

Why Does Plato Argue for the Banishment of Poets in Book 10 of the *Republic*?

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Why does Plato argue for the banishment of poets from the ideal city in the final Book, Book 10, of the *Republic*? Since Books 2–3 contain a discussion on the banishment of poets, it seems awkward as a composition for the dialogue to argue against mimesis again and to pronounce the banishment of poets in Book 10. Moreover, although it is often treated as a locus classicus, the theory of Forms developed through the discussion on the banishment of poets in Book 10 seems inconsistent with that in Book 5–7 for the following reasons. In Book 6, philosophers, who are expected to make the ideal city, are considered as analogous to painters (e.g. *Rep.* 500e2-3) and to perform mimesis as well (e.g. *Rep.* 500b8-c7). On the other hand, in Book 10, a painter is ranked in terms of ‘the maker whose product is at third remove from the nature’ (*Rep.* 597e3-4), and poets are expelled from the ideal city by being regarded as ‘beside a painter as his counterpart’ in Logos (*Rep.* 605a8). In addition, while Book 10 says that the Forms are made by God (*Rep.* 597b4-5), Book 5 states that the Forms are ‘always the same and unchanging’ (*Rep.* 497e6-7, cf. 479a2). These descriptions are mutually incompatible if ‘making (poiêsis)’ is to ‘bring into being something which did not previously exist’ (cf. *Soph.* 219b4-6). This awkwardness and the apparent inconsistencies have made the valuation of Book 10 unstable. In this paper, I address these problems by examining the discussion of Book 10 in comparison with the theory of the Forms in Books 5–7, or the so-called ‘Central Books’, starting with an investigation of the context from which Book 10 is introduced. This paper demonstrates that Book 10 focuses on the aspect of ‘making’ which is involved in mimesis, and explicates the danger lurking within the process of philosophical inquiry in the Central Books through an examination of the visual ‘making’ model. The discussion is completed with a focus on the foundation of the ideal city’s constitution (politeiâ, which is the Greek title for the *Republic*), and it is argued that God’s making of the Forms in Book 10 is located as a paradigm for philosophers, that is, a paradigm for philosophers to ‘become like’ God; ‘becoming like’ is therefore another aspect of mimesis.