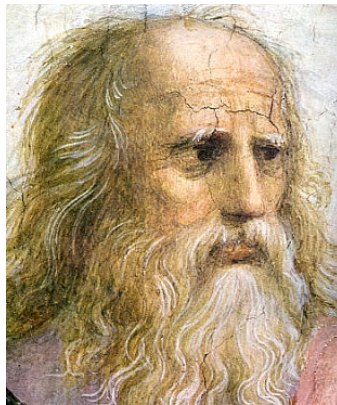


Sept. 21 – Sept. 27, 2018

## **LIVE LIKE A PLATONIST: The Life of Reason**



- Day 1: Mathematics and the Good of the Soul
- Day 2: Mapping Values and Desires
- Day 3: The Examined Life
- Day 4: The Examined Life (cont'd)
- Day 5: Return to the Cave
- Day 6: Return to the Cave (cont'd)
- Day 7: Giving Birth in Beauty

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Day 1: Mathematics and the Good of the Soul

Write your journal entry with your reflections in the space provided at the end of this assignment after practicing the exercises for today.

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### Today's Exercises

I think you don't pay attention to these things [friendship, justice, moderation, etc.] though you're a wise man in these matters. You've failed to see that geometrical equality has great power among both gods and human beings, and you suppose that one should practice getting more. For you have no care for geometry.

— Plato, *Gorgias* 508a

There's a story that above the entrance of Plato's Academy was the inscription "let no one unaware of geometry enter here." The story may be apocryphal, but even so, we have good evidence that the practice of geometry and various other subjects in mathematics occupied many of the initial members of the Academy. Moreover, as we can see in the quote above, in a dialogue as early as the *Gorgias*, it's clear that Plato has a high opinion of geometry. Socrates (you might think bizarrely) seems optimistic that if only Callicles cared about geometry, he'd be less prone to the kind of combative style of argument and ethos of "getting more" that characterises his view of human relations throughout the dialogue.

Plato famously expands upon this idea in the *Republic* by making the study of mathematics essential to the education of philosophers. Why is this? Part of the answer has to do with the fact that the study of mathematics is concerned with the kind of abstract concepts or "forms" that Plato believes philosophers should also train their sights upon. As we see in Book 7, mathematics becomes a key part of the curriculum he proposes for a philosophical education. It's only after a prospective philosopher has studied arithmetic, geometry (2D and 3D!), astronomy, and harmonics that Plato believes he or she is ready to engage in the practice of dialectic: the practice of reasoned inquiry and argument with others. The study of these subjects provides, as it were, a training ground for the study of forms.

But beyond providing this training ground, Plato seems to think that the study of mathematics is inherently good for the soul in that it makes you a better person. Again, that claim is implicit in what Socrates says to Callicles above, and that's the claim you need to test today. You'll find below nine different mathematical puzzles. Your task is to try to solve at least five by the afternoon and then at least four more by the evening.

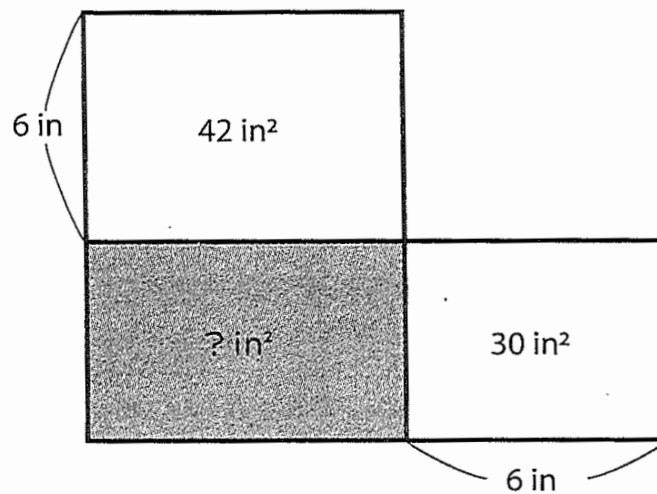
One stipulation: some of these puzzles are tricky and there's a condition for this activity today that you should follow. If you get stuck, ask for help from someone else. Alternatively, if you solve a problem on your own, explain the solution to someone else. That is, it's important for this activity that you spend some time working out these problems with others. Begin your day by trying to solve some of the problems on your own. You will spend some of your time in class today working on these puzzles in groups and sharing your efforts with one another. Then for the rest of the day, seek out other people with whom you can work through the problems.

Each of the puzzles that follow below are taken from *The Original Area Mazes* by Naoki Inaba and Ryoichi Murakami. In each diagram, figure out the missing length or area denoted by the question mark. The solution to every problem is a whole number. To find the solution, all that's required is a bit of mathematics and logic. The only mathematics you need to know is basic arithmetic and that the area of a rectangle is the length multiplied by the width.

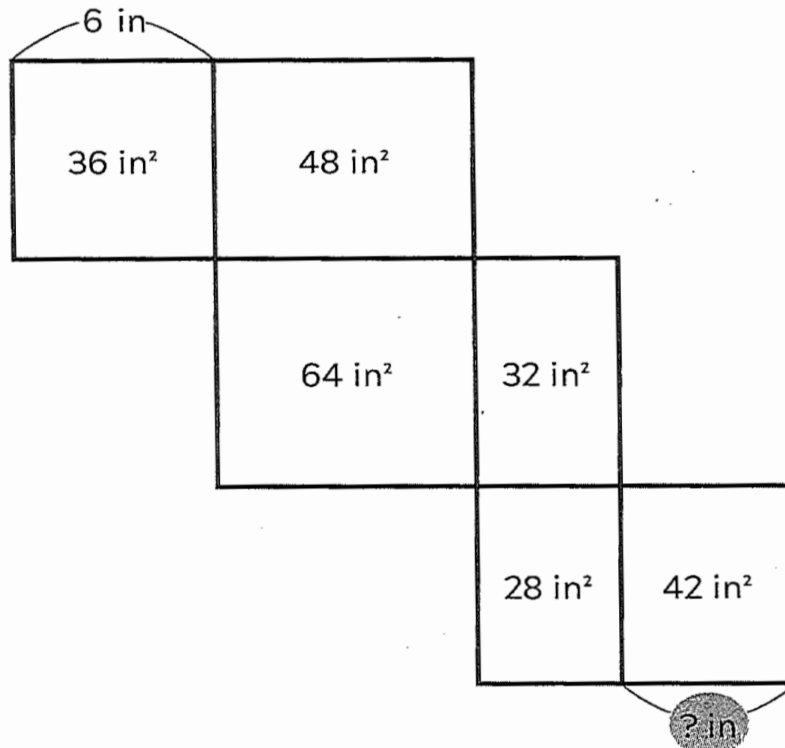
Some rules:

- No algebra!
- No calculators!
- Remember: the solution to every problem is a whole number, so your answer should not be in the form of a fraction.

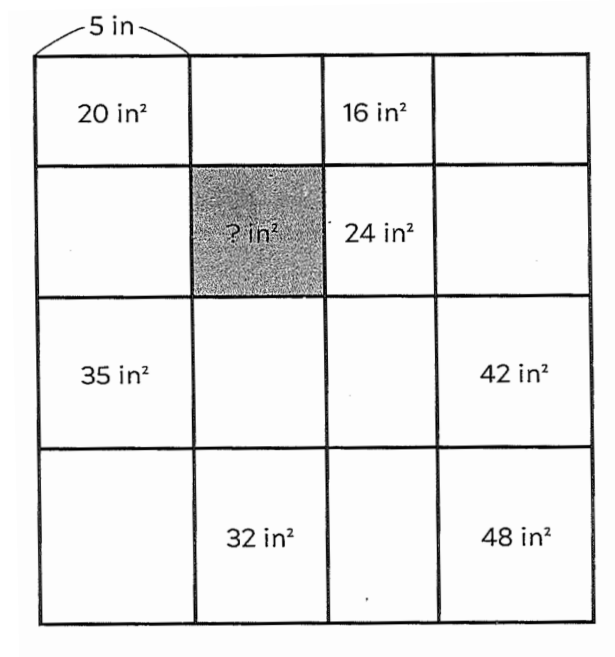
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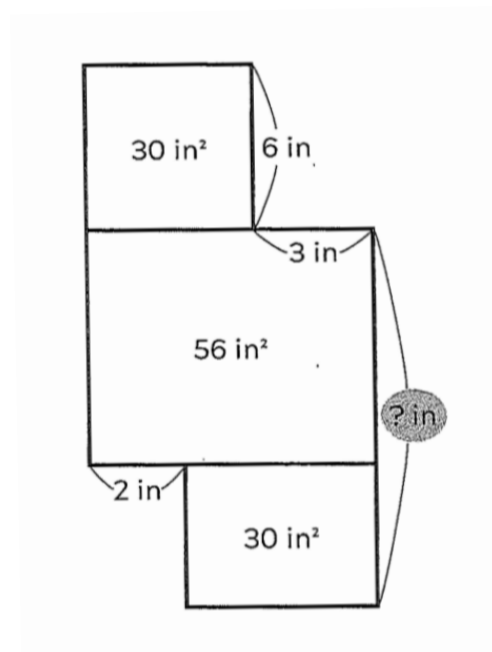
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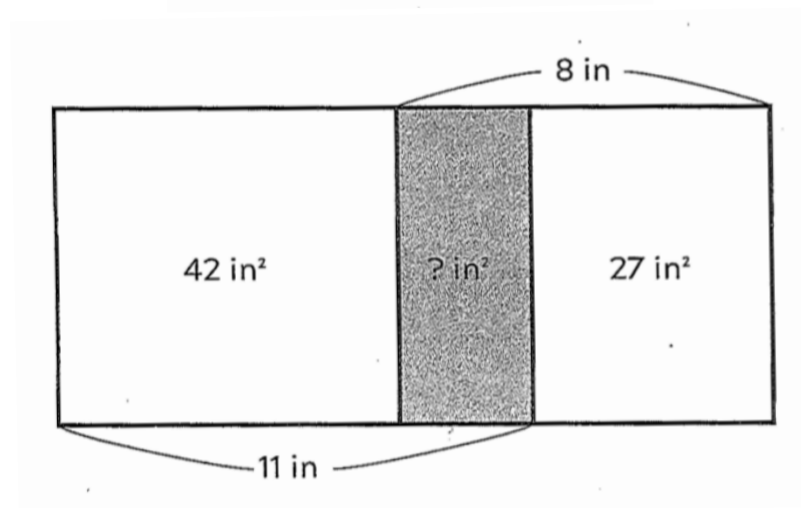
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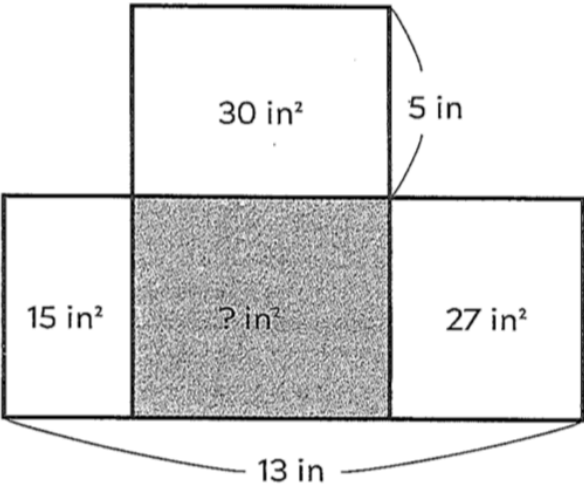
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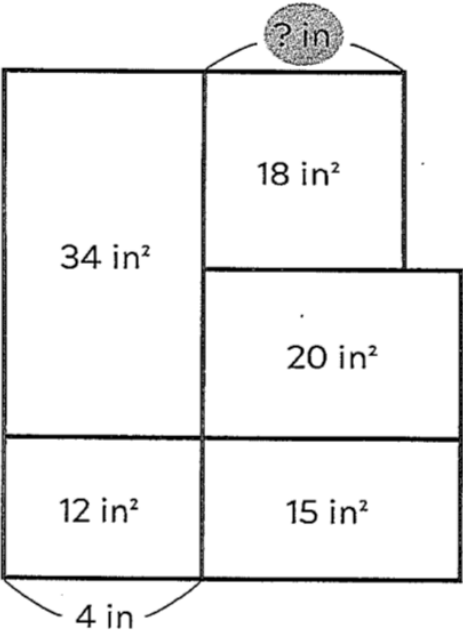
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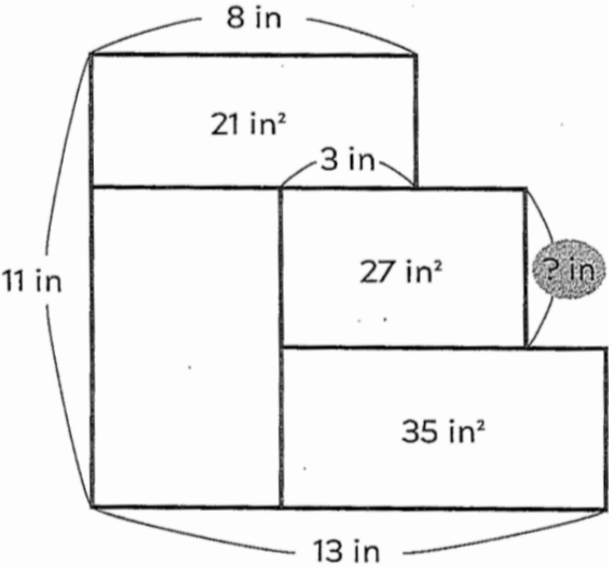
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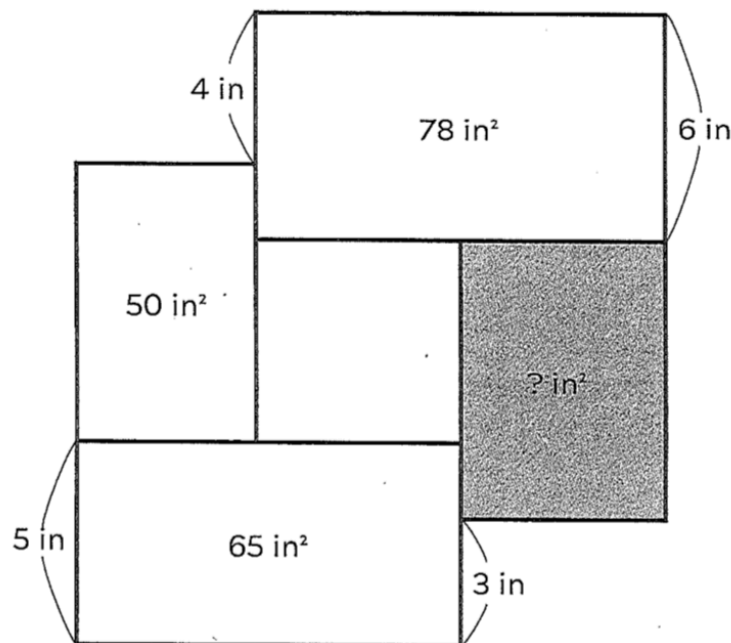
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### Evening Reflection

Don't you realize what a great evil comes from dialectic as it is currently practiced? . . . I don't suppose that it has escaped your notice that, when young people get their first taste of arguments, they misuse it by treating it as a kind of game of contradiction. They imitate those who've refuted them by refuting others themselves, and, like puppies, they enjoy dragging and tearing those around them with their arguments.

— Plato, *Republic* 537d-539b

Plato expresses a worry above about the potential dangers of dialectical inquiry and argument. The worry is that dialectic can seem like a purely combative practice of refutation. Socrates himself, of course, was often regarded in this way by his contemporaries: as indulging in a “game of contradiction.” But that's not what philosophy's about, and Plato thinks that by encouraging the study of mathematics, he can provide a safeguard against people engaging in argument merely for the purposes of winning.

What is it about mathematics that's significant for Plato? The focus on abstractions is no doubt important. Yet also, the fact that mathematical inquiry is governed by the pursuit of wisdom or knowledge seems to force us to reconceive our social relations so that we're no longer pursuing (like Callicles) a position of dominance with respect to others, but something closer to a relationship of cooperation.

It's not important whether you succeeded today in solving the assigned problems. What's important is whether you think Plato's right to be optimistic about mathematics having a reforming effect on our relations with others.

- In your experience, did your efforts to solve the assigned problems with others change the way you engaged with that person? What was it like trying to find a solution? Did it matter if you failed to find a solution?
- Consider how the “mathematical ethos” you adopted today might be applied to any endeavour you’re involved in with others. Do you think this ethos you displayed in problem-solving could affect how you engage with people more generally?
- How did this ethos compare with the Calliclean ethos that we’ve discussed in class? Which would you choose as a better and more satisfying way of engaging with others, and why?

**JOURNAL ENTRY – DAY 1**

## Day 2: Mapping Values and Desires

Write your journal entry with your reflections in the space provided at the end of this assignment after practicing the exercises for today. Today's assignment is adapted with permission from an exercise originally designed by Prof. Steven Horst at Wesleyan University.

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### Today's Exercises

Glaucon: Tell me, do you think there is a kind of good we welcome, not because we desire what comes from it, but because we welcome it for its own sake — joy, for example, and all the harmless pleasures that have no results beyond the joy of having them?

Socrates: Certainly, I think there are such things.

Glaucon: And is there a kind of good we like for its own sake and also for the sake of what comes from it — knowing, for example, and seeing and being healthy? We welcome such things, I suppose, on both counts.

Socrates: Yes.

Glaucon: And do you also see a third kind of good, such as physical training, medical treatment when sick, medicine itself, and the other ways of making money? We'd say that these are onerous but beneficial to us, and we wouldn't choose them for their own sakes, but for the sake of the rewards and other things that come from them.

Socrates: There is also this third kind. But what of it?

— Plato, *Republic* 357b-d

In the quote above, Glaucon distinguishes between things that people consider intrinsically valuable (goods desired for their own sake) and things that people consider instrumentally valuable (goods desired for the sake of something else). This distinction isn't an exclusive one, and indeed, Glaucon suggests that some goods may be considered both intrinsically valuable and instrumentally valuable by a person. Socrates agrees with the distinction. But before you continue with your exercises this week, it's worth considering for yourself the idea that Glaucon is proposing.

Here's a two-part exercise for your day.

### Part 1

Set aside about 30 minutes to do this exercise in the morning. You may want to come back to it after further reflection during the day before proceeding to Part 2.

Take a sheet of paper and make a list of things that you desire: these things may range from the material (e.g., new shoes) to the abstract (e.g., friendship). This list is for your eyes only, so be honest with yourself and don't worry about what anyone else might think of the items on it. You'll probably find that a number of things will come to you quickly and then later you'll think of other things that should go on the list. Carry this list around with you when you can today and jot down additional things that come to mind when you think of them.



## Part 2

Later in your day, look over the list you've compiled. See if you can find relationships between the things you've listed: are some of the things you desire means to other things that are ends? (For example, you might desire new shoes as a means to getting more exercise, which in turn you desire in order to become fit, and so on.)

On another sheet of paper (or multiple sheets), begin to map out such relationships using arrows: e.g., new shoes → getting exercise → becoming fit → etc. It's okay if you find that your desires sometimes point to multiple ends. It's also okay if you find that multiple desires point to a single end. Further, you may find that in doing this you've discovered you desire some things that you had not listed in Part 1. Feel free to add these in, but you might mark them by underlining them. Don't worry if there are things on your original list that don't have connections to other things. You don't have to include everything in the diagram you're constructing.

Look over the diagram(s) you've constructed. Are there one or more things that emerge as your ultimate ends – a thing or things that many of your other desires are aiming at? Circle these.

Now look at the items you've circled and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does it make sense to ask the further question: what do I want these things for?
2. Are these things really ultimate ends for me – that is, do I consider them worth pursuing for their own sake – or do I desire them, too, as a means to something further that is not on the page?
3. If so, can I put a name on what that something might be?

## Evening Reflection

Education isn't what some people declare it to be, namely, putting knowledge into souls that lack it, like putting sight into blind eyes. . . . [our present discussion] shows that the power to learn is present in everyone's soul and that the instrument with which each learns is like an eye that cannot be turned around from darkness to light without turning the whole body. This instrument cannot be turned around from that which is coming into being without turning the whole soul until it is able to study that which is and the brightest thing that is, namely, the one we call the good.

— Plato, *Republic* 518b-d

Plato argues in Book 7 of the *Republic* that the good life for a human being consists in orienting one's life around what he calls "the form of the good." This is how he understands the ultimate end or goal for every human being. What exactly he means by this is a tricky question, but it's clear he also thinks that to clarify the nature of this form and understand what's good for us, each of us needs to engage in independent reflection on what we find desirable. Plato refers to this practice in the quote above as a proper "education," though he's not referring to book learning here. What he has in mind is an education of our desires, a practice of cultivation undertaken independently by each person. For as Socrates says, "the power to learn is present in everyone's soul."

- Consider all the circled and non-circled goods in the diagram(s) you constructed today. Are some of the non-circled items you've listed merely instrumentally valuable to you, in the way that Glaucon says medical treatment is an instrumental good?
- What about the circled items? — are they more indispensable as things you value? Would you call the achievement of these goods intrinsically valuable to you?
- Share your reflections on how useful you find Plato's distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goods in illuminating your personal values. How have today's activities clarified for you, if at all, your own good?

**JOURNAL ENTRY – DAY 2**



## Day 3: The Examined Life

This is a two-day assignment. You should carry out the exercises below today and tomorrow, and then write up your journal entry tomorrow evening.

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### Today's Exercises

And in truth justice is, it seems, something of this sort. However, it isn't concerned with someone's doing his own externally, but with what is inside him, with what is truly himself and his own. One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale — high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one, moderate and harmonious. Only then does he act. And when he does anything, whether acquiring wealth, taking care of his body, engaging in politics, or in private contracts — in all of these, he believes that the action is just and fine that preserves this inner harmony and helps achieve it, and calls it so, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that oversees such actions.

— Plato, *Republic* 443d-e

Consider Plato's notion of internal justice above in terms of the harmony that he envisions in the *Republic* between the three parts of the human soul: appetite (the pleasure-loving part); spirit (the honour-loving part); and reason (the wisdom-loving part). What is key to this harmony is that reason regulates and forms a clear conception of what is good for the soul as a whole. And how does reason do that? For Plato, it's by devoting oneself to the pursuit of wisdom and leading an examined life. The idea here seems to be that if it's essential to human happiness that we bring our desires into line with our values, and if it's in virtue of our status as reasoners that we can understand those values, then the role of the rational part of the soul in achieving the human good is assured.

Your task for today and tomorrow is to consider what the examined life — the life of reason as Plato understands it — requires of us, and to test whether that is in fact a happy life. One thing that Plato evidently believes the life of reason requires, and this goes back to Socrates' practice of philosophy, is a searching inquiry into one's core convictions. So today you should spend some time reflecting on your personal beliefs and values. Do they stand up to scrutiny? Are they consistent? Are they well supported? Are they in fact your beliefs and values, or do you affirm them simply on the authority of others?

For at least 30 minutes today, spend some time by yourself considering the sources of influence in your life. Find a quiet spot and ask yourself the following questions:

1. To what extent have my beliefs, values, and choices been shaped by my upbringing, popular culture, and the media?

2. How are my actions influenced by a desire for prestige or social status?
3. To what extent are my ambitions driven by a need to meet other people's expectations or approval?
4. Are the people whose esteem I want in my life people I also admire and respect?
5. Do the desires I act on currently reflect the values I wish to live by?

Because many of these questions are general in nature, you might find it helpful to explore them with reference to some of the goods you listed on your map yesterday, both the non-circled and the circled items.

Alternatively, you might raise the above questions about a subject that's been on your mind lately — say, a career you want in the future, your treatment of a loved one, or your views on a contentious political issue.

In considering these questions, try to internalise something like the Socratic method. Determine the coherence of your beliefs by testing their consistency: are some of the things you believe or value incompatible or in tension with one another? For instance, if you want to be famous and also want to live a quiet life, the conditions for one might make the other difficult or impossible. You might also explore the implications of achieving something you desire and ask yourself whether you can affirm those implications.

For the rest of today, think about how (if at all) the questions you've considered today might affect the choices you make in life and your everyday actions.

## Day 4: The Examined Life (cont'd)

This is the second day of a two-day assignment. Write your journal entry with your reflections in the space provided at the end of this assignment after practicing the exercises for today.

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### Today's Exercises

For today, you should repeat the exercises you carried out yesterday on Day 3, but this time with a partner. (You may feel most comfortable doing this with someone you can trust.) Discuss with your partner a problem you find in your desires or a concern you encountered yesterday during your exercises.

The point of engaging with another person is to help you sort through your personal beliefs and values. Perhaps your partner will press you on a point you hadn't considered and help you test the consistency of your views. They may also help you resolve a point of confusion you'd reached yesterday when you examined your views on your own.

As you engage with others in this activity, be sure you don't end up interrogating your partner's beliefs and values: the life under examination should be your own.

### Evening Reflection

Consider, then, what being released from their bonds and cured of their ignorance would naturally be like, if something like this came to pass. When one of them was freed and suddenly compelled to stand up, turn his head, walk, and look up toward the light, he'd be pained and dazzled and unable to see the things whose shadows he'd seen before. What do you think he'd say, if we told him that what he'd seen before was inconsequential, but that now — because he is a bit closer to the things that are and is turned towards things that are more — he sees more correctly? Or, to put it another way, if we pointed to each of the things passing by, asked him what each of them is, and compelled him to answer, don't you think he'd be at a loss (*aporia*) and that he'd believe that the things he saw earlier were truer than the ones he was now being shown?

— Plato, *Republic* 515c-d

The exercises you've completed over the last two days are basically the experience of starting the ascent from the cave that Plato describes at the beginning of Book 7 of the *Republic*. Coming to reconsider the sources of our beliefs and values is comparable to being told that most of the things we're conditioned to see as "good" in our lives are shadows of puppets cast on a wall, manufactured by others. What's significant about Plato's description of this process in the passage above is that the experience can be as painful for a person as it is beneficial.

- What was your experience of the examined life like yesterday and today? Even if the experience was painful, was it still beneficial?

- Did you find there was a difference between the line of inquiry you carried out yesterday on your own and today with a partner? Was it helpful to engage with someone else in this activity?
- Generally: is it important to you in living well that the desires you choose to act on reflect the values you wish to live by?
- Recall the primacy that Plato gives to reason in the conduct of our lives: he believes that if we handed the power to determine our values over exclusively to the pleasure-loving or honour-loving parts of ourselves, we'd live unhappy lives. Do you agree?

**JOURNAL ENTRY – DAYS 3 & 4**

## Day 5: Return to the Cave

This is a two-day assignment. You should carry out the exercises below today and tomorrow, and then write up your journal entry tomorrow evening.

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### Today's Exercises

Men of Athens, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I shall not cease to practice philosophy, to exhort you and in my usual way to point out to any one of you whom I happen to meet: “Good Sir, you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city with the greatest reputation for both wisdom and power; are you not ashamed of your eagerness to possess as much wealth, reputation, and honours as possible, while you do not care for nor give thought to wisdom or truth, or the best possible state of your soul?”

— Plato, *Apology* 29d-e

On Days 3 and 4 of this week, you examined your own life. Beginning today, you'll examine the lives of others. Now that you're out of the cave and have a (more or less) reflective understanding of your personal beliefs and values, you should return to the cave — a task that Plato expects of every philosopher — to question the beliefs and values of others. Today you get to live like Socrates.

This won't be easy. Socrates had a knack for annoying people. He also had the ability to see where and how to press a person's views to expose blind spots in their thinking. You may find that in your attempts to do this with others, people will suspect you're engaging with them in a trivial or even mean-spirited way. You will probably also find it difficult to determine which questions to ask in getting others to examine their views.

Approach this activity not as an attempt to refute your interlocutor, but as a way of understanding their views for yourself through the practice of dialectic. You should emulate the character traits you appreciated in others yesterday when you invited someone else to help you clarify your personal beliefs and values.

Today you should carry out this activity by conversing with just two people whom you feel close to. Choose each individual beforehand and approach them good-naturedly. If it helps, you can tell them this is an assignment for class. You might start the conversation by asking your partner about the same topics you considered yesterday: their views on a successful career, perhaps, or a controversial political matter. You might then rehearse some of the questions you asked yourself on Day 3. Has your partner really examined their views on such matters for themselves? Are their beliefs and values consistent? How have their views been influenced by other things, like their upbringing or the media? If you find you're agreeing with them too much, try to test the strength of their views by articulating an opposing position.

What Socrates also often does with his interlocutors is get them to define ambiguous terms as clearly as they can. He then checks whether those definitions can survive scrutiny. What are the implications of those definitions? Are they applicable across all situations and contexts?



For a good example of the Socratic method in action, you might reread the *Alcibiades*, especially 109a-112d, where Socrates challenges Alcibiades' claim that he knows what's just.

However you proceed in cross-examining others, you'll need to ensure that you're not engaging in dialectic simply to score points. The aim is to help your interlocutor come to a more coherent sense of their beliefs and values for themselves. Remember this: the more you bring a "Calliclean" ethos to argument for this activity, the less productive Plato thinks the discussion will be; on the other hand, if you can bring to these exercises the mathematical ethos you developed on Day 1 of this week, then Plato believes you're engaging in argument as a philosopher should.

## Day 6: Return to the Cave (cont'd)

This is the second day of a two-day assignment. Write your journal entry with your reflections in the space provided at the end of this assignment after practicing the exercises for today.

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### Today's Exercises

Today you will continue to adopt the Socratic persona you assumed yesterday. Begin class in the morning by breaking up into pairs and taking turns being Socrates with one another. Then shuffle around and repeat the process with a new partner. At the end of class, we'll discuss as a whole group the benefits and challenges you experienced in doing this.

For the rest of your day, adopt a Socratic persona with anyone you come across. Again, this won't be easy. The interlocutors you engage with could be people you feel comfortable cross-examining or relative strangers. They could be in your family or peer group, or stand in a different authority relation to you entirely. From the perspective of a Socratic gadfly, it should make no difference. In fact, the more unreflective your interlocutor, the better, because in that case Plato thinks you're really doing them some good by engaging them in dialectic.

### Evening Reflection

Consider this too. If this man went down into the cave again and sat down in his same seat, wouldn't his eyes — coming suddenly out of the sun like that — be filled with darkness? . . . And before his eyes had recovered — and the adjustment would not be quick — while his vision was still dim, if he had to compete again with the perpetual prisoners in recognizing the shadows, wouldn't he invite ridicule? Wouldn't it be said of him that he'd returned from his upward journey with his eyesight ruined and that it isn't worthwhile even to try to travel upward? And, as for anyone who tried to free them and lead them upward, if they could somehow get their hands on him, wouldn't they kill him?

— Plato, *Republic* 516e-517a

To “free” other people and “lead them upward” in the cave allegory is to free their reason: to help others think independently for themselves. As the quote above suggests, this can be a dangerous business. Yet Plato believes the task is compulsory for anyone dedicated to promoting the common good — and especially for philosophers in his ideal city — because it's beneficial for civic life to have people like Socrates around.

- What was your experience like as a Socratic gadfly these past two days? Was it uncomfortable or enjoyable?
- Did you often back down when questioning others to avoid provoking their hostility? Or do you believe it's a duty, like Socrates and Plato, to behave in this way with others?
- How difficult was it for you to emulate Socrates? Was your engagement in dialectic always governed by the pursuit of wisdom and shared understanding, or did you stray from that goal into a more combative (Calliclean) mode of argument?

- How productive were your discussions? What did you learn from (or learn about) your interlocutors? Do you think you benefited them?

**JOURNAL ENTRY – DAYS 5 & 6**

## Day 7: Giving Birth in Beauty

This is your last day living like a Platonist. After you complete the exercises below, write up a synthesis essay (approx. 1000 words) at the end of the day about your experiences this week and what they have taught you.

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### Today's Exercises

This is what it is to go aright, or be led by another, into the mystery of love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful.

— Plato, *Symposium* 211c-d

For Plato, to be happy is to enjoy what we understand to be good. In the *Symposium*, he has Socrates (relating the teachings of Diotima) offer a curious solution to our desire to “possess the good forever.” The solution is to “give birth in beauty” (206b). Readers often struggle to grasp what Diotima means here. She says earlier in the dialogue that happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the most powerful object of love in our lives and found in the possession of good things. To live well, then, we need to determine which things in our lives are good for us. These must be the things we consider valuable — goods that are worth taking pleasure in and getting honour for — the things you concluded on Day 2 of this week are intrinsically valuable to you.

As we now know, Plato believes it's the task of a person's reason to form an understanding of what's valuable, and it's through *philosophia* or the love of wisdom — living an examined life in dialogue with others — that we develop this notion of our own good. However, the *Symposium* also tells us that the philosopher (as a lover of wisdom) necessarily lacks wisdom. A philosopher can never attain a complete understanding of what to believe and value. But if the goal of full wisdom is always in the offing and not something we can hope to attain, nor even something we can be confident of progressing towards, what's the point of loving wisdom? Indeed, if loving anything means we're bound to lack the thing we love, what's the point of love?

While possessing an object of love is not possible for a lover, Plato believes that we can approach the goal of love by giving birth in beauty. In the passage quoted above, Diotima lays out a process of first coming to appreciate the different sources of beauty in our lives. After that, we learn to perceive more abstract instances of beauty until finally we encounter what she calls “the beautiful itself” — a form of beauty that exerts such a pull on us that we're led to generate beautiful ideas and thoughts, beautiful goals and aspirations, and to embrace a more beautiful version of ourselves “in unstinting love of wisdom” (210d).

The experience described by Diotima is one of ascent, not unlike the ascent we find in the cave allegory of the *Republic*. The goal of both experiences is the same: to form a clearer picture of our personal beliefs and values. What's significant about Diotima's account (and not obvious in the cave allegory) is that this is a generative experience. A vision of true beauty provokes in us

a need to create a better self. In your final day living like a Platonist, consider whether the exercises and reflections you've carried out over the last week have led you to this same need. Did you find sources of beauty in your life — things that you now see differently and appreciate more — that were harder to perceive before? What would you have to do or change about yourself to lead a better life?

### **Evening Reflection**

“How would it be, in our view,” she said, “if someone got to see the beautiful itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colours or any other great nonsense of mortality, but if he could see divine beauty itself in its one form? Do you think it would be a poor life for a human being to look there and to behold it by that which he ought, and to be with it? Or haven't you remembered,” she said, “that in that life alone, when he looks at beauty in the only way that beauty can be seen — only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he's in touch with no images), but to true virtue (because he is in touch with true beauty).”

— Plato, *Symposium* 211e-212a

Part of Diotima's point in this passage is that we see too little beauty in the world. We believe (or have been led to believe) that beauty is located only in the world of sense perception and that our desires will only find satisfaction there. We forget that beauty can be perceived elsewhere as well, in abstract things like stories, customs, theories, ideals, and a person's character. Seeing such beauty is an achievement and can bring our lives into focus. It may result in the discovery of new aspirations and values, and the development of a new self. But it requires leading our desires in a new direction, which is hard work. For Plato, this too is the task of reason.

- Have you found this week that it's worth pursuing wisdom, even if we can never fully possess it?
- What sources of beauty, if any, did you find in your life this week? — what did you learn to appreciate differently than before?
- Why do we see so little beauty in the world when there is so much to be found?
- What obstacles do you face in creating a better self?

Instead of your daily journal entry for today, write up a synthesis essay for this week on the following pages.

### **LIVE LIKE A PLATONIST SYNTHESIS ESSAY**

How have the exercises you've completed this week in living like a Platonist affected your outlook on life? Were some exercises particularly illuminating or instructive? Do you have a better appreciation for Plato's views after putting them into practice? How viable do you find his approach to the good life? What have you learned about yourself?

Review your journal entries for the week and write an essay of approximately 1000 words summarising your final reflections on Plato's approach to the good life. Your essay should engage with at least one of the theoretical views that we have covered in this unit: e.g., Plato's theory of forms, his tripartite view of human psychology, his distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goods, his understanding of love, or the value of Socratic argument. Cite the texts we have studied where possible.

