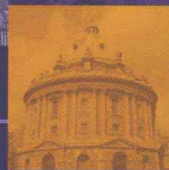




21世纪英语专业系列教材

# Reading Through Occidental Philosophy

## 西方人文经典解读



谭颖 ©主编



北京大学出版社  
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Reading Through Occidental Philosophy

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# 前言

学习哲学对人生观的形成和发展有着深远的影响。“哲学”一词源自古希腊的“philo”“sophia”，意即“爱智慧”，通常用来说明人对生活的看法和处事的基本原则。西方哲人苏格拉底说过：“未经审慎的生活是不值得过的人生。”通过阅读哲学经典文论帮助学生了解、反思并最终认同自身以及世界，并带着这种思辨的智慧去生活，去感受，学会用理智和心灵去选择属于自己的人生轨迹。

了解西方哲学的发展历程对英语专业的学生尤为重要。哲学是文化的重要组成部分。对于英语学习者来说，要掌握一门语言，了解承载她的文化，是十分必要的。而西方哲学无疑浓缩了西方历史、传统及思想的精华。马克思曾经说过，“任何真正的哲学都是自己时代精神的精华”，列宁在《哲学笔记》中也曾指出：“哲学史，简略地说，就是整个认识的历史。”因此，要想更好地掌握英语这门语言，深刻地理解西方文化和历史，就必须阅读西方哲学经典。然而，西方文化有着两千多年的历史，经典文论浩如烟海，一个人就算穷其一生也不可能读完。所以，本书挑选了 16 位西方最具代表性的思想家进行介绍，并节选他们最经典的作品进行解读。

本教材综合西方哲学理论发展的特点，引导学生对西方人文经典进行深度阅读，通过各种独创环节，如片段鉴赏、头脑风暴等，帮助学生梳理西方思想史的发展脉络，激发学生的发散性思维。

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# Seeking the Ideal

— Plato

Chapter

1



*Plato is philosophy, and philosophy Plato.*

— *Waldo Emerson*

*The safest characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.*

— *Alfred North Whitehead*

## In this chapter

- Getting to know Plato
- Peering into Plato's major theory
- Appreciating Plato's hero — Socrates

## Plato

Born into an aristocratic family in the city state of Athens at a time of great ferment and change, Plato (c. 427—347 BC) is Socrates' pupil and Aristotle's teacher. As a young man he became an enthusiastic admirer of Socrates and later wrote the philosophical dialogues through which Socrates is known to us. Although probably destined for a life in politics, he was disillusioned with Athens and spent a lot of time travelling after his teacher Socrates was persecuted. Back in Athens, he founded a school known as the Academy (from which the word "academic" comes), remaining its head until his death.

Plato was widely regarded as occupying the high peak of Greek philosophy. His influence on philosophy and culture in general is rivaled only by Aristotle's. The thought of both is woven not only into Christian theology but into many of western ways of

thinking and talking about the world.

### Distinctive insights<sup>①</sup>

Plato is seen by many to be the ultimate fount of all western philosophy. By proposing that the use of reason, rather than observation, is the only way to acquire knowledge, Plato also laid the foundations of 17<sup>th</sup> century rationalism. His influence can still be felt today. The following is his major thinking.

#### 1. The Forms (Ideas)

The most fundamental distinction in Plato's philosophy is between the many observable objects that appear beautiful (good, just, unified, equal, big) and the one object that is what beauty (goodness, justice, unity) really is, from which those many beautiful (good, just, unified, equal, big) things receive their names and their corresponding characteristics. He believes that the world that appears to our senses is in some way defective and filled with error, but there is a more real and perfect realm, populated by entities (called "Forms" or "Ideas") that are eternal, changeless, and in some sense paradigmatic for the structure and character of our world. That is to say, the material world we can sense is not the real world, but only an image or copy of the real world. The forms, according to Plato, are roughly archetypes or abstract representations of the many types of things, and properties we feel and see around us can only be perceived by reason. Take horse for example, the "form" or "idea" of horse is intelligible, abstract and can be applied to all horses. It is something that never changes no matter how horse is different from another, or even all horses on the earth vanish.

To illustrate his theory, Plato presents what has become known as "Allegory of the Cave" in his work, *The Republic*. In the allegory, a group of prisoners were chained in a fixed position in a cave, and they were only able to look at the wall in front of them. Behind them is an elevation that rises abruptly from the level where the prisoners are seated. On this elevation there are other persons walking back and forth carrying artificial objects, including the figures of animals and human beings made out of wood and stone and various other materials. Behind these walking persons is a fire, and further back still is the entrance to the cave. The chained prisoners can look only forward against the wall at the end of the cave and see neither each other nor the moving persons nor the fire behind them. All that the prisoners can ever see are the shadows on the wall in front of them, which are projected as people walk in front of the fire. They never see the objects or the people carrying them, nor are they aware that the shadows are shadows of other things. The prisoners are "like ourselves", says Plato. The world of our experience, which we take to be real, is only a shadow world. The real world is the world of ideas, which we

---

① 柏拉图建立了欧洲哲学史上第一个庞大的客观唯心主义体系,其中心为理念论。柏拉图认为世界由“理念世界”和“现象世界”所组成。理念的世界是真实的存在,永恒不变,而人类感官所接触到的这个现实的世界,只不过是理念世界的微弱的影子,它由现象所组成,而每种现象是因时空等因素而表现出暂时变动等特征。



can reach only by intuitive contemplation, not by sense-knowledge.

## 2. The Divided Line<sup>①</sup>

In his metaphor of the Divided Line, Plato provides more details about the levels of knowledge that we can obtain. Through Socrates, Plato imagines that there exists a line between the actual world, dividing it into two parts. The lower part of the line consists of the visible world and the upper part of the line makes up the intelligible world. And each half of the line relates to a certain type of knowledge; in the visible world, we can only have opinion; in the intelligible world we achieve knowledge. Each of these divisions can be subdivided into two. The visible or changing world can be divided into a lower region, “illusion”, which is made up of shadows, reflections, paintings, poetry, etc., and an upper region, “belief”, which refers to any kind of knowledge of things that change, such as individual horses. “Belief” may be true some or most of the time but sometimes it is wrong because things in the visible world change. Belief is practical and may serve as a relatively reliable guide to life. The upper region can be divided into “reason” and “intelligence”. “Reason” is the knowledge like mathematics and requires that some postulates be accepted without question. “Intelligence” is the knowledge of the highest and most abstract categories of things, an understanding of the ultimate good. We approach this highest level of knowledge to the extent that we are able to move beyond the restrictions of hypotheses toward the unity of all Forms.

## 3. The Recollection<sup>②</sup>

Plato argues that we have the ability to recognize the imperfect instances of the Form in the world we inhabit. He believes that our conception of Ideal Forms must be innate, even if we are not aware of this. Human beings are divided into two parts: the body and the soul. Our bodies possess the senses, through which we are able to perceive the material world, while the soul possesses the reason with which we can perceive the realm of Ideas or Forms. Plato concludes that our soul, which is immortal and eternal, must have inhabited the world of Ideas before our birth, and still yearns to return to that realm after our death. So when we see variations of the Ideas in the world with our senses, we recognize them as a sort of recollection. Recalling the innate memories of these Ideas requires reason — an attribute of the soul.

## 4. The Philosopher-king

According to Plato, as in the case of a ship, where the pilot's authority rests upon knowledge of navigation, so as the ship of state should be piloted by someone who has adequate knowledge. Plato develops this theme in his *Republic*. He believes that competence should be the qualification for authority. The people who, brave or strong but are not intelligent, are suited for various productive professions, such as farming, building etc.. The people who are somewhat bright, strong and especially courageous are suited to defensive and policing

---

① 柏拉图认为这个世界可分为可知世界和可见世界。可见世界由影子、反射物、绘画、诗歌等幻想和信念组成，是变化无常的，相对的，不真实的。而由像数学这样的理性知识构成的可知世界中的理念却是永恒不变的，绝对的，是唯一的存在。它只能为思维所认识。

② 柏拉图的回忆说认为真正的知识是对理念的认识，是人出世以前灵魂早就具有，但在灵魂投生到人体后，由于肉体的玷污，而被暂时忘却。人们要得到知识，只需唤起自己的灵魂对理念的回忆。认为人只有摆脱肉体的干扰，才能重新获得对理念的认识。



professions. The ruler, said Plato, should be the one who has been fully educated and has come to understand the difference between the visible world and the intelligible world — between the realm of opinion and the realm of knowledge, between appearance and reality. In short, the philosopher-king is one whose education has led him up step by step through the ascending degrees of knowledge of the Divided Line until at last he has knowledge of the Good, the synoptic vision of the interrelation of all truths to each other.

### 5. Platonic Love

Plato goes beyond accepting homoerotic relationships as part of his social world. He takes the romantic view of them, and takes it further, in two ways. He stresses the mentoring aspect of the lover-beloved relation, elevating it to an idealized relation between teacher and pupil which is above physical attraction. It consists in concern for the other's soul — that is, their psychological and mental well-being. This is what is often labeled "Platonic love" — love with the form of a romantic relation, but transformed by concern with the soul rather than the body. By using the language of homoerotic romantic love, Plato presents the urge to philosophical enquiry and understanding as itself being a transformation of sexual desire. In a passage on the "ascent of love" in the *Symposium*, Plato, through Socrates, describes how erotic urge can become sublimated and transfigured, leading the person to move beyond particular gratifications, finding satisfaction only in the transformation from individual possession to contemplation and understanding universal rules.

The reason why Plato did everything as unlikely as tracing the drive for philosophical understanding to the energy of love probably lies in the fact that he is often attracted by an explanation which has the promise of harmonizing two very different demands on what is to be explained. The drive to do philosophy has to come from within you, and be genuine. Plato is struck by its likeness to the lover's desire: it comes from within you in a way that cannot be deliberately produced, and, like love, it drives you to focus all your efforts to achieve an aim which you feel you cannot live without, however impossible the attainment may seem to be. But philosophy is also like a joint activity; and few philosophers have stressed as much as Plato the importance of mutual discussion and argument: philosophical achievement is produced from the conversations of two or more, not just the intense thoughts of one. Plato stresses at times the way that love can produce a couple with joint concerns which transcend what each gets separately out of the relationship; philosophy similarly requires the stimulus and co-operation of joint discussion and argument. Philosophy and love thus share puzzling features.

### 6. Women's Potential and the Family

Plato's *Republic* is also famous for the idea that in an ideally governed society the nuclear family should be either abolished or severely limited. Plato is stuck by the way that families not only serve as schools for selfishness and a competitive and hostile attitude to outsiders, but also close the spread of attachment to wider groups. Cities will have citizens with real attachment to their city and its ideals, he thinks, only if the kind of influences provided within the nuclear family are reined in.

Among the benefits of this idea he sees a release of the potential in women, who will

exchange a narrow life of caring for husband and children at home for one in which their physical and mental capacities can be developed in wider contexts, just as those of men are.

### Introductory remarks

(The) *Apology* is Plato's version of speech given by Socrates as he defends himself against the charges of being a man "who corrupted the young of the Athens, refused to worship the gods recognized by the state and invented new deities". Socrates' speech, however, is by no means an "apology" in our modern understanding of the word. It here has its earlier meaning (now usually expressed by the word "*apologia*") of speaking in defense of a cause or of one's beliefs or actions. Thus, in *The Apology*, Socrates attempts to defend himself and his conduct — certainly not to apologize for it.

(The) *Apology* can be divided into three parts. The first part is Socrates' own defense of himself including the famous recounting of the Oracle at Delphi<sup>①</sup> with occasional comments from Miletus his accuser. The second part is Socrates' Proposal for his Sentence. And the third part, which is our present selection, is Socrates' comments on his own sentence.

### Text

## The *Apology*<sup>②</sup> (excerpt)

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature<sup>③</sup>. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them; you think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal — I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid<sup>④</sup>. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words — certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to do, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me<sup>⑤</sup>. I thought at

① 德尔菲神谕。古希腊的德尔菲被称为神谕之地，是古代神谕者聚居的地方。

② 公元前 399 年，雅典法庭以“亵渎神灵，腐蚀青年”的罪名判处苏格拉底死刑。柏拉图的《申辩篇》叙述了宣判后苏格拉底在法庭上为自己所作的最后的辩护。

③ ... your desire... the course of nature; 如果稍作等待，自然的进程就会帮助你们完成这个愿望。（即，至苏格拉底于死地）。

④ you think that... undone or unsaid; 你们以为我之所以被判刑是由于我的辩护不充分，我的意思是，如果我尽可能用言词和行为打动陪审团，以求获得赦免，也许不至于被判死刑。procured my acquittal; 被判无罪。

⑤ But I had not... unworthy of me. 我不愿哭泣哀嚎，不想厚颜无耻地进行表演，说些和做些我认为毫无价值，而你们却惯于用别人那里听到和看到的事情来取悦你们。wail; 恸哭；嚎啕。lament; 悲痛；伤心。

the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger; nor do I now repent of the style of my defense; I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death<sup>①</sup>. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death<sup>②</sup>. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them<sup>③</sup>. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, — they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong<sup>④</sup>; and I must abide by<sup>⑤</sup> my award — let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated, — and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain<sup>⑥</sup> prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power<sup>⑦</sup>. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose; far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained; and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring<sup>⑧</sup> your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted<sup>⑨</sup> me, I would like also to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges — for you I may truly call judges — I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which

① For neither in war... escaping death: 法庭如同战场, 无论我和他人都不应费尽心机去逃避死亡。

② The difficulty... faster than death: 真正困难的不是逃避死亡, 而是规避不义; 不义之事比死亡更难逃避。(这里, 苏格拉底指出为善去死比苟活于世更有价值。)

③ I am old... overtaken them: 我老了, 迟钝了, 逃避不了死亡; 但聪明而敏捷的原告却不能逃避不义。

④ they too go... villainy and wrong: 他们也会因为邪恶和道德败坏而被真理宣判死刑。villainy and wrong: 邪恶和道德败坏。

⑤ abide by: 承担; 承受。

⑥ would fain: fain 用在 would 后[古][诗]: 欣然; 乐意。

⑦ in the hour... prophetic power: 临死之时是最能作出预言之时。

⑧ censure: 指责; 谴责。

⑨ acquit(sb. of): 宣判……无罪。

the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter<sup>①</sup>; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition<sup>②</sup>, either when I was leaving my house in the morning, or when I was on my way to the court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence<sup>③</sup>? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things — either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another<sup>④</sup>. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others<sup>⑤</sup>. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world<sup>⑥</sup>, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus<sup>⑦</sup> and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus<sup>⑧</sup> and Musaeus and Hesiod

① Hitherto... in any matter: 一种预言的声音一直伴随着我,如果我要去做我不该做的事,哪怕是微不足重的小事,它都要阻止我。

② But the oracle... opposition: 神却没降一点征兆阻止我。

③ What do I... this silence: 我怎么解释神的这种沉默呢?

④ For one of two thing... to another: 死是两种境界之一: 或是灵魂和肉体虚无,死者已毫无知觉;或者如世俗所说,死亡就是灵魂从一处移居到另一处。

⑤ For if a person... with the others: 如果让任何人把他沉睡无梦的夜晚与他一身中度过其他日日夜夜相比较,在充分思考后指出,他的一生中有多少日日夜夜比他沉睡无梦的夜晚更美好、更幸福,我想即使是波斯王都会发现这样的日子屈指可数,更不要说一般人了。a private man: 一般平民。great king: 指当时的波斯王。

⑥ If indeed... in this world: 如果到了另一个世界,他则摆脱了这个世界所谓的法官的纠缠。the world below: 另一个世界,指死亡。

⑦ 米诺斯,克里特国王,死后成为冥府判官之一,以严密的法治闻名;拉达曼提斯,米诺斯的兄弟,死后亦是冥府判官之一;埃阿科斯,蚁民王,作为对他生前的正义和虔诚的报偿,宙斯也让他任阴间当了法官。

⑧ Orpheus: 俄耳甫斯。太阳神兼音乐之神阿波罗和司管文艺的缪斯(Muse)女神卡利俄帕(Calliope)之子。

and Homer<sup>①</sup>? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in their meeting and conversing with Palamedes<sup>②</sup>, and Ajax the son of Telamon<sup>③</sup>, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition<sup>④</sup>; or Odysseus or Sisyphus<sup>⑤</sup>, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions; assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favor to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing, — then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways — I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only know.

### Brainstorming

1. Was Socrates trying to get himself acquitted? If he was not, what effect was he trying to exert on the jury?
2. Why does Socrates assume that his condemnation is actually something good?
3. What is the supernatural sign or divine oracle that Socrates alludes to? Might we

① 穆萨欧斯, 传说是诗歌的创始人; 赫西奥德(c700 BC)古希腊诗人; 荷马(c700 BC)古希腊诗人。

② Palamedes: 帕拉墨德斯, 特洛伊战争中的希腊英雄。

③ Ajax the son of Telamon: 特拉蒙的阿雅克斯, 古希腊神话中的英雄。

④ Trojan expedition: 特洛伊之战, 以争夺漂亮的女人海伦(Helen)为起因。是一场以阿伽门农(Agamemnon)及阿喀琉斯(Achilles)为首的希腊军进攻以帕里斯(Paris)及赫克托尔(Hector)为首的特洛伊城的十年攻城战。

⑤ Odysseus or Sisyphus: 奥德修斯或西绪福斯, 皆为希腊神话传说中的英雄人物。

count this as some kind of specialized knowledge, the kind which Socrates vehemently denies having? Or is this kind of intuition or inspiration of the kind Socrates identifies with the poets?

4. What is Socrates' view of death? Why does Socrates especially want to talk to Palamedes and Ajax (son of Telamon) in the afterlife?

5. What moral values does Socrates uphold?

6. Is Socrates a theist? If he is, what does his "god" symbolize?

7. How does the text illuminate Socrates' maxim "An unexamined life is not worth living"? How, do you think, does Socrates examine his own life?

### Supplementary reading

The famous *Allegory of the Cave*, also known as Plato's Cave is taken from his *Republic* Book VII (514a—520a). Written as a fictional dialogue between Socrates and Plato's brother Glaucon, it depicts Plato's Theory of Forms, according to which, the "Form" or "Idea", and not the material world of change known to us through sensation, possess the highest and most fundamental kind of reality. And it is philosophers' task to enlighten the "prisoners".

As Plato's most widely read work, *The Allegory* has exercised a profound influence upon Western thought.

### The Allegory of the Cave<sup>①</sup>(excerpt)

Next, said I, here is a parable to illustrate the degrees in which our nature may be enlightened or unenlightened. Imagine the condition of men living in a sort of cavernous chamber underground, with an entrance open to the light and a long passage all down the cave. Here they have been from childhood, chained by the leg and also by the neck, so that they cannot move and can see only what is in front of them, because the chains will not let them turn their head. At some distance higher up is the light of a fire burning behind them; and between the prisoners and the fire is a track with a parapet built along it, like the screen at a puppet show, which hides the performers while they show their puppets over the top.

I see, said he.

Now behind this parapet imagine persons carrying along various artificial objects, including figures of men and animals in wood or stone or other materials, which project above the parapet. Naturally, some of these persons will be talking, others silent.

It is a strange picture, he said, and a strange sort of prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; for in the first place prisoners so confined would have seen nothing of themselves or of one another, except the shadows thrown by the fire-light in

① 洞穴寓言, 暗喻那些无知并不愿听取他人意见的人, 或不愿面对真相的人。

the wall of the Cave facing them, would they?

Not if all their lives they had been prevented from moving their heads.

And they would have seen as little of the objects carried past.

Of course.

Now, if they could talk to one another, would they not suppose that their words referred only to those passing shadows which they saw?

Necessarily.

And suppose their prison had an echo from the wall facing them? When one of the people crossing behind them spoke, they could only suppose that the sound came from the shadow passing before their eyes.

No doubt.

In every way, then, such prisoners would recognize as reality nothing but the shadows of those artificial objects.

Inevitably.

Now consider what would happen if their release from the chains and the healing of their unwisdom should come about in this way. Suppose one of them was set free and forced suddenly to stand up, turn his head, and walk with eyes lifted to the light; all these movements would be painful, and he would be too dazzled to make out the objects whose shadows he had been used to see. What do you think he would say, if someone told him that he had formerly seen was meaningless illusion, but now, being somewhat nearer to reality and turned towards more real objects, he was getting a true view? Suppose further that he were shown the various objects being carried by and were made to say, in reply to questions, what each of them was. Would he not be perplexed and believe the objects now shown him to be not so real as what he formerly saw?

Yes, not nearly so real.

And if he were forced to look at the fire-light itself, would not his eyes ache, so that he would try to escape and turn back to the things which he could see distinctly, convinced that they really were clearer than these other objects now being shown to him?

Yes.

And suppose someone were to drag him away forcibly up the steep and rugged ascent and not let him go until he had hauled him out into the sunlight, would he not suffer pain and vexation at such treatment, and, when he had come out into the light, find his eyes so full of its radiance that he could not see a single one of the things that he was now told were real?

Certainly he would not see them all at once.

He would need, then, to grow accustomed before he could see things in that upper world. At first it would be easiest to make out shadows, and then the images of men and things reflected in water, and later on the things themselves. After that, it would be easier to watch the heavenly bodies and the sky itself by night, looking at the light of the moon and stars rather than the Sun and the Sun's light in the daytime.

Yes, surely.

Last of all, he would be able to look at the Sun and contemplate its nature, not as it appears



when reflected in water or any alien medium, but as it is in itself in its own domain.

No doubt.

And now he would begin to draw the conclusion that it is the Sun that produces the seasons and the course of the year and controls everything in the visible world, and moreover is in a way the cause of all that he and his companions used to see.

Clearly he would come at last to that conclusion.

Then if he called to mind his fellow prisoners and what passed for wisdom in his former dwelling-place, he would surely think himself happy in the change and be sorry for them. They may have had a practice of honoring and commending one another, with prizes for the man who had the keenest eye for the passing shadows and the best memory for the order in which they followed or accompanied one another so that he could make a good guess as to which was going to come next. Would our released prisoner be likely to covet those prizes or to envy the men exalted to honor and power in the Cave? Would he not feel like Homer's Achilles, that he would far sooner "be on earth as a hired servant in the house of a landless man" or endure anything rather than go back to his old beliefs and live in the old way?

Yes, he would prefer any fate to such a life.

Now imagine what would happen if he went down again to take his former seat in the Cave. Coming suddenly out of the sunlight, his eyes would be filled with darkness. He might be required once more to deliver his opinion on those shadows, in competition with the prisoners who had never been released, while his eyesight was still dim and unsteady, and it might take some time to become used to the darkness. They would laugh at him and say that he had gone up only to come back with his sight ruined; it was worth no one's while even to attempt the ascent. If they could lay hands on the man who was trying to set them free and lead them up, they would kill him.

Yes, they would.

Every feature in this parable, my dear Glaucon, is meant to fit our earlier analysis. The prison dwelling corresponds to the region revealed to us through the sense of sight, and the fire-light within it to the power of the Sun. The ascent to see the things in the upper world you may take as standing for the upward journey of the soul into the region of the intelligible; then you will be in possession of what I surmise, since that is what you wish to be told. Heaven knows whether it is true; but this, at any rate, is how it appears to me. In the world of knowledge, the last thing to be perceived and only with great difficulty is the essential Form of Goodness. Once it is perceived, the conclusion must follow that, for all things, this is the cause of whatever is right and good; in the visible world it gives birth to light and to the lord of light, while it is itself sovereign in the intelligible world and the parent of intelligence and truth. Without having had a vision of this form no one can act with wisdom, either in his own life or in matters of state.

### **Famous quotations**

Man is a prisoner who has no right to open the door of his prison and run away . . . A man

should wait, and not take his own life until God summons him<sup>①</sup>.

—— *Phaedo*, 62

False words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil<sup>②</sup>.

—— 91

Friends have all things in common<sup>③</sup>.

—— *Phaedrus*, 279

He who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden<sup>④</sup>.

—— *The Republic*, bk. i, 329d

Mankind ensures injustice fearing that they may be the victims of it, and not because they shrink from committing it<sup>⑤</sup>.

—— 344c

Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm to the body; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind<sup>⑥</sup>.

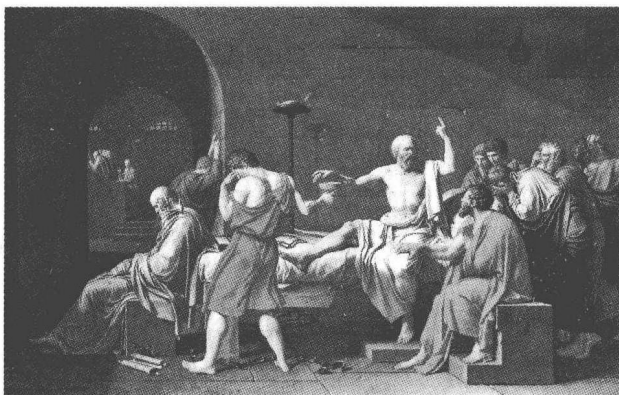
—— vii, 536e

Wealth is the parent of luxury and indolence, and poverty of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent<sup>⑦</sup>.

—— iv, 422a

The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life<sup>⑧</sup>.

—— 425b



Socrates was put to death in 399 BC, ultimately for questioning the basis of Athenian morality. Here he accepts the bowl of hemlock that will kill him, and gestures defiantly at the heavens.

① 人是一个无权打开牢门逃跑的囚犯……一个人应该等待神的召唤,而不要自寻短见。——《斐多篇》,第62节

② 虚假的言辞不仅本身是邪恶的,而且以邪恶侵害人们的灵魂。——第91节

③ 朋友之间有相通之处。——《斐德罗篇》

④ 生性恬淡且又达观的人不会感到年岁的沉重压力;可是对于性格迥异的人,年轻与年老同样都是负担。——《国家篇》,第1卷第329d节

⑤ 人类谴责不仁不义,唯恐自己沦为它的受害者,而非非要约束自己,免犯此类过失。——第344c节

⑥ 体格锻炼即便是强制性的,也不会损害身体;知识如果是强迫灌输的,就不会在头脑中生根。——第7卷第536e节

⑦ 富有是奢侈与懈怠之父,贫穷是卑劣与邪恶之父;富有和贫穷又都是怨愤之父。——第4卷第422a节

⑧ 一个人接受启蒙教育的方向将会确定他今后的一生。——第425b节