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PART I

CHAPTER I: <i>Eidos</i>	3
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Plato's autobiography [3 - 9], the only document we have about his intellectual development, reveals a person destined to pursue a political career, but thwarted by the political disintegration of the age and by the fate of Socrates. The postulate of the philosopher-kings is an epigrammatic formulation of the goal of a radical restoration [9]. Plato's written works and his active participation in politics confirm the priority of the political domain in his life [9 - 10]. The Greek state, originally built on religious foundations, had succumbed to arbitrary rule and thought [10 - 12]. The Socratic method and the death of Socrates are counterweights against the political disintegration [12]. In the encounter with Socrates, Plato's inner eye [13 - 14] beholds the eternal Forms [14 - 19]. The new state is to be built around this central vision [19 - 20]. To translate this vision into conceptual language Plato falls back upon Parmenidean ontology [21 - 25]. The Herakleitean world view presents itself as the opposite pole to that of Parmenides, and both, again, are fused in Plato [25 - 26]. Pythagoras helps to expand this realm into cosmology [26 - 28]; and the Pythagorean-Orphic myth of the soul serves as a vehicle

for communicating the lesson of Socratic existence: the immortality of the soul [28 – 30]. Soul, city-state, and cosmos under the governance of *Eidos*; *Eidos* as a spiritual force; intuition and dialectics as paths toward the *Eidos* [30 – 31].

CHAPTER II: *Demon and Eros*

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The demonic is a characteristic trait of Socrates [32 – 36]. It is a guiding force in his work of education [36]. Treated under various aspects in Plato's myths, the demon is a symbol: for the essential form of man imposed by fate; for the link with transcendence; for freedom within the realm of necessity; for mediation between perfect being and human community [37 – 39]. Demon and God are both identifiable and distinguishable [39 – 40]. The demonic as the *metaxy* is a basic structural element in Plato's world [41 – 43]. Demon and *Eros* [44 – 46]. The erotic nature of Socrates intimately connected with ignorance and irony [46 – 51]. Unity of erotic experience and vision of Forms in the *Symposium*; expanded to the hierarchical order of being in the *Phaedrus*; in the *Republic*, the love of the philosopher is felt as an act of begetting [51 – 54]. The interrelationship of *Eros*, *Eidos*, *Polis*, and *Kosmos* [54 – 55]. Plato preserves the original erotic force of Socrates and combines with it a systematic richness; for Plotinos, true love is *unio mystica* [55 – 58].

CHAPTER III: *Beyond Being*

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The Forms are Plato's answer to the Socratic question, the answer read by Plato in the Socratic existence [59 – 60]. As the latter transcends the spoken word, so Plato's path of knowledge leads to the intellectual vision of the Forms and to the limits of transcendence [60 – 64]. The three paths of knowledge, love, and death are ultimately one [64]. Its characteristics: the ladder [64]; from darkness to light [65 – 66]; liberation from

chains [66]; painful ascent [67]; guidance and compulsion [67 – 68]; compulsion of love [68]; sudden attainment of the goal [69]; light, clarity, and vision [69 – 70]; *eudaimonia* [70 – 71]. Images from the Greek mysteries [71 – 72]. Analogies from mysticism [72 – 80]. Why Plato is not a mystic is shown by contrast with Plotinos [80 – 84].

CHAPTER IV: *The Academy*

85

Functional relationship between Plato's writings and the Academy [85 – 87]. The different conceptions of the Academy developed by various writers suggest that one must not mistake a partial aspect for the whole, and that the essential structure of the Academy is more worth knowing and more knowable than its institutional form [87 – 88]. The Academy as a community permeated by dialectical conversation, centered around the *Eidos*, and oriented toward the city-state [88]. Escape from and participation in the world are evenly balanced [89]. Akin to the Pythagorean orders, the Academy differs from them by virtue of the Socratic power preserved in it [90 – 91]. Developmental and constant factors [91 – 93]. The mathematical sciences [93 – 94]. Systematic studies in botany and zoology [94 – 95]. Foundations of physics and cosmology [95]. Spherical geography [95 – 97]. Synopsis of the special sciences and their relationship with the Forms [97 – 98]. *Paideia* [98 – 99]. Political orientation: inquiries into the nature of the state and practical politics [100 – 107].

CHAPTER V: *The Written Work*

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Power and conceptual richness of *Logos* in the Greek tradition [108 – 109]. Only in the fifth and fourth centuries does writing assume an equal place beside the oral expression [109]. Contrast between Socrates, still engaged entirely in oral conversation, and Plato, the

philosopher-artist to whom writing is a necessity [110]. To clarify this urgent problem, Plato resumes the discussion of contemporary rhetoricians concerning the priority of written or oral discourse [110 – 12] and raises the topic to the level of philosophy [112 – 15]. The problem presents itself once more in the contrast between written laws and the higher norms of the ideal state [115 – 18]. Writing of the dialogues as a form of play [118 – 19]. With the criticism of imitation and the struggle against the imitative poets in the *Republic*, Plato secures for his own written works a place in the true state [119 – 21]. The struggle recurs in the *Laws* [122]. Playfulness and seriousness are inseparable [123]. Plato's struggle against imitation is also a sign of his philosophical conscience watching over the poet within himself and an indication of how the dialogues are supposed to be read [124 – 25].

CHAPTER VI: *Socrates in Plato*

126

The individual ego speaks, from Hesiod on, through many centuries [126 – 27]. Plato's silence about himself, therefore, is a unique phenomenon [127]. Equally unique is the position of Socrates in Plato's works [127 – 28]. It confirms the uniqueness of his encounter with Socrates [128 – 31] and expresses not only gratitude [131 – 32] but also the fact that only in this manner could philosophy be communicated to his readers [132]. Not that Socrates is gradually pushed from the center of Plato's philosophical perspective, but whether Socrates talks, whether he listens, or whether, as in the *Laws*, he is no longer present—these modes signify gradations within the structure of Plato's works [132 – 36]. The historical Socrates is the indefatigable questioner and, at the same time, through his life and death, the answer to his own questions [135 – 36]. Plato's Socrates gives answers within a philosophical context but signifies that the question remains alive in the answer [136].

CHAPTER VII: *Irony*

137

On the nature of irony [137 – 38]. Socrates' life is filled with irony [138 – 39]. Irony is present in his erotic attitude, his educational conversations, and his polemic discussions [139 – 44]. Socratic and Platonic irony [144 – 45]. Polyphonic irony in the *Euthydemus* [145 – 46]. The Form of the Good surrounded by irony [147 – 48]. Socrates and Diotima: ironic split [148 – 50]. Ironic shift of balance and other ironic tensions in the dialogues [150 – 52]. Silent irony [152 – 53]. Irony guards the Platonic secret [153].

CHAPTER VIII: *Dialogue*

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Among the Greeks Socrates is farthest removed from any self-presentation [154 – 55]. His never-ending conversation is based on his ironic ignorance [156 – 57]. Although other disciples of Socrates wrote Socratic dialogues, the form of the dialogue was perhaps a necessity only for Plato [157]. Socratic conversation and Platonic dialogue are related like nature and art [158]. In Plato the setting and the participants necessarily belong to the philosophical discussion; what is often called the formal setting must be analyzed as to its existential content [158 – 61]. Interrelationship and grouping of dialogues [161 – 62]. Plato's written work must be seen as a structured unity [162]. The Socratic dialogue compared to philosophical conversations of India [163 – 64]. How does the dialogue combine both a mirroring of the life of Socrates and a presentation of Plato's philosophy? And why did Plato never write a formal treatise [164 – 65]? The dialogue is the only form of writing which breaks through the rigid form of a book [166]. Plato's philosophy is a struggle between dialectical tensions. The most decisive struggles represented in the dialogues took place within Plato himself [166 – 68]. Socrates ends with a profession of ignorance, Plato with a vision of the *Idea*.

Yet the Socratic dialogue is the form through which the new insight is conveyed, because it was Socrates in and through whom Plato beheld the *Idea* [168 – 69]. Despite the contrast between the two men, there is a final convergence: in Plato's work, Socrates signifies both the philosophical center and, at the same time, its ultimate ineffability [170].

CHAPTER IX: *Myth*

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Dissolving of mythical tradition in late fifth-century Greece [171 – 72]. Socrates does not contribute to the destruction of the myth by the Sophists. But his own attitude is quite different from that of the poets [172]. Plato is both poet and *vir Socraticus*. The new myth grows out of the Socratic existence, including the mythical traits which Plato recognized in Socrates [173 – 75]. First level: Plato's myth is a preliminary, pre-Socratic approach to the problem [175 – 78]. Second level: the *Symposium* first presents myths on the pre-Socratic level [178 – 79]; the Socratic myth follows when Diotima, through Socrates, begins to speak about Eros as a great demon, after Socrates has prepared the conceptual foundations for the speech [179 – 80]. The myths of the beyond from the *Apology* to the *Republic* [180 – 89]. Comparison of the three eschatologies in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic*: in the *Gorgias*, cosmology is still distinguished from eschatology; in the *Phaedo*, the spherical earth is the realm in which the fate of the human soul is portrayed; in the *Republic*, the correspondence between soul and state is completed in cosmology [184 – 89]. Myth carries *Logos* beyond its own limits; and the certainty of the mythical images is again made questionable at the end. But myth gives direction to the will [189 – 90]. Third level: *Phaedrus*—the minor myths and the great central myth [190 – 92]. Foundations of the myth in natural philosophy [192 – 93]. Pictorial construction of the soul; its wings are taken from Eros; the

chariot with the two horses is a mythical image of the psychology of the *Republic* [193]. The soul and its destiny envisaged from the perfection of the cosmos. The vision of *Ideas* in the *Republic* is transformed through the astronomical perspective: the periodicity of the cosmos applicable to the individual soul. Hierarchy of the souls, judgment of the dead, and choice of life are only sketched briefly. Instead, visions of the Forms and recollection are built into the cosmology [194 – 96]. Human love viewed from the perspective of transcendence [196 – 98]. The creation myth of the *Timaeus*: creation and cosmos are fused [198 – 99]. Plato incorporates views of the older natural philosophies into his myth of creation; the Pythagorean in him subjects the whole to mathematical order; Socrates in him gives direction through the Form of perfection [199 – 200]. Prehistoric Athens and Atlantis in the *Timaeus* and *Critias* are mythical images of the two original constitutions: monarchy and democracy [200 – 204]. The myth of the *Statesman* completes what was suggested in the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*: the cosmic determination of political constitutions and thus their relationship to the world of Forms [204 – 207]. A glance at the totality of myths. Their focus is the *Eidos* [207 – 208]. Mythical echoes in the *Laws* [208 – 209]. Myth is falsehood mixed with truth. Myth is related to irony and connected with the truths of dialectics and with moral postulates [209 – 10].

PART II

CHAPTER X: *Intuition and Construction*

213

A PATH TO BERGSON AND
SCHOPENHAUER

Bergson distinguishes between the intuitive origin and the systematic construction of a philosophy and asks that historians of philosophy observe this distinction [213 –

14]. Illustrations of a genetic-analytic approach to Plato's philosophy [214-16]. More recent attempts to do justice to the intuitive element [216-17]. Dilthey [217-18]. Nietzsche's criticism of Schopenhauer, who discovered the origin of Plato's *Idea* in an act of intuition [218-19]. On the basis of Schopenhauer's interpretation, Justi condemned Plato's metaphysics [219]. While Schopenhauer restricted Plato's Forms to the realm of art, he did insist, from his own experience, most forcefully upon the intuitive origin of *Eidos* [219-20].

CHAPTER XI: *Aletheia*

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A DISCUSSION WITH MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Heidegger's emphasis on the "un-hiddenness" of ἀλήθεια [221] cannot be proved, although earlier opposition to etymological interpretations is now seen to be unfounded. Hesiod used ἀ-ληθής in the sense of *not-forgetting* [222]. Homer understood the term positively, though twice the *Iliad* uses it to express unhidden [223]. Thus, even in early Greek, and in Herakleitos and Parmenides before Plato, the meanings of ἀλήθεια include correctness of speech or belief and truthfulness of character [224]. Heidegger, on the basis of his interpretation of the allegory of the cave, imputes to Plato the responsibility for a crucial transition in the meaning of ἀλήθεια: from the original meaning of "that which is not hidden" to the later meaning of "truth" as applied to perception and assertion [225-26]. In Plato, however, *aletheia* clearly expresses an equilibrium between the unhidden reality, the revealing truth, and the truthfulness of spirit, of "existence" [226-28]. Plato did not corrupt the concept, Heidegger's historical (etymological) construction notwithstanding. In opposition to Heidegger, it is shown that Plato sharpened, systematized, and heightened the concept of ἀλήθεια [229].

CHAPTER XII: *Dialogue and Existence*

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A QUESTION ADDRESSED TO KARL
JASPERS

Jaspers has emphasized that true philosophy comes into being only through community; but for him Plato's dialogues are not, as it might appear at first glance, expressions of true communication [230]. Several significant illustrations, however, suggest that this might have been precisely Plato's intention: to reveal the reciprocity between dialectics and existence [231 - 32]. My own intention: to break down the dividing line between philosophical discussion and what is called dramatic setting. Proklos' opinion on this subject [232]. Existential elements in the dialogues [233]. While Jaspers fails to find these elements in the dialogues, Kierkegaard invariably invokes Socrates whenever he speaks of existence [234]. Plato's dialogues are to be read "existentially," combining the reality of human existence with the search for ontological truth [235].

CHAPTER XIII: *Plato's Letters*

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Whether or not Plato's letters are genuine has been a question of prolonged and sharp controversy. A few problems may be discussed without deciding the question of authenticity. Preoccupation with this question is perhaps a barrier to a proper understanding of these documents [236 - 37]. *Seventh Letter*: the three components of the *Letter* [237 - 38]. Misch's argument against its Platonic origin [238 - 39]. There is a structural similarity between the autobiographical account in the *Phaedo* and that of the *Letter*. In both, the intellectual growth includes three stages, the ascent is described in similar words, and there is the same goal [239 - 40]. The *Letter* is an important document in the history of autobiographical writing even if it was not written by Plato himself. Analogy in the *Res gestae* of Augustus [240 - 41]. *Second Letter*: the section about Plato's relations with Dionysios and the

trinitarian metaphysics can be understood only if we are sensitive to the sarcasm behind the pathos [241 – 43]. The section about the events at Olympia is factually correct in that Plato refutes the charges of hostile actions on his part; and it is legally justified in that he clarifies the charge of defamation [243 – 44]. The *Second* and *Third Letters*, whether genuine or not, have a historical place in the relations between the two men [244 – 45]. The attempt to prove that the *Second Letter* is a forgery by Dionysios is fantastic [245].

CHAPTER XIV: *Plato as Physicist*

246

STRUCTURE AND DESTRUCTION OF THE ATOM ACCORDING TO PLATO'S *TIMAEUS*

Opinions of modern scholars about Plato's physics [246 – 47]. Serious meaning and playfulness in the *Timaeus* [247 – 48]. Why the *Timaeus* was given the form of a myth [248 – 49]. The basic concepts of Plato's physics. The primary stuff, designated by various metaphors, is something like space, matter, and energy, in a primitive state which must necessarily be indeterminate [249 – 51]. Possibility of comparing it with Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty [251]? The elements can be transformed; each element has an atomic structure. Is Plato a predecessor of Dalton [252 – 53]? The atoms have stereometric forms. Is Plato a predecessor of modern stereochemistry, crystallography, and atomic physics [253 – 54]? There is a mathematical relation between the different atomic magnitudes of the same element. Is a comparison with modern isotopes legitimate [254 – 55]? Plato's smallest particles split each other and are rebuilt. Modern analogies. Such analogies are dangerous, yet unavoidable [255 – 57]. Causality or chance—a crucial question confronting modern philosophy of physics. According to Plato, nature is a product of both mathematical law and chaotic chance [257 – 58]. Influence of Plato's physics on

modern philosophy of nature: the concept of a mathematical structure of the elements, known during the Middle Ages, is revived at the Renaissance. Kepler, Gassendi, Swedenborg, Ampère, Wollaston, Goethe [258 – 60].

CHAPTER XV: *Plato as Geographer*

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THE BEGINNINGS OF SPHERICAL GEOGRAPHY

1. Two lines of thought are clearly distinguished in the myth of the *Phaedo*: one cosmological-physical, the other mythico-eschatological [261]. The terrestrial sphere has many hollows, one of which is our dwelling place. The true earth reaches into the pure ether [262 – 63]. Our hollow is only a dim reflection of the world above [264]. This contrast of appearance and reality can be understood only from the point of view of the *Idea* [264 – 66]. The description of the subterranean streams provides a basis for the description of the world beyond and a theory of geophysical processes [267] which relates closely to the theory of hollows [267 – 68]. The entire myth may be divided structurally into four parts: parts 2 and 4 are eschatology; parts 1 and 3 provide scientific foundations for the eschatology [269].
- II. Anaximander constructs the first map, probably after a Babylonian model, but with a new scientific orientation [269 – 71]; he as well as Demokritos conceives the earth in a disklike shape [272]. The two views, the earth as disk and as sphere, are combined in the *Phaedo*. The hollows in the spherical earth are to be explained as an adaptation of the raised rim of the earlier disk to the sphere [273].
- III. The geographical construction at the beginning of the *Timaeus* is the basis for the legend of Atlantis, but shows characteristics which are independent of this legend [273 – 74]. Progress over the geography in the *Phaedo*: the hollows have disappeared, and the surface of the earth has now become a potential unity for its human inhabitants [274 – 77].

iv. In Aristotle we find the next great step forward. The sphere of the earth is small. Different attempts to locate the inhabited parts. Western Europe and Eastern Asia are opposite continents. In the north-south direction, the continents run through at least four different zones [277 - 82]. Eudoxos is the most important figure among the authorities of Aristotle [282 - 84]. Continuation of this line of development in later antiquity [284 - 85].

CHAPTER XVI: *Plato as Jurist*

286

BY HUNTINGTON CAIRNS

Plato's theory of law is a basic part of his general philosophy. His influence on the law—in both theory and practice—has been large [286]. The function of law: all laws are rejected that do not tend to goodness in men; law as a second-best solution; the necessity of law; law as both a genetic and a teleologic process [287 - 90]. Theory of legislation: the legislator is the philosopher in action; written and unwritten law distinguished; framing of legislation as an effort of reason; purpose of legislation—to regulate the whole of life; anticipation of Bentham in Plato's thinking; objectives of the legislator; man's duty to obey the laws [290 - 97]. Judicial and administrative system: need for reform in Athenian courts; qualifications of judges; proposals regarding private and public suits; procedure; testing the veracity of witnesses; the art of professional advocacy; function of examiners [297 - 303]. Contract and property: provisions for recovery; property distribution and ownership; classification of property; examination of rules and practices; abolishment of the power of testation [303 - 305]. Sale of goods [306 - 307]. Penal principles: justification of punishment; distinction between injury and wrongdoing; categories of crimes [307 - 11]. The case against the lawyer [311 - 12]. Plato's contribution to jurisprudence [312 - 13].

CHAPTER XVII: *Plato as City Planner*

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THE IDEAL CITY OF ATLANTIS

Text accompanying Fig. 10: coastal plain of Atlantis [314 – 16]. Text accompanying Fig. 11: city of Atlantis [316]. Text accompanying Fig. 12: interior of the city of Atlantis [317 – 19]. The thesis that Plato's Atlantis is an "idealized Oriental city" is supported by parallels with Oriental cities, temples, monuments, and canals [319 – 20]. Similarity with and differences from the city plan of Hippodamos [320 – 21]. Similarity with a section of Hadrian's Villa [321 – 22]. Possible influence on the city plans of the Renaissance [322].

CHAPTER XVIII: *Socrates Enters Rome*

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- i. The digression of Polybios on the education and character of the younger Scipio has had considerable influence on historical and biographical literature [323 – 24]. The report deals first with the beginning of the friendship between these two men and then gives a character sketch of Scipio. Both parts are closely interrelated [324 – 26].
- ii. Documentation of the great similarities between the decisive conversation of Polybios and Scipio, on the one hand, and the first encounter between Socrates and Alkibiades as reported in the dialogue *Alcibiades*, on the other: (1) the significance of the moment of meeting; (2) characterization of the younger interlocutor; (3) Polybios as well as Socrates insists that the young man will not reach his goal without him; (4) the young man assents enthusiastically in both cases and (5) promises that, from now on, he will strive after the highest ideals; (6) for Socrates there remains a doubtful suspicion which was to be confirmed by history; Polybios also suggests doubt which was not so confirmed [326 – 29]. The comparison of the young Scipio with a thoroughbred dog goes back to the *Republic*; Polybios knew Plato's works thoroughly and used them extensively [329].
- iii. Plato's

notion of the philosopher-king is modified by Polybios who looks upon himself as a combination of statesman, historian, and philosopher [329 – 30]. Since philosophy for him is synonymous with *paideia*, he criticizes Rome, which he admired, for its lack of culture and education. He transmits the Socratic-Platonic influence to the circle of the Scipios [330 – 31]. Polybios was well acquainted with the dialogue *Alcibiades*; and the first conversation with the young Scipio, in particular, is written most of all under the influence of this dialogue [332].

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