



Comic Cure for Delusional Democracy: Plato's Republic

Gene Fendt

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This book shows how the discussion of Platos' *Republic* is a comic mimetic cure for civic and psychic delusion. Plato creates such *pharmaka*, or noble lies, for reasons enunciated by Socrates within the discussion, but this indicates Plato must think his readers are in the position of needing the catharses such fictions produce. Socrates' interlocutors must be like us. Since cities are like souls, and souls come to be as they are through mimesis of desires, dreams, actions and thought patterns in the city, we should expect that political theorizing often suffers from madness as well. It does. Gene Fendt shows how contemporary political (and psychological) theory still suffers from the same delusion Socrates' interlocutors reveal in their discussion: a dream of *autarchia* called possessive individualism. Plato has good reason to think that only a mimetic, rather than a rational and philosophical, cure can work. Against many standard readings, *Comic Cure for Delusional Democracy* shows that the *Republic* itself is a defense of poetry; that *kallipolis* cannot be the best city and is not Socrates' ideal; that there are six forms of regime, not five; and that the true philosopher should not be unhappy to go back down into Plato's cave.

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