



[Use of Force and Diplomacy](#)
[Ideas, Identities and](#)
[Decisional Processes that](#)
[Affect Security](#)
[Institutions that Manage](#)
[Violent Conflict](#)

Demiurgic Politics: The Republic and Timaeus

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Demiurgic Politics is a book-length study of the political and ethical theory in Plato's Republic and its influence on the contemporary neo-conservative movement.

The book takes as its starting point Plato's allegory of the cave. In this allegory, prisoners are chained facing the wall of a cave. Behind them is a constant flame that illuminates a series of statues. These statues are moved by others, causing shadows on the cave wall to flicker. These shadows are as close as the prisoners get to seeing reality.

The philosopher is a former prisoner who has been freed from his chains. He sees the fire and realizes the shadows on the wall are created by statues. He is then taken outside, where he sees objects the real world illuminated by the sun. He comes to understand that the objects in the cave were just copies of the objects in the real world.

The question, then, becomes whether the philosopher should go back the cave to rule those left behind. Plato repeatedly argues that because he has gained knowledge of the good, the philosopher is compelled to descend back into the cave. However, it is not clear why. Is it good for him, for his subjects, or simply good in an absolute sense?

Philosophers and political thinkers through the ages have developed answers to these questions. *Demiurgic Politics* examines four readings:

- Aristotle, one of Plato's students.
- Plotinus, the father of Neoplatonism.
- Leo Strauss, the founder of neoconservatism.
- A new optimistic reading by Silverman himself.

Silverman has presented parts of this project during conferences at Princeton, UCLA, and Berkeley. It was also the subject of his plenary address at the Australian Association of Philosophy meeting in Sydney in July 2005.



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