

Risible Cities: Ignorance as Madness in Plato, Pseudo-Hippocrates, and Dio of Prusa

I.) *The Feverish City* ~ [The city “inflamed” by *epithumia*; Socrates as doctor]

1.) Pl. *Resp.* 2. 372d [*Glaucon’s joke, the issue of intelligibility, problems of today*]

καὶ ὅς, εἰ δὲ ὤων πόλιν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔφη, κατεσκευάζεις, τί ἂν αὐτὰς ἄλλο ἢ ταῦτα ἐχόρταζες; ἀλλὰ πῶς χρή, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, ὦ Γλαύκων; ἄπερ νομίζεται, ἔφη: ἐπὶ τε κλινῶν κατακεῖσθαι οἶμαι τοὺς μέλλοντας μὴ τάλαιπωρεῖσθαι, καὶ ἀπὸ τραπεζῶν δειπνεῖν, καὶ ὄψα ἄπερ καὶ οἱ νῦν ἔχουσι καὶ τραγήματα.

And he [Glaucon] said, “If you were providing for a city of pigs, Socrates, on what else would you fatten them than this?” “Well, how should it be, Glaucon” I [Socrates] said. “As is conventional,” he said. “I suppose men [in the city in speech] who aren’t going to be wretched recline on couches and eat from tables and have relishes and desserts *just like men have nowadays*.”¹

2.) Pl. *Resp.* 2. 372e [*Socrates on the healthy ὑγιής vs. inflamed city φλεγμαίνουσα*]

εἶεν, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ: μανθάνω. οὐ πόλιν, ὡς ἔοικε, σκοποῦμεν μόνον ὅπως γίγνεται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τρυφῶσαν πόλιν. ἴσως οὖν οὐδὲ κακῶς ἔχει: σκοποῦντες γὰρ καὶ τοιαύτην τάχ’ ἂν κατίδοιμεν τήν τε δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀδικίαν ὅπη ποτὲ ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐμφύονται. ἢ μὲν οὖν ἀληθινὴ πόλις δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι ἣν διεληλύθαμεν, ὥσπερ ὑγιής τις: εἰ δ’ αὖ βούλεσθε, καὶ φλεγμαίνουσαν πόλιν θεωρήσωμεν: οὐδὲν ἀποκωλύει. οὐδὲν ἀποκωλύει.

“All right, I understand. It isn’t merely the origin of a city that we’re considering, it seems, but the origin of a *luxurious* city. And that may not be a bad idea, for by examining it, we might very well see how justice and injustice grow up in cities. Yet the *true* city seems to me to be the one we have discussed, that is the *healthy* one, as it were. But let’s study a city *with a fever*, if that’s what you want. Nothing is stopping us.”

3.) Pl. *Resp.* 2. 373a–373b [*The luxurious city as a stuffed body*]

ταῦτα γὰρ δὴ τισιν, ὡς δοκεῖ, οὐκ ἐξαρκέσει, οὐδὲ αὕτη ἡ δίαιτα, ἀλλὰ κλίναί τε προσέσονται καὶ τράπεζαι καὶ τᾶλλα σκεῦη, καὶ ὄψα δὴ καὶ μύρα καὶ θυμιάματα καὶ ἑταῖραι καὶ πέμματα, καὶ ἕκαστα τούτων παντοδαπά. καὶ δὴ καὶ ἃ τὸ πρῶτον ἐλέγομεν οὐκέτι τὰναγκαῖα θετέον, οἰκίας τε καὶ ἱμάτια καὶ ὑποδήματα, ἀλλὰ τήν τε ζωγραφίαν κινήτεον καὶ τὴν ποικιλίαν, καὶ χρυσὸν καὶ ἐλέφαντα καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα κτητέον. ἦ γάρ; ναί, ἔφη. οὐκοῦν μείζονά τε αὖ τὴν πόλιν δεῖ ποιεῖν: ἐκείνη γὰρ ἡ ὑγιεινὴ οὐκέτι ἱκανή, ἀλλ’ ἤδη ὄγκου ἐμπληστέρα καὶ πλήθους, ἃ οὐκέτι τοῦ ἀναγκαίου ἔνεκά ἐστιν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, οἷον οἱ τε θηρευταὶ [...]

¹ Trans. of Plato taken from Bloom (1991) (slightly modified).

“For these things, as it seems, won’t satisfy some, or this way of life, but couches, tables, and other furniture will be added, and, of course, relishes, perfume, incense, courtesans, and cakes—all sorts of them. And, in particular, we can’t still postulate *the mere necessities* we were talking about at first—houses, clothes, and shoes, but painting and embroidery must also be set in motion; and gold, ivory, and everything of the sort must be obtained. Isn’t that so?” “Yes,” he said. “Then the city must be made bigger again. This *healthy* one isn’t adequate any more, but *must already be gorged with a bulky mass of things*, which are not in cities because of necessity, such as the huntsmen...”

4.) Pl. *Resp.* 9 571b–571d [*Socrates on tyranny, ἐπιθυμία unleashed, a fever-dream?*]

τῶν μὴ ἀναγκαίων ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν δοκοῦσι τινές μοι εἶναι παράνομοι, αἱ κινδυνεύουσι μὲν ἐγγίγνεσθαι παντί, κολαζόμεναι δὲ ὑπὸ τε τῶν νόμων καὶ τῶν βελτιόνων ἐπιθυμιῶν μετὰ λόγου ἐνίων μὲν ἀνθρώπων ἢ παντάπασιν ἀπαλλάττεσθαι ἢ ὀλίγα λείπεσθαι καὶ ἀσθενεῖς, τῶν δὲ ἰσχυρότεροι καὶ πλείους. λέγεις δὲ καὶ τίνας, ἔφη, ταύτας; τὰς περὶ τὸν ὕπνον, ἣν δ’ ἐγὼ, ἐγειρομένης, ὅταν τὸ μὲν ἄλλο τῆς ψυχῆς εὐδῆ, ὅσον λογιστικὸν καὶ ἡμερον καὶ ἄρχον ἐκείνου, τὸ δὲ θηριῶδες τε καὶ ἄγριον, **ἢ σίτων ἢ μέθης πλησθέν**, σκιρτᾷ τε καὶ ἀπώσαμενον τὸν ὕπνον **ζητῆ ἰέναι καὶ ἀποπιμπλάναι τὰ αὐτοῦ ἢθη**: οἴσθ’ ὅτι πάντα ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ τολμᾷ ποιεῖν, ὡς ἀπὸ πάσης λελυμένον τε καὶ ἀπηλλαγμένον αἰσχύνης καὶ φρονήσεως. μητρί τε γὰρ ἐπιχειρεῖν μείγνυσθαι, ὡς οἴεται, οὐδὲν ὀκνεῖ, ἄλλω τε ὁτῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ θεῶν καὶ θηρίων, μαιφονεῖν τε ὁτιοῦν, βρώματός τε ἀπέχεσθαι μηδενός: καὶ ἐνὶ λόγῳ οὔτε ἀνοίας οὐδὲν ἐλλείπει οὔτ’ ἀναισχυρντίας. ἀληθέστατα, ἔφη, λέγεις. ὅταν δέ γε οἶμαι **ὑγιεινῶς** τις ἔχη αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ **σωφρόνως**, καὶ εἰς τὸν ὕπνον ἴη **τὸ λογιστικὸν** μὲν ἐγείρας ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐστίασας λόγων καλῶν καὶ σκέψεων [...]

“Some of our unnecessary pleasures and desires seem to me to be lawless. They are probably present in everyone, but they are held in check by the laws and by the better desires in alliance with reason. In a few people, they have been eliminated entirely or only a few weak ones remain, while in others they are stronger and more numerous.” What desires do you mean? “Those that are awakened in sleep, when the rest of the soul—the rational, gentle, and ruling part—slumbers. Then the beastly and savage part, *full of food and drink*, casts off sleep and seeks to find a way to gratify itself. You know that there is nothing it won’t dare to do at such a time, free of all control by shame or reason. It doesn’t shrink from trying to have sex with a mother, as it supposes, or with anyone else at all, whether man, god, or beast. It will commit any foul murder, and there is no food it refuses to eat. In a word, it omits no act of folly or shamelessness.” “What you say,” he said, “is very true.” “But, on the other hand, I can suppose a man who has a *healthy* and *moderate* relationship to himself and who goes to sleep only after he does the following: first, he awakens his *calculating part* and feasts it with fair arguments and considerations [...]

5.) Pl. *Resp.* 9 574e [*Socrates describes the “waking nightmare” of the tyrant*]

αἱ πρότερον μὲν ὄναρ ἐλύοντο ἐν ὕπνῳ, ὅτε ἦν αὐτὸς ἔτι ὑπὸ νόμοις τε καὶ πατρὶ δημοκρατούμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ: τυραννευθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ Ἔρωτος, οἷος ὀλιγάκις ἐγίγνετο ὄναρ, ὕπαρ τοιοῦτος αἰεὶ γενόμενος, οὔτε τινὸς φόνου δεινοῦ ἀφέξεται οὔτε βρώματος οὔτ' ἔργου...

“These are the opinions that were formerly released as dreams in sleep when, still under the laws and a father, there was a democratic regime in him. But once a tyranny was established by love, what he had rarely been in dreams, he became continuously while awake. He will stick at no terrible murder, or food, or deed...”

6.) Pl. *Resp.* 9 576b

κεφαλαιωσώμεθα τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, τὸν κάκιστον. ἔστιν δὲ που, οἷον ὄναρ διήλθομεν, ὃς ἂν ὕπαρ τοιοῦτος ᾗ.

“Well, then,” I said, “let’s sum up the worst man. He is awake, presumably what we described a dreaming man to be.”

II.) *The Mad City* ~ [*Hippocrates and Democritus; ἐπιθυμία is risible; laughter as medicine*]7.) Hippoc. *On Internal Affections* 48 [*On fevered dreams and altered states*]:

*(Describing one of the “thick” diseases, caused by a mix of phlegm and bile in the body which leads to chills, fever, head pain)

καὶ ὅταν τὸ ἥπαρ μᾶλλον ἀναπτυγῆ πρὸς τὰς φρένας, **παραφρονέει**· καὶ προφαίνεσθαί οἱ δοκέει πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἔρπετὰ καὶ ἄλλα παντοδαπὰ θηρία καὶ ὀπλίται μαχόμενοι, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτοῖσι δοκέει μάχεσθαι· τοιαῦτα λέγει ὡς ὄρων καὶ ἐπέρχεται, καὶ ἀπειλεῖ, ἦν μή τις αὐτὸν ἐᾷ ἔξω ἐξιέναι· καὶ ἦν ἀναστῆ, οὐ δύναται αἶρειν τὰ σκέλεα, ἀλλὰ πίπτει. οἱ δὲ πόδες αἰεὶ ψυχροί· καὶ ὅταν καθεύδῃ, ἀναΐσσει ἐκ τοῦ ὕπνου ὅταν ἐνύπνια ἴδῃ φοβερά. **τῷδε δὲ γινώσκομεν, ὅτι ἀπὸ ἐνυπνίων αἴσσει καὶ φοβεῖται**· ὅταν ἔννοος γένηται, ἀφηγεῖται τὰ ἐνύπνια τοιαῦτα ὁρᾷ ὅποια καὶ τῷ σώματι ἐποίει καὶ τῇ γλώσση ἔλεγε.

When his liver expands even more against the diaphragm, the patient *becomes deranged*; there seem to appear before his eyes reptiles and every other sort of beasts, and fighting soldiers, and he imagines himself to be fighting among them; he speaks out as if he is seeing such things, and he attacks and threatens, if someone will not allow him to go outside; if he does stand up, though, he cannot lift his legs, but falls. His feet are always cold; when he goes to bed, he starts up out of his sleep on seeing fearful dreams. *We know that his starting up and fear are due to dreams*, from the following: when he comes to his

senses, he reports having had dreams that correspond to the way he moved his body and spoke with his tongue.²

8.) Hippoc. *On Regimen* 4.86 [*On the rule of the soul during sleep*]

ὅταν δὲ τὸ σῶμα ἡσυχάσῃ, ἡ ψυχὴ κινεομένη καὶ ἐγρηγορούσα διοικεῖ τὸν ἐσωτῆς οἶκον, καὶ τὰς τοῦ σώματος πρῆξιαι ἀπάσας αὐτῇ διαπρήσεται. τὸ μὲν γὰρ σῶμα καθεῦδον οὐκ αἰσθάνεται, ἡ δὲ ἐγρηγορούσα γινώσκει πάντα, καὶ ὄρῃ τε τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ ἀκούει τὰ ἀκουστά, βαδίζει, ψαύει, λυπεῖται, **ἐνθυμεῖται**, ἐνὶ λόγῳ, ὀκόσαι τοῦ σώματος ὑπηρεσίαι ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς, πάντα ταῦτα ἡ ψυχὴ ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ διαπρήσεται. **ὅστις οὖν ἐπίσταται κρίνειν ταῦτα ὀρθῶς μέγα μέρος ἐπίσταται σοφίης.**

But when the body is at rest, the soul, being set in motion and awake, administers its own household and performs all the acts of the body itself. For the asleep body has no perception; but the soul being awake has cognizance of all things—sees what is visible, hears what is audible, walks, touches, suffers, *ponders*. In a word, all the functions of body and of soul are performed by the soul during sleep. *Whoever, therefore, knows how to interpret these acts correctly knows a great part of wisdom.*³

9.) Hippoc. [*Ep.*] 10.1

[*The Abderites describe Democritus' symptoms of apparent madness. They include wakefulness night and day; seeing visions, and inappropriate laughter*]

10.) Hippoc. [*Ep.*] 13, cf. 11 [*Democritus and/as the city of Abdera*]

κατὰ πᾶσαν γὰρ ἀνάγκην ἀπιτέον ἐς Ἄβδηρά μοι Δημοκρίτεω χάριν, ἐφ' ὃν νοσέοντα μετεπέμψατό με ἡ πόλις. ἀλεκτός τις ἢ συμπαθείη τῶν ἀνθρώπων, Διονύσιε. **ὡς μία ψυχὴ ξυνοσεῖ τῷ πολίτῃ**, ὥστε μοι δοκέουσι καὶ αὐτοὶ θεραπείης δεῖσθαι.

It is entirely necessary for me to go to Abdera for the sake of Democritus, to whom the city has summoned me because he is sick. The sympathy of the people is indescribable, Dionysius. *Like a single soul the city has fallen ill with its citizen.* Hence they, themselves, seem to me to need treatment.⁴

11.) Hippoc. [*Ep.*] 17.5 [*Abdera's madness, Laughter as Response*]

Ὅ δὲ μάλα τρανὸν ἀπιδῶν μοι, Δύο, φησί, τοῦ ἐμοῦ γέλωτος αἰτίας δοκεῖς, ἀγαθὰ καὶ φαῦλα· ἐγὼ δὲ ἓνα γελῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνοίης μὲν γέμοντα, κενεὸν δὲ πρηγμάτων ὀρθῶν, πάσησιν ἐπιβολῆσιν νηπιάζοντα καὶ μηδεμιῆς ἕνεκεν ὠφελείης ἀλγέοντα τοὺς ἀνηνύτους μόχθους, **πεύρατα γῆς καὶ ἀορίστους μυχοὺς ἀμετρήσιον ἐπιθυμίῃσιν**

² Trans. of Hippoc. *Internal Affection* taken from W.H. S. Jones (1931) (slightly modified).

³ Trans. of Hippoc. *On Regimen* taken from Harris (2009) (slightly modified).

⁴ Trans. of Hippoc. [*Ep.*] taken from Smith (1990).

ὀδεύοντα, ἄργυρον τήκοντα καὶ χρυσὸν καὶ μὴ παυόμενον τῆς κτήσιος ταύτης, αἰεὶ δὲ θορυβούμενον περὶ τὸ πλεόν, ὅκως αὐτὸς ἐλάσσω γένηται.

He looked straight at me and spoke very clearly: “You think that there are two causes for my laughter, good things and bad. But I laugh at one thing, humanity, full of ignorance, hollow of right actions, childish in all aspirations, agonizing through useless woes for no benefit, *traveling to the ends of the earth and her boundless depths with unmeasured desire*, melting gold and silver, never stopping this acquisitiveness of theirs, ever in an uproar for more, so that they themselves can be less.”

III.) *The Sleeping City* ~ [philosophy as medicine; λοιδωρία; and the unconscious ‘state’]

12.) Dio Chrys. Or. 33.6–7 [Dio as “true doctor,” disregard of the people] cf. Or. 33. 9–10

ὁ δ’ ἀληθῆς ἰατρὸς οὐκ ἔστι τοιοῦτος οὐδὲ οὕτως διαλέγεται τοῖς ὄντως δεομένοις: πόθεν; ἀλλὰ προσέταξε τί δεῖ ποιεῖν, καὶ φαγεῖν βουλόμενον ἢ πιεῖν ἐκώλυσε, καὶ λαβὼν ἔτεμεν ἀφεστηκός τι τοῦ σώματος.

But the true doctor is not such a fellow [i.e. the so-called doctor], nor does he discourse in such a way to those who in need: in contrast, he prescribes what is necessary to do, and stops a man wishing to eat or drink, and he takes (his scapel) and cuts some abscess of the body.⁵

13.) Dio Chrys. Or. 33.28 [*The problem of luxury* (τρυφή), cf. Or. 32.22, 32.23, 32.25]

<p>μὴ γὰρ οἶεσθε τοὺς κριοὺς μηδὲ τὰς ἐλεπόλεις καὶ τὰς ἄλλας μηχανὰς οὕτως ἀνατρέπειν ὡς τρυφήν, εἴτε ἄνδρα βούλεται τις πεπτωκότα ἰδεῖν εἴτε πόλιν.</p> <p>For do not think that rams and siege-towers and other machines destroy like <i>luxury</i>, whether one wish to see a <i>man</i> fall or a <i>city</i>.</p>	<p>ἀλλὰ σωφροσύνη καὶ νοῦς ἐστί τὰ σώζοντα.</p> <p>Instead, <i>prudence</i> and <i>intellect</i> are the things which save.</p>
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14.) Dio Chrys. Or. 33.32–33 [*On the Tarsians’ “dreamstate” and “snort”* (ῥέγκειν)]

μεταξὺ γοῦν ὀρθοὶ βαδίζοντες, λαλοῦντες οἱ πλείους **καθεύδουσιν**: εἰ δ’ ἐγρηγορέναι τοῖς πλείοσι δοκοῦσιν, οὐδὲν ἂν εἶη τοῦτο. καὶ γὰρ τοὺς λαγῶς φήσει τις ἐγρηγορέναι τῶν ἀπείρων, ἐὰν ἴδῃ κοιμωμένους. πόθεν οὖν ἐγνώσθη τοῦτο; ἐξ ἑτέρων τινῶν, ἃ σημεῖα ἐστί τοῦ καθεύδειν: ἐπεὶ τὰ γε ὄμματα αὐτῶν ἀναπέπταται. τί οὖν οὗτοι ποιοῦσι κοιμωμένων; πολλὰ μὲν δὴ τὰ γε ἄλλα: **σχεδὸν γὰρ πάντα ὀνειράσιν ἔοικεν αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα**: καὶ γὰρ

⁵ Trans. of Dio Or. 33 taken from Crosby (1940) (slightly modified).

χαίρουσι μάτην καὶ λυποῦνται καὶ θρασύνονται καὶ δεδοίκασι, μηδενὸς ὄντος, καὶ σπουδάζουσι, **καὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐπιθυμοῦσι**, καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα νομίζουσι εἶναι, καὶ τῶν ὄντων οὐκ αἰσθάνονται. πλὴν ταῦτα μὲν ἴσως κοινὰ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐστίν. ἐκεῖνο δὲ οἶμαι φανερώτατον ὕπνου τεκμήριον ποιοῦσι, **ῥέγκουσιν**. οὐ γὰρ ἔχω μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς εἰπεῖν εὐπρεπέστερον. καίτοι καὶ τῶν κοιμωμένων ὀλίγοι μὲν ἀεὶ τοῦτο πάσχουσι: τῶν δὲ ἄλλων **τοῖς μεθύουσι** ξυμβαίνει **καὶ τοῖς ἐμπλησθεῖσι** καὶ **τοῖς μὴ καλῶς κατακειμένοις**.

At any rate, however amazing it may be, while on your feet, walking or talking, most of you all the while *are fast asleep*; and even if you seem to most men to be awake, that would mean nothing at all. For instance, anyone unacquainted with rabbits will say that they are awake, even if he sees them sleeping. How, then, has this state been recognized? From certain other signs which indicate their sleeping, since their eyes at least are wide open. And so what do these people do that marks persons who are asleep? Many indeed are the other symptoms; for practically all their actions bear a resemblance to the dream state. For example, they experience joy and sorrow, and courage and timidity, for no reason at all, they are enthusiastic, they desire the impossible, and what is unreal they regard as real, while what is real they fail to perceive. However, these traits, perhaps they share in common with ourselves. But this in my opinion, is the clearest mark of slumber—they snort. For, by the gods, I am not able to speak a more fitting word. And yet even among sleepers few suffer from that affliction, while with everybody else it occurs only when men are drunk, or have gorged themselves with food, or are reclining in an uncomfortable position.

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