

**Proposal for 20 minute paper**  
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*The Republic's Divided Imagination : from eikasia and dianoia to phantasia*

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In this paper I will investigate the notion of imagination in the *Republic*. In general, the term “imagination” serves in English translations of the *Republic* to render the Greek *eikasia*, which refers to the lowest epistemological level illustrated in the analogies of the divided line and the cave. However, in the present study I shall focus on imagination as a more general psychological faculty involving images, a faculty which functions as an element of a model of mind and ultimately a key component in an account of consciousness. Central to this investigation shall, of course, be an interpretation of the divided line, particularly those sections corresponding to *eikasia* and *dianoia*. I will suggest that these two sections should be understood as belonging to the power which later in Plato and then in Aristotle and the Neoplatonists shall be referred to as *phantasia*. (I shall in the context of this paper only briefly indicate why we are entitled to translate *phantasia* as “imagination” and why we ought to admit the existence of a certain continuity between the use of this notion in Plato’s late dialogues, in particular the *Sophist*, and Aristotle’s psychological works). Thus, it shall be possible to conclude that behind the four-part analogy of the divided line, there lies a three-part model of the cognitive faculty constituted by reason, imagination and sensation. On the one hand, explicitly reading *eikasia* and *dianoia* as precursors to the notion of *phantasia* allows us to resolve various problems in the interpretation of the analogies of the divided line and the cave (such difficulties as are involved in explaining why Plato introduces *eikasia*, accounting for the nature of the proportions governing the sections of the line, identifying those whose cognition remains at the level of *eikasia* and understanding how hypothesizing functions at the level of *dianoia*). On the other hand, such a reading should also permit us to better understand the conceptions of *phantasia* elaborated in Plato’s later thought, in Aristotle and in the Neoplatonists. More generally, an examination of *eikasia* and *dianoia* in light of *phantasia* allows us to formulate with greater clarity the extent to which we might assert that the *Republic* contributes to a “positive” understanding of imagination.

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