

Plato: Further Selections

Translation by Gregory Nagy

Plato *Ion* 535b–c

{Socrates is speaking:} Hold it right there. Tell me this, Ion—respond to what I ask without concealment. When you say well the epic verses and induce a feeling of bedazzlement [*ekplēxis*] for the spectators [*theōmenoi*]*—*as you sing of Odysseus leaping onto the threshold and revealing himself to the suitors and pouring out the arrows at his feet, or of Achilles rushing at Hector, or something connected to the pitiful things about Andromache or Hecuba or Priam—are you then in your right mind, or outside yourself? Does your mind [*psūkhē*], possessed by the god [*enthousiazein*], suppose that you are in the midst of the actions you describe in Ithaca or Troy, or wherever the epic verses have it?

Plato *Ion* 535e

As I look down at them from the platform on high, I see them, each and every time, crying or looking terrified, filled with a sense of wonder at what is being retold.

Plato *Republic* 9.571c–d

I am talking, I [= Socrates] said, about those [desires and pleasures] that are awakened when one part of the soul [*psūkhē*] sleeps—I mean the part that is rational [*logistikon*] and domesticated [*hēmeron*] and in control [*arkhon*] of the other part, which is beast-like [*thēriōdes*] and savage [*agrion*]. Then, [when the rational part is asleep,] this other part, which is glutted with grain [*sīta*] or intoxicants [*methē*], starts bolting [*skirtāi*] and seeks to push aside sleep and to satiate its own ways of behaving [*ēthos* plural]. When it is like this, it dares to do everything, released as it is from all sense of shame [*aiskhunē*] and thinking [*phronēsis*]. It does not at all recoil from attempting to **[571d]** lay hands on his own mother in order to have sex with her—or to lay hands on any other human or god or beast—and to commit whatever polluting [*miasma*-making] murder, or to eat whatever food. In a word, there is nothing in the realm of consciousness [*noos*, pronounced as *nous* in Plato's time] and shame that it will not do.

Plato *Republic* 10.621b–c

And so, Glaukon, myth [*mūthos*] was saved [*e-sō-thē*, from *sōzein*], and it could save [*sōzein*] us in turn, if we trust it.

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