

The Role of Compulsion in the Education of Plato's Philosopher-King¹

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I

In this paper we will examine a question which is of central importance to a thorough understanding of Plato's Republic. Specifically, we will be asking about the role of compulsion in education as it is described in the Republic. At the outset this question must of necessity remain a bit ambiguous since its central role in a dialogue which is ostensibly about justice is not at first apparent, nor are the precise meanings of the terms "compulsion" and "education." During the course of the paper, however, this will be brought into much sharper focus as I argue from the position that, on its most fundamental level, the Republic is concerned in a more significant way with education (paideia) than with justice.

As for the idea of compulsion itself, we need to begin with a preliminary appreciation of just how thoroughly it permeates the Republic. Let us consider some of the senses this word can have.

Most obviously, one can speak of physical compulsion whereby the strong compels the weak. This can occur either on the level of one man compelling a weaker man to do his bidding, or on the level of a state compelling a man to act in a certain way, as for example when a state enslaves someone. In each case physical force is used to intimidate the weak for the benefit of the strong. The reader will of course recognize this sort of compulsion as underlying Thrasymachus' definitions of justice in Book I. Another similar sort of compulsion which is also pervasive in the Republic is in fact at issue in the opening scene of the dialogue. There, it will be recalled, Socrates and Glaucon are detained by Polemarchus' slave boy and are compelled by threat of physical force to remain the Piraeus. A third form of compulsion, the most pervasive form in the Republic, is the compulsion which a good argument exerts on those who hear it, or the compulsion exerted by dialectic truth.

All three of the above forms of compulsion can be found in the Republic, and oftentimes they occur in combination. Thus, as we proceed to examine the specific role of compulsion in education, the actual sense of compulsion which is intended will have to be developed gradually as we proceed. Before turning to these matters, however, it will be necessary to say something about the importance of the discussions of education which occur in the Republic.

What, then, is education as described in the Republic? Following Sallis² we can ask about education from at least three important and interconnected perspectives: we can ask about education with respect to the Republic's mythos, with respect to its ergon, or with respect to its logos. Let us now try to understand the nature of this threefold framework from within which we will address the problem of education.

It has been convincingly argued by Bloom³ that the central issue posed by the Republic is the relationship between the philosopher and the city. If we accept this, then we might understand the task of the Republic as undertaking to educate young men in such a way as to overcome the apparent paradox which underlies the relationship between philosophers and the cities they live in. Or we may push still further in understanding this task. As we will try to show in what follows, should this paradox prove insurmountable, which is to say should the political life be seen as somehow inadequate or ineffectual, we can come to see the task of the Republic as a defense of philosophy and at the same time as an education in philosophy. Furthermore, this task of education can be seen in terms of the logos--we can examine the various discussions about how to educate the guardians, or later the philosopher-king--but it can also be seen in terms of ergon--we can look at the effect Socrates' discussions and arguments have on his various interlocutors. In the first case we are operating from within the narrower framework of the nature of specific arguments, while in the second case we are attempting to grasp the dramatic context of those arguments. As Sallis points out, this is the distinction between what is said in the dialogue and the context in which it is said.⁴ Because of its character as a dialogue, in reading the Republic we will need to be concerned with education in speeches (logos) as well as education in deed (ergon).

By way of a brief digression we will now attempt to make this distinction between logos and ergon more concrete, to ground it in the dialogue itself. In Book II, Socrates poses the question that will determine the direction of the dialogue for the better part of three books: "But how, exactly, will they [the guardians] be reared and educated by us?" (376c). Then follows the tale within a tale on the level of logos of how these men are educated.

Let us consider first of all the speech itself in which the education of the guardians is first determined in its most general form (376d-377a). In this speech between Socrates and Adeimantus the education of the guardians is seen to consist of two main parts: (1) education in music (which includes speeches), and (2) education in gymnastic. The former is said to develop the soul, the latter the body. But there is also an interesting division within the education in music: (A) education in tales which, though false, have true things in them, and (B) exercises, or true speeches. Thus in chronological order, the education of the guardians proceeds in the following three stages: (1) False logoi which nonetheless contain some truth (poetry); (2) Gymnastic; and (3) True logoi (philosophy). This progression, which is worked out in great detail in Books II-IV, is the tale of education.

But it is also necessary to consider this tale as a tale within a tale: that is, to consider these speeches we have just referred to as a tale within the larger tale that is the Republic as a whole. To do this entails a consideration of what Sallis calls "dramatic character."⁵

The drama of the Republic, in general terms, is quite simple: it is the education of the young men with whom Socrates is conversing. Once we undertake to lay out the specifics of this education, however, its complexity increases. The education of the guardians is described in a tale which occurs near the beginning of a larger tale (the Republic). With this in mind, let us consider a remark of Socrates': "Don't you understand," I said, "that first we tell tales to children? And surely they are, as a whole, false, though there are true things in them too. We make use of tales with children before exercises" (377a)." The tale of the education of the guardians, then, may be thought of as on the whole false, although containing some truths. It occurs near the beginning of the dialogue, and thus we can say that Socrates is making use of it at the beginning of the education of Adeimantus and Glaucon which will occupy him for the rest of the Republic. Socrates, then, should be seen as fashioning this tale with great care so that it will properly shape the plastic souls of his listeners and prepare them (the ergon of the tale) for the subsequent true speeches. Furthermore, the young men who are Socrates' interlocutors--especially Glaucon and Adeimantus--can be seen as children, at least with respect to philosophy which will ultimately turn out to be the proper end of their education.

Let us summarize the above discussion. It will be recalled that this discussion was offered as a digression to enable us to see in play a distinction between two significant elements of the dialogue. The distinction we were seeking to ground is that between logos

and ergon. But the above discussion has another role: through it we can see how the subject of education is first explicitly broached in the Republic. That is to say, we have seen how education in this initial discussion arose as a tale within a tale, the former of which is on the whole false. However, in this paper we will want to concentrate on the true speeches about education which occur in Book VII. To understand those true speeches from the standpoint of their dramatic context, it was necessary to point out some of the characteristics of the origins of education in tales such as the above. This dramatic context of the true speeches about education permeates the whole of the Republic to the extent that we see the central task (ergon) of the dialogue being to educate the participants.

Having set the stage, then, in terms of dramatic context and the logos/ergon distinction, let us again take up our central question, but now with respect to the true speeches: What is education as described in the Republic? We will turn now to the true speeches of Book VII, which will be our concern for the rest of this discussion.

Perhaps the most succinct definition of education, or the art of teaching, is to be found near the middle of the cave image in Book VII. There Socrates says to Glaucon:

But the present argument...indicates that this power is in the soul of each, and that the instrument with which each learns...must be turned around from that which is coming into being together with the whole soul until it is able to endure looking at that which is... (518c).

Teaching, then, is the art of this turning-around, and the turning itself is enacted as the process of education. This definition, of course, is cast in the terms of the cave image. It is intended to evoke the image of the cave dweller being freed from his bonds, turning around to face the bright light behind him, and being dragged forth from the cave into the sunlight. In short, it is a turning from darkness to light, or from the visible to the invisible in the terms of the divided line (517a).

With this definition in mind, let us turn now to the central issue in this investigation and consider the role of compulsion in education. As will be seen, this theme emerges most clearly through a contrasting of the cave image with the subsequent description of the education of the philosopher-king. These two discussions have many points in common with respect to the issue of education, although for our purposes it will be necessary to look especially at the significant points of difference between them. These differences will have to be explained before we can be in a posi-

tion to appreciate the full subtlety of Socrates' discussions of education and the role of those discussions in the drama of the Republic as a whole.

One can see many instances of compulsion in the cave image. For example, right from the start the cave dweller is portrayed as a prisoner, indicating the sense in which a man is imprisoned in and by his city, being shackled by the beliefs and customs of that city.⁶ But it goes much deeper than this initial phase. The prisoner is then released, compelled to stand up, compelled to walk around and look towards the light, and it is indicated that he does not want this done to him and that he will fight it (cf. 517a; cf. also the discussion of spiritedness as the defense of the familiar and hostility to the unfamiliar, 375b-e). The teacher, then, has to compel the cave dweller to look at the light, and then has to drag him along the steep upward way out of the cave and into the light (515e-516a). And once the prisoner adjusts to the light and sees this new sphere as representing the happiest life, he is again compelled, this time to return to the cave and rule over the other prisoners. Socrates says that his concern is not with the happiness of any one class, but rather with the happiness of the whole, and this happiness is achieved through persuasion of compulsion, through making each class share its benefits with the others (519e-520a). The key, after all, to the Beautiful City is to have it ruled by those who are least eager to rule--the philosophers. So they are persuaded/compelled to rule by the city which nurtured them in the first place. The fact that the possibility of the Beautiful City hinges on the philosopher ruling should indicate to us how central the problem of his education is to the dialogue as a whole.⁷ And, in fact, having presented the drama of this education in the image of the cave, Socrates next turns his attention to a consideration of what studies have the power to effect the turning-around, which in turn sets the whole process of the philosopher's coming-into-being in motion. It is in the consideration of these studies that we notice an interesting difference in tone from the image of the cave, and it is in terms of this difference that the central issue of our investigation is framed.

Let us review several aspects of the stages of study which Socrates and Glaucon lay out as together having the power to turn the soul around towards what is. The underlying task behind this discussion, it will be recalled, is to see how philosophers come into being and how they are to be led up to the light of what is, or to episteme (knowledge, the highest segment of the Divided Line). The first level of education deals with the art of number and calculation (522c-526c). What is at issue here, and in the next four levels as well, is a phenomenon which will demonstrate

the inadequacy of an explanation based on sensation and which, as a result, will "summon thought" to provide a more adequate one. The art of calculation and number leads to thought only in a case in which a thing could be either of a pair of opposites, as is illustrated by Socrates' "three-finger example." If our knowledge of number and calculation can enable us to determine that the finger which is both bigger and smaller is in fact two things, each of which is one, then we will be satisfied with the report of sensation. But these are not the instances which Socrates is interested in. He argues that thought would only be provoked by the indeterminate instance in which the thing is in fact one thing with two possible explanations. Such a phenomenon then leads the soul upwards and compels it to discuss numbers themselves (525d), rather than dealing with numbers associated with tangible bodies. As Socrates says, "it's likely that this study is really compulsory for us since it looks as if it compels the soul to use the intellect itself on the truth itself" (526b). Why? Because any explanation that remains in the sensuous realm would prove inadequate.

We can see the significance of this compulsion to move beyond the merely visible, which is of central importance for our arguments here, if we digress a moment and ask just what is involved in it. Let us consider this moving-beyond in terms of the schema of the Divided Line where we can see that what is at issue here is what Sallis refers to as the transition across the major division-point of the Divided Line, which also signifies the beginning of philosophy.⁸ If we look at Sallis' analysis of the two kinds of dianoia (thinking) and the provocation which leads to the upwardly-moving dianoia, the movement which allows us to break out of our rest in the visible, then we can better understand the inadequacy of resting in the visible. It is in turn this inadequacy which is crucial to the beginning of philosophy, and thus to the ergon of the central books of the Republic which seek to engage Glaucon in just such a beginning.⁹ The role of dianoia, when confronted with the sort of perceptual inadequacy we were just referring to, is to separate out the indeterminate mixture (the finger as big and small), to reveal the relational aspect of it, and to pose the distinctness of this relation over against the indeterminacy of the visible.¹⁰ Mathematics, then (and number and calculation represent only the first of five levels of mathematics to be considered by Socrates), represents an attempt to "regard the visible order in terms of the intelligible (e.g., mathematical) order that has been posed; it becomes possible, in other words, to impose a determinateness on the visible order in such a way as to provide a clarification of it. . .

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The most important distinction for our purposes which Sallis makes is between upward-moving and downward-moving dianoia: the latter is the attempt to regard the visible in terms of the intelligible but as such it remains turned toward the visible; the former is the turning-away from the visible which characterizes philosophy, and the turn towards the Good.¹² We can readily see how this schema fits Socrates' discussion of number and calculation. The aspect of number and calculation which is turned towards the visible is that aspect of it which is necessary to the warrior, who must have some knowledge of philosophy but who still remains rooted in the visible (522e). The concern that Socrates and Glaucon express at the outset of their discussion of education in Book VII, namely that the study must not be useless to warlike men (521d), is a concern with precisely this downward-moving dimension of dianoia. The upward-moving aspect of number and calculation is then distinguished from the downward to the extent that it raises the philosopher out of becoming and turns him upwards, towards being (525b).

As Socrates continues with his discussion of the various studies which the philosopher-king is to undertake, more emphasis is placed on this turning toward being: this, after all, is the important turning-around of the prisoner in the cave, which in turn spawned the entire discussion we are considering. Sallis points out that this increasing concern with the upward-moving dianoia is also the development of the ultimate separation of the philosopher from the ruler, which at least initially is not seen as a separation.¹³ The development of this separation is the development of the inadequacy of simply resting in the visible, a matter which we mentioned above and to which we will return shortly.

Having described the art of number and calculation as the first level of the education of the philosopher-king, Socrates continues to discuss the subsequent levels of Plane Geometry, Solid Geometry, Astronomy and Harmonics. Each of these studies is described as resulting in an increasing provocation to turn away from the visible and toward the intelligible in much the same way (although more explicitly with each successive stage) as we have seen to be the case with number and calculation. Then Socrates makes the crucial transition to the final level of studies, dialectic. He refers to the first five levels of education as preludes to the song itself, which is dialectic (531d-532b). Thus there is an important sense in which these first five levels are preparatory to Philosophy. As Sallis shows, the first five levels of education lead progressively upward, away from the visible. Their culmination, dialectic, is then an exercise in episteme.¹⁴ As a result, the man engaged in dialectic

"comes to the very end of the intelligible realm" (532b).

Let us turn now to the song itself, to dialectic (531e-534d). Dialectic is the art of giving an account and receiving one (531e). The dialectical man tries by means of argument to attain to what is. He grasps by intellection that which is good itself, and in so doing he comes to the very end of the intelligible realm (532ab). The entire prelude (the first five levels of study) has the power of release (releasing the prisoner in the cave from his bonds), and leads the soul up to the contemplation of what is brightest, what is best in what is.

Dialectic, though, is different from all other things to be learned. It is inseparable from the learning process that would teach about dialectic, and thus Socrates cannot present Glaucon with an image of it (533a). The arts of the prelude result in a dreaming about what is, but they cannot see it in full wakefulness as long as they rely on hypotheses about their beginnings. Dialectic differs from them because it destroys such hypotheses and proceeds to the beginning itself (533bd). Dialectic draws the eye of the soul gently out of the bog of the visible and turns it around, using the arts mentioned as helpers (533d).

Let us consider in more detail the sense in which dialectic is different from the first five levels. This difference is most easily seen in terms of the destruction of hypotheses. From the image of the Divided Line in Book VI we recall that such destruction, together with a proceeding to beginnings, is precisely what marks off the highest segment of the line--episteme (510b). This is a significant transition because it marks a decisive break with what has come to be called Socrates' Hypothetical Method as described in the Meno and especially the Phaedo. With this transition to dialectic, a certain kind of self-sufficiency is achieved.¹⁵ Both in the Phaedo and in the Republic, Socrates associates this move to self-sufficiency with a significant change in the direction in which an inquiry proceeds. In the Phaedo, the method of hypothesis Socrates describes moves from a state of affairs to be described to an hypothesis which can account for its cause, to a still higher hypothesis if necessary, until agreement is reached. As thus described, this is a process which moves toward an end, namely agreement as to the cause of the state of affairs in question.¹⁶ However, as Bluck notes, it is essential to recognize that this sequence of hypotheses is not a process of reasoning from one proposition to another. The various hypotheses are not simply logical propositions in our modern sense of the term, but are rather a series of provisional explanations of the cause of what is being discussed.¹⁷

The transition to dialectic which Socrates describes in the Republic entails something quite different from what is discussed in the Phaedo. What is at issue for dialectic is to turn the agreement characteristic of the Method of Hypothesis into knowledge (533c). Dialectic too begins with hypotheses, but instead of moving towards still higher hypotheses which would serve to produce agreement as the end or telos of the process, it destroys them and moves in the opposite direction toward the beginning, toward the forms (533cd), and ultimately toward an unhypothetical first principle (the Good) which had been the unrecognized basis for the method of Hypothesis all along (511ac).¹⁸

How are we to understand this change of direction which seems to be characteristic of the transition to dialectic? Here it will be helpful to recall the discussion of a similar transition in the image of the Divided Line, and to think of this transition in those terms, namely as a transition from the third to the fourth segments of the line. As we have already seen, the third segment of the line is characterized by two different senses of dianoia, one of which remains dependent to some degree on the visible and one of which leads to episteme or philosophy (see pp. 7-8 above, and the discussion of upward-moving and downward-moving dianoia). The two ways in which hypotheses can be used, as described in the image of the Divided Line, have a relationship to each other which parallels the relationship between the two kinds of dianoia. What has been referred to above as the "Method of Hypothesis" or the "Hypothetical Method" refers to one way of using hypotheses, namely the way characteristic of mathematics. As Socrates points out, this method, as employed by geometers, has a certain dependency on visible forms even though it is concerned with intelligibles (510d). This is in fact a description of the way in which dianoia can turn toward the visible, which as we noted Sallis calls "downward-moving dianoia."

The second way in which hypotheses can be used entails the movement toward beginnings rather than toward ends, and it ultimately involves the destruction of those hypotheses, as we have already seen. We referred to this upward tendency earlier as "upward-moving dianoia." As Robinson clearly points out, the difference between these two uses of hypothesis is most obvious in terms of a claim to certainty. The Method of Hypothesis as described in the Phaedo, as well as the description of the first use of hypothesis discussed above, makes no claim to certainty, while the second way is aimed at grasping beginnings or the unhypothetical first principle, and in so doing make a claim to certainty.¹⁹ This difference vis-a-vis the claim to certainty in turn leads to all sorts of logical problems unless we understand the destruction of hypotheses

properly. The destruction of hypotheses, then, is required for the transition from end to beginning, from agreement to knowledge, from the Method of Hypothesis to the Method of Dialectic or Philosophy, from dianoia to episteme.

In light of the above discussion, it is important to note that the destruction of hypotheses does not itself constitute dialectic, just as upward-moving dianoia was not itself episteme. Rather, this destruction functions to lead the questioner to the point at which dialectic or philosophy begins, namely the point at which the questioner grasps the Good as the beginning. Dialectic is only possible when the argument grasps the Good as its beginning and comes to see that argument depends on this beginning (511bc). We can now see why it is not insignificant that in describing the Method of Hypothesis in the Phaedo Socrates and his interlocutors took the existence of the forms for granted (100bc). The Method of Hypothesis is unable to give any sort of account of the forms other than to take them for granted. A true account of the forms can only occur on the level of dialectic, and it is for this reason that with dialectic the pinnacle of the educational process is reached.

Another sense of the uniqueness of dialectic can be seen in Socrates' remark that he cannot provide an image of it. In response to Glaucon's request that they move on from a discussion of the "prelude" (the first five stages of study) to a consideration of "the song itself" (dialectic), and that they go through it "just as we went through the prelude," Socrates responds:

You will no longer be able to follow, my dear Glaucon, . . . although there wouldn't be any lack of eagerness on my part. But you would no longer be seeing an image of what we are saying, but rather the truth itself, at least as it looks to me (532d-533a).

Nicholas White, for one, seems simply to pass over this crucial passage. White says of Plato in this passage that ". . . he explicitly excuses himself from pursuing the topic of dialectic further than he has, on grounds of an inability to settle the pertinent questions, and there is no reason not to take him at his word."²⁰ However, even a casual reading of the above passage reveals that White is not taking Plato at his word, for nowhere does Socrates excuse himself from going further, either explicitly or implicitly. Rather, this passage is crucial for the development of the rest of the Republic for at least two reasons which White does not mention.

First of all, it is important to see that what Socrates does say is that he will not be able to go on

and consider dialectic in the same way as the earlier studies. Because of its peculiar nature, dialectic cannot simply be described in an analytic way as the earlier levels of study were. What we have here, at the very instant when Socrates begins to consider dialectic, is a failure of the conventional logos, the conventional form of argument. This failure occurs at precisely the point of transition from "an image of what we are saying" to "the truth itself," and as such its significance cannot be overestimated. Dialectic is a realm which in an important way does not have to do with images: the dialectical man has successfully turned away from the flickering images in the cave. The peculiar thing is that one cannot learn about dialectic except insofar as one can engage in it. Thus to the extent that Socrates can reveal dialectic to Glaucon, he has to do so by drawing Glaucon in, by getting Glaucon to partake of dialectic and thus drawing him into philosophy. It will be recalled that in terms of the ergon of the Republic this drawing of Glaucon into the fold of philosophy is the central task for Socrates to accomplish.

This last point brings us to the second significant aspect of the passage cited above. What I have referred to above as the breakdown of conventional logos at the point of transition to something new, namely dialectical logos, also serves to situate the education in deed (ergon) of Glaucon and Adeimantus with respect to the speeches about education in which they have been engaged. This failure of the conventional logos at precisely the point of transition to an account of dialectic which would have to be at the same time a doing of dialectic serves as a strong indication that Glaucon (and implicitly his brother Adeimantus as well) is really too young for dialectical activity. He will be unable to follow Socrates because his own education has not properly prepared him for such a major transition. Glaucon has not had the education in deed (ergon) which Socrates, Adeimantus and he have worked out in speech (logos). I will return to this matter near the end of this paper, although it is important to note here that the coming-into-being of the philosopher seems to have been accomplished only in speech and not yet in deed. The reader will also recall what was said above concerning the Phaedo and the need to take the existence of the forms for granted. There as here Socrates brings his interlocutors to the threshold of philosophy, but they are unable to cross. It seems to be the function of most if not all the Platonic dialogues to bring the interlocutors and the reader to the threshold of philosophy and to stop there, leaving it up to the individual in each case to cross or not. This view is confirmed by Hiram Caton in a quite different context, but it is perfectly in keeping with what Socrates does say about the nature of dialectic.²¹ 1

will have more to say about this in my conclusions, but this failure of Glaucon to be able to follow Socrates into the realm of philosophy (and as we will see shortly, it would be quite inappropriate for Socrates to compel Glaucon to follow, by virtue of the nature of dialectic itself) indicates that Glaucon is not properly prepared, and perhaps he could never be properly prepared except by the educational process which they have described for the Beautiful City.

As a result of the importance we have now seen to be accorded to dialectic, it is easy to understand why in the whole of the educational process special attention must be paid to establishing the proper basis for it. We have also seen that it is only through the mastery of dialectic that one can make the transition to the highest segment of the Divided Line and become a philosopher. Thus everything--the possibility of the city and the education of Glaucon and Adeimantus--depends on proper education. Proper education, in terms of both logos and ergon, can thus be seen as the central issue of the Republic.

II

In the above considerations of the true speeches about education, we have been able to see how education culminates in the coming-into-being of the philosopher. In considering these speeches we have also made passing reference to compulsion, but never in a context which would let its significance emerge. The proper context in which to understand how compulsion fits into the education of the philosopher-king is in the discussion of the distribution of studies. This we will briefly summarize before turning again to our central question.

There are in effect seven stages in the educational process. In the first stage, only worthy men are selected to take up philosophy (535a-536d), which is done with respect to all parts of virtue. Furthermore, unlike the situation of the guardians in Book III (413c-414b), we must not wait until men are old to make the selection because of the preparatory education they must have as children. The second stage of the educational process concerns the beginning of this preparatory education. The free man should not learn slavishly, so play rather than force is used in training the children. (At this point we can see an interesting aspect of the ergon of the Republic: recall (536bc) that the whole dialogue is play--thus Glaucon and Adeimantus are the children being playfully educated in deed. This characterization of the dialogue as play also gives further support to my reading of its inability to draw Glaucon across the threshold and into philosophy. (Cf. end of section I above). We will have more to say on this shortly, but briefly this stage entails education in various studies (presumably

the first five levels of study mentioned above) as play.

The third stage of education is compulsory gymnastic, which was discussed at some length in the earlier books of the Republic. It is a training of the body, and is of two or three years duration.

The fourth stage is synoptic education, which is in effect a systematic overview of the childhood education of the second stage. In terms of our systematic discussion of the studies above, the synoptic stage, which is given to 20-year-olds, would gradually bring out the distinction between the visible and the intelligible and would be such as to show the role of each of those studies in that overall upward progression. This stage lasts 8-10 years.

The fifth stage involves testing men with the power of dialectic, and it occurs only when they are over 30 years old. This test is to show who is able to make the transition from sense to what is, and it requires much care. Men must not be exposed to arguments when they are too young, for they would tend to treat them as play and misuse them, falling then into disbelief (539b). Thus while play was appropriate to earlier stages of education this is no longer the case.

The sixth stage is the return to the cave. The student is compelled to rule in the affairs of war and all other suitable offices for 15 years. Then comes the seventh and final stage. At age 50, the survivors are led to the end and compelled to look toward the light. They are then compelled to use the Good itself as a pattern for ordering the city, private men and themselves. This these men do for the rest of their lives. For the most part they are occupied with philosophy, although each must take his turn in politics and ruling. In this way they educate other likeminded young men to follow them.

III

To this point we have considered in some detail the sense in which education is a central issue in the entire development of the Republic, we have undertaken to lay out the true speeches about education as given in the cave image and in the discussion of the studies of the philosopher-king, and finally we have tried to show the structure of the entire educational process. In light of all this, we are now in a position to make some remarks about how compulsion enters into the education of the philosopher. In terms of the above discussion, we can ask: Is compulsion an important and necessary part of the education of the philosopher, as the image of the cave might suggest, or is it detrimental to that education which might be better guided by persuasion and even a certain degree of playfulness as the discussions in the rest of Book VII might suggest?

Or we can ask the same question again in terms of Sallis' analysis of the Divided Line: Is compulsion necessary for the "dianoetic shift" that results in the commencement of the upward-moving dianoia and the beginning of philosophy, and if so what is the nature of such compulsion?

It should be clear from all of the above analyses that these different questions are in effect asking the same question, which is perhaps the central question in the whole Republic. In terms of the logos of the Republic, we have tried to show how this question is intimately connected with the possibility of a philosopher-king ever coming into existence, and it is readily apparent from the "third wave" of Book V (473a-e) that the very possibility of the Beautiful City depends on precisely such a genesis. It is to bring about this genesis in logos that Socrates ventures to develop the Sun-Good Analogy, the Image of the Cave, the Divided Line and the discussions of education in Book VII. Of course at the same time Socrates is equally involved (perhaps more involved given the ultimate implausibility of ever solving the paradox of the philosopher-king) with bringing about this genesis in ergon, or in deed. That is to say, it is Socrates' concern to educate at least Glaucon from among his interlocutors, and in so doing to bring him in deed to the beginning of philosophy. This effort, it would seem, comes to its culmination in the discussion of the sixth level of education, dialectics, at which point Socrates says that he can no longer offer images but only the truth itself (533a). The only way to progress beyond this obstacle is to engage in dialectic itself, for dialectic is unique among all the levels of education in that it does not lend itself to being talked about: such talk is dialectic. And finally, in terms of the mythos of the Republic, or the ascent from Hades, it is only with the genesis of the philosopher that the ascent can begin anew. That ascent was interrupted in Book I by Polemarchus as Socrates and Glaucon were attempting to ascend from the underworld--from the Piraeus. It was then prevented from resuming at the outset of Book II and again at the outset of Book V. But now with the genesis of the philosopher-king, the ascent can at last resume. The ascent from the underworld is the ascent to philosophy, and in considering how the philosopher comes into being the ascent is resumed (521c).

The role which compulsion actually plays in this ascent (the ascent in all three of its dimensions) is curious, for it points to a limitation in such an ascent; indeed it points to a limitation in the whole of the Republic, namely the neglect of the bodily or erotic side of man.²² This is most easily seen in the image of the cave. The cave itself with all of its prisoners represents a city, and the prisoners are its

citizens. The shackles of the prisoners are the customs and beliefs of the city.

Compulsion, then, enters into the cave first of all in breaking the shackles of the prisoners. Why is this such a task? We can recall from Book II the nature of the spiritedness of the guardians; to be gentle to what is familiar and hostile to what is unknown (375d-376c). Thus compulsion is necessary here to combat and overcome the resistance of the spirited part of the prisoner's nature. It is necessary for him to be free if he is going to engage in the questioning of beliefs which is characteristic of the philosopher. Thus the resistance which the prisoner puts up, and which necessitates his being dragged out of the cave and into the light is all the result of his spiritedness: as Book II pointed out, this is a very strong element in man's nature, the more so if it has been encouraged by gymnastic training. Compulsion in this sense is necessary until the prisoner's eyes become accustomed to the light and he becomes happy with his new-found situation. When this occurs, compulsion in this first sense is no longer necessary--the spiritedness has been overcome, and indeed it has been re-molded to resist any attempts to leave this new world.

But leave it must, and here compulsion in a second sense emerges: the compulsion to return to the cave. This sense is similar to the first in that it involves an overcoming of spiritedness, but there is an added dimension of necessity. It is a compulsion from without, to abandon the new-found world, but it is equally a compulsion from within, from within the cave which the prisoner can never totally leave, and from within the prisoner's very nature. This added necessity is brought about by the necessary incompleteness of the philosopher's ascension: his upward way was only an ascension of the soul, and during the entire time it was underway (the entire time he was up in the light) his body remained a prisoner in the cave/city. Thus he is compelled to return by the fact that one can never detach oneself from one's body, from the erotic dimension of one's nature. So in this second sense of compulsion the prisoner is compelled to return, he is compelled to rule, in short he is compelled to re-unite with his body.

This second sense of compulsion with the characteristic incompleteness mentioned above provides us with an excellent opportunity to see the central importance which the cave allegory has for the Republic as a whole. To fully understand the significance of education for Plato and to grasp the importance which education has for the Socratic/Platonic conception of the political, it is necessary that we see why the body stays in the cave and can never leave. We need, then, to briefly explore the allegorical nature of the cave image.

Let us consider the image of the cave as an allegorical representation of the human condition. In doing this, we can immediately recognize a parallel between the fundamental relationship described in the cave (the relationship of imprisonment within the cave-community) and Socrates' discussions of the nature of man in the Republic as well as in other dialogues. Most obviously, the condition of the prisoner within the cave mirrors Socrates' description of the soul as imprisoned within the body, as "nailed" or "chained" to the body (cf. Phaedo, 66cd and especially 62b). Secondly, the prisoner within the cave can be seen to mirror the relationship which a citizen has to the laws of his state, as I have already suggested above. Thus we have a curious threefold parallelism here:

Prisoner : Cave :: Soul : Body :: Citizen : Country

At this point it should be clear how significant the sense of incompleteness is which I referred to above, and thus why the prisoner is compelled to return to the cave. As Socrates has clearly argued elsewhere, the soul cannot simply leave the body whenever it wishes, but must wait for a proper sign (Phaedo, 62c). Nor can the citizen simply leave behind the laws of his state, as is clearly evidenced by the situation of the historical Socrates and the drama surrounding his acceptance of his sentence as presented in the Crito (50e-51c). Thus we can see that the necessity which compels the prisoner to go back into the cave has the profoundest metaphysical significance for Plato to the extent that it mirrors the compulsion which unites soul to body and citizen to the laws of his state. The metaphysical sense of incompleteness rests in the fact that such a premature break of the prisoner from his cave (of the soul from the body; of a man from the laws of his state) goes against the essence of the human condition as Socrates sees it. Furthermore, just as there is a proper time for the soul to finally break from the body according to nature, likewise there is a proper time for the prisoner to leave the cave completely, but this happens only when he dies. The initial exit we were speaking of above, then, is more along the lines of the beginning of the act of philosophical purification or weaning of the soul from the body which Socrates describes in the Phaedo. The compulsion to return is then of the same sort which leads Socrates to argue against suicide (63e-67b).

The final act of compulsion mentioned in the cave occurs when at age 50 the survivors of the first ascent are led back out of the cave (not compelled this time, but "led": they seem to need help for their eyes are used to the dark, but they do not seem to have to be forced to walk up). Once outside, however, they are compelled to look toward the light and to use the Good

as a pattern for ordering themselves and the city. This would seem to be the compelling of an old man to realize fully his potential at last. As an old man the body is no longer a factor (recall Socrates' discussions with Cephalus early in Book I, 328e-329d). Thus the prisoner can leave the cave (bodily desires) behind for the most part, although he cannot completely detach himself to the extent that he still must rule from time to time. The goal of this third sense of compulsion seems to be a completion. Only now, after the first ascent, the return to the cave, and then a second ascent, is the prisoner in a position to use the Good itself as a model, and only now is this required of him. It is only after this compulsion has been successfully undertaken that the old men are in a position to become teachers. They then take their turn at ruling when necessary, but most importantly they educate like-minded young men to follow them (540b). Thus they become in a way the source of the first sense of compulsion, namely the breaking of the chains and the dragging-up. This act can be seen as the most erotic of all acts--the act of procreation: it is only at this point that these old men can bring about the genesis of their successors, can bring about the "birth" of a new generation of philosophers.

We have, then, these three senses of compulsion in play during the education of the philosopher-king, according to the scenario set forth in the cave image and the discussion of the distribution of studies. We have seen how the compulsion in each case is necessitated by the nature and circumstances of the prisoner--each sense of compulsion is in a way a response to the incompleteness of the prisoner's nature. Thus it would seem that each sense of compulsion is necessary for the education of the philosopher-king. How, then, are we to understand Socrates' requirement in 536de that "instruction must not be given the aspect of a compulsion to learn" or that "the free man ought not to learn any study slavishly?" He says in the same passage "don't use force in training the children in the studies, but rather play." The key to unraveling this requirement would seem to rest in coming to understand the precise sense of "compulsion" or "slavishness" which Socrates wants to prohibit.

The prohibition we have just pointed out occurs at a significant place in the distribution of studies. It occurs with reference to the second of the seven stages mentioned above, the stage of preparatory education. It is at this stage that play is used: play provides the framework for the very first exposure a child has to education. As we know from the earlier discussions of the education of the guardians (which, while on the whole false, nonetheless do contain some true things), this insistence on play cultivates the imitative power that children have. Likewise any sort of effective

compulsion that one might assert in opposition to playfulness in this sense would be either physical force or the threat thereof, both of which Socrates seems to have dispensed with as inappropriate. Thus in contrast to such merely physical compulsion the foundation of the philosopher's education rests on playful imitation.

But why, one might ask, was this imitative element not present in the cave? This question introduces an important distinction into our considerations. What we are confronted with in effect is the distinction between what the cave in fact illustrates and what the discussion of the distribution of studies refers to. In the latter case, Socrates is concerned with educating the philosopher-king from scratch. This fact is illustrated by the requirement he makes at the end of that discussion to send all members of the city older than ten years out of the city. Thus the distribution of studies begins with young children.

In contrast to this, there are no children in the cave. The cave is apparently a city of adults who are unaware of their circumstances. The image of the cave itself would seem to represent to a large degree the historical situation that Socrates finds himself in. It seems to present us with an established but decadent regime in need of reform (Athens), and to show us how to enact such a reform. If this is true, then such a reform would obviously not start from scratch.

This contrast helps us to understand the prohibition of force that Socrates makes. The prohibition refers to the ideal situation in which the philosopher-king has control over the rearing of children. In such a situation, care can be taken with how they are reared, and the proper amount of time can be allotted to each stage. But this only refers to the best of situations, and such conditions are unlikely (which in turn makes the Beautiful City unlikely). The improbability of these conditions is perhaps most clearly expressed in the requirement that all those over ten must be sent out into the country and yet still must support those left behind. So if we are not likely to ever have the best of conditions to work with, we are instead put in a position of having to do the best with what we have: we must attempt to reform the city we are in. This situation is indeed reflected in the ergon of the Republic: according to the distribution of studies, men are not to be tested with the power of dialectic until after age 30. But what is the Republic if not such a testing of the interlocutors, especially Glaucon and Adeimantus, in the power of dialectic? And it would be unlikely that any of the interlocutors, with the exception of Cephalus and probably Thrasymachus, are over 30. What this seems to say is that, lacking the best situation, one does the best one can with what one has. There is also the possibility, as

evidenced by Claucon's inability to follow Socrates in dialectical logos, that in this case the results might have to be less than desired.

If, then, the prohibition of force in education has the significance we have just pointed out, we can see that it is only in effect at an early stage of education. In fact, beginning with the fifth stage, the testing with the power of dialectic, the tendency toward a certain type of playfulness must be de-emphasized totally, and undertaking that would presumably have started in the previous stage of synoptic education. Play as imitation is useful in providing a foundation for philosophy, but it is quite inappropriate to the practice of philosophy. This is further attested to by the fact that the highest segment of the Divided Line--episteme--explicitly excludes all images or imitations of that sort. So to counteract any childish playfulness that might creep in at this advanced level, a certain compulsion would seem to be required. Here, however, rather than mere physical force, what seems to be involved is something like the intellectual compulsion of good argument. This seems to be the sense of compulsion which drives upward-moving dianoia to the level of episteme.

We might be confused at this point by the characterization of the limited scope of usefulness we have assigned to play given Socrates' remark that the whole dialogue is play (536bc). What this tells us, though, is only that play is appropriate to the beginnings of philosophy.²³ Glaucon and Adeimantus are beginners, and the whole task of the Republic from the perspective of ergon is to bring them to undertake a proper beginning. We have seen that play is quite appropriate to this task, and only becomes inappropriate if we venture playfully beyond such beginnings, into the realm of philosophy or dialectics itself where playfulness is considered a misuse of dialectic (539bc). Perhaps this is why, in describing dialectic with Glaucon, Socrates does not attempt to venture into that realm explicitly (533a). The dialogue must still remain playful, for Socrates' interlocutors are not yet properly prepared for a transition of such magnitude.

Compulsion, then, remains necessary to the development of the philosopher, especially in the second and third examples developed above where it comes to take on the form of compelling argument. Compulsion is crucial to the philosopher's development because it brings him to completion. In bringing the philosopher to completion, we have in a sense realized the highest point in the Republic.

NOTES

¹An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate Philosophy Conference in April, 1982.

²John Sallis, Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975), pp. 14-22.

³Alan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay" in The Republic of Plato (New York: Basic Books, 1968), pp. 307-310. All quotations from the Republic in this paper are taken from this translation.

⁴Sallis, op. cit., pp. 12-14.

⁵Ibid., p. 14.

⁶Many of the detailed arguments supporting this reading of the Republic can be found in Leo Strauss' The City and Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 125ff. The reader is also referred to Alan Bloom's "Interpretive Essay" and John Sallis' Being and Logos as cited above.

⁷This point is crucial, but to fully argue it would take me off the main topic for this paper. What is at issue here, and in my claim on page 1 that on its most fundamental level the Republic is more concerned with education than with justice, is the possibility or rather the impossibility, of ever actualizing Socrates' Beautiful City. Plato's Seventh Letter is also very supportive of this reading. There are several places in the dialogue where the arguments suggest that the ideal city can never be realized. Without going through this argument in detail, two points are especially important here: first the likelihood of ever compelling a philosopher to be king and the likelihood of the populace of a city ever going along with it (recall Socrates' fate at the hands of the city), and secondly the requirement at the end of Book VII that all people over the age of ten leave the city and yet still support and defend it. If the impossibility of ever actually founding such a city is accepted, then there is an important shift which occurs as we finally come to understand the purpose of the Republic: in light of the failure to reconcile the political with philosophy, the goal of the Republic becomes the preservation of the philosophical life (the Seventh Letter is important here). Crucial to the philosophical life, of course, is proper education. Thus, in effect, the theme of justice has been shifted from the level of a perfectly just regime, which is impossible, to the level of a just soul, which is not. The

question then becomes how to educate young men in such a way that their souls will be just, or philosophical. This is the sense in which education can be said to underlie the discussions of justice.

⁸Sallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 424-39.

⁹Ibid., p. 428.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 431-32.

¹¹Ibid., p. 432.

¹²Ibid., pp. 433-37.

¹³Ibid., p. 436.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 427.

¹⁵This sense of self-sufficiency is suggested but not elaborated by Hackforth's commentary to the Phaedo, in R. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp. 138-46.

¹⁶I am in complete agreement here with Vlastos in my use of the word "cause." He argues that the word has to be understood in a much more general sense than it has for us today. Cf. G. Vlastos, "Reasons and Causes in the Phaedo," in G. Vlastos, ed., Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1971), pp. 134-37.

¹⁷R. S. Bluck, Plato's Phaedo (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), pp. 161-62. In this regard, Richard Robinson's paper "Hypothesis in the Republic" (in Vlastos, ed., *op. cit.*) seems inherently flawed, whatever other insights it might contain. Again, the generalized conception of "cause" is again presupposed here, as mentioned in note 15 above.

¹⁸Hackforth, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

¹⁹Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-28.

²⁰N. White, Plato on Knowledge and Reality (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1976), p. 90.

²¹H. Caton, The origin of Subjectivity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 22-26.

²²This is not to say that the erotic dimension is completely ignored, for as I will show shortly this is not the case. Rather, it is neglected to the extent that the allusions made to the erotic in the Republic are thoroughly inadequate when compared to other

dialogues. Of course, this neglect does not prevent the erotic dimension from exercising an extremely important role from "behind the scenes."

²³Sallis, op. cit., p. 21.