

## Two Arguments Against Poetry (Bk II and III)

- (1) According to Thrasymachus's view of justice, bad people flourish and good people suffer; some people get away with immoral or unjust acts, while good people are punished.
- (2) Socrates finds this utterly deplorable.
- (3) But in a sense, that good people suffer is the essence of *tragedy*. So, tragedy promotes a wrong view of justice and morality.
- (4) In order to generate the right attitude, poetry must be censored.
- (5) Poetry is based on imitation or *mimesis* (μιμήσις) (392d). The poet impersonates or represents what is not originally his or hers; the poet empathises with someone else, as if it was his or her experience.
- (6) So, mimetic poetry is a lie or at least not sincere (fake).
- (7) Also, mimetic poetry is only (dramatic) appearance, but not real or true.
- (8) For instance, there is often moral conflict that fuels drama, but in reality there is but one moral truth. The Good is one, not many.
- (9) So, mimetic poetry promotes not only disunity and fragmentation, but also behaviour that is not conducive to virtue.
- (10) Furthermore, the principle of specialisation rules out *mimesis*: one cannot do well more than one job, or can be good at more than one thing, but since imitation and what is being imitated are *two* jobs (i.e. the imitating and the imitated), it follows that mimetic poetry impedes, or distracts from, doing the one job well. This is especially bad for guardians, who should focus exclusively on becoming 'precision craftsmen of the community's freedom' (395b).

## Plato's Theory of the Soul

In Greek thought, the soul is the principle of life and animation: things with a soul (ψυχή, *psyche*) are alive. Plato and Aristotle accept this view. This is obvious in *Phaedo* (105c): 'What is it that, when present in a body, makes it living? — A soul'.

*Consequence.* Animals and plants are alive and so have souls. Descartes breaks with this tradition and connects the soul just with thought: *res cogitans*, the thinking thing.

In *Republic*, there is a similar question: 'What about life [τὸ ζῆν, *to zen*]; is this not a function of the soul?' (353d). But here, the affirmative answer relates to *living* a life, and to live it well. So, the general idea is this: the condition of one's soul determines the quality of one's life. A shift from metaphysics to ethics.

*Dualism.* Body and soul are distinct: the body decays, the soul is immortal. In *Phaedo* (64c), Socrates describes death as the separation of body and soul, which, it seems, is even better off without it (cf. 80d–81d). One of Plato's arguments is similar to Leibniz' argument for *monads*: body is divisible or made of parts; the soul

is indivisible or partless. So, body and soul are distinct (see *Phaedo* 78b–80b). And since what has no parts cannot desintegrate either, the soul is eternal (cf. *Phaedro* 245d–e).

*The Problem of Parts.* Yet, Plato mentions parts of the soul. Although in *Timaeus* (69b–72b), he even associates the soul’s parts with bodily parts,<sup>1</sup> ‘part’ (μέρος, *meros*) has no spatial associations, and is fairly vague: e.g., *logistikon* (λογιστικόν) means ‘that by which we reason’. So, a ‘part’ is something like an aspect of psychic function.

<i>City</i>	Guardians	Auxiliaries	Producers
<i>Soul</i>	Reason λογιστικόν <i>logistikon</i>  planning (442b) learning, reasoning searching for truth, increase knowledge intellectual desire (cf. 581b) control or rule the whole soul (441e, 442c): practical judgement about what is best for person as a whole <i>Phaedro</i> 246b: chariot analogy	Spirit θυμοειδής <i>thymoeides</i>  fighting (442b) love of honour ambition aggression and pride power, success, fame Leontious case (439e–440a): passions can be regulated or educated (have their own reason)	Desire or Appetite ἐπιθυμητικόν <i>epithymetikon</i>  major constituent insatiable manifold (cf. 580d–e) immediate, natural drives: thirst, food, sex, greed simple means-end analysis in terms of likes and dislikes
<i>Virtues</i>	<i>wisdom</i> (428a–429a)	<i>courage</i> (429a–430c)	<i>self-discipline</i> (430d–432a): control or moderate desires and pleasures
		<i>justice</i>  (a) in the state (432b–434c): the three classes do their proper jobs (b) in the individual (441d–e; 443b): the three parts of the soul perform their proper functions; harmonious and unified psychic function (443d).	

1 *Reason*: head; *Spirit*: chest (close to the heart, but also close to the head); *Appetite*: belly.

