


12-1965

# The Platonic Dream

David Gallop  
*Trent Univ, dgallop2@gmail.com*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/sagp>

 Part of the [Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity Commons](#), [Ancient Philosophy Commons](#), and the [History of Philosophy Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Gallop, David, "The Platonic Dream" (1965). *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*. 35.  
<https://orb.binghamton.edu/sagp/35>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter by an authorized administrator of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

THE PLATONIC DREAM

"Let's consider who it was that dreamed it... it must have been either me or the Red King. He was part of my dream, of course--but then I was part of his dream, too!...Which do you think it was?"

Lewis Carroll, Alice Through the Looking-Glass,  
Ch. XII, fin.

In his book The Greeks and the Irrational<sup>1</sup> Professor E.R. Dodds has given a richly detailed and wide-ranging account of the Greek attitude to dream-experience. Within this absorbing field the present paper confines itself to a limited area: Plato's conception of dreams, and his use of analogies from dreaming to express some central ideas in his theory of knowledge. Its main object will be to illuminate the levels of cognition distinguished in the middle books of the Republic.<sup>2</sup> The account of the Republic to be offered here will be prefaced by a brief review of some relevant passages in other works.

## I. Dreams, Delusive and Prophetic

The sheer number of Plato's allusions to dreams is remarkable. They occur in most of the major dialogues,<sup>3</sup> sometimes repeatedly within a single work. Some are made only in passing or have no special bearing upon the argument. But more often they have a discernible point.

As we might expect, dreams are commonly associated with delusions or absurdities. In the Statesman (290B) the Eleatic Stranger says that he was not dreaming when he asserted a certain view, meaning that he was by no means deluded. In the Theaetetus (190B) Socrates says: "You have never, even in sleep, gone as far as to say to yourself that odd numbers must be even, or anything of that sort". Similarly in the Philebus (65E) we are told that "No one ever saw wisdom or intelligence being or becoming disgraceful, whether waking or dreaming". In the same dialogue (36E) Socrates appeals to dreams, to support the view that one may think that one is enjoying oneself when one is not. Dreams can also represent disappointed expectations. In the Lysis (218C) Socrates begins his refutation of a promising theory with the words: "It looks as if we have had a golden dream (onar peploutêkenai)". He uses the same phrase in the Theaetetus (208B), after exploding an interpretation of the theory described earlier in his own "dream" (201E).

There are, however, veridical<sup>4</sup> as well as delusive dreams. In the Philebus a theory which Socrates thinks he may have heard in a dream (20B) subsequently turns out to be true. Elsewhere

(Charmides 173A) he echoes Penelope's distinction (Odyssey XIX, 560ff.) between dreams that come through gates of ivory and those that come through gates of horn. The dreams in Plato's more significant allusions are often of the latter kind. The dreamer is not wholly deluded. His belief is correct, yet his state of mind is somehow inadequate. Behind such allusions there lies the notion of a prophetic dream, a supernatural vision or abnormal experience, in which divine commands are given, or truths are revealed that are not accessible to the waking mind. Thus in the Apology (33C) dreams are one source of Socrates' conviction that he must continue his mission to the Athenian people. In the Crito (44B) he can base his prediction that the sacred vessel will arrive next day upon a dream, whose meaning, for once, is said to be "all too clear". Again, in the Phaedo (60E) he explains that he has been writing verses to test the meaning of a recurrent dream bidding him cultivate the arts.<sup>5</sup>

These allusions do not, of course, imply that Plato himself subscribed to popular belief in the significance of dreams.<sup>6</sup> The Timaeus (45E-46A) offers an account of them in terms of residual internal "motions":

"When some stronger motions are left, they give rise to images answering in character and number to the motions and regions in which they persist--images which are copies made inside and remembered when we are awake in the world outside" (trans. F.M. Cornford).

Later in the same work (71A-E) a special explanation is given of prophetic dreams. They are supposed to be images perceived by the irrational part of the soul upon the smooth surface of the liver.

Moreover,

"No man in his normal senses deals in true and inspired divination, but only when the power of understanding is fettered in sleep or he is distraught by some disorder, or, it may be, by divine possession. It is for the man in his ordinary senses to recall and construe the utterances, in dream or in waking life, of divination or possession" (71E).

The dream requires interpretation, but the dreamer himself is not best qualified to provide it. Socrates, we may recall, found the poets incompetent at interpreting their own works (Apology 22B). In the Symposium (175E) he remarks ironically that his own wisdom is a poor thing, and disputable (amphisbêtêsimos) like a dream, compared with the clear vision of Agathon, the poet. The poet's vision, he implies, is obscure in comparison with the philosopher's, and his expression of it is ambiguous. The dream figure suggests the enigmatic character of poetry that Plato derides elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

In the Phaedrus, however, unclearness and ambiguity are held to be inherent in writings of any kind, philosophic ones included. Any writer's belief that his work possesses great stability and clarity is said to be a reproach to him.

"For ignorance of what is a waking vision and what is a mere dream-image of justice and injustice, good and evil, cannot truly be acquitted of involving reproach" (277D).

If this interpretation of the relevant sentence is correct,<sup>8</sup> the contrast between waking and dreaming here represents the difference between a thorough grasp of value concepts obtained through oral dialectic, and a partial understanding based on the written word. In this respect, the Platonic dialogues themselves may be regarded as dreams. Like paintings they cannot answer questions or defend themselves against attack (Phaedrus 275D). Like dreams they are

subject to a host of misinterpretations. Yet they afford some moral enlightenment, if they are interpreted aright.

The same suggestion of a dream-like, and therefore inadequate, grasp of the truth appears in the Meno (85C). After the slave's geometry lesson, true opinions are said to have been stirred up in him "as if in a dream". Just as elements from previous waking experiences are recollected in dreams, so the slave's prenatal acquaintance with mathematical truths is recollected in his geometry lesson. A dream, moreover, is generally an inaccurate recall of our original experience. Its elements recur in fragmentary and disordered fashion. So too the slave's lesson does not provide him with a fully accurate recall of his prenatal experience.<sup>9</sup>

Two other passages contain suggestive references to dreaming. In the Timaeus (52B-C) we are told that space is:

"apprehended without the senses by a sort of bastard reasoning, and hardly an object of belief. This indeed is that which we look upon as in a dream and say that anything that is must needs be in some place and occupy some room, and that what is not somewhere in earth or heaven is nothing. Because of this dreaming state, we prove unable to rouse ourselves and draw all these distinctions and others akin to them, even in the case of the waking and truly existing nature, and so to state the truth" (trans. F.M. Cornford, my italics).

This highly obscure passage appears to make two points. First, we do not perceive space directly, but divine its existence from what we do thus perceive.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, we are disposed, incorrectly, to regard space as a necessary condition of all existence whatever. Our normal awareness is, as it were, spatially conditioned. We can transcend it only in mathematics and philosophy, and even then only intermittently and with conscious effort. Much as Descartes reproaches himself for lapsing from non-sensuous thought into sensuous awareness,<sup>11</sup>

so Plato castigates the senses as a distraction to the philosopher (Phaedo 66A).

The second passage is Theaetetus 157E-158E. Here dreams create an objection to "Protagorean" subjectivism. It cannot be the case that all experience is true, for dreams and hallucinations are delusive. It is argued, however, that this objection is ill-founded. For there are no adequate criteria either for distinguishing dreaming from waking, or for regarding one order of experience as false and the other as true. The dreamer's experience is "true for him".

This passage contains an unnoticed puzzle. In agreeing with Socrates that waking and dreaming are hard to distinguish, Theaetetus remarks:

"The conversation we have just had might equally be one that we merely think we are carrying on in our sleep; and when it comes to thinking in a dream that we are telling other dreams, the two states are extraordinarily alike" (158C).

Since a dream in which we think that we are telling other dreams is most unusual, it seems a bizarre and inept illustration of the point. It is noteworthy, however, that later in the dialogue Socrates himself recounts "a dream in exchange for a dream" (201E).<sup>12</sup> If a dream in which dreams are related is specially hard to diagnose, then the status of their discussion becomes suspect, and Theaetetus' pretended doubts about it may have more point than he himself imagines. Perhaps their conversation is indeed a dream, in which other dreams are told. Like Lewis Carroll at the end of Through the Looking-Glass, Plato leaves the matter in doubt.

Both in waking and in dreaming, says Theaetetus a few lines later, "our mind strenuously contends that the convictions of



the moment are certainly true" (158D). On the face of it, this merely supports the Protagorean position: the dreamer has as good a claim to truth as the waking man. But the remark may well be double-edged. Despite the Protagorean claim, dream experience is not true. The mind's "strenuous contention" is misguided. Here confidence is no criterion of truth. If so, the plain man's ascription of truth to his own normal "waking" experience is open to doubt. Regarded in this way, the passage not only asks how we should prove that we are not dreaming; it also implies that in a certain sense we are. Our normal sensory awareness is, as the Timaeus has suggested, a waking dream.



## II. Dreaming and Waking in the Republic

This notion is elaborated systematically in the Republic. In Book V, after Socrates has affirmed the need for philosophers to be rulers, he contrasts them with lovers of spectacle (philotheamones), and says that the latter "live in a dream" (onar zên). For, he argues, a man is dreaming, whether he be awake or asleep, if he mistakes a likeness for that which it is like. This is the mistake that the lover of spectacle makes. He fails to distinguish between the many beautiful things of sense experience and the Form of Beauty itself. By contrast, the philosopher, who does make this distinction, lives very much awake (mala mupar 476D).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in Book VII, a man who cannot define the notion of Good is said to be "dreaming and dozing through his present life", and "before he awakens here he will arrive at the house of Hades and fall asleep for ever" (534C-D).

Broadly, this may be taken to mean that the non-philosopher lives in permanent unawareness of a higher order of experience. He remains in what Aldous Huxley has called "the quasi-hypnotic trance in which most human beings live, and from which it is the aim and purpose of all true philosophy, all genuinely spiritual religion to deliver them".<sup>14</sup>

But the dream figure may also be interpreted more narrowly in this context, if we reflect upon the kind of experience our dreams give us. Typically, they are (a) indistinct, (b) incoherent, and (c) unstable. Their images are less clear than those of waking

consciousness. They juxtapose elements unrelated in waking life, and they are short-lived in comparison with waking experience. These features, although not common to all dreams, are characteristic of them. They are our basis for ascribing a "dream-like quality" to an experience, or even for wondering seriously (outside philosophy) whether we are dreaming or not. They are also precisely the properties for which Plato condemns the sensible as opposed to the intelligible world, belief as opposed to knowledge.

(a) Belief is said not to exceed knowledge in clarity (saphêneia), or ignorance in unclarity (asapheia). It is "darker" (skotôdesteron) than the former, but "brighter" (phanoteron) than the latter (478C). The cognitive states of the Divided Line are proportioned in respect of degrees of clarity (saphêneia 511E). Objects in the visible world are placed between "being" and "not-being" on the ground that they will appear neither "darker" than the latter nor "brighter" than the former (479C). (b) Their lack of clarity is connected with their incoherence, viz. their propensity to manifest contrary qualities. The many beautiful, just and holy things will also appear ugly, unjust and unholy (479A). The same applies to things large and small, heavy and light, double and half (479B). The senses report the same thing as both hard and soft, thick and thin (523-4). A state that is really neither pleasant nor painful can appear to be both (583E-584A). Things seen may appear to be both straight and bent, concave and convex (602C). (c) Since phenomena are thus incoherent, our judgments about them are unstable. The soul, when beholding the world of change, "shifts its opinions hither and thither" (508D). The "power of appearances" leads us astray and confuses our judgments (Protagoras 356D). The soul is "dizzy as if drunk" (Phaedo 79C).

By contrast, the objects of the Intelligible world, and the judgments made by mathematicians and philosophers about them, possess (a) the distinctness, (b) the coherence, and (c) the stability of normal waking vision. Mathematicians define their terms clearly. Their propositions are logically ordered, mutually consistent, and eternally true. The mind is unshakably convinced of their truth once they have been demonstrated (Meno 98A).

The same advantages would be available for judgments of value, if philosophy were all that Plato hoped that it might become. Dialectic would provide inter alia a "science of values", by means of which practical questions could be infallibly solved. The solutions would be unaffected by the personal view-points or interests of those who reached them, like answers to questions of size and number obtained by measurement and calculation.<sup>15</sup> "Value" knowledge would enable waking vision to replace dreaming in human affairs. The dreamer's private world of subjective judgment<sup>16</sup> would be abandoned for the public world of waking men, sharing a common intellectual experience, and solving their problems objectively by means of agreed procedures.

The philosopher ruler's training in these procedures would provide him with a rationale for those judgments of value that he had learned to make uncritically when young (401E-402A). This perhaps gives point to the suggestion (414D-E) that the guardians' early education happened to them "as if in a dream". In context, this curious story is intended to bolster up the myth of their autochthonous origin. In a sense, however, their early education was dream-like, for it exposed them to sensible images of Beauty and

other Forms, which they would see directly only later in life, when trained in dialectic.

So far the paradigm of waking visions has been provided by mathematics. Yet there is one place in Book VII where the mathematician himself is said to be a dreamer.

"Geometry and the studies that accompany it are, as we see, dreaming about being, but the clear waking vision of it is impossible for them as long as they leave the assumptions which they employ undisturbed and cannot give any account of them" (533B).

In what sense does the mathematician's failure to question his assumptions make him a dreamer? A dreamer has no guarantee that his convictions are true. Even the most vivid and coherent of dreams need not be so. To call the mathematician a dreamer is thus to imply that, despite the coherence of his system, he may be deluded. Internal consistency is no guarantee of truth.<sup>17</sup> However clearly his terms are defined, and however logically his propositions are ordered, his conclusions may not be true. They rest upon purely hypothetical foundations, so long as his definitions and axioms remain unchallenged. The hypothetical status of mathematics needs to be abolished, and its categorical truth established, by dialectic. Like the lovers of spectacle (philotheamones) of Book V, however, mathematicians remain unaware of their limitations. They too are satisfied with images beyond which they feel no need to inquire, with mere logoi, words and definitions, whose real designata they never call in question.

A case for regarding the mathematician's objects as "verbal images" has been put forward elsewhere.<sup>18</sup> Here it will be of interest to see its connection with the dreaming:waking antithesis, and thus with the different degrees of cognition in the Divided Line.

The close relation between images and dreams in Plato's thought is made especially clear in the Sophist (266D), where a real house is contrasted with a painted one, and the latter is described as "a man-made dream for waking eyes". To paint a picture is to produce a kind of dream. Conversely, to behold a dream<sup>19</sup> is to see a kind of picture. The dreamer, like the picture viewer, lacks direct vision of a real object, but sees only the image. Furthermore, as we have noticed, he confuses likeness with original. He fails to recognize that the object before him is a mere image, and he will not acknowledge the assistance of any reality beyond it (Republic 476D).

The relevance of this to the Divided Line can now be seen. Just as the relation of image to original expresses different degrees of "reality" (alêtheia) in the Line's objects, so that of dreaming to waking expresses different degrees of "clarity" (saphêneia) in its cognitive states.<sup>20</sup> This can best be brought out in a diagram:

*Paton, H.J. Proc. Am. Soc. 1921-22*

<u>Book V</u>		<u>Books VI-VII</u>	
"Objects"	"Cognition"	"Objects"	"Cognition"
Forms	A Philosopher "Waking"	Forms Aa	Dialectic ( <u>noêsis</u> ) "Waking"
		Verbal Images Ab	Mathematics ( <u>dianoia</u> ) "Dreaming"
		Material Things Ba	Natural Science + Crafts ( <u>pistis</u> ) "Waking"
Sensibles	B Philotheamon "Dreaming"	Images Bb	Ordinary Man "Dreaming" ( <u>eikasias</u> )

The dreaming:waking antithesis is used initially in Book V to contrast the philosopher with the lover of spectacle, knowledge (gnōsis) with belief (doxa). The lover of spectacle is dreaming, in that he mistakes mere likenesses (particular beautiful things) for the realities which they resemble (the Form of Beauty). The same antithesis is used to draw an analogous contrast in Book VII. Mathematicians only "dream about being". Unlike dialecticians they do not view the Forms directly, but see them only through the medium of logoi, verbal images.

The application of this to the lower segments of the Line is, however, more difficult. Plato nowhere describes the state of eikasia as "dreaming", and it is not clear that a man in this state could make a mistake analogous to that of the lover of spectacle or the mathematician. For even the most unenlightened men are not given to mistaking images, i.e. shadows or reflections, for the objects that cast them, or refusing to distinguish between such images and their originals.

But this difficulty can be overcome. If the "images" perceived in eikasia are interpreted more widely, so as to include "appearances" ("impressions", "sense-data") in general,<sup>21</sup> the dreaming:waking antithesis becomes applicable here too. On this view, the man in eikasia will be a "naive realist", a plain man, who draws no distinction between sensible appearances and the real objects that produce them. He does not recognise the dependent and ephemeral character of "appearances", so aptly symbolised by shadows and reflections. The qualities of dream images noted earlier, viz. their lack of clarity, coherence and

stability, belong par excellence to the various appearances of a physical object, in its interaction with perceiving subjects. The appearances are manifold, changing and transitory, whereas the object is unitary, unchanging and permanent.<sup>22</sup> Conversion from eikasia to pistis involves the recognition that this is so, the drawing of a distinction between Appearance and Reality, not only between Forms and the physical world, but within the physical world itself.

On this view pistis is a waking state in comparison with eikasia. It is the condition of those who have distinguished the material world from its appearances, of those who understand the physical structure of objects, both natural and artificial. They are not limited, like the chained prisoners (516C-D), to empirical prediction of phenomena, for they have a grasp of their physical causes. At this level we also find craftsmen, concerned with the production and tendance of "things grown and things constructed" (533B). They are contrasted with those artists who cater for the "opinions and desires of men",<sup>23</sup> i.e., presumably, with poets, sophists, orators and others who exploit the ignorance and appetites of ordinary people.



### III. The Philosopher's Dream

The foregoing interpretation yields the following set of proportions:- Philosopher (A): Lover of spectacle (B):: Dialectician (Aa): Mathematician (Ab) :: Natural Scientist (Ba): Plain Man (Bb).

What, in this complex scheme, is the status of Plato's own work? Despite its doctrine that philosophers are "very much awake", the Republic is, in various respects, a dream itself.

(1) First, through its use of sensible and verbal images, it gives the reader a "prophetic" insight into the Intelligible world, an indirect vision of the Forms.

We have noticed that behind many of Plato's allusions to dreams there lies the idea of prophecy. In the Republic Socrates compares his own use of sensible images to obtain moral insight with a mantic dream. In Book IV, when about to define justice in the individual, he says:

"Finished, then, is our dream and perfected--the surmise we spoke of, that, by some Providence (kata theon tina), at the very beginning of our foundation of the state, we chanced to hit upon the original principle and a sort of type of justice" (443B-C).

The principle in question is that each man should perform one function, that the shoe-maker should stick to his last. This has proved to be an image (eidôlon) of justice, for it was adopted throughout the construction of the city, and thus foreshadowed the definition of justice as the performance by the parts of city and individual of their respective functions. When the principle is understood in its profoundest, i.e. its psychological, sense, it is seen to enshrine the true account of justice that has been sought. In this sense the dream has proved veridical, and can thus be ascribed to "some god".

In Book IX Socrates speaks of the perverted sexual desires and murderous impulses that emerge in the dreams of outwardly decent men, and that are gratified by the tyrannical man in waking life. He contrasts such dreams with those of one who retires to sleep after gratifying his appetites in moderation and soothing his spirited element. The "best part of him" is then left free "in isolated purity to examine and reach out towards and apprehend some of the things unknown to it, past, present or future", and it is then that "he is most likely to apprehend truth" (572A-B). Here there are striking affinities between the dreamer and the philosopher. Both are released from the limitations of their ordinary awareness. Dreaming, as Dodds has said,<sup>24</sup> is for normal men "the sole experience in which they escape the offensive and incomprehensible bondage of time and space". It is just such an escape that the philosopher achieves in his contemplation of timeless and non-spatial Forms. Moreover, like the dreamer of this passage, he can discover truth only when the clamour of appetites and emotions is stilled, and reason has undisturbed access to her own objectives.

Thus there is a sense in which the philosopher, although wide awake compared with other men, is himself a dreamer. Paradoxically, in order to achieve "waking" conceptual vision, he must re-enter the "dreaming" state. To command and to impart a clear view of Justice and Man, Ruler and City, he must resort to sensible illustrations, and to the construction of a dream city in words.

These contrasted uses of the dream figure appear on two successive pages of the Statesman (277D-278E). When discussing the nature of examples, the Eleatic Stranger describes our experience as "knowing all things in a dream, yet knowing nothing when

we are once again awake". Here the dream in which we may "know all things" is the philosophical understanding of an abstract concept by means of a sensible illustration. After using an example to explain the rôle of examples in general, the Stranger proposes that they use another one to understand the nature of the statesman's art, "in order that it may become waking instead of dreaming experience for us". By this he means that when they have defined the statesman, they will have a clear grasp of his nature instead of their present vague idea. In this latter passage, dreaming represents an unphilosophical lack of definition, whereas in the former it represents a philosophical use of images, such as we have found in the Republic itself.

(2) The Republic is dream-like in a second and more fundamental respect. Like mathematics, it avoids ultimate questions concerning the existence of the Forms, upon which so much of the argument depends.

In the Cratylus (439C) Socrates raises a question "about which he often dreams", namely whether there is any Form of Beauty, Good and so forth. A science of values, if there were such a thing, would be exposed to the same doubts that the Republic entertains regarding mathematics. Are there such things as Goodness and Beauty, or are our propositions about them no more than an edifice of coherent but purely verbal deductions? Such questions, if answerable at all, would presumably be left for oral dialectic. But unless they are answered, Plato's whole system can hardly escape being challenged as an illusion, an "ivory-gated" dream.

The Republic indicates the need for this further inquiry by disclaiming knowledge of the final truth. At the climax of the prisoner's journey out of the Cave Socrates says:

"God knows whether my surmise be true. But this at any rate is how it appears to me" (517B).<sup>25</sup>

Later he tells Glaucon:

"If I could, I would show you no longer an image of my meaning, but the very truth as it appears to me--though whether rightly or not I may not properly affirm. But that something like this is what we have to see, I must affirm" (533A, cf. 506C-E).

What supports this affirmation, in the last analysis, is a belief in the veracity of God. "God", we have been told, "neither changes himself nor deceives others by visions or words or the sending of signs in waking or in dreams" (382E-383A), and the passage in the Iliad (II.1-34) where Zeus sends a deceitful dream to Agamemnon has been duly marked for expurgation. Somehow or other Plato's God, like Descartes', must be supposed to be the ultimate guarantor of mathematical and metaphysical knowledge.<sup>26</sup> Without this there is nothing to show that the philosopher's dream has, indeed, come through the gates of horn.

(3) There is one final sense in which the Republic may be regarded as a dream. Plato uses this figure to express the contrast between theory and practice, between founding a city in words and founding one in fact.

In Book IX, as we have noticed, depraved impulses are said to be felt and gratified in the dreams of decent men. In the Theaetetus (173D), however, philosophers are said to be immune from such thoughts. They are so unworldly that "to take any interest in the rivalries of political cliques, in meetings, dinners and merry-makings with flute girls never occurs to them even in dreams".



Their fantasies are, doubtless, of a more elevated kind. But fantasies they remain. The ideal city of the Republic is little more than a pipe-dream.

When introducing his plan for women and children, Socrates expresses the fear that his audience will think him merely day-dreaming (mê euchê dokê(i) einai ho logos, 450D), and compares himself with idle thinkers who pretend to themselves that their wishes are already granted (458A). Admittedly, he professes to argue that the plan is "not impracticable or utopian (ouk adunata oude euchais homoia)" (456B, 499C), that the city "is not altogether a day-dream, but that though it is difficult it is in a way possible" (540D). But the tone of these passages is thoroughly pessimistic. The city, he tells us, could "most easily" be realised, if at all, by separating children under the age of ten from their parents, and training them de novo (541A-B). Since he has hinted earlier that such measures would not be at all easy (ou panu rha(i)dion 501A), to suggest that they afford the "easiest" means of realising the city is only, once again, to underline its improbability.

In Book VII, when telling his trained philosophers that they must go back into the Cave, Socrates says to them:

"In this way both for us and for you (hêmin kai humin) the city will become a waking reality, and not a dream, like most existing cities, which are peopled by men who fight one another for shadows and wrangle for office as if that were a great good" (520C-D).<sup>27</sup>

There seems to be a double-entendre in this cunningly worded sentence. The city will become a waking reality in two senses. "For you", because it will be ruled by "you" philosophers, and not by the dreamers who now contend for power. In this sense it

is existing cities that are the dream ones, and only the ideal city that is "real". But in another sense it is the ideal city that is the dream. Only when philosophers become kings will it become feasible, "see the light of the sun" (473E). Only when they re-enter the Cave will the city become more than the dream that it now is "for us"; that is, for Socrates and his friends who have been founding it in words. If, as F.M. Cornford suggested,<sup>28</sup> Plato "enjoyed framing the studied ambiguities forced on him by his dramatic method", this is surely a case in point.

The Eighth Epistle makes similar use of the waking:dreaming contrast. It ends by exhorting the relatives and friends of Dion to strive "until like a heaven-sent dream presented to waking eyes, the plan which has been pictured by us in words be wrought by you into plain deeds and brought to a happy consummation" (357D).<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the end of the Laws (969B) looks forward to seeing "as an accomplished fact and waking reality that result which we treated but a short while ago in our discourse as a mere dream". Much earlier (746A), the Athenian Stranger had criticized his own programme as impossible of complete fulfilment. For this would require that the citizens should accept all that is dictated to them by the law-giver, "almost as if he were telling nothing but dreams, or moulding so to say, a city and citizens out of wax". This would apply equally well to the city of the Republic, combining the two figures, dreaming and sculpture, repeatedly used to describe it.

We have seen that the Republic gives us a prophetic dream, in the sense that it reveals the Intelligible world. Clearly, however, it harbours no optimistic illusions about our own world.

Plato did not expect the fulfilment of his dream in this sense. If our argument has been correct, the dream of a just society was only the refuge of one who despaired of building it in waking life. Dreaming, like painting, was the solace of his political inertia. In short, the Republic is a dream of wish fulfilment, but it is not the product of wishful thinking.

To summarise: the Republic is dream-like in three senses. First, it makes a "prophetic" use of images. Secondly, it avoids fundamental questions regarding the Forms' existence. Thirdly, it offers a theoretical model of justice rather than a plan of action. In these respects it has much in common with mathematics, and its status on the Divided Line is that of dianoia. It provides an image appropriate to that level of cognition, a verbal picture of the Forms. It may thus be aptly described, in the Sophist's phrase for painting, as "a man-made dream for waking eyes".

D. Gallop

University of Toronto



NOTES

1. Beacon Press, Boston, 1957, Ch. IV, pp. 102-134.
2. See also my article "Image and Reality in Plato's Republic" (Archiv zur Geschichte der Philosophie Vol. No. 1965, pp. ), to which the present paper is complementary. Both papers were written during my leave of absence from the University of Toronto in the spring of 1963, and both are indebted to the late J.L. Austin's interpretation of the Divided Line.
3. The Protagoras, Gorgias, Euthydemus and Parmenides seem to be the only exceptions.
4. Dreams may be called "veridical", and are treated as such by Plato, if they are somehow fulfilled in subsequent waking life. They are rarely veridical in the sense that they represent a real state of affairs coinciding with the dream itself, if only because there are evident limits to what we can "really" be doing in our sleep. The story of Pitt the Elder dreaming that he was addressing the Commons and waking to find that he was is absurd.
5. For prophetic dreaming cf. also Laws 800A.
6. See Laws 909E-910A, Epinomis 985C, and Dodds, op.cit. pp. 108, 125.
7. Republic 332B, Lysis 214D, Protagoras 339ff.
8. Unfortunately, it is doubtful how hupar te kai onar in 277D10 should be construed. The above translation is R. Hackforth's. See his Plato's Phaedrus, p. 161, note 3.

9. Interpretations of the dream in this context vary. According to E.S. Thompson (ed. Meno p. 140) the slave's opinions are still "fluid and insecure". J. Gould (The Development of Plato's Ethics p. 136) says that the reference is to their "instability" and "apparent strangeness". R.S. Bluck (ed. Meno p. 33, note 2) thinks that the slave has had "only a dream-like memory of the truths concerned aroused in him, and there is little or no akribeia". This seems correct, as against Bluck's later suggestion (p. 311), that the arousing of the slave's opinions has been comparable to the recalling of a dream. Rather, it has been comparable with his having a dream, which is itself a recall of previous experience.
10. A.E. Taylor (Commentary on Timaeus, note on 52B3) denies that the passage means that we lack a clear vision of space itself. He takes it to mean only that "with regard to it [space] we dream with our eyes open". However, the dream figure does seem to be connected with the idea that we apprehend space "by bastard reasoning", i.e. that its existence is not perceived, but has to be inferred.
11. Meditations I fin., III init.
12. Note that Socrates here foists the dream language upon Theaetetus. The latter has not mentioned dreams at all, although he later agrees (202C) that Socrates' account tallies with the dream as he has heard it.
13. From now on all references are to the Republic unless otherwise noted. P. Shorey's translation in the Loeb Classical Library is used throughout, with minor modifications.

14. The Devils of Loudun, pp. 20 ff., quoted by E.R. Dodds, ed. Gorgias, p. 10.
15. cf. also E.R. Dodds, ibid., p. 316: "Must there not be a discoverable technê of conduct, an Art of Living, which would give a dependable scientific answer to the question pôs biôteon? In various forms this idea haunted Plato throughout his life."
16. The use of dreaming as a symbol of subjectivity is suggested by Heracleitus' observation that the waking share one common world, but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own (fr. 89).  
See W.K.C. Guthrie's discussion of this fragment in his History of Greek Philosophy Vol. I, pp. 427-431. The privacy of dream contents is also implied by the expression to emon emoi legeis onar used by Adeimantus (563D) to mean "You are telling me what I already know". "My own dream" is, presumably, what I must know better than any one else.
17. This point is made at 533C, and in a different connection at Cratylus 436D.
18. In my earlier paper cited above.
19. Dodds (The Greeks and the Irrational, p. 105) observes that the Greeks never spoke, as we do, of having a dream, but always of seeing a dream - onar idein, enupnion idein.
20. This contention was Austin's central thesis. The lettering in the diagram is adapted from his interpretation of the Divided Line, and is intended to display the ratios prescribed in 509D.

21. For this view of the objects of eikasia cf. H.J. Paton, "Plato's Theory of Eikasia", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Vol. XXII, 1921-22. See also D.W. Hamlyn, "Eikasia in Plato's Republic", Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, 1958. This interpretation, which was also Austin's, is supported by the treatment of painting in Book X. The painter of an ordinary bed is there said to make "an apparent bed" (klinê phainomenê, 596E), or to represent "the appearance as it appears" (to phainomenon hōs phainetai, 598B). His work is phantasmatos mimêsis, i.e. he reproduces the appearance of the bed. Here Plato treats the "appearance", the single partial aspect captured by the painter, as an image of the bed - smikron ti hekastou ephaptetai, kai touto eidōlon, 598B. The sensible appearance is related to the physical object as image to original, and is thus an appropriate "object" for eikasia. I am grateful to Mr. J.L. Ackrill for drawing this line to my attention, although he would perhaps not accept the use here made of it.
22. In these respects the relation between a physical object and its appearances is analogous to that between a Form and the objects that fall under it.
23. This contrast recalls the distinction in the Gorgias 464B ff. between genuine and pseudo-arts. The genuine craftsman aims to benefit rather than to please, and his methods are scientific, not merely empirical.
24. The Greeks and the Irrational, p. 102.
25. I have translated this sentence literally. It may be noted, however, that Shorey renders ta emoi phainomena houtō phainetai

as "my dream as it appears to me".

26. How this guarantee is to be provided remains obscure, in Plato as in Descartes. Adequate treatment of it would require an elucidation of the Form of the Good in its relation both to other Forms and to God, a suchnon ergon which lies beyond the scope of this paper.
27. kai houtô hupar hêmin kai humin hê polis oikêsetai, all' ouk onar, hôs nun hai pollai hupo skiamachountôn te pros allêlous kai stasiazontôn peri tou archein oikountai, hôs megalou tinos agathou ontos.
28. Mind 1932, p. 174.
29. For hupar ant' oneiratos in the sense of "reality as opposed to mere fantasy" cf. also Ep. III, 319B.