THE *PATHOS* OF KNOWLEDGE: ON THE DIALECTICAL PLAY OF UNITY AND GOODNESS IN PLATO'S *STATESMAN*

By

Aidan Ingalls

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

At

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
December 2022

In memory of my grandparents

James Ingalls
(1919-2018)

and

Audrey Ingalls
(1926-2016)

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abstract

In *Statesman*, Plato stages a dialectical approach on one of his 'unwritten doctrines,' "that the good is one," in the voice of his literary creation, the Eleatic Visitor. Though the dialogue begins by positing political philosophy as the concern for the 'oneness' of a properly political knowledge, the implicit drama and logic of the dialogue follows a series of successive attempts to reformulate the very structure and content of this 'unity' in order to accommodate and include the ever-broadening scope of political reality. The dialogue culminates in the dialectical realization that the philosopher is unable to account for the uniqueness of the statesman's knowledge and the unity of political life in abstraction from the question of the *goodness* of this unity. Goodness, particularly the discernment of virtue in the dialogue of souls, comes to define the content *both* of the statesman's knowledge *and* of the city's unity.

List of Abbreviations Used

Gorg.	Plato's *Gorgias*
Metaph.	Aristotle's *Metaphysics*
Parm.	Plato's *Parmenides*
Phaedr.	Plato's *Phaedrus*
Protag.	Plato's *Protagoras*
Rep.	Plato's *Republic*
Soph.	Plato's *Sophist*
Symp.	Plato's *Symposium*
Theaet.	Plato's *Theaetetus*

Acknowledgements

"Our life and our death is with our neighbour."
- St. Anthony the Great

I am indebted to an inestimable number of people in my life, without whom the completion of this thesis, already difficult, would have been utterly impossible.

I wish to thank Dalhousie University, the Killam Trusts, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for supporting me in the practical matters of life.

To all of my friends and colleagues in the Classics Department, both present and past, it has truly been an honour to live and work with you these past years. I am so grateful for your commitment to truth and to dialogue, and for your kindness, which has made this department such a wonderful place in which to study. I have learned and received far more from you than I have ever given in return. I am hopeful I may be a part of this wonderful community for many years to come.

My immense gratitude to the University of King's College Chapel, where I have found much friendship and a spiritual home for many years. For adorning my time in Halifax with so much music. For providing a space on campus where it is possible to fall in love. To Peter, Iona, Anil, Seika, Cole, Ben, Earl, Katherine, Neyve, Sarah, Cam, Isaac, and Alison, who have made the last few years particularly special and whose friendship means so much to me. To all others I do not have space here to mention by name, but who have extended the hospitality of their spirit toward me. To Fr. Thorne who I count as one of my foremost teachers and from whom I have received so much. To Fr. Ingalls for his discernment and guidance in difficult times and in joyful times. To Fr. Curran for his continual encouragement and for his always captivating ruminations, whether concerning a snippet of discourse on CBC Radio, the philosopher-who-must-not-be-named-in-this-chapel, or the nature of things more broadly.

My love and thanks to my family, and especially to my parents for their unswerving support not only of these present studies, but in their lifelong care. For giving me a place to rest and an ear to hear when writing seemed impossible. To my grandmother, Na, for always being there to talk. To my brothers, Nicholas and David, for never letting me win an argument. To Kelly, my wonderful partner, who has endured the trial of this thesis with remarkable forbearance. I want to especially thank my father for a conversation somewhere on the wild side of Grand Manan Island that proved decisive in the formulation of my thesis.

Finally, my profound and enduring thanks to Dr. Diamond not only for his supervision of this thesis, but for his many years of encouragement, and for his depthless and undeserved patience. I could not have hoped for a better Virgil to help guide me through the rich world of ancient philosophy. I also wish to extend my thankfulness to Dr. Fournier and Dr. King, the other committee members of this thesis, not only for their diligence and helpful editorial comments, but also for the many years they taught me before this. Thank you to all of my teachers who have informed my learning and to whom *πολλὴν χάριν ὀφείλω*.

Chapter I – Introduction

Statesman and the Regime of Interpretation: A Problem of Unity

The unity of Plato's *Statesman*, the logic underlying its labyrinthine array of turnings and digressions, is a contentious question in the interpretation of the dialogue. It is almost a cliché in contemporary scholarship that the first line of any substantial work on *Statesman* take the form of a disclaimer, a reminder of the work's preeminent unpopularity among the works of Plato, of its seeming erratic disorganization, or of its failure as a work of genuinely serious political philosophy.[1] *Statesman* is "weary,"[2] "dull"[3] the "most unloved Platonic dialogue" short of the *Laws*,[4] "a record of complication and even confusion,"[5] and "cannot be said to be principally concerned with questions of political philosophy, at least not in an obvious way,"[6] a text "so infertile in later political thought."[7] The dialogue's profound interest in the question of political unity and in the unity of political 'science' or 'knowledge,' seems to be counterbalanced by the conspicuous disunity, circularity, and obscurity of the text itself. It is the "Platonic dialogue with the least pleasing proportions."[8] Its form is a kind of inflated formlessness.[9]

---

[1] See Taylor (1971) p. 250
[2] Ryle (1966) p. 285
[3] Grene (1965) p. 181
[4] Larivée (2018) p. 11
[5] Annas & Waterfield (1995) p. xxii
[6] Scodel (1987) p. 9
[7] Lane (1998) p. 6; For an opposing standpoint, see O'Meara (1994; 2005), who traces the influence of *Statesman* in a number of late ancient works. Still, compared to the influence of Plato's *Republic* and even *Laws*, *Statesman* stands as the 'black sheep' of his political philosophy.
[8] Benardete (1992), p. 25; He continues: "If a perfect writing is to resemble a living being, a committee must have put together whatever animal the Statesman is."
[9] See Appendix A and B for two quite radically different depictions of the *Statesman*'s structure. Merrill (2003) argues that the structure of the dialogue is ring-like in its form, which "has the effect of inviting a reader to return to earlier passages in the dialogue" (55). The definition at the end of the dialogue is not complete without a kind of play of the reader's recollection. For a somewhat different interpretation of this circularity, see White (2016) on the Visitor's 'far-reaching but ultimately circular thinking' (7). Castoriadis (2002) to the contrary reads the dialogue in more 'lateral' terms. He doesn't divide the dialogue into discrete, self-contained segments as much as he indicates the various disruptions to the smooth continuity of the text. Thus, he brings the strangeness of this multi-jointed animal into fuller view. Rosen (1995) in some sense falls between these two schematics: "there is no explicit argument of the dialogue but instead a series of ambiguous treatments, not always clearly related and each filled with asides and obscure discontinuities, mistakes, repetitions and the like. Otherwise stated, the explicit argument of the dialogue is the dialogue itself in its entirety" (66). He recognizes a certain kind of circularity or spirality at play in the dialogue and at the same time the presence of profound discontinuities. Klein's (1977) view is that the discontinuity of the dialogue is *necessary* as a reflection of the profoundly discontinuous nature of the political realm (161).

Though the expressed aim of *Statesman* is simple enough, to discover the singular knowledge or singular 'form' of the true ruler, one can hardly say the same about the course the dialogue takes to realize this end. From this simple premise or hypothesis that 'the knowledge of the statesman is one,' the dialogue seems to fall into all manner of rabbit holes in its attempt to discern the nature of this unicity. The Eleatic Visitor, the principal interlocutor of the dialogue, seems to introduce methodological shifts and new beginnings without the slightest sign to the reader of what connects these developments together—of what constitutes the *unity* of these erratic turns. The lengthy biological divisions and jokes, the cosmological myth, the sudden discussion of paradigm, and of weaving, the rumination of the correct length of discourse—all these things and more contribute to the sense that something is not quite right in the structuring of the work. We find a text that seems to initiate a self-concealment at every step. In *Statesman*, perhaps more than in any other Platonic dialogue, one gets the sense that Plato intentionally aims to perplex and to produce obstacles of interpretation for his readers. It is not clear in the end what the dialogue is even *about*. At times, the dialogue seems more a comedy than a serious philosophical investigation.[10] The difficulty of discerning the unity of the statesman, which the dialogue as a whole traces, corresponds to the difficulty of determining the unity of *Statesman*. As Larivée remarks, "[t]hroughout this long and convoluted discussion that is supposedly about [the statesman], he remains mysteriously faceless, intangible, hidden."[11] At its close, it is not clear how successful the dialogue *is* in its aim, or what the *measure* of its success might be. Even the Visitor himself appears to question the very relevance of the initial investigation.[12]

Confusion about the subject of *Statesman* extends back to Plato's first interpreters. Among ancient commentators, Aristotle takes the *political* import of the dialogue seriously;[13] Thrasyllus, Albinus and other Middle Platonists classify *Statesman* as a text concerned with *logic*;[14] the Alexandrian Neoplatonists, inheriting Iamblichus'

---

[10] Scodel (1987) in particular understands *Statesman* as a kind of Platonic comedy.
[11] Larivée (2018) p. 13
[12] See *Stat.* 285d; The Visitor claims at this point in the text that their current investigation is for the sake of "becoming more skilled dialecticians in respect to all things." Many scholars, like Delcomminette (2000) and Sayre (2006) take this passage very seriously. For an alternate view, see Castoriadis (2002) p. 19.
[13] On this topic, see Cherry (2008).
[14] See El Murr (2014) p. 31-2

Platonic curriculum, view the dialogue as particularly relating to the exposition of *nature*.[15] That *Statesman* is able to accommodate these vastly different interpretations of the dialogue's content speaks to the complexity of the text. The general scholarly reaction to *Statesman* for most of the twentieth century was to ignore it, or to regard it as one of Plato's most egregious literary and philosophical failures.[16] Even today, after the relative explosion of scholarship in the last thirty years, enthusiasts of the dialogue seem to defend it by trying to 'save it from itself.' Delcomminette exemplifies this tendency: "toutes les absurdités et contradictions que l'on croit découvrir dans le dialogue doivent être attribuées à l'incompréhension du lecteur plutôt qu'à Platon lui-même."[17] The unity of *Statesman* must be discerned almost in spite of the text itself, and if not discerned, imposed, before the interpreter will admit of any fault on the part of Plato. The strategy of interpreting *Statesman* involves the sweeping up of the dialogue's fragments into a more or less coherent heap—a series of progressive assaults on the self-dissention of the dialogue in the name of a unity that the scholar maddeningly asserts *must be present*.

In one sense, this thesis is no different from other recent attempts to interpret *Statesman*: it recognizes that the most vexing barrier for a clear explanation of the dialogue is the dialogue itself. The fundamental problem to which this thesis is responding, then, is of the seeming disorganization and structurelessness of *Statesman*. It seeks to discern the unity of the dialogue—to read the dialogue as a coherent whole.

The One and the Good: The Implicit Aim of *Statesman*

If one is attempting to trace out Plato's theory of goodness broadly and his theory of the *form* of 'the Good' more specifically, *Statesman* seems an unlikely dialogue toward which to turn. One would do better attending to Book VI of *Republic* for Plato's

---

[15] See *Anon. Proleg*. (1962)

[16] See, for example, as above: Taylor (1971), Ryle (1966), and Grene (1965)

[17] Delcomminette (2000) p. 24. Delcomminette insists on the 'perfection' of *Statesman* especially because he discerns that the dialogue moves according to *dialectic*: "cette pensée est dialectique, ce qui signifie qu'elle ne procède pas par essais et erreurs, mais se meut d'emblée dans la vérité, qui confère à ses développements une unité et une continuité sans faille" (19). He justifies this interpretation by citing the passage from 286b-287a, wherein the Visitor defends the length and diversity of the investigation (24). It is a perfect dialogue because the Visitor *says* that all the digressions have been necessary. See also El Murr (2014): "Si ce dialogue paraît désorganisé, décousu, si son unité paraît artificielle, tiraillée entre deux sujets, c'est tout simplement que le principe de cette unité n'a pas été saisi" (42). For my part, I agree both that *Statesman* is concerned with dialectic and that it does not lack a principle of unity, though in contrast to Delcomminette and El Murr, I will insist that this dialectic is both *perspectival* and *incomplete*.

most famous treatment of the Good, or to the *Philebus* for its examination of pleasure and reason in relation to the Good, or even to *Timaeus* which theorizes upon the good ordering of the cosmos. Indeed, the interlocutors of *Statesman* scarcely mention goodness at all—'the Good' never—and when they do their remarks hardly centre goodness as a serious focal point of philosophical questioning. Yet, this is precisely the argument of this thesis: that Plato's fundamental aim and object of *Statesman* is to approach 'the Good.' This alone makes sense of the tangled structure of the dialogue.

Statesman, however, does not constitute a conventional Platonic engagement with the question of goodness. Rather, I argue that the dialogue stages a preliminary and playful approach on one of Plato's most famous 'unwritten doctrines': "that the Good is One" (*ὅτι ἀγαθόν ἐστιν ἕν*).[18] Given the profound ambiguity and gravity of this apparent spoken and public doctrine, in addition to the cursory nature of Aristoxenus' report, the question of just how to interpret this fragment in relation to Plato's written dialogical comments on goodness remains tremendously controversial.[19] This is not a tension that this thesis seeks to relieve, nor will this thesis primarily concern itself with this question. Rather, I take this enigmatic doctrine as a kind of philosophical horizon toward which *Statesman* points: that for Plato, Unity *in some way* corresponds to the Good. This is the conclusion toward which *Statesman* enigmatically and preliminarily gestures, though without explicit doctrinal intent. It constitutes the unspoken centre around which Plato structures *Statesman*.

One might reasonably ask why Plato does not make the implicit centre of *Statesman*, more explicit in the dialogue. In my view, there are two reasons why he approaches the topic of the One-Good relation indirectly. First, Plato uses the Eleatic as principal interlocutor, suppressing his own conventional philosophical language,[20] to avoid the appearance that he is expressing dogma about *the most important things* in written form, something against which Socrates warns in *Phaedrus*.[21] The 'unwritten

---

[18] Findlay (1974) p. 413

[19] See Gaiser (1980) for a general overview of the ancient and contemporary reception of Plato's so-called lecture 'On the Good.'

[20] Dorter (1994) and White (2016) each insist, in my view rightly, that the Visitor speaks of goodness but never 'the Good,' of oneness but never 'the One.' I will press this point in chapter IV when the Visitor speaks of 'form' in a decidedly non-Platonic way.

[21] See, for example, *Phaedr.* 275e

doctrine' "that the good is one" appears nowhere in dialogue form, likely since Plato considers that the written word would corrupt the spoken truth. The *hiddenness* of *Statesman*'s structure, then, is constitutive of *Statesman*'s philosophical point. Plato's own purpose in writing the dialogue, to indirectly approach the identity of Oneness and Goodness, in not identical with the aims and intentions of his *character*, the Eleatic Visitor. Plato uses the philosophy of the latter for his own purposes. This is essential to understand the force of the dialogue. By expressing his philosophical positions about unity and goodness—as opposed to Unity and Goodness[22]—in the voice of an Eleatic, Plato frees himself from taking up definite written positions about these most important forms.[23] At the same time, his philosophical kinship with the Parmenidean position allows him to speak without fundamentally betraying his own philosophical commitments. The Visitor, as I argue in chapter II, both is and is not Plato. In the guise of the Visitor, Plato is free to gesture without advancing firm doctrine; he is able to mix together his own genuine philosophical positions, with the *perspectival* views of his character.

Second, Plato has chosen to advance this *implicit* dialectic of oneness and goodness in a dialogue *explicitly* concerned with the knowledge of politics in order to redeem Socrates as, in some sense, the only one properly concerned with the "practice of true politics."[24] The Socratic concern for the virtue of souls, initially excluded from the political scope of the Visitor's thinking, comes to be included in the dialectical

---

[22] The topic of 'the Good' or 'good' in *Statesman* is a marginal, though still contentious topic in scholarship on the dialogue. Dimas (2021) holds what is probably the prevailing view, that for the Visitor, "[a] necessary condition […] is that the King has insight into the Good. To come to possess the knowledge this achievement requires one must be a competent dialectician" (5). The good, for Dimas, is *implicit* in the discussion of *Statesman*. For a contrary view, see Crosson (1963): "the question of the end or ends of the polis—beyond the minimal condition of the achieving of unity—is never raised" (30). Márquez (2014) believes that the Good is somewhat redundant in the dialogue, since "the Plato of the *Laws* and the *Statesman* conceives of political knowledge as a specialist knowledge that demands *more than the knowledge of the good* [emphasis added]" (21-2). Zuckert (2005; 2009), on the other hand, sees the absence of the Visitor's concern for the Good as a conscious *lack*: "Neither naming nor apparently recognizing a supreme 'idea of the good' among the 'greatest *eidê*,' the Stranger does not identify *dialektikê* with the ability to isolate and give an account of the 'idea of the good.'" (fn. 16). Similarly, White (2016) and Rhodes (2020) see the lack of an explicit treatment of Goodness as a problem. The former writes, "[t]he good, lower case, will be employed where "the good" appears in the dialogue without a palpable sense that it is a privileged reality" (11-2). In my view, Plato intentionally limits the discussion of goodness to an Eleatic *perspective*.

[23] See Plochmann (1954) p. 227

[24] See *Gorg.* 521d

reformulation of the oneness of political knowledge. Plato knows he may convincingly save Socrates only from a non-Socratic starting point. The Visitor's 'Socratization,'[25] must occur gradually and dialectically from a more ordinary conjecture that politics concerns above all *unity* instead of virtue.[26] Socrates will be redeemed only if the Visitor's non-Socratic preoccupation with unity comes to centre upon the question of virtue.

The Withdrawal of Unity: The Dialectical Movement of *Statesman*

If an approach on the relation of the unwritten One-Good doctrine and the rescue of Socrates is the *implicit* goal of *Statesman*, the *explicit* movement and logic of the dialogue functions according to an Eleatic dialectic between oneness and multiplicity. According to the *internal* logic of the dialogue, *Statesman* represents the Visitor's attempt to formulate a political philosophy that privileges a concern for *Unity* to the exclusion of *Goodness*. It constitutes, for Plato, a kind of philosophical test case to exhibit the functional philosophical limit of a unity understood in abstract isolation from goodness, and as the ground of philosophy's approach to political reality. The increasing digressiveness of the dialogue, then, is not a mistake of poor authorship on Plato's part, but *the dialectical result of the philosophical assumptions of his character*. The disunity of the dialogue is a direct result of the philosophical presupposition that politics properly concerns unity, to the exclusion of questions of goodness. Unity by itself *causes*, so to speak, the disunity of the investigation: the logical movement of *Statesman* follows a series of successive dialectical attempts to formulate and reformulate the notion of unity sufficiently to accommodate the variousness of political reality, attempts which ultimately end in failure, but in productive failure, since goodness comes to appear on the scene as the necessary associate of oneness at the close of the dialogue. Plato reveals goodness as that which more properly unifies the chasm between limited oneness and unlimited multiplicity. The positive conclusion of *Statesman*, then, is not the precise

[25] Scodel (1987) notes that "the Stranger becomes much more 'Socratic' in the concluding part of the dialogue" (151), though he is unable to say *why* or *how* this happens. My thesis supplies the reason for the shift in the Visitor's philosophical perspective.

[26] In the rest of this thesis, I will refer to Plato and to Plato's intentions *only* when I am speaking of the purpose of the dialogue *as a whole*. I will refer to the Visitor and to the Visitor's intentions when I speak of *particular* arguments and *particular* moments of the dialogue. Plato is using the Visitor to make a philosophical point, and his philosophical intentions are not identical those of the character he has created.

determination of the statesman's one knowledge, which remains withdrawn in the blinding light of its own unity, but the recognition of the intertwining of this oneness with the *matter* of goodness, a conclusion not *intended* by the Eleatic character.

I want to turn now from this general overview of my reading of *Statesman*, to consider the particular commitments of my argument. First, I argue that Plato's Visitor is committed to a theory of oneness, broadly, and to a theory of political unity, specifically, to the exclusion of considerations of goodness. Thus, *Statesman* involves (at least at the beginning) a *henology* to the exclusion of *agathology*. *Statesman* is a dialogue that seems to be *haunted* by the meaning of oneness, but by goodness more elusively.[27]

Second, closely related to the first point, I argue that the Visitor's functional notion of unity undergoes several modifications over the course of the dialogue. *The very meaning of unity and of oneness in* Statesman *is in flux*. This is not a random flux but involves a kind of rational and *dialectical* transformation, toward the greater and greater inclusion of multiplicity. Thus, though the expressed aim at the outset of the Visitor's investigation is to discern the figure of the statesman—what the one statesman is, and what the statesman's one is, if the statesman is indeed one—the attempt to discern the unity proper to human political life, is obstructed by the ontological chasm that opens between unity and unlimited multiplicity. The philosophical drama of *Statesman* moves from unity to multiplicity, from arithmetic to geometry, from abstraction to concretion, from knowing to making,[28] as the Visitor struggles to accommodate the exigencies of human life in his functional and reformulated notions of unity. Though the focus of *Statesman* is political, its essential problem is more properly metaphysical. It is only by being reduced to *aporia* in respect to the relation between unity and multiplicity, that the Visitor recovers goodness as a new way to bridge this ontological chasm.

Third, a large portion of this thesis will centre on the Visitor's 'Myth of Kronos.' On an abstract and dialectical level, it is the 'pivot' of the dialogue in which unity in some sense is made to abandon its 'identity' as sameness, in the accommodation of difference in the *pathos* of human life. It is precisely the absence of the one with which

---

[27] I paraphrase and modify Benardete (1992) here: "The *Statesman* seems to be haunted by the ghosts of its own argument" (29).

[28] See Rosen (1995): "The central theme of *Statesman* is the relation between *phronēsis*, or sound judgment, and *technē*" (vii).

the rest of the dialogue grapples, and which culminates in the appearance of goodness in the face of the one's withdrawal.

None of these elements in themselves involve a completely unique reading of the dialogue,[29] but taken together I hope to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on this difficult text. I divide the dialogue in the following way, which corresponds to the divisions in my thesis:

Chapter II: The Dramatic Context of *Statesman*
Chapter III: Prologue [257A – 258A]
Chapter IV: Initial Divisions [258A – 268D]
Chapter V: Cosmic Myth of Kronos [268D – 274E]
Chapter VI: The *Pathos* of Knowledge [274E – 287B]
Chapter VII: Political Core [287B – 311C]

In my second chapter, I argue that Plato has woven certain suggestions of the hidden One-Good centre in the dramatic details of the trilogy of dialogues to which *Statesman* is bound. In the third chapter, I offer a close reading of the prologue of *Statesman* and find certain motifs of the One-Good relation embedded in the very groundwork of the dialogue. In the fourth, I shall examine the 'starting point' of the Visitor's political philosophy: that the statesman's knowledge is *one*. Here, the Visitor prefigures oneness as a kind of arithmetical absoluteness. The fifth chapter will consider the famous 'Myth of Kronos,' and the failure of unity to act as the sole and proper measure of human politics. My sixth chapter will examine the Visitor's digressions on paradigm, weaving and due measure. I shall argue that these sections attempt a kind of reformulation of the meaning of oneness from the perspective of the *pathos* of human knowledge. Finally, the last chapter shall examine the Visitor's return to a notion of absolute unity as the measure of the statesman's knowledge. I shall argue that the Visitor is able to restore the unity of the statesman only through its centring in goodness.

[29] Dorter (1994), White (2016) and Sallis (2021) in particular have written works on *Statesman* that centre the question of oneness in their interpretation of the text. Neither, however, perceive the dialogue as involving a *dialectical* drama. This I see as my main contribution to the scholarship of *Statesman*.

Chapter II – Good, One, and Doomed: The Dramatic Context of *Statesman*

Statesman constitutes the concluding dialogue of Plato's only completed trilogy, which includes *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesman* respectively.[30] The primary point of this chapter is to show how Plato embeds questions of unity and goodness into the dramatic structure of *Statesman*, especially in his selection of characters, dramatic frames, and topics of discussion in the three dialogues that compose his trilogy. I argue that Plato plays with the perspectival framing of these dialogue, *both*, in order to reveal the hidden centre of the trilogy to the discerning reader, *and* to ensure that the unwritten One-Good doctrine does not fall into mere dogma.

The Unity of the Trilogy: *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesman*

Plato's trilogy is connected *dramatically* rather than expressly thematically,[31] and its episodes occur over the course of two consecutive days, largely with the same cast of characters and in the same location, at an Athenian gymnasium. In *Theaetetus*, Socrates converses with his friend, the mathematician Theodorus, and the eponymous Theaetetus, a pupil of the latter, about the nature of knowledge. Another young man, who will respond to the Eleatic Visitor in *Statesman*, the namesake of the elder Socrates, is in attendance. The dialogue concludes when Socrates departs, after urging Theodorus and company to meet there again in the morning. *Sophist* explicitly signals its continuity with *Theaetetus*, in the very first words of the dialogue: Theodorus explains that they have returned "in accordance with yesterday's agreement,"[32] though the pack of mathematicians now bring with them an unnamed Visitor from Elea, who will lead the discussion in the last two dialogues of the trilogy. The topic of conversation shifts (at least seemingly) radically from that of *Theaetetus*. Now, Socrates asks the Visitor to explain the difference, from an Eleatic perspective, between sophist, statesman and philosopher. Finally, *Statesman* begins, possibly immediately[33] after *Sophist* concludes,

---

[30] See Gill (2012; 2013; 2016) for a discussion of two *uncompleted* and hypothetical trilogies, including the hypothetical *Philosophos* dialogue, which would have formed a more 'thematic' trilogy alongside *Sophist* and *Statesman*.

[31] There have been scholarly attempts to discern a more thematic unity of these dialogues, though it is uncontroversial that this trilogy is connected most obviously by their dramatic context.

[32] *Soph*. 216a1; κατὰ τὴν χθὲς ὁμολογίαν ; All translations from *Statesman* are my own unless otherwise marked. All translations from other texts are not my own, unless otherwise marked. For *Theaetetus*, I take my translations primarily from Levett & Burnyeat (1997). For *Sophist*, I take my translations primarily from Brann, Kalkavage & Salem (1997).

[33] See Klein (1977) p. 3

with the elder Socrates expressing his gratitude to Theodorus for his acquaintance with the Visitor, and, presumably, for the philosophical discussion that has preceded. This relatively prosaic dramatic context, then, functions as the most obvious gesture of the trilogy's obscure unity. It is not clear on the surface why these dialogues are connected at all.

The Good: The Megarian Frame

It is easy to forget when reading *Statesman* of the narrative edifice that frames the *Theaetetus*, and, by extension, frames the trilogy as a whole and each of the other dialogues within it. *Theaetetus* begins with a short prefatory dialogue between Euclides and Terpsion,[34] two Megarian philosophers,[35] the former of whom relates that he has just seen an aged Theaetetus on his deathbed, being conveyed from a Corinthian battlefield to Athens through the port of Megara, stricken with dysentery. Thus, the dialogue begins at the *end*, with the death of the eponymous interlocutor. After musing about the great virtue of Theaetetus, and of Socrates' "prophetic" (*μαντικῶς*) gift to have discerned this,[36] Euclides tells his friend about a conversation between the two that occurred when the latter was still a boy, which Euclides himself has heard from Socrates, and which he has written down over time. It is this account that will form the bulk of *Theaetetus*, read out by an unnamed slave while the philosophers rest.[37]

As with most Platonic prologues, the more attention one pays to the details of the text, the more significant these seemingly banal situations appear as a thematic introduction to the work in question.[38] For our purposes, the Megarian philosophical framework is most important to observe. Though little is known about the Megarian school, and there are substantial doubts whether the Megarians ever founded what could

---

[34] Plato places both of these individuals at Socrates' deathbed in *Phaedo* (59c), though neither have a speaking role in that dialogue.

[35] Euclides, indeed, was the founder of the Megarian school of philosophy. For a survey of the Megarian school, see Caizzi (2006) p. 132-134.

[36] *Theaet*. 142c5

[37] So Benardete (1984) writes, "All Platonic dialogues are written, but only the Theaetetus presents most of itself as written. Its author is not Plato. The voice is the voice of Plato, but the hand is the hand of Euclides" (I.85).

[38] The Alexandrian Neoplatonists, for example, (including Proclus, who was formed by this school) take Plato's various prefatory passages very seriously. See *Anon*. *Proleg*. p. 30-35 for an overview of Platonic literary elements and the philosophical interpretation thereof. Broadly speaking, most contemporary scholarship on the Platonic dialogues regard the prologues to be important as well, though to varying degrees.

reasonably be called a 'school' at all,[39] Diogenes Laertius offers a succinct summary of Euclides' philosophical position: "He declared that the good is one, though it is called by many names: sometimes wisdom, sometimes god, sometimes mind, and so forth. He rejected what is opposed to the good, claiming that it does not exist."[40] So too, there is evidence, especially in Aristotle, of the Megarian denial of potentiality: "There are some people, such as the Megarians, who say that something is potential only when it is active, but when it is not active it is not potential."[41] Thus, in the broadest possible terms one may view the doctrine of the school as a kind of fusion of absolute Parmenidean monism and Socratic ethical concern, replacing Parmenides' One for Goodness.[42] We may also note to this end that the Megarians were involved in *eristics*,[43] though there is also evidence that they were interested in dialectic and worked in the "logical-linguistic area."[44] At any rate, the discussion of knowledge between Socrates and Theaetetus, which will end in an aporia "more comprehensively sceptical than any other so-called sceptical dialogue,"[45] begins with an image of the hospitality of Euclides, which, evokes in a certain *the hospitality of the absolute Good*.[46]

It is deeply ambiguous whether Euclides' slave reads all three dialogues in the trilogy, or the first only, to the reclining philosophers.[47] On the one hand, both *Sophist* and *Statesman* are written in the same style as *Theaetetus*—a style Euclides is at pains to point out that he himself has cultivated, "to avoid the bother of having the bits of narrative in between the speeches."[48] Thus, the two 'later' dialogues continue in a style

---

[39] Caizzi (2006) p. 132
[40] Diogenes Laertius, 106
[41] *Metaph.* 1046b29-31
[42] See *Rep.* 508a-e for Socrates/Plato's positioning of the Good beyond Being.
[43] That is, a style of disputive (even 'logic-chopping') argumentation that attempts to reduce an opponent to self-contradiction. It is possible that the Megarians are among the "professional controversialists" Socrates ridicules at *Theaet*. 164c. For a defense of Megarian eristics from the Aristotelian critique see Hartmann (2017).
[44] Caizzi (2006) p. 134
[45] Benardete (1984) p. I.87
[46] To be perfectly clear, there is no argument at work in the opening of *Theaetetus*. Plato is not *arguing* for the so-called 'hospitality of the good' any more than he is arguing for anything else. Rather, an *image* of the Good in the Megarian philosophers frames the dialogue, though this image is neither plain nor unambiguous as we shall see, and it is an image *that the Megarians themselves would deny*, since they do not admit the existence of potentiality or mediation.
[47] See Lane (1998) p. 7 for a short treatment of this perplexity, who cites Miles Burnyeat as asking this question.
[48] *Theaet*. 143c; Lane (1998) suggests that if the Megarian frame does not encompass *Sophist* and *Statesman*, then the latter two dialogues involve a "performed version of conversation" (7).

that stresses a kind of literary immediacy,[49] a style that involves a kind of functional forgetting of recollection (in the *Theaetetus*, at least, we know that the originating recollection belongs explicitly to Socrates), and a style that Euclides connects both to the leisure of writing, and to the ease of hearing.[50] On the other hand, in the preface to *Theaetetus*, Euclides refers *specifically* only to the conversation between Socrates and Theaetetus from the same dialogue, making no mention of the Visitor or of any other element that characterize the latter two dialogues of the trilogy. If these dialogues do constitute a trilogy of Euclides' written recollections of Socrates' recollections, then he has forgotten to tell us. At the same time, Plato could have been ignorant of neither the stylistic nor the dramatic unity underlying this triad of dialogues, nor does it seem likely that he himself forgot about the framing prologue of *Theaetetus*, failing somehow to cap it off.[51] It is a serious question whether the prologue of *Theaetetus* acts exclusively as the prologue to *Theaetetus*, or also to the so-called 'trilogy.' This question, in my view, would be rendered completely inconsequential were it not for Plato's (surprising) almost graceless and clumsy insistence at the end of *Theaetetus* and at the beginning of the others, that the three dialogues be joined. Plato deliberately draws these dialogues out of what would constitute perfectly reasonable isolated unities, into a tangled, and complex relationality. The Megarian prologue, too, belongs to this strange association.

Absolute goodness—or more accurately a philosophical *vision* of goodness' absoluteness (to use non-Platonic language)—frames and mediates the entirety of Plato's trilogy. And yet, in relation to the 'Eleatic' parts of this trilogy, this goodness is *absent* in appearance. No edition of *Sophist* or *Statesman* by itself includes this framing prologue—it is too far separated or distended from each dialogue in themselves. It is not a part of the

---

[49] Benardete (1984): "Euclides presents what has happened as if it were happening now; he has suppressed the difference of time and place" (I.88).

[50] The dominant interpretation of the Megarian frame of *Theaetetus* tends to emphasize the poverty of Euclides' philosophical imagination. See Benardete (1984); Blondell (2002); Giannopoulou (2013). For a defense of Euclides' writing, and for a defense of the philosophical role of leisure, see Kaklamanou & Pavlou (2016).

[51] Though without connecting the Megarian framework to the latter two dialogues of the 'trilogy,' Kaklamanou & Pavlou (2016) note, "Plato does not return to the dramatic setting with the two Megarians and the slave at the end of the dialogue, so the outer frame remains forever incomplete" (411). Though this is quite common in Platonic dialogue—"[t]he introductory dramatic dialogue is resumed only at the end of the Euthydemus and the Phaedo" (fn. 5)—nevertheless, as a dramatic trilogy, the case of *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesman* is unique among Plato's works.

dialogue as a *whole*. This is to say, insofar as the framing of goodness is present at the beginning of the whole trilogy, it is absent from the 'whole part' that constitutes *Statesman*: absolute goodness as a frame of reference is *present only insofar as it is absent*. *Statesman* lies in *relation* to the Megarian opining of *Theaetetus*, but its relation is a relation of absence.[52] Indeed, the very structure of the work—its very composition as a separate and distinct work in the first place, literarily 'distended' by a great distance from the prologue of *Theaetetus*—seems intentionally *to effectuate a forgetting in the reader*. We begin *Sophist*, and moreso *Statesman*, by forgetting the Good. Yet, Plato seems to intend that the careful reader recollect their own forgetfulness: the absent-presence of the absolute Good in *Statesman* depends upon the reader's recollection of their own forgetfulness.

The One: The Visitor from Elea

As aforementioned, there is radical shift in philosophical focus between *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, emphasized by a similarly radical shift in the dramatic structuring of the dialogues. The major changes, most simply, are twofold: there is the presence of the Visitor from Elea—a philosopher who hails from the birthplace of Parmenides—as the leader of the conversation, and there is the silence of Socrates.

The Visitor has been called many things by scholars: unpoetic,[53] unerotic,[54] and as Rosen comments, "[h]e reminds us of a professor who is full of his own learning and the originality of his doctrines."[55] It is important to be careful, however, not to import certain assumptions about this mysterious Visitor to the text. We must read carefully how Theodorus and Socrates characterize him, especially at the beginning of *Sophist* and how he reveals himself in the course of the successive investigations.

Theodorus' opening introduction offers certain important properties about the Visitor's character. First (1), Theodorus tells Socrates they are bringing "a certain

[52] It is therefore hardly surprising that few scholars have noted the ambiguous relation of *Statesman* (or for that matter *Sophist*) to the prologue of *Theaetetus*.
[53] Zuckert (2000) p. 78
[54] Rosen (1995) p. 2; Zuckert (2005) p. 3
[55] Rosen (1995) p. 4

stranger [*τινὰ ξένον*]" or "a certain visitor"[56] with them—on a basic level one who is extrinsic to the Athenian polis, and whose own customs are different from the Athenians present.[57] Thus, *Sophist* too begins with a kind of image of hospitality. In *Theaetetus* the spokesperson of 'the Good' welcomes; in *Sophist* it is the spokesperson of the Parmenidean 'One' who is welcomed. This dramatic detail is suggestive for a triad of dialogues that have so much to say about the meaning of *participation*—the mutual participation of oneness in multiplicity and in goodness. Indeed, Sallis points out that the very meaning of oneness in Greek mathematics includes a similar suggestion of strangerliness: "one is not a number, for only what can be counted (i.e., a number of things) is a number. Thus, the smallest number is two."[58] Oneness as 'unit' [*μοναδικός*] is itself a stranger of sorts to number and to multiplicity.[59] It lies at the threshold of number, simultaneously *founding* number in the counting of discrete ones, and yet excluded from the fold of countable externals. The cases of oneness and strangerliness are different but comparable, insofar as each involves a simultaneous inclusion and exclusion from the whole. Oneness and stranger are each included in number and in city only *in a way*. The

---

[56] *Soph*. 216a2; I translate *ξένον* here in *both* ways it is typically translated in English, though I marginally prefer 'Visitor,' since I believe it better reveals the Greek meaning of the word, evoking the complex customs of stranger-hospitality to which the Greeks were beholden. 'Guest-friend' also seems an appropriate translation to me. The *τινὰ* here is deeply ambiguous. Some translators, such as Brann, Kalkavage & Salem (1996) and Benardete (1984) emphasize the indefiniteness of the stranger: "a stranger of sorts" and "a kind of stranger," respectively. Other translators, such as Rowe (1997) take the *τινὰ* in a more 'indicative' sense: "this man who's visiting us." I try to take a middle ground here. What exactly would it mean for Theodorus to be unclear about the status of the stranger's 'strangerliness'? Does it mean that to Theodorus the Stranger is only a half-stranger, a repeat visitor or a closer friend than he lets on? This seems unlikely, since Theodorus does not introduce him by name (See Blondell (2003) p. 249 for the importance of names and naming in Greek social custom). Or is Plato ironically inserting himself here as 'a certain stranger,' taking on the voice of the Eleatic? I don't believe we can abstract this from the text. Still, in reading these 'Eleatic' dialogues, it is important to keep in mind the 'strangeness' or the 'indefiniteness' of the Visitor's 'strangerliness' in mind.

[57] Theodorus, of course, is also a *ξένος*, being from Cyrene (See *Theaet*. 143d), though note that neither Socrates nor any other interlocutor will refer to him as such.

[58] Sallis (2021) p. 87; Sallis is drawing on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1092b) to make this point. To my mind it is contentious whether Aristotle's notion of oneness corresponds to that of Plato or of Parmenides. Indeed, the passage Sallis quotes possibly lies within a longer passage critiquing the notion of oneness as a possible *cause* or *form* of something, a view which seems to line up with some of Plato's so-called 'unwritten doctrines' (See Findlay (1974) p. 414-6 for an overview of Plato's unwritten view regarding the relationship between oneness and *eidos* from Aristotle *Metaph.* 987a29-988a17). Nevertheless, Sallis' citation here is useful in bringing out at least one way in which 'one' remains apart from number more broadly. This 'apartness' or 'privileging' of oneness certainly does appear to belong both to the Parmenidean and Platonic philosophical tradition. For a contrary view see Brisson & Ofman (2018).

[59] This liminality of oneness reflects the Greek notion of the 'guest-friend' and the Visitor's elaboration of the statesman, which we will see in due course. One of the central paradoxes of the meaning of oneness precisely involves the question of the relation between its internal content and its external boundary.

problem of oneness, then, its 'status' in relation to the many, extends to political, mathematical, and metaphysical dimensions.

Next (2), Theodorus reveals that the Visitor is "from the stock [*γένος*] of Elea,"[60] and immediately clarifies the philosophical significance thereof—(3) he is a "comrade of the comrades who circle Parmenides and Zeno."[61] Finally (4), he is a "very philosophical man."[62] The Visitor's association with the Parmenidean philosophical circles is not by accident. The Visitor has been both nurtured by Parmenidean philosophy and involves himself heartily in the current philosophical discussions and questions of his day. Theodorus thus introduces the Visitor as a 'visitor,' 'from Elea,' 'of the Parmenidean and Zenoian cohort,' and 'very much a philosopher' in this order. These are the very first things the reader learns about the Visitor's philosophical character, and indeed, some of the very first words of *Sophist*. Plato means to emphasize these aspects of his character, signaling to the reader to keep them in mind during subsequent discussions.[63] Though

---

[60] *Soph.* 216a2-3; my translation; It is important to note here the language of 'γένος'—stock, race, class, kind—which will be of crucial importance to the Visitor's diairetic methodology.

[61] *Theaet.* 216a3; ἑταῖρον δὲ τῶν ἀμφὶ Παρμενίδην καὶ Ζήνωνα ἑταίρων [non-emended]

[62] *Soph*. 216a4

[63] There is a strong tradition of interpretation that reads the Visitor's views as a reflection, or indeed as the very expression, of Plato's own views, and which thus downplays the 'Eleatic' character of the Visitor. Delcomminette (2014) offers a succinct summary of this account: "it seems clear that the answer to Socrates' question [what is the sophist, statesman and philosopher] which will be offered in the dialogue is not the Eleatics' but Plato's own. But perhaps we might say that Elea stands, not specifically for Eleatic philosophy, but for philosophy in general" (536). See also Ryle (1966); Blondell (2003); El Murr (2014). I object to this interpretation strongly. This is not at all to say that Plato does not in some way exhibit his views through the character of the Visitor—it would be most surprising and uncharacteristic indeed if Plato wrote such long treatments in Sophist and Statesman as mere parodies. Indeed, it is quite possible that Plato himself did see his own philosophy as a "more duly measured," non-eristic Parmenideanism. Blondell's view of the Visitor as a philosophical "clean slate" is misguided (264). The Visitor is neither so non-descript nor so neutral in his philosophical commitments as Blondell suggests. With the introduction of the Visitor as the major interlocutor, I do not believe that Plato is attempting to transcend personality as such. If anything, there are places in Sophist and Statesman especially where Plato parodies the academic 'blandness' of the Visitor, who, as Zuckert point out, "does not pay attention to either the thumotic or the erotic desires and drives in which the intelligible and the sensible converge in human life" (3). Further, should Plato have wanted either an avatar of the γένος of the Philosopher or a representative of philosophical capability most generally, or moreover a figure on which to project his own views, it is surpassingly unlikely that Plato would have employed an explicitly Eleatic visitor to perform any one of these functions, especially when so many alternate possibilities present themselves to this end. The philosophical 'baggage' conveyed by the merest mention of 'Elea' is hardly neutral or general. Plato could have simply called the visitor, 'Visitor,' foregoing the Eleatic burden; he could have given the Visitor a more distant origin, or from a place that lacks such a firm philosophical tradition, or even from a place that lies between two areas of distinct philosophical 'identity'; he could have given his main interlocutor a fictional name, perhaps a play on the very word 'philosophy,' or even a common name without real historical referent, such as is the case in Philebus, for example (See Nails (2002) p. 328-9); finally, he could have directly personified philosophy.

these descriptions hardly paint a vivid picture of a unique personality, if they are general, they are still pointedly directed.[64] Socrates cements the importance of the Visitor's Eleaticism in his explicitly *regional* query: "I would, however, love to ask our stranger, if he likes, *how the people who live over there* [*οἱ περὶ τὸν ἐκεῖ τόπον*] tend to regard these things [*sophist*, *statesman*, *philosopher*] and what they've named them."[65]

Theodorus, further qualifies the Visitor's philosophical devotion to oneness and unity as the ultimate principle of reality. After Socrates ponders whether this visitor might be "a sort of refuting god,"[66] Theodorus assures him that the Visitor is "more measured [*μετριώτερος*]"[67] than those who take polemics seriously," that is, than the eristics.[68] The comparative sense of *μετριώτερος* is important here: the Visitor is not a lover of logic-chopping as some of his Parmenidean contemporaries, though Theodorus avoids the superlative, 'most measured.' Presumably, the Visitor will not be entirely *divorced* from this tradition of disputation either, nor from the broader commitments of that school of thought. This has profound philosophical significance in addition to stylistic purport. The Visitor will not deny the existence of multiplicity, as many of his school might and will admit the many into philosophical consideration, even if oneness still predominates in his metaphysics.

The prologue to *Statesman* does little to further a description, physical or intellectual, of the Visitor, or of his peculiar opening onto Parmenideanism. Thus, Plato again engineers a kind of narrative forgetfulness about the perspectival framing of the

---

[64] To read the Visitor as a simple usurpation of Socrates in Plato's understanding of the true philosopher, in my view, rests on a faulty reading of Platonic developmentalism (See Klein 1977, Scodel 1987, for a critique of the developmentalist thesis) and ignores Plato's often rich characterization of the Visitor throughout both 'Eleatic' dialogues. I am here simply suggesting that we take the literal description of the Visitor seriously. The idea that Theodorus' introduction is enough to conclusively stage the Visitor as "very much a philosopher" (See El Murr (2014) p. 22), forgets Plato's derisory depiction of Theodorus' philosophical prowess in Theaetetus. Is the non-philosophical and even anti-philosophical Theodorus in a position to convincingly identify the true philosopher to the reader?

[65] *Soph.* 216d3-217a2; Emphasis added; Delcomminette suggests that 'οἱ περὶ τὸν ἐκεῖ τόπον' refers not to Elea specifically, "but to being (τὸ ὄν). Later in the dialogue, the Stranger will say that being is the place (τόπος) or the space (χώρα) where the philosopher lives and on which he dwells (253e7–254b2); so if the Stranger is a genuine philosopher, this should be his real home, in a much deeper sense than Elea" (537). In my view, though this metaphorical reading is broadly *correct*, it far too wantonly eradicates the literal sense of the passage. Note, too, the ambiguity of the question: is Socrates asking about the people of Elea broadly, or about the view of the Eleatic philosophers more specifically?

[66] *Soph*. 216b6; θεὸς ὥν τις ἐλεγκτικός

[67] See Ch. V for a more complete discussion of *measure* and *due measure*, central concepts in the *Statesman*.

[68] *Soph*. 216b8; Like the Megarians, the Parmenideans were also known for their eristics.

dialogue.[69] Indeed, if a reader does not have in mind the Visitor's Parmenideanism clearly outlined in *Sophist*, it would be easy to forget *on the surface* about his philosophical commitments. Again, as in the case of the Megarian framework, in the distention of *Statesman* from *Sophist*, Plato seems to have built-in a kind of forgetting of the absolute One. The conversation that was framed by the Megarian vision of absolute goodness, gives way to a conversation led by a certain representative of the Parmenidean vision of absolute oneness. Each of these dramatic realities, however, the former more than the latter, withdraw into the background by the beginning of *Statesman*, as the conversation moves more deeply into the reality of multiplicity and difference. In my own view, a thorough reading of the *Statesman* must recollect and account for this double withdrawal.

The Doomed: The Silence of Socrates

It is commonly observed that both *Sophist* and *Statesman* occur within a greater octology of Platonic texts dramatically leading to Socrates' trial and execution.[70] Thus, we may reasonably expect that each of these works will in some way bear on the character of Socrates and of his death. What is almost[71] uncontroversial, however, is that the spectre of Socrates' death looms over each of the Eleatic's conversations, a fate Plato further highlights in the present-absence of his teacher—in the silence of Socrates, who, apart from his brief exchanges with Theodorus in the prologues of each of the remaining dialogues, dwells at the sidelines of the conversation. The meaning of this silence, and the meaning of the dramatic context generally is not easy to decipher. I will begin my own attempt by looking closely at the way Plato overtly and textually depicts—or does not depict—his teacher's looming death.

---

[69] I agree with Sallis' (2021) interpretation that "[t]he question animating the Statesman is one of number. It is also a question of the number one—if indeed one is a number" (84). This central thematic, however, lies just beneath the surface of the dialogue. In other words, it must be *recollected*. Sallis (2017) too notes that the dialogue does not 'begin at the beginning': "[t]he Statesman begins with a return to a beginning anterior to its own beginning. In the course of the dialogue such return will be multiply reiterated, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly" (14).

[70] For a comprehensive list of the various dialogues dramatically related to Socrates' death, see Sallis (2021) p. 75-78. The dramatic time of *Cratylus* is disputed by many, though I accept its status as a pre-trial dialogue. Other dialogues, such as the *Meno* could also reasonably be included among the 'trial' dialogues, since, for example, the *Meno* includes a short conversation with Anytus, one of Socrates' accusers.

[71] Blondell (2003) charges that "[m]ost of the commentators who make these works revolve around the trial and death of Socrates are primarily concerned with Socrates as he appears in other Platonic dialogues, not these ones" (265).

A great bulk of literature has been written on the ambiguous relationship between the Eleatic Visitor and Socrates in *Sophist* and *Statesman*, interpreting both Socrates' silence in these dialogues, and the Visitor's ambiguous philosophical commitments. Regarding Socrates' silence, on one reading, these two dialogues constitute a kind of "philosophical trial" conducted by the Visitor, running parallel to Socrates' civil trial:[72] there is compelling evidence to this end, especially given dual passages in which the Visitor first paints Socrates as a sophist,[73] and then seemingly condemns his inquiring activity in relation to the second-best political regime, the rule by law.[74] Some argue that Plato means precisely to refute or even 'punish' his former teacher in the introduction of the Eleatic.[75] An opposed reading sees the Visitor as defending Socrates from the Athenian charges, developing a political theory that includes and 'saves' the philosopher from the opinion of the masses.[76] Still further, some commentators understand the Visitor-Socrates relationship entirely outside suggestions of antagonism or abetment: the tone of conversation is one of "mutual respect,"[77] or otherwise, it is only a facsimile of a Platonic dialogue, disguising its monological import.[78]

---

[72] See Howland (1993), who determines that Socrates' questioning posture is indeed a danger to Athenian democracy. The Straussian school of interpretation will make much of the Socrates/Visitor divide in Sophist and Statesman, as well as the ambiguity of Socrates' own status as sophist, statesman and philosopher. On the philosophical trial of Socrates, see also Dueso (1993) for a similar position; Zuckert (2005) is more measured in her critique of the Socratic political danger, ultimately coming to a view that Socrates' presence in the city *can* be a good, both to the whole and to individuals therein (18). Miller (1980) also takes up the view that the 'trilogy' involves a philosophical trial of Socrates (2). Of the Straussian interpreters—Benardete, Rosen, Zuckert and Rhodes, being among the most prominent commentators of *Statesman*—I am in closer agreement with Zuckert's evaluation of the dramatic and philosophical situation. Benardete (1984) and Rosen (1985) in my view each wrongly read the dialogue as culminating in Plato's condemnation of Socrates, his teacher. At the other extreme, Rhodes (2020) views the Visitor as a "sham philosopher." To my mind, Zuckert rightly views the dialogue as involving a conflict between 'the good' and 'being' as 'first principles' so to speak, through Socrates and the Visitor's characters, respectively. Thus, we are not to wholesale reject the Visitor's arguments as pure philosophical farce, nor are we to take them as straightforward Platonic doctrine.

[73] *Soph*. 226b–231b; In Howland's (1993) reading, the Visitor replaces his implicit critique of Socrates as a philosophical charlatan in *Sophist*, with a critique of Socrates as citizen.

[74] *Stat.* 299b-d; Dueso (1993) comments, "in the eyes of the democracy [Socratic activity] has to be seen as a doctrine intended to encourage tyranny" (62).

[75] Rosen (1995) p. 6; Benardete (1984) p. II.70

[76] See Rowe (2001); Miller (1980); Cochran (2011) p. 77-87

[77] Miller (1980) p. 2; El Murr (2014): "Avec le sophiste et le politique, Platon donne au dialogue une autre forme philosophique qui, si elle est moins agonistique, n'est pas nécessairement moins dramatique que celle où Socrate mène la danse" (22).

[78] This might summarize the older scholarly attitude to the dialogue, before the present age of renewed interest. See Ryle (1966) p. 285; Castoriadis (2002) p. 15. However, El Murr (2014) also affirms the view, that *Statesman* has "une forme quasi monologique" (20).

In actuality, it is perhaps surprising how *little* Plato draws attention to Socrates' trial. In *Theaetetus*, there appear only two unambiguous references to the philosopher's death. First, in the Megarian prologue, Euclides tells Terpsion, "It was not long before his death, if I remember rightly, that [Socrates] came across Theaetetus."[79] Given that Euclides recorded, or began to record, his account from Socrates' own mouth, this places the composition of the piece also roughly around the time of Socrates' death. Second, at the very end of *Theaetetus*, Socrates himself makes an explicit reference to his hearing: "And now I must go to the King's Porch to meet the indictment that Meletus has brought against me; but let us meet here again in the morning, Theodorus."[80] In contrast, one is hard pressed to find *any* explicit references to Socrates' trial or death in *Sophist* and *Statesman*, and indeed, if Plato had not been so careful to connect the dramatic settings and flag the temporal continuity of the conversations, this detail might even slip the reader's notice, especially when reading the dialogues in isolation. In my view, however, Plato is again masterfully playing with the reader's forgetfulness and memory. That Socrates does not draw attention to his own misfortunes is hardly a surprise. That his friend, Theodorus, does not even mention the indictment, however, is much more surprising. Is Theodorus' silence on the matter a mark of politeness? Or has the mathematician completely forgotten about Socrates' final words from the previous day, perhaps in his eagerness at his acquaintance with the Visitor? At any rate, Socrates' condemnation also withdraws from the locus of the dialogue. It is forgotten, or at least suppressed by all except the Visitor, whose single indirect and brief recollection of Socrates' trial constitutes a profound ambiguity.[81] Socrates' death, like the framing notion of Goodness, and the guiding notion of Oneness, both retreats and remains in a peculiar, textual present-absence.[82]

The fact of Socrates' silence, and the forgetting of his trial, however, does not mean that Socrates is *ineffectual* in *Sophist* and *Statesman*. I argue that Socrates is

---

[79] *Theaet.*142c
[80] *Theaet*. 210d
[81] *Stat*. 299b-d
[82] Miller (1980) remarks that there is a dramatic "double-estrangement" (12) of philosophy at play in the dramatic context: there is the estrangement of Socrates from the Athenians, and the estrangement of Socrates from his friends, especially Theodorus, whose indifference to abstract discussion afflicts the dialogue.

somewhat in control of the conversation even while remaining in the background of the dialogue.[83] This is noticeable when we consider Plato's framing of the Visitor's investigation. As soon as Theodorus informs Socrates about the presence of the Visitor, something sparks in Socrates: Dixsaut writes, "[i]l adopte un ton bouffonnement tragique."[84] He launches into two successive circumlocutions regarding the conflation of gods with humans,[85] and of philosophers with gods, statesmen, sophists, and madmen.[86] The 'look' of these kinds seem to blend with each other. Simple perception is not enough to distinguish these types accurately and consistently.[87] Only then does Socrates pose a coherent question, how the Eleatics *regard* [*ἡγοῦντο*] and *name* [*ὠνόμαζον*] a series of often-conflated objects: "[s]ophist, statesman, philosopher [σοφιστήν, πολιτικόν, φιλόσοφον]."[88] We will note that Socrates carefully controls both the lead-up to the question and the question itself, which will inform the philosophical trajectory of both *Sophist* and *Statesman*.

The significance of Socrates' questioning and his subtle piloting of the conversation cannot be overstated. The question of distinguishing between sophist, statesman and philosopher is hardly a neutral topic, though it can easily be interpreted as such. Socrates, it would seem, knows that such an examination shall force Parmenides' pupil both to confront both the ontological reality of falsehood-making and the problem of the relation between multiplicity and unity in his treatment of the sophist and statesman, respectively.[89] In other words, what Socrates disguises with a farcical façade is in reality a question *directly targeting the Visitor's Parmenidean philosophical*

---

[83] In arguing for this point, I am especially positioning my own argument against that of Blondell (2003), who asserts that when introducing the Visitor, Plato is attempting to transcend "the baggage of Socratic characterization" (252). If we observe closely Socrates' framing of the discussion, we will see that the Socratic influence is very much present in the dialogue.

[84] Dixsaut (2013): "Qu'est-ce qui arrive à Socrate? Il adopte un ton bouffonnement tragique et prétend voir un dieu quand il n'a affaire qu'à un homme divin, il s'y reprend à trois fois – oubliant la priorité de la question définitionnelle – pour réussir à bien poser sa question…" (14). In his opening words of *Sophist*, Socrates seems either to be genuinely rattled or else, as Dixsaut contends, putting on a kind of show for the Visitor. I agree in this case with the latter interpretation.

[85] *Soph.* 216a5-b6

[86] *Soph*. 216c2-217a2

[87] Hence, Socrates' (admittedly erratic) question at the beginning of *Sophist* ties into the *Theaetetus*' concern for knowledge.

[88] *Soph.* 217a4

[89] Zuckert (2005) point out that Socrates and the Visitor represent "two divergent paths from Parmenides" (1). Neither are what one might call a 'traditional' Parmenidean. Indeed, Zuckert (2000) argues that for the Visitor, "all things are and are known only in relation to others" (70).

commitments.[90] With his characteristic irony, Socrates wishes to see the Visitor jump through hoops to account for the discrete existences of these seemingly comingled kinds. Should Socrates pose a direct question, the Visitor might easily reply with an eristic discussion, characteristic of the Parmenidean school. Thus, Socrates must be indirect. He must catch the Visitor off-guard with a question that conceals his true intention on the surface, in a philosophical domain in which the Visitor is perhaps more uncertain.[91] The Parmenideans were hardly known for their strong philosophical interest in questions of falsity, nor for their political philosophy. Though in the course of *Sophist* and *Statesman* the Visitor shall prove more resourceful that Socrates likely expects, Socrates' silence is as potent as his question. Socratic elenchus does not disappear from these dialogues. Rather, it takes on a more protracted and unexpected form: we can read each dialogue as a single exchange between Socrates and Visitor, in which the Visitor's Eleaticism comes to be refuted not by Socrates but by himself, as the question comes to demand more and more of his intellectual creativity.

Here, I do not suggest, however, that *Statesman* is *merely* parodical or that its drama is *merely* comic in nature.[92] It would be unprecedented for Plato to write a dialogue simply concerned with satirization and not with truth. Thus, the Visitor must not be viewed *merely* as the object of Plato's ridicule—this would be a mistake and would overlook the serious philosophical problems to which the *Statesman* is devoted and the Visitor's at times impressive philosophical imagination. Rather, Plato uses the limited perspective of the Eleatic scholar to venture upon the truth of political philosophy and nature *from another angle*—the angle of a moderate Parmenideanism. The Visitor's perspective is *imperfect* and it is *partial*, but by no means is it entirely vacuous. The Visitor is both a genuine target of Plato's ridicule and a his genuine philosophical avatar voicing serious philosophical concerns. The Socratic concern for virtue, and the Megarian 'formal' opening onto goodness is silenced to the substitution of the Visitor's

---

[90] Contra Blondell (2003), Delcomminette (2014), Socrates is effective and effectual at guiding the conversation *even in his silence*. Miller (1980) writes, "Socrates is pleased to hear that the stranger is a follower of Parmenides," though in my view this pleasure is mixed with a kind of mischievous glee (2).
[91] Theodorus' remark at *Soph.* 217b seems to confirm this likelihood.
[92] This is not exactly Scodel's (1987) view, but he is the commentator who perhaps comes closest to calling the dialogue an outright farce. In my view, Plato successfully toes the line between comic parody and serious investigation.

measured Eleaticism and his primary concern for unity, but this silence and this distension is *charged*. It is present to the dialogue in the absence of written word, and it bears upon the philosophical significance of the discussion: can political philosophy be the philosophy of unity—is unity sufficient to contain the seemingly unlimited exigencies of human political life—or does a concern for unity constitute only a *partial* grasp of the meaning of the political? By setting up the parameters of the discussion, Socrates appears to suggest the latter, though it is only by working through the Eleatic's account of the statesman that the weakness of this hypothesis might be dialectically exposed.

Chapter III – Prologue: The Worth of Ones [257A – 258A]

Regarding the nature and purpose of the Platonic prologue, I follow Gonzalez, who argues that each prologue "provides the foundation for the subsequent investigation by drawing our attention to specific problems without a reference to which this investigation can be neither fully understood nor made fruitful."[93] Plato accomplishes this according to him, "by introducing different themes or motifs that have a bearing on the main subject of the dialogue."[94] My intention in this chapter, then, is to offer a close reading of the initiatory exchanges of *Statesman*, in order to identify both the problems and the themes that foreground the investigation as a whole. What we find at the beginning of *Statesman* is a carefully staged contest of words, concerning the priority of unity or worth in the measure of a debt. The introduction to the dialogue stages a preparatory skirmish between the principles of mathematical oneness and goodness, a skirmish played out on both a philosophical and dramatic level. Through the conflict, Plato poses certain questions. How does somebody measure a 'one' that is owed: by the mathematical art or by a consideration of the one's worth? Is oneness the measure of worth, or is worth the proper measure of a one? Plato is setting the stage for a sustained treatment of the relation between Oneness and Goodness—and further, between the *techniques* of mathematics and dialectic. This is to say, the Good-One identity from Plato's unwritten doctrines is precisely what he is drawing into question here, though playfully and indirectly, and what the dialogue will examine in its dialectical course.

Socrates and Theodorus

On the surface, the opening conversation of *Statesman* seems unrelated to the philosophical investigation that will follow. The exchange between Socrates and Theodorus, appears banal—a pedantic, almost childish, quibble about Socrates' indebtedness to his friend. Below the surface however, Plato is using this somewhat innocuous exchange to set up certain essential spectres of the dialogue: first, there is the problem of honour or worth—and by extension, goodness—a spectre which lurks in the

---

[93] Gonzalez (2003) p. 16

[94] Ibid; Delcomminette's (2000) suggestion, "il ne nous semble pas que ces caractéristiques [dramatiques] puissent servir de principes à l'interprétation du reste du dialogue: ce sont bien plutôt elles qui doivent recevoir un éclairage de ce qui se passe dans le dialogue lui-même" (17-8) to me is untenable. Neither the dramatic nor the philosophical may be abstracted from each other in the dialogue form, but rather, each co-determine the other.

background of the dialogue; second, the question of the meaning of oneness; third, that of the relation between knowledge and technical activity. All of these concerns are bound up in the opening conversation of the dialogue as I shall show. In one sense, all these problems express a deeper question of participation and incommensurability. The relation between goodness and oneness, between partless unity and partitioned totality, and between abstract theoretical knowledge and concrete art, all open onto this same tension. Can these terms *participate* each other, and if so, *how*?

Socrates opens the dialogue, "I owe much goodwill (*ἦ πολλὴν χάριν ὀφείλω*) to you, Theodorus, for my 'getting-to-know' (*γνωρίσεως*) both Theaetetus and the Visitor at once."[95] Theodorus immediately checks Socrates' indefinite[96] expression of gratitude, by attempting to make his debt measurable: "presently, Socrates, you will owe triply (*τριπλασίαν*), whenever they finish off (*ἀπεργάσωνταί*) both the statesman and the philosopher for you."[97] Theodorus conflates unmeasurable magnitude (*πολλὴν*) with measurable number. After the Visitor has finished off the statesman and the philosopher, Socrates will owe *πολλὴν χάριν* + *πολλὴν χάριν* + *πολλὴν χάριν*, as if each πολλὴν χάριν were like a finger on a hand.[98] Instead of asking, perhaps, '*what of this acquaintance has caused Socrates to overflow with gratitude*'—thereby searching for the object and *cause*

---

[95] Stat. 257a1-2; Ἦ πολλὴν χάριν ὀφείλω σοι τῆς Θεαιτήτου γνωρίσεως, ὦ Θεόδωρε, ἅμα καὶ τῆς τοῦ ξένου.

[96] See Sayre (2006) p. 241-243 for list of terms in Plato's readers used to denote and describe the 'indefinite dyad'. *Πολλήν* is not employed as a *technical* term to describe this elementary principle, but it still contains within itself dyadic resonances in its expression of unmeasured or unmeasurable *amount*.

[97] *Stat*. 257a3-5; τάχα δέ γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀφειλήσεις ταύτης τριπλασίαν, ἐπειδὰν τόν τε πολιτικὸν ἀπεργάσωνταί σοι καὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον.

[98] See *Rep*. VII 523A – 526C. In this passage, Socrates distinguishes two ways in which number—and oneness in particular—inheres, in respect to sense and to intellect. The *common* way that one understands oneness is through the senses. When counting fingers, for example, Socrates argues, "the soul isn't forced to ask for insight into what a finger is" (523d). It simply counts, making no difference "whether it's white or dark, whether it's thick or thin, or anything that's like that" (523d). On the other hand, (so to speak) when opposites cohere in a sense perception, for example, "if the sensation indicates that the heavy thing is light and the light thing is heavy" (524a), "insight (*νόησις*) [would be] required in turn to see [heavy and light (replacing "large and small")], not as mixed together but as distinct, the opposite of sight" (524c). The difference in *Republic* amounts to a difference between an 'economic' (525c) or 'militaristic' (525b) use of counting, and a deeper philosophical sense, "suited in every way to draw someone toward being" (523a). Theodorus' understanding of Socrates' *πολλὴν χάριν* here is rendered in the more common sense of oneness. Theodorus *perceives* Socrates' debt to be a one, and thus his judgment does not open onto the contemplation of unity. It is only by questioning the 'indeterminate' or 'mixed' *sense* of Socrates' gratitude, that the intellect might be drawn up to a contemplation of this one, "toward making it easier to gain sight of the look of the good" (526e). To the best of my knowledge, this connection to *Republic* has not been made by any other commentator.

of his goodwill in this indefinite expression—Theodorus moves to quantify his debt. He unquestioningly assumes he knows that from which Socrates' gratitude stems, that the Visitor and YS have finished-off the definition of the first figure in the series. However, this is not at all what Socrates has said. The 'knowledge' for which Socrates is thankful makes its appearance in the text as 'acquaintance' or 'getting-to-know' (*γνωρίσεως*),[99] and the object of this acquaintance is not the 'kind' of the sophist but rather, the *persons* of the Visitor and Theaetetus. Socrates *never* alludes to the definition of the sophist as the reason for his goodwill. What is explicit in the expression of his thankfulness is his acquaintance with the interlocutors, which we have every reason to believe is genuine. The 'one' of the statesman is less important to him than the 'ones' of particular souls. Theodorus does not understand that the gratitude of acquaintance might extend to the human *soul*, far distanced from the external abstractions that he deems most important.

Socrates responds to Theodorus' cynical needling in his typically ironic fashion, asking if they have heard the final word from "the strongest (*κρατίστου*) in calculations (*λογισμοὺς*) and in geometrical matters (*γεωμετρικὰ*)?".[100] Socrates here realizes that his friend has entirely missed the real object of his gratitude. Charitably, he silently shifts to Theodorus' own intellectual register: mathematics. The distinction Socrates makes between the two disciplines of calculation and geometry is important to Greek mathematical theory as it is to the philosophical point of *Statesman*: the former concerns discrete numbers, which are measured by and composed of distinct *ones*;[101] the latter,[102] a

---

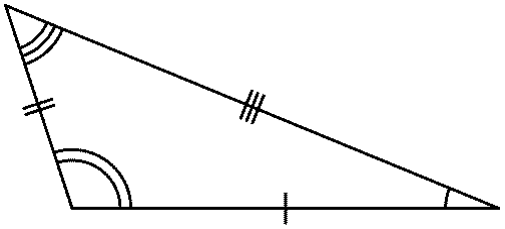
[99] *Stat*. 257a2; See Gerson (2006) p. 464 for analysis of Platonic knowing as 'acquaintance'.
[100] *Stat.* 257a7-8; …φήσομεν ἀκηκοότες εἶναι τοῦ περὶ λογισμοὺς καὶ τὰ γεωμετρικὰ κρατίστου;
[101] E.g., what contemporary mathematical theory calls 'real numbers.'
[102] Geometry for the Greeks concern what contemporary mathematics would call 'irrational numbers,' those which exceed the grasp of rational measure. √2 can *symbolize* a magnitude, but it cannot make this unlimited magnitude intelligibly *graspable*. In Book VII of *Republic*, where Socrates outlines his scheme for the education of the good city, it is important to note that geometry proceeds *after* arithmetic, the *second* science necessary in the education of the city's guardians. The logic behind this pedagogical ladder is important to perceive in relation to the prologue of *Statesman*. First, arithmetic stands as the most basic science, since it is a "common thing that every branch of art, thinking, and knowledge makes additional use of" (522c). Arithmetic is capable of distinguishing into rational 'kinds' or 'ones' what is mixed and without measure and is essential in order to "become skilled at reasoning" (525b); Geometry, the second science to be learned, in its common 'militaristic' conception involves an increasing degree of difference and change. It concerns formations and shapes and is often rendered in the language of "practical activity" (527a). The ascent of sciences in *Republic* will involve the *increasing accommodation of difference*, though Socrates indicates that the *philosophical* importance of these sciences is "a knowing of what always is" (527b). Geometry moves *beyond* arithmetic, but this movement occurs only considering its foundation in arithmetic.

constellation of magnitudes, which may or may not give themselves to the measure of units. Socrates thus ironically collects these two mathematical domains of counting and geometry together in his barbed praise of Theodorus. What the mathematician has done is conflate the inner asymmetry of the *nature* of these figures in question—sophist, statesman, philosopher—with the external uniformity of basic arithmetical counting. His art reduces all to an absolute limit of neutral self-identity. Even at the level of abstract mathematical cognition, he does not recognize a *geometric* or *attributive* uniqueness of each figure,[103] which alone would account for why each 'one' is not replaceable with every other 'one,' and why Socrates' 'πολλὴν χάριν' is not grounded in the simple *fact* of each definition. Even at the level of mathematics and geometry Theodorus has made an error. Theodorus is only counting external ones; he has no inkling that each 'one' might contain essential differences in themselves. His mind is operating at the level of arithmetic and at the level of *common* arithmetic more properly, which covers over, rather than discloses, difference.[104] The one of mathematics is not one *of* anything; each one is undifferentiated and abstract.

Theodorus does not follow the direction of Socrates' chiding: "how do you mean, Socrates?".[105] Socrates clarifies, but in so doing he inflects the conversation with an opening onto Goodness: "you have set down each of the men of equal worth (*τῆς ἴσης ἀξίας*), though they have stood further apart in honour (*τιμῇ*) from each other than is

---

[103] Take, for example, a scalene triangle, whose three sides have a measurement of α, β and ψ, and whose angles each measure χ, θ and ζ. What I have called 'attributive' or 'geometric' unity accounts for the uniqueness of its parts. The triangle is *one*, it is *unique*, because the internal values are *specifically these values,* and the internal parts are *specifically these parts*. Arithmetic, '*external'* unity is only able to articulate *one* triangle*, another* triangle, a *third* triangle. It is incapable of differentiating each polygon by the precise character of its inner nature.



[104] Again, see *Rep*. VII 523d; Sallis (2021) also makes this point: "in arithmetic, the *ones* lack precisely those relations between kinds that are the primary concern of philosophy" (88). See Klein (1968) p. 22-3 for an overview of the difference between theoretical and practical 'logistics' in Plato's thought. Lawrence (2021) draws attention to a semantic "*account-oneness problem*" (26, 31), drawn along similar lines: how can knowledge be simple, if it is a knowledge of an unlimited variety of things and conditions?

[105] Stat. 257b1

grasped by the proportioning (*ἀναλογίαν*) of your art (*τέχνη*).”[106] Socrates now centres his playful critique on the proportionality (*ἀναλογία*) of Theodorus’ art, in a double-pronged attack.[107] First, Socrates’ rejection of Theodorus’ *proportioning* is somewhat ironic, because Theodorus is not thinking in geometric terms in the first place. His ‘proportion’ is the proportion of 1 : 1 : 1. Second, anticipating Theodorus’ response, Socrates preparatorily signals a movement even beyond geometry. The crucial *content* that Theodorus’ external arithmetic abstraction covers over, is the inner *honour*, *worth*, or *goodness* of each figure.[108] Such content lies beyond even geometric or attributive expressions of unity. There is no ‘geometry’ of Goodness,[109] at least not directly—that is, without *analogy*. This is to say, the language of the Good is not *identical* to the language of mathematics and geometry. The proportioning of goodness and honour proceeds by a different path. Unsurprisingly, Theodorus remains one step behind Socrates in his response: “by our god, Ammon,[110] that is well and justly said. You have altogether hit upon a mistake in my counting by your good memory (*μνημονικῶς*).”[111] For Theodorus,

---

[106] *Stat.* 257b3-4; Τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἕκαστον θέντος τῆς ἴσης ἀξίας, οἳ τῇ τιμῇ πλέον ἀλλήλων ἀφεστᾶσιν ἢ κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τὴν τῆς ὑμετέρας τέχνης.

[107] See Book V of Euclid’s *Elements*. ‘Proportion’ most properly belongs to the science of geometry. The ratio is a ratio of *magnitudes* (V. def. 3). Thus, ratios are not numbers, but *can* be given over to measure or proportion (V. def. 6). See Dixsaut (2013) p. 21-2 for an outline of the various interpretations regarding what Socrates is including here in ‘proportion.’

[108] I make a distinction between *external abstraction* and *internal content* consciously. *External* here does not mean ‘physical’ but rather, that which has no mutually signifying inner reality. For example, in *Sophist*, “whether [the Eleatics] considered all these figures [the sophist, statesman and philosopher] to be one, or two, or just as there are three names, […] they fasten the genus-name to each” (217a7-9), Socrates asks whether the three *abstract* and *external* names, each correspond to a mutually distinct *inner* content and reality. If one were to remain at the level of abstract names, however, the inner content of each figure might remain concealed. As Dorter (1994) puts it, “an attempt to account for distinctively human activities without reference to value is doomed to confronting externals rather than essentials” (191).

[109] Benardete (1984) remarks to this end, “[t]he beauty of Theaetetus, the divinity of the stranger, and the gratitude of Socrates determine together the confines of mathematics” (III.72).

[110] Dorter (1994) writes, “there may be an oblique reference to value as well in Theodorus's oath by Ammon, who, in his characteristic of Ammon-Ra, was the Egyptian sun god” (191). If this is so, Plato is calling the Good to mind ironically in the voice of Theodorus. Benardete (1984) offers an intriguing extension (though he does *not* speak, as Dorter, in terms of the Good): the name ‘Ammon’ is “thought to mean ‘Concealed’ or ‘Hidden’” (III.71). This seems to be particularly appropriate. The measure of goodness remains, for Socrates, essentially obscured. He does not propose in his few remarks a positive measure, but only critiques Theodorus’ pride. The status and measure of the Good remains clouded in uncertainty, and will appear in the dialogue in a manifold of cloaked forms.

[111] *Stat.* 257b5-7; εὖ γε νὴ τὸν ἡμέτερον θεόν, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὸν Ἄμμωνα, καὶ δικαίως, καὶ πάνυ μὲν οὖν μνημονικῶς ἐπέπληξάς μοι τὸ περὶ τοὺς λογισμοὺς ἁμάρτημα. According to Sallis (2017), the reference of this recollection is to *Sophist*, wherein the Visitor shows that “between kinds there are relations, there is community (*κοινωνία*)” (14). Thus, he writes (2021), the recollection is that these kinds are “nonarithmetic” (88).

the issue is not with the nature of *counting itself*, but with the particular numbers that he has chosen in the representation of worth: to him, his proportioning fails simply because he bungled the numbers, not because his *τέχνη* is mislaid in the first place. Yet, it is not clear that one could even understand the statesman in an arithmetical proportion to the sophist or philosopher. How would one go about determining this relative numerical worth in the first place? Socrates is firm: *no* mathematical proportionality can capture their difference. There is a fundamental incongruency in their respective *being* and *goodness*, the measurement of which is not yet clear.[112]

Socrates and Theodorus' discrepancy in their respective theoretical understanding of the worth of the 'ones' in question, highlights a more practical and *political* difference in their activities. The opening of *Statesman* involves a kind of contest between 'charistics'—the self-overflow of goodwill—and *economics*, which is to say, a system of value predicated upon the identity and exchange of discrete ones.[113] Plato immediately defers the initial moment of generosity, the dialogue's beginning-in-gratitude, to consider Theodorus' own limited mathematical perspective.[114] Though the dialogue begins with a suggestion of goodness in the overflow of gratitude, no sooner does Socrates speak than Theodorus renders his goodwill into a *mere* economic sum. Benardete remarks, "[Theodorus] and Socrates are like two cities, for whom the only relation that can obtain between them is that of mutual retaliation."[115] The threat of false community lingers in the air.[116] Even if Socrates gets the upper hand *philosophically* at the end of their brief exchange, the threat of violence, or at least of forced debt-collection, lingers over the

---

[112] See Rowe (1995), for whom an analogy between statesman or philosopher and the sophist fails since "the sophist has no positive value at all (117)" Dixsaut (2013) agrees with this assessment. I would go a step further: it is unclear to me whether 'worth' or 'goodness' might *ever* be spoken of in terms of 'amount.' It is unclear that it may ever give itself over to mathematical proportion as such, even if one contends that the statesman and philosopher have true worth. What we seek is 'a measure beyond measure.' This seems to be what Brisson and Pradeau (2003) are pointing to in their commentary (p. 214, fn. 7).
[113] Again see *Rep*. 525c for the 'common' modality of arithmetic, which is "for the purpose of (*χάριν*) buying and selling [slightly modified from Sachs]" (525c). I supply the term 'economics' here to refer to the 'common' of arithmetic. See above, footnotes 103 and 105.
[114] Ewegen (2017) writes, "[*χ*]*άρις*—favor, gratitude, kindness—[…] begins the *Statesman*. More precisely, *χάρις* owed (*ὀφείλω*), and therefore *χάρις* now absent but deferred to some future moment where it might be repaid, begins the *Statesman*" (51). For the reader, too, this *χάρις* is deferred: Goodness is excluded henceforth from direct philosophical consideration until the very end of the dialogue.
[115] Benardete (1984) p. 70
[116] Miller (1980) argues that "[t]he explicit tone is one of mutual deference, especially towards Socrates" (1). To my mind, the respectful atmosphere of the encounter is only 'skin deep.'

conversation: "I will go after you in the future for these things,"[117] Theodorus punctuates. Even after winning the philosophical contest, Socrates appears to have lost the 'political.' He is still in debt. Theodorus threatens to render his gratitude economically useless.[118] Socrates' choice to call Theodorus' mathematical capacity a *τέχνη*, then, is subtle but intentional: his expertise does not reach the yet-concealed criterion of *ἐπιστήμη*;[119] it is a mere *technique* of rendering account, incapable of interrogating or modifying itself. The political as the 'merely economic' cannot accommodate goodwill, since it is foreign to its currency. Socratic gratitude, in contrast, lies beyond the realm of technique, though it runs the risk of being excluded entirely from the realm of politics itself.[120]

Socrates and the Visitor

Following Socrates' and Theodorus' sparring, the conversation shifts to include the Visitor, who confirms they must seek out the statesman before the philosopher and opts to change discussion partners from Theaetetus to his "gym-partner" (*συγγυμναστὴν*), Young Socrates (subsequently YS) for the next stage of discussion, to let the former rest after the discussion of *Sophist*. Socrates interjects—his last words of the dialogue[121]—with a strange pronouncement:

> And indeed, Visitor, both are in danger of having a certain kinship (*συγγένειαν*) to me from somewhere (*ποθὲν*). The one, you say appears similar to me on account of the nature of his face, and for the other, his calling and his address being the same name supplies a certain 'household relation' (*οἰκειότητα*) to us. Of course it is necessary for us always eagerly to recognize (*ἀναγνωρίζειν*) these kinships through words (*διὰ λόγων*). I myself, then, mixed (*συνέμειξα*) with Theaetetus

[117] *Stat*. 257b7-8; καὶ σὲ μὲν ἀντὶ τούτων εἰς αὖθις μέτειμι

[118] The opening of *Statesman* resembles that of *Republic* (see *Rep.* 327c). The threat of violence, though spoken in jest, nevertheless discloses a radical fissure in the relation between philosophy and politics.

[119] This is the first instance of the use of the word *τέχνη* in *Statesman*, a term whose significance is not yet clear, yet which will come in the course of the dialogue both to oppose and to complement at different times the central notion of *ἐπιστήμη*. I will interrogate the Visitor's understanding of *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη* later in chapter IV, but here—especially in the face of the *aporia* of knowledge in *Theaetetus*—I want to suggest that Socrates' remark is subtly derogatory. Theodorus cannot give an account of his 'knowledge' any more than Socrates and Theaetetus could give an account of 'knowledge' as such.

[120] As much as the Visitor will exhibit a similar fixation on unity as Theodorus, one cannot say that his understanding of politics mirrors Theodorus' merely economic interest. If anything, the Visitor's account of statesman appears to lack an economic dimension until the end of the dialogue: the statesman first appears as a shepherd-god over a flock. In this way, his interpretation of rulership is more Socratic than Theodoran.

[121] There is some ambiguity whether the last words of *Statesman* should be attributed to the elder Socrates. I follow Gill (2013) in maintaining that Plato means for the attribution of final line of the dialogue to be ambiguous.

> yesterday through words and now I have heard him being set apart (*ἀποκρινομένου*),[122] but not Socrates. It is necessary to examine him too.[123]

While this might easily be interpreted as mere stage-setting—a simple, cordial nod to Socratic maieutics before the *real* philosophy begins—Socrates' remark is more integrated into the philosophical themes of the dialogue than scholars often perceive.[124] Remembering Socrates' goodwill as the gratitude for *acquaintanceship* renders these peculiar remarks intelligible. Socrates points back to the very beginning of the dialogue, to the object of gratitude that Theodorus has overlooked: *souls*.

Socrates relinquishes the question of worth, returning to consider the real object of his gratitude. He distinguishes two moments in the structure of acquaintance: *mixing* (*συνέμειξα*)—an erotic moment, so to speak, in which one comingles with the acquaintance—and *setting apart* (*ἀποκρινομένου*)—wherein one distinguishes the acquaintance from afar, indirectly. The recognition (*ἀναγνώρισις*) of kinship (*συγγένειαν*), then, is the *completion* and *unification* of these two moments of acquaintance (*γνώρισις*)—the mixing together and the setting apart, which, Socrates assures us, must occur in conversation (*διὰ λόγων*).[125] Recognition, then, occurs only through a mutual dialogue, a co-participation in *λόγος*, without which soul is barred entry from soul. The

---

[122] This is to say, *answering*, which is the more conventional translation.

[123] *Stat*. 257d1-258a5; καὶ μὴν κινδυνεύετον, ὦ ξένε, ἄμφω ποθὲν ἐμοὶ συγγένειαν ἔχειν τινά. τὸν μέν γε οὖν ὑμεῖς κατὰ τὴν τοῦ προσώπου φύσιν ὅμοιον ἐμοὶ φαίνεσθαί φατε, τοῦ δ᾽ ἡμῖν ἡ κλῆσις ὁμώνυμος οὖσα καὶ ἡ πρόσρησις παρέχεταί τινα οἰκειότητα. δεῖ δὴ τούς γε συγγενεῖς ἡμᾶς ἀεὶ προθύμως διὰ λόγων ἀναγνωρίζειν. Θεαιτήτῳ μὲν οὖν αὐτός τε συνέμειξα χθὲς διὰ λόγων καὶ νῦν ἀκήκοα ἀποκρινομένου, Σωκράτους δὲ οὐδέτερα: δεῖ δὲ σκέψασθαι καὶ τοῦτον. [ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν εἰς αὖθις, σοὶ δὲ νῦν ἀποκρινέσθω.]

[124] Much scholarship on *Statesman* either glances past this passage or dismisses it having only marginal dramatic significance—a mere reminder that the students of Theodorus are *not* Socrates. Lane (1998) offers a cursory reflection: "two people with the same name may or may not turn out to share any substantive character traits in common; as it happens, temporal proves himself at various points cagier, brasher, and less astute than Theaetetus, and his mathematical abilities do not seem to be matched by any ethical inclinations which would liken him to his namesake" (34). Apart from this slight dramatic significance, Socrates' remark has little philosophical value, at least in the particular philosophical exploration of *Statesman*. For White (2016) the passage has more profound philosophical significance: "The nature of kinship—or, more abstractly stated, relation—is also thrown into question, at least indirectly, since two of the most common and evident types of relation, physical appearance and names, at best evoke only a superficial kind of sameness. […] [The passage] initiates the need for reflection on what happens metaphysically when relations connect things, whether those relations are, initially, linguistic or perceptual" (20). Dorter (1994) may be right that the movement from Theaetetus to Statesman constitutes a philosophical ascent according to the Republic's schema of the Cave (See p. 191). We might say that 'nominal' correspondence represents a greater (or more philosophically deceiving?) unity than aesthetic similarity.

[125] The movement from γνωρίσεως (257a2) to ἀναγνωρίζειν (258a3) is important: knowledge is to be *elevated* and *intensified* from mere acquaintance to the higher recognition of kinship in repeated associations and examinations.

singularity of the soul, and presumably its goodness, is only distinguishable in this dual strategy of mixing-with and being-set-apart. If Socrates' conversation with Theodorus sets out the essential question of the dialogue—the relation between unity and goodness—this subsequent remark develops certain secondary features of the dialogue's horizon. It marks out a kind of dialectical *methodology* through which the recognition or reconciliation of Oneness and Goodness must occur. Though it is not possible to *prove* the significance of this utterance here, I have set out this brief exposition in order that I might return to consider its import periodically in my analysis of *Statesman*.

Conclusion

I have insisted at the beginning of this thesis on a thorough examination of the prologue of *Statesman*, since it obliquely contains the essential questions of the dialogue. Even if the introduction has little to say directly about the nature of the statesman, the initial conversation sets up a subtle philosophical typology, which Plato develops overtly and covertly during the dialogue. From the beginning, *Statesman* centres the question of the relation between oneness and goodness. Even so, our perspective on Plato's unwritten doctrine that 'the Good is One' could be no more tenuous: Theodorus' notion of unity is too deficient to disclose the worth or goodness of anything. Yet, I argue that this relation remains unsettled at the heart of the dialogue, the unspoken centre around which the tangled investigation of *Statesman* pivots. In the rest of this thesis, I aim to trace how this dissonance between unity and goodness develops dialectically. Though the Visitor will centre his analysis of statesmanship more directly around the question of oneness, the spectre of goodness—of worth—continues to haunt the dialogue until its conclusion.

Chapter IV – The Beginning of Diairesis: The One as Absolute [258B – 268D]

The philosophical drama of *Statesman* involves the progressive unfolding of unity's relation to multiplicity. More specifically, it is the drama of the unfolding of the relation of the unique ruling knowledge of *statesmanship* which alone might properly be called statesmanship to its plurality of subjects. There are at least three major questions of unity woven throughout *Statesman*: the most obvious question of the statesman's unity—the uniqueness of their person; closely related, the oneness of the statesman's art or knowledge; and finally, the unity of the political *object* or *site*—the human herd or the polis. The question concerning the unity of the human soul figures only incidentally in the philosophical proceedings. Further, a direct questioning of the unity of the human good also unfolds mostly beneath the surface of the text.

The beginning of *Statesman*, about which this chapter is concerned, marks out the Eleatic's originary relation to oneness. It discloses, above all, certain presuppositions and assumptions he holds about the meaning and structure of what 'one' is: namely, that it is a kind of arithmetical unity—a kind of absolute exteriority, lacking discernible internal content.[126] In this chapter, I shall trace the Visitor's notion of oneness and knowledge through the successive divisions of the initial diairesis—the first attempt to define what the statesman is. I shall argue that the definition breaks down since the interlocutors' functional conception of oneness lacks inner content. It is not, or not *only*, as most commentators have suggested, that the method of bifurcatory diairesis itself constitutes the major stumbling block in the first attempt to define the statesman.[127] Rather, more deeply, the problem that derails the investigation into statesmanship is the problem of *conceiving oneness*. The 'arithmetical' understanding of the statesman's one knowledge is not alone sufficient to account for the statesman's activity, nor for the relation of the ruler's one knowledge to its subjects ruled.[128]

The problem of discerning the figure of the sophist in *Sophist* is that their expertise appears to encompass *everything*. The Visitor comes to ask, 'how can *one*

---

[126] Here I consciously use non-Platonic language to qualify the Visitor's functional notion of unity. I will clarify and demonstrate my meaning more precisely in the course of this chapter.
[127] See Miller (1980); Scodel (1987); Rosen (1995); Lane (1998); Castoriadis (2002). In contrast, Delcomminette (2000), Márquez (2013), and El Murr (2013) each take very seriously the initial diairesis of *Statesman* and argue that its conclusions are carried forward until the end of the dialogue.
[128] See particularly Scodel (1987) p. 25 on this point.

knowledge possibly encompass an expertise in *all* things.'[129] To contrast, in *Statesman*, the uniqueness of the statesman's knowledge appears to *withdraw* in the face of all other competing expertises. It comes, as we shall see, to have *no* relation to human activity in the opening diairesis of *Statesman*, through the peculiar unity it possesses. The seeming *infinite capability* of the sophist's art will be thus contrasted with the seeming *infinite ineffectualness* of the statesman's one knowledge. The *incommensurables* at issue in *Sophist* and *Statesman* appear across some of the same chasms, but inversely. *Sophist* involves totality seeking unity, absolute *τέχνη* seeking *ἐπιστήμη*. *Statesman* begins from the opposite side of this philosophical cleft, absolute *ἐπιστήμη* seeking *τέχνη*.

The Method of Diairesis

Leaving the short but pithy introductory conversation behind, the Visitor and YS now attempt to make a start discerning the statesman. The project that *Sophist* begins, namely, "defining (*διορίσασθαι*) clearly what each [sophist, statesman and philosopher] is" (*τί ποτ' ἔστιν*),[130] continues in *Statesman*. Yet what the Visitor means by 'defining' and the method he employs to this end is hardly self-evident. The word *διορίσασθαι* here, more than simply 'defining', means 'to draw a boundary', or 'to separate by means of a limit or boundary.'[131] What is needed in this investigation are limits that partition and distinguish these figures both from each other and from all other things that are, and this is precisely what the Visitor's method of bifurcatory diairesis promises to accomplish.[132] Diairetic instruction in the dialogue, however, is surprisingly scarce; the Visitor's comments to this end are shrouded by what seems a conscious ambiguity.[133] The Visitor

---

[129] See *Soph.* 232e-234b for the Visitor's consideration of the sophist's seeming grasp of *everything*.
[130] *Soph.* 217b2-4; καθ' ἕκαστον μὴν διορίσασθαι σαφῶς τί ποτ' ἔστιν, [οὐ σμικρὸν οὐδὲ ῥᾴδιον ἔργον]
[131] See Sallis (2021) p. 84
[132] I shall be mostly limiting my analysis of the diairetic method to the *Statesman* dialogue itself, though I will also offer some comparative remarks about diairesis in *Sophist*. This is also the approach Lane (1998) takes, separating the *actual* practice of diairesis in *Statesman* with Socrates' theoretical conversations about diairesis in dialogues like *Phaedrus* and *Philebus*. For my part, I believe that the methodological differences between *Sophist* and *Statesman* are also significant enough to bracket a full consideration of the former. El Murr (2010) argues that the difference in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*'s treatment of paradigms amount to the paradigm of the statesman also standing in as a paradigm for dialectic. For a treatment of this method across the Platonic corpus, especially in *Sophist* and *Phaedrus*, see Sayre (2006); Fattal (1993).
[133] Rosen (1995) p. 16 refers to only three places in *Sophist*, for example, that the methodology is given conscious detail, at 227a7, 253c7, and 267d6. Miller (1980) writes, "In exhibiting rather than explaining his method, the stranger leaves it to his auditors to grasp its procedural rules" (17). In my view this is right. Rather than spelling out a rigid and dogmatic methodology, Plato wants the reader to do the work of separating out the occasions when and the reasons why things go right or wrong.

does offer a few restricted comments on the method at 258c and at 262b-263b, but I argue here that the Visitor's diairetic method rests on a fragile foundation, since it uncritically employs *a variety of different and conflicting kinds of 'ones'* in its search for definition: the one of the *part-kind*, the one of the *name*, and the one of the *beginning*.

Kinds and Ones

Diairesis, the Visitor explains at 258c, seeks to uncover a "straight path" or "shortcut" (*ἀτραπὸν*)[134] to the expertise in question, by means of "discovering" (*ἀνευρήσει*)[135] successive, cumulative, bifurcations, systematically dividing each 'class,' 'look' or 'kind' (*γένος*, *εἶδος*, *ἰδέα*) into two roughly equal sub-groups.[136] At each juncture one must "seal [the statesman's path] with a single kind (*ἰδέαν μίαν*), while marking off one other look (*ἓν ἄλλο εἶδος*) for the other turnings."[137] Thus, by gradually separating the path of the statesman from the classes of other things at each bifurcation, the limits of the thing in question are exhumed. One should note the technical and productive language the Visitor uses here, of *sealing* (*ἐπισφραγίσασθαι*) and *marking* (*ἐπισημηναμένους*) and even of "*making* our soul to think" (*διανοηθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ποιῆσαι*),[138] which rests uncomfortably beside his earlier language of kind-discovery (*ἀνευρήσει*). Whether diairetic distinctions discern real divisions *in nature* or whether the methodology fashions its own cuts proper to the sphere of human *τέχνη* is deeply ambiguous and calls the Visitor's entire project into question at the very beginning, if the method cannot even determine whether its products are that of the human artifice or belonging to a nature beyond human contrivance. The Visitor explicitly refers to each

---

[134] *Stat.* 258c3
[135] *Stat.* 258c3
[136] It is my contention that the meaning of the various terms, *γένος*, *εἶδος*, and *ἰδέα*, in the Visitor's usage do not properly refer to Platonic 'forms.' Though there are a variety of features in *Statesman* that either 'look like' or are called 'form,' form in the Socrato-Platonic sense is conspicuously missing from the dialogue. See Rowe (1999), p. 297, fn 8, Scodel (1987) p. 25-7, and Lane, 1998, p. 16, for a more detailed justification to this end. For Lane, the *actual* divisions Plato uses in *Sophist* and *Statesman* are of *technai* (15). Chiesa (1995) in my view satisfactorily describes what can be said about the meaning of *εἶδος*, and ἰδέα for the Visitor, drawing on the Visitor's short methodological aside at 258c: "*Εἶδος* et *ἰδέα* apparaissent ici comme ce qui est imprimé et marqué sur l'objet recherché ainsi que sur les objets dont il se sépare" (117). In my view, this can hardly be said to be the case for Platonic forms.
[137] *Stat.* 258c5-6; ἰδέαν αὐτῇ μίαν ἐπισφραγίσασθαι, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐκτροπαῖς ἓν ἄλλο εἶδος ἐπισημηναμένους
[138] *Stat.* 258c7; The whole passage reads, "making our soul to think of all knowledge as being two looks" (πάσας τὰς ἐπιστήμας ὡς οὔσας δύο εἴδη διανοηθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ποιῆσαι).

branch of diairesis as a *one* (*μίαν*), though in what *way* the subclass is one he will not discuss until later.

Later, at 262b-263b, the Visitor will attempt to clarify the meaning of eidetic or genetic unity, a problem that comes into view particularly when YS attempts to bifurcate the class of "ensouled animals" (*ἔμψυχα*)[139] on his own, into beasts (*θηρίων*) and humans (*ἀνθρώπων*).[140] There is a philosophical danger here. The Visitor responds, "it is not safe to finely cut (*λεπτουργεῖν*) [a class], but it is safer for the cuttings to go through the middle (*διὰ μέσων*), as one might more likely hit upon a true kind."[141] Each division must represent "a class and a part at the same time";[142] one cannot simply cut parts from the classes as one wishes. Though stringent criteria for the discernment of 'true kinds' or 'real classes' remains unarticulated, since the Visitor determines that it would take too much time to distinguish properly between part and true class, the force of the Visitor's objection is particularly aimed toward the novice of philosophy: when one lacks any other basis on which to ground bifurcations, a rigid commitment to this arithmetic halving is roughly acceptable as a guide, second, of course, to an actual knowledge of the appropriate classes. Diairetic discernment is therefore best regarded as a method of ratio-making; the 'ones' of 'real classes' or 'kinds' in turn are best regarded not as *units*, but as *ratios*.[143] The most important criterion of proper diairesis at this point is that the subclass contain a number of things roughly reducible to the ratio of 1 : 2 in relation to the 'parent class' from which it is divided.

The division of human and animal, Greek and Barbarian,[144] ten thousand and all the other numbers,[145] are thus each inappropriate—even dangerous—divisions since they

---

[139] *Stat.* 261b8
[140] *Stat.* 262a4
[141] *Stat*. 262b6; [ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ φίλε,] λεπτουργεῖν οὐκ ἀσφαλές, διὰ μέσων δὲ ἀσφαλέστερον ἰέναι τέμνοντας, καὶ μᾶλλον ἰδέαις ἄν τις προστυγχάνοι.
[142] *Stat*. 262e8; γένος ἅμα καὶ μέρος. The Visitor expands this thought at 263b8-10: "Whenever there is a class of something, it is also necessarily itself a part of whatever matter the class is said to be of, but a part [of a class] is not necessarily [also] a class"; ὡς εἶδος μὲν ὅταν ᾖ του, καὶ μέρος αὐτὸ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος ὅτουπερ ἂν εἶδος λέγηται· μέρος δὲ εἶδος οὐδεμία ἀνάγκη.
[143] This talk of the subclass of diairesis as a *ratio*, however, still covers over the *content* of the class. As Miller (1980) notes, the two subclasses of a division must be *contraries*: "Contraries are mutually exclusive and (so long as they express an essential aspect of it) exhaust the initial kind (17). Mathematical ratio fails to disclose this aspect of diairetic reality.
[144] *Stat*. 262c10-d6
[145] *Stat.* 262d6-e5

give special status to a part of a class, without either formal or mathematical justification. Fattal notes, "when the part is not a species, that is, when the part is not determined, limited and characterized by unity, then it may well sink into the indefinite and the infinite (*apeiron*)."[146] Without these admittedly abstract formal parameters, one is at risk of failing to limit and, thus, make intelligible unlimited reality itself. In the faulty division between Greeks and barbarians, for example, the barbarians constitute a *part* but not a *class* of the prior human class. As a part they "are unlimited in number, unmixing, and non-harmonious toward one another" (*ἀπείροις οὖσι καὶ ἀμείκτοις καὶ ἀσυμφώνοις πρὸς ἄλληλα*).[147] They have, in short, as a class almost nothing discernibly *common* between them, besides their *not being Greek*. The division tells us nothing about inner nature of either Greek or Barbarian. Mathematically, the part, 'barbarian,' is a *negation* of Greekness, without having a positive unity or identity in itself. It does not give itself to ratio. The 'real classes' or 'true forms' of a division always give themselves to a rough measure. Thus, the Visitor conceives of the diairetic operation in explicitly geometric terms: the end of diairesis is the "kingly shape" (*σχῆμα βασιλικόν*).[148]

Names and Ones

The 'real classes' or 'kinds' that proper diairesis discloses are not the only 'ones' involved in diairetic methodology. The nominal 'ones,' used to 'stamp' each class, pose their own distinct problems in diairetic division. Indeed, certain semantic difficulties embedded in the method of diairesis threaten to disrupt the 'ratiometric' understanding of the process. One brief remark in *Sophist* particularly illuminating: "You and I must consider this issue [of the sophist] in common (*κοινῇ*)" the Visitor begins, "[…] by seeking and exhibiting with an account (*λόγῳ*) whatever [the sophist] is."[149] The Visitor then offers a *justification* for diairesis:

> For at present, you and I share in common (*κοινῇ*) only the name of this man, but we might perhaps privately (*ἰδίᾳ*) hold for ourselves the work (*τὸ ἔργον*) for which we each invoke the name. So it is always necessary in all things to agree upon the

[146] Fattal (1993) p. 66
[147] *Stat.* 262d4
[148] *Stat.* 268c6-7
[149] *Soph*. 218b7; κοινῇ δὲ μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ σοι συσκεπτέον [ἀρχομένῳ πρῶτον, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται, νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σοφιστοῦ,] ζητοῦντι καὶ ἐμφανίζοντι λόγῳ τί ποτ᾽ ἔστι [Bracketed section omitted from above translation]. The Visitor will again insist upon the necessity of this collaborative aspect of diairesis in *Statesman*. See *Stat*. 258c-d; 260b

> matter itself through mutual reckoning (*διὰ λόγων*), rather than agreeing about the name alone without this reckoning.[150]

The Eleatic wants as much as possible to avoid the misunderstandings that names or words can engender; he wants to find a way of spanning the chasm between the private opinions of individuals. The issue is that names provide a kind of false semblance of unity. They do not deliver absolute meaning. Yet, paradoxically, it is only through names in *discussion* (*διὰ λόγων*) that one may get beyond the false unity of names. The end of diairesis is, in a certain way, just a collection of names strung together in mutual relation. What is needed is a way to tie down these 'private' abstractions to concrete limits, and bifurcatory diairesis offers a particularly measured way of achieving this end, with its reliance on a chain of successive bifurcative and ratiometric *agreements*. By the end of the path, the interlocutors will have agreed with each stamping, one subclass and one half parent-class at a time, and will share a kind of definitional road map to the nature of the subject in question. This *collaborative* importance to the method is something that the Visitor will continue to stress in *Statesman*.[151]

The Eleatic, however, will also elaborate further upon his suspicion of names in the initial diairesis of *Statesman*. There are two problems with naming that diairesis both exposes and conceals. First, there is the problem that occurs when *many* names stand for *one* class; second, there is the problem when *one* name covers over *many*, unlimited parts or classes.

Illustrating the first case, during the proceedings of the sixth division the Visitor asks YS whether to name the cut "herd-nurturing" (*ἀγελαιοτροφίαν*) or "collective-nurturing" (*οἰνοτροφικήν*).[152] YS replies, "whatever comes together (*συμβαίνῃ*) in the argument (*ἐν τῷ λόγῳ*),"[153] for which response the Visitor offers his praise: "and if you guard closely not to busy yourself with names, you will appear plainly to be richer in wisdom (*φρονήσεως*) in old age."[154] YS seems, perhaps unknowingly, to hit upon a rare

---

[150] *Soph.* 218c1-5; νῦν γὰρ δὴ σύ τε κἀγὼ τούτου πέρι τοὔνομα μόνον ἔχομεν κοινῇ, τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἐφ᾽ ᾧ καλοῦμεν ἑκάτερος τάχ᾽ ἂν ἰδίᾳ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἔχοιμεν· δεῖ δὲ ἀεὶ παντὸς πέρι τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μᾶλλον διὰ λόγων ἢ τοὔνομα μόνον συνωμολογῆσθαι χωρὶς λόγου.
[151] See *Stat*. 258d1-2; 260b7-12;
[152] *Stat*. 261e2
[153] *Stat*. 261e4
[154] *Stat.* 261e5-7; κἂν διαφυλάξῃς τὸ μὴ σπουδάζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, πλουσιώτερος εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀναφανήσῃ φρονήσεως. See also 262d5-6.

moment of wisdom, submitting *ὄνομα* to the play of *λόγος*. The name must be justified by the argument, not the argument by the name. The Visitor, however, surprisingly takes this remark as a total repudiation of names in general and proceeds without making a determinate judgment, as if to say the argument can stand on its own without the use of precise naming at all.[155] Of course, the names herd-nurturing and collective-nurturing contain within themselves radically different connotations, the former suggesting a paradigm of shepherding not implied as strongly by the latter. The Visitor's disinterested preference for the former seems to steer the diairesis in a very different direction, as we shall see.[156] By treating names as *mere* exterior markers without internal significance, the Visitor and YS open themselves to tremendous philosophical folly. The name is not a mere external mark; different names *do* seem to attach themselves to different things.[157] Even if we generously interpret that the Visitor and YS have clarified the meaning of the names at each stage of the division for each other and thus do not need precise naming, this does not guard against the fact that the final definition—its string of names—does not carry along with it these elaborations and clarifications.

In the second case—the inverse problem—names can cover over rather than reveal what is essential about something or pretend to a formal unity which the signified does not possess. Like Theodorus' arithmetization of Socrates' gratitude at the beginning of *Statesman*, the oneness of the name similarly *covers over* and *stands in for* what may well not be unified at all, or what may have a *different* unity than the name addresses. The name in this sense *does* act as a mere external mark without real inner reality. From a passage I explored above (262b-263b), the Visitor notes, "while addressing it [the cut] 'barbarian' with a single name, [people] expect it, because of this single name, also to be one class (*γένος ἓν*)."[158] The oneness of the name creates an expectation for a corresponding oneness of the signified, and this expectation appears essential to the

---

[155] The Visitor, however, seems to prefer 'herd-nurturing' for the rest of the initial diairesis, but the disregard of care for names allows him to proceed without argumentative justification.

[156] Yet, as Jinek (2013) points out, there is a *serious* difference in meaning between herd-nurturing and collective nurturing, a difference that Jinek argues might account for part of the failure of the initial diairesis. Similarly, at 275e the Visitor's substitution of the 'name' "rearing" [*τρέφειν*] for "attending to" [*θεραπεύειν*] in describing the statesman's activity makes all the difference to the lucidity of the statesman's definition.

[157] See also the digression at 258e8-259c4, which I shall treat later.

[158] *Stat.* 262d5-6; …βάρβαρον μιᾷ κλήσει προσειπόντες αὐτὸ διὰ ταύτην τὴν μίαν κλῆσιν καὶ γένος ἓν αὐτὸ εἶναι προσδοκῶσιν·

external functioning of the name in discourse. Yet, the name does *not* essentially denote an internal uniqueness qua formal, stable, or measurable reality.

To summarize, (1A) The name, on the other hand, possesses arithmetical unity insofar as it covers over the difference that lies in itself, the difference between private imaginings or the difference of a non-formalizable manifold of parts. (1B) It possesses a kind of 'attributive' unity, however, insofar as it actually refers to something. (2B) The class possesses a geometric unity insofar as it expresses a ratiometric relation with the originating class. (2A) Yet the subclass itself is arithmetical in its unity insofar as it contains no content in itself, without the help of names and its formal relation to the 'parent' class. Miller writes about the initial diairesis, "diagramming hardly indicates the odd complexity of this section of the dialogue. Ostensibly its purpose is to complete the definition of statesmanship, but actually it contains much more—and much less—than this requires."[159] The Visitor's privileging of *dialogue* seeks to reject the significance of naming, though his insistence upon a rigid *methodology* of diairetic halving paradoxically redoubles the importance of the name. Though diairesis attempts to formally 'freeze' the relations of these 'ones,' by insisting upon the priority of kinds over names, diairesis can act only as an inferior substitute to active dialogue, since, in the end, despite the Visitor's suggestion otherwise,[160] the ratiometric division into class is only as philosophically useful as the precision to which these classes are named. The formal intermixing of kind and the name say both more and less than what is needed to define the statesman.

The Diairetic Beginning of *Statesman*: *Ἐπιστήμη* and *Τέχνη*

We now turn to the beginning of diairesis in *Statesman*. The immediate problem is how to make a start: what is it that one is dividing in diairesis in the first place? In the opening philosophical movements of *Sophist* and *Statesman* respectively, the Visitor proposes two *separate* starting points to define the figure in question, without explanation. In *Sophist*, the originary opening is *δύναμις* or 'power,' which is recollected as the 'parent class' of the initial dichotomous division between *τέχνη* (art,[161] craft, expertise) and *ἀτεχνής*; in *Statesman*, the Visitor discerns the methodological opening in

[159] Miller (1980) p. 29
[160] See *Stat.* 261e
[161] Typically, I shall favour this word when translating *τέχνη*, but it should be noted that no single English word encompasses all the connotations of the Greek.

ἐπιστήμη (knowledge, science) alone. As such, the first cut "does not appear in the same place (κατὰ ταὐτόν)"[162]; it is in a "different place" (*κατ' ἄλλο*). In *Sophist*, the Visitor first discovers that the sophist's *τέχνη* appears in a manifold of forms,[163] leading him to search for the hidden unity of their *knowledge*, a unity which in the end he discerns is not properly knowledge at all.[164] In *Statesman*, on the other hand, the Visitor *begins* by positing the statesman as a knower, and only gradually comes to discern their *art*—the thing it is that statesmen actually *do*. The profound differences in diairetic methodology between the two dialogues are grounded precisely in these distinct beginnings, a multiplicity of arts seeking unity in the former case, and a unique knowledge seeking its practical expression in the latter. The distinction between *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη* here is subtle, especially since the Visitor and his interlocutors themselves will frequently use the terms interchangeably,[165] but it is my view that this difference is *essential* to understanding the philosophical import of the respective dialogues.

Plato's interest in the relationship between *ἐπιστήμη* and *τέχνη* extends throughout his corpus. Broadly speaking, *τέχνη* possesses a function or a *work* (*ἔργον*) as its end. Practical handicrafts are particularly good illustrations of this term, achieving their work in the fabrication or acquisition of objects exterior to maker or doer, though Plato also frequently employs this term when discussing the expertise of the doctor or even the mathematician, whose objects are not mere physical fabrications. *Ἐπιστήμη* on the other hand has a more theoretical dimension. It centres a kind of concealed unity, where *τέχνη* centres upon the external work itself. Yet, Plato will both say that the practical arts

---

[162] *Stat.* 258b10-11; οὐ μὲν δὴ κατὰ ταὐτόν γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, φαίνεταί μοι τμῆμα

[163] There are no less than *seven* seemingly successful attempts to define the work of the sophist in the initial diairesis.

[164] See *Soph.* 268c8-d4. The final definition excludes mention of knowledge at all. Lane (1998) writes, "the fact that the more wholly intellectualist episteme is missing from the Sophist may cast a faintly pejorative shadow back on the status of sophistry" (23).

[165] Many commentators argue that Plato uses *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη* interchangeably in *Statesman*. See El-Murr (2014), 11, footnote 2; Sallis (2021) argues (in my view, mistakenly) that these are essentially similar starting points, even if he recognizes a crucial difference that "knowledge is the *central moment* in *τέχνη*" (91-2); Castoriadis (2002) identifies both in the thought of Plato (35-36), but in my mind is not wholly consistent on this point. See p. 116; 135-6; 149-9; 154. Rosen, in contrast, makes a firm distinction between the Socratic conception of *τέχνη*—"[i]n a slightly paradoxical formulation, […] Socrates does not attribute technical production to the *techne* of politics—and the "practico-productive" sense of the Visitor's political *techne* (5-6). Though τέχνη and ἐπιστήμη are often functionally interchangeable for the Visitor, they are not essentially so.

"possess knowledge"—that they are *ἐπιστήμαι*[166]—and that knowledge, on the other hand, can be divided into "arts,"[167] which includes, for example, the theoretical 'art' of arithmetic (*ἀριθμητικὴ*).[168] There is a certain blending inherent in their relation. However, simply because *ἐπιστήμη* can designate a broad spectrum of modes and models of cognition, does not mean that it is simply *reducible* to *τέχνη* and *τέχνη* to it.

The Visitor opens the main philosophical investigation of *Statesman* by asking whether the eponymous figure "is among those of the knowers (*ἐπιστημόνων*)," which is then "set down" (*θετέον*)[169] as the fundamental assumption of the investigation. The originary diairetic opening of *Statesman* thus has no immediate trace of the dyadic opposition between *τεχνίτης* and *ἄτεχνος* that defines the starting point of *Sophist*. The division is not between knowledge and non-knowledge, but the unity of knower and knowledge stands as the privileged point of philosophical departure.[170] This is not a *petitio-principii*[171] as Castoriadis contends, but an assumption or hypothesis, which will be grounded and unfolded as the dialogue develops.[172] It is a leading question no doubt, but that the statesman *seems* to be "someone among the knowers" is enough to make a start, lest the statesman slip back into the mold of the sophist, as one who appears to do and make all things—the unknowing production of *phantasma*. To prevent this totalism, it appears reasonable to open the search by seeking a *knower*. We must assume that they are not sophists—that in the statesman we are seeking a genuinely different form. Though the Visitor has seen many a sophist *in action*, this is not so for the 'true statesman,' since, as we shall see, the cities are dominated by those who, "being the greatest mimics and jugglers, are the greatest sophists of the sophists."[173] Their knowledge therefore must be

---

[166] *Stat.* 258d8-e1; [αἱ δέ γε περὶ τεκτονικὴν αὖ καὶ σύμπασαν χειρουργίαν…] τὴν ἐπιστήμην κέκτηνται
[167] *Stat*. 258d5; τέχναι
[168] *Stat*. 258d4
[169] *Stat*. 258b3-5; καί μοι λέγε πότερον τῶν ἐπιστημόνων τιν' ἡμῖν καὶ τοῦτον θετέον, ἢ πῶς; (258b7-8)]
[170] It is important to note here, that the Visitor's starting point erases the difference between the knower and the knowledge they possess. The division of knowledge in diairesis corresponds to the division of the knower and vice versa. Knower and knowledge are *inseparably one*. Similarly, the Visitor gives no indication that the class of *knowers* is a sub-class of the more original *power* as in *Sophist*.
[171] Castoriadis (2002) p. 35 accuses Plato of 'begging the question' in making this the beginning point of the search for the statesman. By setting down the statesman as a knower (*ἐπιστημόνων*), Plato will find exactly what Plato wants to find. Though the structure of the statesman's knowledge will inevitably end up exhibiting signs of circularity, it is not clear that this assumption is unwarranted.
[172] In particular, this will occur from about 292a to 300c in the dialogue.
[173] *Stat.* 303c4-5; μεγίστους δὲ ὄντας μιμητὰς καὶ γόητας μεγίστους γίγνεσθαι τῶν σοφιστῶν σοφιστάς

posited first and their technique sought thereafter, in contrast to the sophist, whose technique is eminently perceivable, yet whose knowledge is obscure. Whether or not the posited knowledge of the statesman amounts to wishful thinking, is beside the point: should there exist one who knows how to rule well (and at this stage, there is no reason to suspect otherwise), what must then be sought is their proper technique—*how* one accomplishes this task, by interrogating their hypothetical knowledge.

Already, however, there appears a crisis attaching to the meaning of knowledge. In *Sophist*, the need to have an account of what knowledge is—an account that *Theaetetus* failed to achieve—is largely averted due to both the dialogue's focus on the language and structures of *technique*, as well as its more *ontological* centring on the question of non-being. *Statesman*, on the other hand, posits knowledge as the very *starting point* and *assumption* of philosophical exploration. It is "all knowledge" (*πάσας τὰς ἐπιστήμας*) that the Visitor is dividing, but 'all knowledge' rendered both as a *one* and as a *whole*: "one whole science" (*μιᾶς ἐπιστήμης τῆς ὅλης*).[174] Though *Theaetetus* has ended in an *aporia* regarding what knowledge actually is, the method of diairesis appears to be indifferent to this absence of an *account*; it does not need an understanding of what knowledge is in order to divide it. Diairesis is able to treat knowledge as if it is simple *object* or *bulk* to be cut and divided ratiometrically. Yet how does diairesis begin when the beginning is not *known*? What exactly is being cut when knowledge is cut? The investigation begins precisely with what is *unknown*;[175] the statesman's knowledge thus has already begun its retreat from view.

Theoretical Knowledge: The Supply of the 'One' in Itself

First Division. The Visitor makes the first cut: "divide all knowledges (*συμπάσας ἐπιστήμας*) in this way, speaking to both the practical (*πρακτικὴν*) and the singly cognitive (*μόνον γνωστικήν*)."[176] If indeed *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη* were identical in species, there is no reason why this cut should be different, that is, if indeed *Sophist* accomplished dividing the genus of 'expertise/science' into truly real 'kinds' or 'forms' through bifurcation.

---

[174] *Stat.* 258e6

[175] See Figal (2017), "knowledge cannot be determined directly, as if it were some simply knowable thing among others" (140-1).

[176] *Stat.* 258e4-5; ταύτῃ τοίνυν συμπάσας ἐπιστήμας διαίρει, τὴν μὲν πρακτικὴν προσειπών, τὴν δὲ μόνον γνωστικήν.

Why seek other ways to divide the whole, when the classes of production (*ποιητικὴν*)[177] and acquisition (*κτητική*)[178] have functioned perfectly well in discerning the sophist? The different beginning points of each dialogue and the different initial bifurcations suggest a subtle shift in the very nature of the matter under investigation. The Visitor is attempting to bring out the concealed unity of the statesman's knowledge in its different aspects.

In *Sophist*, the division of *τέχνη* into (1) production and (2) acquisition,[179] each describe a particular relation to externality. The former class involves *externalization*; the latter class involves either *internalization* (in both a physical and cognitive dimension) or the protection of what is internal from exteriors, in the case of combat specifically. Where these first divisions concern the relation of the technician to the *external world*, the diairetic opening of *Statesman* reconfigures these classes in the light of a different epistemic relationality. In the case of practical knowing, actors "possess their knowledge as if it were contained naturally in their actions (*ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνοῦσαν σύμφυτον τὴν ἐπιστήμην κέκτηνται*), and through it help to complete (*συναποτελοῦσι*) the bodies they bring into being, which formerly were not."[180] On the other hand, the theoretical "is stripped of action (*ψιλαὶ τῶν πράξεών*), and supplies only coming-to-know (*τὸ δὲ γνῶναι παρέσχοντο μόνον*)."[181] 'Practical knowing' becomes the class of other-relating; 'theoretical knowing', the class of self-relating or self-supplying;[182] it is the class of the relation of the same knowledge to itself—the supplying of knowledge to itself. In the former case, the 'unity' of knowledge is displaced across the nexus of the play of ends, actions and objects. Knowledge finds itself expressed in what is *other* than it through practical action in relation to bodies. In the latter case, knowledge itself alone expresses or offers itself. It 'supplies' the ground of its own 'acquaintance' through itself alone.[183]

---

[177] *Soph*. 219b11
[178] *Soph*. 219c7
[179] *Soph*. 219a-c
[180] *Stat*. 258d9-e2; "ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐνοῦσαν σύμφυτον τὴν ἐπιστήμην κέκτηνται, καὶ συναποτελοῦσι τὰ γιγνόμενα ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν σώματα πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα."
[181] *Stat.* 258d5-6; ψιλαὶ τῶν πράξεών εἰσι, τὸ δὲ γνῶναι παρέσχοντο μόνον.
[182] Rosen (1995) p. 20, has suggested that this division is insufficiently exhaustive of the class of knowledge, since certain expertises such as hunting do not make anything and yet are not purely theoretical. I argue that the primary aspect of practical knowledge is that the knowledge is "contained naturally in their actions," and a further division between manufacture and acquisition would be the next step. In this way the one class of πρακτικός contains both the class *ποιητικὴν* and *κτητική*.
[183] Here I am playing with the internal tension involved in Plato's alternating use of ἐπιστήμη and γνῶναι.

Knowledge in this theoretical class involves a kind of absolute self-relation. This of course makes it difficult to express *of what* this knowledge happens to consist, since the knowledge of this class alone communicates itself.

The explicit reason the Visitor will give for placing the statesman in the subclass of 'theoretical' knowledge is "that each king is able to do little with their hands and their whole body to hold their rule."[184] What *directly* involves the hand and the body—*handicraft* (χειρουργίαν)[185]—the manipulation of material according to some epistemic guideline alone accounts for practical knowledge. That the statesman does not use their hands and body to rule directly amounts to the literal reason why their knowledge does *not* belong to the practical arts. One cannot possibly understand the power of a king as reducible to the power of a particular body and a particular set of hands over a host of subjects, who also possess hands and bodies. The statesman is not an expert in collective-wrestling. Rather, it is the "comprehending unity and force of the soul" (*σύνεσιν καὶ ῥώμην*)[186] that is much more powerful for their end—"for holding their rule" (*εἰς τὸ κατέχειν τὴν ἀρχὴν*).[187] One can perceive in this pronouncement, however, a confirmation of the absolute self-relation of theoretical knowledge: the knowledge of the statesman, which is the knowledge of ruling, possesses an 'end' of simply maintaining itself—of holding ruler. The activity and end of statesmanship is identical.

The Visitor illustrates the nature of this theoretical 'self-supplying' knowledge in a strange and often misunderstood passage.[188] First, he argues that the separate expertises of "statesman" (*πολιτικὸν*) "king" (*βασιλέα*) "master" (*δεσπότην*) and "household-manager" (*οἰκονόμον*) ought to be "set down as a single thing (*ὡς ἓν πάντα ταῦτα*

[184] *Stat*. 259c6-8; ὡς βασιλεὺς ἅπας χερσὶ καὶ σύμπαντι τῷ σώματι σμίκρ᾽ ἄττα εἰς τὸ κατέχειν τὴν ἀρχὴν δύναται [πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σύνεσιν καὶ ῥώμην].
[185] *Stat.* 258d9
[186] Stat. 259c8; …πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς σύνεσιν καὶ ῥώμην. This is one of the very few moments in which the Visitor takes up the soul as an important aspect of statesmanship.
[187] *Stat.* 259c7-8
[188] My view here runs against a significant amount of scholarship; See Zuckert (2005) p. 9; El Murr (2018) for a defense of the Visitor's literal argument here.

προσαγορεύοντες).”[189] The material circumstances of the situation in which this knowledge is practiced are entirely insignificant, whether the ruling is of many people or few, of a household or of a city. The one of the statesman’s knowledge—the one of the theoretical knowledge of ruling—*covers over these ‘attributive’ differences*.[190] In other words, the knowledge of ruling is *determined by* and *supplies* itself alone without reference to any exterior difference. This amounts to the following: all knowledge of rule supplies itself and is indifferent to the particular contextual circumstances in which the rule occurs. The knowledge of rule alone justifies and supplies itself.

Next, the Visitor considers ‘private person’ (*ἰδιώτης*) who hypothetically possess ‘kingly knowledge’: “if someone, themself a private person, is capable of advising doctors in the public service, is it not necessary for them to be called the same name of the art which they advise?”[191] The private person who advises a king, then, who ‘supplies’ the know-how so to speak, *actually* possesses “the knowledge which the ruler themselves should have possessed.”[192] There is a substitution here between the external and public-facing *semblance* of knowledge, and the internal, private, and *actual* possession of the same. The external honour attributed to rulership from the bulk of citizenry means nothing in relation to this knowledge, but someone “is rightly spoken of as kingly altogether in reference to expertise itself.”[193] In other words, this knowledge can *only* be private. The knowledge of statesmanship is validated only by the inner possession of the expertise itself, again without reference to any external condition. The knowledge or expertise supplies itself.

---

[189] *Stat.* 258e8-10; πότερον οὖν τὸν πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλέα καὶ δεσπότην καὶ ἔτ᾽ οἰκονόμον θήσομεν ὡς ἓν πάντα ταῦτα προσαγορεύοντες, [ἢ τοσαύτας τέχνας αὐτὰς εἶναι φῶμεν ὅσαπερ ὀνόματα ἐρρήθη;]. Many commentators express perplexity at this sudden move, which seemingly comes without foreshadowing or provocation. This confusion is so pronounced, that many have suggested that the text here is ‘broken.’ See the Oxford Classical Texts edition of the dialogue (1995). In my view, these movements do not function as *proofs* of anything. Rather, they are illustrations of the consequence of a purely self-grounded mode of knowledge.

[190] Sallis (2021) notes the geometric language that the Visitor employs here, speaking of “[t]he figure [σχῆμα] of a large household” and “the bulk [ὄγκος] of a small city” (94).

[191] *Stat.* 259a1-4; εἴ τῳ τις τῶν δημοσιευόντων ἰατρῶν ἱκανὸς συμβουλεύειν ἰδιωτεύων αὐτός, ἆρ᾽ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῷ προσαγορεύεσθαι τοὔνομα τῆς τέχνης ταὐτὸν ὅπερ ᾧ συμβουλεύει;

[192] *Stat.* 259a6-8; [τί δ᾽; ὅστις βασιλεύοντι χώρας ἀνδρὶ παραινεῖν δεινὸς ἰδιώτης ὢν αὐτός, ἆρ᾽ οὐ φήσομεν ἔχειν αὐτὸν] τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἣν ἔδει τὸν ἄρχοντα αὐτὸν κεκτῆσθαι;

[193] *Stat.* 259b4-5; πάντως κατά γε τὴν τέχνην αὐτὴν βασιλικὸς ὀρθῶς προσρηθήσεται

The Visitor has completely transformed the meaning of *ἰδιώτης* from its context in *Sophist*, where the *ἰδιώτης* is the one wholly without art.[194] There they are *definitionally* opposed to the technicians (*τεχνίτης*). In *Statesman*, the essential meaning of *ἰδιώτης* as the class without art (*ἄτεχνος*) has completely fallen away: the expert is now defined only in relation to the private possession of knowledge, regardless of their public or private *practice*. The external world order is being turned on its head. The conditions, material or otherwise, of ruling have no role in defining statesmanship, nor does the nature of the statesman's personality, but something purely private and univocal. The absoluteness of knowledge is its own sole measure.

Directive Knowledge: The Supply of the 'One' for the Other

Second division. For the next division of the class of theoretical knowledge the Visitor discerns a directive (*ἐπιτακτικὸν*) kind of knowledge and a discerning (*κριτικὸν*) branch.[195] He unfolds the nature of the latter class as follows: "surely we will not give any more work to the calculating art, which has come-to-know (*γνούσῃ*) the difference between the numbers, than distinguishing (*κρῖναι*) the things it has come-to-know (*τὰ γνωσθέντα*)."[196] If theoretical knowledge "supplies only coming-to-know," the 'discerning,' 'critical' or 'judging' branch of knowledge is simply the reversion of the same knowledge back on itself. The tautology here is palpable. Supplying the coming-to-know of the differences between numbers and distinguishing or judging what one has come-to-know are essentially identical movements. In coming-to-know numbers is identical to the discernment of numbers, without which it would not be possible to come-to-know in the first place. The theoretical knowledge-category of judging amounts to being-supplied the difference; being-supplied the difference in turn is judging. The reflexivity that characterizes 'judging' or 'discernment' cannot be absent from getting-to-know in the first place. What resists a pure tautology alone is some sense of progression: the discernment of a single difference, between two and three for example—between odd and even—can furnish the discernment of difference with respect to *all* numbers. Judging

[194] See *Soph.* 221c9-d2
[195] *Stat.* 260b3-4
[196] *Stat.* γνούσῃ δὴ λογιστικῇ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς διαφορὰν μῶν τι πλέον ἔργον δώσομεν ἢ τὰ γνωσθέντα κρῖναι;

completes the initial self-supplying coming-to-know, so to speak, simply by extending what is already present in principle to other different cases.

When the mathematician has recognized the differences between numbers, the Visitor explains, they have no other task than to discern what has been recognized, after which they "deliver themselves (*ἀπηλλάχθαι*)" from the very problem.[197] In the directive class on the other hand—the class where the interlocutors locate the statesman—the Visitor places the chief-artificer (*ἀρχιτέκτων*), who "is not given to labour themselves, but rule those who do work."[198] The chief-artificer "supplies out of themselves the coming-to-know, but not the handiwork."[199] Unlike with the critical branch of knowledge, which keeps a 'critical distance' from its object, the 'epitactical' knower appears to be more closely bound to the object of their epistemic interest: "it belongs to the master-artificer after they have finished judging not to reach the end (*τέλος*) and not to deliver themselves (*ἀπηλλάχθαι*) [from the task]."[200] Rather, even after they have discerned, differentiated or known what is to be known, they must stay with the object of their undertaking, and "command (*προστάττειν*) to each of the workers what is indeed useful until they should complete what has been commanded (*προσταχθέν*)."[201]

This directive branch of knowledge seems simply to indicate a *kind* of critical knowledge, but whose objects are external and involved in some contingency, thus necessitating more careful critical supervision. In the case of the 'critical' class of knowledge, the arithmetician (for example) discerns certain differences that are always there regardless of their own conscious attention to the presence or absence to these differences. The calculator leaves after making a judgment since what is recognized is and always will be. Other classificatory sciences like geology or biology also should fit in

---

[197] *Stat.* 260a5

[198] *Stat.* 259e9-10; καὶ γὰρ ἀρχιτέκτων γε πᾶς οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐργατικὸς ἀλλ᾽ ἐργατῶν ἄρχων.

[199] *Stat.* 259e12; παρεχόμενός γέ που γνῶσιν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ χειρουργίαν. ; The middle/passive voice of παρεχόμενός is important here to the meaning of the class. The artificer is above all supplying *themselves*. The knowledge is not something separate from the overseer but in some way both agent and knowledge depend on each other. The knowledge that the chief-artificer holds and in some way *is*, is expressed to their workers as a coming-to-know [*γνῶσιν*].

[200] *Stat.* 260a4-5; προσήκει κρίναντι μὴ τέλος ἔχειν μηδ᾽ ἀπηλλάχθαι

[201] *Stat.* 260a6-7; προστάττειν δὲ ἑκάστοις τῶν ἐργατῶν τό γε πρόσφορον ἕως ἂν ἀπεργάσωνται τὸ προσταχθέν. ; I highlight the two instances of *προστάσσω* here in order to indicate the circularity of this commanding class. The expression of the statesman's knowledge both *begins* and *ends* with the content of the command. The goal of the command is for its own completion and perfection.

this class, so long as they are particularly concerned with the judgment of difference. Directive theoretical knowledge on the other hand seems to involve a fundamental *technical* bent. It is in some way mixed up with the world of change and instability: the architect does not simply *judge* the intricacies and 'differences' of some house design, recognize what has been judged, and leave off. The external fabrication that they 'mentally supervise' does not have a stable reality in itself, except insofar as its form originates from the knower or expert themselves.

The critical and 'directive' modes of theoretical knowledge, however, are not as different from each other as these examples might first suggest. That the object of a master-builder's craft is contingent in its particularity is not to say that its object is *merely* contingent or that it lacks any relation to what is *necessary*. A house after all, must abide by certain laws of nature—of proportion and physics. It cannot be *simply* imaginary. So too a particular idea or instance of building a particular house must participate in the general principles of the art of housebuilding. And any directive art—that of the master housebuilder for example—must abide by certain principles that are essential to its regime *as* a knowledge and an art. Just as the objects of a more purely critical knowledge have their principle of reality beyond the knower themselves, those of a directive knowledge are also grounded in principles of nature and craft that are not purely *invented* or *fabricated* themselves by human hands or cognition.

Self-Commanding Knowledge: The Origination of the 'One' from Itself

The Third Division. The Visitor sets up a kind of geometric proportion to make the next cut, between peddlers (*καπήλων*) and self-sellers (*αὐτοπωλῶν*) in comparison to the herald-kind (*κηρύκων γένους*) and kingly kind (*βασιλικὸν γένος*), respectively.[202] In the former case, "the herald class, after it has received thoughts (*νοήματα*) put on them from another, then in turn gives commands to others."[203] In other words, they are mediators, through whom commands pass but never originate. For the other group, the Visitor invents his own name, "self-directing (αὐτεπιτακτικός)," which itself is only a

[202] *Stat*. 260c8-d2

[203] *Stat.* 260d7-9; τὸ κηρυκικὸν φῦλον ἐπιταχθέντ᾽ ἀλλότρια νοήματα παραδεχόμενον αὐτὸ δεύτερον ἐπιτάττει πάλιν ἑτέροις.

slight nominal modification of the previous subclass, *ἐπιτακτικός*.[204] That which *originates* and *substantiates* the directing is nothing other than the directing itself. The justification for the directing of order comes from the directing itself. This is to say, *by originating itself the directing supplies itself*. Echoing the Elder Socrates' language from the prologue, which he uses to describe the relation between two things of the same name—Socrates and Socrates—the statesman or king's commands are "from his own household (*πρὸς οἰκειότητα*)."[205]

To pause and briefly recollect the character of the divisions so far, the statesman's one knowledge (1) *supplies only coming-to-know*, (2) *supplies this coming-to-know to others*, and (3) *originates its own direction*. If the first division indicates *in what* the knowledge coheres (itself / another), the second indicates *for whom* the knowledge is given (itself / another), and the third, *from where* it receives itself (itself / another). Thus, in a purely abstract formula, though an abstraction that the mathematical language of the diairesis invites the reader to perceive, the statesman's knowledge is an in-itself-for-another-from-itself kind of knowledge. Indeed, the 'one' of the statesman's knowledge risks being consumed by an almost total abstraction. What the 'one' *is* is impossible to perceive, except that it both supplies its own knowing and originates from itself. If this formulation of the statesman's knowledge seems needlessly abstract at this point, this is intentional on Plato's part. The statesman's knowledge risks an almost total evaporation in the blinding light of the one's absoluteness. The only hope now that the statesman's knowledge might actually be *known* rests in the second division: that its 'end' is precisely *to supply its knowledge*—itself—*outside of itself*, "to command what is fitting for each of the workers, until they have brought to perfection what has been commanded."[206] Apart from this promise, however, the first three divisions are unable to disclose the nature of the statesman's knowledge beyond its own self-related and self-originating absoluteness.

The abstraction inherent in the result of the first three divisions exposesva profound perplexity in the methodology of diairesis itself. Diairesis seems in no way to

---

[204] The etymological construction here is deeply interesting. ἐπιτακτικός itself modifies τακτικός—that which is 'fit for ordering'. Thus to be *ἐπιτακτικός* is to be above that which is fit for ordering, and to be αὐτεπιτακτικός further intensifies the relation of rulership, as if 'belonging to itself essentially.'
[205] *Stat.* 261a3
[206] *Stat.* 260a6-7; …προστάττειν δὲ ἑκάστοις τῶν ἐργατῶν τό γε πρόσφορον ἕως ἂν ἀπεργάσωνται τὸ προσταχθέν.

be capable of cutting *into* the oneness of the statesman's knowledge; it appears capable only of separating the knowledge in various ways across the fissure of abstract self- and other-relation, which discloses nothing of the *content* of the knowledge at all. We are left with a purely external and abstract understanding of its inner content and ground, just like in the case of Theodorus' mathemeticization of Socrates' gratitude, covering over every possible expression and elaboration of one's uniqueness—apart from the mere external *fact* of its uniqueness. The formal and external structure of the statesman's one knowledge is incapable of disclosing the inner nature and ground of the same. The absoluteness of the one corresponds exactly to the withdrawal of the one.

Animal Divisions

Fourth Division. In the next divisions, the 'animal divisions,' the Visitor at least promises on the surface to fill in the *content* of the statesman's knowledge—that is, its subject, its end and its means of determining what is to be directed. As we shall see, however, since the end of the statesman's ruling knowledge has already been determined tautologically as the maintenance of *itself*—its *ἀρχή*—this will prove problematic.

The Visitor now makes the cut between the generation of "soulless" (*ἄψυχα*) and "ensouled" (*ἔμψυχα*) things,[207] contrasting master-builder (*ἀρχιτεκτονικόν*) who "is set over soulless things (*τῶν ἀψύχων ἐπιστατοῦν*)" with the statesman, who is "more noble (*γενναιότερον*) [than the former], having always procured his power among living things and about these same things (*ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ ταῦτα*)."[208] There is, then, at least some semblance of a mutual relation between the statesman's knowledge and the things it governs, insofar as it receives its power *from* and *in relation to* these same objects. In other words, the Visitor is attempting to wrest the knowledge of statesmanship from pure abstraction; it is *effectual* insofar as it emerges out of its relation to its objects. This is the *intimation* of the Visitor's words here, but surprisingly, the diairesis will venture no further to mutually reconcile the kingly knowledge with its object. Instead, the Visitor stages the absolute prioritization of *knowledge* over *known*. The subsequent divisions seem to branch off now from the *second* division, that is, from the directive

[207] *Stat*. 261b7-8
[208] *Stat*. 261c8-d2; γενναιότερον, ἐν τοῖς ζῴοις καὶ περὶ αὐτὰ ταῦτα τὴν δύναμιν ἀεὶ κεκτημένον.

class. Thus, the diairesis strays from the 'straight path' the Visitor claims to be making.[209] Instead of cutting further into the statesman's one knowledge itself—further interrogating the self-originating class of directive knowledge—the divisions now centre upon the raw material that is directed, abstracted from this knowledge. The Visitor proclaims, "will we not find that they have been sending out commands for the sake of generating something?", but as we shall see, it is precisely at this point that the 'end' or 'goal' of the statesman's generating ceases to be a question of concern for the philosophical investigation.[210]

We move from considering the knower and the knowledge together, to a consideration of the brute matter of generation.[211] The diairesis turns neither to consider what is to be *produced*, *generated or ordered* by the statesman's knowledge, but rather, only the 'raw material' of their art—human beings in their pure exteriority—through which the statesman's knowledge will freely pass. Soul, grasped by diairetic methodology, does *not* correspond to life or to self-motion but acts only as an external mark of differentiation. Similarly, the Visitor excludes the possession of *reason* as a proper seal of division, since reason appears to be too inward and private to give itself as a mark of differentiation from other living things.[212] Humans, then, as defined by diairesis, are merely biological and merely material;[213] they contain no life or inner reality of their own that the statesman's knowledge does not render into its mere apparatus. At issue is neither the city's *good ordering*, nor the good of the human, nor the *end* of the statesman's craft, to which the statesman's knowledge is presumably directed—the Good is not a consideration in determining what this knowledge is at all—but the raw bodily outline of the object to be directed. The human being becomes the crude object through which the statesman's one knowledge freely flows, and nothing

---

[209] See Appendix C. Most illustrations of the diairetic 'tree' depict a straight path from knowledge through the end, disrupted only by the Visitor's 'two paths' later on (265a). I believe that a more accurate illustration of the diairesis should make the fourth division out of the second. Scodel (1987) p. 47 makes a similar point.

[210] *Stat.* 261b1-2; …ἆρ᾽ οὐχ εὑρήσομεν γενέσεώς τινος ἕνεκα προστάττοντας;

[211] For Merrill (2003), the first three divisions (258bl-261a7) "pos[e] of the question of what defines the statesman," whereas the last divisions (261a8-267d12) discuss "how to define human beings in a community" (41).

[212] See *Stat.* 263d

[213] See Hemmenway (1994) p. 259; Gill (2010) p. 192; Ambuel (2013) p. 218; Each of these commentators note that the purely biological view of human life will be challenged in the Myth of Kronos.

beyond this.[214] The statesman's knowledge, as 'one,' is effectively both *abstracted* and radically separated from its raw material and as such it flows through this material without resistance or self-division.

In the *fifth division* the Visitor classes humans as "domesticated" animals, which means both having a "nature suited to domestication (*ἔχοντα τιθασεύεσθαι φύσιν*)" and actively "willing" (*θέλοντα*) their own subjection.[215] The diairesis conceals both the possibility that the 'willingness' of the human might be founded in their *rational* nature, and that some humans are not at all willing. The *sixth division* follows quickly after the fourth.[216] The Visitor makes a cut centring upon number, between "single-nurture" (*μονοτροφίαν*) and the "common care of creatures in herds" (*τὴν κοινὴν τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀγέλαις θρεμμάτων ἐπιμέλειαν*),[217] but in doing so, he slips discretely into the language of 'nurturing' and 'herds,' which will in large part determine the course of the remaining divisions. The introduction of the shepherd paradigm of statesmanship is odd, however, since shepherding fits irregularly in the 'commanding' subclass. For one, the shepherd will excessively use their hands and bodies to accomplish their rearing and herding tasks. Second, only in the case of humans, and perhaps to a much lesser degree dogs,[218] would shepherding make sense as a 'commanding' art, since the mediation of language alone would allow for the reception of the command and its working-out amongst an understanding 'herd.' Diairesis has nothing to say about language however, just as it excludes a consideration of reason and of soul. It views herdsmanship as having an unmediated relation to the passive herd.

We will glance quickly over the intricacies and peculiarities of the remaining divisions. Of the "watery" (*ἔνυδρον*) and the "land-based" (*ξηροβατικόν*) herds,[219] the

---

[214] Indeed, the 'end' or 'goal' of the statesman's rule appears to be, simply, *itself*. The king's power "to hold onto their rule" (*εἰς τὸ κατέχειν τὴν ἀρχὴν*) is also the *end* of their art. The structure of the statesman's knowledge is *essentially* circular and *essentially* concealed in its own unity.
[215] *Stat*. 264a2-3
[216] The sixth division actually comes before the fifth in the sequence of the philosophical drama. The fifth division, the Visitor and YS will make only retrospectively, between "domesticated" (τιθασός) and "wild" (ἄγριος) animals (264a)—remembering that this former makes possible and grounds the division between single-nurture and collective or herd-nurture.
[217] *Stat.* 261d5-6
[218] See *Stat.* 266a; Interestingly, the Visitor excludes dogs from their diairetic division. I wonder if this might be due to the fact that dogs can receive linguistic commands, and thus are not properly *herd animals*. They are individuated by *λόγος*. It is curious that the Visitor recognizes this of the dog and not the human.
[219] *Stat.* 264d2-3

statesman belongs to the latter, which subsequently divides into "winged" (*πτηνῷ*) and "footed" (*πεζῷ*) subclasses.[220] In the latter class, the Visitor announces suddenly, that "it appears two ways have stretched out"—one "quicker" (*θάττω*) and one "longer (*μακροτέραν*)."[221] In the quicker path, with YS's agreement the Visitor further discerns the outline of the human herd as "hornless," (*ἄκερος*) "own-breeding" (*ἰδιογονία*) and "two-footed in power" (*δυνάμει δίπους*), leading to a comical image of the statesman running with their herd alongside the swineherd.[222] The shorter way fares little better. From the 'footed' class, the Visitor immediately divides the subclasses "four-footed" (*τετράπουν*) and "two-footed" (*δίποδα*) and the latter into "feathered" (πτεροφυεῖ) and "bare" (ψιλῷ), revealing a definition of the human as the featherless biped.[223] It is unclear how one of these definitions might be better than the other. In each case we are left with raw bodily human material upon which the statesman's knowledge will impose itself without resistance.

<u>One and All: The Statesman as Shepherd</u>

YS seals the final definition—using the longer path—with his approval. The Eleatic, however, spies a problem: "the account (*λόγον*) has somewhat (*πως*) been spoken, but it has not been finished off completely to the end (*τελέως*)."[224] The issue that the Visitor identifies finally distinguishes the human herd and herdsman from that of all other flocks. In herds of other animals, the herdsman's access to the object of their art—the herd or the individual—is entirely comprehensive, as the Visitor emphasizes at the end of the initial diairesis:

> the herdsman himself is the rearer of the herd, himself doctor, himself a sort of matchmaker, alone a knower of midwifery (*μόνος ἐπιστήμων τῆς μαιευτικῆς*), concerning both childbirths and deliveries of those who are born […], [and] in play and music—in whatever degree his creatures have participated by nature—there is not other who is stronger at exhorting them, and soothing them with enchantment."[225]

---

[220] *Stat.* 264e6
[221] *Stat.* 265a3; 265a5
[222] *Stat.* 266c10-d2
[223] See Diogenes Laertius, VI 40 for the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope's farcical appropriation of this definition of the human.
[224] *Stat.* 267c9-d2; …τὸ τὸν λόγον εἰρῆσθαι μέν πως, οὐ μὴν παντάπασί γε τελέως ἀπειργάσθαι;
[225] *Stat.* 268a8-b2; …αὐτὸς τῆς ἀγέλης τροφὸς ὁ βουφορβός, αὐτὸς ἰατρός, αὐτὸς οἷον νυμφευτὴς καὶ περὶ τοὺς τῶν γιγνομένων τόκους καὶ λοχείας μόνος ἐπιστήμων τῆς μαιευτικῆς. ἔτι τοίνυν παιδιᾶς καὶ μουσικῆς ἐφ᾽ ὅσον αὐτοῦ τὰ θρέμματα φύσει μετείληφεν, οὐκ ἄλλος κρείττων παραμυθεῖσθαι καὶ κηλῶν πραΰνειν

In other words, the relation of the herdsman to the herd is a relation of total and singular capability. What is more, though not explicit in the Visitor's speech, the herdsman seems to have a total knowledge of what is *good* for the herd, both as a whole and for the individuals therein. In this respect, the herdsman resembles the sophist insofar as the sophist claims to be able "to make and do with one art the whole range of things"[226] in relation to the human masses. The image of the shepherd thus involves a positive transformation of sophistry. Where the sophist only *seems* to have a knowledge of all things by the skillful abuse of language, the herdsman's art is fundamentally non-linguistic. They must *actually* possess the knowledge they claim lest they give their herd over to ruin. In relation to the 'all' of the herd, the shepherd's 'one' science can perform all things needful.

In contrast to these animal-shepherds, the Visitor notes that the expertise of human-nurture is hotly "disputed by thousands of others (*μυρίων ἄλλων ἀμφισβητούντων*)," [227] who claim "that they themselves take care (*ἐπιμελοῦνται*) of the human herd, not only humans in herds, but also that of the rulers (*ἀρχόντων*) themselves."[228] The Visitor leaves the realm of diairetic and mathematical abstraction and turns to consider his political experience. *Everybody* in the human herd appears to believe they are the most properly political. Among all of the animal-herdsmen, then, the human statesman is the only figure whose expertise is placed profoundly into question, whose herd *disputes with them*. The dispute is centred by *language*: "these all together fight against those we have called 'statesmen' altogether with their speech."[229] The statesman's one knowledge, and the *one* of the statesman's knowledge, seems to retreat absolutely in the face of these competing expertises into the sepulchre of its own privateness. The absoluteness of the statesman's knowledge corresponds *precisely* to its absence. The statesman is doomed to know *everything* about the care of their herd and yet to have no unique activity in relation to these competing carers.

---

[226] *Soph*. 233d9-10; …ποιεῖν καὶ δρᾶν μιᾷ τέχνῃ συνάπαντα ἐπίστασθαι πράγματα
[227] *Stat*. 268c3
[228] *Stat*. 268a2-4; …ὡς σφεῖς τῆς τροφῆς ἐπιμελοῦνται τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης, οὐ μόνον ἀγελαίων ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτῶν;
[229] *Stat*. 267e9-268a2; …οὓς πολιτικοὺς ἐκαλέσαμεν, παντάπασι τῷ λόγῳ διαμάχοιντ᾽ ἂν οὗτοι σύμπαντες…

Conclusion

The end of this initial diairesis constitutes a crisis for the interlocutors' discernment of the statesman's knowledge. It appears that their diairetic methodology has produced a statesman whose abstract knowledge bears no relation to the actual site of human politics, since all in their herd dispute his apparent function. There are at least three reasons for this failure. First, diairesis appears incapable of examining the importance of reason and of language in the formation and structure of human community. It is capable only of defining a kind of external mass where the statesman's knowledge apparently comes to pass. Second, the Visitor does not entertain questions of the *good* of the statesman's knowledge, nor discuss what it is that is good for a group of humans, which might better give explicit *content* to this knowledge. The closest he comes to this, in determining the statesman as a nurturer, says only *that* their knowledge is bound up with the question of the herd's good, not *what* this good is. Finally, exacerbated by the limitations of the diairetic method, the Visitor is incapable of refining the notion of the statesman's unity in order to account for their *activity* and for the *foundation* of their knowledge. The first three divisions in particular are not able to say anything about what knowledge generally, and what *kingly* knowledge specifically, *is*. The ground of the statesman's knowledge disappears in the blinding tautological unity; all we can know about the nature of the statesman's knowledge is that it both supplies itself and takes as an end the maintenance of its own rule. So too, in the face of this absolute 'arithmetical' unity of the ruling knowledge, human subjects are reduced to a kind of mere potentiality. The Visitor deprives the human political sphere of a life that is its own.

Chapter V – The Myth of Kronos: The *Pathos* of the One [268D – 277D]

Following the diairesis, the Eleatic Visitor presents a cosmological story about alternating cycles of the universe's revolution to YS, dividing cosmic history between what he calls the "age of Kronos," a golden age period of the world order, and the **"**age of Zeus," the order belonging to the present conditions of life. Thus, the Visitor situates the question of the nature of the political knower and knowledge on a cosmic and theological stage. The interlocutors have assumed too much about the meaning and arrangement of human political life and knowledge, and this has led their investigation astray. They have cloaked their picture of the political knower and the nature of political unity, as it were, in a 'black box' of the immanence of knowledge. What the Visitor believes shall remedy their situation is an examination of the external place of the human being in relation to gods, cosmos and other animals. The newfound consciousness of the human relation to 'the all' will clarify the mode of the statesman's rule.

From the very first ancient commentators,[230] the *Statesman* myth has drawn considerable attention. It is what El Murr calls "le plus complexe de tous les mythes platoniciens,"[231] a vertigo-inducing and often disorganized mixing of cosmological, theological, zoological and political motifs, in the face of which "astonishing mass (*ὄγκον*) of myth" even the Visitor leaves seemingly bewildered.[232] It is not surprising, then, that even some of the seemingly most basic questions of the myth's content have proven contentious, questions regarding the number of cycles of cosmic rotation, the identity of the gods ruling in each epoch, and the nature of the human or statesman's

---

[230] See Dillon (1995), Schicker (1995), Calvo (2018) and Motta (2018). Generally speaking, the Neoplatonists' treatment of the *Statesman* was disproportionately focused on the myth. The most important Neoplatonic interpreters of the myth, Proclus and Iamblichus, put forward a non-literal interpretation, in which Kronos and Zeus rule alternating cycles: two permanent, non-temporal, levels of reality—the intellectual and the sensible, respectively.

[231] El Murr (2014), p. 144.

[232] *Stat.* 277b4-5; θαυμαστὸν ὄγκον […] τοῦ μύθου ; See Appendix D for a general schematic of the epochal shift, which the myth unfolds. Betegh (2021) sees a fundamental 'meta-pedagogical' reason for the bizarre construction of the myth. His interpretation hinges on a perception of the Visitor's incompetence at myth-telling: he learns from his own account that "the ability to tell myths is a distinct capacity […] based on knowledge" (82), which he did not adequately possess. Contra this view, for an interpretation that argues for the Visitor's pedagogical skill in the construction of the myth, see Hemmenway (1994). Horn (2012) has suggested that Plato may view myth as a "relatively adequate (perhaps even the best possible) form of knowledge for states of affairs which are hard to grasp, e.g. because they lie in the distant past, or for objects which have an inferior ontological status (i.e. those of the world of experience)" (400).

imitation of god and cosmos.[233] My own analysis will focus upon the metaphysical core of the myth, which has been somewhat neglected in more narrative and political readings, arguing that the myth constitutes a serious metaphysical 'pivot' in the dialogue's grasp of the nature of the political realm.[234] The myth of *Statesman* is not intended as a purely doctrinal account of cosmic structuring,[235] but uses mythic images of the world-order for the purpose of elaborating the meaning of human nature and community, as it lies between divine and bodily realities, equally real.

---

[233] I will address each of these issues during this chapter. Benardete (1984) notes that the Visitor "announces the coming to the point [of the myth] four times (272d5, 273e4, 274bl, 274e)" (III.96). The Visitor's disorganization is clearly constitutive of his telling of the myth, not a mere accident of lazy writing on Plato's part. Its scatteredness is intrinsic to its structure and helps to emphasize the confusion of human life in this age. Lane (1998) remarks, "The story, as suggested by its mode of construction, has no such internal or articulable structure" (123).

[234] Here I am most radically setting my analysis against that of Rosen (1998), who argues that "the first order of being is mentioned indirectly and plays no role, either in the myth itself or in the dialogue as a whole. If we try to reconcile the Stranger's teaching in the *Sophist* on the greatest genera or elements of stability and intelligibility with his teaching in the *Statesman*, grave problems arise. What cannot be denied is that the greatest genera play no role in the analysis of political existence. In the *Statesman*, the central problem is how to construct a rational ordering of human life in a changing cosmos that is largely if not entirely hostile to the stability of our existence. Apparently the perception of ontological structure is of no use in the resolution of this problem" (45). It will become clear during this chapter why I disagree with this assessment. It is curious to me that Sayre (2006), in his primarily metaphysical treatment of the dialogue, almost completely neglects the metaphysical force of the myth, reading it in an almost exclusively political aspect. I hope somewhat to correct this oversight.

[235] There have been several attempts to define the *Statesman* myth in terms of an index of Platonic mythic genres. Horn (2012) calls the Visitor's story a "doctrinal myth," in that it makes "serious and even far-reaching claim[s] to truth and explanatory power" (401). This is a view that many scholars of Platonic cosmology agree with, though unlike Horn, they view the myth as explicitly *Platonically* doctrinal, due to its similarities with mythical passages from *Timaeus* and *Philebus*, as the cosmology of the myth (with some latitude) directly represents the views of the author (See Mohr, 1981; 1982; 1985; Robinson, 1967; 1995). I agree with Horn in some way, insofar as the myth employs certain doctrinal principles, Platonic and mathematical, to bear on the nature of human desire. However, I do not agree that the 'end' of the myth is true doctrine. I more strongly disagree with commentators who take the cosmology presented in the myth as the simple Platonic doctrine, ignoring its complex dramatic and philosophical relationality to the rest of the text. Mohr's conjecture that the cosmologies embedded within *Statesman*, *Philebus* and *Timaeus* are "doctrinally homogeneous with each other" (1982, 47, ft. 1), is in my view only possible with a great deal of 'smoothing-over' the minute details of each account and a total forgetting of the dramatic contexts of each dialogue. In no dialogue does Plato give his own personal dogmatic understanding of the cosmos, which is not mediated by the particular perspectives of the interlocutors and the dramatic contexts of the arguments. Further, the myth is too haphazard in its construction, and too ambiguous on its own points of contention, to exist primarily for dogmatic purposes.Rosen (1998) characterizes the myth as a so-called "founding myth" (51), functioning similarly in a political situation to Socrates' 'noble lie' of *Republic* (414b-415d). If anything, in my view, it is much moreso a 'philosophical myth' than a political myth, especially given that the Visitor evokes nowhere the human statesman. I find it difficult to see how exactly how this myth would either legitimise the statesman's rule or educate the people of a city and teach them about 'good order'—it is too abstract and not at all concerned with ethical questions, in radical contrast to Socrates' great political myths, as, for example, in his 'noble lie.' As Zuolo observes, the myth "does not seek to guide the action of individuals" (5).

Within the dialectical movement of *Statesman*, the myth of Kronos constitutes a negation of the initial diairesis; the myth shatters the Parmenidean Visitor's functional notion of epistemic unity. Where the opening diairesis attempts to conceive the statesman's knowledge as a kind of arithmetical and absolute unity, which flowed through its passive object, the myth reintroduces *nature* onto the scene, complicating not only the meaning of knowledge but also the character of human existence. Most basically, this chapter argues that the dialectical introduction of the myth challenges certain basic assumptions about unity and about the rulership of humans, to which the formal methodology of diairesis is blind. First, it suggests that the knowledge of the statesman is *not one*, since the oneness that remains the same always in itself belongs not to human knowledge but to divine. If the statesman's knowledge is to be found at all, it must be grounded in *both* the reality of flux that characterizes human life *and* the transcendent divine principles of selfsameness. Second, the human, beyond the mere biological exteriority of the 'herd,' is more properly defined by its self-minding, that is, by its rational care and concern for itself, and by its desire *to know*. Any knowledge of rulership, therefore, must take this essential aspect of human life into consideration. Third, the myth's rich characterization of human life foregrounds the reality that it is *not unified*. In the absence of unity, unity becomes the concealed object of human desire.

I will argue, at the risk of a too-abstract analysis,[236] that the Visitor leans on central metaphysical notions of sameness and difference to accomplish the above reformulations of the meaning of human life and politics. Stated most simply, I view the myth as an attempt to discern the *difference* of the human from the *same itself*.[237] The messiness of the myth is itself constitutive of the myth's purpose and function, namely, to descend into difference itself from the initial standpoint of diairetic unity. The Visitor now finds he must account for a more internal uniqueness—the 'geometric uniqueness'—constitutive of human life and community in his account of the unicity of the statesman.

---

[236] In my view, paying attention to the Visitor's abstract principles of the myth's construction is entirely appropriate. As I have mentioned, the Visitor has proven himself to have, as a Parmenidean, an affinity for both abstraction and unity. We must also not forget that he is principally speaking to mathematicians and thus crafts the myth around a quasi-mathematical core. See Hemmenway (1994).

[237] In Chapter IV, I show that the central assumption of the knowledge discovered in the diairesis is that it is the same as its object. The initial diairesis fails to discern that the human being is not the same as themselves, that is, they are not immanent to themselves.

Thus, the Visitor's interest in these abstract quasi-mathematical categories as fundamental epistemic and ontological kinds continues and develops in the myth, though to different, and increasingly complex ends.

I present here only a broad outline of the myth, which in some way will guide my reflections on its content:

268d2-269c3: Introduction
269c4-270b1: The Metaphysical Core of Myth
270b1-272b3: The Age of Kronos
272b3-d6: A Question of Happiness
272d6-274b1: The Age of Zeus
274b1-e2: Conclusion: Human Pathos

A more detailed analysis of its structure proves to be a much more difficult task, however, since the Visitor often jumps back and forth in his considerations, departing from and reverting to the same places of the cosmic process at different points in the text. For this reason, I will not attempt a reading that preserves the strict chronology of the text, but will instead aim to collect and organize many of the Visitor's thoughts according to thematic groupings, regardless of their position in the text. I will, however, treat certain self-contained sections, such as the 'metaphysical core of the myth' and the 'question of happiness' in their own place. One should forget, however, *neither* the general chronology of the myth, *nor* the fact of the myth's relative disorganization: Plato has chosen to present the myth—what "will be fitting for the showing-forth (*ἀπόδειξις*) of the king"—with a dramatic elasticity.[238]

The Turn Toward Myth

The Visitor introduces the myth of Kronos precisely at the point of failure of the initial diairesis—after he and YS have found themselves unable to "display [the statesman] pure and alone (*καθαρὸν μόνον*), having separated him from those other people,"[239] from all other competing *τέχναι* that also claim to rear the human herd. The Visitor introduces the myth here, "lest we are about to put to shame our account (*λόγον*) at its end."[240] In one way, the Visitor offers the myth for the purpose of *saving* the argument that has come before, namely, the discovery of the statesman as human-

[238] *Stat.* εἰς γὰρ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπόδειξιν πρέψει ῥηθέν.
[239] *Stat*. 268c10-11; χωρίσαντες ἀπ᾽ ἐκείνων καθαρὸν μόνον αὐτὸν ἀποφήνωμεν
[240] *Stat.* 268d2-3; εἰ μὴ μέλλομεν ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει καταισχῦναι τὸν λόγον

herdsman (*ἀνθρωπονομικὸν*) through diairesis.[241] The Visitor thus signals that the myth will solve the problem of the statesman's competition with other supposed rearing-experts, which diairesis could not accomplish on its own, without irrevocably tarnishing and invalidating the method that has come before. The myth disrupts the argument—*μῦθος* disrupts *λόγος*—but for the very purpose of restoring the original argument and philosophical methodology back to themselves. The Visitor assures YS, their investigation will return to normal, "just as things were before, always with parts being taken away from part to reach what we are seeking at the furthest point."[242]

At the same time the myth represents a fresh attempt at the problem, "from another beginning" (*ἐξ ἄλλης ἀρχῆς*) and travelling "by another path" (*ἑτέραν ὁδὸν*).[243] The road is no longer to be the 'short cut' or 'straight path' (*ἀτραπὸν*) laid out at the beginning of diairesis. Instead, this other and new beginning will involve "mixing in a little play."[244] In some sense, then, the Visitor signals here a disavowal of the rigid and abstract classes of knowledge's self-relation from the opening diairesis: if the statesman is to be found, a certain amount of *mixture* must be permitted in the cognition of these classes. The Visitor repeats his charge a second time, "please pay careful attention to my story, just as if you were a child."[245] The myth is not only to offer amusement and respite from the strenuous work of division, but it doubles as an opportunity for serious pedagogy, so long as YS attends this play with child-like wonder. In many ways, the myth will be more serious than even the preceding dialectic.

When the Visitor proposes "to use a long part (*συχνῷ μέρει*) of a great myth (*μεγάλου μύθου*)"[246] to rescue their previous argument, as it turns out, this story shall

---

[241] *Stat.* 267c1;
[242] *Stat.* 268e1-2; καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν, μέρος ἀεὶ μέρους ἀφαιρουμένους ἐπ᾽ ἄκρον ἀφικνεῖσθαι τὸ ζητούμενον
[243] *Stat.* 268d5-6
[244] *Stat.* 268d8; σχεδὸν παιδιὰν ἐγκερασαμένους; For Sallis (2021), this 'play' precisely involves a "mixture […] of myth and dialectic, a compounding of *μῦθος* and *λόγος*" (111). Hence, the traditional tension between *μῦθος* and *λόγος* is somewhat alleviated. Generally speaking, the Visitor uses these terms interchangeably throughout the course of his story, excluding one disparaging remark about myths at 272c7, ringing with a certain amount of Platonic irony, that describes the hypothetically gossipy stories animals might tell each other to pass the time during the age of Kronos.
[245] *Stat.* 268e4-5; ἀλλὰ δὴ τῷ μύθῳ μου πάνυ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν, καθάπερ οἱ παῖδες;
[246] *Stat.* 268d8-9; συχνῷ γὰρ μέρει δεῖ μεγάλου μύθου προσχρήσασθαι

combine no less than three "of the ancient stories" which "were and will be again":[247] the story of Thyestes and Atreus' conflict over the throne, in which Zeus changes the course of the sun as a sign of his witness to Atreus' kingship; the tale of the age when Kronos ruled the cosmos, when the celestial bodies followed an opposite course; and one of the "earthborn race," recalling an age in which humans were born from the soil.[248] What is essentially common to each of these stories is the reversion of external motion, with respect to either the cosmos as a whole, or the nature of generation on earth. Though the *Statesman* myth is a fabrication crafted by the Visitor himself (he introduces it as '*my* story'),[249] it serves most especially the function of revealing "what the *pathos* (*πάθος*) and *cause* (*αἴτιον*) of all these stories is [emphasis added]."[250] The Visitor explains

[247] *Stat.* 268e8; ἦν τοίνυν καὶ ἔτι ἔσται τῶν πάλαι λεχθέντων [πολλά τε ἄλλα]; At this point, the Visitor's musing on the coming-to-pass of these tales appears to constitute only a kind of mythic nostalgia. It is not until later in his telling of the myth that this 'eternal recurrence' shall become philosophically important.
[248] *Stat.* 268e8-269a5; *Stat.* 269a7-8; *Stat.* 269b2-3, respectively; See Vidal-Naquet (1978), Miller (1980) p. 40-50, for an overview of the function of 'golden age' myths in the political climate of Plato's Athens. A number of commentators have read the myth as a rebuttal of 'golden age' rhetoric in politics (See Vidal-Naquet (1978); Scodel (1987); Steiner (1993), p. 140; Lane (1998), p. 106; Castoriadis (2002) p. 102; Miller (1980), p. 50; Zuolo (2017), p.10; Betegh (2021), p. 91). These scholars read Plato as consciously dismissing a prevalent current of Athenian political thought, which sought a return to the golden age of time past. On this reading, the age of Kronos is absolutely inaccessible to the current cosmic conditions. Of these scholars Miller has a unique interpretation wherein the 'first' humans of the age of Zeus, the ones who possess a "relatively 'accurate' memory," live in the "period of ancient despotism which is glorified, even in its demise, by Homer and Hesiod, the period when godlike kings, literal copies of the shepherd-god, ruled absolutely as 'shepherds of the people'" (49). Though I tend to agree with this school of thought that the age of Kronos is not the political horizon of Zeusian humans, I disagree with Miller on this point, as I do not believe there is enough reason to historicize the contents of the myth, though he later, in my view rightly, takes a firm step backwards from this view: "[t]his sort of "remembrance" [at issue in the myth] transcends Hesiod as well as Protagoras; as the recovery of rational principle, it is anamnēsis, or philosophical recollection. But, secondly, to grasp the "measure" by this reflection is not yet to apply it. To know what the Cronian shepherd is, is not yet to know how Zeusian man may live up to it" (51-2).
[249] For Craig (2019), the Visitor's compiling of the myth speaks to an implicit pedagogical intentionality. That the Visitor himself composes the myth "introduces a kind of logographic necessity, as all the parts have been chosen by the Stranger rather than passed down incidentally" (23). All elements of the myth as conscious *construction* are opened to philosophical critique. Márquez (2014) identifies the Visitor's myth-making as "something similar (though not necessarily identical) to what Socrates in other Platonic dialogues calls 'recollection,' and which we can understand here more broadly as a kind of insight into the 'original' order of the whole" (132). In my view, it is precisely the Visitor's recollection as recollection of the 'original order of the whole' that distinguishes it from Socratic recollection. The Visitor's mode of recollection is concerned with a kind of *exterior* order rather than an *inner* reality.
[250] *Stat.* 269b9; ὃ δ᾽ἐστὶν πᾶσι τούτοις αἴτιον τὸ πάθος

further: "Now, all these stories together are from the *pathos* of the same event,[251] and in addition to these tales there are countless others even still more astonishing than these, but after much time some of them have vanished and others, having been sown about, are each spoken of separately from the others."[252] *His* myth will gather these other myths together by reconstructing the hidden source and cause of their absent unity, which has been lost to time. We are dealing with a *forgotten oneness*—a oneness that has absconded precisely due to the condition and nature of present life, and yet a oneness that can still be accessed with proper recollection and invention. This is to be, in other words, foremost *a myth about myths*, as much as it is to be a myth about the nature of statesmanship. The

[251] This is a consciously unorthodox translation of 'ἐκ ταὐτοῦ πάθους'. Translators have tended to view this *pathos* to which the Visitor refers as a reference to the physical or 'historical' event of cosmic reversion—the 'earthquake' (*σεισμὸν*) (273a3) and destruction (*φθορὰν*) (270c11; 273a3) that occurs between the two epochs of contrary revolution. Rowe translates this phrase "consequences of the same state of affairs" (310); Brann, Kalkavage and Salem, "from the same disturbance" (37); Benardete, "from the same affect" (III.18). There is in my view nothing *wrong* with this translational inclination, but in my rendering I want to emphasize that this *pathos* to which the Visitor refers, as will become clear in the course of this chapter, is more critically psychological and metaphysical in nature. The earthquake and destruction brought on by the epochal transition only accounts for its more minor, external aspect. The external, material *pathos* corresponds with an internal, psychological *pathos* of both cosmic and human self-alienation. More than a physical destruction, the transition between rotational epochs constitutes an *aporia* [274c5] for humans. Of the several references to *pathos*, some (*πάσχον*; *παθήματα*) (270d2; 270e10-271a1) refer explicitly to the bodily condition, while some (*πάθος*) (273d1), (*παθήματι*) (274a1) refer to metaphysical *pathos* of 'disharmony.' These latter two references are most important to my argument, and where I think the Visitor clarifies his particular usage in the preface to the myth. Scodel (1987) expresses perplexity whether "the Stranger's myth describes the *οὐσία* of the cosmos or merely a *πάθος* of it, whether a *πάθος* can possibly be an *αἴτιον* [a cause] as the Stranger says it can [See 269b9; 270b4]. Since the pathos is one of opposed motions (*ποραί*) into which the cosmos as a whole is divided, in seeking the *οὐσία* of this cosmos we are in fact seeking the unity which makes the diaeresis of opposed motions possible" (74). On a literal level, the *pathos* is indeed the simple experience of being caught between opposed cosmic motions. In this way, the *pathos* is not a cause, or at best it is an 'accidental' cause (to slip into Aristotelian parlance), just as an author might use an experience from their life [an accidental cause] as fodder when constructing a story. On a sub-literal level, the *pathos* in question is of the opposed motions *in the soul*. This *pathos*—this being-acted-upon of the soul—is perhaps the experience of one's 'nature,' which is more appropriately both an *οὐσία* and *αἴτιον*. *Pathos* understood this way, as the unity of contrary motions in the soul, is both a *result* of the metaphysical reality of the opposed cosmic revolutions, but also a kind of active principle of self-moving. Steiner (1993) finds in the myth that "not only do we find the origin of the 'metabole politeion,' but metabole is explicitly identified with the self-movement of psyche" (142).

[252] *Stat.* 269b5-9; ταῦτα τοίνυν ἔστι μὲν σύμπαντα ἐκ ταὐτοῦ πάθους, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἕτερα μυρία καὶ τούτων ἔτι θαυμαστότερα, διὰ δὲ χρόνου πλῆθος τὰ μὲν αὐτῶν ἀπέσβηκε, τὰ δὲ διεσπαρμένα εἴρηται χωρὶς ἕκαστα ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων; 'διεσπαρμένα' contains the root verb, 'to sow' (*σπείρω*). The pastoral language used to describe the age of Kronos is preserved here in the image of sowing seeds of the recollection of the former age. Looking ahead, the Visitor will explain that the first humans after the *calamity* are "heralds" to the current generation of humans, since they alone have immediate lived memories of the former age of Kronos (See *Stat.* 271b). These myths, which initially amounted to *teachings* and to *memory*, have now forgotten the cause of their being-sowed in the first place.

cause (*αἴτιος*) and origin of myth-telling as recollected by the Visitor is bound thoroughly to the cause of politics—and indeed, to the beginning of philosophy, as we shall see.

God, Cosmos and Body: The Metaphysical Core of the Myth

The Visitor begins his myth by outlining the broad external framework of cosmic reversal, recounting the opposing revolutions of 'the all,'[253] and introducing many of the central themes that he will develop in the course of the story:

> At times the god used to conduct the all and help it to rotate while being carried, and at other times he has let it go, whenever the circuits have actually obtained the measure (*μέτρον*) of time proper to it [the all], its self-minding (*αὐτόματον*) turns itself backwards in the opposite direction, since it is a living being (*ζῷον ὂν*)[254] which has received (*εἰληχὸς*) prudence (*φρόνησιν*) from the one himself who has fit it together (*συναρμόσαντος*) from the beginning.[255]

The Visitor elaborates the most important themes of the myth immediately in this outline. The remainder of the myth will concern each of these two cycles,[256] the first, wherein the

---

[253] I translate 'τὸ πᾶν' here as 'the all' with Benardete and with Brann, Kalkavage and Salem, instead of the more conventional and linguistically attractive, 'universe' (Rowe). Since I believe that the usage and movement of different expressions of unity and totality are crucial to understanding the philosophical import of the dialogue, I translate this term literally to keep the henotic or totalic nature of the expression at the forefront of the mind. See *Theaet.* 204a-205a for Socrates' discussion regarding the sameness or difference of 'all' [*τὸ πᾶν*], 'totality' [*τὰ πάντα*] and 'whole' [*τὸ ὅλον*].

[254] And thus, an *ensouled* being. (See Robinson 1967, 1995; Scodel, 1987, 75)

[255] *Stat.* 269c4-d3; τὸ γὰρ πᾶν τόδε τοτὲ μὲν αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς συμποδηγεῖ πορευόμενον καὶ συγκυκλεῖ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀνῆκεν, ὅταν αἱ περίοδοι τοῦ προσήκοντος αὐτῷ μέτρον εἰλήφωσιν ἤδη χρόνου, τὸ δὲ πάλιν αὐτόματον εἰς τἀναντία περιάγεται, ζῷον ὂν καὶ φρόνησιν εἰληχὸς ἐκ τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτὸ κατ᾽ ἀρχάς.

[256] Brisson (1995), Carone (2005), Rowe (1999; 2002; 2010), each defend a three-era model of the *Statesman* myth. In the account of the former two, the first era involves a god's rulership of humans alongside auxiliary daemons; the second, a period in which the god retreats leaving humans disastrously to rule themselves; and the third, in which the god again returns to rule still-autonomous humans but without daemonic assistance. Rowe, on the other hand, interprets the middle period to involve a brief but disastrous transition from god-rule to human self-rule. In my view, Verlinsky (2008), (2009), and Horn (2012) have conclusively put this theory to bed, the former in a close reading of the text itself, and the latter in his analysis of the broader themes of the dialogue. Other scholars who have a sustained critique of the three-age theory include, Ferrari (1995), Lane (1998), El Murr (2014), Márquez (2014) and Gartner & Yao (2020). Trying to be a good teacher for the education of YS, the Visitor begins his account with the clearest outline of the myth's content. On a purely compositional note, if three periods of revolution were as necessary to the construction of the myth as Carone, Rowe and Brisson suggest, it would make little sense that the Visitor's most basic outline of the myth's content lacks any indication thereof. To my mind, the three-stage schematic has been imported to the myth by scholars in an attempt to 'save' Plato from himself, instituting a reading against an 'entropic' view of the current world-order, which would seemingly negate the efficacy of human politics entirely: "what is the point, therefore, of advocating the best kind of politics in the rest of the *Politicus*, if the myth suggests that the cosmos either prevents such an achievement in our current cycle or promises the abolition of all politics in a future one?" (Carone 128). In the Neoplatonic reading of the myth, the two cycles of revolution correspond to two mutually existing and co-eternal realities. See Dillon (1995). My own reading leans closer to the interpretation of the Neoplatonists insofar as I think Plato is using the two cycles in order to reflect on the eternal reality of the human condition, though I do not discount its more literal and temporal meaning.

motion of the all and the god's help and direction seem to be closely aligned—if not immanent to each other—and the second, wherein god and cosmos are explicitly severed—the all becomes *self-minding* or *self-seeking* [*αὐτόματον*].[257] Yet this 'prudence' or 'practical wisdom' active in the second cycle expresses the central ambiguity and tension of the myth: the principles, the wisdom or *φρόνησις*, at work in the period of the cosmos' newfound self-agency, are as much an expression of divine directive as they are an elucidation of the cosmos' own self-minding and self-motion. This is to say, at its origin, the *phronesis* of 'the all' or of the universe *does not belong to itself*. The all is separated or *disharmonized*[258] from itself in this way. It expresses its own inner nature precisely in and through its relation to *another*, the god himself, *which it is not*, yet from which it has received its proper nature. The Visitor's above remarks constitute a broad, preliminary outline of the two cycles of the all's revolution and of the relationship

---

[257] The word here is *αὐτόματος* and does not precisely correspond to our contemporary notion of 'autonomy' [*αὐτόνομος*], which word never appears in this dialogue. The difference here is between self-thinking, self-minding or even more properly, self-*seeking* (*αὐτό- ματος*), and 'living under one's own laws' (*αὐτό- νομος*), respectively. This difference cannot be more critical: the former involves an inward turn, to discern the source and content of one's own thinking; the latter involves positing for oneself a rule to follow that suits one's own taste or pleasure. The former involves an *inward turn* to one's own nature as a being endowed with reason and *phronesis*; the latter involves an *external construction* from and for oneself—what one might demonstrably call a *τέχνη* of self-realization. Naas (2017) draws out the profound "pharmakonal" (29) ambiguity of this word, a word used to describe the self-moving of world-order in *both* epochs of rotation: "the term *αὐτόματος*, an adjective that, as we will see, oscillates, not unlike the two ages themselves, between spontaneity and automaticity, activity and passivity, positivity and negation, presence and absence, memory and forgetting, and, in the end, life and death, or, rather, two very different conceptions of life and death" (15-6). Human self-minding in the age of Zeus must involve a kind of acting-out-of-self, parallel to the self-minding of the earth in the age of Zeus. At the same time, Naas notes, "because its power as a living creature seems to come only from its recollection of the teachings of the Demiurge in the previous age, this automatic movement must also be understood negatively, as a movement that is unguided, haphazard, set adrift, like a boat abandoned by its helmsman, a state without a statesman, a son deserted by his father" (27). Apart from this single mention of *αὐτόματος* in relation to the age of Zeus at the beginning of the dialogue, the Visitor later favors the language of self-caring and self-ruling later in the myth in his depiction of human and cosmic self-reflexive action (ἐπιμελείᾳ, 273a7, 274d6; κράτος, 273b1; αὐτοκράτορα, 274a5).

[258] We shall see in the course of this chapter that both the human and cosmic soul find in their nature an indissoluble self-disharmony, which is the peculiar challenge of politics to address. At 273c7 Plato uses the language of musical disharmony or discord [*ἀναρμοστίας*, the negation of *ἁρμοστικός* or *ἁρμοστός*: 'well-fitted' or 'fitted for joining'], to describe the *pathos* of the cosmos as it hurdles toward its own destruction at the end of the age of Zeus. Harmony, of course, involves a measured and good arrangement of a multiplicity of different voices: though the notes are *different* from each other, their ordering produces concord or unity even in their difference—and indeed, *due* to this difference, without which there could be no union at all. The 'pathos of ancient disharmony' for the cosmos, on the other hand, refers to its essentially disordered relation to body—an un-fittedness per se. Casadio (1995) notes that 'disharmony' is "virtually coincident" with evil in the Pythagorean philosophical tradition and appears with such a meaning in *Phaed*. 93e6 (ft. 26, p 93). Using this musical metaphor, cosmos is both 'disharmonious' in the relation of the parts to the all and 'self-disharmonious' in the relation of the all to itself.

between god and all in each of these revolutions, but the Visitor next aims to explain just *how* "this going backwards has become inborn [*ἔμφυτον γέγονε*] for it [the all] by necessity [*ἐξ ἀνάγκης*]."[259] The Visitor sets himself up to unfold the metaphysical core of his myth, immediately after producing its general outline.

The Eleatic now establishes an initial distinction between divinity and non-divinity, and with it, draws upon his central metaphysical notion of sameness and difference from *Sophist*:[260] "always being the same, in the same conditions, and having the same state, befits alone the most divine things of all."[261] The "nature of body" [*σώματος φύσις*] on the other hand, is "not of this rank" [*οὐ ταύτης τῆς τάξεως*], that is, it is not always the same, but necessarily comes to be different from itself.[262] It seems that one of the things the Visitor is accomplishing with the myth is an elaboration of 'worth,' which moves beyond the diairetic disinterest in categorizing classes as "more dignified" [*σεμνοτέρου*] or less.[263] Here, solely using the quasi-mathematical categories of being-

---

[259] *Stat.* 269d2-3; τοῦτο δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ ἀνάπαλιν ἰέναι διὰ τόδ᾽ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔμφυτον γέγονε.

[260] See *Soph*. 254d-255e ; It should be noted here that the Visitor is employing the notion of sameness to somewhat different ends in *Statesman* than in *Sophist*. In *Sophist*, the same and the different are each one of the 'greatest kinds' [μέγιστη γένη], which are especially important in the Visitor's distinguishing between being and non-being. There, the kinds are explicitly non-scaled and non-scalable: there are no separate orders or levels of being (See Cochran (2011) p. 31-2). The μέγιστη γένη do not again appear by name in *Statesman*, though sameness and difference do play an important, if subtle, role in the myth and elsewhere in the dialogue. To the contrary of *Sophist*, the Visitor explicitly evokes sameness at the beginning of the myth *precisely to differentiate certain essential orders of being*.

[261] *Stat.* 269d5-6; τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν ἀεὶ καὶ ταὐτὸν εἶναι τοῖς πάντων θειοτάτοις προσήκει μόνοις ; This language, as many scholars have noted, has a distinctively Socratic ring to it (See Blyth (2019) ft. 28 for a list of similar Platonic references and scholarly comments; Ionescu (2014) p. 35, 38, provides several particularly compelling (though flawed) reasons why *Statesman* does involve the consideration of form; See Robinson (1995) p. 18, for whom the θειότατα (269d) can only refer to form). Sallis' (2021) interpretation is more textually rigorous, reading a contrast between "the completely selfsame and self-identical, like the ones of arithmetic, or the kinds treated in Sophist" and the "not utterly selfsame" (113). Though an explicit treatment of the forms and formal reality in my view is absent from the text of *Statesman*, this does not mean that Plato has abandoned the forms. They would be present precisely in their absence for student readers in the Academy.

[262] *Stat.* 269d6-7

[263] See *Stat.* 266d7-10 for the Visitor's explanation of the disinterestedness of the diairetic method, which "has not cared more for the more-revered than for the not" [οὔτε σεμνοτέρου μᾶλλον ἐμέλησεν ἢ μή]; Ionescu (2014) argues that the myth is important in the reformation of diairesis by offering a criterion how to "figur[e] out hierarchical relations among the classes obtained" (31). In her view, the final definition of the sophist in *Sophist* is erroneous precisely because the diairesis lacks a consideration of worth. The myth of *Statesman* fixes this problem and thus produces a correct definition of the politicus. Contrast El Murr (2011) for whom evaluations of worth is actually the *problem* to be overcome by diairesis: "Plato has the protagonists fail to bring the myth to a telos [for the following reason]: their approach to statesmanship is still too strongly influenced by a prejudice that the rest of the dialectical enquiry will undermine and that Plato constantly castigates, i.e. the predominance of value over essence" (278). My reading of *Statesman* sides with Ionescu in this matter.

the-same-always and not-being-the-same-always—that is, being different—the Visitor subtly establishes an as-yet rudimentary metric of worth. The oneness and simplicity of divinity is in some way (although the Visitor consciously resists this language)[264] *better* than the disorder of body.[265] The Visitor is beginning to formulate a theory of better and worse orders of being, but within the quasi-mathematical parameters, of the same and the different. In his attempt at playfulness, the Eleatic reverts surprisingly quickly to metaphysical abstraction. The mathematical and metaphysical preoccupation of the Visitor is barely disguised beneath the surface of his story.

Immediately following the above distinction between the 'most divine things' and 'body,' the Visitor begins to describe the relation of '*world-order*' [*κόσμος*][266] to each. I will quote the following passage at length since it plays an essential role in supplying the metaphysical framework for interpreting the myth as a whole:

> And the thing we have called 'the heavens' and 'world-order,' it has come to partake of [*μετείληφεν*] many blessed things [*μακαρίων*] from its begetter [*γεννήσαντος*], but of course nevertheless it indeed also has communed [*κεκοινώνηκέ*] with body, for what reason it is unable for it to have no share in changing, and it moves itself according to its power as much as possible in the same place and in the same manner with one motion [*μίαν φορὰν*]. Wherefore, it has received backwards motion as its lot, since it is the smallest alteration from its own motion, but for itself to turn itself always is, I dare say, not possible except for that which again leads [*ἡγουμένῳ*] all moving things, and it is not laid down for that one to move now otherwise, and again contrary to this. From all these things, of course one ought to say neither that the cosmos turns itself always, nor again that the whole [*ὅλον*] is always turned by a god in two contrary revolutions, nor again that some two gods, minded contrarily to each other, turn it, but the very thing which has been said and alone remains: at that time it was conducted

---

[264] Hence, as I have indicated above, Plato is explicitly calling to mind the absence of an ethical framework.
[265] Rowe and Benardete translate τάξεως above as "order" and "ordering" respectively. I marginally prefer the Brann, Kalkavage and Salem translation of "rank," precisely because this passage preliminarily discloses a certain metric of *worth*, closely related to oneness and not-oneness. Of course 'order' and 'orderliness' is also in this context suggests some measure of *worth*, as having a closer relationship with unchanging divinity, but I believe the Brann et al. translation better brings this subtle philosophical development to the surface.
[266] Rowe, Benardete and Brann et al. all translate κόσμος into the English derivative 'cosmos.' I translate it here as "world-order" in keeping with a suggestion from Rowe (fn. 29), and in order to maintain the essential connotation of 'ordering' in the Greek, which can be lost in the English derivative. The word might also be translated as "good-order," but I am consciously resisting this translation, since the Visitor shows little interest in the dialogue in Socratic ethical forms, and much more interest in the more mathematically informed relation between *unity* and the *order* of a multiplicity.

> together [*συμποδηγεῖσθαι*] by a different[267] [*ἄλλης*] divine cause, gaining life in the backwards direction and receiving a restored immortality from the demiurge (craftsman) [*δημιουργοῦ*], and then whenever it is let go, it moves itself through itself, after being left to itself at such the right moment [*κατὰ καιρὸν*] that it is carried backwards again a countless number of rotations, since though it is the biggest thing its equally-balanced [*ἰσόρροπος*] motion goes on the smallest foot.[268]

Following the Visitor's articulation of the divine-body relation above, this passage mainly concerns the divine-cosmic relation. At the outset he is careful to position the world-order, so to speak, *between* divinity and body. Due to its participation in body, the world-order cannot be selfsame as its divine progenitor: its share in body also necessitates a share in change, in which divine being does not partake. Thus, the world-order is different from the pure unchangingness of the most divine things in themselves, but different too from the disorder inherent in body itself, insofar as it has received a kind of stability from its partaking of divine things. It is the 'material communion' of the world order that will necessitate that the cosmos undergo a reversal of rotation, since it cannot always move itself unchangingly. Thus, there are three major levels of being that the Visitor is articulating in the myth, characterized by increasing degrees of changing, disorder, disunity or 'self-difference': the most divine things do not partake of change or

---

[267] That is, different in the sense of 'not-cosmos,' not different in the sense of '*another god in addition to the one we have been speaking of*.' Rowe's translation "another, divine, cause" (311) is helpful in clarifying this, distinguishing this 'other' divine cause from the 'self-cause' so to speak of the cosmos in the present cycle of revolution. Fowler & Lamb's rendering, "extrinsic divine cause," though perhaps questionable as a literal translation, similarly signifies that we are not talking about two gods but the same god who is different from or external to the cosmos.

[268] *Stat.* 269d7-270a9; ὃν δὲ οὐρανὸν καὶ κόσμον ἐπωνομάκαμεν, πολλῶν μὲν καὶ μακαρίων παρὰ τοῦ γεννήσαντος μετείληφεν, ἀτὰρ οὖν δὴ κεκοινώνηκέ γε καὶ σώματος: ὅθεν αὐτῷ μεταβολῆς ἀμοίρῳ γίγνεσθαι διὰ παντὸς ἀδύνατον, κατὰ δύναμίν γε μὴν ὅτι μάλιστα ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κατὰ ταὐτὰ μίαν φορὰν κινεῖται: διὸ τὴν ἀνακύκλησιν εἴληχεν, ὅτι σμικροτάτην τῆς αὑτοῦ κινήσεως παράλλαξιν. αὐτὸ δὲ ἑαυτὸ στρέφειν ἀεὶ σχεδὸν οὐδενὶ δυνατὸν πλὴν τῷ τῶν κινουμένων αὖ πάντων ἡγουμένῳ: κινεῖν δὲ τούτῳ τοτὲ μὲν ἄλλως, αὖθις δὲ ἐναντίως οὐ θέμις. ἐκ πάντων δὴ τούτων τὸν κόσμον μήτε αὐτὸν χρὴ φάναι στρέφειν ἑαυτὸν ἀεί, μήτ᾽ αὖ ὅλον ἀεὶ ὑπὸ θεοῦ στρέφεσθαι διττὰς καὶ ἐναντίας περιαγωγάς, μήτ᾽ αὖ δύο τινὲ θεὼ φρονοῦντε ἑαυτοῖς ἐναντία στρέφειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅπερ ἄρτι ἐρρήθη καὶ μόνον λοιπόν, τοτὲ μὲν ὑπ᾽ ἄλλης συμποδηγεῖσθαι θείας αἰτίας, τὸ ζῆν πάλιν ἐπικτώμενον καὶ λαμβάνοντα ἀθανασίαν ἐπισκευαστὴν παρὰ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ, τοτὲ δ᾽ ὅταν ἀνεθῇ, δι᾽ ἑαυτοῦ αὐτὸν ἰέναι, κατὰ καιρὸν ἀφεθέντα τοιοῦτον, ὥστε ἀνάπαλιν πορεύεσθαι πολλὰς περιόδων μυριάδας διὰ δὴ τὸ μέγιστον ὂν καὶ ἰσορροπώτατον ἐπὶ μικροτάτου βαῖνον ποδὸς ἰέναι. For the Aristotelian resonances of this depiction of divinity see Blyth (2019).

difference; the world-order is intermediate, partaking of *some* change and difference; and body undergoes the most change and comes to be most different from itself.[269]

The difference in terminology between *μετείληφεν* and *κεκοινώνηκέ* here is evocative: the world-order 'has come to have' or 'has come to partake of' blessed things from its divine begetter, but it has *communed* with body. The linguistic choice is subtle but suggests an image of the world-order being *raised up* from bodily disorder into proportion by the god, not a *creatio ex nihilo*. In other words, the divine action is more appropriately the *cause* of the world-order, bodily nature its primordial *condition*. Here, the image of the craftsman-god comes to be dominant. Since the 'all' or the world-order is composed of body, the Visitor explains that it cannot attain the unchanging selfsameness and motional self-constancy 'to turn itself always,' as the most divine things, and *yet*, due to its participation in divine ordering during the age of Kronos, the Visitor describes its circular motion as being '*as much as possible in the same place and in the same manner with one motion.*' In other words, the divine craftsman makes the cosmos *almost* as stable as himself during the age of his immanent command, at least given its essentially unstable bodily condition. In addition, the 'backwards revolution' that the cosmos undergoes once the god lets go is the 'smallest alteration from its own motion,' an alteration necessitated by its communion with body, but whose character still resembles its divinely instituted motion in and through its order-preserving *phronesis*.[270] The whole life of the world-order, with its opposing revolutions, is thus framed by this metaphysical necessity: what has any share of body cannot stay the same, even if the god

---

[269] Ionescu reads in *Statesman* the schematic of the fourfold from *Philebus*. It is not exactly *wrong* in a 'Platonic' sense to make this connection, but it is not in my view textual. Attempts to separate the 'passive' god from the 'active' demiurge are problematic as well, however, since they almost inevitably reduce the god to mere figurehead. Ionescu (2014), for example, in her attempt to preserve Kronos and Zeus separate from the demiurge, reduces the former gods to mere "symbols of the kind of life available in each age" (38). And yet, since the demiurge himself 'changes' in her view, he is not among the 'most divine things,' essentially banishing the highest divinity from the cosmos. Ionescu indicates that it is actually the forms that constitute the θειότατα, but if so, the forms remain radically separated from the life of the world.

[270] 'Own motion' here is identical with the motion 'received' from the god. White (2016) argues that the reverse-spinning and unwinding is a result of the world-order's wisdom: "the cosmos is 'wise' to move ineluctably toward self-destruction in that such motion fulfills the material part of its nature and also underlines the contingency of natures insofar as principles of order constituting natures dwell within the cosmos" (42). Here I disagree. Since the cosmos receives its wisdom from the selfsame god, it does not make sense that this wisdom is not directed toward sameness and order as its source. In my own view, the *memory* and *phronesis* of the world-order is always divine-facing. *Forgetting alone* constitutes a movement into self-destruction, a move which, though *necessary*, is not included in divinely-bestowed phronesis.

should will the cosmos to be perfect like himself. Indeed, for the god to disregard the difference and change inherent in body would be for the god to disown his own being, sameness and perfection. It would entail that the god himself be not-one.

The materially-communing world-order is thus essentially other-than-divine, yet this does not mean it is *simply* or *absolutely* other-than-divine, just as the god as demiurge does not seem to be absolutely private, but is somehow effective in his relation to and rule of the multitudinous all. The god's rule tends towards immanence, though it is never purely so. The all is never the same as the divine in such a way as to transcend its own materiality, nor is it ever so different as to break up into a pure otherness in relation to the divine; likewise, the divine is never the same as the world-order in such a way as to negate the essential flux of body, nor is it ever so different that he cannot see at least some semblance of its own unity in it.

Turning, finally, to consider the Visitor's characterization of divinity, it is worth nothing that the Visitor never grants the divine a name during the myth but refers to him most often simply as 'the god' [*ὁ θέος*].[271] Yet limiting our purview simply to the passages quoted above, the Visitor supplies the god with a great multiplicity of appellations and effectuations: he is 'co-conductor,' 'helper of rotation,' 'carrier of the all,' 'begetter of blessed things,' 'leader of all moving things,' 'cause,' and 'demiurge.'[272] These descriptors solidify the myth as a curious mixture of *μύθος* and *λόγος*. The Visitor describes the god using both philosophical and poetic language interchangeably, but the

---

[271] The identity of *ὁ θέος* is hotly contested in Plato scholarship, whether 'demiurge' 'steersman' and 'co-rotator' are the *same* as *ὁ θέος* (See Klein (1977); Dorter (1994); Lane (1998); Miller (1980); Márquez (2014); offering analysis from a more stringently 'cosmological' perspective, Benitez (1995) argues that Plato means for the conception of the 'Good' from *Republic* to cohere with 'demiurgy' in *Timaeus*. Thus, there is no contradiction between θειότατα and δημιουργός), or whether these titles refer to a different god or different gods (See Robinson (1967); White (2016) p. 39; Ionescu (2014) who separate the demiurgic activity from 'the god'.). Rosen (1995) argues that "if we merely summarize the main or most explicit teaching of the myth, the demiurge, co-rotator, and Kronos are one and the same god," even if he believes that this unleashes a host of problems and ambiguities (53). For Benardete (1984) the Visitor introduces the god in the myth precisely to banish him from the political sphere. For my part, I believe the Visitor is speaking of one and the same god using these names.

[272] συμποδηγεῖ (269c5; 270a3-4); συγκυκλεῖ (269c5); πορευόμενον (269c5); γεννήσαντος (269d9); ἡγουμένῳ (269e6); αἰτίας (270a4); δημιουργοῦ (270a5; 273b2). This is in addition to being a ruler and carer of the whole revolution [τῆς κυκλήσεως ἦρχεν ἐπιμελούμενος ὅλης ὁ θεός] (271d3-4), and steersman [κυβερνήτης] (272e4; 273c3), father [πατρός] (273b2), and *possibly* nurturer [ἔνεμεν] and overseer [ἐπιστατῶν] of humans (271e5), all appellations or actions of ὁ θέος. It is somewhat ambiguous whether the god's overseeing and rule of the cosmos is extended to humans, or whether the latter references are instead referring to the particular divine *daimon* that oversees and nurtures humans.

poetic language does not in any way serve to negate the essential philosophical point of the cosmic difference from what is always the same.[273] Rather, the Visitor recognizes YS's need for both poetic and philosophical foundations, at this point mixed together, but later perhaps, to be distinguished more rigorously.

At the beginning of his explanation of divine-cosmic relation, the Visitor is careful to maintain the strict philosophical logic of divine being—"always being the same, in the same conditions, and having the same state." "[T]urn[ing] itself always" appears as another expression of this divine self-constancy, though distinguished from the last in respect to motion. One must understand the various appellations and effectuations of *ὁ θέος* within this principle of divine self-sameness. The poetic language suggests the mode and manner of divine involvement in material affairs, crafting, measuring, steering etc.; the more purely philosophical language establishes the god as, so to speak, the *ἰδιώτης* par excellence, at least when considering him in himself and by himself alone. This is of course a difficult tension at best and a charged contradiction at worst, but it is not one which the reader has not seen before: the god precisely takes the place of the theoretical-yet-effectual knower from the opening diairesis.

Expanding the vision of metaphysical necessity, the Visitor explains that the cosmos is turned neither by a single god in two different directions—since this would violate the principle of divine sameness—nor by two different gods, each in a contrary direction—since this again would suggest that divine 'mind' can be contrary to itself. It is not that only *one* god must be the same as itself, but that *the most divine things* cannot contradict each other. This plurality [*θειότατα*] must be singular—it must be *one* and *self-same*. The final option the Visitor provides to explain the reversal of cosmic motion is that the opposed revolutions of the world-order necessarily involves either divine rule or the absence of divine rule, respectively. Thus, the divine cause does not contradict itself in the opposed revolutions, but 'lets go' of the world-order at the 'proper time,' leaving cosmos to rule itself with its received wisdom, and, as the Visitor describes in poetic

[273] Many interpreters of the myth seem to forget that the myth is a 'mixture' and 'play' and wrongly attempt to force the Visitor's poetic flourishes into a philosophical mold. I do *not* want to argue for a radical separation of philosophical and poetic language in the myth, as if the poetic were a mere trifle or ornament in comparison to the robust philosophical language. The poetic images are significant for the philosophical meaning of the text. At the same time, however, one must be careful what elements of a poetic image one is interpreting in an irreducibly philosophical aspect.

language, leaving the god to "retreat to his lookout tower."[274] The difference between cosmic periods is the presence and absence of the rule of this one god, that is, a difference between 'one' and 'not-one,' 'same' and 'not same' as the principle of cosmic rulership.[275]

A Mathematical and Poetic Model of the Cosmos

The Eleatic proves to be presenting two distinct but interrelated models of the cosmos: a mathematical model, which he seems in some respects to prefer, and a poetic model, each involving their own peculiar images of *effectual sameness*. In one possible model, the Visitor seems to be depicting *ὁ θέος* as a *geometric point*, around which the extended bulk of the cosmos turns—the "smallest foot" upon which the "biggest thing," the all, rotates, and on which it is "equally balanced."[276] The point, "that of which there is no part,"[277] is both wholly the same as itself, having in itself no parts that might be *different* from the whole, and able to revolve around itself without any change to itself, since revolution displaces no part of it. Thus, the god signifies the effective epicentre upon which the cosmos rotates, in one way not moving at all in relation to itself, but in another way, rotating around itself in relation to any given part of the all, a point of

[274] *Stat.* 272e4-5; εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ περιωπὴν ἀπέστη ; The god, it would seem, still has his sights on the cosmos even in his withdrawal. See *Stat.* 273e: the god must have knowledge of the world-order's worsening condition to save it from total dissolution.

[275] Here I mean this as 'one' qua 'one' in the sense of the oneness explored in *Parmenides*, but also 'one' and 'not-one' in the sense of a single epistemic principle of rule. To the Eleatic Visitor the god and his rulership are an image of abstract unity. Perhaps in a more Platonic sense, the god seems to represent an epistemic unity, whose immanent presence disappears in the age of Zeus.

[276] As far-fetched as this may seem initially, this point-model has some precedent in the scholarly tradition. Robinson (1995), wrestling with the notion that the cosmos of *Statesman* possesses both a beginning in time and "everlastingness not eternity" (21), draws a parallel to certain contemporary models of the universe's generation, most notably the 'Big Bounce' or 'Oscillation Theory': "the theory of the *Politicus* that the universe, after its initial formation, is in an everlasting process of coiling and uncoiling like some gigantic spring has its counterpart in that variant of the Big Bang theory known as the Oscillation Theory, in which the universe expands from an original atomic explosion to a point where its momentum is spent and it is drawn back by gravitation to its original State, only to explode once more and restart the process; and so on, apparently, everlastingly" (29). It should be noted, however, that the function of Robinson's exemplar differs significantly from my own. Robinson is seeking examples to furnish what he sees as Plato's conjecture that there is "no contradiction between the motion of the world of spacetime's temporal beginning and that of its overall eternal contingency on a principle itself uncontingent" (30). Robinson does not suggest the mathematical point as an image and model of the god and divine demiurge.

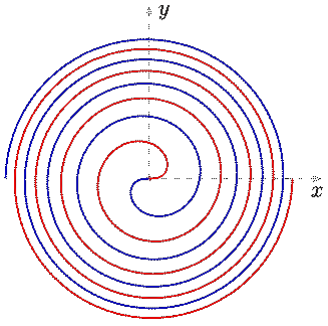
[277] Euclid, Book I, def α′, p. 6; Σημεῖόν ἐστιν, οὗ μέρος οὐθέν.

reference which turns in its relation to another point of the spinning bulk.[278] For the Eleatic visitor, who has been educated in the Parmenidean tradition to be particularly concerned with the unity of being and being as unity, and who is in the process of educating YS, himself a fledgling mathematician, this model makes particular philosophical sense. The difference between the all's motion in the age of Kronos and the age of Zeus, according to this model can be understood more from the perspective of the 'all' than from the perspective of the point. In the age of Kronos the all spirals into the divine pivot like a gravity well, becoming increasingly ordered; and in the age of Zeus the all spirals back outward, having opposite circular motion and becoming further distanced from its principle of order. The divine centre is both effective *and* private; revolving, yet absolutely stable; exerting a kind of relational force, yet remaining selfsame. Indeed, in this model the retreat of the god in the age of Zeus requires no actual movement on the part of the god: the god remains the epicentre of the cosmos even as his rule is gradually forgotten, and as world-order descends further into difference.[279]

---

[278] Castoriadis (2002) notes the profound significance of the circle in the relation to geometric identity and difference: "This circular movement is identical because the circle is, among plane figures, the only one that you could make slide over itself: in a rotation, all the points of the circle pass through all the other points and remain upon the same circle" (100). Thus, the circle has a close "kinship" with identity understood in respect to circular motion. Castoriadis does *not* however envision the god as a mathematical point as I do, which further approximates absolute identity.

[279] Fermat's two-branch spiral (see below) is a good approximation of the Visitor's point-bulk geometrical model of the cosmos to a certain extent. We can envision the bulk of the universe turning clockwise and being drawn into the centre (blue line) in the age of Kronos, and abruptly turning counter-clockwise at the beginning of the age of Zeus (red line). In the latter age, world-order approximates the divinely ordered circular motion from the former age, yet draws away from its own divine centre in its increasing self-differentness and divine-forgetting. In this model, the parts of or points on the circle of the all, gradually become closer together and more *similar* to each other in the age of Kronos and separate from each other and take on an increasing *differentness* from the other points in the age of Zeus. The below model is, of course not perfect. First, the model appears to describe the cosmos as becoming the same as the god at the origin point of the graph. This, of course, is not possible in the Visitor's metaphysical modeling of the world-order: the world order is never the same as the god because it communes with body. Second, Fermat's spiral does not revert back into itself once the cosmos is in danger of disintegrating into absolute self-dissimilarity, when the god once again takes control of the world-order (273e).



The model that Plato further seems to have in mind, beyond this two-dimension mathematical image, is the model of a spinner spinning wool, which will consequently become important to the very paradigm of human statesmanship later in the dialogue.[280] In the mathematical model the divine is loosely conceived as the point around which the all turns, effectual *and* private; in the more poetic model, the god takes on the role of the spinner, whose fingers twist the disordered wool fibre on the distaff into thread above the drop spindle, and who then wraps the newly formed thread around the spindle. In this model, during the age of Kronos when the world-order most resembles the nature of the divine, the god patiently wraps the thread tightly around the spindle, forming an organized circular bulk of wool thread. In the age of Zeus, when the god lets go of the world-order, the drop spindle turns rapidly *in the other direction* and plummets under its own weight, unloosing the wound thread, and untwisting it back into fluffy, raw wool. Though at risk of straining the metaphor, the wool will never reach the purely disordered state that it possessed when it rested upon the distaff but will become a long, untwisted strand of wool fibre, hanging between the drop spindle below and the god's fingers above. The god is active in the age of Kronos, passive in the age of Zeus, letting the thread unwind by itself, though still functioning as the effective centre around which the spindle whirls backwards and drops, under the tension of the tightly-wound string and the weight of the spindle itself. Thus, the world-order becomes "slack."[281]

Within the poetic model, the nature of god and cosmos differ more substantially than in the geometric model. The imitation of divine motion is really an imitation of the *product* of divine thinking and craftsmanship, much more than an imitation of the divine themselves. Both of these models, geometric and poetic, should be kept in mind, neither one analogically perfect.[282] The former geometric model better depicts the self-sameness and self-constancy of the god as the absolutely unified mathematical point; the latter

---

[280] See *Stat.* 279b ; This model has some scholarly precedent: Robinson (1967), and Márquez (2014) ft. 136, each indicate that Plato's cosmic model functions like a spindle. It is hard to believe that the spindle, which plays such an important role later in the myth, *accidentally* maps onto the external vision of the cosmos the Visitor presents at the beginning of the myth. ; Schuhl (1960) envisions the Visitor's mythic cosmos according to the model of a spinning top. Robinson (1995), like a spring.

[281] *Stat.* 273e2; The Visitor remarks that at the end of the age of Zeus, the god again "twists" [*στρέψας*] what has become "sick" [*νοσήσαντα*] and "slack" [*λυθέντα*], thus once again initiating the conditions present to the age of Kronos.

[282] Against Benardete (1984) p. III.97 that the god is bodily: in each of these models the god is either bodiless or of an entirely different order from the cosmos.

poetic model better depicts the *efficacy* of the god's care. We must always remember that the myth involves both *play* and *mixture*, and that the Visitor is attempting to *unify* these apparently contrasting philosophical and poetic images, to present a view of both divine simplicity and efficacy at the same time. The difference between these models essentially amounts to a difference in the nature of the peculiar unities at work in the rule of the world-order: the 'external' unity and simplicity of the mathematical point,[283] and the more 'internal' unity of divine personality.[284]

Human and World-order: Between Whole and Part

I want to pause here and recollect the train of my thought. So far, I have attempted to show how the Visitor leans on a metaphysics of sameness and difference to elaborate a model of the world-order, and of an ontological taxonomy. This taxonomy, as I have shown, involves both the descent of unity into not-unity, and the descent of sameness into difference. The Visitor has not shown interest in Socratic, ethical and 'formal' constructions underlying the world order but has concerned himself most primarily with quasi-mathematical categories of unity and multiplicity, with sameness and difference. This is the most fundamental point that I have been endeavoring to make so far: the Visitor continues to interrogate and reconceive the notion of unity, absolute and relational, in the course of the myth. The examination of the political realm, which the myth will subsequently undertake, occurs only in the light of this fundamental metaphysical structuring. These preoccupations shall carry through to the end of the myth, even as the Visitor turns to examine questions more directly concerning human nature and community. Even so, it is not the nature of the divine-cosmos relation that interests the Visitor most, but the human *pathos* which is also "cause" [*αἴτιον*] of the three aforementioned myths. It is to the subject of the human condition in each era of revolution that I shall now turn in these following sections.

---

[283] An 'outer' mark with no 'inner' part.

[284] An 'inner' with no 'outer' so to speak. ; See *Odyss*. II.93-113; It is hard to believe that Plato does not have the figure of Penelope in mind at some level in this myth. Penelope weaves a funeral shroud for her father-in-law Laertes by day, promising to choose a suitor when "she [has] completed her duty to Laertes and his family, including Odysseus" (Lowenstam, 2000, 335), only to unweave her work by night. Penelope weaves, the god only twists, yet this is a rich, if deeply ambiguous political and theological image in the context of *Statesman*. It seems to suggest a kind of *efficacy* of the god even in the unravelling and forgetting of the world-order. The god withdraws in order to defer an impossible marriage. We shall return to this image in due course.

At 270b3, the Visitor turns "to reckon with (*λογισάμενοι*) and reflect on (*συννοήσωμεν*) this *pathos* from the things that have just now been said,"[285] that is, the human experience in relation to the metaphysical necessity so described, on either side and in the midst of "the greatest and most final (*μεγίστην καὶ τελεωτάτην*) change (*τροπήν*) of all the changes which occur in the heavens."[286] It is immediately striking that the Visitor's language here directly contradicts his depiction of the change just a few lines earlier, when he describes the world-order's reversal as the "smallest alteration (*παράλλαξιν*) from its own motion."[287] The contrasting superlatives are jarring: the Eleatic refers to the reversal of the all's revolution as *both* the smallest and greatest change in as matter of lines. What the Visitor appears to be subtly indicating is the relative difference of this change's effect in relation to *whole* and to *part* respectively: the change is smallest in relation to the world-order's *own motion*, that is, its circular motion as a whole, but largest in relation to the part as it *participates* in this whole—largest, "to those of us who live within the heavens."[288] If one imagines staring at a circle rotating as a whole, without focusing one's gazes on any part of its bulk, the reversal of its motion will seem relatively insignificant, and possibly unnoticeable if it occurs in an instant as in the myth. If one imagines staring at a small part or point on a circle as it reverses its motion, however, the change is violent and sudden,[289] as the Visitor reflects: "great destructions come together by necessity to the other animals, and in particular, only some small group of humans survive."[290] For a part of the all, and for human beings in particular, the reversal of cosmic motion results in tremendous destruction, though the world-order *as a whole* is relatively unscathed, accomplishing its recollection of the age of Kronos at the beginning of the new epoch "more precisely" (*ἀκριβέστερον*) than at the

[285] *Stat.* 270b3-4; λογισάμενοι δὴ συννοήσωμεν τὸ πάθος ἐκ τῶν νῦν λεχθέντων
[286] *Stat.* 270b10-c2; τῶν περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν γιγνομένων τροπῶν πασῶν εἶναι μεγίστην καὶ τελεωτάτην τροπήν
[287] See above.
[288] *Stat.* 270c5; τοῖς ἐντὸς ἡμῖν οἰκοῦσιν αὐτοῦ
[289] Consider a spinning wheel: if a wheel is moving fast enough such that the eye is unable to see the movement of the part (as in a car commercial, for example), a sudden equivalent reversal will not register to the perceiver. If, on the other hand, the perceiver is able to pay attention to a part of the wheel, the sudden reversal of motion will seem abrupt and violent.
[290] *Stat.* 270c11-d1; φθοραὶ τοίνυν ἐξ ἀνάγκης τότε μέγισται συμβαίνουσι τῶν τε ἄλλων ζῴων, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ὀλίγον τι περιλείπεται

end, as it spins toward its own entropic destruction.[291] What this further outlines is a taxonomy of diminishing unity and 'sameness,' from god, to world-order, to part, and finally, (later elaborated) to "unlimited sea of unlikeness."[292] Each by necessity is less selfsame than the former, and therefore more unstable.[293] Since humans are only a part of the all, their nature is essentially more unstable than that of the cosmos and more devastated by a sudden change in the world-order's revolution.[294]

The fact that the human is only a part of the whole has substantial ontological implications, which the Visitor makes clear as he details the nature of human life in each cycle of revolution. In the age of Kronos, he explains, humans are "born from the earth" (*γηγενὲς*)[295] already in old age, and the growth of animals proceeds by "turning backwards in the opposite direction [from the motion of the present age], growing, as it were, younger and softer."[296] More philosophically important though, is the idea that in this epoch "all things become self-giving (*αὐτόματα*) for human beings," springing out of the earth for the expressed purpose of providing welfare for living beings.[297] In the age of Kronos, all external necessities for life are self-minding. Hence, the Visitor refers to *life* broadly in the age of Kronos as "αὐτομάτου […] βίου":[298] "they had plentiful fruits from trees and from much of the other underbrush, not by the production of agriculture, but from the distributing of the self-minding (*αὐτομάτης*) earth. And most grazed while living

---

[291] *Stat.* 273b3
[292] Stat. 273d6-e1; τὸν τῆς ἀνομοιότητος ἄπειρον ὄντα πόντον
[293] Ionescu (2014) understands the "hierarchical order" that the Visitor is unfolding here as an appearance of the *Philebus'* schematic of the 'fourfold': "with Forms as highest, followed by the Demiurge, then the particulars, and finally this indefinite sea of unlikeness" (44; ft. 16). This may well be so, but the Visitor actually uses the language of (1) 'same,' (2) 'world-order' / 'all' / 'whole,' (3) part and (4) 'indefinite sea of unlikeness' in his taxonomy. Parallels to the 'fourfolds' of *Timaeus* and *Philebus* are very possible, but the peculiarly geometric language of this taxonomy suggests that Plato's own views cannot be merely substituted with those of the Visitor.
[294] Gartner and Yao's 'Correspondence Principle,' their assertion of the "interentailment of a number of macrocosmic and microcosmic phenomena," has its limit (4). Though the visitor asserts that "all other things" imitate 'the all' in respect to "pregnancy and producing and nurturing" (274a1-3), it is not easy to see how this is the case, since the nature of part and the nature of whole differs in their order of being with respect to selfsameness, the life of the part cannot be said to 'correspond' to the life of the whole in any direct or immediate sense.
[295] *Stat.* 271a6
[296] *Stat*. 270d8-e1; μεταβάλλον δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ τοὐναντίον οἷον νεώτερον
[297] *Stat.* 271d1; πάντα αὐτόματα γίγνεσθαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις
[298] *Stat*. 271e4

in the open air, naked and without bedding."[299] The all thus gives itself to its parts through its own self-minding. In this age, part and whole are at their most similar—they are most *identified* in the quasi-immanence of the god's rule and in the quasi-immanence of the world-order organizing its body, which welds part and all together in a mutual symbiosis. The nature of the all is to give itself to the part; the nature of the part is to receive its own from the all. To put this another way, the world order both gives and receives itself. The image of rule in this epoch, therefore, is of self-minding providing both rearing and unity to the non-self-minding part from itself.[300] God and cosmos give themselves to what is not them, namely, the human class, as indeed the class of all living things, which are transformed into sites of divine outpouring.[301] The very nature of each class is, as it were, *given* by what is other, constituted by a kind of divine transmission through the self-minding giving of all to part, and the mutual reception thereof. It is proper for whole to give itself, and for part to receive the whole as its harmonizing unity.[302]

This mode of the all's self-minding in the Kronosian age lies in contrast to the present age, wherein what is *self-minding* is rather *both* part and whole, each attempting to preserve themselves separately through their own inner natures and *φρόνησις*. Our abstract 'immanent' geometric understanding of the relation between part and whole is thrown into question with the sudden reversal of the cosmos. Each mind themselves:

> Just as it had been commanded for the world-order (*τῷ κόσμῳ*) to be its own master (*αὐτοκράτορα*) of its own motion, so too in the same way were the parts themselves commanded to move through themselves (*τοῖς μέρεσιν αὐτοῖς δι'*

---

[299] *Stat.* 272a2-b1; καρποὺς δὲ ἀφθόνους εἶχον ἀπό τε δένδρων καὶ πολλῆς ὕλης ἄλλης, οὐχ ὑπὸ γεωργίας φυομένους, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτομάτης ἀναδιδούσης τῆς γῆς. γυμνοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄστρωτοι θυραυλοῦντες τὰ πολλὰ ἐνέμοντο: τὸ γὰρ τῶν ὡρῶν αὐτοῖς ἄλυπον ἐκέκρατο, μαλακὰς δὲ εὐνὰς εἶχον ἀναφυομένης ἐκ γῆς πόας ἀφθόνου.

[300] Again, the Visitor does not discuss this in terms of *goodness*. It is certainly true here that god and all give to each class of animal its *good*, but the fact that the Visitor avoids this language is indicative that his interests lie elsewhere.

[301] At 271d7, the god delegates certain "daemons" [δαίμονες] as intercessors to care for each part, instituting a network of further mediators in his rule of the world-order. Though this somewhat breaks up the 'immanence' of divine rule in this age, the Visitor is rather vague about the details of daemonic tending, especially in its relation to the god's rule and to the co-nurturing of the world-order. It is possible to understand daemonic care as the care extended from whole to part from the perspective of a particular part.

[302] The fourfold distinction between god, all, part and unlimited does not *vanish* in the age of Kronos, but certainly it is somewhat collapsed than in the current era.

> *αὑτῶν*), so far as each was able, to grow, to beget and to sustain by similar direction.[303]

In the former epoch the self-minding whole gives itself for the sake of its parts—*life* itself is self-minding, the distinction between part and whole notwithstanding. In the current age, the self-ruling whole and parts are primarily concerned with self-preservation in a stricter sense, each of these 'selves' disharmonious from the self-ruling of each other. Life itself ceases to be self-minding, characterized now by 'the necessity of need.'[304] Presently, the world-order attempts to preserve itself in spite of its warring parts,[305] and each part attempts to preserve itself in spite of the increasing disharmony of the whole. Whole and part lose their co-mutuality. The demiurge's joining-together (*συναρμόσαντος*) of the cosmos into a living being (*ζῷον*) is what harmonizes part and whole in the first place—without which activity, the essential relationality of 'whole' and 'part' loses its meaning.[306]

During this second epoch, the inseparability of whole and part, of world-order and animal, of self-minding earth and the receiving human, is somewhat diminished, since the part too becomes its own master, *to some extent* over and against the self-minding of the whole. The part is no longer a pure receiver of the unity of the whole, at least in relation to its livelihood. The dissolution of this unifying reciprocity is not, however, total: the world-order "has care and rule of itself and *of those things within it* [emphasis added], remembering the teaching of its demiurge and father as it had power."[307] Though part and whole of universe each exercise self-minding as far as they are able, having their own principle of motion in themselves, there is still a *sense* in which the whole rules the part. The part, after all, still participates in the backwards circular motion of the all, though the terms of the all's rule over part are vague at best.

---

[303] *Stat.* 274a4-b1; καθάπερ τῷ κόσμῳ προσετέτακτο αὐτοκράτορα εἶναι τῆς αὑτοῦ πορείας, οὕτω δὴ κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ τοῖς μέρεσιν αὐτοῖς δι᾽ αὑτῶν, καθ᾽ ὅσον οἷόν τ᾽ ἦν, φύειν τε καὶ γεννᾶν καὶ τρέφειν προσετάττετο ὑπὸ τῆς ὁμοίας ἀγωγῆς.

[304] See *Stat.* 274c3-4; πορίζεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοί πω διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοὺς χρείαν πρότερον ἀναγκάζειν.

[305] See *Stat*. 274c; The formerly tame animals have become wild.

[306] *Stat.* 269d1-2 ; Stated otherwise, "humans, insofar as they 'follow and imitate' the cosmos, are also necessarily independent of it" (Lane, 1998, p. 109).

[307] *Stat.* 273a7-b3; ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κράτος ἔχων αὐτὸς τῶν ἐν αὑτῷ τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδαχὴν εἰς δύναμιν.

Between Aporias: The *Pathos* of Memory, and the Birth of Desire

We turn toward its expressed purpose in the dialogue, the excavation of human pathos in the time of the cosmos' epochal shift, an issue, though, closely tied to the problem of human imitation. In the age of Kronos, the Visitor envisions human life as a life "of much leisure" (*πολλῆς σχολῆς*).[308] There are no regimes (*πολιτεῖαί*), and thus no politics, no possession of wives or children in families, and thus no *eros* or erotic desire, and "no recollection" (*οὐδὲν μεμνημένοι*) of their former lives in the age of Zeus.[309] Even with the increase of leisure during this age on account of the self-giving livelihood from the gods' care, the general disposition of the human soul is one of *forgetfulness*, and even, perhaps, ignorance. The span of human life is from old age into childhood—"[humans] go backwards in their nature, becoming as a newborn child, to which they compare in both soul and body, and forthwith being extinguished, they disappeared altogether entirely"—mirroring and grounding a general inclination for forgetting.[310] After all, since the human is cared for absolutely by the gods, served by the self-minding flourishing of their goods and needs, memory loses its necessity in the souls of living things. Memory is no longer essential in a life wherein all care is simply *given*. In addition, there is no need for the human to act out of themselves, or to reveal themselves to themselves in erotic desire, production, or meaningful political action. As pure sites of

---

[308] *Stat.* 272b9

[309] *Stat.* 272a1-2; νέμοντος δὲ ἐκείνου πολιτεῖαί τε οὐκ ἦσαν οὐδὲ κτήσεις γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων: ἐκ γῆς γὰρ ἀνεβιώσκοντο πάντες, οὐδὲν μεμνημένοι τῶν πρόσθεν ; According to the so-called 'traditional' interpretation of the myth, with which my account mostly agrees, the cosmos *oscillates* between the two epochs. The evidence for the reversion of cosmic order from the age of Zeus to the age of Kronos (the change most often disputed by scholars) occurs at 273e, where the god saves the cosmos from utter self-destruction by once again "taking his seat at the steering-paddle" [*πάλιν ἔφεδρος αὐτοῦ τῶν πηδαλίων γιγνόμενος*] (273e1-2). Thus, Miller (1980) writes, "the whole of history is thus projected as an endless cycle between opposites" (38).

[310] *Stat.* 270e6-9; γιγνόμενα πάλιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ νεογενοῦς παιδὸς φύσιν ἀπῄει, κατά τε τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα ἀφομοιούμενα: τὸ δ' ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη μαραινόμενα κομιδῇ τὸ πάμπαν ἐξηφανίζετο. ; In Márquez's (2014) interpretation, this divine 'ordering' corresponds to the purification of soul from body in the age of Kronos: "The god "measures" the right time for letting go of the cosmos by looking at the ratio of soul to body, that is, of the ordering principle to the disordering principle, and determining what is the highest ratio of order to disorder that the universe can bear due to the fact that it is necessarily mixed with body. The "fitting" time for release would then be the time at which further ordering by the god would not be compatible with the bodily nature of the cosmos, as we shall see in the next section" (138-9). In my view, this reading imports too much to the text, and forgets how great a role body plays in the age of Kronos, in the self-giving self-minding of life. Counter to this view, for Rosen (1998), there are no souls or perhaps only 'half-souls' in the age of Kronos.

immanent divine care, the very need for knowledge of self and of other recedes almost absolutely.

For some strange reason, while the Visitor gives ample details concerning human life during the age of Kronos, he is relatively mum when relating the reasons for the character of human life in the present age. It is possible that the Visitor believes YS to have a sufficient grasp of human life in an everyday sense, or more likely that Plato intentionally leaves the reader to infer many of these reasons from what has come before in the myth. At any rate, only a small section (274b-274e) is actually devoted to a direct exposition of human life in the present age, which is supposedly the very point for which they had begun the *λόγος*.[311] What the Visitor does not explicitly state in the text, I shall attempt to draw out in my analysis, relying heavily on the whole-part relationship of world-order to human, and the nature of the Zeusian world-order, which I have detailed above, in order to extract a picture of the reason for the character of human life in the present time.

Human life in the age of Zeus is characterized by self-minding or self-rule, as I have shown above, yet this self-minding is buttressed by and sandwiched between moments of profound upheaval and epistemic perplexity—between two discrete limits of complete *ἀπόρια*, which mediate and shape the nature of this self-minding in a critical way. The later aporetic moment occurs in the period at the end of Zeus' rule, after the "bodily form (*σωματοειδὲς*) of [the all's] composition" has become the predominant "cause"[312] of the world-order's motion. The "pathos of ancient disharmony (*τὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀναρμοστίας πάθος*),"[313] inherent to matter itself begins to dominate in the mixture of the all, and world-order becomes increasingly forgetful (*λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης*)[314] of the principles of divine rule from the former age and from its inner *φρόνησις*, derived from the same. The cosmos—and by necessary extension, the human part, since it participates in the ordering of the whole—forgets the divine principles of order-production: "mingling little good, but much mixture of the opposite, it becomes in

---

[311] *Stat.* 274b1
[312] *Stat*. 273b4-5; …τούτων δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ σωματοειδὲς τῆς συγκράσεως αἴτιον… ; The σωματοειδὲς is a remarkable Platonic expression. Here it seems to indicate a state of being and a cause lying somewhere in between pure bodily disorder and divine immanent-order—a quasi-recollection so to speak.
[313] *Stat.* 273c7-d1
[314] *Stat.* 273c6

danger of destruction, both of itself and of the things in itself."[315] It is only when Kronos sees the all to be in these "difficulties" (*ἐν ἀπορίαις*),[316] in danger of "sinking into the unlimited sea of unlikeness," that he once again takes control of cosmic rulership. This describes and posits, as it were, the 'futural' limit and *aporia* of human and cosmic memory, the point at which all human machinations and faculties are split apart into an endless division, of such a kind that neither politics, nor philosophy, nor the human crafts, nor erotic desire can overcome—indeed, these are the very things that participate in and threaten infinite fracturing.[317]

Thus, at the most extreme point of aporia in the age of self-rule, human and cosmos are *essentially* divided in and from themselves. These domains, taken *in themselves alone*, constitute an absolute self-separation, that is, a separation from their own nature, which the god has given to each in the former age. After all, the major functional difference between the beginning and end of the age of Zeus lies in the degree of the persistence of memory. When memory of the former age has entirely vanished, what is left—the cosmos and human alone in their self-minding—is absolute self-division. If the Visitor's 'heirarchy of being' is virtually collapsed in the age of Kronos, at the extreme of the Zeusian age there is a kind of absolute division between sameness and difference. Anything that admits of difference to any degree whatsoever becomes in danger of sinking into difference *absolutely*.

The 'first' aporia—the most important aporia in relation to the human *pathos*—occurs immediately following the reversal of cosmic motion, after "the steersman [*κυβερνήτης*] of all things, letting go the handle of the steering paddles so to speak, withdrew to his summit."[318] The all undergoes a period of "great destructions by necessity,"[319] in the "turning-back and dashing-together," as "the reverse impulse is set in motion by the beginning [of the new age] and end [of the old]."[320] Living things, and

---

[315] *Stat.* 273d1-4; σμικρὰ μὲν τἀγαθά, πολλὴν δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων κρᾶσιν ἐπεγκεραννύμενος ἐπὶ διαφθορᾶς κίνδυνον αὐτοῦ τε ἀφικνεῖται καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ.
[316] *Stat.* 273d5; καθορῶν ἐν ἀπορίαις ὄντα
[317] See Márquez (2014): "the myth suggests that if political science is necessary to human beings, it is not necessary for protecting them against a fundamentally hostile nature but to protect them from the unbridled consequences of the uses of the arts" (fn. 171).
[318] *Stat.* 272e3-5; τοῦ παντὸς ὁ μὲν κυβερνήτης, οἷον πηδαλίων οἴακος ἀφέμενος, εἰς τὴν αὑτοῦ περιωπὴν ἀπέστη
[319] *Stat.*. 270c11; φθοραὶ τοίνυν ἐξ ἀνάγκης τότε μέγισται
[320] *Stat.* 273a1-3; ὁ δὲ μεταστρεφόμενος καὶ συμβάλλων, ἀρχῆς τε καὶ τελευτῆς ἐναντίαν ὁρμὴν ὁρμηθείς,

humans most of all—"weak" (*ἀσθενεῖς*), "without defense" (*ἀφύλακτοι*),[321] "without resources and skill" (*ἀμήχανοι καὶ ἄτεχνοι*),[322] "having been left destitute of the caring of the god who nurtured and possessed us"[323]—are thrown "into great difficulties" (*ἐν μεγάλαις ἀπορίαις*).[324] Yet the bodily danger into which humans are thrown is a mere effect of a deeper problem, the sudden self-conscious lack of knowledge, "not knowing how to provide for themselves since not a single need had compelled them in the past."[325] The human pathos, which is the very point of the myth, is thus an *epistemic* and '*epithymic*'[326] condition, a lack of knowledge at the outset of the epoch,[327] and a lack of the stability of the god's care, in whose mind the ordering of nature is essentially grounded. Human life is characterized by a 'pathology of desire'—the recognition of the *essential* lack of oneself to oneself, coupled with an appetite to possess what is one's own, one's nature or self-order which has withdrawn its immanence.

The condition of human desire in the age of Zeus includes both a desire of the part for the immanent unity of the whole and a necessary separation of part from whole in self-minding or self-ruling. The lack constituting the age is twofold: the human is separated from the god's self-giving and from the self-giving of the whole world-order. Similarly, the desire is twofold: the human has a desire for their *own* divinely constituted nature, and a desire for the proper *relation* of itself to nature as a whole.[328] As an expression of "fate" (*εἱμαρμένη*) or "necessity" (*ἀνάγκη*), this desire directs both world-order and human toward their own bodily condition, which is precisely *dis*-order:

---

[321] *Stat.* 274b8
[322] *Stat.* 274c1
[323] *Stat.* 274b5-6; τῆς γὰρ τοῦ κεκτημένου καὶ νέμοντος ἡμᾶς δαίμονος ἀπερημωθέντες ἐπιμελείας
[324] *Stat.* 274c5
[325] *Stat.* 274c3-4; πορίζεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοί πω διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν αὐτοὺς χρείαν πρότερον ἀναγκάζειν
[326] That is, a condition of *desire*, which involves an essential separation.
[327] In partial answer to question three (3) above, what is particular to human nature, in addition to technology, appears to be this *lack*. It should be noted here that humans appear to be privileged in this way, unique among both world-order and the other animals in their ignorance about how to survive. The world-order simply knows to turns the other way and animals become wild naturally to meet their needs (274c). The exteriority of the human animal, however, is not enough to keep them alive. This is not to say that humans do not also possess *phronesis*, nor that the world-order and the other animals do not experience *aporia* in some way, but the Visitor suggests that there is *something* unique at work in the peculiarly human helplessness, which may only be abated by the gift of technical know-how from the gods, a unique window into the nature of demiurgy.
[328] It is important to note the two related but different sense of 'nature' at play here. El Murr (2014) explains, "« nature des hommes » est ici à entendre aux deux sens génitif: non seulment comme la nature qui est propre aux hommes mais également comme celle don't ils son tune partie" (144).

"[world-order] shares imperfectly in the perfect, or negates its own perfection," as Miller writes.[329] The second *aporia* of the age of Zeus entails a near total negation of self and nature—a near total negation of its divinely-bestowed 'perfection'—which, paradoxically, appears to be precisely the 'nature' or 'condition' of pure body in itself. On the other hand, as an expression of phronesis, wisdom, or the capacity for recollection, "inborn desire" orients human and cosmos toward the divine reality from which they receive their proper ordering. This divine absence, Miller observes, when 'known,' "is a form of evocative presence."[330] Desire strains in two opposing directions without contradiction.

The Visitor's expression, that the world-order reverses through "fated and inborn desire," suggests that desire is the very site of unity of these two contrary aspects of self-separation and disharmony.[331] The divine and bodily proclivities and impulses of human and cosmos are unified in this fundamental psychic sense of *lack*, knowing and unknowing, respectively. It is only toward the end of the myth that the Visitor fully elaborates the character of the body-facing aspect of desire: the desire of the cosmos as body is for the very negation of its god-given nature in its own self-seeking. The 'futural' limit or aporia of self-minding and self-rule in the present age is thus utter self-destruction. The 'anterior' limit of self-minding and self-rule in the present age is the immediate knowing-absence of the god's order. Desire tends and dis-tends toward each at once. The Visitor illustrates this in the physical earthquake of the cosmic transition: the moment of calamity between the two epochs, wherein 'beginning' and 'end' fight to exert

---

[329] Miller, 1980, p. 38. The negation of the divine as selfsame, as in *Sophist*, does not mean nihilation, but rather institutes a new kind of unstable unity: "the cosmos both contains yet negates the divine within itself; as the opposite to the divine, it is in itself the opposition between its own divine and mortal elements" (39).
[330] Miller, 1980, p. 51. He continues: "In effect, to be aware of what the god was in the age of Cronus is to know what man, within his limits as different from the god, must strive to be for himself in the age of Zeus." See also, Ewegen (2017) p. 56 who likens the god's retreat to the retreat of Socrates from *Statesman*; Contrast Benardete (1992): "The Stranger discovers the statesman once he leaves as a myth the demiurgic god and assumes there is no Zeus. In the political sense, the Statesman is the only atheistic dialogue" (47). White's (2016) interpretation corresponds with that of Benardete: "In this cosmic arrangement, Zeus is reduced to a figurehead deity, a mere surrogate for the demiurge who has withdrawn from the scene" (51). In my own view I side with Miller, that divinity is present in the current age precisely in its absence, through the particular 'gifts' bestowed on human and world-order.
[331] I say that "inborn" [σύμφυτος] is a divine-facing expression of desire since, properly speaking, body births nothing. All discussion of reproduction and birth in the myth occurs either with regard to the immanence of divine care or the imitation thereof. The cosmos is *imbued* with order by the god, but it cannot be said that body *imbues* anything at all.

themselves, is exactly the structure of desire, a yearning for deliverance and destruction in the unity of an instant. This desire is effectual and constitutes the character of human life in this age. It essentially amounts to the desire of what is not-stable for the stability it once had, and what is not-one for the sameness it once possessed, but paradoxically in its self-seeking it is *also* the desire of the not-stable to remain *itself*, namely, not-stable, and for the not-one to remain *itself*, namely, not-one.

What 'saves' humans in the intervening time between aporias is twofold: the introduction of *τέχναι* and the exercise of memory. Each of these activities contain an aspect unique to human beings. In the latter case, the memory of the Age of Kronos is "kept in mind by our earthborn ancestors, the ones who were neighbours to the formerly completed cycle of time, growing up at the beginning of our own age,"[332] especially in the telling of stories, which preserve some image, however fractured, of the former divine order. These stories are the articles of *messengers* (*κήρυκες*) from the divine age,[333] and thus the Visitor laments that these stories "are nowadays incorrectly disbelieved by many"[334] for this reason.

The technical arts, on the other hand, are "gifts given to us from the gods with the necessary teaching and instruction,"[335] a fact that is also preserved in mythic memory: "fire from Prometheus, the arts (*τέχναι*) from Hephaestus and his fellow artisan, as well as seeds and, further, plants, from others."[336] It is these gifts, that "have helped to organize"[337] (*συγκατεσκεύακεν*) human life, during this newfound age in which "it begins to be necessary to have charge of their course of life and care, of themselves and through themselves, just as the whole cosmos, which they imitate and follow."[338] No longer the bare biological objects of the knowledgeable rule of Kronos, humans must find their own way using the new paradigms of technical production, which bring a certain kind of order to the indefinite mixture of the cosmos. Here, it is again deeply ambiguous whether

---

[332] *Stat.* 271a8-b2; ἀπεμνημονεύετο δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων προγόνων τῶν πρώτων, οἳ τελευτώσῃ μὲν τῇ προτέρᾳ περιφορᾷ τὸν ἐξῆς χρόνον ἐγειτόνουν, τῆσδε δὲ κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς ἐφύοντο
[333] *Stat.* 271b2
[334] *Stat.* 271b3-4; νῦν ὑπὸ πολλῶν οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἀπιστοῦνται.
[335] *Stat.* 274c6-7; παρὰ θεῶν δῶρα ἡμῖν δεδώρηται μετ᾽ ἀναγκαίας διδαχῆς καὶ παιδεύσεως
[336] *Stat.* 274c7-d2; πῦρ μὲν παρὰ Προμηθέως, τέχναι δὲ παρ᾽ Ἡφαίστου καὶ τῆς συντέχνου, σπέρματα δὲ αὖ καὶ φυτὰ παρ᾽ ἄλλων
[337] *Stat.* 274d3
[338] *Stat.* 274d5-7; δι᾽ ἑαυτῶν τε ἔδει τήν τε διαγωγὴν καὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοὺς αὑτῶν ἔχειν καθάπερ ὅλος ὁ κόσμος, ᾧ συμμιμούμενοι καὶ συνεπόμενοι

technology for the Visitor involves the imitation of divine or cosmic order, whether it is an expression of divinely-bestowed *phronesis* or whether, as a human *invention*, it grants a different kind of order entirely.[339] Given, however, that *phronesis* seems to have been imparted to each class of living things already it would seem that *τέχνη* is a mode of knowledge that is *not* identical to what has come before, but is a novel development in the course of human self-consciousness and in the human relation to exteriority. In my view, *τέχναι* involve a kind of imitation of the activity of the divine demiurge,[340] whether conscious or unconscious, but distinct from *phronesis*, which in its purest sense is not imitation at all but the inner capacity for memory. The central point here, however, is that humans do not invent technology themselves. The arts, meant to preserve human life, are a *gift* from the gods.

The use of *τέχναι* constitutes the major distinguishing feature of human life, a part of their nature which is itself not invented by human wisdom, but given specifically as a gift from the gods. Indeed, the Visitor cannot speak with greater magnitude: "and from these things [that is, the *τέχναι*], all the many things that have helped to establish human life, have arisen."[341] 'Human life' here is to be understood as the distinctly *political* character of living that now attains, to which formation the Visitor attributes technology alone. The introduction of *τέχνη* marks the point at which human self-minding, so to speak, opens up onto *autonomy*.[342]

In all this, however, where is the statesman? Indeed, the Visitor does not make mention of the human statesman or king a single time in the course of the myth: all

---

[339] Much interpretive significance rests on this question. For Vidal-Naquet (1978), it is important that these *τέχναι* are precisely divine gifts and not human inventions, thereby further distancing Plato from the sophistic humanism of his age (139, ft. 51). Brill (2017) echoes a skepticism of *τέχνη* as "the clearest expression of human self-rule" (44). Contrast Scodel (1987) for whom "[the myth's] complicated 'theological' teaching at the outset yields place to an anthropocentric teaching regarding the origin of *techne* in a world characterized by war, necessity, and cosmic and human autonomy" (89). Benardete (1984) and Nightingale (1996) share the view that technology is essentially 'invented' in the absence of the gods.

[340] This is alongside a newfound danger, as Miller (1980) points out, that *homo faber* becomes forgetful of their own cosmic place, and posit themselves in the place of the divine as *homo mensura* (49-51).

[341] *Stat.* 274d2-3; καὶ πάνθ' ὁπόσα τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον συγκατεσκεύακεν ἐκ τούτων γέγονεν

[342] Márquez (2014) draws out the ambiguous status of technology: "In the myth, the Stranger associates Hephaistos and his fellow artisan with the *technai*. Implicitly, therefore, he is suggesting that the *technai* are, colloquially, a 'Pandora's Box.' They are seductive, indeed truly beautiful, but dangerous. The gifts of Hephaistos and Athena are in no way unambiguously good. When used without foresight, they unleash a myriad of evils on the world, though the hope always remains that they can be used for good" (171).

references to the self-rule concern humans only as a mass and in relation to the necessity of current cosmic conditions. There are no unequivocal citations of the statesman's knowledge or technique. The statesman, like the god in the age of Zeus, is strikingly *absent* from the account of the myth.[343] If the initial diairesis sought the entity of the statesman in the immanence of perfect knowledge, the myth continues the search in the absence of this immanence, in the human condition, which in some way must contain his figure. I thus leave question (4) as undecidable in relation to the contents of the myth alone. This is not to say that the statesman will not be discovered later occupying some yet unelaborated or absent place in the mythic story, but it would seem that the Visitor entirely neglects such a 'colouring.'[344]

What *does* seem clear is that there is no simple knowledge in the age of Zeus, nor simple mediation of knowledge. *Phronesis*, in its intimate connection to *anamnesis*, is not completely purified, and necessarily falls away from itself in the restless movement of time; *τέχνη*, perhaps as a kind of 'demiurgic imitation,' is disharmonious from what is truly real and selfsame, bound to the tangled network of ends, means and material circumstances. It is not possible to have a perfect knowledge of the whole, which might

---

[343] Márquez (2014) notes, too, that even "[t]he god who stands for statesmanship [Zeus], unlike Athena and Hephaistos, is the god conspicuous for its absence in the story about the gifts of the gods (175).

[344] See *Stat.* 277a3-c8 for a return to this question. In my view, this moment of *aporia* in the search for the statesman—albeit interrupted shortly by the reimposition of diairesis—must be taken seriously. This has not stopped a great many commentators from attempting to read the statesman into the myth. This impulse in itself is not misguided—and indeed it seems Plato encourages reflection on the place of the statesman within the mythic structuring—but many commentators do not recognize the moment of *aporia* to any degree, and paint their statesman into the myth as if this is simply given *at this juncture of the text*. The myth does not indicate whether the activity of the god is (1) a 'paradigm,' (2) a 'co-cause,' or (3) a 'measure' of human statesmanship, but speaks more broadly about the relation of divine and world-order to the general nature of human life. There are two major interpretive schools regarding the interpretation of statesmanship within the context of the myth: there are those who believe that the age of Kronos is in some way 'paradigmatic' of the statesman's art, and there are those who believe that the statesman's art is not to be found in the preceding epoch. Within this former group, there is a great variety of contrasting opinion, whether the statesman ought to imitate directly the god's rule in the age of Kronos (Delcomminette (2000); Carone (2005), p. 145; Márquez (2014)), or the part-ruling daemons of the same age (a relatively rare view, nevertheless defended by Cropsey (1995)). Márquez primarily indicates *external* parallels between statesman and the god, seeing the statesman's imitation of the god in the pattern of establishing order and *withdrawal* (See also, Arends (1999))—what he calls "emergency care" (121). For Márquez, "[t]he idea of the statesman is the hope of salvation" (174). The other major interpretive group sees the Visitor to be rejecting the rule of the god in the former age as the *immediate* 'standard' of the statesman's rulership, though this is not to say that each of these commentators reject the importance of the divine age *fully*. Mohr (1982) constructs an analogy wherein "[d]emiurge is functionally contrasted with the World-Soul as a shepherd is contrasted with a human statesman" (42). Lane (1998) and Miller (1980) each regard the myth as having a 'negative' function in the discernment of the statesman: the myth shows us what the statesman is *not*.

allow humans to rule as the gods of the former age, grazing their herd, and caring for each and every need as rearer, doctor, matchmaker, midwife, and bard[345]—all things in a single immanent knowledge and practice. Moreover, the very existence of 'unity' *per se* is at issue in the myth, with the strong implication that such an intellection appears absolutely nowhere and in nothing during the age of Zeus. To see this is to see how the myth constitutes an acute crisis for the Eleatic. The non-being of unity is the antithesis to the thesis of immanent unity in the opening diairesis, a negative moment in the philosophical movement of the text that threatens to sink the entire project into oblivion. Memory and *τέχναι*—but also, eros, the structure of procreation, politics, and philosophy—are each caught up in a necessary movement of self-destruction in the pathos of desire. The 'one' of divine knowledge—the unifying exigency of political desire—is displaced or even obliterated in the necessity of unity's non-being at the very site of politics itself, the desiring human soul. To put it in another less extreme way, oneness or sameness admits of degrees of difference, which threatens the very notional unity of one/same in the first place. The myth seems destined to resolve in an irredeemable tragedy.

The Question of Happiness

With these cosmological, epistemological, and psychic implications teased out from the narrative, I want to turn to a short passage at the heart of the myth, which invokes the question of human happiness. Just before his final comments on the myth, the Visitor asks YS an arresting question: which epoch of cosmic revolution is "more blessed" (εὐδαιμονέστερον)?[346] He goes on to lay out the proper criteria of judgment after YS declares his inability or unwillingness to answer:

> If, then, the nurslings of Kronos, having for themselves much leisure and power to be able to associate not only with humans but also with beasts through words, made full use of all these things for philosophy, consorting with both beasts and with each other, and learning about each nature—whether some species, possessing some private power (*ἰδίαν δύναμιν*), perceived something different

[345] See *Stat.* 268a6-b7; In order for the human statesman to fit this paradigm, they must be all of these things at once, and without need for any other knowledge beside the sole 'one' they possess.

[346] *Stat.* 272b3-4; For the Neo-Platonists it is obvious that divine rulership is better than its human analog (See Dillon (1995) p. 371). Proclus' non-literal reading of the myth, however, reads the 'nurslings of Kronos as "souls at the intelligible level of reality." In my own reading of this section of the myth, I wish to limit my considerations to the text at hand, without making certain Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrinal inferences, however appropriate they may be in their respective contexts.

> from the others for the purpose of collecting wisdom (*φρονήσεως*)—then it is easy to decide that these humans surpass those of the present age in happiness without measure. But if, being filled to satisfaction with food and drink, they exchanged stories (*μύθους*) with each other and with the beasts, of the sort which are now told about these men, then this also is very easy to decide, as it seems in my opinion.[347]

The answer to the question hinges largely on the practice or neglect of philosophy in the age of Kronos. If the humans of the former age engage in mere conversational trifles—in disinterested myths or fables which do not attempt to approach or comprehend the particular natures and powers of the beasts or of each other—one must judge the present age to be more blessed. If philosophical inquiry *is* possible however, then the peace inherent to this former age would justify its being an 'immeasureably' (*μυρίῳ*) more blessed state.[348]

Interestingly, though he lays out the necessary criteria for judgment, the Visitor withholds his own verdict on the question, "until someone should appear to us capable of bringing this to light, in which of the two ages humans then possessed desires concerning knowledge and the use of words."[349] Neither epochal option presents a particularly clear-cut answer to this question, though the Visitor does seem to insinuate strongly that the age of Kronos lacks philosophical inquiry (and thus subtly indicates a tentative answer). In the former age, the lack of human self-minding speaks against the existence of human desire in general, notwithstanding philosophical desire, though if there *were* such a desire it is hard to see how it would not be total. As herded objects of divine care whose

---

[347] *Stat.* 272b8-d1; εἰ μὲν τοίνυν οἱ τρόφιμοι τοῦ Κρόνου, παρούσης αὐτοῖς οὕτω πολλῆς σχολῆς καὶ δυνάμεως πρὸς τὸ μὴ μόνον ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ καὶ θηρίοις διὰ λόγων δύνασθαι συγγίγνεσθαι, κατεχρῶντο τούτοις σύμπασιν ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίαν, μετά τε θηρίων καὶ μετ᾽ ἀλλήλων ὁμιλοῦντες, καὶ πυνθανόμενοι παρὰ πάσης φύσεως εἴ τινά τις ἰδίαν δύναμιν ἔχουσα ἤσθετό τι διάφορον τῶν ἄλλων εἰς συναγυρμὸν φρονήσεως, εὔκριτον ὅτι τῶν νῦν οἱ τότε μυρίῳ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν διέφερον: εἰ δ᾽ ἐμπιμπλάμενοι σίτων ἅδην καὶ ποτῶν διελέγοντο πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ τὰ θηρία μύθους οἷα δὴ καὶ τὰ νῦν περὶ αὐτῶν λέγονται, καὶ τοῦτο, ὥς γε κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν ἀποφήνασθαι, καὶ μάλ᾽ εὔκριτον.

[348] The peace of the animals is in some way to be understood as the negation of difference. Though the Visitor leaves the possibility open that different animals may have different capacities to perceive and know, the external ordering of each animal life (like individual arithmetic unities, infertile and undifferentiated from other 'ones' in their exterior) suggests this may be the case only on a formal level. We can take the potential 'immeasurability' of blessedness in this age in an ironic sense: there is nothing to measure in an age of quasi-immanent sameness. If the "different from the other" [διάφορον τῶν ἄλλων] were perceivable as such in nature, *measure* and the "collection of wisdom" [συναγυρμὸν φρονήσεως] would be possible. If the age is characterized by "satisfaction" [ἅδην] on the other hand, it does not even appear that phronesis would be possible without this desire to collect difference.

[349] *Stat.* d2-4; ἕως ἂν ἡμῖν μηνυτής τις ἱκανὸς φανῇ, ποτέρως οἱ τότε τὰς ἐπιθυμίας εἶχον περί τε ἐπιστημῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν λόγων χρείας

necessities are all perfectly met, though, it is difficult to envision just how desire might spring up, or what character it might take.[350] In the present age, on the other hand, all things are heading toward infinite disagreement despite our best efforts. If the main criteria for this determination is the 'possess[ion] [of] desires concerning knowledge and the use of words,' then the Zeusian age sits between the hypothetical extremes of the former. Humans of the present, as we know, *are* capable of desire, an expression of their self-minding and their self-disharmony, and thus can practice philosophy to *greater or lesser degrees*.

The tentativeness of the Visitor's own position with respect to the relative blessedness of each age, withholding his judgment from resolving this ambiguity, speaks to a growing uncertainty in the dialogue that we can even speak of this 'former' age at all, from the perspective of our current autonomous age. This is an anxiety that will deepen in the later part of the dialogue, as the Visitor continues to search for the evasive principle of political and ontological unity, that will overcome material contingency. Within the limits of the Visitor's metaphysical imagination—strongly informed by his quasi-Parmenidean notion of immanent-unity and the nearly immanent cosmological overcoming of the different by the principle of sameness—the Kronos-human is not more blessed *at least if the question of happiness is determined by the possibility of the exercise of philosophy*. One wonders if Socrates' absence from the discussion here constitutes an 'evocative presence.' Measuring the happiness of an age by the metric of the possibility for philosophy seems to be a radically Socratic move,[351] as indeed does the whole sudden insertion of the question of happiness, a question that seems to interest the Visitor far less than those of abstract unity. As such, happiness will not constitute a major talking point for the rest of the dialogue.

---

[350] It is worth mentioning that practically the *only* references to the self-moving activity of humans during the age of Kronos, without which philosophy seems not to follow, are elaborated during the Visitor's *hypothetical* exploration of the above question. Apart from this passage of imaginative speculation, the Visitor does not seem to bestow Kronos-humans with the capacity for self-moving activity and by extension inquiry. One could possibly argue that it might be part of the gods' care of humans to imbue them with philosophical desire, but the Visitor does not ever indicate this fact. There is little to no indication that Kronos-humans are not completely *satisfied*.

[351] This metric of happiness (philosophy, love-of-wisdom) as a desire for what one does not possess and what is absent to onself, resonates with the Diotiman conception of love and philosophy from *Symposium* (See *Symp.* 200b-201c; 202d), though, of course, the Visitor seems little interested in desire apart from its formal non-erotic structuring.

Even so, the Visitor's highly tentative ruling in favor of the blessedness of the present age, is a triumph for the dialogical over the monological, for desire over hedonism, and for philosophy over control. In spite of the essential disharmony of human from self and other, from its ground and from the whole of which it constitutes a part, the Visitor is suggesting that the very nature proper to human life *is* this separation, from which also comes the possibility of the woven fabric of communal living.

An Unasked Question of Goodness

Closely related to the question of happiness is the question of goodness. Concerning this, we will find ourselves even less satisfied. What is the good in and for each age, both in the immanence of the god's rule and in the character of newfound political communion? Moreover, what is the good of the whole, encompassing both contrary oscillations of cosmic temperament? More simply, how does goodness show itself and reveal itself in the myth? Once again, however, as in the opening diairesis, the Visitor appears to be largely disinterested in questions of goodness and of ethics. [352] A brief tangent from 273c-d constitutes the bulk of the myth's treatment of goodness:

> [The world-order] has acquired many beautiful things from the one who has composed (*συνθέντος*) it, but from its former possession [i.e. body], it births such great difficulties and injustices in the heavens, which things it itself has from this possession and produces in living things. On the one hand, when it nurtures the living things in itself with the [divine] steersman, it used to create few bad things and many good things. On the other hand, after being separated from him, most near the time of this letting-go, it carries over all the most beautiful things; but after the advance of time, forgetfulness intervenes more in itself, and the pathos of ancient disharmony holds power, and at the end world-order blooms few good things and compounding the blend of contraries it reaches a danger of destruction,

[352] Nightingale (1996) notices the absence of goodness and attributes it to a *hypothetical* and *unreal* model of the cosmos: "Plato's picture of the Age of Zeus is designed to warn readers not to confuse it for our own world, which is replete with goodness and divinity. This goodness is something whose presence and power should be the ground for all our endeavors, including (and especially) political activity. […] The Age of Zeus, in short, depicts a humanistic version of the world which is, in Plato's view, both false and dangerous" (89-90). I agree that the age of Zeus lacks the presence of goodness, but not *constitutively* as is her view. Rather, it is the Eleatic's particular interpretive framework that expels a direct consideration of the good, something to which Plato draws attention in the course of the myth. I disagree too that the age of Zeus represents a hyper-humanized version of the world. Several close comparisons with the *Protagoras* myth, which similarly depict the gods' gifts to humankind in the present age reveal the *Statesman* myth in fairly stark contrast to Protagorean humanism. See El-Murr (1995); Miller (1980) p. 44-5; Gartner & Yao (2020) p. 21. Balaban (1987) brings out Plato and Protagoras' different conceptions of 'subjectivity' in his analysis of the myth. See also, Vidal-Naquet (1978), who makes a most convincing argument against interpreting the *Statesman* myth as belonging to Athenian humanism.

both of itself and of the things within it.[353]

This utterance is a strikingly Platonic in nature, even if the Visitor emphasizes the importance of oneness over goodness. It is significant that these are the only mentions of goodness and badness in the myth, yet the Visitor seems to be interested in these only as effects of the god's rule or lack thereof. Good and bad things are an effect of the prevailing principle in the world-order, either unifying sameness or disunifying unlikeness, and are purely secondary to the actual principles and causes of change. The Visitor conceives of beauty *as a result* of oneness—an *effluence*, so to speak. From the one (composer), the world possesses beauty, but there is no indication that beauty is itself a *cause* of creation in any sense. It is an aesthetic product of unity, imbedded in formed objects, alongside goodness, which acts as a similar *ethical* emission of unity, again, not effectual *in itself* in any expressed way.

In many ways, the myth is consumed with externality, cosmological, mathematical and psychic. Unlike Socrates, the Visitor does not show himself to be particularly interested in the intricacies of human psychology, nor in the inner realities of goodness or virtue as a reality *αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτό*. Indeed, for a myth about politics and statesmanship, he proves to say little about the internal regime of the soul,[354] the character of which must be inferred from other things he says about world-soul, recollection and imitation. The Visitor's attempts to explain the political sphere and the science of rulership in abstract external terms: human and cosmic desire is merely 'hollowed out' in the space between the extremes of immanent sameness and immanent disorder, though this has at least distinguished the human from pure biological

[353] *Stat.* 273b7-d4; παρὰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ συνθέντος πάντα καλὰ κέκτηται: παρὰ δὲ τῆς ἔμπροσθεν ἕξεως, ὅσα χαλεπὰ καὶ ἄδικα ἐν οὐρανῷ γίγνεται, ταῦτα ἐξ ἐκείνης αὐτός τε ἔχει καὶ τοῖς ζῴοις ἐναπεργάζεται. μετὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ κυβερνήτου τὰ ζῷα τρέφων ἐν αὐτῷ σμικρὰ μὲν φλαῦρα, μεγάλα δὲ ἐνέτικτεν ἀγαθά: χωριζόμενος δὲ ἐκείνου τὸν ἐγγύτατα χρόνον ἀεὶ τῆς ἀφέσεως κάλλιστα πάντα διάγει, προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης ἐν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον καὶ δυναστεύει τὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀναρμοστίας πάθος, τελευτῶντος δὲ ἐξανθεῖ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ σμικρὰ μὲν τἀγαθά, πολλὴν δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων κρᾶσιν ἐπεγκεραννύμενος ἐπὶ διαφθορᾶς κίνδυνον αὑτοῦ τε ἀφικνεῖται καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ.

[354] The Visitor refers to soul only two times in the course of the myth (270e7; 272e1), each in relation to Kronosian humans, and each time connecting it closely to a bodily and external motion. In this vein, Hemmenway (1994) argues that the function of the myth is "to draw the youth's attention to the importance of the body" which is not reducible to mind-body duality (254).

exteriority.[355] This being said, the absence of a direct consideration of eidetic reality in the dialogue is not really a *philosophical* problem at all, as much as it is a further clarification of the limits and dramatic parameters of the dialogue. It is as if Plato were calling attention to the investigation of *Statesman* as a test-case—a lab experiment—designed to see what happens when aesthetic and ethical questions are abstracted from considerations of unity and multiplicity, from ontology and politics, and when causal considerations are limited to the pure oneness of a guiding unity. Regardless of the extent of the Visitor's 'Socratic' or 'Platonic' resonances, his relative ethical disinterest constitutes a limit to this similarity.

Conclusion

I want to conclude by briefly scaling back the scope of the analysis by recollecting the myth's positive function in the chronology of the dialogue. What the Visitor has accomplished in his story is both more precisely defining the stage of human politics (though this does not mean a *narrower* stage by any means), and a clearer view of the peculiar nature of human beings beyond biological reduction, the object of the yet-indefinite exercise of political knowledge and *τέχνη*. So too, the myth opens philosophy onto the rich domain of the *absent*, the *no-longer*, and the *present-absence*, peculiar waypoints within the logic of philosophical desire, lacking in the earlier diairetic fixation on absoluteness. What the Visitor is *not* suggesting, however, is that politics involves a return to the golden age of Kronosian leisure, as if this were a political possibility at all, notwithstanding the fact that it seems to be a less blessed condition than the present age according to the metric of the possibility for the love of wisdom. Politics prefigures this age of divine rule and human subjection, but precisely as a *limit* and as an *aporia*—a knowing-absence and the withdrawal of the immanent ground of unity. This limit is a *condition* of human politics, a *pathos*, not a contingency. No amount of political or technical prowess can force the cosmos to take up its former course or mold the human back into a pure site of immanent ordering. The self-disharmonious structure of desire is not to be *overcome* by politics, but itself constitutes the very possibility of political

[355] We may be surprised that the Visitor's understanding of desire is so abstract in comparison with Socrates' vividly beautiful and poetic descriptions in dialogues such as *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. Notwithstanding, it would be wrong to overlook the place of desire in the Visitor's anthropology, even if the Eleatic himself seems to have little taste for beauty.

community. 'Disharmony' as I see it is not a kind of immanent site of stability, but precisely the motion of the soul toward itself in the different.[356] It is in this condition of human desire that the human statesman must be discovered, not lording over a herd as the sole possessor of a private knowledge, but being situated among all humans, attempting to produce order not in spite of the restlessness of human desire, but through a coordinating harmony, with the peculiar tools of divine-facing memory and body-facing technical imitation at their service.

First, then, the Visitor's story reinforces the scope and parameters of the investigation: *Statesman* is to be above all *positively* centred upon the question of *oneness* and *unity*, as befits the Parmenidean Visitor, to the general *negative* exclusion of Socratic formal and ethical considerations. *Statesman* is thus perhaps best understood as a kind of test-case, attempting to discern *if* and *how* unity *in itself* might participate multiplicity.[357] At the same time, the myth of Kronos marks a substantial shift in the Visitor's cognition of the nature of unity. Oneness—or more textually accurate, 'the same'—is neither immanent nor immanentizable but transcending in its absence. Consideration of cosmic structuring, the city, political action, *τέχνη*, and the statesman's knowledge from here onwards must recognize and reflect this measure of absent unity. Indeed, the retreat of oneness in the myth actually paves the way for a newfound *desire* and a newfound *seeking* of unity, which was not conceivable in the 'horizontal,' worth-indifferent methodology of bifurcatory diairesis. In the opening diairesis, oneness is assumed. It is not an object of search or desire. The Visitor's investigation remains a search for the unity of the polis and for the unity of political activity and knowledge, but now a unity understood as a one-in-relation, and within the framework of desire. Just as the god disappears from the present temporal epoch in the myth, leaving both cosmos and human to rule themselves, the figure of the statesman—as the human-shepherd and, indeed, as anything at all—disappears from view. His project to consider politics as an embodiment and an expression of a peculiar kind of unity will be complicated but not abandoned.

---

[356] As I have pointed out, there are two aspects of the different-in-same bound up in human desire: the human desires its divine ground as different from itself, and the human desires itself in the respect of its 'σωματοειδὲς,' which is not 'properly' divine.

[357] In this way, *Statesman* is a true inheritor of the concerns of *Parmenides*, though approaching the one-multiplicity question from another angle, excluding *being* as a direct focus.

Second, the myth maintains that human biological exteriority is *not* what primarily defines the human in a political context. Rather, the myth institutes a newfound consciousness that human and cosmos are *disharmonized from* and *in* their own nature. This disharmony takes on a variety of forms: human and cosmos are alienated from themselves and from each other, from the gods and from the very fount of rational rulership and knowledge. As Brill writes, "the cosmos finds the fullest expression of its capacities not when it governs itself but when it is governed by the god. The cosmos is, in this sense, radically incomplete"[358] It is this alienation from self and other, in short, that constitutes the very realm of the political, and it is in this space, opened up by metaphysical necessity, that humans must find their statesman.

[358] Brill (2017) p. 37.

Chapter VI – Paradigm and Measure: Recollecting the One [274E – 278B]

Following the insights of the myth, the Visitor attempts two different ways of determining the nature of the statesman. First, he endeavours to rehabilitate the initial diairesis by modifying certain branches and making several new cuts into the statesman's knowledge. This, however, still fails to uncover a precise definition of the statesman, largely because he has not sufficiently reformed the method of diairesis itself, to accommodate the myth's richer portrait of the structure of human life. Second, after the failure of this diairetic return, he proposes an entirely new method to approach the figure of the statesman, through a newfound consciousness of *paradigm*. This new strategy is more successful than the first, since it better accommodates the *condition* or *pathos* of human life. Dialectically, within the logic of *Statesman*'s broader movement, if the opening diairesis marks out a philosophical starting point in which the one is absolute, and the myth negates this absoluteness, the Visitor's centring on paradigm stages a *return to the one of the king's knowledge*, but from the perspective of the *pathos* of disharmonious human knowledge—from the perspective of true opinion, multiplicity and difference, excluded until now from the borders of this knowledge. In other words, the Visitor seeks the one of the statesman's knowledge not *in spite of* the fact of human disunity, but in and through this essential condition.

By the end of this dialectical moment, the Visitor will produce a vision of a different kind of unity—the unity of *due measure*—as a more proper image of the statesman's unique knowledge. First, we find in the notion of due measure a greater inclusion of multiplicity in its scope. Rather than covering over difference and the nature of its object, this mode of unity springs out of a concern for the object's disunity. Second, in contrast to other arithmetical or geometric notions of unity, the notion of due measure involves a opening onto the question of *goodness*, excluded until now in the dialectical investigation of oneness. The Visitor finds, then, that the one of the statesman's knowledge cannot be understood in absolute priority to both to the object in question and to the *good* of their art.

The Diairetic Appropriation of Myth

At the close of his story, the Visitor gives what is now a confused YS two explicit reasons for introducing the elaborate myth, one "smaller," one "greater and more vast."[359] The latter, bigger, issue is the conflation of the human statesman with the divine shepherd, which the myth seems to have done an adequate job at fixing, though it will remain an open concern to maintain consciousness of this division as the dialogue continues. The former, smaller, problem, however, is not insubstantial: the initial diairesis does not say exactly *how* (*ὅντινα τρόπον*)[360] the statesman rules. Unlike with the greater problem, it does not seem as if the myth has done enough to clarify a solution. Post-story, it is quite clear that 'human-rearing' is far too broad as a category of the statesman's *τέχνη*, and further, that it is inaccurate in its depiction of the statesman's work, but it does not yet substitute this flawed paradigm for a new positive model. Though apparently of smaller concern, the Visitor tells YS, "it is necessary, as it seems, to expect that after delimiting the manner of his rule of the city, the statesman will have been specified thus to us completely."[361] Even though this is the smaller mistake—"what was said was again true, but neither whole (*ὅλον*) nor clearly spoken"[362]—the interlocutors will have completed their account only once they address and fix this particular problem. The knowledge which seemed in diairesis to constitute a *whole* (258e6), the myth reveals not to be whole at all. Now we are looking for the *manner* (*τρόπον*) of human statesman's rule, the nature of their *τέχνη*, not in contrast but in priority to their *ἐπιστήμη*, since the

---

[359] *Stat.* 274e6-7

[360] *Stat.* 275a4; Rosen (1998) in my view rightly points out that there is an error, or at least an ambiguity in the Visitor's measure of these two problems: "It is obvious that the smaller error is not only bigger than the bigger error, but that it is the key to the entire dialogue. The Stranger makes this switch in his measurement of the relative importance of the errors, but without calling attention to the fact" (73). Contra this view, Hemmenway (1994) observes that "the paradigm of herding distorts politics more than it might at first seem, for the change in man, essentially a change in the course of the cosmos, would have to be quite drastic indeed to make it applicable" (260). In some way the difference between human and god involves a greater 'order' of error, but the failure to describe *how* the statesman acts is more philosophically complex and politically relevant.

[361] *Stat.* 275a8-10; Δεῖ τοίνυν τὸν τρόπον, ὡς ἔοικε, διορίσαντας τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς πόλεως οὕτω τελέως τὸν πολιτικὸν ἡμῖν εἰρῆσθαι προσδοκᾶν.

[362] *Stat.* 275a4-5; ταύτῃ δὲ αὖ τὸ μὲν λεχθὲν ἀληθές, οὐ μὴν ὅλον γε οὐδὲ σαφὲς ἐρρήθη

cosmology of the myth has situated humans in some sense 'below' the realities of true knowledge in the age of Kronos.[363]

In the wake of the myth, the Visitor has indicated that discerning the *τέχνη* of the human statesman must be privileged in their investigation, but this is not the only thing that has changed. It is only after the myth that the city becomes the philosophical and political focal point of human community, replacing the neutral arithmetic 'bulk' of the herd, an entity animated by the inner life of its mutually-desiring community.[364] The Visitor can no longer envision the human statesman as being essentially *external* to the city itself, or to the bulk of citizens they rule, since "the statesmen who exist here and now are very much similar to (*ὁμοίους*) those they rule in their nature, and they partake of a more nearly resembling education and rearing,"[365] in contrast to the divine-human relation in the age of Kronos. The human statesman shares not only in human nature—and the disharmonious desire involved in the essential human capacities to *recollect* and *produce*—but so too in the contingent customs and educational processes of the society into which they are born. This is a crucial passage in the course of *Statesman*. Rulers and ruled alike share in the peculiar human mode of *interiority*, self-minding and self-

---

[363] I certainly do not want to suggest that the Visitor gives up on knowledge here (he considers it again explicitly toward the end of the dialogue), nor that we are left with a kind of technical relativism. The myth indicates that phronesis *is* possessed by human and cosmos in the present age, even if it is subject to distortion in its imperfection. So too, definite knowledge seems to properly 'exist' in this age precisely in its absence, as a divine 'end' animating desire. One mistake of the initial diairesis is what the myth brings out as a 'top-down approach,' beginning with the selfsameness of knowledge and subjecting all things in its scope to its immanence, without actually *knowing* what this knowledge *is* in itself.

[364] There are few references to the city before the myth of Kronos, and it is understood in completely different terms. See *Stat.* 259b for mention of the city, which is essentially conflated with the household. The city is essentially an undifferentiated "bulk" or "mass" of people [*ὄγκος*]. See *Stat.* 266e for mention of the city as the site of human rulership, yet here again the city seems to be identical to the place where the herd happens to be. It is a neutral location, a mathematical external; it does not have any nature *in itself*, and it is not important except as the place that happens to contain the herd-animals. This is to say, the city before the mythic interruption is not *political*. The Visitor's recollection at 275a that their vision of the statesman pre-myth concerned the 'ruling of a city' either amounts to poor memory or a small fib. Benardete (1984) remarks, "It is not so much, then, the statesman's inability to conform perfectly with the paradigm of the shepherd that makes the paradigm inappropriate (the statesman could still hold it to be his goal however unrealizable), as it is the impossibility of the city to conform with the paradigm of the herd" (101).

[365] *Stat.* 275c1-4; τοὺς δ᾽ ἐνθάδε νῦν ὄντας πολιτικοὺς τοῖς ἀρχομένοις ὁμοίους τε εἶναι μᾶλλον πολὺ τὰς φύσεις καὶ παραπλησιαίτερον παιδείας μετειληφέναι καὶ τροφῆς. ; For Karfik, (2013) that the Visitor requires the statesman to share in the nature and education of humans is both the major "source of opacity in defining the statesman," as well as "the source of a tendency, emerging in all forms of human government, to become detrimental rather than beneficial to the citizens" (125-126). The human statesman is liable to the same misplaced desires and tendencies for self-destruction as humankind as a whole. The knowledge of the statesman is perhaps in some way *constructred.*

disharmony, but also education and *external* societal custody, in such a way that the opposite problem to what has come before poses itself. Earlier, the privateness of the statesman's knowledge poses a barrier for investigating what the statesman is, knows and does. Now, the similarity of ruler and ruled throws into question on what basis this division is made in the first place, since it is not drawn according to a difference in either nature or ontological status. It becomes a concern whether there is anything unique about the art of rulership, or whether rule is a kind of accidental practice, exercised without any particular knowledge between people of identical natures and capacities. What is certain is that human rule cannot be quasi-immanent as in Kronos' rule, but that it must be mediated by the self-minding subjects themselves, and by the city, which is the site of life and exchange.[366]

The concrete changes that the Visitor and YS make to the diairetic tree, however, are surprisingly few and unsatisfying, without modifying the methodology at all. They seem to dramatically embody the role of the surviving humans at the beginning of the Zeusian Age—stunned and unable to properly account for the new set of conditions and problems that address them. The first change the Visitor makes is to the sixth division, substituting "rearing" (*τρέφειν*) for the more neutral "attending to" (θεραπεύειν), a name which one may apply both to herdsmen and to statesmen and other such expertises not particularly concerned with rearing.[367] Indeed, the Visitor suggests that any such words like "herd-preserving" (*ἀγελαιοκομικὴν*) "attending to" (*θεραπευτικὴν*) or "caring for" (*ἐπιμελητικὴν*)[368] might function better than the former, containing both rearing and non-rearing sub-categories, and encompassing the kinds of rulership involving distinct natures and similar. In contrast to the task of rearing, which a great variety of technicians claim as their own, the Visitor contends, "no art would be willing to say that the care of the human community all together (*συμπάσης κοινωνίας*) was rather different from or prior to

[366] For Lane (1998), the problem of diairesis is a temporal problem: "Division has no mechanism for dealing with history. Its distinctions are drawn between arts or species treated as logical wholes, and tenselessly. But the distinction between human life now, and human life in the age of Kronos, is a distinction not of kinds but of epochs" (115). Though I believe this is correct, in my view the greater issue in the method of diairesis, of which temporality is an aspect, is that diairesis cannot account for self-separation.

[367] *Stat.* 275e4 ; See Appendix D for an illustration of these added diairetic divisions

[368] *Stat.* 275e6-7

the art of the king, which is also the art of the rule over all (*πάντων*) humans."[369] The other expertises are willing to assert their responsibility for the rearing of individuals and even collectives, but they shy away from taking responsibility for the care and preservation of all and of the whole *tout court*. Statesmanship alone is privileged in its concern for the stability of the all, the changing, ever-tangled nexus of relation, which is the truer inner reality of the human 'bulk.'[370] This modification of this bifurcatory division succeeds in wresting the human statesman from the paradigm of the divine shepherd. It succeeds also in determining more clearly the *scope* of statesmanship—rooting out its competitors due to the sheer unbounded breadth of its purview, the *all*—but it hardly clarifies the *τρόπον* of the human statesman. If anything, defining the statesman as a 'carer' only broadens and makes more abstract the way in which the statesman rules.[371]

The next immediate correction that the Visitor makes has again been "utterly overlooked" (*διημαρτάνετο*) by the initial divisions.[372] Tacked to the bottom of the former diairetic divisions, the Visitor first makes a distinction between "divine herdsman" (*τὸν θεῖον νομέα*) and "human carer" (*τὸν ἀνθρώπινον ἐπιμελητήν*), remembering the 'greater and more vast' problem illuminated by the myth.[373] Within the caretaking cut thereafter the Visitor locates another divide "with respect to the forcible (*τῷ βιαίῳ*) and the voluntary (*ἑκουσίῳ*)."[374] Their mistake has been one of "good-hearted

---

[369] *Stat.* 276b8-c2; ἐπιμέλεια δέ γε ἀνθρωπίνης συμπάσης κοινωνίας οὐδεμία ἂν ἐθελήσειεν ἑτέρα μᾶλλον καὶ προτέρα τῆς βασιλικῆς φάναι καὶ κατὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἀρχῆς εἶναι τέχνη.
[370] The Visitor seems to be subtly indicating the relation between statesman and other craftspeople to resemble the relation between the god and his daemons. One looks after the all; the others concern themselves with parts. In this way, the rule of the city is a microcosm of the Kronosian macrocosm. One should not forget, however, that the nature of the object of statesmanship is *not* the same in either era.
[371] See *Soph.* 219a-b; The very first division of *τέχνη* in *Sophist* is between two kinds of θεραπεία: the caring for natural things and for the moral body, and the caring for things composed and fabricated. There is also a third division here, separating imitation from these two forms of attendance. If the question were posed in *Statesman*, it would seem that statesmanship extends to all three branches: it involves the care of living things, the fabrication of the site of human life, and tentatively, perhaps, some degree an imitation of the divine demiurge. Statesmanship refuses to fit into the branches of the former dialogue: the 'all' of human community explodes such clean divisions. We will remember, too, of course, that one of the primary functions of god and daemon is to care (271d4; 273a1; 274b6; 274d4). ; Just later, the Visitor remarks that still "thousands dispute with the kingly class concerning the care for the cities" [τῷ βασιλικῷ γένει τῆς περὶ τὰς πόλεις ἐπιμελείας ἀμφισβητοῦσι μυρίοι] (Plt. 279a2–3). The clarification has done little to distinguish how the statesman is at all distinct from these others.
[372] *Stat.* 276c5
[373] *Stat.* 276d5-6
[374] *Stat.* 276d11

simplemindedness" (*εὐηθέστερα*):[375] without perceiving any danger, the Visitor and YS have simply *assumed* that the statesman's art unifies the human mass without smothering the nature of the inhabitants. Perhaps unsurprisingly, until now the Visitor needed no concept of voluntariness, because he simply assumed the connection between unity and good order, without addressing or unfolding any independent notion of goodness.[376] That order or unity produced goodness was obvious to him. The interlocutors have unthinkingly posited king (*βασιλέα*) and tyrant (*τύραννον*) into an identical class (*εἰς ταὐτὸν*), "although they themselves and the manner (*τρόπον*) of each rule are *most dissimilar* (*ἀνομοιοτάτους*)."[377] The false unity in the opening diairesis has covered over this *greatest degree of difference*.

At the same time, however, post-myth this former lack of concern for the freewill of the ruled can be understood as a kind of extension and assumption proper to the logic of the Age of Kronos, in which the distinction between king and tyrant in one way is collapsed. The objects of the god's rule lack self-minding in themselves and therefore can submit themselves neither voluntarily nor involuntarily to his rule. The very terminological distinction seems to break down in the divine case. The opening diairesis too in treating humans as a simple mass devoid of self-volition follows suit. This newfound consciousness of the interiority and self-minding of all human beings, proper to the Zeusian Age, necessitates a dramatic shift in the understanding of the objects of rule—who are precisely *subjects* in themselves. Indeed, here for the first time in diairesis,[378] there is *some* indication that the objects of rule and the ruler themselves *co-*

---

[375] *Stat.* 276e1-2

[376] *Stat.* 276c5; One could rightly argue that the assumption of knowledge automatically excludes the tyrant from the picture in the initial diairesis. After all, the tyrant is consistently depicted in Plato's corpus as being ruled by passion, and *not* ruling according to knowledge or even art (See *Rep*. IX). This would be correct, but it would miss the dramatic import of the myth: the interlocutors have now become aware that the knowledge they assumed earlier may have been lost to the previous age. The distinction between voluntary and involuntary rule is in response to this newfound awareness that the *good* is not necessarily unambiguously bound to their abstract concept of knowledge and unity in the present cycle of reality. Even so, it is important to note that the Visitor again does not frame this development in terms of some independent reality of goodness, as we might expect Socrates to do. The voluntariness of the ruled is just another aspect of unity.

[377] *Stat.* 276e2-4; εἰς ταὐτὸν βασιλέα καὶ τύραννον συνέθεμεν, ἀνομοιοτάτους ὄντας αὐτούς τε καὶ τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς ἑκατέρου τρόπον.

[378] This is indicated non-diairetically slightly earlier at 275c, at which point the Visitor indicates the sharing of nature, education, and rearing of statesman and subject, but not expressed in the chain of divisions until now.

determine each other. The exercise of statesmanship is not the simple activity of the knower exercising themselves on the passive civilian material. The tyrant is a "tyrant of forced people."[379] The condition of the object, in this case their 'being-forced,' reflects upon the nature of the actor and the principle of knowledge. The knowledge of the statesman cannot simply and violently pass through the bodies of the ruled without fundamentally compromising the very meaning of statesmanship.[380] The diairetic resolution to this problem thus clarifies the *manner* of the statesman's rule to some degree, but again, it hardly offers an exhaustive and satisfying glimpse into the nature of the statesman's work. Though the statesman may be a voluntary carer of voluntary two-footed living creatures this does not address *how* the statesman cares, or what the statesman is *knowing* when they care.

YS is satisfied by the above modifications in his usual uncritical manner. It appears that a terminological shift and a couple of extra mathematical divisions have satisfied his desire to know the statesman. The Visitor, on the other hand, seems to perceive a lack in their conclusion, again citing the dialogical and quasi-political parameters of the discussion in order to urge further exploration: "it is necessary for these things not to be for you alone, but for me also to share them with you in common."[381] However, the Visitor will not give a complete account of the problem, either because he is unable, or because he is tuned to the limitations of his interlocutor, communicating his suspicions through a series of veiled intuitions. YS and the Visitor are each persistently stubborn in their natures: YS remains quite incapable of any critical evaluation external to or beyond abstract diairetic logic; the Visitor is aware of certain limitations in diairesis yet is unable to express the nature of these problems to his conversation partner except through inscrutable and indeed 'mantic' turns of topic, such as we will see in his 'artistic' analogies in his evaluation of the myth.

---

[379] *Stat.* 276e10; τῶν βιαίων τυραννικήν

[380] This being said, I think Dorter (1994) rightly sees the distinction between tyrant and statesman on the basis of voluntarism or involuntarism as a "superficial characteristic." He observes, "[t]he writer of the Republic, for whom the tyrant was the paradigmatic unjust man, can hardly have believed that the distinguishing feature of the tyrant is simply the reluctance of his subjects" (196). Of course, as I have already mentioned, the Eleatic Visitor is *not* Plato. We see that his still-simplistic notion of unity strains to breaking point to accommodate the insights of the myth.

[381] *Stat.* 277a3-4; δεῖ δὲ μὴ σοὶ μόνῳ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ κἀμοὶ μετὰ σοῦ κοινῇ συνδοκεῖν.

An Incomplete Figure

At the close of the myth, the Visitor offers a remarkably complex, self-conscious criticism of the myth's function, to refute YS's misplaced confidence. He leaves YS with a tangled analysis of what has happened, which attempts to pose certain problems. How exactly does the myth function? According to what paradigm or analogy shall we understand the myth's partial but inadequate *showing-forth* (*ἀπόδειξιν*) of the king? Is the myth above all a *construction* or a *paradigm*? Is the incomplete shape of the king due to poor craftsmanship, poor pedagogical direction, or something inherent to the nature of the statesman?

The Visitor unfolds his suspicion in seemingly plain terms: "it appears that the king does not yet have a complete figure (*σχῆμα*)."[382] The problem is twofold. First, (1) there is the issue of the "great paradigms" (*μεγάλα παραδείγματα*), the "amazing bulk of myth" (*θαυμαστὸν ὄγκον τοῦ μύθου*) that the Visitor has seen fit to employ in the service of revealing the former diairetic mistake.[383] This is a problem of quantity: the Visitor explains, "we have been forced to use a larger part of it [the myth] than is needful" for the determination of the statesman, without knowing which parts specifically contribute to the conclusion.[384] Their account has been like a deformed statue, with some parts being too large and with too many additions added onto the form.[385] The second (2) issue is related: "our account, just as an animal [or painting] (*ζῷον*),[386] is likely to have a sufficient external outline (*τὴν ἔξωθεν μὲν περιγραφὴν*), but not to have yet received any

[382] *Stat.* 277a5-6; οὔπω φαίνεται τέλεον ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμῖν σχῆμα ἔχειν; Sallis (2021) notes that word 'σχῆμα' [figure] carries a distinctly mathematical (and indeed, a *geometric*) connotation (See Euclid: "A figure [σχῆμά] is that which is contained by some boundary or boundaries" [Σχῆμά ἐστι τὸ ὑπό τινος ἤ τινων ὅρων περιεχόμενον]). Does the incompleteness suggest that the 'boundaries' of the king or statesman have not been fully elaborated—that the statesman has not been enclosed? Or are we looking for a more internal measure of their shape? (For other references to σχῆμα to this point, see *Stat.* 259b9; 268c6; 269a5). White (2018) draws an analogy between σχῆμα and εἶδος as between true opinion and knowledge: "Schema names a reality characterized by a whole-part relation which reflects the reality of a Form but which is not equivalent to that reality" (99).

[383] *Stat.* 277b4-5

[384] *Stat.* 277b5-6; μείζονι τοῦ δέοντος ἠναγκάσθημεν αὐτοῦ μέρει προσχρήσασθαι

[385] *Stat.* 277a6-b1

[386] ζῷον here can mean both 'animal' or 'living thing' as well as 'form' or 'picture'. I have preferred to translate this term using the former signification following Benardete (III.27), though I think Plato is leaning into the dual meaning of the word. The initial diairesis treats human beings essentially as animals, as mere external objects so to speak, and thus the ambiguous meaning of the word seems particularly appropriate. From the divine Kronosian perspective, animals might be viewed just like a painting—the passive objects of divine *τέχνη*. Brann et al. interestingly offer a translation that exhibits both senses of the word at once in "animal-painting" (49).

sort of clearness (*ἐνάργειαν*) from healing remedies (*φαρμάκοις*)[387] or from the mixing together of pigments."[388] After the myth it is true that *some* 'colour' has been added to the consideration of human life, but the visitor is still speaking of statesmanship as "the voluntary herd-preserving of voluntary two-footed living creatures" (*τὴν ἑκούσιον καὶ ἑκουσίων διπόδων ἀγελαιοκομικὴν ζῴων*), in rather *external* and still-biological terms.[389] The recognition of the necessity for 'voluntary' ruled subjects has at least carved out a certain interiority beyond the mere outlines of external physicality, but diairesis renders this voluntariness in purely neutral and external terms, no different from any other physical feature of human beings.[390]

What the Visitor is signaling is a need to *heal* or to *colour* their very philosophical method itself, even though the framework elucidated to this point is apparently broadly correct. Diairesis needs healing, a healing which will correspond with a newfound consciousness of the inner life and health of both the statesman's objects—city, citizen—

[387] Φαρμάκοις can be simply rendered as 'colours' but its much more common use refers to drugs, healing remedies and cures. In keeping with the dual meaning of ζῷον, I think Plato is using the ambiguity of these words to create a parallel between the externality of animals and of human works of art, especially paintings. Medicine is for the health of the animal as pigment is for the beauty of the painting. Each requires a technical modification in order to achieve the good of the object under consideration.

[388] *Stat.* 277b8-c2; ἀτεχνῶς ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ζῷον τὴν ἔξωθεν μὲν περιγραφὴν ἔοικεν ἱκανῶς ἔχειν, τὴν δὲ οἷον τοῖς φαρμάκοις καὶ τῇ συγκράσει τῶν χρωμάτων ἐνάργειαν οὐκ ἀπειληφέναι πω.

[389] *Stat.* 276e10-11

[390] See Davenport (2011) p. 84-5 for a consideration of the 'voluntary' nature of the statesman's rule. The 'voluntary' character of the statesman's art seems to be in part an extension of the shared nature of ruler and ruled. Just as the subjects of the true statesman submit themselves willingly to rule, the statesman correspondingly should submit themselves to their art, perhaps out of a sense of duty. ; It is interesting how these latter two diairetic modifications attempt to smooth over the old problems of the method, as bifurcatory diairesis strains to accommodate the revelations from the myth. (2) The division between human and divine ruler is essentially the first explicit division that concerns the nature of statesman themselves, but diairesis can say only that these two rulers are different in nature, not how. (3) The division between voluntary and involuntary rule is one of the only moments in which the manner of the statesman's rule is directly divided. Other divisions occasionally suggest a manner of the statesman's rule, but these suggestions are almost always subtly couched within the content of a different division. For example, the division at 261d is formally the division between single animals and herds, but the language of rearing is simply slipped in, without any diairetic justification. Self-originating-other-directing becomes rearing with not even the slightest defense.

and the statesman themselves.[391] They must somehow find a way to properly formalize the informal discoveries of the myth. Yet this reformulation again cannot involve an absolute rejection of what has come before. Though both diairesis and myth have proved to be wholly unsatisfactory for solving the problem in their own right, Plato is not finished with their insights. Somehow, they must be *woven together*.[392] The Kronosian principles of rule represented in diairesis cannot be completely left behind. They are still present in phronesis and in the ordering of the world-order. This external shape of statesmanship is not dissociable from its inner content. It will linger like an absent god.[393]

Above, the Visitor reflects on the content and function of the myth using a series of cloaked metaphors and images: the myth is like a deformed statue, like a sick animal, or a dull painting. And yet, not sooner does he deliver these images, he reels them back: "it is more fitting for speech and word (*λέξει καὶ λόγῳ*) to make visible (*δηλοῦν*) each living thing (*πᾶν ζῷον*) than painting and all manner of handiwork, for someone who is able to follow along. But for others, it is more fitting through handicrafts."[394] This will play out with a certain amount of dramatic irony in the dialogue, as the model for statesmanship later turns out precisely to be the handicraft of weaving. It is odd, at any rate, that the Visitor uses a critique of his own craft-analogies to double as a critique of the myth as a whole. This critique is not direct, but oddly mediated by his own self-imposed analogies. Essentially, he labels the myth with handicraft images and uses his critique of these self-imposed labels to stand in for a critique of the myth. It is the

---

[391] Pradeau (2014): "If a technique takes care of and governs its object, and if the interest of its object is the function that defines it, the reason for this is that this object is to some extent defective (just as medicine exists because bodies fall sick). The cause of the technique is the defectiveness of its object, and its function consists in furthering the latter's interest" (75). If this is indeed the case for statesmanship and its relation to the city, to come to know the *technique* of statesmanship one must first come to know its object, and more specifically its defect, which originates the technique in the first place. This is a plausible reading of statesmanship as τέχνη, though I withhold a total embrace of Pradeau's language, since the Visitor does not seem to understand the city, or the human for that matter, primarily on account of its defects. It *is* true that the gods give humans the gifts to technology at the very point when they seem in danger of annihilation, thereby, shall we say, 'healing' the sickness or disorder already inhering in human community, but the Visitor does not seem to put it this way. Indeed, political community does not really seem to exist until the bestowal of technology at all in the first place.

[392] See Ionescu (2014) for a very similar view.

[393] Davenport (2011) rightly surmises that the view of statesmanship as shepherd is one that the Visitor can't entirely reject, perhaps either because it is so pervasive in Greek political thinking or because this model is somehow intrinsic in the τέχνη of rulership.

[394] *Stat.* 277c3-6; γραφῆς δὲ καὶ συμπάσης χειρουργίας λέξει καὶ λόγῳ δηλοῦν πᾶν ζῷον μᾶλλον πρέπει τοῖς δυναμένοις ἕπεσθαι : τοῖς δ᾽ ἄλλοις διὰ χειρουργιῶν.

observation that the *schema* of the king is without a complete shape—not the fact of the myth itself—that seems to be the thing which first elicits the technical and artistic metaphors from the Visitor. After all, the myth in its most basic regime *is* simply a mixture of speech and word, and thus *should be* within the category of things that are fitting to make visible a living thing. The tension here is between word and speech as sites of disclosure or *manifestation* of the life of something,[395] and word and speech as conscious *constructions*—shall we say, as a site of the *enclosure* of something. Is the myth and dialogue trying to *reveal* or *trap* its living object? Word can both recollect and construct, a tension that is most manifest in the difference between philosopher and sophist, and most opaque in the work of the statesman themselves, who is caught between divine-facing memory and body-facing technology.[396] *If* the bulk of the myth is an object of handicraft, the Visitor's critique stands.

On the other hand, the Visitor seems to suggest to YS that the myth is not *merely* a construction, but a *paradigm*, though the Visitor again offers a critique of the myth's function as such: the interlocutors "believed it to be fitting to produce great paradigms (*μεγάλα παραδείγματα*) for the king, raising up an amazing bulk of myth, and were compelled to use a larger part of it than was needful."[397] This has a double-pronged implication. First, if the myth functions as a paradigm, this would at least tentatively displace the myth as a kind of pure construction, even recognizing the plethora of technical language flooding the above passage. As we shall see in the next chapter,

---

[395] Rosen (1998) is helpful on this point: "People possess logos, which does not define in the sense of closing their nature but rather opens it" (38). This is the power of language that the Visitor is pointing to, though Plato is aware also of its tension with more 'constructivist' understandings of λόγος. See also, Sallis (2021), who distinguishes two distinct senses of the function of λόγος—"correspond[ing] to beings" and "revealing beings" (111).

[396] Of course, technology is not *merely* body-facing. It has, as aforementioned, divine origins in the myth, and the Visitor's later digression makes clear that *τέχνη* involves an important relation to 'due measure' (See *Stat.* 283b – 287a). Nevertheless, it seems most primarily oriented toward the *external*. Howland's (1993) Straussian interpretation of *Statesman* divides Socratic philosophy and the Visitor's philosophy along similar lines. The former involves an embrace of *phronesis* and *logos*, with the end in view to protect the soul from "a direct confrontation with physical matter" (27); the latter involves an embrace of *nomos* and *techne* to these same ends. The 'pure' Socratic philosopher, for Howland, is a bad citizen, since the city requires these latter means to survive. To my mind, however, Sanday's (2017) remarks on the relation between *τέχνη* and philosophical inquiry better reflects the fundamental point of the dialogue: the philosopher alone understands the instability and fragility of technology as an imitation of divine reality, and, rather than excluding it from inquiry, uses it as a resource for its own self-examination.

[397] *Stat.* 277b3-6; τῷ βασιλεῖ νομίσαντες πρέπειν μεγάλα παραδείγματα ποιεῖσθαι, θαυμαστὸν ὄγκον ἀράμενοι τοῦ μύθου, μείζονι τοῦ δέοντος ἠναγκάσθημεν αὐτοῦ μέρει προσχρήσασθαι

paradigm involves an essential mediation and disharmony of a thing's nature through speech and image, but it also opens up the possibility of the showing-forth (*ἀπόδειξιν*) of its object through something *other*. Second, the paradigm is still liable to be distorted, misinterpreted and wrongly conceived, a fact which seems to constitute the Visitor's major critique of its function as such. This begs further questions. What exactly are these paradigms embedded in the myth? What is the myth a paradigm *of*, or what has the myth as its paradigm? I want to suggest that for Plato the myth functions as a kind of paradigm for the structure of the whole dialogue which is an animal unto itself.[398]

I am thus reading the myth somewhat against the Visitor's own expressed perspective about its limitations. His critique, of course, is important in the education of YS, favoring rational argument over more monological mythic invention, but at the same time, I think Plato means for the reader to recognize the complex philosophical framework that the myth opens, as a kind of pivot separating and relating two distinct notions of unity. The myth is animal, paradigm, painting all at once, and yet none of these modes is adequate for the *ἀπόδειξις* of the king. It is painting insofar as it has produced a broadly correct, but external notion of statesmanship; animal as an self-minding and imitating part of the whole dialogue; and pedagogical paradigm for the philosophical inertia of the dialogue as a whole, rehearsing the movement from selfsameness into difference, and from immanence into desire. The myth is in this way a microcosm of the whole.

A 'Great Paradigm': Plato's Statesman as Mythic Re-enactment

One peculiarity of the myth's role in the dialogue is its ambiguous relation to its own form and content. It is at once a beginning and an end just like the "earthquake" (*σεισμὸν*)[399] of epochal shift, a site of the dashing-together of two separated realities. The myth has an *intrinsic* and an *extrinsic* relation to its whole and to its own content. Understood with respect to its own inner content, the Visitor's myth itself lies within the cosmic chronology that the myth exposes and unfolds. The Visitor notes broadly that

[398] See *Phaedr.* 264c for Socrates' analogy between a speech and a living animal. The Neoplatonists, Proclus, Iamblichus and the Alexandrian school in particular, will heavily employ this notion of the speech as a living animal in their Platonic commentaries (See Baltzly (2017) p. 182-3; Layne (2017) p. 544-5; Motta (2014); Motta (2019) p. 120-1).
[399] *Stat.* 273a3; 273a6

myths 'are nowadays incorrectly disbelieved by many,' and this is a sign of just how far cosmos and human have drifted since the beginning of the epoch of human and cosmic self-minding—how much has been *forgotten*. By fabricating a myth, instead of simply pointing to one or all of the stories that preface his telling, the Visitor is recognizing that myth in general has lost its efficacy. In other words, the myth interpreted through its own content, implies that the memory of the former age, which alone guides the cosmos well, is fast fading; they are deep into the age of Zeus, closer to the 'unlimited sea of unlikeness' than perhaps they realize. Since humans have lost the meaning of these original myths, we may only return to them within the framework of self-conscious fabrication, a myth that knows itself to be the product of human *τέχνη*, rather than from memory *properly*. The memory of Kronos' rule has lost a certain naturalism, and thus it may only be reconstructed by a conscious philosophically directed production.

The myth may also be interpreted extrinsically to its own mythic content, in its relation to the dialogue as a whole and to the philosophical logic and content therein. If the dialogue is taken as a kind of 'cosmos' in itself, so to speak, the myth represents a single moment or part of its life. And yet, just as the earthquake of epochal shift and the sudden novel constellation of human life constitutes "that on account of which we have aroused the myth"[400]—the moment that reveals the structure of the whole—the myth, with its alternating cycles of cosmic motion, reveals and elaborates the very logical structure of the dialogue in its entirety. It forms the pivot, so to speak, around which the other sections of the dialogue turn, each functioning within alternating epistemic situations. The movement of *Statesman* is thus affected by the inclusion of the myth in two ways. First, in a dramatic sense. The interlocutors will rehearse and imitate the

[400] *Stat.* 272d4-5; οὗ δ' ἕνεκα τὸν μῦθον ἠγείραμεν

alternating cosmic periods on their way to the discernment of the statesman.[401] Second, epistemically, the myth clarifies the character of the dialectic at play in the heart of the dialogue, between *ἐπιστήμη* and *τέχνη*, unity and disharmony. The Visitor will centre his focus on the two modes of knowing available to each respective age, and their relation to each other, both generally and in the particular regime of the statesman.

The reason Plato has his Eleatic go through the initial series of seemingly fruitless divisions in search of the statesman, can be glimpsed only after the mythic diversion—or reversion. Looking back at the diairesis now, the philosophical assumptions grounding these divisions reflect, and indeed imitate, the nature of both the cosmic order and divine rule in the previous age. As in the initial diairesis where there appears a distinction and a kind of separation (both in nature and in philosophical treatment) between ruler, attendants and the object of rule, so here the myth preserves and elaborates these distinctions. The initial diairesis insists that theoretical knowledge (and perhaps knowledge as a whole) involves an essential privateness, and this is reflected in the nature of the ultimate "steersman" and "demiurge," who is 'always the same and having the same state in the same conditions, as befits alone the most divine things of all.' The Kronos-god himself is a theoretical knower. His very principle of knowledge is private, unable to be affected by anything outside of itself, yet at the same time, unable to give

[401] Hence we return to the theme of play, which the Visitor establishes at the beginning of the myth (268d-3). Sallis (2021) offers a particularly compelling reading of what "play" means in the myth: "But how exactly do children play? Children listen to a story, and then they *enact* it—they *play* at it" (117). Sallis goes on to offer a 'temporal' reading of this play, in which the telling of the myth enacts or 'plays out' the very temporal shift that occurs in the content of the myth. What, in my view, Sallis does not see is how the 'play' of the myth extends to the content of the *very dialogue as a whole*. Externally, Plato's *Statesman* enacts and re-enacts the μεταβολή of the myth, precisely by oscillating between a depiction of 'divine' quasi-immanent knowledge, and recollected / disharmonious / technically mediated knowledge of the age of Zeus. Further, *internally*, it is worth nothing that play involves a kind of separation from the self, taking up a role as an 'other' to the self, which mirrors the human condition of disharmony in the age of Zeus. Though I borrow Sallis' notion of 'play' in my interpretation of the myth, I do not believe he recognizes the full extent of the importance of 'play' in the interpretation of the myth's content or its relation to the dialogue broadly. Not dissimilarly to this view, Ionescu (2014) indicates that the different strengths and weaknesses in the initial diairesis and in the myth are overcome in the last half of the dialogue by an 'interweaving' of both methods (42). Further, "[t]he myth provides a meta-physical horizon that explains why the dialectical method can succeed when adequately applied and why it fails when inadequately used" (37). ; Miller (1980), opposite but not opposing this view, reads the myth back into the pedagogical structure of the initial diairesis: "the first two major phases of the dialogue as a whole, the initial diairetic process (258b–267c) and the critical digressions at 267c–287b, are analogous in structure to the first two parts within the initial diairesis. The rhythm and exemplary value are the same: in both cases the stranger's elicitation of error and the subsequent critical reflection offer temporal the experience of becoming philosophical" (35).

itself or express its inner reality absolutely: it cannot transform 'the all' completely, in that it cannot make the different into the absolute selfsame. The god gives himself in his rule, but without fully revealing himself. Due to the simplicity of knowledge and the simplicity of the god's oversight, speaking in whichever register one prefers, it is not possible to exhaust or exhume the ground of this simplicity. Kronos cannot simply will to convey the principle of his knowledge to humans, precisely because of his privateness and simplicity. To express this ground would be precisely to leave himself, to become other than himself, and so, due to metaphysical necessity, humans are left with only a *memory* of his rule in *phronesis* and an *image* of his wisdom in technology.

The humans of the Kronos-age are exactly the humans of the diairesis, the objects of disinterested division, without any serious reference to their inner nature.[402] The division does not take into account erotic desire—there exists none—nor the capacity to philosophize. Indeed, nothing really relates one human to the next except for their pure material happenstance, since they are related not by sexual desire, nor by procreation and birth from each other, nor even by politics. Diairetic and 'daemonic' division is the division of non-self-minding things, whose principle of motion is not contained by the thing itself. The philosophical method of division involves cutting through the all, but the cutting itself is the only truly self-minding action. The human is defined from the outside so to speak, by external division,[403] and by means of differentiated bodily attributes, simply because this is all that *can* distinguish them in their non-relation. By dividing according to the geometry of matter, the daemons are able to distinguish a certain principle of arithmetic unity: *a single genus*. This mathematical unity, originally a pure *object*, will only come to be separated from itself in its self-minding in the second age,

---

[402] Indeed, during the Age of Kronos this inner nature and self-separation has not yet truly come to pass. It will be 'created' in the next age.

[403] Sallis (2021) calls this an "originary division" (114). If, after the gods had withdrawn, humans again attempted these divisions (as in diairesis), "they would be imperfect imitations that would re-mark the lines of those originary divisions" (114). It would seem that human philosophical attempt to re-draw these 'natural' lines is in a way tainted by a kind of technology of imitation. See also, Benardete (1963), who argues, "art and not nature is the tool of dichotomy" (196). Márquez (2014) sees the age of Kronos formally as involving the "self-perpetuation of the unity of eidos," an expression that comes close to my own view of the immanence of unity (165). Though he uses formal Platonic terminology that I believe to be absent from the dialogue, Márquez is right to contrast the ages according to a metric of immanence. In the present age, bodies can "be categorized according to eidē, but where they are not identical to these eidē" (162).

but here in the first age, represented philosophically in the initial diairesis, humans are simply taken as the abstract objects of rule, a true *but partial* reality of their being.

The abstract formalism of bifurcatory diairesis, with its strict mathematical dividing, seems as if to belong to the *τέχνη* of the co-ruling daimons: "all the parts of the cosmos were divided (*διειλημμένα*) by the ruling gods, and in particular the divine daimons just as shepherds had cut (*διειλήφεσαν*) living things by kind (*γένη*) and by herd, each being sufficient in all ways to each of the things, whom they themselves were pasturing."[404] The kinds that the gods *know* in the Age of Kronos are only *approximated* by our own age, through the *τέχνη* of mathematical halving. Just as in the diairetic counterpart, the theoretical rule of Kronos is practically carried out by multiple assistants, who are charged with the care of certain parts and kinds within the cosmos. The simplicity of Kronos' knowledge-principle is here itself divided among the daemons, but without compromising the essential hiddenness and unicity of his rulership. Just as the privately knowledgeable person advises the *publicly* ruling human, and so is properly said alone to possess the art about which they advise, the daemons are the non-political and divine equivalents of the public and unknowing king, in whom knowledge of rule is necessarily divided, fractured and reliant on the private possessor. At the same time, having this private and actually knowledgeable advisor at hand allows the *daemons* to act concretely in the world, without ever truly knowing the ground of their *τέχνη*. The daemons follow the directives of the one who knows, without possessing the knowledge themselves.[405]

But what does all of this mean philosophically? What does it matter that these two sections, diairesis and Kronos' mythic rule, seem to resonate with each other structurally? On the one hand, the Visitor is pointing toward philosophy as having *both* a divine and a human aspect. The initial diairesis is not wholly philosophically wayward since it is tapping into a formal and abstract model of rule and of knowledge that precedes and

---

[404] *Stat.* 271d5-8; ὑπὸ θεῶν ἀρχόντων πάντ᾽ ἦν τὰ τοῦ κόσμου μέρη διειλημμένα: καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰ ζῷα κατὰ γένη καὶ ἀγέλας οἷον νομῆς θεῖοι διειλήφεσαν δαίμονες, αὐτάρκης εἰς πάντα ἕκαστος ἑκάστοις ὧν οἷς αὐτὸς ἔνεμεν

[405] See *Stat.* 272d6-273a4; During the cosmic reversal the daemons, immediately perceiving that Kronos has let go the rudder of the universe, follow suit and do the same. However the order of occurrence is clear, the daemonic release of their partial rule is in *response* to the god. That the relationship is of divine attendants to divine statesman is clear.

grounds the current cosmic arrangement. Though the abstract and external logic can function pedagogically as a starting-point of philosophical investigation, especially for a mathematically inclined mind such as that of YS,[406] this kind of philosophy must be exceeded in order to speak to the mixed reality of present life. This initiates a tension that will extend through the remainder of the dialogue, between the *recollection* of divine principles and the exercise of human rulership. It is unclear non-mythically how these two mutually co-existing realities participate in each other. Who is to say to what degree human philosophy has remembered or forgotten this age and to what degree the character of this 'former' age has been distorted by the peculiar character of cognition or imagination available to the present? So too, it is an active question how transcendent and divine principles ground and conversely are to be employed in human life.

To the 'living animal' of the dialogue, the mythical diversion *is* the very disruption—the very calamity—that the myth itself describes between epochs. The myth forces a complete reconsideration of the nature of human rulership, within different situational and logical parameters than what has come before. It constitutes a necessary movement toward the consideration of mixed reality, the actual reality in which humans reside, separated from the pure or absolute treatment of knowledge found in the initial diairesis. The Visitor begins again, but backwards, imitating and remembering the method and logic of what has come before to the extent possible, but now attempting to treat more directly the conditions of mixed reality. By attempting to move beyond the initial diairesis and beyond the great bulk of the myth, the Visitor moves deeper into the Age of Zeus, into the mixture, self-minding and self-separation peculiar to present reality. If there is a relationship to unity in the present circumstances, it is transfigured in the cast of human desire.

A New Approach on the Statesman: Paradigm and Measure

After the failure of the Visitor's direct approach to expose the one of the statesman's knowledge in the initial diairesis, cutting directly and successively into all knowledges in order to expose the boundaries of statesman, and after the mythological digression, which distances human life from the immanent rule of the selfsame one, the Visitor turns to paradigm in an attempt to recover a clear vision of the statesman. There

[406] This is also the view of Hemmenway (1994) and Mitchell (1980).

are two issues still at play—indeed, the two greatest problems have remained unsolved. First, what is the one of the statesman's knowledge? What is it that renders their knowledge as unique, and more fundamentally, grounds their knowledge *as* knowledge in the first place? Second, what does the statesman actually *do*, and how is the *work* of their knowledge to be understood in relation to the *being* of their knowledge? Since the myth goes little distance giving either of these questions a positive elaboration, only *negating* an insufficient conception of the statesman's unity, the Visitor urges YS to try again by different means, through the conscious adoption of and investigation into paradigm. This is not to say, of course, that paradigm is not already effectual in the philosophical investigations thus far. Most notably, the paradigm of the shepherd has cast a shadow over the proceedings, even if this figure has lacked proper philosophical introduction and reflection. However, it is at this point that the Visitor turns to examine the epistemic efficacy of paradigm more properly in itself. By way of twoness—the twoness proper to paradigmatic relation—the Visitor hopes to recollect the one.[407]

This middle section of *Statesman* thus stands in a kind of dialectical relation to what has come before, transforming the notion of unity out of the interlocutors' newfound concentration on the nature of multiplicity. It is through this vision of multiplicity that their notion of oneness must be reformed, since their first attempt at disclosing the one of rulership amounted to the very disappearance of the one itself. The structure of these passages is particularly difficult. The Visitor's turn to consider the structure of paradigm appears suddenly, just as the appearance of weaving as the paradigm of the statesman's activity, and his turn to consider the nature of 'due measure' comes not from the division of weaving directly, but out of a concern that they are taking too long in their investigation. First, in this chapter I want to suggest that the logic of the philosophical movement between these moments is *dialectical* in nature: it involves a successively greater inclusion of difference within the principle of unity. The Visitor's

[407] Benardete's (1984) interpretation of *Statesman* draws heavily on the relation between oneness and twoness: "In the *Statesman* there are four [digressions]: (1) part and kind; (2) the myth; (3) paradigm; (4) measure. The first two are linked to the statesman as shepherd, the third and fourth to the statesman as weaver. In short-hand jargon, the problems they severally raise can be titled as follows: (1) Ontology; (2) Cosmology; (3) Methodology; (4) Teleology. The first and third are as plainly to be paired together as the second and fourth, and each in turn is presented as a problem in doubleness: (I) part and kind; (2) god and nature; (3) paradigm and what it exemplifies; (4) number and the fitting. All four pairs culminate in the doubleness of the beautiful that is commonly called moderation and courage" (104).

increasing concern for ever-expansive notions of multiplicity corresponds to increasingly inclusive notions of oneness, which appear in and through this many. Second, I will argue that the nature of *language* and of *speaking* underlies each moment of this dialectical movement. The Visitor's remark, that 'speech and word are most fitting to make visible living things,'[408] parenthesizes the discussion of paradigm, weaving and due measure. These discussions will come out of and qualify the interlocutors' newfound consciousness of speech as the proper means of disclosing living things. Subtly, the Visitor aligns the statesman's art with the very structure of language and of dialectic itself.

The Paradigm of Paradigm: The Correspondence of the Same

The myth of Kronos has been unable adequately to represent the nature of the statesman. Remember, what initiates the transition to the mythical digression is precisely a *sense of shame*,[409] a *pathos* that does not belong at all to the domain of formal diairesis, but to the human condition, within the mixed and self-moving age. The interlocutors are already disharmonious and separated from pure givenness of the initial philosophical starting place and it is this *disharmony* in the first place that allows the Visitor to notice problems inherent to their method. The Eleatic thus shifts the conversation to the topic of philosophical methodology, to diagnose their difficulties and indicate how the investigation should proceed:

> It is hard—you heaven-sent!—to reveal sufficiently something of greater importance without divining (*χρώμενον*)[410] paradigms (*παραδείγμασι*). For each of us are in danger, having known (*εἰδὼς*) everything as if in a dream, of not recognizing (*ἀγνοεῖν*) once more in turn all things just as with our waking vision (*ὕπαρ*).[411]

---

[408] See *Stat.* 277c3-6

[409] *Stat.* 268d

[410] I translate χράω in a somewhat unorthodox way, but in a way which I think more accurately expresses the central meaning of the word. Benardete (1984) Brann, Kalkavage and Salem (2012) and Rowe (2005) each prefer the less ambiguous, "using" and "the use of." This is a perfectly reasonable translation, but in my own translation I prefer to use a term that captures some of the 'mantic' connotation of the word. After all, as we shall see, in the central moments of paradigm-introduction—with the shepherd-paradigm from the opening diairesis, and with the weaving-paradigm later—the Visitor's selection appears almost divine, introducing the models without serious philosophical justification, models which will nevertheless come to have an essential philosophical relation to the structure of statesmanship.

[411] *Stat.* 277d1-4; χαλεπόν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, μὴ παραδείγμασι χρώμενον ἱκανῶς ἐνδείκνυσθαί τι τῶν μειζόνων. κινδυνεύει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἕκαστος οἷον ὄναρ εἰδὼς ἅπαντα πάντ᾽ αὖ πάλιν ὥσπερ ὕπαρ ἀγνοεῖν.

Thus, the Visitor subtly recentres the investigation on a concern for *recollection*.[412] We are not so much leaving the content of the myth behind, as we are entering into its epistemic ramifications. The myth's dreamlike vision of totality does not suffice, since the interlocutors have not adequately accounted for the human situation with their waking *λόγος*: Philosophical reflection itself must understand itself to inhabit the sphere of human *pathos*. Thus, the Visitor remarks, "at present I have stirred up the *pathos* in us concerning knowledge (*τὸ περὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης πάθος ἐν ἡμῖν*),"[413] namely, the simultaneous *alienation* and *possession* of knowledge at one and the same time, which the retreat of the *one selfsame* in the myth has engendered. He is referring not only to his immediate observation about dreams, but to the human condition as outlined by the myth. To portray the importance of paradigms for the disclosure of difficult subjects, the Visitor explains to an increasingly confused YS, "my paradigm itself also has need again of a paradigm, blessed one!"[414] As it turns out, paradigm itself constitutes 'something of greater importance' for which one requires paradigm. Without proper examination, paradigm itself functions in a dreamlike way. Circularity again appears essential to the investigations of *Statesman*.

It seems appropriate, given the Visitor's prior insistence that "speech and word" is best suited to make living things visible, that the paradigm he chooses to illustrate paradigm is *grammatical* in nature—the "easiest and most beautiful way (*ῥᾷστον καὶ κάλλιστον*) to lead them into the things they do not yet recognize (*τὰ μήπω γιγνωσκόμενα*)."[415] The example concerns a child learning to read. In the first moment of the paradigm, that is, in the *paradigmatic moment* of the first paradigm, "sufficiently distinguishing each of the letters (*στοιχείων*) in the shortest and easiest of the syllables (*συλλαβῶν*), [children] become able to say true things about each thing," that is, both about the individual letters of a syllable and about the syllable itself as a composite of

[412] Sayre (2006) notes that the Stranger's observation is "strongly reminiscent of recollection in the *Meno*" (77).
[413] *Stat*. 277d6-7; …ἐν τῷ παρόντι κινήσας τὸ περὶ τῆς ἐπιστήμης πάθος ἐν ἡμῖν.
[414] *Stat.* 277d9-10; παραδείγματος, ὦ μακάριε, αὖ μοι καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα αὐτὸ δεδέηκεν.
[415] *Stat.* 278a5-6; [ἆρ᾽ οὖν οὐχ ὧδε] ῥᾷστον καὶ κάλλιστον ἐπάγειν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ μήπω γιγνωσκόμενα[;].

letters.[416] This simpler recognitions "become paradigms"[417] in relation to the more difficult and *unknown* cases about which children are "doubtful" (*ἀμφιγνοοῦντες*),[418] when "the letters that are judged truly have been brought to light as furnishing all those about which they are ignorant."[419] It is by 'throwing-beside' (*παραβάλλοντας*) and by 'leading the pupil back and forth' (*ἀνάγειν*) between the two moments of paradigm, which "exhibits that the same likeness and nature (*ὁμοιότητα καὶ φύσιν*) exists in each interweaving (*συμπλοκαῖς*)."[420] On a basic level then, grammatical pedagogy seeks both to separate out and to re-weave a kind of cloth.

The methodological crux of paradigm then centres upon the notions of *sameness* and *difference*, which already play an important role in the myth, and which the Visitor himself introduces as two of the 'greatest kinds' in *Sophist*. The grammatical paradigm "makes each of all the letters (*στοιχείων*) in all syllables to be addressed as different, being different from the others, and same as itself as being always same in the same letters (*κατὰ ταὐτὰ*)."[421] Sameness and difference cohere in the *one* of the στοιχεῖον. Oneness, therefore comes to *include* both sameness and difference in itself, which dialectically integrates both the immanent understanding of oneness from the initial diairesis and the aporia of oneness from the myth. The Visitor generalizes the structure: "the generation of a paradigm occurs whenever the same thing is correctly judged (*δοξαζόμενον ὀρθῶς*) to be in a different scattered thing (*ἐν ἑτέρῳ διεσπασμένῳ*) and brought together with each, so that it ends off with a single true opinion (*μίαν ἀληθῆ δόξαν*) of both together."[422] The most essential feature of paradigm, then, is this dialectical emergence of oneness out of twoness—a consciousness of the *same* out of two things that are essentially different from one another as a whole, which itself *generates*

---

[416] *Stat.* 277e6-8; ὅτι τῶν στοιχείων ἕκαστον ἐν ταῖς βραχυτάταις καὶ ῥάσταις τῶν συλλαβῶν ἱκανῶς διαισθάνονται, καὶ τἀληθῆ φράζειν περὶ ἐκεῖνα δυνατοὶ γίγνονται. Intrinsic to the meaning of the Greek 'στοιχεῖον' is being a part of (-εῖον) of a 'στοῖχος'—a 'line' or a 'row.' Thus, as *Cratylus* makes clear *negatively*, the στοιχεῖον has no positive meaning except for its integration within the στοῖχος. It is an *instrument* of the στοῖχος.
[417] *Stat.* 278b4-5; … παραδείγματα οὕτω γιγνόμενα…
[418] *Stat.* 278a2
[419] *Stat.* 278b3-4; …μέχριπερ ἂν πᾶσι τοῖς ἀγνοουμένοις τὰ δοξαζόμενα ἀληθῶς παρατιθέμενα δειχθῇ…
[420] *Stat.* 278b1-3; … ἐνδεικνύναι τὴν αὐτὴν ὁμοιότητα καὶ φύσιν ἐν ἀμφοτέραις οὖσαν ταῖς συμπλοκαῖς…
[421] *Stat.* 278b5-c1; … τῶν στοιχείων ἕκαστον πάντων ἐν πάσαις ταῖς συλλαβαῖς τὸ μὲν ἕτερον ὡς τῶν ἄλλων ἕτερον ὄν, τὸ δὲ ταὐτὸν ὡς ταὐτὸν ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἑαυτῷ προσαγορεύεσθαι.
[422] *Stat.* 278c4-6; …παραδείγματός γ᾽ ἐστὶ τότε γένεσις, ὁπόταν ὂν ταὐτὸν ἐν ἑτέρῳ διεσπασμένῳ δοξαζόμενον ὀρθῶς καὶ συναχθὲν περὶ ἑκάτερον ὡς συνάμφω μίαν ἀληθῆ δόξαν ἀποτελῇ[;]

paradigm. Paradigm both constitutes a consciousness *of*, and itself *shows*, what seems unrelated or unmixed to have an '*element*' of selfsameness running through and mixing with each interweaving, grounding a process of recollection in the setting-beside and mutual reversion to each 'one' of the paradigm's *two*. Yet crucially, paradigm for the visitor does not amount to knowledge. The one of true opinion and correct judging, grounded in the recognition of a sameness-in-other, does not necessarily know either the *same* or the *other* in itself, but judges each only in their mutual relation. The difference between true opinion and knowledge here lies in the difference between the exteriority of *spelling* and the concealed inner significance of *word.* Presumably though, this hermeneutic circularity between short and long, between *στοιχεῖον* and *συλλαβή*, between organized (*ίστανται*)[423] and scattered (*διεσπασμένῳ*) takes for itself knowledge as its distant *horizon*.

The Visitor now goes one step further, centring paradigm as an essential structure of soul's 'doxastic'[424] relation to the *all*: "should we be amazed then if our soul, having been affected (*πεπονθυῖα*) this same way by nature concerning the elements of all things (*τὰ τῶν πάντων στοιχεῖα*), sometimes becomes stable by the truth about each one thing in some things (*ἔν τισι*), and at other times it is again carried off concerning all things in each (*ἐν ἑτέροις*)."[425] Again, the Visitor gestures toward the *pathos* of human knowledge—the twoness of its condition. The stability of soul depends here upon the resolution of certain unified 'elements' within clusters of beings (*τισι*), a stability threatened in turn by the undetermined presence of unlimited 'all' in discrete fragments (*ἑτέροις*). This is not to say that reality is essentially *paradigmatic*, but only that paradigm is important as an initial moment of the soul's relation of intelligibility toward the 'all' as a complex—transposing a consciousness of discrete element in relation to the

---

[423] *Stat.* 278d2

[424] I say 'doxastic' here, meaning the relation of the soul's 'true opinion' to totality itself. Thinking especially of Plato's divided line from *Republic* (509d-513e), this relation of true opinion to the 'all' cannot be absolutely separated from the domain of knowledge, though it is not *identical* to knowledge. Paradigm has a certain essential opening onto truth. See *Stat.* 278e. See Sayre (2006) p. 87-9 for an evaluation of the similarities and differences between Platonic 'recollection,' 'collection' and 'paradigm,' all of which modes or methods of knowing situate humans essentially as already dwelling in the site of truth.

[425] *Stat.* 278c8-d3; θαυμάζοιμεν ἂν οὖν εἰ ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ φύσει περὶ τὰ τῶν πάντων στοιχεῖα πεπονθυῖα τοτὲ μὲν ὑπ᾽ ἀληθείας περὶ ἓν ἕκαστον ἔν τισι συνίσταται, τοτὲ δὲ περὶ ἅπαντα ἐν ἑτέροις αὖ φέρεται… Again, the Visitor's rare reference to soul should give us reason to pay attention, as the Eleatic slips into a distinctly *Socratic* register.

increasingly tangled and indistinct 'all.' By centring its gaze on the simple elements of reality, the soul makes its slow approach on totality.

This discussion of letters and words, then, produces a more radical philosophical shift than first appears on the surface. Where the initial diairesis portrays the statesman's knowledge in the light of its necessary unitary and theoretical simplicity, here the Visitor begins afresh, ascending toward statesmanship cognized as a *complex*—a statesmanship that looks more like an 'all' than a 'one.' Post-myth, with the discussion of paradigm, the Visitor makes a move toward the reality of statesmanship from another direction—the direction of the practical to the exclusion of the purely theoretical. He is speaking in the register of "the long and not so easy syllables of *practical life* (τὰς τῶν πραγμάτων μακρὰς καὶ μὴ ῥᾳδίους συλλαβὰς)," [426] a far cry from the concealed simplicity of the statesman's *theoretical* knowledge, with which the beginning of the dialogue concerns itself. There are, in other words, *two* aporias of statesmanship—its theoretical and practical realities—which, however, at the current moment in the dialogue do not appear to possess a 'oneness in both together.' The oneness of the *στοιχεῖον* or 'element,' which is simple and constitutes 'syllables' of reality, is *not* identical to the oneness of the statesman's originary theoretical knowledge, which is anything but simple, and which can be as little said to compose 'syllables' as to be judged by human cognition in the first place. The relation of these two 'ones' does not appear now itself to express a possible 'one.' It is crucial to recognize this fact in order to understand the dialectical structure of *Statesman*: though the paradigm of weaving will promise to make clearer the statesman's *practical* function in the city, or at least what *looks* practical in its concrete manifestations, it is not yet clear that paradigm can reach across the sensible-intelligible gap and account for the theoretical unity of the statesman's knowledge.

The paradigm of a child learning to spell, however, is not a paradigm of paradigm; it constitutes only the first moment of this meta-paradigm. The paradigm of

---

[426] *Stat*. 278d4-5; I take my translation here from Brann, Kalkavage and Salem (2012), whose translation of πραγμάτων is unique. Both Benardete (1984) and Rowe (1999) opt for the simpler, "things." I prefer the former for a few reasons. First, *practical life* is precisely that which the Visitor and YS will concern themselves in the following paradigm of weaving and in the application of this paradigm to statesmanship. Second, this translation more explicitly marks the transition post-myth in the philosophical opening onto the statesman's τέχνη. The blinding unity of their knowledge has forced the Visitor and YS to make another approach onto the statesman from another direction—from the direction of practical living.

paradigm shall only be completed when the Visitor and YS take the two moments of paradigm-complex as itself a *single* paradigm, to be employed in the search for the unity of other complexes.[427] In this case, of course, the complex in question is statesmanship, whose paradigm (conversely to the very structure of paradigm) is yet undetermined: "what, then, is some very small paradigm, which has the same practical occupation as the statesman, which, after placing it beside, might sufficiently find the one we seek?".[428] The Visitor casually and *mantically* responds to his own question, without explicit philosophical justification: "are you willing—by Zeus!, Socrates—unless we have something different at hand, otherwise than that we should choose the art of weaving?"[429]—"not the *whole* art (*μὴ πᾶσαν*),"[430] however, "for the art of things woven from wool (*ἐρίων*) will equally suffice."[431] But what is the statesman weaving? By specifically identifying *wool*, the Visitor also evokes *speaking* (*εἴρων*) and *loving* (*ἐρῶν*)—precisely the things that the initial diairesis excludes in its consideration of human nature, and the former of which the Visitor has just mentioned as the proper way to make visible all living things. What is excluded in the blinding unity of the initial diairesis begins to appear in the practical consideration of the statesman's art. We might also recognize in the paradigm traces of both the content of the initial diairesis as well as the mythic diversion. First, practically, the weaver's work is directly related to the shepherd's art, namely, by using the non-living biproduct of the shepherd's care for a living animal—indeed, a product that is *necessary* for the shepherd to produce for the very health of the sheep. Second, the weaver is dependent upon the spinner's materials, a figure with whom the god of the myth is identified, a spinner of all things.

---

[427] See *Stat.* 278e. Sayre (2006) rightly points this out in his distinction between 'Paradigm A'—"a letter in a familiar syllable, which serves as a paradigm for the same letter in an unfamiliar context"—and 'Paradigm C'—"the use of A in the learning process, [which] serves as a paradigm for the use of weaving as a paradigm in the definition of the statesman's art" (99). Paradigm D, by extension, Sayre identifies as "the use of weaving as a paradigm for statesmanship, which serves as a paradigm for the use of paradigms in dialectical inquiry generally" (99).

[428] *Stat.* 279c7-b1; τί δῆτα παράδειγμά τις ἄν, ἔχον τὴν αὐτὴν πολιτικῇ πραγματείαν, σμικρότατον παραθέμενος ἱκανῶς ἂν εὕροι τὸ ζητούμενον;

[429] *Stat.* 279b1-3; βούλει πρὸς Διός, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰ μή τι πρόχειρον ἕτερον ἔχομεν, ἀλλ᾽ οὖν τήν γε ὑφαντικὴν προελώμεθα

[430] *Stat.* 279b3

[431] *Stat.* 279b3-4; ἀποχρήσει γὰρ ἴσως ἡ περὶ τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἐρίων ὑφάσματα

Weaving: Being and Relation

The Visitor's turn to the diairesis of weaving is both complex and protracted, and as such, I only want to focus on the most fundamental philosophical developments stemming from this discussion. We again return to the diairetic splitting, but unlike with the initial diairesis of the statesman's knowledge, the Eleatic's starting point is "however many things we make (*δημιουργοῦμεν*) and acquire,"[432] and the first cut is between "things for the sake of doing something (*τὰ μὲν ἕνεκα τοῦ ποιεῖν τι*)"[433] and "defensive things for the sake of not suffering (*τὰ δὲ τοῦ μὴ πάσχειν ἀμυντήρια*), in which class the Visitor ultimately places the woven object."[434] This is similar to the first cut of *Sophist*, between "production" (*ποιητικός*)[435] and "acquisition" (*κτητικός*),[436] yet here the Visitor renders production as 'demiurgy' giving the branch a kind of divine significance that *Sophist* omits. Unlike in *Sophist*, too, the division is not between different kinds of arts *as such*, but between the different *products* of art, and in direct contrast to the opening of *Statesman*, it is not the selfsame *one* of a given knowledge that is being divided but the multifarious *all*. We begin on the opposite side of the one-many noetic divide. It is worth noting to that the end of weaving—for which statesman is a paradigm—is not actually *making* anything, but for the sake of 'not undergoing *pathos* or suffering.' The diairetic branch proper to weaving points to the originary rift within human life that the myth discloses. One weaves clothes to prevent the dissolution of body;[437] it seems possible that statesmanship looks to this same cleft in its epistemological dimension, weaving to prevent the extinction of *knowledge*.

At the close of the diairesis of weaving, the Visitor comes to a tentative conclusion, having discovered the art of clothes-making in the various turnings: "do we

---

[432] *Stat.* 279c7-8; …πάντα ἡμῖν ὁπόσα δημιουργοῦμεν καὶ κτώμεθα…
[433] *Stat.* 279c8
[434] *Stat.* 279c8-9
[435] *Soph*. 219b11
[436] *Soph*. 219c7
[437] Dorter (1994) sees in the Visitor's diairetic assumptions here, a newfound interest in 'value': "It may seem surprising that the stranger begins by dividing 'doing' from 'protecting against,' and looking for weaving under the latter. We can find it just as easily under the former, so it is odd that the distinction is made at all. It is evidently made in order to illustrate that an activity is best defined by its purpose, we might even say its 'value'" (200). Weaving, and particularly the products of weaving, are defined implicitly in relation to *goodness*. The proper criterion to determine of what weaving and its products essentially consist, is not reducible to a pure question of 'unity.'

also say that weaving, as much as it constitutes the greatest part concerning the work of clothing, is not different from this art of clothes-making except in name, just as also then kingship was different from statesmanship?".[438] In the latter case, the supposed unity of statesmanship, kingship, household-management covers over essential differences in the objects or sites of the respective arts. In this case, the identification of weaving with clothes-making covers over the fact that weaving constitutes only the "greatest part" (*μέγιστον μόριον*) of clothes-making. The apparent unity again covers over 'geometric' difference. Thus, the Visitor discovers they are in the same condition as before. The category of 'care'—here, "care of clothing"[439] or "art of clothes-making"[440]—marked out by division is too broadly defined in respect to the object of the weaver's art. Too many other expertises share the similar concern for the same object. The object stands at the locus of a great network of interrelations. He targets YS himself in his explanation, who has already made several mistaken moves to close the investigation, "[someone] may not be able to reflect that they have not yet divided 'helping work' (*συνεργῶν*), though it [weaving] had been divided from many other kindred things (*συγγενῶν*)."[441] Kindred things and their respective arts essentially open onto a different but related objects than those of weaving; helping causes, to the contrary, open onto and are concerned with the same object, but at different stages of its production. Though weaving may be the "finest and greatest" (*καλλίστην καὶ μεγίστην*)[442] of the clothes-making arts, since weaving brings these clothes to their initial end,[443] it does not constitute an unmediated relation to the *whole* of the product. It is dependent upon other arts.

The weaving art may comprise the end of clothes-making, but the *account* of weaving is "not yet complete,"[444] since, the Visitor explains, "the one engaging in

---

[438] *Stat.* 280a3-6; φῶμεν δὲ καὶ ὑφαντικήν, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν ἱματίων ἐργασίᾳ μέγιστον ἦν μόριον, μηδὲν διαφέρειν πλὴν ὀνόματι ταύτης τῆς ἱματιουργικῆς, καθάπερ κἀκεῖ τότε τὴν βασιλικὴν τῆς πολιτικῆς; The Visitor is referring to *Stat.* 258e-259d, where he collects the different names of the 'same' knowledge together.
[439] *Stat.* 281b4; ἐπιμέλειαν ἐσθῆτος
[440] *Stat.* 280a5
[441] *Stat.* 280b2-4; …μὴ δυνάμενος συννοεῖν ὅτι τῶν μὲν ἐγγὺς συνεργῶν οὔπω διώρισται, πολλῶν δὲ ἑτέρων συγγενῶν ἀπεμερίσθη.
[442] *Stat.* 281d1
[443] The clothes-mender, of course, is also tasked with bringing clothes back to their completion a subsequent time.
[444] *Stat.* 280e7; ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστι πω τέλεον, ὦ παῖ, τοῦτο λελεγμένον.

(*ἁπτόμενος*) the first-rule of making cloaks appears to do the opposite of the weaving."[445] The 'rulership' of an art and the 'beginning' of an art are now placed into some not-insignificant tension, where previously the terms were collapsed. The weaver's status as the primary 'ruler' of cloak-making is called into question, because the 'beginning' of cloak-making amounts to what appears to be the very opposite of weaving, in the "work of the carder's art" (*ξαίνοντος τέχνης ἔργον*),[446] which separates rather than combining "what is [already] combined and matted together."[447] Again, we might think of the god from the myth, whose cosmic spinning separates out the threads of reality from the tangled, primordial mass: neither weaving nor statesmanship constitute the beginning of themselves. The wool cloak, separated by class from all other things, seems to contain within itself *both* traces of separation and of weaving, and the weaving activity—just like the *speaking* activity[448] and presumably the activity of statesman—depends on a prior separation from unlimited disorder.

The Visitor now turns away from the cloak as an external object to consider its inner reality and causes. The art object appears as the product of two opposing kinds of action, but more than this, one *art* seems to account for the unity of these oppositions: all the related arts open onto "some single (*μία*) art of those spoken by everyone, 'woolworking,'"[449] which in turn "springs from two cuts, and each one of these are naturally at once parts of two arts."[450] Carding, for example, belongs *both* to the art of separating *and* to the art of woolworking without contradiction, just as weaving belongs to that of combining and to woolworking. The art of woolworking *as a whole* constitutes the moment of unity between these opposing functions. The discussion culminates in the Eleatic's clarification, that "some two great arts were to us in all things (*κατὰ πάντα*),

---

[445] *Stat.* 280e8-281a1; ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς τῶν ἱματίων ἐργασίας ἁπτόμενος τοὐναντίον ὑφῇ δρᾶν φαίνεται. I translate ἀρχῇ here as 'first-rule' instead of 'beginning' in contrast to every translation I've read in order to more clearly exhibit how Plato is making a parallel between weaving and statesmanship.
[446] *Stat.* 281a8
[447] *Stat.* 281a5; συνεστώτων καὶ συμπεπιλημένων
[448] See *Theaet.* 201e-202c for an account of the *weaving* of names and elements in speaking. The prior separation of 'unknowable elements,' however, seems to be necessary in order to produces speech-complexes.
[449] *Stat.* 282a7-9; …μία τίς ἐστι τέχνη τῶν ὑπὸ πάντων λεγομένων, ἡ ταλασιουργική.
[450] *Stat.* 282b1-2; [τῆς δὴ ταλασιουργικῆς] δύο τμήματά ἐστον, καὶ τούτοιν ἑκάτερον ἅμα δυοῖν πεφύκατον τέχναιν μέρη.

compounding and separation (*συγκριτική τε καὶ διακριτική*)."[451] It is ambiguous what the Visitor is referencing here, whether he is literally extending this unity of opposites to the cosmic all, echoing back to the scope of the myth, or whether he is only referring to the unity of these opposites specifically in relation to the craft of woolworking as itself an aggregate of different related arts.[452] Either way, within this 'all' there lies precisely an intimation of the unity of opposites. The unity of opposite activities is *necessary* in order for the wool to be worked to a proper end. Within the 'all,' the Visitor now finds a site of the unity of twoness.

The Eleatic now diairetically divides the class of the 'helping work' of cloak-making by making a distinction between "joint causes" (*συναιτίους*)—"those that do not create (*δημιουργοῦσι*) the work itself, but provide tools to the workers (*δημιουργούσαις*)"[453]—and "[direct] causes" (*αἰτίας*)—"those causes that look after and produce (*θεραπευούσας καὶ δημιουργούσας*)."[454] The 'joint' or 'instrumental' causes he leaves largely to one side, although we can assume that these arts, too, require the unification of certain processes of division and composition. As for the direct causes regarding the weaving of wool cloaks, the Visitor immediately divides between *διακριτικός* and *συγκριτικός*, and further divides the compounding class into the two-fold twisting of woof and warp, and the intertwining proper to weaving itself. This results in a peculiar definition of weaving: "the part of compounding in woolworking, whenever it brings to completion a complex (*πλέγμα*) from the straight-weaving of woof and warp, this woven thing altogether (*σύμπαν*) we address as woolen clothing, and the art of weaving, as concerning this thing."[455] The unity of each—the art and the product—is tied

---

[451] *Stat.* 282b7-8; … μεγάλα τινὲ κατὰ πάντα ἡμῖν ἤστην τέχνα, ἡ συγκριτική τε καὶ διακριτική.

[452] Benardete (1984) and Rowe (2005) each suggest that this is a reference to Soph. 226b-c. This suggestion misses the force of what the Visitor is saying, namely, that all things are related to, and are the unified products of, a complex relational nexus of separating and combining. The line in Sophist seems only to collect a variety of different discriminating arts under one name. We do not need to look further than Stat. 280e ff. for the object of the Visitor's reference.

[453] *Stat.* 281e1-2; ὅσαι μὲν τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ μὴ δημιουργοῦσι, ταῖς δὲ δημιουργούσαις ὄργανα παρασκευάζουσιν

[454] *Stat.* 281e9-10; …τὰς δὲ αὐτὰ θεραπευούσας καὶ δημιουργούσας [αἰτίας].

[455] *Stat.* 283a4-8; τὸ [γὰρ] συγκριτικῆς τῆς ἐν ταλασιουργίᾳ μόριον ὅταν εὐθυπλοκίᾳ κρόκης καὶ στήμονος ἀπεργάζηται πλέγμα, τὸ μὲν πλεχθὲν σύμπαν ἐσθῆτα ἐρεᾶν, τὴν δ᾽ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τέχνην οὖσαν προσαγορεύομεν ὑφαντικήν. "πλέγμα," we may note, in *Sophist* conveys the sense of a *complex of words* (262d6). Here, too, this sense of the Visitor's utterance is not far from the surface, with "πλεχθὲν" playfully suggesting the similar "λεχθὲν" and "ἐρεᾶν" bringing to mind the verb of speaking, "εἴρω." Plato deliberately uses the art and product of weaving to connote subtly the very structure of speaking.

to the other. Each requires the other for its own expression and for its own completion. In other words, the unity of the art is bound to the mutual interrelation between itself, which is already a *part* of woolworking, and the product itself. Further, the unity of weaving includes within itself the multitudinous differences that also share in the work of the end. These differences include the other objects in *kinship with* but not identical to the woven cloak, and the helping causes that also bring about cloak-weaving, both instrumental and direct—differences necessarily encompassed and included by the peculiar unity of art and object.

But what does this mean *dialectically*, this mixing of kinships, helping and instrumental causes, in relation to the philosophical movement of *Statesman* as a whole? For one, the diairesis of statesmanship at the beginning of the dialogue utterly fails to include in its consideration of unity the inclusion of difference and relation. The model of the statesman's rule involved an absolute immanentization of his one knowledge, without mediation or coordination. This is the blinding unity of divinity, understood *in itself* alone. That the unity of a human art includes and requires difference in its own functioning, involves a serious dialectical movement beyond the interlocutors' understanding of oneness at the beginning of the dialogue. So too, this vision of weaving involves a unity more inclusive than that of paradigm, which remains forever within the sphere of true opinion on account of its irreconcilable twoness. To be clear, of course, the very central movement of paradigm involves a noetic activity of *relating* between two ones, yet paradoxically, it is precisely the nature of *relation* and *difference* to conceal itself in paradigmatic cognition. The power of paradigm does not originate from its inclusion and recognition of the essential *difference* between the first and second moment, but from the essential *sameness* of paradigm to its unknown correlative. The paradigm treats 'great things' as if they are just like small things, which inherently covers over a great multitude of difference. In this regard, the Visitor's modifications to diairesis for the weaving paradigm go beyond the notion of unity which precedes. If unity is to be found, it is to be found *in* and *through* opposites—a unity of both being and relation.

<u>Due Measure: Oneness and the Good</u>

After unfolding their definition of weaving, Visitor understandably asks YS why they didn't simply say this at the beginning, instead of "going around in a circle, dividing

all the many things in vain."[456] The method of diairesis has, in some sense, not turned up much that the interlocutors didn't already know. Their definition of weaving, though exhibiting an odd kind of circularity, is not far removed from an everyday perception of what weaving entails. The diairetic methodology seems to have taken a long and arduous path to reveal what is mostly a perfectly ordinary definition of weaving. YS assures his teacher that he feels nothing had been spoken in vain, but the Visitor returns indirectly to the question of memory: perhaps YS feels this way now, but a certain "sickness" (*νόσημα*) might come upon him later and challenge this assurance.[457] Thus, the Eleatic begins his digression regarding 'due measure'—investigating the appropriate length of speech—by directing YS to "hear a certain account (*λόγον*) fitting (*προσήκοντα*) to be said concerning all such cases."[458] Again, he centres the discourse on the 'all,' the proper sphere of 'true opinion.'[459] So too, it is *λόγος* that the Visitor deems most appropriate to disclose a living thing, in this case, as a kind of prescription against an illness of forgetting. The twining of paradigm and the splitting of diairesis occur *through λόγος*, yet further require *λόγος* to make visible their end and purpose. If *λόγος* has appeared now in the most basic example of paradigm, both fundamental to the paradigm of paradigm and as a parallel to the paradigm of weaving itself, it emerges here as a kind of means of defense precisely to protect itself from sickness. The discussion of the "excess and deficiency"[460] of discussion, then, is not *merely* a way of transitioning to what's truly important, namely, the notion of due measure as ontological and epistemological reality. This reality may be manifest only in and through discourse. To protect philosophical discourse against the charge that it merely goes in circles, the Visitor invokes *λόγος*—intensifying the very circularity of the endeavour. The question becomes, does this circularity have a centre? And, moreover, is this centre accessible by *λόγος* itself?

The Visitor first generalizes the problem of "length (μήκους) and brevity (*βραχύτητος*)," "all excess (*πάσης ὑπεροχῆς*) and deficiency (*ἐλλείψεως*)," by collecting

---

[456] *Stat.* 283b3; …περιήλθομεν ἐν κύκλῳ πάμπολλα διοριζόμενοι μάτην
[457] *Stat.* 283b7
[458] *Stat.* 283b8-c1; …λόγον ἄκουσόν τινα προσήκοντα περὶ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων ῥηθῆναι.
[459] See *Stat.* 278c4-6 and *Stat*. 287a7; In this latter case, the Visitor and YS turn away from the discussion of due measure to consider again the statesman after they have agreed, without philosophical proof, on the necessary existence of due measure.
[460] *Stat.* 283c3-4; ὑπερβολὴν καὶ τὴν ἔλλειψιν

these concerns into the same class of "the art of measuring."[461] These two pairings of contraries above appear to be synonyms of each other, though the former seems to connote geometric construction and the latter, practical activity. In turn, the Visitor will divide this class of measuring-art diairetically into two, or, as he puts it, "set down these things as a twofold being (*οὐσίας*) and judgment (*κρίσεις*) of the great and the small."[462] Each branch of the art of measurement, then, will open onto a distinct *ontological* and, shall we say, *doxastic* relation to this dyad of contrary realities. Each of these ways of measuring addresses dyadic reality in a different, though true, register of being, and in turn poses a judgment of this being that is appropriate to the *mode* of being at issue in the measuring activity.

The first subclass of the measuring-art concerns "the reciprocal communing (*πρὸς ἄλληλα* […] *κοινωνίαν*) in greatness and smallness."[463] As the Visitor explains rhetorically, "[b]y nature does it not seem good to you to say that the greater is greater than the lesser, needing nothing other, and the lesser is again lesser than the greater, also needing nothing else?"[464] Any measure in this register, in other words, involves an essential 'twoness' in the coming-into-being of measurement—a measuring that posits itself in a mutual relation to both contraries. One measures the 'bigness' of something, for example, against both the lesser and the 'bigger' at once. A discrete 'big' thing lies always somewhere between the 'bigger' and the smaller, which both extend in opposite directions boundlessly, and yet commune with each other in their necessary relationality. Neither can be understood without the other.[465] A measurement involves, then, the imprecise play of judgment about the greater and the lesser in relation to an object.

---

[461] *Stat.* 283c11-d2; μήκους τε πέρι καὶ βραχύτητος καὶ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς τε καὶ ἐλλείψεως· ἡ γάρ [που] μετρητικὴ [περὶ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶ ταῦτα.]

[462] *Stat.* 283e8-9; διττὰς ἄρα ταύτας οὐσίας καὶ κρίσεις τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ τοῦ σμικροῦ θετέον…

[463] *Stat.* 283d7-8; τὸ μὲν κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἄλληλα μεγέθους καὶ σμικρότητος κοινωνίαν… Taken from the Brann, Kalkavage and Salem (2012) translation.

[464] *Stat.* 283d11-e1; ἆρ᾽ οὐ κατὰ φύσιν δοκεῖ σοι τὸ μεῖζον μηδενὸς ἑτέρου δεῖν μεῖζον λέγειν ἢ τοῦ ἐλάττονος, καὶ τοὔλαττον αὖ τοῦ μείζονος ἔλαττον, ἄλλου δὲ μηδενός;

[465] See, for example, *Phaedo* 100e-102a for Socrates' invocation of bigness and smallness as a justification for the existence of forms. We will note that the register of the Visitor's language here is *comparative.* He is not interested in notions of 'greatness or 'smallness' itself, for example. The greater and the lesser are more properly expressions of unlimited reality, then, and not self-unified forms as in the Socratic sense. The force of the argument is similar in each case—that the contraries require each other to be thought—but the underlying philosophical import differs between the two figures.

Judgment and being are bound to each other in this mode of eidetic reality, that of the "reciprocal communing" of contraries.

The Eleatic says little directly about this first kind of measuring—measuring by opposites—but we may make several inferences about its scope. In the first place, this is a measure concerned with unlimited reality[466] and whose measure similarly remains imprecise—the reality of the senses and of simple sense-judgment, for example, as I have indicated above. Though this classification will become more uncertain below, the Visitor at least *seems* to place most technical arts in this side of the division as well: "we put down one part of [the art of measurement] as all the many arts together, which measure number (*ἀριθμὸν*), length, depth, width, and quickness from their opposite."[467] Presumably the Visitor is not excluding here arts that measure by units—by discrete 'ones-of-something.' The 'unitary' measure of arithmetical number or geometric length is, after all, precisely the measure of the longer by the shorter, even if the unit offers a way of making the unlimited limited and computable. Though calculation allows a more precise judgment of the unlimited object, it is not clear that this mode of measurement is *essentially* different from that of perception in regards to the judgment of the greater and lesser. One might say, perception may use the one of the 'unit' to elevate itself toward greater precision, though by doing so it does not become non-perception. Similarly, the mode of measurability of dyadic being corresponds to the very judgment of measurability. Both uncountable and countable belong to the same essential kind of measure. Neither belong to the class of due measure, which, as we shall see, essentially belongs to questions of the *worth* and *goodness* of a thing.

The second mode of measurement concerns what the Visitor calls at different times, "the necessary being of becoming,"[468] "[the more and the less] in relation to the becoming of due measure"[469] and, more extensively, "'due measure,' 'the fitting,' the 'right time,' 'the needful' and all whatever has been rehoused (*ἀπῳκίσθη*) into the middle

---

[466] Sayre (2006) convincingly argues that the *Statesman* offers a dialogical source for several of Plato's so-called 'unwritten doctrines.' In particular, the Visitor's elaboration of the "greater and the lesser" and "excess and deficiency" in *Statesman* represents one of the clearest formulations of Plato's supposedly unwritten doctrine of the Dyad. See chapter 7.

[467] *Stat.* 284e3-5; …ἓν μὲν τιθέντες αὐτῆς μόριον συμπάσας τέχνας ὁπόσαι τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ μήκη καὶ βάθη καὶ πλάτη καὶ ταχυτῆτας πρὸς τοὐναντίον μετροῦσιν…

[468] *Stat.* 283d8-9; …τὸ δὲ τὸ κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν.

[469] *Stat.* 284c1 & 284d6; πρὸς τὴν τοῦ μετρίου γένεσιν

from the extremes."[470] It is important to recognize here that 'measure by due measure' does not involve the covering-over of dyadic reality; *both* kinds of measurement involve the "being and judgment of the great and the small," though according to different modes of the same. We find that within expressions of dyadic reality the second kind of measuring is already anticipated in the formulation of "excess and deficiency," which contrasts the usual dyadic neutrality of 'bigger and smaller' or 'longer and shorter.' "Excess and deficiency" suggests an oppositional dyad of *worth*, an excess of and deficiency from *something*—a standard, a due measure, what is fitting etc. Thus, though *properly* an expression of oppositional, dyadic reality, "excess and deficiency" itself seems to express the *due measure* of the dyad, including all unlimited reality in its scope, while simultaneously pointing toward a necessary centre—the being of becoming and the becoming of due measure. This mode of measurement does not *exclude* the extremes of reality, but brings the extremes—'rehouses' these extremes—into relation with a hidden centre, and a hidden *one*.

Making strides to reformulate the deficient notions of unity at play since the beginning of *Statesman*, the unity of what is in due measure represents a dialectically more inclusive vision of oneness than what has come before in both diairetic and paradigmatic treatments. The radicalization of the scope and purview of the all—corresponding to an unlimited difference and relativity—seems to threaten the very possibility of unity in the first place, since the judgment and being of any given thing is caught up in the play of dyadic 'twoness.' A thing is *both* great and small at once, though far from unifying these terms, it is caught up in the essential instability of this play of perception. The increasingly expansive and unbounded vision of the real necessitates the corresponding radical inclusivity of unity or risk a more total Protagorean relativism.[471] The introduction of due measure, then, accomplishes this precisely by bringing the unlimited relation of the 'greater and lesser' into a *concrete* relation of excess and

---

[470] *Stat.* 284e6-8; [τὸ δὲ ἕτερον,] ὁπόσαι πρὸς τὸ μέτριον καὶ τὸ πρέπον καὶ τὸν καιρὸν καὶ τὸ δέον καὶ πάνθ' ὁπόσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀπῳκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων.

[471] A great portion of the *Theaetetus* involves the refutation of Protagoras' famous relativistic dictum, that 'man is the measure of all things.' *Stat.* 285a seems to be referring precisely to this theory, "that the art of measuring concerns all things that come into being" (ὡς ἄρα μετρητικὴ περὶ πάντ᾽ ἐστὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα)—which is to say, human measure inherently rules the domain of becoming. In some sense, the *demiurgic* vision of due measure displaces the human at the centre of this activity.

deficiency, centred around the *fittingness* of the practical activity. Due measure *excludes* these extremes *precisely by their inclusion*—by their essential relation or 'rehousing' of these extremes in relation to what is in due measure. The unity of due measure, then, is *most comprehensive of difference* in the dialectical movement of the interlocutors' understanding of unicity, not because it subsumes difference under sameness, but by revealing difference in its essential relation to oneness.[472]

The Visitor's discussion of 'due measure' corresponds with one of his most explicit treatments of goodness from the whole dialogue.[473] One of the Visitor's central arguments for the existence of this second kind of measurement, takes as its evidence an ethical vision—the witness of good and bad actions: "[w]ill we not again say that there truly (*ὡς ὄντως*) comes to be (*γιγνόμενον*) what exceeds the nature of due measure or is exceeded by it either in word or in deed, and in this the good and the bad differ exceedingly to us?"[474] Due measure appears in good words and deeds precisely as what is good about these things. Without betraying the Visitor's disinterest in formal theory, his notion of due measure approaches the 'Good' itself.

This second kind of measuring, however, further complicates the placement of the technical arts in either class of measuring-art. The Visitor considers the consequences to *τέχνη* if only the first kind of measurement existed:

> With this account, will we not destroy utterly all these arts and their works, and especially will we not lose sight of what we now seek, the statesman, and the weaver, which has been specified? For as many such arts, I suppose, guard against what is greater or less than due measure in their practical actions, not guarding against something that does not exist, but as something that is difficult. And in this way, they save measure (*μέτρον*) and bring to completion all good and beautiful things.[475]

---

[472] *Stat.*285b-c lays out more clearly the dialectical necessity of attaining *both* a clear vision of the multitudinous differences in a community of things, *and* the essential similarities unifying these differences. Should one attain a clear vision of due measure, this is precisely what would be accomplished.

[473] The Visitor's treatment of goodness does not appear to correspond to a Platonic form of 'Goodness.' This is not to say that this is not a properly *Platonic* conclusion, but only that the form 'Goodness' is not at issue in this particular dialogue, for these particular interlocutors.

[474] *Stat.* 283e3-6; τὸ τὴν τοῦ μετρίου φύσιν ὑπερβάλλον καὶ ὑπερβαλλόμενον ὑπ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν λόγοις εἴτε καὶ ἐν ἔργοις ᾖρ᾽ οὐκ αὖ λέξομεν ὡς ὄντως γιγνόμενον, ἐν ᾧ καὶ διαφέρουσι μάλιστα ἡμῶν οἵ τε κακοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀγαθοί;

[475] *Stat.* 284a5-b2; οὐκοῦν τὰς τέχνας τε αὐτὰς καὶ τἄργα αὐτῶν σύμπαντα διολοῦμεν τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὴν ζητουμένην νῦν πολιτικὴν καὶ τὴν ῥηθεῖσαν ὑφαντικὴν ἀφανιοῦμεν; ἅπασαι γὰρ αἱ τοιαῦταί που τὸ τοῦ μετρίου πλέον καὶ ἔλαττον οὐχ ὡς οὐκ ὂν ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ὂν χαλεπὸν περὶ τὰς πράξεις παραφυλάττουσι, καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ μέτρον σῴζουσαι πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται.

If the general range of calculating and measuring arts appeared earlier to belong more properly to the first kind of measurement, here the Visitor shows that they are at least dependent upon the second for their being. Indeed, just like the 'greater and lesser' itself, subject to a twofold *being* and *judgment* disclosed by the respective kinds of measurement, *τέχνη* itself appears to be similarly divided, containing within itself two modes of being and judgment. In the 'perceptual' aspect of *τέχνη*, the craftsman performs discrete first-order measurements of their objects, determining their material in relation to the bigger and the smaller. In the 'demiurgic' or 'productive' aspect of *τέχνη*, these discrete calculations are directed at an *end*, toward which the whole of their productive activity aims. Thus, the discrete moments of perception and calculation are bound to a central moment of due measure, which constitutes both the beginning and the end of the productive activity. The technical arts, then, are bound to *both* modes of measurement and to *both* modes of being: the unlimited twoness of dyadic reality, and the oneness of due measure, which constitutes the *good* and the *end* of the product. This is to say, though the Visitor has largely abstracted questions of the good from questions of the unity of technical expertise and knowledge thus far in *Statesman*, here he is unequivocal: a vision of unity—a vision of the wholeness of the whole—cannot be abstracted from the question of the one's *good*. A purely mathematical rendering of political unity is not possible without doing violence to the *good* of political unity. The Visitor's resistance to questions of the better and worse, which in part defines the methodology of diairesis, must fall away precisely at this point, when unity itself cannot show itself apart from its goodness. It is out of the practical arts that the necessity of the one makes itself present—the necessity of the Good.

What is the most metaphysically prescient section of *Statesman*, however, is also its least methodologically rigorous. No sooner has goodness made its appearance on the stage of measuring, it disappears from inquiry; at the precise moment goodness reveals itself as a possible object of disclosure, it again withdraws. No sooner has the Visitor charged YS that "the more and the less now must be compelled to become measurable […] in relation to the becoming of due measure,"[476] he cuts off the attempt, citing this as

[476] *Stat.* 284b9-c1; νῦν τὸ πλέον αὖ καὶ ἔλαττον μετρητὰ προσαναγκαστέον γίγνεσθαι [μὴ πρὸς ἄλληλα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ] πρὸς τὴν τοῦ μετρίου γένεσιν;

a "still greater work"[477] than the investigation of *Sophist*.[478] He does not attempt to prove to YS that the greater and the less can *necessarily* be measured by due measure—deferring this demonstration with the promise "that sometime it will be needed to show forth what has now been said concerning the accurate for itself"[479]—but only *assumes* this premise on the basis of the opinion that the technical arts really do exist. This will have a profound effect on the final, explicitly political section of the dialogue, since the Good-Unity is permitted to appear only as *fact*, without a direct examination of its inner reality and content. We are subject to the rule of a principle about which we have no actual knowledge. It is ironic that the Visitor refuses to go the length to make manifest "indisputably"[480] the existence of due measure precisely at the point in the text when he is arguing that the length of philosophical discourse should be judged only "in accordance with 'the fitting.'"[481] Since no criterion for the judgment of the fitting or of due measure has been disclosed, what constitutes the fittingness of the fitting remains concealed. *Statesman* will then involve no *philosophical* judgment of its own lengths in relation to the fitting. We are confined to the realm of fact, which belongs to true opinion. The Visitor, then, simultaneously posits and removes the centre of philosophical *λόγος*, promising a hermeneutical relation of the pupil to this centre—"it is necessary to attend to (*μελετᾶν*) being able to give and receive and account of each thing"[482] for the sake of "all things"[483]—but withholding a vision of this same knowledge.

Conclusion

The Visitor's turn to paradigm as a new methodology to seek the statesman, following the implicit critique of the myth, comes to centre on the notion of due measure in its dialectical reformulation of epistemic unity. Though the Visitor is unable to prove its necessary existence, leaving it as a kind of hypothesis or true opinion, as an image of the statesman's activity and knowledge it improves substantially on the diairetic model, since, rather than simply covering over the nature of what is known, due measure

---

[477] *Stat.* 284b7
[478] Namely, the part in which the Visitor must prove that non-being in a way *is*.
[479] *Stat.* 284d1-2; ὥς ποτε δεήσει τοῦ νῦν λεχθέντος πρὸς τὴν περὶ αὐτὸ τἀκριβὲς ἀπόδειξιν.
[480] *Stat.* 284c3; ἀναμφισβητήτως
[481] *Stat.* 286d1-2; πρὸς τὸ πρέπον
[482] *Stat.* 286a4-5; διὸ δεῖ μελετᾶν λόγον ἑκάστου δυνατὸν εἶναι δοῦναι καὶ δέξασθαι·
[483] *Stat.* 285d8; καὶ τοῦτο δῆλον ὅτι τοῦ περὶ πάντα.

discerns a unity that lies already in the nature of its objects. What is more, with the introduction of due measure as the standard of technical unity, the Visitor first reveals that oneness depends on a criterion and judgement of goodness. Oneness, then, is not the sole end and ground of knowledge, but is *woven*, so to speak, with the concern for and reality of goodness. Our philosophical outlook on the statesman's knowledge must be engaged with its goodness, just as the statesman in the exercise of their knowledge, must look to the good of their object. It seems at this point in the dialogue, that the interlocutors are prepared now to complete their definition by finally considering not only the one of the statesman, but also the good of their knowledge, which is essentially *constitutive* of their unity.

Chapter VII – The *Pathos* of Desire: Politics and the Play of the One-Good [287B – 311C]

In the remaining section of the dialogue, two surprising things happen: first, the Visitor's philosophical approach on the statesman seems to become more *Socratic*, both after abandoning bifurcatory diairesis as the absolute standard of philosophical discovery and after coming to see the place of goodness—the better and the worse—in its integral relation to definition;[484] second, in his characterization of the statesman's unity, the Visitor seems to revert back to a pre-mythic conception of the absolute priority of the king's knowledge. We must be cautious here, determining the dialectical logic of *Statesman*'s conclusion. It appears on the surface, at least, that this ending—the reversion to an absolute knowledge for and from itself—negates the entire dialectical trajectory of *Statesman*. Instead of being able to locate the statesman's knowledge more fully *in* and *through* its objects of care, toward which the due measure section appears to be gesturing, the Visitor doubles back to the priority of the absolute, privileging once again the enigmatic concealment of its epistemic ground. *We return to the beginning*—the *ἀρχή*—not only of the dialogue, to the assumptions of the initial diairesis, but also to the beginning of the myth—to the age of Kronos—the whole of which itself functions as an image of the movement of the whole dialogue. Was the investigation in such disarray, threatening to be immersed in an 'unlimited sea of unlikeness,' that the god needed to return to the tiller? Was the principle import of the discussion of due measure only that nothing was measured at all in their discussion of statesmanship? It certainly appears that this return to the absolute priority of knowledge over known unravels the cloth that *Statesman* has been weaving. We appear to come full circle.

Though the Visitor's return to the absoluteness of the Visitor's knowledge *appears* to preclude the possibility of finally knowing the knowledge of the statesman, I want to suggest that this is not the case. In this chapter I want to stress two major points. First, the discussion of regimes, which constitutes a great portion of the end of *Statesman*, is indeed a return to a pre-mythical understanding of the king's knowledge,

[484] Scodel (1987) notes that the Eleatic Visitor becomes much more 'Socratic' in this final section of the dialogue, though he is unable to account for *why* this occurs. In my own interpretation, I believe this is a result of the fact that goodness has shown itself to coincide with the unity of due measure. It is this newfound interest in the question of goodness that makes the Visitor appear now in the light of Socrates.

corresponding once again to the withdrawal of their *activity* and this epistemic *ground* from sight. We return to the absoluteness of epistemic unity, which we cannot breach from outside. In order to properly distinguish the statesman from the sophist, the Visitor must maintain that the only truly political knowledge is an absolute knowledge. However, second, where the question for goodness was formerly excluded both from proper philosophical methodology and from the political scene, the Visitor now restores it at the heart of philosophical and political inquiry. In other words, though we have been 'restored to the care of the god,' so to speak, whose divine knowledge is shrouded in inaccessible light, something has changed. The one is not permitted to withdraw absolutely but remains visible to the philosopher in its aspect of *goodness*. We approach Plato's One-Good identity neither from a perspective *inside* this identity nor from the external and doctrinal perspective of true opinion, but in the dialectical examination of the woven 'cloth' of reality and in dialogue with other people.

In the very concluding passages of *Statesman* the Visitor will go further, once again tracing the dialectical movement of the myth's *μεταβολή* and centring the king's knowledge on the knowledge of the human *soul*. If the knowledge of the statesman is one, essentially and absolutely, the ground of this knowledge is not tautologically located in inaccessible unity, but in the goodness of the statesman's subjects. Due measure as the source and expression of the king's knowledge, then, returns finally at the end of the dialogue, ensuring the opening of a *path* to real political *ἐπιστήμη*. In the end, the Visitor may maintain *both* the absoluteness of the statesman's one *and* the possibility of *tracing* this one in the mutuality of dialogue. *Statesman*, then, appears to open onto the One-Good identity of Plato's unwritten doctrine not dogmatically, but in the philosophical *questioning* of political reality, and in the *questioning* of the soul.

The Present-Absence of the God

One of the major difficulties of interpreting this final section of *Statesman* is that the Visitor's political considerations seem to mix both pre-mythic and post-mythic considerations of statesmanship. The shepherd image and weaver paradigm each support the investigation variously; the Visitor understands the statesman's knowledge sometimes in an aspect of 'absoluteness,' sometimes in an aspect of 'absence.' The final section marks the convergence of a great plurality of opposing characterisations of the

statesman's knowledge and activity: the various dialectical moments bound up in the movement of the dialogue are present in a kind of collage, each fighting for their due philosophical significance. In each case, for example, the Visitor seems to backtrack from the diairetic corrections he makes to the statesman's delimitation after the myth. (1) The conclusion that the statesman rules over a "voluntary" (*ἑκούσιος*)[485] crowd of people—precisely the distinction between tyrant and king—the Visitor calls directly into question in these further political musings: "the boundary-marker (*ὅρον*) concerning what is needful [for statesmanship] is neither few nor many, voluntary nor involuntary, poverty or wealth, but a certain knowledge, if, in fact, we will follow the things we have said before."[486] Of course, that statesmanship *essentially* involves voluntary rule the Visitor has also previously maintained. It is difficult to see how the Visitor is not simply overriding the insights of the myth. (2) The post-mythic division between "divine herdsman" and "human carer"[487]—coupled with the insight that the statesmen "are very much similar to those they rule in their nature, […] partake[ing] of a more nearly resembling education and rearing"[488]—seems to be compromised again by a return to the originary assumptions of the investigation. Now, the Visitor will posit the statesman again as "one (*εἷς*) straightaway superior in body and soul"[489] whose rule must be separated "like a god from men, from the other regimes."[490] (3) Though the Visitor has never truly abandoned the language of 'herds' as the object of political concern,[491] this language returns and redoubles at the close of *Statesman*,[492] sitting uncomfortably with the interlocutors' newfound consciousness of the city as the site of politics. (4) Finally, the distinction between practical and theoretical kinds of knowledge, already in profound tension at the beginning of the dialogue, remains seemingly irrevocably blended at its

---

[485] See *Stat*. 276e
[486] *Stat.* 292c5-8; [τοῦτ᾽ αὐτὸ τοίνυν ἆρ᾽ ἐννοοῦμεν, ὅτι] τὸν ὅρον οὐκ ὀλίγους οὐδὲ πολλούς, οὐδὲ τὸ ἑκούσιον οὐδὲ τὸ ἀκούσιον, οὐδὲ πενίαν οὐδὲ πλοῦτον γίγνεσθαι περὶ αὐτῶν χρεών, ἀλλά τινα ἐπιστήμην, εἴπερ ἀκολουθήσομεν τοῖς πρόσθεν;
[487] See *Stat.* 276d
[488] See *Stat.* 275c1-4
[489] *Stat.* 301e2; τό τε σῶμα εὐθὺς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διαφέρων εἷς
[490] *Stat.* 303b4-5; …οἷον θεὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτειῶν.
[491] See above. The Visitor makes steps to reject the herdsman paradigm by making a conscious separation between "divine herdsman" and "human carer," though even in the reformulated post-myth definition he addresses the statesman as being involved in "herd-preserving" (ἀγελαιοκομικὴν) (*Stat.* 276e11).
[492] See *Stat.* 287b5, 289c1, 294e10, 295e6, 299d8

close.[493] The use of the practical paradigm of weaving, which guides the final diairesis, apparently does little to allay this overarching tension.

The way through this tangle of threads, I suggest, is to perceive the structure of the Visitor's exposition both as a rehearsal of the philosophical movement of the dialogue as a whole and as a synthesis of its dialectical moments. What has been expounded *temporally* in the myth, the Visitor reframes now in relation to the simultaneity of *goodness*—the better and the worse. There are many concealed dangers, however, bound to this dialectical convergence. First, we must remember that the final political section of *Statesman* is still functioning within a *paradigmatic* mode of discourse. We are, mythically speaking, still within the age of Zeus, caught between memory and *τέχνη*, as competing modes of the *pathos* of knowledge. An interpretation of this final section must keep this in mind. The investigation remains in the realm of true opinion and "hypothesis (*ὑποτίθεσθαι*)."[494] Second, writing itself—reflected in the structure of *laws*, as we shall see—precisely occupies this ambiguous position between divine recollection and human craft. The Visitor and YS can in no way be viewed as speaking plain Platonic doctrine. Third, no less difficult a problem of interpretation, the parallelism between divine and human rulership, which redoubles at the end of *Statesman*, poses a particularly rigorous problem of political analysis. In the course of the dialogue, the Visitor has at times moved to identify the human statesman with the divine activity, and at other points sharply divided their respective forms. Unless Plato truly means for us to dismiss wholesale a significant and lengthy portion of *Statesman*, we will need to be careful when delimiting the human ruler from the divine, and critically examine these moments of divine identification and difference. All these different factors situate and inform the final diairesis of the dialogue and make interpretation a particularly difficult task.

The Digression on Regimes

This chapter will not focus directly on the political ramifications of the conclusion of *Statesman*, nor will it make an argument for the continuity or discontinuity of the politics outlined here with Plato's political philosophy more broadly. Rather, I shall focus my remarks on the metaphysical and dialectical structuring of the dialogue's end. This is

[493] See *Stat.* 284c, 289c-d, 305d
[494] *Stat.* 284c9

not to say that I shall deliberately avoid political questions, as if this is possible, but only that they shall not constitute the centre of my analysis. More specifically, my interpretation shall focus upon a *digression* from the final diairesis, which returns to the original question of the dialogue—the nature of the statesman's knowledge—and poses three different models of rulership, roughly mapping onto the three discrete temporal moments that the myth describes.

Joint and Subordinate Causes

Taking the reformed diairetical *method* used to define weaving as a paradigm to determine the statesman, the Visitor turns now to divide statesmanship from its joint and direct causes, which lie "throughout the city itself (*κατὰ πόλιν αὐτὴν*),"[495] and which were neglected in the first diairesis. In doing so, however, the Visitor reaffirms the divisions made previously: "Surely then, indeed, the king has been thoroughly separated from many things flocking together (*σύννομοι*), and moreover, from all the arts that concern herds."[496] In spite of the problems plaguing these initial steps of definition, they remain our starting point in the determination of statesmanship. The Visitor hopes that distinguishing between the various joint and direct causes of the city will assuage these issues. Now, however, without explicit justification, he makes his first radical departure from the diairetic methodology employed in the weaving-case. It is "difficult to cut [the joint causes] into two,"[497] the Visitor divines, before modifying their method: "let us cut

---

[495] *Stat.* 287b6

[496] *Stat.* 287b4-6; οὐκοῦν ἀπό γε τῶν πολλῶν ὁ βασιλεὺς ὅσαι σύννομοι, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν περὶ τὰς ἀγέλας διακεχώρισται· I differ from most translators here in my rendering of this passage, 'ἀπό γε τῶν πολλῶν […] ὅσαι σύννομοι,' what the king has been divided from: "from many arts that were in the same field" (Benardete (1984)), "from the many sorts of expertise that share his field" (Rowe (2005)), and "from the many arts that share his field" Brann, Kalkavage and Salem (2012). Annas & Waterfield (1995) do not even attempt to conserve the connotations of the herd in 'σύννομοι' in their translation, "from his rivals." The sense in these translations is that the Visitor is referring to the statesman's 'competing arts' in both sections of the sentence, rephrasing his 'spatial' description at the beginning with a more 'object-oriented' description in the second instance. These arts 'share the field' of statesmanship, but less metaphorically, they share the same object of interest—the herd. I prefer to see the 'τῶν πολλῶν' here as a reference to the individuated animals in a herd, and the 'πασῶν' in the second half of the sentence as a reference to the competing arts. We will remember that the initial diairesis distinguishes the nature of the statesman quite radically from the nature of the herd animal in the paradigm of the shepherd. Though the myth causes a revaluation of this position, culminating in the Visitor's claim that "the statesmen who exist here and now are very much similar to those they rule in their nature, and they partake of a more nearly resembling education and rearing" (*Stat*. 275c1-4), the interlocutors are in danger of forgetting this, as we shall see. This quotation, then hearkens back to the *two* major claims of the initial diairesis: that the statesman is different from the many of the herd, and that their art is different from the other herd-arts.

[497] *Stat.* 287b10; [οἶσθ' οὖν ὅτι] χαλεπὸν αὐτὰς τεμεῖν δίχα;

limb by limb just as a sacrificial animal."[498] If weaving is the paradigm of statesmanship, the Visitor appears to find in animal sacrifice an analog for diairesis. Diairesis, then, if we take this metaphor seriously, seems to involve essentially the mediation between gods and humans. We might wonder at its ability to discern the nature of the statesman in their ambiguous divine-human nature.

As the Visitor begins to make his cuts, he immediately hits upon another difference from the weaving paradigm. Where the Eleatic solely identifies the joint causes of weaving as instrument-making, in the case of statesmanship, instruments—or at least, instruments narrowly defined, since "that it is reputed to be said of the things that are that they are an instrument of some one thing (ἑνός γέ τινος), is a statement that is somewhat persuasive"[499]—are only one class of the joint causes. Over the course of one and a half Stephanus pages, the Visitor uncovers seven joint causes in total: there is the "firstborn form (*πρωτογενὲς εἶδος*) which should have been placed first (*κατ' ἀρχὰς*)"—raw materials[500]—"and after this, the instrument, vessel, vehicle, defence (*πρόβλημα*), plaything and nourishment."[501] Tame animals, the Visitor alleges, has already been treated; slaves, he will treat forthwith. Curiously, "the look (*ἰδέα*) of currency (*νομίσματος*),[502] and of seals and of the much engraving,"[503] the Visitor excludes from having its own class, "for a class possess these things in no great field (*μέγα σύννομον*) by themselves, but some into the class of good order (*κόσμον*),[504] some into that of the tool by force (*βίᾳ*), but nevertheless they are dragged there wholly by agreement."[505] The

---

[498] *Stat*. 287c3; κατὰ μέλη τοίνυν αὐτὰς οἷον ἱερεῖον διαιρώμεθα… It is possible to view this methodological modification as a reaction to the exposition of due measure previously. Turning away from the unlimited dyad, one might interpret this new cutting as a move toward diairetic 'due measure.'

[499] *Stat.* 287d8-e1; ὅτι γὰρ οὖν τῶν ὄντων ἔστιν ὡς ἑνός γέ τινος ὄργανον εἰπόντα δοκεῖν εἰρηκέναι τι πιθανόν.

[500] Just previously, the Visitor remarks, "we should call all this one (*ἓν*) thing, the first-born and uncompounded (*ἀσύνθετον*) possession for humans, in no way belonging to the work of the statesman's knowledge" (ἓν δὲ αὐτὸ προσαγορεύομεν πᾶν τὸ πρωτογενὲς ἀνθρώποις κτῆμα καὶ ἀσύνθετον καὶ βασιλικῆς ἐπιστήμης οὐδαμῶς ἔργον ὄν.) We should think *both* of the στοιχεῖον from the letter-syllable paradigm *and*, perhaps too, of the god's raw spinning of the cosmos.

[501] *Stat.* 289a9-b2;… τεθὲν κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς τὸ πρωτογενὲς εἶδος, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ὄργανον, ἀγγεῖον, ὄχημα, πρόβλημα, παίγνιον, θρέμμα.

[502] It is important to note here that "νόμισμα" conveys also the sense of 'custom' or 'a thing used customarily'—a *law*, per se.

[503] *Stat.* 289b4-5; …[οἷον] ἡ τοῦ νομίσματος ἰδέα καὶ σφραγίδων καὶ παντὸς χαρακτῆρος.

[504] The most popular way to translate this is as "ornamentation," a perfectly valid rendering, though one I feel misses the force of the passage, for which reasons I note above.

[505] *Stat.* 289b5-7; γένος τε γὰρ ἐν αὐτοῖς ταῦτα οὐδὲν ἔχει μέγα σύννομον, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν εἰς κόσμον, τὰ δὲ εἰς ὄργανα βίᾳ μέν, ὅμως δὲ πάντως ἑλκόμενα συμφωνήσει.

Visitor is talking here about inscriptions—about *writing*—which encompasses and includes not only the diairetic divisions themselves,[506] but the very laws and customs of a city. That these laws themselves do not hold to a stable class in themselves puts in jeopardy the Visitor's second-best kind of rule, the rule by fixed law, as we shall see in turn. What exactly are the criteria of determining which laws, customs or divisions are purely ornamental, instrumental or a product of good order? At this point, at any rate, this question is not a cause for concern to the Eleatic.

From here, the interlocutors turn toward the division of the direct causes. After dividing the statesman from the class of slaves, a liminal class lying between possession and cause,[507]— "the opposite […] from those whom we have suspected possess the pursuit and *pathos* [of the king]"[508]—the Visitor subsequently removes labourers and traders, heralds and scribes, and of those who possess a more direct claim to rule, the class of diviners, priests and kings-by-lot. It is at this point that he abruptly stops, citing the appearance of a "very great throng (*πάμπολυν ὄχλον*)"[509] and "a chorus concerned with the matters of cities"[510]—those he will later identify as "factioners" (*στασιαστικούς*),[511] party politicians we might say, "the greatest sorcerer of all sophists and the most experienced in this art."[512] It is the observation of this mass of competitors, from which the central digression of this section stems. The Visitor must separate the true king from those who "pretend (*προσποιοῦνται*) to possess"[513] and "imitate (*μιμεῖσθαι*)"[514] this expertise. Just as in *Sophist*, the fissure between *seeming* and *really being* becomes central to the philosophical significance of the text. These political sophists seem to thrive in regimes whose "boundary-markers" (*ὅροις*) involve a criterion different from political *knowledge*, whether number of rulers, wealth, the voluntariness of its citizens, or the use of written laws.

---

[506] See *Stat.* 258c, where the Visitor describes the diairetic method as precisely a method of *stamping* and *marking*.
[507] See Miller (2004) p. 151 and Dorter (1994) p. 214-15 for an analysis of the ambiguity of the status of slavery in the Visitor's taxonomy.
[508] *Stat.* 289d8-9; …τοὐναντίον ἔχοντας εὑρίσκομεν οἷς ὑπωπτεύσαμεν ἐπιτήδευμα καὶ πάθος.
[509] *Stat.* 291a2-3; πάμπολυν ὄχλον
[510] *Stat.* 291c1; … τὸν περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεων πράγματα χορόν.
[511] *Stat.* 303c2
[512] *Stat.* 291c3-4; τὸν πάντων τῶν σοφιστῶν μέγιστον γόητα καὶ ταύτης τῆς τέχνης ἐμπειρότατον.
[513] *Stat.* 292d6
[514] *Stat.* 300d10

The Best Regime: The Return of Divine Knowing and Ruling

To fend off these statesman-competitors, the Eleatic returns to the central premises of the investigation. He returns again to the *beginning*—to the *beginning* of their shared *λόγος* and to the essential aspect of rulership, which, as we shall see, constitutes a *beginning* in itself. He returns to his initial assumptions concerning statesmanship, "not forgetting that it is knowledge" (in the age of Zeus, this is a distinct possibility) both "discerning and directive,"[515] though, the Visitor correctly notes, "we have not yet been able to examine precisely and sufficiently whatever this knowledge is."[516] By extension, this also constitutes a return to the mode of knowledge that the myth has revealed as *divine.* The Visitor refuses the simple mathematical 'oneness' of rulership, the simple fact of having one (*ἑνὶ*) ruler,[517] as a proper criterion of the "correct" (*ὀρθὴν*) regime,[518] but in doing so, he again takes on the concealed oneness of the statesman's knowledge as the essential hypothesis of their investigation, that which is "alone a regime."[519] In order to fight off the multiple hosts of imitating sophists, we must force the one of the statesman's knowledge to appear.[520]

The Visitor makes two preliminary arguments for the priority of the 'one' of the statesman's knowledge. First, he produces a simple empirical observation to bear on the theoretical existence of the king's science: "surely it does not seem that the multitude of a city is able to be in possession of this science."[521] Even in more trivial matters of *play*, he explains, "we know that among thousands of men there would not ever become such a number of the highest draught-players in relation to those among the other Greeks, and indeed it is not so for the king either."[522] Thus, *numerically* at least, the Visitor modifies the search for "correct rule (*τὴν ὀρθὴν ἀρχὴν*)[523] in cases of some one or two or altogether

---

[515] *Stat.* 292b9-10; κριτικὴν δήπου τινὰ καὶ ἐπιστατικὴν …
[516] *Stat.* 292c2-3; ἐπιστήμης οὐκ ἐπιλανθανόμενοι, τὸ δ' ἥτις οὐχ ἱκανῶς πω δυνάμενοι διακριβώσασθαι.
[517] *Stat.* 292a6
[518] *Stat.* 292a5
[519] *Stat.* 293c6; μόνην πολιτείαν
[520] The parallelism of this difficulty to the central problem of *Sophist*—bringing non-being into a relation with being—is not accidental. The Eleatic appears best suited to this task, as a student of Parmenides, yet this appears more formidable than that of the former, since it amounts precisely to what the Visitor deems at 284c to be too great a task.
[521] *Stat.* 292e1-2; μῶν οὖν δοκεῖ πλῆθός γε ἐν πόλει ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστήμην δυνατὸν εἶναι κτήσασθαι[;]
[522] *Stat.* 292e7-9; ἴσμεν [γὰρ] ὅτι χιλίων ἀνδρῶν ἄκροι πεττευταὶ τοσοῦτοι πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἕλλησιν οὐκ ἂν γένοιντό ποτε, μή τι δὴ βασιλῆς γε.
[523] *Stat.* 293a3

few."[524] These are the *external* circumstances in which the statesman must be sought. Next, he turns to consider the *internal* circumstances of this one, by employing the paradigm of the doctor:

> Not least, we have considered doctors to be doctors, whether they heal us willingly or unwillingly, cutting or burning or delivering any other sort of pain, and whether by writings or without writings, and whether being poor or rich, we say they're doctors completely, nothing less, insofar as they are set over an art, whether cleansing or otherwise increasing or diminishing us alone for the good of our bodies, making us better from worse, those attending (*θεραπεύοντες*) save the attended (*θεραπευόμενα*). We will set it down in this way as I suppose and not otherwise, that this boundary-marker is alone correct concerning doctors and other such ruling arts.[525]

What is the 'same' across this paradigm is that each constitute a kind of 'rulership'—the one, ruling the good of the body, and the other, the good of the city. Here, the Eleatic evokes a concrete verbal image of due measure or goodness. The doctor's knowledge constitutes "the necessary being of becoming." The only 'boundary-marker' of rulership is itself—its own inner reality. In other words, inner knowledge determines outer technique, but external expression does not determine or signify the essence of the originary knowledge. What is healthy or good to the body 'looks' differently, depending upon the situation. Thus, the Visitor returns also to the paradigm of demiurgic knowledge: the ruler or 'attendant' gives or 'attends'; the ruled or 'attendee' receives or 'is attended.' There is no room for exchange, but only a pure giving and a pure receiving, which constitutes the "real being (*ὄντως οὔσας*)"[526] of rulership, to which factionalism can only pretend.

The problem of the initial diairesis has not been resolved. Indeed, it has only deepened. Taken in itself and by itself, this hypothetical knowledge of statesmanship remains the sole justification of itself, resembling closely the radical selfsameness of the god of the myth. YS is understandably aghast at the suggestion that the true ruler might

---

[524] *Stat.* 293a3-4; περὶ ἕνα τινὰ καὶ δύο καὶ παντάπασιν ὀλίγους

[525] *Stat.* 293b1-c3; τοὺς ἰατροὺς δὲ οὐχ ἥκιστα νενομίκαμεν, ἐάντε ἑκόντας ἐάντε ἄκοντας ἡμᾶς ἰῶνται, τέμνοντες ἢ κάοντες ἤ τινα ἄλλην ἀλγηδόνα προσάπτοντες, καὶ ἐὰν κατὰ γράμματα ἢ χωρὶς γραμμάτων, καὶ ἐὰν πένητες ὄντες ἢ πλούσιοι, πάντως οὐδὲν ἧττον ἰατρούς φαμεν, ἕωσπερ ἂν ἐπιστατοῦντες τέχνῃ, καθαίροντες εἴτε ἄλλως ἰσχναίνοντες εἴτε καὶ αὐξάνοντες, ἂν μόνον ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ τῷ τῶν σωμάτων, βελτίω ποιοῦντες ἐκ χειρόνων, σῴζωσιν οἱ θεραπεύοντες ἕκαστοι τὰ θεραπευόμενα: ταύτῃ θήσομεν, ὡς οἶμαι, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλῃ, τοῦτον ὅρον ὀρθὸν εἶναι μόνον ἰατρικῆς καὶ ἄλλης ἡστινοσοῦν ἀρχῆς.

[526] *Stat.* 293e3

reign without laws.[527] Everything else has been said "in due measure (*μετρίως*)," [528] but this part alone risks losing sight of goodness itself. He has apparently not forgotten their prior agreement that the boundary between kingship and tyranny corresponds to the respective willingness and unwillingness of the subjects. By doing away with this distinction, the Visitor again appears to take the citizenry as a kind of raw material to be sculpted—a herd without individuated desire. He seems to have forgotten entirely the content of the myth, without, however, refuting its conclusions. Even if we are to give this ruling-in-itself the benefit of its absolute orientation toward the good of its subjects, that this good might not be *perceived* by the patient on account of the variability of the ruler's techniques, poses an enormous difficulty, as we shall see. What really does belong to the knowledge of rulership, one may perceive as only *seeming* to belong; what only *seems* to belong to rulership on account of imitation, one may perceive as really belonging. Just as before, this 'divine' or 'demiurgic' knowledge of rulership threatens to retreat into the abyss of its own blinding unicity. Ruler and subject are at risk of finding themselves on opposite sides of a chasm of intelligibility. If there is one positive and *external* mark of the true statesman's activity, however, it is that they may exercise command only, "as long as employing their knowledge and justice they make [the city] better from worse, preserving it insofar as they are capable (*κατὰ δύναμιν*)."[529] The Visitor, then, explicitly posits the statesman's essential relation toward goodness *for the very first time in the dialogue*. The oneness or sameness of their knowledge is not in itself enough of a criterion for true rulership. The one must open onto goodness or stumble into tyranny. So too, for the first time, we get a sense that the statesman is limited by their own capacity. This is hardly enough to wrest the human statesman from the blinding light of divine knowledge, but it does bring the statesman out of total solitude into an essential relation or dependence.

The Second-Best Regime: Law and Memory

The Visitor turns now to address the problem of lawlessness that YS levels against this newfound understanding of the statesman's rulership. The Visitor first

---

[527] *Stat.* 293e; This is one of the few moments in the text that YS actively voices his disapproval.
[528] *Stat.* 293e7
[529] *Stat.* 293d8-e1; …ἕωσπερ ἂν ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ προσχρώμενοι σῴζοντες ἐκ χείρονος βελτίω ποιῶσι κατὰ δύναμιν…

concedes to his interlocutor, "it does appear in a certain manner that the legislative art belongs to the kingly one."[530] No sooner has he admitted this correspondence, however, he levels a devastating critique against the rule of law *in itself*, abstracted from the king's intelligence (*φρονήσεως*):[531]

> Law is not ever able, after precisely covering around what is best and most just to all at the same time, command what is best. For these things—the dissimilarities (*ἀνομοιότητες*) of humans and of their practical actions and the fact that not even one thing (*τὸ μηδέποτε μηδὲν*) ever concerning humans, to say a word, leads to rest—permit not one art (*οὐδὲν τέχνην*) whatsoever to make a singular proclamation (*ἁπλοῦν*) about any one domain concerning all things (*ἐν οὐδενὶ περὶ ἁπάντων*) and to manifest itself for all time.[532]

Though law claims to have encompassed and included goodness and justice within its lattice, it is precisely the good that escapes its static framework. The good or due measure, which, as aforementioned, always includes and sets into self-relation the manifold of oppositional realities, withdraws from a static image of human affairs. Justice, too, itself involves a relation and demands attention to the *moving* and to the *always-different* of the human sphere. Both, then, in a certain light always exist outside their own private self-relation, not *contingent* upon but *attendant* to the contingencies of indefinite human life. Human life does not permit a *one* to include and encompass itself; it permits only a *not-one*. By extension, the one of the statesman's knowledge must itself be and include in itself a kind of not-one if it is to be effective of justice in human life.

The Visitor rightly points out that law in itself resembles "a certain self-willed and ignorant man, permitting nobody to do anything regarding the arrangement (*τάξιν*) of himself."[533] The law resembles a *tyrant*, at least when viewed or posited as a one of geometric absoluteness. The law is unable to come to any self-knowledge; it would be impervious to Socratic maieutics. This principle of the disconnect between the always-stable and the moving, the Eleatic now generalizes: "what becomes simply in relation to

---

[530] *Stat.* 294a6-7; τρόπον τινὰ [μέντοι] δῆλον ὅτι τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐστιν ἡ νομοθετική·
[531] *Stat.* 294a8
[532] *Stat.* 294a10-b6; [ὅτι] νόμος οὐκ ἄν ποτε δύναιτο τό τε ἄριστον καὶ τὸ δικαιότατον ἀκριβῶς πᾶσιν ἅμα περιλαβὼν τὸ βέλτιστον ἐπιτάττειν· αἱ γὰρ ἀνομοιότητες τῶν τε ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τὸ μηδέποτε μηδὲν ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων οὐδὲν ἐῶσιν ἁπλοῦν ἐν οὐδενὶ περὶ ἁπάντων καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὸν χρόνον ἀποφαίνεσθαι τέχνην οὐδ᾽ ἠντινοῦν.
[533] *Stat.* 294c1-2; …τινὰ ἄνθρωπον αὐθάδη καὶ ἀμαθῆ καὶ μηδένα μηδὲν ἐῶντα ποιεῖν παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τάξιν…

the all is not able to cling (*ἔχειν*) well to what is never simple."[534] In addition to law, we must take this as a concealed critique of *paradigm* as well, which precisely involves the use of the simple in relation to the complex.

Why, then, might the true statesman ever use law at all in the first place? The Eleatic provides YS with two examples. On the one hand, he brings in the paradigm of expert trainer, whose use of static law permits them to speak to a greater mass of trainees at the same time. These trainers, "suppose it necessary that a coarser command be made, which brings profit to bodies in many respects and for many people,"[535] though sacrificing the precision of individual attention. The Visitor is clear both that "commanding each person, by sitting-beside them at all times through their life"[536] would constitute the most ideal form of the statesman's rulership, and that this is impossible in the constraints of this life. In this case, law functions as a general mean in relation to the otherwise unmanageable size of a multitude. The law shows itself to be necessary then in respect to the nature of the statesman's object—the vastness of their herd.

On the other hand, the Visitor again calls upon the paradigm of the physician, this time evoking a doctor—or the trainer—who must travel away and be absent from their patients for some time. The expert employs written law in this case for the individual as a way of retaining *memory*: "supposing that the trainees or the sick will not remember (*μὴ μνημονεύσειν*) their commands, they will be willing to write reminders (*ὑπομνήματα*) for them."[537] Law in this circumstance again does not function as an absolute, but depends on a prior expertise to select the proper character of the reminder, given the patient and given the amount of time they expect to be absent. It functions fundamentally as a *tool* for the doctor or true statesman, a tool they may change freely depending upon the changing requirements of the circumstances, for example, "should the doctor come back after being away from home for less time than expected,"[538] and "should other better things happen for the patients through the winds or something other somehow contrary to

---

[534] *Stat.* 294c7-8; [οὐκοῦν] ἀδύνατον εὖ ἔχειν πρὸς τὰ μηδέποτε ἁπλᾶ τὸ διὰ παντὸς γιγνόμενον ἁπλοῦν [;]
[535] *Stat.* 294e1-3; …παχύτερον οἴονται δεῖν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ καὶ ἐπὶ πολλοὺς τὴν τοῦ λυσιτελοῦντος τοῖς σώμασι ποιεῖσθαι τάξιν.
[536] *Stat.* 295a10-b2; [πῶς γὰρ ἄν τις ἱκανὸς γένοιτ᾽ ἄν ποτε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὥστε] διὰ βίου ἀεὶ παρακαθήμενος ἑκάστῳ [δι᾽ ἀκριβείας] προστάττειν [τὸ προσῆκον;]
[537] *Stat.* 295c3-5; …μὴ μνημονεύσειν οἰηθέντα τὰ προσταχθέντα τοὺς γυμναζομένους ἢ τοὺς κάμνοντας, ὑπομνήματα γράφειν ἂν ἐθέλειν αὐτοῖς, [ἢ πῶς;]
[538] *Stat.* 295c7-8; [τί δ᾽ εἰ] παρὰ δόξαν ἐλάττω χρόνον ἀποδημήσας ἔλθοι πάλιν [;]

expectation, one of the things from Zeus that happens different from the usual."[539] The expert's laws are a kind of *moving, graphic image of the same*, which always reflect the same knowledge and yet which precisely attend to the different in due measure. In this way, the Visitor justifies the expert use of force and the expert use and disuse of law, all of which external techniques depend on the same unchanging inner knowledge.

All the same, when the expert doctor or trainer, steersman[540] or statesman, is absent, the Visitor maintains that the rigid observance of these laws or reminders must be followed, since they have been set down by real knowledge, only amending these prescriptions when the knower has returned and commanded anew. What the Visitor then calls the "the most correct and most beautiful as a second best [regime]"[541]—second to the active presence and command of the statesman—corresponds closely to first mythic era in the age of Zeus, following the withdrawal of the god. One of the primary markers of this time, the Visitor informs us, is the cosmos' "remembering of the teaching of its demiurge and father as it had power—at the beginning, bringing it to an end more precisely."[542] *Recollection* dominates, not of law precisely, but of the god's teaching, offering a clear divine parallel to the second-best rule of human law. This second-best regime, I want to suggest, does not constitute the rule of law *simply*, but necessarily involves the essential aspect of *memory*. The right and second-best rule of law is the rule of *recollected law*, specifically, law that has been set down by a true knower. Thus, the Visitor asks YS rhetorically, "[s]ince this regime to which we have referred is alone correct to us [rule by expert knower], do you perceive that it is necessary that these others be saved in this way by using the writings of that one, even if it is not the most correct thing?"[543] In the absence of the statesman, the best way of proceeding politically is to gather and to re-collect whatever material they have left behind to strictly regulate affairs of the city.

---

[539] *Stat.* 295c9-d2; …συμβαινόντων ἄλλων βελτιόνων τοῖς κάμνουσι διὰ πνεύματα ἤ τι καὶ ἄλλο παρὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῶν ἐκ Διὸς ἑτέρως πως τῶν εἰωθότων γενόμενα…

[540] See *Stat.* 296e, which re-introduces the mythic paradigm of the steersman-god (*Stat.* 272e, 273c) in the case of the human statesman.

[541] *Stat.* 297e3-4; [καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν] ὀρθότατα καὶ κάλλιστ᾽ ἔχον ὡς δεύτερον…

[542] *Stat.* 271b1-3; …τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδαχὴν εἰς δύναμιν. κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς μὲν οὖν ἀκριβέστερον ἀπετέλει…

[543] *Stat.* ὀρθῆς ἡμῖν μόνης οὔσης ταύτης τῆς πολιτείας ἣν εἰρήκαμεν, οἶσθ᾽ ὅτι τὰς ἄλλας δεῖ τοῖς ταύτης συγγράμμασι χρωμένας οὕτω σῴζεσθαι, δρώσας τὸ νῦν ἐπαινούμενον, καίπερ οὐκ ὀρθότατον ὄν;

The Worst Regime: Tyranny and the Absence of Law

Jumping ahead briefly to the close of the digression concerning sophistry and law, the Visitor will lay out six existing regime-types that one finds in the rule of cities. This taxonomy does not include the best regime, kingly rule, which has been separated from the others and from the fact of single rulership "like a god from men,"[544] but we do find the worst mode of governance. The three most basic types, characterized by the simple number of rulers, "monarchy, the rule of few and of the many"[545] are in turn divided into six, each classed according to the observance of or disdain for law. Broadly speaking, the Visitor finds the administrations that keep to the laws to be better than the others, descending in order of goodness from the rule of one to that of the many—lawful democracy—and, in turn, descending in goodness again from the lawless rule of the many to that of the single ruler—the tyrant. Within the three most basic types, then, defined by number of rulers, "the same one becomes especially difficult and easiest."[546] This is to say, "from monarchy comes tyranny and kingship,"[547] each characterized by the rulership of a single person, though distinct in terms of the observation of laws. One the one hand, the kingly and strict observance of law produces the most just conditions in the city, when the knowledgeable ruler does not appear on the scene; on the other hand, the tyrant's "minding none of the written laws"[548] produces the most unjust conditions, since this ruler both "knows nothing"[549] and acts "either for the sake of some profit or in favour of some private end (*ἰδίας*)."[550] The whole political sphere in this latter case is subsumed by the merely private concerns of a single person.

If the singular epistemic foundation of the statesman's rule justifies itself, the tyrant's dual desire and ignorance grounds their imitation of right command.[551] This desire resembles little of the desire that grounds human life at the beginning of the age of Zeus, the desire for the one which has become absent and the desire for the renewal of memory. Indeed, tyrannical desire is expressed purely as technique, the technique of self-

---

[544] *Stat*. 303b4
[545] *Stat.* 302c4-5; μοναρχίαν [φημὶ] καὶ ὀλίγων ἀρχὴν καὶ πολλῶν
[546] *Stat.* 302c1-2; τὴν αὐτὴν [τοίνυν φάθι τριῶν οὐσῶν] χαλεπὴν διαφερόντως γίγνεσθαι καὶ ῥᾴστην.
[547] *Stat.* 302d1; ἐκ μὲν τῆς μοναρχίας βασιλικὴν καὶ τυραννικήν
[548] *Stat.* 300a4; μηδὲν φροντίζων τῶν γραμμάτων
[549] *Stat.* 300a6; μηδὲν γιγνώσκων
[550] *Stat.* 300a4-5; ἢ κέρδους ἕνεκέν τινος ἢ χάριτος ἰδίας
[551] *Stat.* 301c2-3; …ᾗ δέ τις ἐπιθυμία καὶ ἄγνοια τούτου τοῦ μιμήματος ἡγουμένη…

realization and the multiplication of their own ignorance. The tyrannical relation to the city, then, resembles closely the second cosmic *aporia* of the myth, the absolute "forgetfulness" of the ruler is mingled with the "disharmony" of the whole. To the tyrant, the city itself constitutes a 'sea of unlikeness,' an object unlike themselves in every way, which nevertheless must be forced to realize their desires.

The great problem that tyranny poses, to the philosopher no less than to the citizenry, is not simply that they rule poorly and with self-interest alone in mind, but that they invoke in their rulership precisely the framework of knowledgeable and expert rulership. The tyrant makes a claim on the possession of true knowledge, "pretend[ing] as if knowing that indeed what is best must be done beside the written laws."[552] The distinction between true statesman and tyrant is at once exceedingly great when perceiving their difference abstractly, but exceedingly fraught when viewed with the simpler lens of perception, both by the masses of a city and by the discerning philosopher. Statesman and tyrant each employ the same language—or the same language is employed of them—to describe their activity, that of violating the written documents of a constitution for the sake of the goodness of a city, which these written laws or unwritten customs do not adequately circumscribe. In a certain way, the external 'look' of their respective activities correspond closely with each other, even if the inner reality of their respective techniques could not be more different from each other in relation to the goodness of their ends. The tyrant employs as rhetoric precisely the philosophical language that the Eleatic has hereto used to describe the true statesman, appealing to their knowledge or to their divinity, while simultaneously relying on the withdrawal of the one from perception. The tyrant is the greatest of the sophists precisely because they hide in the blinding light of the statesman's concealed principle of *ἀρχή*.[553] The investigation into statesmanship is put into profound jeopardy if the seeming of the tyrant's expertise cannot be brought into relation with the real being of the statesman's knowledge. How exactly does one prove the tyrant is acting without expert knowledge,

---

[552] *Stat.* 301c1-2; …προσποιῆται δὲ ὥσπερ ὁ ἐπιστήμων ὡς ἄρα παρὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα τό γε βέλτιστον ποιητέον…

[553] I extend here, a metaphor found in *Sophist.* In *Sophist* the Visitor describes the sophist as "run[ning] away into the darkness of Non-being" (*Soph*. 254a). The tyrant is more dangerous and seems to hide, to the contrary, in "the brightness of [the philosopher's] region" (*Soph.* 254b).

and conversely, how does one prove the opposite? The Visitor has little of practical use to say on this subject, apart from his abstract concessions. He appears to have given up this line of inquiry with his dismissal of finding a proof for the existence of due measure.[554]

The Second-Worst Regime: Law and *Τέχνη*

Following the Visitor's exposition of the 'second-best' regime of law, he bids YS, "let us bring to a conclusion in what manner it is that this thing is born, that which we have called 'second-best.'"[555] This is a perplexing thing for the Eleatic to say at this point, since it seems clear that this question has already been adequately answered: the absence of the true statesman, the doctor of the city, is what causes this law-centred regime to come to pass, a regime of memory. It is surprising, subsequently, that the Visitor does not give an answer like this, but instead describes a kind of democratic rebellion against artistic expertise, which unfolds into a strict regime of law. In my view, the Visitor is describing here a *different* regime of law from the former, one that originates not from the recollection of the knower's expert laws, but from a place of non-expertise and out of the fear of tyranny.

The Eleatic begins by rousing YS, "let us go back to the likeness, with which it is always necessary to compare ruling kings"[556]—"the noble steersman and the doctor, who is worth many others."[557] The image of the steersman again evokes divinity; the paradigm of the weaver is noticeably absent. He continues: "for let us look down, moulding some figure (*σχῆμα*) among these same things."[558] Curiously, however, the Visitor appears to do the very opposite of this, not forming an image of the statesman in the light of these paradigms, but forming an image of the *opposite* of the true statesman, using the *opposite* of these paradigms—the tyrant doctor and the tyrant steersman:

> Suppose that about these figures we all thought (*διανοέομαι*) that we suffer the most terrible things from them. For whoever of these ourselves they have been willing to save, likewise they save them, and whoever they have desired to maltreat, they maltreat. […] If after thinking over these things we should determine a certain council regarding them, no longer to entrust either of these arts to rule as their own master (*αὐτοκράτορι*) over either slaves or free people,

---

[554] See chapter VI and *Stat.* 284c
[555] *Stat.* 297e5-6; ᾧ δὲ τρόπῳ γεγονός ἐστι τοῦτο ὃ δὴ δεύτερον ἐφήσαμεν, διαπερανώμεθα.
[556] *Stat.* 297e8-9; εἰς δὴ τὰς εἰκόνας ἐπανίωμεν πάλιν, αἷς ἀναγκαῖον ἀπεικάζειν ἀεὶ τοὺς βασιλικοὺς ἄρχοντας.
[557] *Stat.* 297e11-12; τὸν γενναῖον κυβερνήτην καὶ τὸν ἑτέρων πολλῶν ἀντάξιον ἰατρόν.
[558] *Stat.* 297e12-13; κατίδωμεν γὰρ δή τι σχῆμα ἐν τούτοις αὐτοῖς πλασάμενοι.

> but gathered an assembly of ourselves, either all the people or only the rich, and allowed the opinion (*γνώμην*), both of the laymen (*ἰδιωτῶν*) and of the other craftsmen (*δημιουργῶν*), concerning both sailing and of sicknesses to be jumbled up together (*ξυμβαλέσθαι*), how it is necessary for us to use drugs and medical instruments for the sick, and especially how to use the vessels themselves and the nautical instruments for the advantage of the ships, both concerning the danger of the winds and of the sea for the sailing itself and concerning also procedure for meetings with pirates, and if perhaps there is need to fight against other such things with longships. And whatever things will be imagined by the multitude about these things, whether certain doctors and steersmen or whether other laymen counseled together, after these are inscribed into certain tablets and into stone, and after unwritten ancestral customs are set down, immediately henceforth for all time sailing and attending to the sick is to be done according to these things.[559]

We will note that the Visitor's genealogy of this 'second-best' regime of law is democratic or oligarchic in its construction, not as in the earlier instance mon-archic. The creation of the law-regime emerges out of the multitude's distrust of expertise. The Visitor leaves his portrait tellingly ambiguous whether this distrust is itself warranted. It is not entirely clear whether these 'most terrible things' performed by the doctor and steersman are in fact only *perceived* as terrible things, or if they do indeed originate from tyrannical masters and from tyrannical intentions. The first sentence from the above passage seems to promote the former interpretation, since, after all, the Visitor has already apparently established that this 'molded figure' will concern both the noble steersman and doctor. The verb, *διανοέομαι*, however, is pointedly ambiguous; it certainly *may* refer to opinion, but its root, *νόος*, suggests a genuine apprehension. The external description of the deeds of these doctors and steersmen, which I quote only partially, also seems to indicate genuine wrongdoing: 'saving only who one wants to save' is unambiguously tyrannical behaviour. The Visitor is playing a strange game here.

---

[559] *Stat.* 298a1-e3; οἷον εἰ πάντες περὶ αὐτῶν διανοηθεῖμεν ὅτι δεινότατα ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν πάσχομεν. ὃν μὲν γὰρ ἂν ἐθελήσωσιν ἡμῶν τούτων ἑκάτεροι σῴζειν, ὁμοίως δὴ σῴζουσιν, ὃν δ᾽ ἂν λωβᾶσθαι βουληθῶσιν, λωβῶνται […] εἰ δὴ ταῦτα διανοηθέντες βουλευσαίμεθα περὶ αὐτῶν βουλήν τινα, τούτων τῶν τεχνῶν μηκέτι ἐπιτρέπειν ἄρχειν αὐτοκράτορι μηδετέρᾳ μήτ᾽ οὖν δούλων μήτ᾽ ἐλευθέρων, συλλέξαι δ᾽ ἐκκλησίαν ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἢ σύμπαντα τὸν δῆμον ἢ τοὺς πλουσίους μόνον, ἐξεῖναι δὲ καὶ ἰδιωτῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δημιουργῶν περί τε πλοῦ καὶ περὶ νόσων γνώμην ξυμβαλέσθαι καθ᾽ ὅτι χρὴ τοῖς φαρμάκοις ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῖς ἰατρικοῖς ὀργάνοις πρὸς τοὺς κάμνοντας χρῆσθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῖς πλοίοις τε αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ναυτικοῖς ὀργάνοις εἰς τὴν τῶν πλοίων χρείαν καὶ περὶ τοὺς κινδύνους τούς τε πρὸς αὐτὸν τὸν πλοῦν ἀνέμων καὶ θαλάττης πέρι καὶ πρὸς τὰς τοῖς λῃσταῖς ἐντεύξεις, καὶ ἐὰν ναυμαχεῖν ἄρα δέῃ που μακροῖς πλοίοις πρὸς ἕτερα τοιαῦτα: τὰ δὲ τῷ πλήθει δόξαντα περὶ τούτων, εἴτε τινῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ κυβερνητῶν εἴτ᾽ ἄλλων ἰδιωτῶν συμβουλευόντων, γράψαντας ἐν κύρβεσί τισι καὶ στήλαις, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἄγραφα πάτρια θεμένους ἔθη, κατὰ ταῦτα ἤδη πάντα τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον ναυτίλλεσθαι καὶ τὰς τῶν καμνόντων θεραπείας ποιεῖσθαι.

At one time he seems to be preparing a model of the true statesman who is wrongly deposed by the inhabitants of the city, and at another time he seems to be laying down an image of unabashed tyranny, rightly usurped by the discerning deme. The Visitor's language itself duplicates the problem of the tyrant-statesman likeness. The people can judge their ruler solely on the basis of what they effect. They have only inscriptions by which to judge the inner presence of right knowledge.[560]

Another reason to disbelieve that this rule-by-law is identical to the regime described earlier is that there is no indication of an expertise behind the formation of these new laws. To the contrary, the Visitor takes pains to stress that the new laws are "jumbled up together" (ξυμβαλέσθαι) especially by non-experts or "private people" (*ἰδιωτῶν*), who are not even necessarily politically interested. Similarly, there is no indication that *any* of the so-called experts' writings should be used, as was previously the case, precisely because they did not appear to be experts at all, inhabiting the ambiguous knower-tyrant fissure of perception. Law here takes the form more fundamentally of a collective *invention*; its mnemonic function is purely secondary and circular. One is to remember the laws not because the remembrance is good, but because the artifice of the law is better than perceived tyranny. In the former case, on the other hand, law was secondary to memory. The expert doctor or trainer employs law fundamentally *for the sake of memory* when they are absent. Law is not the end or the good in itself, but functions primarily as a mnemonic tool. We will remember from the myth of Kronos that human desire in the political age of Zeus extends in two directions: through memory, toward divine reality, and through *τέχνη*, toward artifice and self-realization. There is every reason to believe that here again in the Visitor's elaboration of the different regimes of rule there is a mythic insight into human desire.

If the Visitor is expounding two different kinds of rule-by-law, however, why does he seem to insist upon referring to each as 'second' without differentiation? In each case, the Eleatic summarizes, one must "never permit either one or many to do anything

[560] The Visitor undercuts this problem later at *Stat.* 301d4-6, arguing that the presence of the expert statesman would simply dissolve this problem: "if there were to come to be someone of the sort we are describing, he would be prized and would govern a regime that would alone be correct in the strict sense, steering it through in happiness" (trans. Rowe). This, however, is hardly satisfying and only augments another problem, regarding possibility of the philosophical investigation into this figure. The Visitor appears to double down on the impenetrability of the epistemic foundation of the statesman's knowledge.

whatsoever contrary to these [laws]."[561] The function of administrative structures, then, share a similar structure in each case, guarding strictly against even the slightest violation of the written rule. This image of political regulation constitutes the unifying content of the class of lawful rule. As we have come to expect, the Visitor is more interested in the question of *unity* than the question of goodness. Indeed, by positing both distinct kinds of governance-by-law as a selfsame unity, the Visitor is in danger of forgetting the profound differences that lie between each kind of rulership. The former originates from the expert ruler and functions mnemonically, as a way of bringing the subjects of a city into relation with a now-absent due measure; the latter originates as a last-ditch effort to save the polis from tyranny and bears little relation to due measure at all.

This latter kind of law absolutism, then, does away with the very need to make a judgment at all about the correctness or erroneousness of the ruler's apparent knowledge in the first place. Indeed, it mitigates the very uncertainty of epistemic opacity in *every* sphere. YS points out in a moment of rare lucidity, "it is clear that all arts would be utterly destroyed for us, and they would not ever be born again, on account of this law prohibiting [knowledge]-seeking—so that life, which is even now difficult, would become at that time completely unsupportable (*ἀβίωτος*)."[562] From the perspective of *knowledge*, the law, resembling an 'ignorant and self-willed man,' simply permits the learning of ignorance itself and the destruction of all that underlies craft. From the perspective of *law*, though, its absoluteness allows that "nobody is ignorant either of the doctor's art or health, or of the steersman's art of ships, since, for those who desire, it is possible to learn what has been written and the ancestral customs that have been set down."[563] The law posits itself as the only knowledge. Its triumph amounts the removal of the inscrutable itself from the political realm. Statesmanship is not the only expertise that must be sacrificed for the greater good. Socratic investigation, too, would be unlawful. The Visitor appears here to agree with the Athenian condemnation of Socrates,

---

[561] *Stat.* 200c2-3; …τὸ παρὰ ταῦτα μήτε ἕνα μήτε πλῆθος μηδὲν μηδέποτε ἐᾶν δρᾶν μηδ᾽ ὁτιοῦν.
[562] *Stat.* 299e6-10; δῆλον ὅτι πᾶσαί τε αἱ τέχναι παντελῶς ἂν ἀπόλοιντο ἡμῖν, καὶ οὐδ᾽ εἰς αὖθις γένοιντ᾽ ἄν ποτε διὰ τὸν ἀποκωλύοντα τοῦτον ζητεῖν νόμον: ὥστε ὁ βίος, ὢν καὶ νῦν χαλεπός, εἰς τὸν χρόνον ἐκεῖνον ἀβίωτος γίγνοιτ᾽ ἂν τὸ παράπαν.
[563] *Stat.* 299c6-d1; οὐδένα γὰρ ἀγνοεῖν τό τε ἰατρικὸν καὶ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν οὐδὲ τὸ κυβερνητικὸν καὶ ναυτικόν· ἐξεῖναι γὰρ τῷ βουλομένῳ μανθάνειν γεγραμμένα καὶ πάτρια ἔθη κείμενα.

at least as a second-best given that no true statesman has appeared on the scene.[564] That the citizenry should know themselves to be ignorant would be the worst abuse of all. Knowledge, should it lie purely outside the soul, in written inscriptions and in inscriptions on the soul, would have nothing at all to do with recollection.

Collecting Traces: The Question of a Third-Best Regime

This appears to constitute the Visitor's conclusion to the digression concerning better and worse regimes. The rule of the true statesman is best and would be manifestly so if they were present; this is followed by the rule of law, with lawful kingly rule best, regardless of the mode of law-absolutism; finally, lawless democracy, is "the best when all the regimes are lawless,"[565] since it is most ineffective at producing both goods and evils. Yet this begs the question: how is it that the regime the Eleatic identifies as second-best is worse in almost every way to current circumstances, extinguishing the very possibility for technical expertise and the love of wisdom at once? Is the Visitor suggesting an attempt to return to the non-philosophical life of the age of Kronos, or is he somehow implying that lawless democracy is better than the regime of inflexible regulation? I want to suggest here a few threads of interpretation, following neither one to their extremes. First, what I call the 'four regimes,' elaborated in each of the last four sections of this thesis, opens up a space for a kind of 'middle,' whose nature is not circumscribed by any one constitution that the Eleatic describes. Second, the Visitor's understanding of goodness is not sufficiently inclusive or discerning enough to account for the realities of political life. The Visitor's conceptual privileging of oneness over goodness culminates in a problem of abstraction, which his dialectics are not yet able to overcome.

In addition to the six 'factional' regimes and the seventh quasi-divine regime, the Visitor appears to posit another series of regimes upon different lines: there is direct and indirect, mnemonic expert on the one side, and the imitation of direct and indirect expert rulership on the other. Each of the two declining forms of expert rulership possess a corresponding tyrannical image and imitation. In each of the law-ruling regimes—on opposite sides of the expert-tyrant gulf—emerge out of the best and worse regimes

---

[564] See *Stat.* 299b-d, which seems provocatively to be drawing an explicit parallel to the Socratic activity.
[565] *Stat.* 303a8-b1; παρανόμων δὲ οὐσῶν συμπασῶν βελτίστη

respectively, since the 'mnemonic' legal regime appears in the absence of the right statesman, and the 'technical' legal regime appears in response to the seemingly tyrannical abuses leveled against the populace. This, however, seems to leave space for a kind of undifferentiated middle—a regime that originates neither in the wake of true kingly rule, nor as a simple buffer against proximate tyranny. What I am describing resembles closely the epistemic *pathos* of the myth: regimes that are neither expert-led nor tyrannical seem to be able to occupy the centre between the opposing camps, opened *both* to the mnemonic and technical element of political desire without preference, as a kind of 'due measure' between opposing desires. The Visitor himself appears to be only dimly aware of this possibility, if at all, but I believe warrant for this reading might be found in certain traces of the Eleatic's account.

In several moments throughout the digression, the Visitor appears to promote the vision of a regime which is involved in a kind of collective search for truth. This truth-seeking activity is difficult to distinguish from the collective law-making of what I have called the 'second-worst' constitution, but I believe there is enough evidence to put forward this tentative hypothesis. At one point, the Visitor asks YS "when one certain man or whatever multitude, for whom laws happen to be set up, have put their hand to doing something different from the laws as if better, do they not do the same thing as that very true statesman (*ἀληθινὸς*), to the extent of their power?"[566] In other words, the activities of the non-knower who desires the better and the knowing king are *identical*, differentiated only by the degree of precision and capability. Though the Eleatic undercuts this observation almost immediately, subjecting again the non-expert inquirer to the stringency of lawful observation, there does appear to be a crack in his constitutional artifice. Not much later, however, the Visitor again seems to return to a similar sentiment:

> But now when the [true] king is not born in cities, as indeed we say to be the case, just as one who is implanted in beehives—the one who differs straightaway in body and in soul—it is necessary it seems, then, to come together to inscribe writings, running after the tracks of the truest regime (*τὰ τῆς ἀληθεστάτης*

[566] *Stat.* 300d4-7; οὐκοῦν ἀνὴρ ὁστισοῦν εἷς ἢ πλῆθος ὁτιοῦν, οἷς ἂν νόμοι κείμενοι τυγχάνωσι, παρὰ ταῦτα ὅτι ἂν ἐπιχειρήσωσι ποιεῖν ὡς βέλτιον ἕτερον ὄν, ταὐτὸν δρῶσι κατὰ δύναμιν ὅπερ ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἐκεῖνος;

πολιτείας ἴχνη).[567]

This is significant for a whole host of reasons, not least because the Visitor admits here that the true king does not appear to be born anywhere at present. What is more, however, is that there is every reason to believe that he is referring to neither of the rigid regimes of legal-rule. Since the true king *is not*, the regime of mnemonic law is not valid; but since the Visitor recommends a genuine attempt to follow the traces of the *truest constitution*, he is again not recommending the regime of 'thrown-together' law, which originates not from a concern for truth but from a desire not to suffer tyranny. What the Visitor recommends is a search for truth and for good laws, a regime which lies so to speak 'in between' these other modes of regime, able to evolve or devolve into either, depending upon the predominating character of human desire. The search for goodness necessarily involves the 'play' of political risk, which is *not* identical to the democratization of goodness.

Next, I want to consider the Visitor's understanding of goodness. Immediately following the close of the Visitor's discussion regarding the temporal and logical decline of the best regime into the second, he breaks off in astonishment:

> Do we then wonder, Socrates, that it comes to pass how many great evils happen in such regimes and how many *will* come to pass, whenever such a foundation (*κρηπῖδος*) lies under them, effecting practical actions with writings and customs but not by knowledge? Would another art employed like this be manifest to all as utterly destroying all things that are produced in this manner? Or is this more astonishing to us, that a certain city is strong by nature (*φύσει*)? For indeed cities have suffered such things now for a boundless amount of time, and nevertheless certain ones of them are stable (*μόνιμοί*) and are not overturned.[568]

There is something out of sync in their theoretical and abstract examination of these practical regimes. The Visitor's understanding is limited; it cannot account for the goodness and stability of the city, apart from the presence of knowing rulership or its distant imitation. In other words, neither the good of the true knowledge of statesmanship

---

[567] *Stat.* 301d8-e4; νῦν δέ γε ὁπότε οὐκ ἔστι γιγνόμενος, ὡς δή φαμεν, ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι βασιλεὺς οἷος ἐν σμήνεσιν ἐμφύεται, τό τε σῶμα εὐθὺς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν διαφέρων εἷς, δεῖ δὴ συνελθόντας συγγράμματα γράφειν, ὡς ἔοικεν, μεταθέοντας τὰ τῆς ἀληθεστάτης πολιτείας ἴχνη.

[568] *Stat.* 301e6-302a6; θαυμάζομεν δῆτα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις πολιτείαις ὅσα συμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι κακὰ καὶ ὅσα συμβήσεται, τοιαύτης τῆς κρηπῖδος ὑποκειμένης αὐταῖς, τῆς κατὰ γράμματα καὶ ἔθη μὴ μετὰ ἐπιστήμης πραττούσης τὰς πράξεις, ᾗ ἑτέρα προσχρωμένη παντὶ κατάδηλος ὡς πάντ᾽ ἂν διολέσειε τὰ ταύτῃ γιγνόμενα; ἢ ἐκεῖνο ἡμῖν θαυμαστέον μᾶλλον, ὡς ἰσχυρόν τι πόλις ἐστὶ φύσει; πάσχουσαι γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα αἱ πόλεις νῦν χρόνον ἀπέραντον, ὅμως ἔνιαί τινες αὐτῶν μόνιμοί τέ εἰσι καὶ οὐκ ἀνατρέπονται:

nor that of its lawful imitation exhaust the goodness of the good. By centring his analysis on the good of human technical *art* and *true rulership*, the Visitor forgets to consider the good that *already* inheres in the city, received from nature itself. The city *already* possesses both a unity and a goodness for itself, which accounts for its stability even in the face of ignorant human rule.

The subtle philosophical effect this has, is to decouple the statesman from the figure of the divine demiurge. Though the digression concerning the different regimes marks an increasing identification of human statesman with divinity—particularly with the demiurge of the myth—the Visitor's astonishment at the stability of the city decisively uncouples the paradigm. The Visitor wakes from his dream. The king and statesman is *not* an analog for the producer or 'spinner' of nature but is themselves also subject to this nature. The natural good of the city is different from that which the statesman imparts. Thus, the activity of the statesman constitutes neither the *extension* of nature, as if bringing nature to some place it does not yet exist, nor the *rupture* of nature, as if the good of their activity negates or interrupts the free flow of natural processes and the self-minding bestowal of natural goods. Though the statesman's knowledge appears to be divine in some essential way, their activity is decidedly human. We must look elsewhere for an account of what the statesman actually does.

Weaving and Being Woven: the One and the Good

Nearing the end of the dialogue, the figure of the statesman seems hardly clearer and more distinct than before the final diairesis. What do these final divisions and paradigms even mean if the true statesman has again been placed far beyond our reach, both intellectually and politically? They are still held to be quasi-divine, having little to do with the inner workings of existing human settlements, and we are yet far from being able to perceive the foundation and essence of the statesman's knowledge—what it is that the statesman knows when they know—no less than their activity. Still, if we consider, as I do, that the central concern of *Statesman* is the dialectical investigation into the meaning of political unity and goodness, we must remain alert for traces of the statesman's one, even in the face of their withdrawal.

The Visitor returns to diairesis, having separated off the sophists and factionalists from the statesman's knowledge through the digression. There now remains only those

who are "honourable and akin" to the statesman,[569] "the general, the judge and the rhetorician, who commune with the king."[570] In each case, these arts are subservient to the knowledgeable rule, since they deal with concrete *things*, weapons and warring practices, contracts and laws, stories and speeches, respectively. All these arts, too, concern the completion of certain concrete ends: winning a war, adjudicating according to set laws, and delivering convincing speeches to the people. In contrast, the Visitor then places the king over all of these, for whom "it is not necessary to act themselves, but to rule over those who act, perceiving that beginning (*ἀρχήν*) and the onset of the greatest things in cities concerning seasonableness and untimeliness, and the other arts ought to do the things that have been commanded."[571] The Visitor's prior tenuous claim that the statesman's knowledge is 'theoretical' proves decisive. The ruler is removed from the sphere of action, though this does not amount to an unconcern for practical affairs or for the material circumstances of the city. Rather, the statesman rules from afar, without hands, "ruling all these things and caring for all the laws over a city and weaving all things most correctly."[572] We appear to have reached the end: the statesman is a weaver insofar as they are a nomothete. As such, the content of the statesman's one knowledge—knowledge of the *good* of their laws—appears to withdraw irrevocably from investigation.

Surprisingly, however, the Visitor next moves to consider the figure of the statesman more directly in relation to the paradigm of weaving, though it is difficult to see why this is necessary. The Eleatic might have completed his account already with the 'weaving of all things correctly,' perhaps taking law and custom as woof and warp respectively. It is unclear exactly why this does not suffice, and why we require further rumination on the prior paradigm. At this point in the interlocutors' consideration of the weaving-paradigm, at any rate, the material of the woof and the warp had already been

[569] *Stat.* 303e9-10; τὰ τίμια καὶ συγγενῆ
[570] *Stat.* 303e10-304a1; τούτων δ᾽ ἐστί που στρατηγία καὶ δικαστικὴ βασιλικῇ κοινωνοῦσα ῥητορεία…
[571] *Stat.* 305d1-5; οὐκ αὐτὴν δεῖ πράττειν ἀλλ᾽ ἄρχειν τῶν δυναμένων πράττειν, γιγνώσκουσαν τὴν ἀρχήν τε καὶ ὁρμὴν τῶν μεγίστων ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐγκαιρίας τε πέρι καὶ ἀκαιρίας, τὰς δ᾽ ἄλλας τὰ προσταχθέντα δρᾶν.
[572] *Stat.* 305e2-4; τὴν δὲ πασῶν τε τούτων ἄρχουσαν καὶ τῶν νόμων καὶ συμπάντων τῶν κατὰ πόλιν ἐπιμελουμένην καὶ πάντα συνυφαίνουσαν ὀρθότατα

identified in the exploration of its helping causes. Wool-weaving required neither further explanation of itself nor of its spun materials.

Nevertheless, in the final pages of *Statesman* the paradigm of weaving returns to inform our understanding of the statesman's activity, carrying with it a newfound and surprising concern for the virtues, which become woof and warp of the statesman's activity. In particular, the Eleatic singles out both "courage" (*ἀνδρείαν*)[573] and "discretion" (*σωφροσύνην*)[574] as each being "one part of virtue,"[575] different and even "having enmity and faction toward each other, among many of the things that are."[576] Plato means for the reader to recollect Socrates here: this seems to directly contradict the Socratic conception of virtue,[577] yet it constitutes a critical moment in *Statesman*, exposing the dialectical logic of the dialogue's whole philosophical movement. The crucial point is that each virtue, what is one *as* virtue, is part and partial in relation to the limitless all, the manifold realm of human activity. This is to say, the one of virtue is simultaneously *not one*, in its own expression, though recalling the one of its origin precisely in the *pathos* of its own *καταστροφή*. The expression or 'emanation' of the one, here as virtue, negates the one even as this negation recollects and is collected by its own beginning. Speaking more practically, virtue or virtuous action in the human sphere expresses itself fundamentally either as courage or discretion, dividing the very originary unity from which the virtuous activity originates and to which it looks. In general circumstances, courage expresses itself as what is "sharp," "quick and manly," "energetic,"[578] and discretion, what is "gentle and temperate," "having good order."[579] In more extreme and forgetful circumstances, these virtues express themselves precisely as non-virtues: courage becomes "insolent and mad,"[580] discretion, "cowardly and lazy."[581] In these latter cases, the image of virtue draws ever closer to that 'sea of unlikeness' from the myth of Kronos, the utter negation of goodness itself, from which, however, the

---

[573] *Stat.* 306a12
[574] *Stat.* 306b2
[575] *Stat.* 306b1; μέρος ἓν ἀρετῆς
[576] *Stat.* 306b9-11; πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔχθραν καὶ στάσιν ἐναντίαν ἔχοντε ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν ὄντων
[577] See, for example, *Protag.* 328d-333b for Socrates' defense of the unity of all virtues
[578] *Stat.* 306e9-10; ὀξύ […] ταχὺ καὶ ἀνδρικόν […] σφοδρὸν
[579] *Stat.* 307a7-b3; ἡσυχαῖα […] σωφρονικά […] κοσμιότητος
[580] *Stat.* 307b10; ὑβριστικὰ καὶ μανικὰ
[581] *Stat.* 307c2; δειλὰ καὶ βλακικά

impulse stems.[582] In the case of virtue, the human exercise of goodness, the one of virtue becomes increasingly a not-one in the increasing partiality of the action. If one 'side' of virtue predominates in a city, it risks wholesale destruction.

It is clear now that the Visitor's reversion to the model of the statesman's absolute unity which begins *Statesman* is not the last word of the dialogue. It is true that the absolute one of the statesman's knowledge remains the essential *horizon* that separates and distinguishes statesman from sophist; but at the same time, with this new centring of the statesman's knowledge on the *virtue* of their subjects, the Visitor simultaneously reincorporates the essential principle of due measure in the *activity* of the ruler. The knowledge of the true ruler both must be absolute *and* its activity must include and spring out of an attention to the nature of the subject. It is the reality of *goodness* that unifies these two mutually sympathetic moments of the statesman's knowledge and activity. The matter or material with which the statesman's activity is concerned is no longer purely opposed to the knowledge as it exists in itself and for itself, since the reality of goodness bridges the ontological chasm between oneness and multiplicity. The Good is both One and leaves its trace in the many, the gathering of multiplicity in the due measure and reconciliation of seemingly opposed virtues.[583]

The Visitor is here placing both unity and goodness in a kind of dialectical relation both to themselves and to each other. Each—goodness and unity—both *rule over* and *originate* their subordinate expressions, and in turn, these generated forms, better and worse, limited and unlimited, trace back and are included by their origin. We have seen that the Visitor's philosophical account of statesmanship has similarly traced this dialectical movement in the *λόγος* of the argument, in the moments of the one's self-exclusion and in the inclusion of its own difference. Though the Eleatic begins *Statesman* by privileging the importance of unity in the political and philosophical realm, the end of the dialogue sees the notion of unity—political and otherwise—opening onto a more

---

[582] Scodel (1987) points out that courage and discretion each loosely correspond to the nature of the opposing cycles (163-4). The consequence of this, is that the 'due measure' lying between each cosmic moment is precisely the calamity which institutes the *pathos* of human knowledge.

[583] Dorter (1994) is precisely right on this point: "The confusion that we witnessed at the beginning of the dialogue, as to whether statesmanship is a practical or theoretical science, now seems to be a deliberate adumbration of the nature of the science of the mean, in which praxis and theôria are inextricably linked" (204).

prior *goodness*. The account of statesmanship does not conclude with the king as a weaver of laws, precisely because the unity of the polis is subordinate to its goodness. More important than the weaving of good laws for a city is the weaving of the *souls* themselves; and far from the character of inert law, which reflects a purely formal notion of mathematical unity, souls have a decipherable *content*, tracing back to goodness itself.

The statesman's activity, then, marks the return of the not-one and of the not-good back to their origin in oneness and goodness, a movement which, rather than eliminating difference, includes and relates these differences-of-the-same to each other. The king's science "throws away things that are in a bad condition as able, after taking the things that are suitable and useful, and from these things—which are both similar and dissimilar—they craft (*δημιουργεῖ*) a certain power and form, gathering all things themselves into one (*πάντα εἰς ἓν αὐτὰ συνάγουσα*)."[584] The moment of separation in the ruling craft is akin to untangling a ball of yarn, separating the what is too matted or shredded to be useful,[585] yet what is woven need not be the same—or even similar. Even what is radically dissimilar, the Eleatic contends, is capable of being woven together into one. The Visitor determines two distinct kinds of bond-making available to the craft of kingly weaving, each of which promote mutual sharing or participation (*κοινωνεῖν*). First, there are the "more divine bonds, which unite unlike parts of the nature of virtue to their opposites."[586] Second, the "human bonds" constitute "those of intermarriages and the sharing of children."[587] This first kind of weaving involves the weaving of good laws to promote the intercourse of souls; the second, involves the weaving of those opposed in a more bodily and erotic reconciliation.

The knowledge of the statesman, then, is both an agathology and a science of erotics. Though the foundation of this knowledge is no less divine than that of the statesman in prior dialectical iterations, it does not culminate in an absolute henotic

---

[584] *Stat.* 308c3-7; [ἢ πᾶσα ἐπιστήμη πανταχοῦ] τὰ μὲν μοχθηρὰ εἰς δύναμιν ἀποβάλλει, τὰ δὲ ἐπιτήδεια καὶ τὰ χρηστὰ ἔλαβεν, ἐκ τούτων δὲ καὶ ὁμοίων καὶ ἀνομοίων ὄντων, πάντα εἰς ἓν αὐτὰ συνάγουσα, μίαν τινὰ δύναμιν καὶ ἰδέαν δημιουργεῖ.

[585] I want to suggest here, contra to Brann, Kalkavage and Salem (2012), that the king's separating art is not analogous to carding in the weaving process (163). Rather, it corresponds to the untangling of something, which has already been spun into their elements by the god. The statesman is not involved in *making nature*, but only repairing what has since become tangled by human activity and ignorance.

[586] *Stat.* 310a4-5; … τοῦτον θειότερον εἶναι τὸν σύνδεσμον ἀρετῆς μερῶν φύσεως ἀνομοίων καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἐναντία φερομένων.

[587] *Stat.* 310b2; τοὺς τῶν ἐπιγαμιῶν καὶ παίδων κοινωνήσεων

concealment. In the Visitor's turn from the question of unity to the question of the good, a real pathway both of investigating the political and of acting politically opens up in the exercise of the virtues. The statesman knows the good as the due measure of virtue itself; the statesman knows their material—the souls of the inhabitants of the city—by observing their actions and by engaging them in conversation, precisely the activity in which Socrates is engaged at the beginning of *Statesman*.[588] Far from being a merely passive 'herd' or 'bulk' as described earlier in the dialogue, the souls of citizens possess the very goodness to which the statesman's knowledge corresponds. In other words, it is knowing the condition and the good of each soul in dialogue that the statesman knows the good of the city. Political knowledge and the *subject* of political knowledge is not in essence divided, but the souls of those present in a city alone ground and constitute what political knowledge happens to be in a given situation. Above all, the statesman's knowledge is of 'acquaintance' with the plurality of souls, which may only occur in dialogue and in observation of their practical activity. The dialectical emergence of goodness onto the scene of politics simultaneously releases Socrates from condemnation,[589] since the properly political activity at least begins with elenchus—knowing the people present in the city—and proceeds with the maieutic arts.[590]

[588] See *Stat.* 257d-258a
[589] See *Stat.* 299a-c
[590] See *Theaet.*150a-151d. The activities involved in Socratic maieutics—the examination of the soul through dialogue, the deliverance of the beautiful, and match-making—corresponds closely to the statesmanly activity.

Chapter VIII – Conclusion: Goodness and Unity

At the close of *Statesman*, Plato, employing the limited perspective of the Eleatic Visitor for his own ends, approaches the identity of the One-Good. Though Plato's famous 'unwritten doctrine,' "that the Good is One," appears nowhere explicit in his dialogues, this thesis has argued that one can interpret this doctrine as constituting the implicit philosophical horizon of *Statesman*, approaching this doctrine, however, inversely from the other side of the identity—that is, from the perspective of *oneness*. The logical movement of *Statesman* does not culminate in the *doctrine* "that the Good is One," but in the *indication* that oneness essentially opens onto, and is woven together with, *goodness*. The oneness of something and its goodness, mutually signify each other. Though the Visitor does not come to *prove* the necessary existence of due measure, which is precisely the hypothetical expression of this One-Good identity, and though the mutuality of goodness and oneness remains at the level of 'true opinion,' he has adequately demonstrated a *path* toward the attainment of the statesman's knowledge.

I want to reiterate three essential points toward which the conclusion of *Statesman* gestures. First, regarding the problem of *participation*—how *forms* participate and mediate particulars in the Platonic expression of the problem, or how *unities* participate and mediate multiplicity in the more textual expression of the problem—the notion of due measure suggests a preliminary solution. What the Visitor seems to perceive is that goodness lies on either side of this ontological chasm, both in the dyadic 'twoness' of virtue—the expression of goodness in its mode of *multiplicity*—and in the concealed unity of due measure—which is goodness itself, both the originator of virtue and the gathering up of its different expressions. In the aspect of goodness, the incommensurability of one and many is made commensurable. Goodness constitutes a greater unity than the abstract one alone, since it reconciles the unlimited and the limited together, as both its source and end.[591] This is the abstract way of looking at the conclusion of *Statesman*, though it opens up a concrete methodology of pursuing the One-Good, which I detail below.

---

[591] I suggest that the image of the Sun in *Republic* (*Rep.* 507b–509c) offers a particularly good illustration of the peculiar unity of the good, a unity beyond the distinction between one and many.

Second, the end of *Statesman* addresses the problem of the initial diairesis, which proposes a vision of the statesman's knowledge as abstract and tautological, divorced from the nature of its objects. The problem of an epistemology and of a political philosophy that privileges the question of *unity* alone, is that this unity itself appears to exclude, and to be excluded *from*, multiplicity: it 'floats' above the concrete particulars with which it is concerned.[592] The particulars cease to open a way *into* the knowledge at all. By contrast, in the appearance of goodness, both as the *end* of the statesman's activity and as constitutive of the nature of the objects of kingly knowledge, the particulars—the virtues of souls—offer a path into the concealed unity of this knowing. All particular expressions of goodness or of virtue gesture toward the absolute Good. The ground of the statesman's knowledge, then, appears precisely in their very subjects; the king's knowledge is impossible to abstract from the goodness and nature of the very subjects over which they rule. One may approach the statesman's knowledge by coming-to-know the virtues in particular souls, which are a *partial* and *incomplete* expressions of Goodness as such.

Finally, then, Plato is saving Socrates from philosophical condemnation, not by suggesting that Socrates *already possesses* kingly knowledge and is capable of weaving the polis, but by underscoring that the Socratic activity is precisely the activity whereby one may make a preliminary approach on the concealed unity of the statesman's knowledge.[593] Socrates' final remark in the prologue, then, receives renewed significance:

> Of course it is necessary for us always eagerly to recognize these kinships through words. I myself, then, mixed with Theaetetus yesterday through words and now I have heard him being set apart, but not Socrates. It is necessary to examine him too.

---

[592] See again Sallis' discussion of the 'status' of the mathematical one in relation to multiplicity on page 14. Dorter (1994) perfectly encapsulates the priority of Goodness over Unity: "Only what is beyond being, the good itself, does not point beyond itself" (202).

[593] In the end, I agree with Larivée's general interpretation of the dialogue, that "[i]ts main purpose at the time it was written was to steer readers in the direction of a *search* [emphasis added], a pursuit that was still ahead of them once they had read the last line of the text" (30). This does *not* however mean, as she contends, that Plato is encouraging his students "to go for the top position instead of subordinate ones: the kingly position insured by the possession of πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη" (31). Rather, Plato is suggesting to students of the Academy, that they take Socrates' activity as a model. After all, even Socrates did not possess the πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη.

Socrates himself is engaged in the activity of discerning what it is that the statesman must know, in his mixing with the inhabitants of Athens and in his discernment of the virtuous and the knowledgeable. Though lacking the absolute unicity of the statesman's knowledge—an absoluteness which remains the horizon and end of the questioning activity—Socrates acquaints himself with the particulars that constitute and participate this knowledge: the souls of the Athenians.

The trilogy of *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesman* is complete. Socrates' activity is justified even in the face of his impending execution, as at least gesturing toward the one of the statesman's knowledge. So too, the Megarian in some sense has been reconciled with the Parmenidean—the Good with the One, though precisely *not* by denying the reality of mediation. Indeed, *Statesman* comes to centre dialogue (and Socratic examination), through which Goodness itself comes to be disclosed. Dialogue is the proper means of revealing and approaching the goodness of the Good. *Statesman*, then, is not merely circular. In the dialectical return to its beginning, in the positing of an absolute kingly knowledge, a hermeneutic path for the approach on the One-Good has revealed itself in the acquaintance of soul with soul.

Works Cited

Texts and Translations

Anonymous. *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*. Translated by L. G. Westerink, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1962.

Aristotle. *Aristotle's Metaphysics*. Translated by Joe Sachs. Green Lion Press, 1999.

Aristotle. *Aristotle's Physics: A Guided Study*. Translated by Joe Sachs. Rutgers University Press, 1995.

Aristotle. *Aristotle Politics: Translation Introduction and Glossary*. Translated by Joe Sachs, Focus Pub, 2012.

Euclid. Euclid's Elements of Geometry. Translated by Richard Fitzpatrick, Richard Fitzpatrick, 2008.

Laertius, Diogenes. *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Pamela Mensch. Edited by James Miller. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Plato. "Phaedrus." Translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John M Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, 1997, pp. 506-556.

Plato. *Platon: Le Politique*. Edited and Translated by Luc Brisson and J.F. Pradeau. 2003.

Plato. *Republic*. Translated by Joe Sachs. Focus Philosophical Library, 2007.

Plato. *Plato: Sophist*. Translated by Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem, Focus Publishing, 1997.

Plato. "Sophist." Translated by Nicholas P. White. *Plato: Complete Works*. Edited by John M Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, 1997, pp. 235-293.

Plato. *Plato: The Statesman*. Translated by Julia Annas and Robin Waterfield, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Plato. *Plato: Statesman*. Translated by Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem, Focus Publishing, 2012.

Plato. *Plato: Statesman*. Edited and Translated by C. J. Rowe, Liverpool University Press, 1999.

Plato "Statesman." Translated by Seth Benardete. *The Being of the Beautiful: Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist, and Statesman*. University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Plato. *Statesman Philebus Ion*. Translated by Harold North Fowler and W. R. M. Lamb. Harvard University Press, 1925.

Plato "Theaetetus." Translated by M.J. Levett. Revised by Myles Burnyeat. *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John M Cooper, Hackett Publishing Company, 1997, pp. 157–234

Plato. *The Sophist & the Statesman*. Translated by A.E. Taylor. Barnes & Noble, 1971.

Plato. “ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΟΣ.” *Platonis Opera: Tomvs I*, Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 473–559. Oxford Classical Texts.

Plato. “ΣΟΦΙΣΤΗΣ.” *Platonis Opera: Tomvs I*, Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 383–471. Oxford Classical Texts.

Plato. “ΘΕΑΙΤΗΤΟΣ.” *Platonis Opera: Tomvs I*, Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 277–382. Oxford Classical Texts.

Secondary Literature

Ambuel, David. “Pigs in Plato: Delineating the Human Condition in the *Statesman*.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragense*. Edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013. pp. 209-226.

Arends, Frederik. “The Long March to Plato’s *Statesman*. Review of *Plato: Statesman*, ed. with an Introduction, Translation & Commentary by C. J. Rowe.” *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, 1999, pp. 93–122.

Arends, Frederik. “The Long March to Plato’s *Statesman* Continued. Review of *Method and Politics in Plato’s* Statesman by Melissa Lane.” *Polis*: *The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, vol. 18, no. 1-2, 2001, pp. 125-152.

Balaban, Oded. “The Myth of Protagoras and Plato’s Theory of Measurement.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1987, pp. 371–84.

Baltzly, Dirk. “The *Skopos* Assumption: Its Justification and Function in the Neoplatonic Commentaries on Plato.” *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, vol. 11, no.2, 2017, pp. 173-195.

Benardete, Seth. *The Being of the Beautiful: Plato's Theaetetus, Sophist, and Statesman*. University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Benardete, Seth. “Eidos and Diaeresis in Plato's Statesman.” *Philologus*, vol. 107, no. 3, 1963, pp. 193–226.

Benardete, Seth. “The Plan of the *Statesman*.” *Mètis*. vol. 7, no. 1-2, 1992, pp. 25-47.

Benitez, Eugenio E. “The Good or The Demiurge: Causation and the Unity of Good in Plato.” *Apeiron*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1995, pp. 113-140.

Betegh, Gábor. “The Myth and What it Achieves: 268d5-277c6.” *Plato’s* Statesman: *A Philosophical Discussion*. Edited by Panos Dimas, Melissa Lane, and Susan Sauvé Meyer. Oxford University Press, 2021, pp. 71-93.

Blondell, Ruby. *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Blondell, Ruby. “The Man with No Name: Socrates and the Visitor from Elea.” *Plato as Author: The Rhetoric of Philosophy*. Edited by Ann Michelini. 2003, pp. 247-266.

Blyth, Dougal. “God and Cosmos in *Politicus* 269c–270a and Aristotle.” *Plato’s* Statesman *Revisited*. Edited by Beatriz Bossi, and Thomas M. Robinson. 2018, pp. 55-71.

Brickhouse, Thomas C., and Nicholas D. Smith. "HE MANTIKE TECHNE: STATESMAN 260El AND 290C4-6". *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, vol 12, iss. 1-2, 1993, pp. 37-51.

Brill, Sara. "Autochthony, Sexual Reproduction, and Political Life in the *Statesman* Myth." *Plato's* Statesman*: Dialectic, Myth and Politics*. Edited by John Sallis, Suny Press, 2017, pp. 33–51.

Brisson, Luc. "Interprétation du Mythe du *Politique*." *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 349-363.

Brisson, Luc and Salomon Ofman. "Powers and Division in the 'Mathematical Part' of Plato's *Theaetetus*." *Tropos: Journal of Hermeneutics and Philosophical Criticism*, vol. x, no. 2, 2018, p. 121-140

Brown, Eric. "Plato on the Unity of the Political Arts (*Statesman* 258d-259d)." *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 58, 2020, pp. 1-18.

Burnyeat, M. F. "The Philosophical Sense of Theaetetus' Mathematics." *Isis*, vol. 69, no. 4, 1978, pp. 489–513.

Caizzi, Fernanda Decleva. "Minor Socratics." *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. Edited by M. L. Gill and P. Pellegrin, 2006, pp. 119–135.

Calvo, José María Zamora. "Plato's Reign of Kronos: Proclus' Interpretation of the Myth in the *Politicus*." *Plato's ›*Statesman*‹ Revisited*. Edited by Beatriz Bossi and Thomas M. Robinson. 2018, pp. 119-140.

Carone, Gabriela Roxana, "Cosmic and Human Drama in Plato's Statesman: on Cosmos, God and Microcosm in the Myth." *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*, vol. 12, no. 1 and 2, 1993, pp. 99–121.

Carone, Gabriela Roxana. "Reversing the Myth of the Politicus." *Plato's Cosmology and Its Ethical Dimensions*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 124–145.

Casadio, Giovanni. "The *Politicus* Myth (268D-274E) and the History of Religion." *Kernos*, vol. 8, 1995, pp. 85-95.

Castoriadis, Cornelius. *On Plato's Statesman*. Translated by David A. Curtis. Stanford University Press, 2002. Print.

Cavini, Walter. "Naming and Argument: Diaeretic Logic in Plato's Statesman." *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 123-138.

Cherry, Kevin M. "Aristotle and the Eleatic Stranger on the Nature and Purpose of Political Life." *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1–15.

Chiesa, C. "De Quelques Formes Primitives de Classification." *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 115-122.

Cochran, William. *The Doctrine of Due Measure in Plato's Statesman*. MA Thesis. Dalhousie University, 2011.

Craig, Catherine. *The Role of the Myth in Plato's Statesman*. 2019. Baylor University, MA dissertation.

Cropsey, Joseph. *Plato's World: Man's Place in the Cosmos*. University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Crosson, Frederick J. "Plato's *Statesman*: Unity and Pluralism." *New Scholasticism*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1963, pp. 28-43.

Davenport, Daniel. "Unravelling An Outline Of The *Statesman*." *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*. vol. 28, no. 1, 2011, pp. 74-89.

De Chiara-Quenzer, Deborah. "The Purpose of the Philosophical Method in Plato's *Statesman*" *Apeiron*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1998, pp. 91-126.

Delcomminette, Sylvain. *L'inventivité Dialectique Dans Le Politique De Platon*. Ousia, 2000.

Delcomminette, Sylvian. "Odysseus and the Home of the Stranger from Elea." *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 64, no. 2, 2014, pp. 533–41.

Dillon, John. "The Neoplatonic Exegesis of the *Statesman* Myth." *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 364-374.

Dimas, Panos. "Introduction: The Significance of Plato's *Statesman*." *Plato's* Statesman*: A Philosophical Discussion*. Edited by Panos Dimas, Melissa Lane, and SusanSauvé Meyer. Oxford University Press, 2021, p. 1-12.

Dixsaut, Monique. "La Bonne Mémoire De Socrate." *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragese*. Edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013, pp. 11–26.

Dorter, Kenneth. *Form and Good in Plato's Eleatic Dialogues: The* Parmenides*,* Theaetetus*,* Sophist*, and* Statesman. University of California Press, 1994.

Doull, James. "Plato's *Parmenides*." *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*. Edited by David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson. University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Doull, James. "A Commentary On Plato's *Theaetetus*." *Dionysius*, vol. 1, 1977, pp. 5-47.

Dueso, José Solana. "*STATESMAN* (299B-D) AND THE CONDEMNATION OF SOCRATES." *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, vol. 12, no. 1-2, 1993, pp. 52-63.

El Murr, Dimitri. "Colloquium 4: Politics and Dialectic in Plato's Statesman". *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2010, pp. 109-147.

El Murr, Dimitri. "Miscellanea The telos of Our muthos. A Note on Plato Plt. 277b6-7". *Mnemosyne*, 64.2, 2011, pp. 271-280.

El Murr, Dimitri. “Protagoras et L’âge de Zeus do Mythe du *Politique*.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragese,* edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013, pp. 80-98.

El Murr, Dimitri. “Theoretical, not practical: the opening arguments of Plato’s *Politicus* (*Plt*., 258e–259d).” *Plato’s* Statesman *Revisited.* Edited by Beatriz Bossi, and Thomas M. Robinson. 2018, pp 55-71.

El, Murr Dimitri. *Savoir Et Gouverner: Essai Sur La Science Politique Platonicienne*. J. Vrin, 2014.

Ewegen, S. Montgomery. “Where Have All the Shepherds Gone? Socratic Withdrawal in Plato’s *Statesman*.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Dialectic, Myth, and Politics*. Edited by John Sallis, SUNY Press, 2017, pp. 51-6.

Fattal, Michel. "ON DIVISION IN PLATO'S STATESMAN." *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 12.1-2 (1993): 64-76.

Ferrari, G.R.F. “Myth and Conservatism in Plato’s *Statesman*.” *Reading the* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Sankt Augustin: Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 389-398.8.

Figal, Günter. “Finding the Right Concepts: On Dialectics in Plato’s *Statesman*.” *Plato's Statesman: Dialectic, Myth and Politics*, edited by John Sallis, Suny Press, 2017, pp. 137-147.

Findlay J. N. *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Doctrines*. Humanities Press, 1974.

Friedländer, Paul. Plato: An Introduction. Translated by Hans Meyerhoff, Princeton University Press, 2015.

Gaiser, Konrad. “Plato’s Enigmatic Lecture ‘On the Good.’” *Phronesis*, vol. 25, no. 1, 1980, pp. 5–37.

Gartner, Corinne, and Claudia Yao. “The Myth of Cronus in Plato’s Statesman: Cosmic Rotation and Earthly Correspondence.” *Apeiron*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2020, pp. 437-462.

Gerson, Lloyd P. “Platonic Knowledge and the Standard Analysis.” *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, Routledge, 2006, pp. 455–74.

Giannopoulou Zina. *Plato's* Theaetetus *as a Second Apology*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Gill, Mary Louise. “Division and Definition in Plato's *Sophist* and *Statesman*.” *Definition in Greek Philosophy*. Edited by David Charles. Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 172-199.

Gill, Mary Louise. *Philosophos*: *Plato's Missing Dialogue*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Gill, Mary Louise. “Plato’s *Statesman* and the Missing *Philosopher*.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragese,* edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013, pp. 27-39.

Gill, Mary Louise. “Plato’s Unfinished Trilogy: *Timaeus–Critias–Hermocrates*.” *Plato’s Styles and Characters: Between Literature and Philosophy*. Edited by Gabriele Cornelli, De Gruyter, 2015, pp. 33-46.

Gonzalez, Francisco J. “How to Read a Platonic Prologue: Lysis 203a-207d.” *Plato as Author*. Brill, 2003.

Grene, David. *Greek Political Theory*. University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Hartmann, Nicolai. “The Megarian and the Aristotelian Concept of Possibility: A Contribution to the History of the Ontological Problem of Modality.” Translated by Frederic Tremblay & Keith R. Peterson. *Axiomathes*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2017, pp. 209-223.

Hemmenway, Scott R. “Pedagogy in the Myth of Plato’s ‘Statesman:’ Body and Soul in Relation to Philosophy and Politics.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1994, pp. 253–68.

Horn, Christoph. "Why Two Epochs of Human History? On the Myth of the Statesman". *Plato and Myth*. Brill, 2012, pp. 393-417.

House, Dennis. “COMMENTARY: The Criticism of Plato's Doctrine of Participation in *Parmenides*: A Propaedeutic to the Platonic Dialectic.” *Philosophy and Freedom: The Legacy of James Doull*. Edited by David G. Peddle and Neil G. Robertson. University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Howland, Jacob. “THE ELEATIC STRANGER'S SOCRATIC CONDEMNATION OF SOCRATES.” *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought*, vol. 12, no. 1-2, 1993, pp. 15-36.

Ionescu, Cristina. “Dialectical Method and Myth in Plato’s Statesman.” *Ancient Philosophy*. vol. 34, 2014, pp. 29-46.

Ionescu, Cristina. “Dialectic in Plato’s Sophist: Division and the Communion of Kinds.” *Arethusa*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2013, pp. 41–64.

Jinek, Jakub. “‘Herdenzucht’ und ‘Gemeinschaftszucht’: Zu einer Vernachlässigten Unterscheidung.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragese*, edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013, pp. 99–117.

Kaklamanou, Eleni & Pavlou, Maria. “Reading the Proemium of Plato’s *Theaetetus*: Euclides in Action.” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, vol. 56, 2016, pp. 410-437.

Karfik, Filip. “The World of Human Politics.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium Platonicum Pragese*, edited by Aleš Havlíček et al., OIKOYMENH Publishers, 2013, pp.118-133.

Klein, Jacob. *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*. M. I. T. Press, 1968.

Klein, Jacob. *Plato's Trilogy:* Theaetetus*, the* Sophist*, and the* Statesman*.* The University of Chicago Press, 1977.

Lane, Melissa S. *Method and Politics in Plato's* Statesman. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Larivée, Annie. “Taking Frustration Seriously. Reading Plato’s *Statesman* as a Protreptic to Political Science”. *Plato’s ›*Statesman*‹ Revisited*, edited by Beatriz Bossi and Robinson, Thomas M., De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 11-34.

Lawrence, Gavin. "Trailhead: 257a1-259d6." *Plato's Statesman: A Philosophical Discussion.* Edited by Panos Dimas, Melissa Lane, and Susan Sauvé Meyer. Oxford University Press, 2021. p 25-51.

Layne, Danielle A. “Chapter 29: The Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy”. *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Plato in Antiquity*. Brill, 2017, pp. 533-554.

Lowenstam, Steven. “The Shroud of Laertes and Penelope’s Guile.” *The Classical Journal*, vol. 95, no. 4, 2000, pp. 333–48.

Márquez, Xavier. *A Stranger's Knowledge: Statesmanship, Philosophy, and Law in Plato's Statesman*. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2014. Print.

McCabe, Mary Margaret. “Chaos and Control: Reading Plato's Politicus”. *Phronesis* vol. 42, no.1, 1997, pp. 94-117.

Merrill, Jacqueline Pfeffer. “The Organization of Plato’s ‘*Statesman*’ and the Statesman’s Rule as a Herdsman.” *Phoenix*, vol. 57, no. 1/2, 2003, pp. 35–56.

Meyer, Susan Sauvé. “Structure and Methods of the Dialogue.” *Plato's* Statesman*: A Philosophical Discussion.* Edited by Panos Dimas, Melissa Lane, and Susan Sauvé Meyer. Oxford University Press, 2021, p. 13-18.

Mié, Fabián. “Defining the Statesman by Division: 259d7-268d4” *Plato's Statesman: A Philosophical Discussion.* Edited by Panos Dimas, Melissa Lane, and Susan Sauvé Meyer. Oxford University Press, 2021. p 52-70.

Migliori, Maurizio. "The Multifocal Approach: The Statesman as the Key to Plato’s Political Philosophy". Plato’s ›Statesman‹ Revisited, edited by Beatriz Bossi and Robinson, Thomas M., De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 35-52.

Miller, Mitchell H. *The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman*. Parmenides Publishing, 1980.

Miller Mitchell H. “Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's *Statesman*.” In *The Philosopher in Plato's* Statesman. Parmenides Publishing, 2004.

Mohr, Richard. “Disorderly Motion in Plato’s ‘*Statesman*.’” *Phoenix*, vol. 35, no. 3, 1981, pp. 199–215.

Mohr, Richard. “Plato’s Theology Reconsidered: What the Demiurge Does.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1985, pp. 131–44.

Mohr, Richard. “The World-Soul in the Platonic Cosmology.” *Illinois Classical Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1982, pp. 41–48.

Motta, Anna. "Demiurgy in Heavens. An Ancient Account in Plato's Statesman". *Plato's ›Statesman‹ Revisited*. Edited by Beatriz Bossi and Thomas M Robinson. DeGruyter, 2018, pp. 141-156.

Motta, Anna. "Putting Cosmogony into Words: The Neoplatonists on Metaphysics and Discourse (logos)". *Peitho. Examina Antiqua*, Vol. 10, no. 1, Nov. 2019, pp. 113-32.

Motta, Anna. "The Visible Cosmos of Dialogues: Some Historical and Philosophical Remarks About Plato in the Late Antique Schools." *Revista Archai*, no. 12, 2014, pp. 11–18.

Naas, Michael. "From Spontaneity to Automaticity: Polar (Opposite) Reversal at *Statesman* 269c–274d." *Plato's* Statesman*: Dialectic, Myth and Politics*. Edited by John Sallis, Suny Press, 2017, pp. 15–32.

Nails, Debra. The People of Plato a Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics. Hackett Publishing Company, 2002.

Nehamas, Alexander. "Episteme and Logos in Plato's Later Thought," *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*, 1984, pp. 11-36.

Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. "Plato on the Origins of Evil: The Statesman Myth Reconsidered." *Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 16, no.1, 1996, pp. 65-91.

O'Meara, Dominic J. *Platonopolis: Platonic Political Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. Oxford University Press, 2005.

O'Meara, Dominic J. "Political Life and Divinization in Neoplatonic Philosophy." *Hermathena*, no. 157, 1994, pp. 155–64.

Opsomer, Jan. "To Find the Maker and Father: Proclus' Exegesis of Plato *Tim*. 28c3-5." *Études Platoniciennes*, no. 2, 2006, pp. 261–283.

Pradeau, Jean-François. *Plato and the City: A New Introduction to Plato's Political Thought*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. University of Exeter Press, 2014.

Plochmann, George Kimball. "Socrates, the Stranger from Elea, and Some Others." *Classical Philology*. vol. 49, iss. 4, 1954, pp. 223-231.

Rhodes, James M. "The Real Name of the Stranger: The Meaning of Plato's *Statesman*." *VoegelinView*, 26 Aug. 2020, https://voegelinview.com/real-name-stranger-meaning-platos-statesman/.

Robinson, T. M. "Demiurge and World Soul in Plato's *Politicus*." *The American Journal of Philology*, vol. 88, no. 1, 1967, pp. 57–66.

Robinson, Thomas M. "FORMS, DEMIURGE AND WORLD SOUL IN THE '*POLITICUS*.'" *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1995, pp. 15–30.

Rosen, Stanley. *Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. Print.

Rowe, Christopher. "Killing Socrates: Plato's Later Thoughts on Democracy." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 121, 2001, pp. 63–76.

Rowe, Christopher. “On grey-haired babies: Plato, Hesiod, and the Visions of the Past (and Future)” *Plato and Hesiod.* Edited by G.R. Boys-Stones and J.H. Haubold. Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 298-316.

Rowe, Christopher. “Zwei oder Drei Phasen? Der Mythos im *Politikos*.” *Platon als Mythologe: Neue Interpretationen zu den Mythen in Platons Dialogen*. Edited by in M. Janka and C. Schäfer. Wissenschaftliche Buchengesellschaft, 2002, pp. 160-175.

Ryle, Gilbert. *Plato's Progress*. Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Sallis, John. “Beginnings—.” *Plato's* Statesman*: Dialectic, Myth and Politics*. Edited by John Sallis, Suny Press, 2017, pp. 11–14.

Sallis, John. *On Beauty and Measure: Plato’s* Symposium *and* Statesman. Edited by S. Montgomery Ewegen. Indiana University Press, 2021.

Sayre, Kenneth M. *Metaphysics and Method in Plato's Statesman*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Schicker, Rudolf. “Aspekte der Rezeption des *Politikos* im Mittel und Neuplatonismus.*” Reading the* Statesman*: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*. Edited by Christopher J. Rowe. Sankt Augustin: Academic Verlag, 1995, pp. 381-388.

Schuhl, Pierre-Maxime. Études Platoniciennes. 1960.

Scodel, Harvey Ronald. *Diaeresis and Myth in Plato's* Statesman. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987.

Steiner, Peter M. “METABOLE AND REVOLUTION THE MYTH OF THE PLATONIC *STATESMAN* AND THE MODERN CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION.” *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought*. vol. 12, iss. 1-2, 1993, pp. 134-153.

Verlinsky, Alexander. “The Cosmic Cycle in the Statesman Myth. Part I.” *Hyperboreus*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2008, pp. 57–86.

Verlinsky, Alexander. “The Cosmic Cycle in the Statesman Myth. Part II.” *Hyperboreus*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2009, pp. 221–250.

Vidal-Naquet, Pierre. “Plato's Myth of the Statesman, the Ambiguities of the Golden Age and of History.” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 98, 1978, pp. 132–141.

White, David A. *Myth, Metaphysics and Dialectic in Plato's Statesman*. Routledge, 2016.

White, David A. “Paradigm, Form and the Good in Plato’s *Statesman*: The Myth Revisited.” *Plato’s ›*Statesman*‹ Revisited*, edited by Beatriz Bossi and Thomas M. Robinson. De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 87-106.

Zuckert Catherine H. *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues*. University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Zuckert, Catherine H. “The Stranger's Political Science v. Socrates’ Political Art.” *Plato Journal*, vol. 5, 2005.

Zuckert, Catherine H. “Who’s a Philosopher? Who’s a Sophist? The Stranger V. Socrates.” *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2000, pp. 65–97.

Zuolo, Federico. “Constituting the Political Age in Plato’s Statesman: New Categories for an Old Question.” *History of Political Thought*, Jan. 2017, pp. 1–16.

Appendix A – Castoriadis' 'Carving Up' of *Statesman*

257a	Preamble
258b	First Definition: *The Divine Pastor (February 26)*
262a	Incidental Point 1: *The Species-Part Distinction (March 5)*
263c	Incidental Point 2: *Subjective Division (March 5)*
268d	Digression 1: *The Myth of the Reign of Cronus (March 12)*
	(March 26)
277d	Incidental Point 3: *The Paradigm and the Elements*
	(March 5)
	(March 12)
279b	Second Definition: *The Royal Weaver (February 26)*
281d	Incidental Point 4: *Proper Cause/ Comitant Cause (March 12)*
283c	Incidental Point 5: *Absolute Measure/ Relative Measure (March 12)*
285d	Incidental Point 6: *Dialectical Exercise as Object of the Dialogue (March 12)*
291d	Digression 2: *The Form of Regimes*
	(March 26)
	(April 23)
292a	Digression 3: *Science, Sole Basis for the Statesman (April 23)*
	(April 30)
300d	Digression 2½: *The Forms of Regimes (reprise) (April 30)*
304b	Incidental Point 7: *The Arts that Serve Other Arts (March 12)*
306a	Incidental Point 8: *The Diversity of the Virtues (March 12)*

Appendix B – Merrill's Helical Schematic of *Statesman*

Link with the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* (257a1–258a10)

Introduction:

A. The question of how to define the statesman posed (258b1–261a7)

Part I: Disordered Politics

B. Human beings in a herded community (261a8–267d12)

C. Practitioners of other arts (267e1–268d4)

D. The statesman presented in myth (268d5–275a11)

C. Practitioners of other arts (275b1–277c8)

Part II: Philosophy

E. Method and the paradigm of weaving

E_1. Method: the use of paradigms (277d1–278e11)

E_2. The paradigm of weaving (279a1–283a9)

E_1. Method: the mean (283b1–287a7)

Part III: Politics Ordered by the Statesman

C. Practitioners of other arts (287a7–291c)

D. The statesman and his regime

D_1. Typology of regimes: rejected attempt (291c8–292d9)

D_2. The statesman as a legislator (292e1–302b4)

D_1. Typology of regimes: new attempt (302b5–303c7)

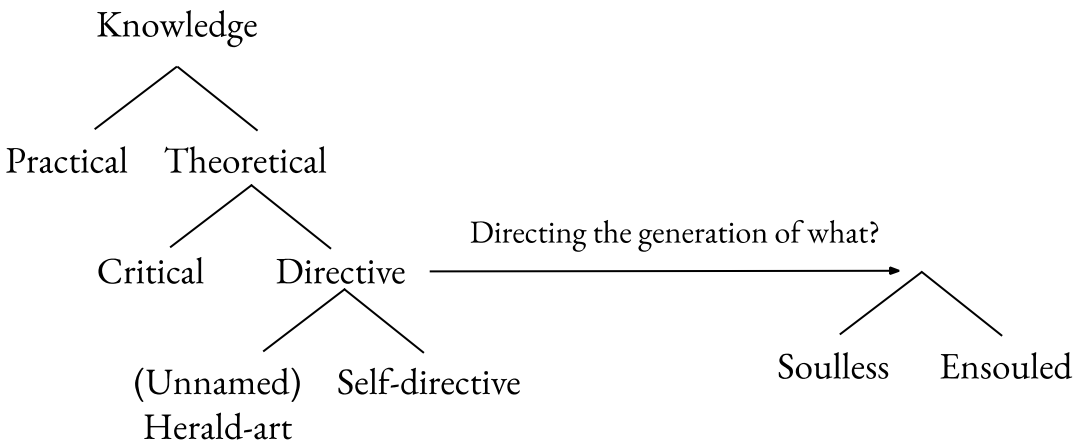
C. Practitioners of other arts (303c8–305e7)

B. Human beings in a herded community as citizens (305e8–311b6)

Conclusion:

A. The question of how to define the statesman answered (311b7–c8)

Appendix C – The Fourth Cut: Revising the 'Straight Path'



Appendix D – The Cosmic Structure in Myth of Kronos