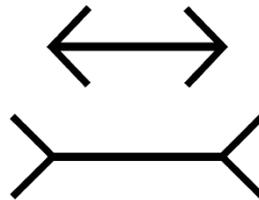


## Republic Bk X 595a–621d

The main work of the *Republic* seems over at the end of Bk IX. But Plato returns to his critique of ‘mimetic’ poetry begun in Bk III (392c–398b); informed by the discussion of Forms, he attacks the representational arts of painting and poetry. The discussion then once again returns to the rewards of justice. After exploring the immortality of the soul, the *Republic* ends with the myth of Er, which aims to consolidate the discussion of justice or morality.

1. At 597b, Socrates talks about three beds. What are they? Which one really is a bed, and why?
2. What is wrong with painting and poetry? (598a–c, 601c–602b)
- 3.★ Connect the discussion of representational art (601e–602b) with the line analogy (509d–511e).
4. How does mimetic art relate to the parts of the soul? Why is this relevant? (603a–606b)
- 5.★ What is the point of Glaucus, the sea-deity? (611c–e)
- 6.★ What strikes you most about the story of Er? (614ff.)

*Background.* (a) The phrase ‘illusory painting’ (602d) translates σκιαγραφία (*skia-graphia*), which hence literally means ‘shadow-painting’. This is an allusion to the cave and line analogies: shadows are the least real items about which there is but guesswork (conjecture) and ignorance. (b) At 603c–e, Socrates talks about the potential tension between having a perceptual impression and measuring (the use of reason). Here is an example (the Müller-Lyer figure of 1889):<sup>1</sup>



(c) The point about contradictory beliefs (602e) is used in the argument for the tripartite soul (436ff.). Keep in mind too that internal (psychological) conflict prevents justice (444). (d) Hume has a nice essay, *Of Tragedy*, which explores the paradoxical phenomena that Plato mentions at 605d.<sup>2</sup> The paradox is that we enjoy what is not enjoyable, *viz.* a tragedy.

1 Figure from Tudusciuc, O. & Nieder, A. (2010). Comparison of length judgments and the Müller-Lyer illusion in monkeys and humans. *Experimental Brain Research*, 207, 221–31 (p. 222).

2 The essay is available at <http://davidhume.org/texts/etss.html>.