is then strengthened in the good kind of shame, *aidôs*, by the symposiarch's training. The result is the reestablishment of psychic health and equilibrium: *sôphrosynê*. In this way, wine is a medicine that helps to restore health to the body and *aidôs* to the soul (*Laws* 2.672d7–9).

Catharsis of the soul is of course not an idea peculiar to the *Laws*, but has been well documented throughout the dialogues.⁴⁹ The best-known example is *Sophist* 230b–e, where one kind of education, the *elenchos*, is said to be 'the greatest and best *catharsis*', one that affects the soul as a medical purge does the body. In this and other passages, *catharsis* is thought of simply as a purgation of disorder. At *Laws* 7.790d–791a, for example, 'the women who officiate in the curative rites of the Corybantes' are said to calm pre-existing internal turmoil by applying external

⁴⁶ A homeopathic ethical function of wine in the *Laws* is commented on by Brès, p. 363, and Diès, XI.xii. When used as a medical purge, however, wine had the allopathic function described in 'Aristotle', *Prob.* 1.2: 'They cure diseases by excess of wine or water...because the causes of disease are opposites of one another. Each opposite brings the other to a mean'. On the cathartic properties of wine see Mnesitheus, fr. 45 (quoted above, p. 431); *Regimen* 2.52 *init.*: οἶνος θερμὸν καὶ ξηρόν· ἔχει δέ τι καὶ καθαρτικὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης.

⁴⁷ See Tracy, pp. 126–32, for an excellent discussion of the medical basis for Plato's prescription of wine as a remedy for the *dysthymia* of old age.

⁴⁸ On Plato's negative views of drugs in the *Timaeus* and *Republic* 3 see A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford, 1928), on *Tim.* 89a–d. I cannot agree with Joly, 'Platon et la médecine', pp. 444–6, that the *Rep.* has more positive views on drugs than the *Tim.* The more positive views on drugs in the *Laws* are in line with those of *Ancient Medicine* 19, on which see MacKinney, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁴⁹ Some good discussions of Plato's concepts of *catharsis* are those of L. Moulinier, *Le Pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs* (Paris, 1952), pp. 323–410; Laín Entralgo, *op. cit.*; A. Ničev, *L'Enigme de la catharsis tragique dans Aristote* (Sofia, 1970), pp. 159–69; L. Golden, 'The Clarification Theory of *Katharsis*', *Hermes* 104 (1976), 444–5.

agitation.⁵⁰ What is new in *Laws* 1 and 2 is the idea that *catharsis* begins with increased disorder. Disorder is first deliberately produced by wine in the soul deficient in fire in order to allow it to receive a better new order. This new Platonic *catharsis* of the soul resembles a medical purge not only in its contribution to order but also in its production of an initial temporary disorder and weakness. It is interesting to note that Olympiodorus describes this very kind of *catharsis*, which 'cures evil with evil' or '*pathos* with *pathos*', and 'leads to *symmetria* by means of the combat of opposites'. He compares the process to that of straightening crooked twigs and producing *symmetria* by bending them in the opposite direction. Though Olympiodorus calls this *catharsis* 'Aristotelian', it may well be Platonic in origin.⁵¹

If Greek medicine provides much of the theoretical basis for the psychology of *Laws* 1 and 2, the institution of the symposium in these passages must be connected with the Greek festivals of Dionysus, the god of beneficial *mania*. Plato leaves us in no doubt that his symposia are part of a festival of Dionysus. In the daily *sussitia*, common meals in which everyone takes part, people pour a libation to the gods to whom that day is dedicated (807a1–2). They do not get drunk, for this is forbidden except in the festivals of the wine god (*ἐορταῖς*: 775b). Throughout Book 2, Plato's main concern is with festivals (*τὰς τῶν ἐορτῶν ἀμοιβάς*: 653d2–3). Thus, the *sussitia* at which the symposia take place are not ordinary common meals but a part of the festivals of Dionysus, at which the older people 'invoke the other gods and especially *Dionysus*' (666b2–5).

Because we know most about the Anthesteria, Plato's debt to traditional concepts of Dionysus is especially evident from a comparison of his symposia with this festival of the god.⁵² This spring festival of Dionysus was a celebration of new wine and of the initiation of male children into the adult community. Small children were crowned with flowers, given small wine jars and other toys and allowed to join the adult festivities. Teachers were paid and slaves celebrated freely with their masters. Singing and dancing continued throughout the festival. On the day of the Pithoigia the wine jars were opened and the new wine was brought to the shrine of Dionysus to be mixed with water. A libation was then poured to Dionysus, as the god of the grape and especially as the teacher of the art of mixing wine with water. The worshippers prayed with this libation that the drink would be a harmless and beneficial *pharmakon*.⁵³ On the next day, the Choes, a drinking contest was held, the prize being awarded to the person who could most quickly drink a large measure of wine. The Choes was also, however, an ill-omened, polluted day on which the spirits of the dead wandered freely.⁵⁴ On the last day of the Anthesteria, the Chytrai, the dead returned to the underworld as pollution was removed and order reestablished.

⁵⁰ I follow I. Linforth's interpretation and translation of this passage, in *The Corybantic Rites in Plato* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946), pp. 129–34.

⁵¹ Olym. in *Plat. Alcib.* pr. 54.17 and 19 Westerink. This passage is cited by R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy* (London, 1984), p. 147, who refers to the discussions of Olympiodorus by Ničev, op. cit., pp. 183–4.

⁵² On the Anthesteria see Pickard-Cambridge, pp. 10–25; Burkert, op. cit., pp. 237–42 and his *Homo Necans* (Berlin, 1972), trans. P. Bing (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1983), pp. 213–47; H. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca, New York, 1977), pp. 107–24; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (1932, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1966), pp. 93–122; G. Van Hoorn, *Choes and Anthesteria* (Leiden, 1951).

⁵³ I follow the account of the Pithoigia given by Parke, op. cit., p. 108. He cites Phanodemus 325 F 12 Jac. (see above, p. 430 and note 33) on the importance of mixture, and Plutarch, *Quest. Conv.* 665e on the prayer. Plato explicitly refers to Dionysus as the god of mixture in *Philebus* 61b11–c2, a passage called to my attention by Bertier, p. 62 n. 24.

⁵⁴ I follow the account of Burkert, *Homo Necans*, p. 218 n. 11.

The Anthesteria thus combined the many, sometimes contradictory aspects of Dionysus: the god of new life and the chthonic god, the god who disrupted the social order but who also bound the human community together in the symposium, the god of the pleasant and rejuvenating wine that was also potentially destructive.⁵⁵ It is easy to see how closely Plato's symposia resemble this festival of Dionysus. Both are formal, religious institutions under the patronage of Dionysus. Both are concerned with education and celebrate the child-like qualities of adults. Both require drinking to excess but emphasize the need for a proper mixing of wine and control of individual anti-rational tendencies within a public institution. Both mandate a temporary disruption of the normal order of society and of the soul for the purpose of creating a better permanent order.

Not only at the Anthesteria but in all of his other manifestations as well, whether at formal festivals, informal symposia or spontaneous outbreaks of Bacchic frenzy, Dionysus is the god of *mania*, who creates and strengthens psychic and social order through disorder and inversion. Jeanmaire has some insightful comments on the treatment of Dionysiac possession:

[T]he method of treatment...aims less at the suppression of the emotional and delirious states that result from the state of possession...than at their transformation...and utilization to achieve a new equilibrium of the personality by means of a sort of symbiosis with the possessing spirit, which has become a protective spirit.⁵⁶

This, of course, is exactly what happens at Plato's symposia. It is reasonable to conclude that Plato based his symposia on the traditional Greek concept of Dionysus in all his manifestations. He did not model them solely on the kind of informal, convivial banquet portrayed in his *Symposium*.⁵⁷

Whether or not drama was actually performed at the Anthesteria,⁵⁸ role-playing was central to this festival. In commemoration of the treatment of the polluted Orestes by the Athenian king, at the Choes the Athenians drank from separate wine jars and sat in silence at separate tables. As Callimachus wrote, on this day all were Oresteioi.⁵⁹ Of course, at the Lenaia and at the Rural and the Greater Dionysia, Dionysus was explicitly celebrated as the patron of drama. There is reason to believe that *Laws* 1 and 2 also had this aspect of Dionysus in mind. While Dionysus' function as patron of the theatre is not specifically in question in *Laws* 1 and 2, it is certainly not forgotten. When drunkenness is first introduced it is connected by Megillos with the Athenian Dionysia, which he claims to have attended (*Laws* 1.637b). It is likely, as Pangle remarks, that he is referring to the festival open to foreigners, the Greater Dionysia, at which tragedies were performed.⁶⁰ Again, while discussing wine as a test, at *Laws* 1.650a1–2, Plato unexpectedly remarks that dispositions can be tested 'at the spectacle of Dionysus' (τῆς τοῦ Διονύσου θεωρίας), explicitly referring to the visual and dramatic aspects of Dionysian festivals. It may also be significant that Plato

⁵⁵ One these aspects of wine and of Dionysus see H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos* (Paris, 1951), esp. pp. 5–56. Euripides calls Dionysus 'most terrible and most gentle to mortals' (*Bacchae* 861).

⁵⁶ Jeanmaire, op. cit., p. 121.

⁵⁷ The usual view, that Plato's symposia are based on the custom of convivial symposia, is held, for example, by Jaeger, ii.176–8; iii.222–30 and Morrow, p. 316. The only scholar who connects the symposia of the *Laws* with the Anthesteria is S. Karouzou in 'Choes', *AJA* 50 (1946), 139.

⁵⁸ See the discussion in Pickard-Cambridge, pp. 15–17.

⁵⁹ Callimachus, fr. 178.2. I owe the reference to Burkert, *Homo Necans*, p. 222.

⁶⁰ Pangle, p. 516 n. 40. While this account seems most likely, Plato's phrase ἐν ἀμάξαις (637b2–3) is puzzling, since the 'wagons' are not attested for the Greater Dionysia, according to Pickard-Cambridge, pp. 12–13.

chooses a fear drug as the analogue of wine in *Laws* 1. Fear is not only the tragic emotion but is also closely connected with Dionysus, the god of battle panic.⁶¹ In any case, wine, Dionysus and drama were always intimately connected in ancient thought. Drama was performed at the Lenaia and the Rural Dionysia, as well as at the Greater Dionysia, and wine was consumed at the dramatic festivals as well as at the Anthesteria. Moreover, in antiquity the theatre itself aroused emotions similar to those aroused by wine. Dio Chrysostom writes to the Alexandrians that at dramatic performances 'You sit dumbfounded or you leap about more violently than the dancers themselves; you get all tensed up like people in a drunken frenzy...or like barbarians after inhaling some kind of drug'.⁶²

Most significant, the symposia of Plato's *Laws* are theatrical events in many ways. Staid elders temporarily take on the persona of mad young children in order to play their role of Chorus of Dionysus and to renew their education through song and dance. Everyday rules are suspended, and emotions are aroused that are alien to the normal dispositions of older people. In sum, those very events occur for which Plato blames the drama in *Republic* 10. There, poets are criticized for claiming falsely to educate us (606e) and to present a safe and pleasant special situation in which we can indulge our anti-rational emotions without real-life consequences. Plato's symposia are aesthetic situations in which aesthetic emotions are aroused. In the *Laws*, Plato welcomes back the god of drama whom he so mistrusted in the *Republic*.⁶³

Plato's advocacy of drunkenness in the *Laws*, however, is not a defence of the kind of poetry he condemned in *Republic* 10. While he takes a more positive view of emotional arousal in aesthetic situations than he did in the *Republic*, he still does not look favourably on most poets. There is no room even in the second-best state of the *Laws* for a poet who is not also a lawgiver: 'We [lawgivers]', the Athenian Stranger says, 'are poets of the most beautiful and best tragedy we are able to make' (*Laws* 7.817b). Poets who are not lawgivers themselves, and who do not obey the rules made by the lawgivers, cannot arouse emotion without causing harm. The recipe for Plato's mixing bowl is simple: the emotions, whether occurring naturally or aroused by drugs, are combatted by restraint to produce virtue. However, it takes a master chef, a god or a lawgiver, to do the mixing properly. Without the safeguard of a wise and sober symposiarch, Plato writes, the use of wine is more dangerous than fighting a battle under leaders who cannot keep calm (*Laws* 2.671d). Children must not use wine and adults must not abuse this drug. The motley crowd of the Athenian Dionysia will certainly be harmed by the ignorant and drunken symposiarch who is the tragic poet.

Though Plato's new views did not, then, lead him to revise his views about actual tragedies, they may well have influenced Aristotle. We know that Aristotle read the *Laws* very carefully, referring to the work repeatedly in his *Politics*. At *Politics* 1274b11–15, if this passage is genuine, he particularly mentions Plato's views on drunkenness.⁶⁴ Aristotle would also have found Plato's psychological theories attrac-

⁶¹ See Euripides' *Bacchae* 302–5.

⁶² *To the Alexandrians* 32.55–6, translated by W. B. Stanford, *Greek Tragedy and the Emotions* (London and Boston, 1983), pp. 6–7. On wine-drinking at Dionysian festivals Stanford cites (p. 13) *Laws* 775b and Philochoros in Athen. 11.464f. Stanford has many excellent remarks on the connections between wine and dramatic performances, pp. 1–20.

⁶³ On Plato's attitude towards Dionysus see P. Vicaire, 'Platon et Dionysos', *BAGB* 3 (1958), pp. 15–26, who has many excellent remarks, though I disagree with his conclusions.

⁶⁴ This passage was bracketed by Newman but not by Ross and many others. G. Morrow includes it (p. 148) in his thorough examination of Aristotle's debt to the *Laws*, 'Aristotle's Comments on Plato's *Laws*', in *Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century*, eds. I. Düring and G. E. L. Owen (Göteborg, 1960), pp. 145–62.

tive in a number of ways. The *Laws* stresses the importance of the psychic elements other than reason as do Aristotle's own psychological and ethical works.⁶⁵ Plato's views also assume a very Aristotelian distinction between temporary emotional states (*pathê*) and permanent dispositions (*hexeis*)⁶⁶ Again, the theories of the *Laws* take into account, in a very Aristotelian way, observed phenomena, 'what people say', customs and practices and traditional accounts of the physical and psychological effects of wine and emotion. Most significantly, wine in the *Laws* produces many of the same effects tragedy produces in the *Poetics*. Both arouse emotions temporarily and artificially, in pleasant, harmless and socially controlled circumstances. Both contribute to an emotional education.⁶⁷

The most intriguing possibility, however, is that the *Laws* directly influenced Aristotle's views on tragic *catharsis*. As we have seen, Plato's symposia provide an allopathic *catharsis* of the emotions within a situation that is aesthetic in many ways. Plato clearly indicates that this is a radically new psychological theory, though firmly based on Greek popular, medical and religious traditions. It is not impossible that it is a primary source for Aristotle's theory of *catharsis* in the *Poetics*. A parallel is often drawn between the kind of *catharsis* discussed in *Laws* 7.790d–791a, in which external agitation is used to calm preexisting internal disorder, and Aristotle's discussion of *catharsis* in *Politics* 8.1342a4–15, a passage which is said to explain the tragic *catharsis* of *Poetics* 6.⁶⁸ The different sort of *catharsis* described in *Laws* 1 and 2, in which disorder is first created and then given order and measure, might prove to be more appropriately connected with Aristotle's tragic *catharsis*. The fact that Olympiodorus calls the kind of *catharsis* described in the *Laws* 'Aristotelian' is some evidence in favour of this view.⁶⁹ These speculations, however, cannot be pursued here.

Whether or not the views on drunkenness expressed in the *Laws* influenced Aristotle, they are a valuable though neglected source for Plato's theories of psychology and aesthetics. In the *Laws* Plato welcomes, for the first and only time, anti-rational emotion as a beneficial and necessary element in the human soul. He advocates its arousal in a controlled environment that has many aesthetic characteristics. Plato had come, in his old age, a long way towards reconciliation with Dionysus, the 'most terrible and most gentle god'.⁷⁰

University of Minnesota

ELIZABETH BELFIORE

⁶⁵ See above, note 22. W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion* (London, 1975), p. 23, argues that 'the *Laws* seems to be working towards a psychology that Aristotle ultimately made his own and exploited within his political and ethical writings'.

⁶⁶ See, for example, *EN* 2.5. I argue that this sort of distinction is essential to Aristotle's views on tragedy in 'Pleasure, Tragedy and Aristotelian Psychology', *CQ* 35 (1985), 349–61.

⁶⁷ On the intellectual aspects of *catharsis* see especially the articles of L. Golden, 'The Clarification Theory...', 437–52; 'Catharsis', *TAPA* 93 (1962), 51–60; 'Mimesis and Katharsis', *CP* 64 (1969), 145–53.

⁶⁸ This is done, for example, by D. W. Lucas, *Aristotle: Poetics* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 273–90; H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* (Bern, 1954), pp. 68–78; F. Pfister, 'Katharsis', *RE* Suppl. Bd. 6, 147–9.

⁶⁹ See above, p. 434.

⁷⁰ *Eur. Ba.* 861.

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