

Title: Gorbachev Reads Plato, Plato Reads Gorbachev: Glasnost, Perestroika, and the Noble Lie  
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In this paper, the author applies Plato's political doctrine of the "noble lie" stated in the *Republic*, hypothesizing an intricate relationship between Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika on the one hand, and capitalist ideology, which infused Eastern Europe during and after the disintegration of communism in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, on the other. This relationship is analyzed in terms of Plato, Aristotle, and Aristophanes' criticisms of the Sophists as pseudo-philosophers. The noble lie is a small falsehood by which philosophers who rule the ideal city-state achieve the big truth of social justice.

From one standpoint, Plato's philosophy is elitist and exclusive, because in its political theory it allows only philosophers to be perfect rulers. From another standpoint, it is populist and inclusive, because in its epistemological, religious, educational, psychological, aesthetic, etc. areas it promises wisdom and happiness to all humans. Glasnost and perestroika, embracing only Plato's populism, can be seen as a deconstruction of the noble lie of communist rule on a universal social scale. This dismantling underestimates two things: first, that Plato's populism is a philosophical abstraction, not a manual for pragmatic action; and, second, that in the politically divided world there is a second noble lie--that of developed capitalism competing with communism.

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the noble lie of capitalism displaced the noble lie of communism due to logical fallacies and ambiguous use of concepts similar to those analyzed in Plato, Aristophanes, and Aristotle's criticism of the Sophists. The resurgence of the Sophists in Eastern Europe during that era can be summed up thus: glasnost and perestroika moved from elitism to populism, and in that process they deconstructed the noble communist lie. Conversely, the invention of the capitalist noble lie was a transition from inclusiveness to exclusiveness. In this two-way process, the capitalist noble lie acquired the aura of a philosophical truth characteristic of glasnost or the Truth, while glasnost started being perceived as a new communist noble lie or the Lie.