

THE DOCTRINE OF DUE MEASURE IN PLATO'S *STATESMAN*

by

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

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2011

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DATE: 25 August, 2011

AUTHOR: William Cochran

TITLE: THE DOCTRINE OF DUE MEASURE IN PLATO'S *STATESMAN*

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL: Department of Classics

DEGREE: MA CONVOCATION: October YEAR: 2011

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Abstract

This thesis examines the extent to which the doctrine of due measure can be rightfully called the σκοπός of Plato's *Statesman*. In order to determine the doctrine's explanatory power, the thesis adopts the Neoplatonic method of exegesis. It first examines the current state of Platonic scholarship in general and then of studies on the *Statesman* in particular, then provides both the philosophic and literary context of the dialogue in question. Next, it analyses the doctrine of due measure's philosophic content, and then proceeds to examine its ability to illuminate the literary details of the text. In completing this exercise, this thesis hopes to demonstrate a method of interpreting a Platonic text, by which we can better understand how Plato wrote his dialogues, and how we can be better interpreters of his writing – both in its philosophical and literary aspects.

List of Abbreviations Used

<i>Apol.</i>	Plato's <i>Apology</i>
<i>Cat.</i>	Aristotle's <i>Categories</i>
MMPS	Kenneth Sayre's <i>Method and Metaphysics in Plato's Statesman</i>
NE	Aristotle's <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Parm.</i>	Plato's <i>Parmenides</i>
PPS	Mitchell Miller's <i>The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	Plato's <i>Republic</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	Plato's <i>Sophist</i>
<i>Stsm.</i>	Plato's <i>Statesman</i>
<i>Thts.</i>	Plato's <i>Theaetetus</i>
LT	Plato's 'Late Trilogy', consisting of his <i>Theaetetus</i> , <i>Sophist</i> , and <i>Statesman</i> .

Acknowledgements

I am really very much indebted to several people, who were integral to the completion of this thesis.

First, my parents, for their continued support and encouragement, and for being examples that this could, in fact, be done. Also to my Grandmother, for her eternal thought and care, as well as tea and sandwiches.

To Ruth Covert, my semi-step-mother and magnanimous benefactor, who gave me a place to live and to write.

To Donna Edwards, for, among many other things which have been noted elsewhere, her incredible flexibility with my hours.

To the Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for their generous funding.

To my classmates. Having been around people that are so willing, eager, and capable of discussing philosophy, religion, history, literature, and even grammar has been a true gift.

To my teachers: Dr. Dennis House who once commented on my first paper in Ancient Philosophy, "Plato would have much to say to you." To Dr. Peter O'Brien and Dr. Michael Fournier, for their friendship as well as their teaching and guidance. Dr. Leona MacLeod for her incisive arguments in third year Greek; they improved my own. To Dr. Wayne J. Hankey, for telling me to never, ever use more words than were absolutely necessary, and, more importantly, for more than I can say. Finally, to Dr. Eli Diamond, my thesis supervisor, for his patience, encouragement, meticulousness, enthusiasm and, most importantly, for helping me see for myself just how much more Plato has to say.

Lastly, to Lindsay Fancy, who has been my support, my home, my funding, my classmate, my teacher, my best friend and love throughout.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

“Doesn’t it seem natural to you to say that the greater is necessarily greater than nothing other than the less, and also that the lesser is lesser than the greater and nothing else?”¹

Plato’s *Statesman*, 283d11–e1

Introduction: The Context of the Commentary

Justifying the Study

The question, “why do you need another study of Plato after 2,300 years of studies of Plato?” has been asked often in Platonic scholarship.² The best answer, it seems, is that we still have very little idea of what Plato is actually saying. It appears we are in the dark even more now, because one of the major debates in the literature on Plato is not over *what* he has to say, but *whether* he has anything to say at all.

Though immense, the history of Platonic interpretation can be boiled down into the positions of two opposed groups: those who believe Plato has a system, and those who do not.³ Among those who believe that he has a system are: the “unitarians,” who believe that Plato’s complete system is disclosed in his dialogues; the “developmentalists,” who maintain that because of the apparent contradictions in Plato’s dialogues he could not have had one unified system

¹ Ἄρ’ οὐ κατὰ φύσιν δοκεῖ σοι τὸ μείζον μηδενὸς ἑτέρου δεῖν μείζον λέγειν ἢ τοῦ ἐλάττωνος, καὶ τοῦλλατον αὖ τοῦ μείζονος ἔλαττον, ἄλλου δὲ μηδενός; My translation.

² One such example is in the Preface to *The Third Way: New Directions in Platonic Studies*, ed. Francisco J. Gonzalez, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), vii.

³ For a systematic and in-depth treatment of the many positions described below, see Gonzalez’s Introduction to *The Third Way*.

when he set out to write, but that Plato's system evolved as he wrote; finally, there are the "esotericists," who believe that Plato's system is not to be found in his writings at all but in his "unwritten doctrines," of which we have some second-hand accounts from Aristotle and others. On the other side of the debate are the skeptics, who maintain that Plato has no system at all, either written or unwritten, but that he is instead concerned with refuting any and all philosophical conclusions.

At first it would seem that the two positions are irreconcilable. On the one hand, the systematic approach seems to neglect many of the literary and historical details of the dialogues in an attempt to render a purer philosophical reading. On the other hand, the skeptics maintain that these details were essential for their Plato, who wished to remain anonymous, and to ground his philosophy completely in the particular, thus avoiding philosophical systematization. From the systematic point of view, Francisco J. Gonzalez says, "The literary and dramatic details of the dialogues appear as so much pointless and even misleading ornamentation... unless one is willing to give these details allegorical significance in the manner of the Neoplatonists."⁴

On a smaller scale, the same question could be asked about Plato's *Statesman* – although this is probably the first time that someone has had to justify another study of this particular dialogue. Just 30 years ago, the *Statesman* was one of the most neglected dialogues of all. So much so, that Harvey Scodel

⁴ Francisco J. Gonzalez, "Introduction: A Short History of Platonic Interpretation," in *The Third Way*, ed. Gonzalez (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), 12.

was able to say in 1987 that “Among the longer Platonic dialogues, the *Politicus* has probably received the least scholarly attention.”⁵ See also Mitchell Miller, who initiated the current wave of studies on the *Statesman* with his work *The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman*.⁶ Before Miller’s study, the *Statesman* (or *Politicus* as it is also called sometimes) seems to have been almost totally forgotten in all commentaries and studies of Plato, except for its myth, and, perhaps, other select parts of its teachings.⁷ Before 1980, the year in which Miller’s *PPS* first appeared, there was very little mention of the *Statesman* in any of the philosophic commentators.

Harold Tarrant outlines the reception of the *Statesman*, and the rest of what he calls the “logical” dialogues in his *Plato’s First Interpreters*.⁸ He says that for the Neoplatonists the *Statesman* “rarely rates a mention, except for the myth.”⁹ This does indeed seem to be the case. Very little mention of the *Statesman* is made at all throughout the rest of the history of platonic commentary.¹⁰ Such a lack of commentary supports Miller’s claim, which he makes in a preface to a new edition of his *PPS*. There he says that when he wrote the *PPS* in 1980, “there

⁵ Harvey Scodel, *Diaeresis and Myth in Plato’s Statesman* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 9.

⁶ Mitchell Miller, *The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980). Hereafter, I refer to Miller’s work as *PPS*.

⁷ Such as the apparent identification of the statesman’s weaving activity with that of the λόγος in Plotinus’ *Enneads* III.2-3, the doctrine of the mean in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, although neither of these works references the *Statesman* by name.

⁸ Harold Tarrant, *Plato’s First Interpreters* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 183-197.

⁹ Tarrant, 183.

¹⁰ See also John Dillon’s “The Neoplatonic Exegesis of the *Statesman* Myth” in Rowe’s *Reading the Statesman*, 364-374, for a fuller treatment of the extant Neoplatonic commentaries on the *Statesman*. There too, Dillon asserts that for the Neoplatonists, “particular interest centered on the myth” (365).

was no full-length study of the *Statesman* as a whole, nor in the little commentary then available in English on its form and structure, was it appreciated as a dramatic dialogue in the manner of...the 'early' and 'middle' dialogues."¹¹

Since that time, however, there has been an abundance of book-length commentaries,¹² essays, and even an entire conference¹³ devoted to mining the *Statesman* for all its worth. Yet to my mind, this task has not yet been fully accomplished, since there has not been a commentary that sufficiently grasps the meaning of the whole dialogue. No commentary has yet adequately grasped the *Statesman's* philosophic content in light of its dramatic context, so that the philosophic intent of the work is able to explain the host of its literary details. This is not to say that other commentaries have not been helpful. Quite the opposite is true. Sitting as we do at the end of 30 years of studies on the *Statesman* creates the ideal balance between having the room to advance the study of this dialogue and the support of those who have already tried to do so.

While many of the important works on the *Statesman* of the last 30 years maintain that it is necessary to keep the dramatic context of the *Statesman* in mind,¹⁴ none explains the whole dialogue adequately, along the principles of

¹¹ Miller, *PPS*, xii

¹² Among the best and most useful of which I count Miller's *PPS*, and Kenneth Sayre's *Metaphysics and Method in Plato's Statesman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) (hereafter *MMPS*).

¹³ This is the Third *Symposium Platonicum*, which was held in Bristol, Spain in 1992. Most of the papers presented there have been published. They can be found in either Rowe's *Reading the Statesman* (Sankt Augustin, 1995) or in volume 12 of the journal *Polis* (1993).

¹⁴ Miller's work, as well as Gonzalez's "The Eleatic Stranger: His Master's Voice?" in *Who Speaks for Plato? Studies in Platonic Anonymity*, ed. Gerald A. Press (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 161-182, establish, I believe, beyond any doubt, that there *is* dramatic content to this work.

interpretation which I believe are Plato's own. Such a commentary is the goal of this thesis, as it surely is for other interpreters of the dialogue. The best, however, that we can accomplish within the context of this thesis is an analysis of the philosophical core of the dialogue, which I take to be the doctrine of due measure.

A Neoplatonic Method of Interpretation

Fortunately, there is a philosophical school which has a method of interpretation which seeks to meet the criteria I have outlined above. I agree almost entirely with the Neoplatonic method of exegesis, for it follows Plato's own prescriptions for what makes a good commentary. In his *Phaedrus* at 264c, Plato tells us how to view his dialogues. At 264c is the famous admonition that "it is necessary for every λόγος to be ordered just like a living organism, having a body of its very own, so that neither is it headless nor footless, but has both a middle and limbs, having been written in a fitting relation to one another and to the whole."¹⁵ That a dialogue must be like a living organism means it should have a unity to its parts, and that these parts are related to one another just as the parts of a living being are: the unifying factor – whatever it is – holds the whole together. It explains the *purpose* for which the being was created. This purpose, or conscious intention of the author, is what the Neoplatonists called a σκοπός.

As James A. Coulter explains in his *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of*

¹⁵ δεῖν πάντα λόγον ὡςπερ ζῶον συνεστάναι σώμά τι ἔχοντα αὐτὸν αὐτοῦ, ὥστε μήτε ἀκέφαλον εἶναι μήτε ἄπουν, ἀλλὰ μέσα τε ἔχειν καὶ ἄκρα, πρέποντ' ἀλλήλοις καὶ τῷ ὅλω γεγραμμένα: *Phaedrus*, 264c. My translation.

Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists, the σκοπός is “the conscious intention of the artist...which imparts to the various elements of his work the quality of being necessary or belonging.”¹⁶ Further, “[I]t is only a correct understanding of this intention on the part of the exegete which allows for him to settle the question of unity.”¹⁷

When seeking an interpretation that expresses the unity of a Platonic dialogue, the literary/dramatic details which Plato includes in each dialogue, as well as the dramatic links between dialogues, are chiefly important, second only to the philosophical intent of the dialogue itself. The details of the work are like a keyhole, which only the proper reading of the σκοπός will fit into and unlock. J.A. Coulter includes a list of “rules” that Neoplatonic commentators used, which I reconstruct here from pp. 83-84 of his *Literary Microcosm*, which he gets from the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*:

- 1) “if every living thing ‘has only one purpose (*telos*), the Good (for the sake of which it has been created),’ then ‘the dialogue must have one purpose (*telos*), that is, *one theme*.” In other words, there is one *skopos* for each dialogue, which is its principle theme (*telos*).
- 2) “the more comprehensive theme is to be preferred to the less.”

¹⁶ James A. Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 77.

¹⁷ Ibid. There is an interesting, albeit conjectural, assertion by Westerink (1962, xxxviii), supported by Dillon (in his essay “The Neoplatonic Exegesis of the *Statesman* Myth”, which appears in Rowe’s *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the III Symposium Platonicum*, 366) that Iamblichus thought the σκοπός of the *Statesman* concerned the ‘heavenly demiurge’, since Iamblichus takes the *Sophist* to concern his sublunary counterpart. (See Dillon’s *Iamblichi Chalcidensis: In Platonis dialogos commentariorum fragmenta*, 90-91 & 245-247).

- 3) “no theme which reflects only a small section of the dialogue be preferred to one which reflects the whole.”
- 4) “the more precisely stated theme be preferred to the less.”
- 5) “the more noble (*kreitton*) theme be preferred to the less.”
- 6) “the theme in harmony with the explicit matter of the dialogue be preferred to one which is not”
- 7) “any theme which presupposes a personal attack on an individual be rejected”
- 8) “the theme must not be concerned with emotion (*empathous*)”
- 9) “mere dialectical ‘tools’ or ‘instruments,’ e.g. the art of division (*diairesis*) in the *Sophist*, should never be made the theme”
- 10) “the ‘matter’ of the dialogue, e.g. the specific characters and their attributes, should also never be made the theme of the dialogue”

To my mind, these are excellent guidelines both for determining what makes a proper reading of a Platonic dialogue, and for judging which reading is best.

Certain readings are therefore better the more they are able to explain the whole dialogue, including its dramatic situation, particular details, and literary structure. Seen this way, the dialogue itself is the measure of an interpretation’s accuracy – or, as David Roochnik phrases it, “Even if the text refuses to yield the entirety of its meaning, it nonetheless functions as a stable object by which to evaluate various readings. Rather than being the measure of the text, a good

reader is measured by, and so must be responsible to, the text.”¹⁸

The Skopos of Plato’s Statesman

In this thesis I argue that the doctrine of due measure is the σκοπός of Plato’s *Statesman*. However, I realize my assertion contradicts rule 9 from the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* cited above. While the real intent of the *Statesman* – at its most fundamental level – is to establish a kind of relation which uses an absolute standard to measure relative difference, the doctrine of due measure provides this very relation. I aim to prove that the doctrine of due measure is the most important part of the *Statesman* by arguing that it accomplishes the very things that the σκοπός of a dialogue must accomplish: It explains the dramatic details of the dialogue, and it provides an explanation for the dialogue’s often confounding literary structure. Within the dialogue’s philosophical project, the doctrine of due measure also does the following:

- 1) It offers a new way to define the philosopher, sophist, as well as provide the necessary methodology to define the statesman
- 2) It ushers in a new metaphysics which closes the gap between form and particular, which ‘participation’ previously covered up in the eidetic dialogues. In turn, this new metaphysics provides a political philosophy which, if it could be implemented in reality, would save Socrates from condemnation.

¹⁸ David Roochnik, “Residual Ambiguity in Plato’s *Statesman*” in *Plato*, vol. 5 (2005), 15.

The doctrine of due measure therefore provides the necessary tools to be able to conclude the trilogy of dialogues to which the *Statesman* belongs in both its dramatic and philosophical aspects.

Background: The Situation of the *Statesman*

In order to get a full appreciation of the purpose of Plato's *Statesman*, it is necessary to situate it within the larger continuum of the Platonic *corpus*. In this section, I ignore the questions of stylometry which try to organize Plato's dialogues as they may have been written at different points of his life. Such studies are ultimately useless, since Plato's dialogues can be grouped in a much better way into their proper divisions based on their philosophical content.¹⁹ I rely on the distinctions made by JN Findlay in his *Plato: The Written and Unwritten Dialogues*, which separates the dialogues into 'Socratic', 'Ideological', and 'Stoicheological'. Though far from perfect, these divisions at least offer better names for the sections of Plato's corpus than 'early', 'middle', and 'late'.

Plato himself indicates that we ought to situate one dialogue within the continuum of his larger body of work by the various links he creates between his dialogues. If we are to comprehend the details of a dialogue, one of which is an allusion to another dialogue, surely Plato made this connection for a reason, and it is our job as interpreters to investigate it.

¹⁹ For more on the fruitlessness of such stylometric studies, see Charles H. Kahn, "The Place of the *Statesman* in Plato's Later Work" in *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the Third Symposium Platonicum*, ed. Christopher J. Rowe (Sankt Augustin: Academic Verlag, 1995), 49-60, 50.

Although a full explanation of the movement from one dialogue to another would be too much to accomplish here, I intend to trace the connections between the dialogues that are most closely connected to the *Statesman*. I shall begin with a rough outline of the dramatic situation by sketching the dramatic connections between the dialogues; then I shall fill in the details of the sketch by mapping out the discrete philosophical progression which I see unfolding in a succession across multiple works. By “progression” I do not intend to place myself in the camp of the ‘developmentalists’. Rather, I think that the division between schools of Platonic interpretation is somewhat of a false dichotomy. Plato’s philosophy is not simply either Unitarian or Developmentalist. I see a way in which it can be both. If one dialogue has a logical inconsistency or something is missing from the argument, there is nothing to say that Plato did not intend to do this. It very well could be that Plato had the whole of his philosophy before him when writing the particular dialogues, and has interconnected them in such a way that uncovering the problems within each dialogue will lead the attentive reader onto the next dialogue where precisely the matter in question from one dialogue is addressed in the next. This way there can be an overarching unity to the corpus which becomes apparent as we trace the development of the philosophical arguments.

Certain dialogues are therefore connected to one another both by dramatic setting and by a philosophically based logical progression. What follows is an

explanation of an example of this kind of interweaving in a particular set of Plato's dialogues.

The Dramatic context of the *Statesman*

The *Statesman* is the concluding dialogue of a whole trilogy of dialogues, consisting of the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman*, which are dramatically connected to one another by a few remarks within the dialogues themselves. I shall hereafter refer to these dialogues, i.e. the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* collectively as Plato's Late Trilogy, or LT for short. Although it is not explicit anywhere in the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, or *Statesman*, these dialogues are also dramatically connected to the *Euthyphro* and the *Cratylus* by connections which are made in those dialogues to the same dramatic time as the setting of the LT. Both the *Euthyphro* and the *Cratylus* are set on the same day as the *Theaetetus*. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates is on his way to the King's Porch to meet the indictment of Meletus, a journey which he also mentions at the end of the *Theaetetus*. Thus we are to assume that the *Euthyphro* takes place immediately after the *Theaetetus*. The *Cratylus* also occurs on the same day.²⁰ However, since these dialogues are not explicitly mentioned in either the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, or *Statesman*, I will not dwell on them here. There is also, of course, the more obvious dramatic connection of this set of dialogues to the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*. Thus there are eight dialogues in total that are set around the trial and death of Socrates.

²⁰ See *Cratylus*, 396d; see also Catherine Zuckert's *Plato's Philosophers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 651-652 for more on the dramatic connections of the *Euthyphro* and *Cratylus*.

The dramatic setting of the Late Trilogy is most easily seen by pointing to the conclusion of the *Theaetetus*. There it is revealed by Socrates that “I must now report myself to the King’s Court, to answer the indictment of Meletus, which he has written against me. But early in the morning, Theodorus, let us meet here again.”²¹ This single quotation sets up the dramatic situation of the LT, and connects the *Theaetetus* directly to the discussion of the *Sophist* and, consequently, to that of the *Statesman* as well.

The connection between the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* is clear from the beginning of the *Sophist*. The project that will take the duration of these two dialogues to complete is defined explicitly at *Sophist* 216c-217a, where Socrates asks for the Stranger to recount how the people in his country define the sophist, statesman, and philosopher: “For certainly those men, appearing in all kinds of ways on account of the ignorance of others ‘frequent the cities’ – I mean those men who are not feignedly but really philosophers – looking down from above on the life of those below, and to some seem to be worth nothing, while to others worth everything; and sometimes they appear to be statesmen, other times sophists, and sometimes they might even give some people the impression they are altogether mad” (*Soph.*, 216c-217a).²² Roughly speaking, the *Sophist* contains

²¹ Νῦν μὲν οὖν ἀπαντητέον μοι εἰς τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως στοὰν ἐπὶ τὴν Μελήτου γραφήν, ἣν με γέγραπται· ἔωθεν δέ, ὦ Θεόδωρε, δεῦρο πάλιν ἀπαντῶμεν: 210d. My translation. Note the repetition of the verb ἀπαντάω here. If nothing else, there is a linguistic signal of the connection between Socrates’ indictment and the proposed meeting which will occur in the *Sophist* and *Statesman*.

²² πάνυ γὰρ ἄνδρες οὗτοι παντοῖοι φανταζόμενοι διὰ τὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἄγνοιαν ἐπιστρωφῶσι πόλας, οἳ μὴ πλαστῶς ἀλλ’ ὄντως φιλοσόφοι, καθορῶτες ὑψόθεν τὸν τῶν κάτω βίον, καὶ τοῖς μὲν δοκοῦσιν εἶναι τοῦ μηδενὸς τίμιοι, τοῖς δ’ ἄξιοι τοῦ παντός· καὶ τοτὲ μὲν πολιτικοὶ θανατίζονται, τοτὲ δὲ σοφισταί, τοτὲ δ’ ἔστιν οἷς δόξαν παράσχονται ἄν ὡς παντάπασιν ἔχοντες

the discussion of the definition of the sophist, and the *Statesman* that of the statesman. Each dialogue tries to single out the eponymous person, but in doing so it discovers the philosopher as well.

There is also often the discussion in scholarship of whether there was meant to be a third dialogue, *The Philosopher*. J.B. Skemp, in his translation of the dialogue, goes so far as to suggest that Socrates' remark at *Statesman* 258a about how he will examine the Younger Socrates at a later time, indicates that these two were supposed to be the interlocutors of this fourth and final dialogue.²³ This pairing, Skemp suggests, would create a kind of symmetry between the interlocutors of the four dialogues. But as it stands, I find it more intriguing to think that there was no *Philosopher* written by Plato on purpose, but instead think that we are meant to find the reason for its absence, as well as the reason for Socrates' remark at *Statesman* 258a, with the information we have. In this view I agree with Miller: "If anything, the philosopher must be sought within the searches for the sophist and the statesman, and the first task will be to recognize and distinguish him there."²⁴ Why there was a *Philosopher* project proposed but never completed is another question. Miller again seems to have the right answer: "If to nonphilosophers the philosopher assumes no distinct appearance of his own but rather those of sophist and statesman, then, since Theodorus and his

μυθικῶς. Translated by H.N. Fowler (Loeb Classical Library edition). For the most part, I have used Fowler's translations in the Loeb Classical Library editions, except when I have felt it necessary to modify them.

²³ J.B. Skemp, *Plato's Statesman: A Translation of the Politicus of Plato* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 20.

²⁴ Miller, *PPS*, 10

students are clearly nonphilosophers, there can be no distinct search for the philosopher."²⁵

All three dialogues are thus connected to one another at least by explicit dramatic comments made by the characters, which reference one another. The *Theaetetus* points forward to the discussion of the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, while the *Sophist* points backward to the *Theaetetus*, and the *Statesman* points to the discussion of the *Sophist* which preceded it. This is done at 258a in the *Statesman*, when Socrates' says, "While I myself communed with Theaetetus in arguments yesterday and just now have heard him answering the Stranger, Socrates I know neither way."²⁶ This remark, along with the Stranger's suggestion that he does not want to tire Theaetetus (257c), firmly place the *Statesman* immediately after the *Sophist* in dramatic time.²⁷

The Philosophical Progression

There are also ways in which each of the dialogues of the LT point forward to each other *philosophically*, which Plato accomplishes by inserting subtle remarks into one dialogue, which point to the philosophy contained in another. An example of this is the progression in Platonic metaphysics from the *Phaedo* to the *Parmenides* to the *Sophist* and finally (for the purposes of this thesis) to the *Statesman*. The overarching project in these dialogues is to find a way to

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Θεαιτήτω μὲν οὖν αὐτός τε συνέμιξα χθὲς διὰ λόγων καὶ νῦν ἀκήκοα ἀποκρινομένου, Σωκράτους δὲ ουδέτερα:258a.

²⁷ Although this setting may seem obvious, there are scholars who hold that each dialogue of the LT has its own day. See, e.g. Rosen, *Plato's Statesman: The Web of Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 12.

bridge the gap between self-identical Forms and their differing sensible instantiations.

In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates says,

If anyone tells me that what makes a thing beautiful is its lovely colour, or its shape or anything else of the sort, I let all that go, for all those things confuse me, and I hold simply and plainly and perhaps foolishly to this, that nothing else makes it beautiful but the presence or communion (call it what you please) of the beautiful itself, however it may have been gained; about the way in which it happens, I make no positive statement as yet, but I do insist that [all] beautiful things are made beautiful by the beautiful.²⁸

Clearly the most common name for what Socrates is talking about here is participation—a key part of the theory of Forms, which Socrates calls his “Second Best Method” (δευτερός πλοῦς: *Phaedo*, 85c). I believe that it is this very lack of a positive explanation of what participation is that Plato seeks to take up in the late (or stoicheological) dialogues; specifically I aim to argue that it is in the *Statesman* that we get a definitive, albeit subtly expressed, answer. However, the project to investigate the Forms according to the First Best Method begins in Plato's *Parmenides*.

²⁸ ἀλλ' ἐάν τις μοι λέγη, δι' ὃ τι καλόν ἐστιν ὁτιοῦν, ἢ χρώμα εὐανθὲς ἔχον ἢ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν τῶν τοιούτων, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα χαίρειν ἐῶ, ταράττομαι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι, τοῦτο δὲ ἀπλῶς καὶ ἀτέχνως καὶ εὐήθως ἔχω παρ' ἑμαυτῶ, ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλο τι ποιεῖ αὐτὸ καλὸν ἢ ἡ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ εἴτε παρουσία εἴτε κοινωνία ὅπη δὴ καὶ ὅπως προσγενομένη· οὐ γὰρ ἐτι τοῦτο διισχυρίζομαι, ἀλλ' ὅτι τῶ καλῶ πάντα τὰ καλὰ γίγνεται καλά. *Phd.*, 100 c-d. (Fowler's translation, modified)

Plato's *Parmenides* and the Problems of Participation²⁹

The *Parmenides* is readily able to be seen as the beginning of the self-critique of Plato's own Second Best Method, which is explicated most clearly in his *Phaedo*.³⁰ Specifically, the first half of the *Parmenides* attacks the doctrine of participation, while the second half demonstrates a new method of investigation – looking at the principles themselves.

The overall project of the *Parmenides* is also indicated by its literary form. The first half, which explicates Plato's Second Best Method and then deconstructs it, is transmitted to the reader in dialogue form and indirect speech, while the second half, which tries to investigate the principles behind the forms is delivered mostly in monologue form and direct speech. The *Parmenides* as a piece of writing thus encapsulates both difference (in the form of dialogue and indirect speech) and sameness (in the form of monologue and direct speech) in one whole. Such an endeavour, i.e. to investigate a way in which identity and

²⁹ There is too much in this dialogue to give a complete treatment of it, and so such an endeavour is outside the scope of this thesis. Still, it is necessary to give an account of what the *Parmenides* does for Plato's philosophy in general before moving on to discuss the *Statesman*, because it is in the wake of the criticisms put forth in the first half of the *Parmenides* that the *LT*, and the *Stsm* as its concluding dialogue, exist. For a fuller treatment of the first 'half' of the *Parmenides*, see J.A. Doull's commentaries on the *Parmenides*, one in *Dionysius*, vol. XIX (2001), "The Problem of Participation in Plato's *Parmenides*" (pp. 11-25), and the other in *Animus*, vol. 4 (1999) "The Argument to the hypotheses in *Parmenides*." For a helpful introduction to these two articles, see D.K. House's introduction in *Dionysius XIX*, as well as his commentary on Doull's treatment of the whole *Parmenides* in the Doull's *Festschrift, Philosophy and Freedom*, pp. 141-166. I am greatly indebted to these thinkers for their reading of the *Parmenides* and of the pre-Socratics.

³⁰ I recognize that the *Phaedo* is only one of many places where the Theory of Forms is discussed, but I choose to name it here for the reason that it is also in the *Phaedo* that Socrates raises the need to criticize the hypotheses on which the theory Forms is based. After he has proved the soul's immortality beyond the (communicable) doubts of the interlocutors (107a), Socrates says that "our first assumptions, even if they are believed by you all, nevertheless ought to be explained more clearly" (τὰς ὑποθέσεις τὰς πρώτας, καὶ εἰ πισταὶ ὑμῖν εἰσιν, ὁμῶς ἐπισκεπτέαι σαφέστερον). These are the last words of Socrates before he expounds the myth, drinks the hemlock, and dies.

difference need to be thought together even in the first principles, is the goal of the *Parmenides*. The setting of the dialogue during the time of the Panathenaea also tells us that the reconciliation of two opposed factors through reason is the goal of the work, for Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, has just this power. While the actual content of the *Parmenides* may not accomplish this goal, the literary structure of the dialogue provides an image of the kind of unity to be sought – and found later in *Sophist* and *Statesman*.

See also *Theaetetus* 143c, where Euclides says that he manipulated the written representation of the account of the conversation of the LT. Instead of writing it in the indirect voice, which would portray the story truly, he has chosen to represent the dialogue in direct speech, “so that the explanatory words between the speeches might not be annoying in the written account.”³¹ Such a manipulation changes the actual truth of the written account, since in truth it is a report of a conversation and so should use indirect speech; this choice presents the account directly to the reader. This choice is also an allusion to the two types of imitation that the Stranger bisects at 236ff of the *Sophist*: one which represents things like length breadth and depth in equal measurement to the original, and the other which manipulates the proportions in order to present a more beautiful image to the point of view of a perceiver (a bisection taken up later in the measurement section of the *Statesman* as well, 283ff). The *Phaedo*, interestingly, is represented in indirect speech.

³¹ ἵνα οὖν ἐν τῇ γραφῇ μὴ παρέχοιεν: *Theaetetus*, 143c. Trans. Fowler, modified.

The real problem that occupies the *Parmenides* is that of how the self-identical One and the different many – both in the relation of the forms to the One and the particulars in relation to the forms – come together so that their identity and difference can be thought together. The ‘second sailing’ of the *Phaedo*, with its doctrine of participation, covered up the problem of having to think of how the many are actually like the one and *vice versa*.³² The content of the *Parmenides* tries to get behind the image of participation, and employs Socratic logic to investigate metaphysics, whereas before it was focused solely on opinions.

Socrates in the dialogue is on the side of sameness/identity of the forms and their participants, while Zeno points to their endless difference. It becomes clear that there needs to be a philosophy that can reconcile both sides. Where the Second Best Method leaves some of the sensible world unexplained (mud and hair) and relies on the radical separation of the world of pure identity (the forms) and pure difference (the many), the *Parmenides* seeks to overcome this chasm first by bringing it to light, then by grasping the principles prior to the distinction between Forms and the many, and finally by showing the unity of both, from the top down.

The opening of the *Parmenides* can tell us much about its project.

Anaxagoras, who is indirectly mentioned in the very first line by way of a

³² See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I.6 & I.9. Knowing the content of the first half of the *Parmenides*, it is all too tantalizing not to think that the young interlocutor in its second half – called ‘Aristotle’ – is not the namesake of the real Aristotle when we look at what Aristotle has to say about participation in his *Metaphysics*: “[T]o say that they [the Forms] are patterns and the other things share in them is to use empty words and poetical metaphors.” (991a20-23, trans. WD Ross)

reference to his home in Clazomenae, taught that there was a *Nous*, which was separate, pure, and unmixed, and that it set in motion and ordered matter, which was comprised of atoms that were mixed, impure, ‘all things together’, and ‘everything in everything’. The problem for Anaxagorean metaphysics lies in the constitution of the atoms: being ‘all things together’ Anaxagoras’ atoms are endlessly divisible, even when joined together by *Nous*, since their composition creates an endless difference within themselves, which a transcendent ordering principle such as Anaxagoras’ *Nous* is unable to overcome. In other words, *Nous*’ ordering of the atoms could not create an identity for any particular thing because all atoms are made of ‘everything in everything’. Even when combined by *Nous*, the atoms would still be endlessly different from one another because they have no identity of their own.

A similar problem with regard to the many is brought up in the *Parmenides*. Near the beginning of the dialogue, Plato has Socrates recount Zeno’s attack of the logical cohesion of the physical many: “If beings are many, they must be both alike and unlike, which is impossible...[and] if it is impossible for the unlike to be like and like unlike, it is impossible for existences to be many; for if they were to be many, they would experience the impossible.”³³ The result of Zeno’s polemic is that the existence of a many produces still more ridiculous results than Parmenides’ theory that all is one. For there to be many, there must be difference, for if the many were absolutely the same they would all be one.

³³ εἰ πολλά ἐστὶ τὰ ὄντα, ὡς ἄρα δεῖ αὐτὰ ὁμοιά τε εἶναι καὶ ἀνόμοια, τοῦτο δὲ δὴ ἀδύνατον...εἰ ἀδύνατον τὰ τε ἀνόμοια ὅμοια εἶναι καὶ τὰ ὅμοια ἀνόμοια, ἀδύνατον δὴ καὶ πολλὰ εἶναι· εἰ γὰρ πολλὰ εἴη, πάσχοι ἂν τὰ ἀδύνατα: *Parm.*, 127e

But absolute difference means that the many are both alike and unlike at the same time, which is a logical contradiction. Socrates, however, finds Zeno's paradoxes unremarkable, at least as they attempt to show that the existence of the *physical* many gives way to self-contradiction. Participation, Socrates explains, can account for how things can be both like and unlike, even at the same time. So far as a one thing partakes of the idea of likeness it will become like, and so too with the idea of unlikeness, or, "even if all things partake of both opposites, and are enabled by their participation to be both like and unlike themselves, what is there wonderful about that?"³⁴ The physical many can easily be shown to be both the same and different, as well as one and many at the same time; Socrates even offers up himself as an example of how physical objects are simultaneously many and one (*Parm.*, 129c-d). What would be more amazing, Socrates goes on to say, would be if such contradictions existed in the ideas themselves:

If anyone then undertakes to show that the same things are both many and one – I means such things as stones and sticks and the like – we shall say that he shows that they are many and one, but not that the one *is* many or the many *is* one; he says nothing wonderful, but only what we should accept. If, however, as I was saying just now, he first distinguishes the abstract ideas, such as likeness and unlikeness, multitude and unity, rest and motion, and the like, and then shows that they can be mingled and separated, I should,' he said, 'be filled with amazement, Zeno. (*Parm.*, 129d-e)³⁵

³⁴ εἰ δὲ καὶ πάντα ἐναντίων ὄντων ἀμφοτέρων μεταλαμβάνει, καὶ ἔστι τῷ μετέχειν ἀμφοῖν ὁμοιά τε καὶ ἀνόμοια αὐτὰ αὐτοῖς, τί θαυμαστόν; *Parm.*, 129a-b

³⁵ ἂν οὖν τις τοιαῦτα ἐπιχειρῇ πολλὰ καὶ ἓν ταῦτα ἀποφαίνειν, λίθους καὶ ξύλα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, φήσομεν αὐτὸν πολλὰ καὶ ἓν ἀποδεικνύναι, οὐ τὸ ἓν πολλὰ οὐδὲ τὰ πολλὰ ἓν, οὐδὲ τι θαυμαστόν λέγειν, ἀλλ' ἄπερ ἂν πάντες ὁμολογοῖμεν· ἂν δὲ τις, ὃ νῦν δὴ ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, πρῶτον μὲν διαιρῆται χωρὶς αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ τὰ εἶδη, οἷον ὁμοιότητά τε καὶ ἀνομοιότητα καὶ πλῆθος καὶ τὸ ἓν καὶ στάσιν καὶ κίνησιν καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα, εἶτα ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ταῦτα δυνάμενα συγκεράνυσθαι καὶ διακρίνεσθαι ἀποφαίνει, ἀγαίμην ἂν ἐγὼ γ', ἔφη, θαυμαστῶς, ὦ Ζήνων.

Socrates' words are remarkable for two reasons: they point backward to the criticisms of Zeno and seek to resolve them by demeaning their significance; they also point forward to what is the main problem of Plato's *Parmenides* – how can there be both sameness and difference in the Forms? – the solution of which we find in *Sophist*. But first, Socrates' conception of the theory of Forms is put to the test by an impressed Parmenides.

After ascertaining Socrates' conception of the Ideas, Parmenides begins his assault on the theory of Forms by way of his four arguments against participation. Each argument of the first half undermines the possibility of a doctrine which rests on a notion of "participation" to connect the forms to their sensible particulars, especially when the forms are said to be "themselves by themselves" (αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτά).

The problem that Socrates sees in Anaxagoras' philosophy in the *Phaedo* is now the problem that Socrates has in the *Parmenides*: there is not an adequate account of causation given by the theory of the Forms and the doctrine of participation, yet the forms are that without which there could be no cause. Just as the physical things Anaxagoras mistook to be the cause of a thing's being the way it is – just as he did not connect the principle of mind to the principled physical many, so Socrates cannot connect the principles of the forms to their physical instantiations.

The final effect of these problems against participation is that they render participation illogical, and – worst of all – even if participation were possible, we

would not be able to know the forms because of the complete separation of human knowing from divine knowing.³⁶ The total separation of the intelligible Form from its sensible instantiation creates a chasm, or χωρισμός, which philosophical dialectic is unable to cross. Since knowledge of the unchanging Ideas is the ultimate goal of philosophical inquiry, the complete separation of the human (sensible) world from the divine (intelligible) world nullifies any chance for human knowledge of the divine, and *vice versa*. The biography of Antiphon—the character who relates the discussion to Cephalus—indicates that this is the conclusion of the dialogue. We are told at the beginning of the *Parmenides* (at 126c) that Antiphon, who has carefully studied the discussion of Parmenides' visit, withdrew from the study of what he heard from Pythodorus between Socrates, Parmenides and Zeno, to tend horses.

Next it is important to turn to the second half of the *Parmenides*, in order to see the first steps taken in the direction of a new metaphysics. From 137c to the end of the dialogue, Parmenides investigates several hypotheses, by way of a method of investigation which Parmenides lays out as prerequisite for true knowledge in the first half of the dialogue (at 135d-136d).

In its essence, the question which I take to be at the heart of Plato's *Statesman*, namely, that of the proper relation between the absolute and the relative, is the re-articulation of a question that has been on-going since the

³⁶ Parmenides likens the relation between the human realm and the divine to that of the master and slave. The choice of master and slave for comparison is particularly illuminating (i.e. more than father and son, or brother and sister, etc.) because it highlights the particular relationship of the forms and the particulars. It shows that there is no familial connection whatsoever, and no mingling or middling of the respective roles or powers of the two together.

Parmenides. There, after Socrates has been unable to defend the doctrine of participation in the face of the four problems posed by Parmenides, the second ‘half’ of that work espouses the hypothetical existence of the two principles of all reality.

These principles are precisely what Aristotle comes to call the One and the Dyad of greater and smaller.³⁷ That the hypothetical principle of the One is in the *Parmenides* should be self-evident. It is the first hypothesis, the One-Unity, which is so completely unified that it cannot even be said to be, for to attribute existence to it would be to superadd to its unity, and would therefore make it a multiplicity.

In fact, adding existence to unity is what creates the second hypothesis, the One-Being. This second hypothesis is the Dyad of the Greater and the Smaller. Because the One-Being is a unity of parts that are not inherently connected to one another, but instead are mutually dependent on one another for their existence and unity, each part will require the joining of the parts of unity and being to make a whole. But each part of the whole will be made up of both parts of unity and being, and each of these parts made up of unity and being *ad infinitum*. Further, in order for there to be a distinction between parts, both parts must partake of difference. And so what was originally supposed to be one has turned out to be three, and from being three, generates the infinitely many. The One-Being is thus “split up into the *smallest and greatest* [τε σμικρότατα καὶ

³⁷ See *Metaph.* I.6 & I.9. For an account in the scholarship that traces the terminology Plato uses to the terms Aristotle uses to describe Plato’s philosophy, see Kenneth Sayre’s *Plato’s Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 84-112

μέγιστα] and all kinds of existences; nothing else is so much divided, and in short the parts of existence are infinite" (*Parm*, 144b-c). In sum, it cannot be said that there is a One, since the One itself is so unified that it cannot partake of the separate attribute of being, and the joining together of unity and being in the One-Being creates an infinite multiplicity. The One-unity is complete and total Unity without being, while the One-being is the compilation of being and unity which creates an indefinite plurality. From these two hypotheses we have the principles of self-identity and difference as the principles of all things, but we still have yet to find a way to combine them.³⁸

The problem of the *Parmenides* is that there is no logically successful link between the two principles of the One and Indefinite Dyad. The third hypothetical principle tries to do this, but fails. It can only combine the contraries of the One-unity and one-being of the *Parmenides* in successive moments, instead of at the same time:

If the One is such as we have described it, being both one and many and neither one nor many, and partakes of time, must it not because one is, sometimes partake of being, and again because one is not, sometimes not partake of being?

Yes, it must.

And can one, when it partakes of being, not partake of it?

No, it cannot.

³⁸ This is by no means meant to be a complete treatment of these two principles. Instead, I retreat to the following chart for further explanation. These two principles are re-articulated thus in the course of the following dialogues:

<i>Parmenides</i>	One-Unity	One-Being
<i>Sophist</i>	Being/Sameness	Non-being/Otherness
<i>Statesman</i>	Absolute	Relative

Then it partakes at one time and does not partake at another; for that is the only way in which it can partake and not partake of the same thing. (*Parm.*, 155e-156a)³⁹

The reason for this is expressed in the typically Eleatic terms of being and non-being, where non-being means total non-existence. Because of the Eleatic law of non-contradiction, a thing either is or is not. Thus the instant cannot partake of both being and non-being, or the one and the many, at the same time. It must only partake of one at one time and another at another time. There is no mingling of the two at the same time, but only either one or the other: “Being one and many and being generated and destroyed, when it becomes one its existence as many is destroyed, and when it becomes many its existence as one is destroyed” (*Parm.*, 156b).⁴⁰ There is still no account of how the first and second principles combine.

Without a way to combine being and non-being – or, to put another way, without a way to say that non-being somehow *is* – all sorts of logical paradoxes arise.⁴¹ At 163c, for example, Plato takes pains to establish that ‘non-being’ means that something in no way *is* at all through the dialogue he writes between

Parmenides and the Young Aristotle:

³⁹ Τὸ ἐν εἰ ἔστιν οἷον διεληλύθαμεν, ἄρ' οὐκ ἀνάγκη αὐτό, ἔν τε ὄν καὶ πολλὰ καὶ μήτε ἐν μήτε πολλὰ καὶ μετέχον χρόνου, ὅτι μὲν ἔστιν ἔν, οὐσίας μετέχειν ποτέ, ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστι, μὴ μετέχειν αὐ ποτέ οὐσίας;

ἀνάγκη.

ἄρ' οὖν, ὅτε μετέχει, οἷόν τε ἔσται τότε μὴ μετέχειν, ἢ ὅτε μὴ μετέχει, μετέχειν;

οὐχ οἷόν τε.

ἐν ἄλλω ἄρα χρόνῳ μετέχει καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐ μετέχει· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μόνως τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετέχοι τε καὶ οὐ μετέχοι.

⁴⁰ ἐν δὲ καὶ πολλὰ ὄν καὶ γιγνόμενον καὶ ἀπολλύμενον ἄρ' οὐχ, ὅταν μὲν γίγνηται ἔν, τὸ πολλὰ εἶναι ἀπόλλυται, ὅταν δὲ πολλὰ, τὸ ἐν εἶναι ἀπόλλυται;

⁴¹ This seems to me to be the main reason for this second section of the *Parmenides* – to show how the Eleatic law of contradiction cannot provide an adequate metaphysics for a philosophy of Forms, but only the perfect playground for sophism. See below.

Does the expression 'is not' denote anything else than the absence of existence in that of which we say that it is not?

No, nothing else.

And when we say that a thing is not, do we mean that it is in a way and is not in a way? Or does the expression 'is not' mean without any qualifications that the non-existent is not in any way, shape, or manner, and does not participate in being in any way?

Without any qualifications whatsoever.

Then the non-existence cannot be and cannot in any way partake of existence.

No.

(*Parm.*, 163ff)⁴²

The dialogue ends shortly after drawing this conclusion about the nature of non-being with the following concluding words: "[A]s it seems...whether the one is or is not, the one and the others in relation to themselves and to each other all in every way are and are not and appear and they do not appear" (*Parm.*, 166c).⁴³ Because there can be no mingling of being and non-being under the Eleatic logic, the one and the many cannot be at the same time, and we are left with the perfect metaphysical conditions for sophistic manipulation. With all things both being and not being and appearing and not appearing to be what they are and what they are not, no thing has its own identity, much like the atoms in the Anaxagorean universe. All things are bound up in a sea of simultaneous similarity and dissimilarity, in which the sophist can manipulate realities to make one thing appear to be its opposite.

⁴² "τὸ δὲ μὴ ἔστιν ὅταν λέγωμεν, ἄρα μή τι ἄλλο σημαίνει ἢ οὐσίας ἀπουσίαν τούτῳ ᾧ ἂν φῶμεν μὴ εἶναι;" "οὐδὲν ἄλλο." "πότερον οὖν, ὅταν φῶμεν μὴ εἶναι τι, πῶς οὐκ εἶναι φαμὼν αὐτό, πῶς δὲ εἶναι;" "ἢ τοῦτο τὸ μὴ ἔστι λεγόμενον ἀπλῶς σημαίνει ὅτι οὐδαμῶς οὐδαμῆ ἔστιν οὐδέ πη μετέχει οὐσίας τό γε μὴ ὄν;" "ἀπλούστατα μὲν οὖν." "οὔτε ἄρα εἶναι δύναιτο ἂν τὸ μὴ ὄν οὔτε ἄλλως οὐδαμῶς οὐσίας μετέχειν." "οὐ γάρ."

⁴³ ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐν εἴτ' ἔστιν εἴτε με ἔστιν, αὐτό τε καὶ τὰλλα καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα πάντα πάντως ἔστι τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστι καὶ φαίνεται τε καὶ οὐ φαίνεται.

In order to overcome this problem, it needs to be shown how something is false. Coincidentally, this is also necessary to define the sophist, since the sophist is one who deals in falsehoods (*Soph.*, 240d). It should be no surprise then that the main content of the dialogue titled *Sophist* takes up this precise metaphysical circumstance that we find at the end of the *Parmenides* and seeks to overcome it. In order to do this, it is necessary to be able to say that something *is false* in order to overcome the sophistic manipulation of contraries. For in order for there to be truths (and in order to not have absolutely everything be true) there also need to be falsehoods. But this expression is a contradiction itself, since falsehoods are precisely those things which *are not* (*Soph.*, 241a).

Plato's *Sophist* and the Positive Negation

Plato's *Sophist* is presented as the continuation of his *Theaetetus*.⁴⁴ The characters from the latter dialogue agree to meet the following morning to continue their discussion. In the intervening dramatic moments, Socrates has had discussions with Euthyphro, Cratylus and Hermogenes, and has also received the charges against him at the King's Porch. Socrates' interlocutors of the previous days' discussion in the *Theaetetus* – Theodorus and his geometry students – have brought with them another person, who is (strangely) introduced by Theodorus as “a Stranger from Elea, one of the followers of

⁴⁴ The explicit objective in the *Theaetetus* has been to discover a definition of knowledge, and it has sought it in perception, opinion, and right judgment plus an account (λόγος). Although it ends unsuccessfully, there remain several positive outcomes. Among them: we understand that knowledge is not to be found in the world of sense perception or opinion, and we also have a clear depiction of Socrates' art, as well as a model for what knowledge would look like in the mathematical example at 147d-148b.

Parmenides and Zeno, and a real philosopher (μάλα δὲ ἄνδρα φιλόσοφον)'' (*Soph.*, 216a).

The Stranger brings with him a new method of investigation, one which stands in stark contrast to the method of *elenchus* which Socrates used the day before with Theaetetus. With the young Theaetetus as his interlocutor, the Stranger pursues the definition of the sophist with the method of *diairesis*.⁴⁵

The Stranger characterizes his method in the following way: "It endeavours to understand what is related and what is not related (τὸ συγγενὲς καὶ τὸ μὴ συγγενὲς) in all arts, for the purpose of acquiring intelligence and therefore it honours them all equally and does not in making comparisons think one more ridiculous than another'' (*Soph.*, 227b). Other than this remark, the Stranger offers very little in the way of explanations of his methodology. Yet what he lacks in explicit explanation, he makes up for with numerous examples which employ the method. From these examples we can glean some understanding of the method's *modus operandi*. As we shall see, it fundamentally rests on the principles of metaphysics that were derived from the hypotheses in the second half of the *Parmenides*.

The starting point of the method is to ascertain an intuition of what the *definiendum* is.⁴⁶ This intuition needs to be something that is general enough to encapsulate the overall essence of the *definiendum*, but not too general as to be

⁴⁵ This method is also sometimes called the method of collection and division and the method of bifurcation. I tend to use all three interchangeably.

⁴⁶ Cf. Miller, *PPS*, 17. This is perhaps the most implicit part of the process. Could it be the place to find the doctrine of recollection – which is otherwise missing – in the late dialogues?

completely vague. Take the example which the Stranger chooses first in the *Sophist* of the Angler. It is intuited by Theaetetus that such a person has an art (τέχνη). The practitioner of the method – the dialectician – then detects a split within the kind that will cut it in half and make what was double become half as many. The Stranger divides τέχνη into productive and acquisitive kinds. The goal of such a division is to create two halves of the initial kind that will diametrically oppose one another. If the division is a good one, it will create divisions that exhaust the initial kind. Thus the *definiendum* will only be able to be found in one of the two options that the division has created. There will be no blending of the two new kinds, which will prevent confusion in the next step: identifying in which of the two divisions the *definiendum* belongs. Once this is selected (in the example, the Angler is identified as belonging to the acquisitive kind of τέχνη), the process repeats itself. Acquisition is divided into two kinds, and so on, until one of the divisions isolates the *definiendum* itself and separates it from the rest of the kinds. It is then a simple process of recollecting the kinds in which the *definiendum* was identified. This recollection of kinds comprises the definition.

The method bases itself on the metaphysics which we heard Parmenides unfurl in the second half of *Parmenides* (*Parm.*, 136ff). This should not come as a surprise, since the Stranger is from Elea, and a follower of Parmenides and Zeno (*Soph.*, 216a). In the Eleatic ontology, there is no room for degrees of variation, since such distinctions imply that something both is and is not what it is in

varying proportions, and this mixture violates the law of non-contradiction. (something either is or is not what it is; it cannot be both). The method of bifurcation is similarly bound up in the mutually exclusive categories of existence and non-existence. The *definiendum* either is or is not that with which it combines. There is no possibility of the *definiendum* being either more or less like the kind with which it combines, because such distinctions are not ontologically possible within an Eleatic metaphysics.

The binary opposition of being and non-being explains why the method of bifurcation runs into such problems as it does when trying to bifurcate likeness, since the idea of likeness is inherently bound up in distinctions of more and less.⁴⁷ In order for something to be 'like' something else, it must be *both* the similar to *and* different from what it is like. Thus 'like' combines the principles of existence and non-existence and in doing so violates the law of non-contradiction. These are precisely the distinctions that the method cannot make, because the Eleatic metaphysics cannot permit them. Because of this problem, Plato has the Stranger carry out the ontological 'digression' which re-defines non-being as otherness, giving it a positive aspect and no longer strictly a negative one. This redefinition creates a way for us to be able to say that falsehood exists, but it does not create a metaphysics that allows for likenesses to exist.

⁴⁷ On this point, see Aristotle, *Categories*, Ch. 7, particularly 6b2-26.

The main idea behind the re-definition is that particle ‘non-’ or ‘not-’ does not need to denote the opposite of what it negates:

For instance, when we speak of a thing as not great, do we seem to you to mean by the expression what is small any more than what is or middle size?

How could we even?

Then when we are told that the negative signifies the opposite, we shall not admit it; we shall admit only that the particle ‘not’ indicates something different from the words to which it is prefixed, or rather from the things denoted by the words that follow the negative. (*Soph.*, 257b-c)⁴⁸

Thus ‘not-’ can denote anything from the complete opposite to the nearest possible likeness of something. To illustrate his point, the Stranger chooses the examples of the beautiful, the great, and the just. Under the re-definition, ‘the not-beautiful’ does not only mean ‘the ugly’, but rather what is simply *other* than beauty. The redefinition incorporates all possible differences from beauty into one category – all of which have just as much existence as beauty itself: “And we shall, then, say the same of other things, since the nature of the other is proved to possess real being; and if it has being, we must necessarily ascribe being *in no less degree* to its parts also” (*Soph.*, 258a; italics mine).⁴⁹

Thus although the re-definition of ‘not-’ has overcome the problem of saying that non-being somehow is, it has not done much of anything to help us make distinctions of more or less. In fact, it has accomplished the opposite. The

⁴⁸ ΞΕ. Οἶαν ὅταν εἴπωμέν τι “μὴ μέγα,” τότε μᾶλλον τί σοι φαινόμεθα τὸ μικρὸν ἢ τὸ ἴσον δηλοῦν τῷ ῥήματι;

ΘΕΑΙ. Καὶ πῶς;

ΞΕ. Οὐκ ἄρ’, ἐναντίον ὅταν ἀπόφασις λέγεται σημαίνειν, συγχωρησόμεθα, τοσοῦτον δὲ μόνον, ὅτι τῶν ἄλλων τι μηνύει τὸ “μὴ” καὶ τὸ “οὐ” προτιθέμενα τῶν ἐπιόντων ὀνομάτων—μᾶλλον δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων περὶ ἅττ’ ἂν κέηται τὰ ἐπιφθεγγόμενα ὕστερον τῆς ἀφάσεως ὀνόματα.

⁴⁹ ΞΕ. Καὶ τὰλλα δὴ ταύτη λέξομεν, ἐπεὶ περὶ ἡ θατέρου φύσις ἐφάνη τῶν ὄντων οὐσα, ἐκείνης δὲ οὐσης ἀνάγκη δὴ καὶ τὰ μόρια αὐτῆς μηδενὸς ἦττον ὄντα τιθέναί.

re-definition has completely *nullified* distinctions of more and less, particularly in the category of being – something which the Socrates from the ideological dialogues would find completely appalling. For example, to say that the not-just has just as much being as the Just itself runs counter to the entire argument in the simile of the cave and the analogy of the line of the *Republic*.⁵⁰

Clearly what is needed is a way to combine the principles of being and otherness in such a way that something can be said to be more like something than something else. It is precisely the need for this new kind of metaphysics that Plato has the Stranger articulate in the *Statesman's* doctrine of due measure.

⁵⁰ Far from saying that only the Good has being in these allegories, it is rather the case that entities on the line have more being the closer they are on the line to the Good. Because of their close proximity they are clearer (σαφέστερον: 511c4). There is thus a scale of more/less being according to an entity's proximity to the Good, which, as the measure of being, lies beyond it.

CHAPTER TWO: The Doctrine of Due Measure

Introduction

In this Part, I aim to illustrate what exactly this doctrine is, and demonstrate how it functions in the argument of the dialogue, as well as in the Late Trilogy. In particular, I show how it provides the necessary doctrine for the methodological and metaphysical philosophy that the dialogue contains.

Measurement

Introduction

The Stranger introduces the doctrine of due measure to his new interlocutor, the Younger Socrates⁵¹, as an aside, simply as a way for us to determine the proper length of dialectical discussions (283b). Different commentators have offered different explanations for the place of this “digression” in the dialogue as well as different evaluations of its importance.⁵² Mitchell Miller attributes the necessity for the doctrine of due measure to YS’s inadequacies as a dialectician. He believes it is because of “Young Socrates’ failure – by now clearly established characteristic – to respond to this indirect communication that the Stranger closes with this presentation of the doctrine of

⁵¹ The Younger Socrates (hereafter YS) is a friend of Theaetetus and also a student of Theodorus. The switch in interlocutors is made in the *Statesman’s* prologue, which I analyze in Part Three.

⁵² Kenneth Sayre (*MMPS*, 139 n. 1) notes the various interpreters who have dismissed this section of the dialogue as either lengthy, irrelevant, or even self-contradictory. Both Sayre and I take the opposite view, and give chief importance to this section of the dialogue.

‘essential measure’ at 283b-287a.”⁵³ Melissa Lane holds that it is because of “the confusion of standards of measurement in the claims ascribed to weaving’s rivals.”⁵⁴ Finally, Jacqueline Merrill attributes the placement of the doctrine of due measure at this point in the dialogue to its relation to the structure of the dialogue as a whole.⁵⁵ I take a similar stance to Merrill, and believe that the placement of the doctrine of due measure at this point in the *Statesman* is due in large part to the overall structure of the work. On the other hand, the doctrine of due measure also plays several very important roles in the unfolding logic of the text and of the Late Trilogy as a whole. In order to better understand how the doctrine of due measure functions in the dialogue as well as within the Late Trilogy we first need to grasp what it is.

Two Kinds of Measurement

The art of measurement (μετρητική) has two parts. One sub-division of the art of measurement measures length and brevity, as well as excess and deficiency in general, in relation to their opposites (πρὸς τοῦναντίον μετροῦσι: 284e5). The other division of μετρητική measures these opposed contraries by their relation to “the mean” (πρὸς τὸν μέτριον: 284e6). The existence of the first kind of measurement is laid down by the Stranger as self-evident: “Doesn’t it seem natural to you to say that the greater is necessarily greater than nothing other

⁵³ Miller, *PPS*, 57. Cf. his similar assessment, p. 64.

⁵⁴ Melissa Lane, *Method and Politics in Plato’s Statesman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 52 fn. 75.

⁵⁵ Jacqueline Pfeffer Merrill, “The Organization of Plato’s ‘Statesman’ and the Statesman’s Rule as a Herdsman” in *Phoenix*, vol. 57, No. 1/2, pp. 35-56. See pages 82-84 of this thesis for a discussion of this point.

than the less, and also that the lesser is lesser than the greater and nothing else?" (283d-e, my translation).⁵⁶ This kind of relation is intuitively clear: 'big' is knowable only in relation to 'small' and *vice versa*.

After YS agrees that the great is greater than nothing other than the small and *vice versa*, the Stranger poses his next question: "But why? Shall we not also say that there really is something that exceeds the nature of the mean and that overshooting this very thing in words or also deeds is that by which most of us differentiate the wicked and the good?" (*Statesman* 283e, my translation).⁵⁷ YS responds in the affirmative to this question as well. The great and the small, or what is excessive or deficient, are thus relative in two ways: in one way they are relative purely to each other; in another they are relative to what is the 'mean' for each.

The First Kind of Measurement

While the existence of the relation between contraries may seem clear, it will help to have an explicit understanding of what this kind of relation entails. For the clearest possible explanation of this relationship, the best guide is Aristotle. He explains the relation between contraries this way:

[I]f 'great' and 'small' are contraries, it will come about that the same subject can admit contrary qualities at one and the same time, and that things will themselves be contrary to themselves. For it happens at times that the same thing is both small and great. For the same thing may be small in comparison with one thing, and great in comparison with

⁵⁶ Ἄρ' οὐ κατὰ φύσιν δοκεῖ σοι τὸ μείζον μηδενὸς ἑτέρου δεῖν μείζον λέγειν ἢ τοῦ ἐλάττονος, καὶ τοῦ ἁπλοῦτος αὐτοῦ μείζονος ἑλάττον, ἄλλου δὲ μηδενός;

⁵⁷ Τί δέ; τὸ τὴν τοῦ μετρίου φύσιν ὑπερβάλλον καὶ ὑπερβαλλόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐν λόγοις εἶτε καὶ ἐν ἔργοις ἄρ' οὐκ αὐτὸ λέξομεν ὡς ὄντως γιγνόμενον, ἐν ᾧ καὶ διαφέρουσι μάλιστα ἡμῶν οἱ τε κακοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀγαθοί;

another, so that the same thing comes to be both small and great at one and the same time, and is of such a nature as to admit contrary qualities at one and the same moment" (*Cat.* 5b31-40).⁵⁸

Note here the similarity between this kind of contrariety and that expressed by Socrates in the *Parmenides* (129d-e). Such a principle of pure relativity can be traced back to the second half of the *Parmenides*, where Parmenides described the second hypothesis as "split up into the *smallest and greatest* [τε σμικρότατα καὶ μέγιστα] and all kinds of existences; nothing else is so much divided, and in short the parts of existence are infinite" (*Parm.* 144b-c). It is this pure otherness that allows the sophist to infinitely conflate essences and become the measure of all things as they are relative only to his self as the absolute measure.

Without an external standard to measure the contrary qualities of great/small, these contraries have no self-identity apart from their connection to their opposite. They thus become so bound up in one another that they form a contradiction. If large and small can be defined only in relation to one another, the definition of each is impossible without reference to the other, and so neither one is really defined at all. Instead, the mutual dependency of the two contraries creates an indefiniteness which is impossible to define or limit, without, at any rate, reference to an external standard.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Categories*, trans. E.M. Edghill, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 16.

The Second Kind of Measurement

The second kind of measurement is distinct from the first precisely because it measures the contrary qualities of more/less (and all the various instances of this sort of opposition) against the ‘mean’. The ‘mean’ is a third thing which lies outside of the relative opposition of contraries. Initially the Stranger introduces the concept of the mean very vaguely as “the something without which production would not be possible” (τὸ δὲ κατὰ τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαίαν οὐσίαν: 283d6-7). A little later, he says it is “that by which most of us differentiate the wicked from the good” (ὧ καὶ διαφέρουσι μάλιστα ἡμῶν οἱ τε κακοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀγαθοί: 283e5-6). Then, it is called that without which the arts (τέχνη) could not be. For artisans, means are “real difficulties in actual practice, and it is in this way, when they preserve the [measure], that all their works are good and beautiful” (284a9-b2).⁵⁹ Finally, the Stranger provides a little more clarity by providing terms that are synonymous with ‘mean’. The second type of measurement, he says, “comprises those which measure them in relation to the moderate (πρὸς τὸ μέτριον), the fitting (τὸ πρέπον), the opportune (τὸν καιρὸν), the needful (τὸ δέον), and all the other standards that are situated in the mean between the extremes (καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀπωκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων)” (284e 6-8).⁶⁰ These remarks comprise the bulk of the Stranger’s explanation of

⁵⁹ ὡς ὄν χαλεπὸν περὶ τὰς πράξεις παραφυλάττουσι, καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ μέτρον σώζουσαι πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται. Fowler actually translates both τὸ μετρίον and τὸ μέτρον as ‘the standard of the mean’ here; however, the difference in the Greek warrants using different English translations. I discuss the difference between τὸ μετρίον and τὸ μέτρον below.

⁶⁰ ὅποσα πρὸς τὸ μέτριον καὶ τὸ πρέπον καὶ τὸν καιρὸν καὶ τὸ δέον καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀπωκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων.

the doctrine of due measure. However, what, exactly, these ‘means’ are is still not clear.

The first step is to understand the proof for the existence of these measures. The Stranger deduces the existence of due measures through the existence of τέχνη. Due measures and the arts (τέχνη) are interrelated this way: “For all these,” says the Stranger, “are doubtless careful about excess and deficiency in relation to the standard of the mean (τοῦ μετρίου); they regard them not as non-existent, but as real difficulties in actual practice, and it is in this way, when they preserve the [measure] (τὸ μέτρον), that all their works are good and beautiful.” (284a-b).⁶¹ Thus the arts depend on the existence of this second kind of measurement. If due measures do not exist, then neither will the arts; but since the arts do exist, then so too must due measures. The natural conclusion of this argument is that since statesmanship is an art, the existence of due measures is necessary to define it, just as the conclusion that non-being existed was necessary in order to define the sophist. Thus the doctrine of due measure and the definition of statesmanship exemplify the same sort of inter-relationship that the Stranger asserts between measures and the arts: the doctrine of due measure is necessary for the definition of the statesman, and it is because of the occasion of defining the statesman that we need the doctrine of due measure.

⁶¹ ἅπασαι γὰρ αἱ τοιαῦται που τὸ τοῦ μετρίου πλεον καὶ ἔλαττον οὐχ ὡς οὐκ ὄν ἀλλὰ ὡς ὄν χαλεπὸν περὶ τὰς πράξεις παραφυλάττουσι, καὶ τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ τὸ μέτρον σώζουσαι πάντα ἀγαθὰ καὶ καλὰ ἀπεργάζονται. The reason for the square brackets around ‘measure’ is given in the next section.

Measure (to metron) vs. Mean (to metrion)

The Stranger uses τὸ μέτρον and τὸ μέτριον almost interchangeably, and many translators have used the same words for both.⁶² So far as I am able to tell, it is only Miller and Sayre who differentiate between these two words in their translations. I follow Miller and Sayre as much as possible, since I believe their translations of ‘mean’ (Miller) or ‘due measure’ (Sayre) for τὸ μέτριον and ‘measure’ for τὸ μέτρον are the truest representations of these words both in general⁶³ and in the context of this dialogue.

We are able to see the distinction between ‘measure’ and ‘mean’ the clearest when we consider the relationship between measurement and the arts (τέχναι) at 284ff. Artisans seek to “preserve the measure” (τὸ μέτρον σῶζουσι) in their works (284b1-2), and, as the Stranger explains, “it is in this way that their works are good and beautiful.” The confusion between measure and mean is understandable, since less than one Stephanus page earlier, the Stranger says that the chief difference between good and bad men is to be found in their exceeding or falling short of the mean (283e, exact translation and Greek are above). Both measure and mean are therefore involved in our making judgments of quality in the things people produce. While both Miller and Sayre have offered their

⁶² In particular: Fowler translates both as “the standard of the mean”; Rowe and Annas and Waterfield follow Skemp and translate them as “due measure”; Seth Bernadete translates both as “the mean”. Sayre calls τὸ μέτριον ‘due measure’ and τὸ μέτρον ‘measure’ (*MMPS*, 142-3).

⁶³ Τὸ μέτριον is the substantive form of the adjective μέτριος, which translates as “moderate”. By contrast, τὸ μέτρον generally means “that by which anything is measured”, or simply “measure”, “due measure”, “limit”, or “proportion” (*LSJ*).

interpretations of the difference between measure and mean,⁶⁴ I add my own below, drawing mostly from the remarks about measurement and the arts.

Among modern scholars, Xavier Márquez has the best explanation of the relationship between means and the arts: “Here [in the doctrine of due measure] A is not measured against any arbitrary thing B, but against that quantity C of something (which may not in fact exist) that actually (and necessarily) produces X. This quantity or number C of G can thus be called the necessary quantity or number for the *generation* of X, and hence this sort of measurement can be said to be *according to the necessary being of the generation* [of something] (284d8-9).”⁶⁵

Because of the interrelation of τέχνη and due measures, we will be able to see some of the details of how the doctrine of due measure works if we examine τέχνη. To generalize, each τέχνη has a craftsman, who makes his craft out of materials specific to his trade. Each craft’s materials are indefinite in shape before the craftsman turns them into something. The artisan’s essential activity is to impose definite form on indefinite material. The artisan is thus the measure whose skillful act brings about limit on the unlimited – or, in other words, manifests form in matter. The craftsman’s works are able to be judged as good or bad to the extent that they preserve the measure – or, to the extent that they realize the form of the thing they are trying to build. Measure needs to be ‘preserved’ here because of its being instantiated in matter, which, by its very

⁶⁴ Miller, *PPS*, 66-67 and Sayre, *MMPS*, 178-179.

⁶⁵ Xavier Márquez, “Measurement and the Arts” *Plato 6* (2006), 3.

nature, is contrary to the form.⁶⁶ Form's instantiation in matter degrades the perfection of the form, and so it is the craftsman's task to 'preserve' the form of the thing as much as possible within the context of the matter he uses to realize it. The resulting combination of the form and the matter will therefore be the product of the artisan's work. If the combination is good, it will have 'hit the mean'. If bad, it will have missed the mark. Yet the only way we will be able to judge whether the craftsman's product is good or bad is by knowing the measure and measuring their product against that ideal.

Extrapolating from this discussion of τέχνη, we can see that measures are the absolute, perfect, and self-identical forms of things—be they houses, speeches, etc. As perfect and self-identical, they are unable to be completely realized in the world of becoming, since the world of becoming is bound up with change and otherness.⁶⁷ These measures are nevertheless necessary for generation, because without them, imitations and approximations of these measures would not be possible. The mean, then, is the instantiation of the measure in the world of change, or of greater/smaller to use the language of this text. It (the mean) is not the best form of a house, speech, etc. *per se*, but instead is the *best possible instance* of that measure for the situation. "Thus," says Miller, "to fashion a relevant example, the statesman works to realize the just state, that is,

⁶⁶ For more on the opposition between form and matter as it is articulated in the *Statesman*, the myth is the most helpful, esp. 269d-e & 273b-c. I discuss the relevant parts of the myth later in this thesis.

⁶⁷ For a deeper investigation into the problem of the relationship between something absolute and something different from itself we need only to remember Parmenides' criticisms from the dialogue Plato named after him.

to actualize in social-historical fact the ideal of the just polity" (*PPS*, 66). Another example from the text can be found in the myth of the reversed cosmos. There, the god's rule creates paradise on earth. The kind of rulership that creates this kind of human life on earth is *the measure of rulership per se*. It is against this form of rulership that all other types of human rulership are judged. When the god leaves, however, and humans are left on their own to rule themselves, the best possible instantiation of the god's rule in a period which is characterized by change and decay is the mean.

Method

The first method that Plato has the Stranger and the younger Socrates use to define the statesman is that which was used to define the sophist – namely, the method of bifurcation (*diairesis*). By the end of the first attempt it is discovered that there have been a number of errors in the process of the divisions, and the method is abandoned in favour of the myth. This section seeks to understand why this happens. I argue that it is because the method is unable to make distinctions of more and less within a kind (εἶδος) (and hence distinctions of value) that it is ultimately dropped in favour of a new method.

The "Value" of *Diairesis*

The reason the method is unable to make such distinctions is because it relies on a metaphysics of being and otherness, which it has inherited from the ontological digression of the *Sophist*. As we noted in the previous Part, the method of bifurcation is grounded in a metaphysics which is expressly unable to

make distinctions of more and less. In order to overcome the binary opposition of being and non-being in the *Sophist*, the Stranger made the point that the particle ‘not-’ or ‘non-’ (μή or οὐ in Ancient Greek) does not necessarily denote the opposite of the thing negated, but merely that it is different, or ‘other’.⁶⁸

We can see that the metaphysics of being and otherness has influenced the method of bifurcation when the Stranger outlines the goal of the *Statesman’s* whole endeavour: “Where then, shall we find the statesman’s path? For we must find it, separate it from the rest and imprint upon it the seal of a single class; then we must set the mark of another single class upon all the other paths that lead away from this, and make our soul conceive of all sciences as of two classes” (258c).⁶⁹ In these words the Stranger provides us with the kind of separation that also belongs to the difference between being and otherness from the *Sophist*: When we have found the definition of statesmanship, there will be two kinds of science, Statesmanship and ‘non-Statesmanship’. Statesmanship is to be one kind of science, isolated by itself, and all other sciences will be grouped into a kind that is simply other than it. Yet, as we shall see, there are problems with this kind of distinction.

⁶⁸ There is a section in the *Statesman* at the beginning of the first attempt to define the statesman that recalls the results of the *Sophist*. In reference to the lines where the Stranger says that the method of inquiry will proceed “along other lines” (κατ’ ἄλλο: 258c1), and YS responds, “So it seems” (ἔιοκέ γε: 258c2), Jacob Klein says, “There is something surprisingly amusing in the excessive character of this interchange” (*Trilogy*, p.148). This dialogue, so far as I can tell, is best explained as a subtle signal to the reader that the following section will deal with the notions of otherness and likeness.

⁶⁹ Τὴν οὖν πολιτικὴν ἀτραπὸν πῆ τις ἀνευρήσει; δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀνευρεῖν, καὶ χωρὶς ἀφελόντας ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἰδέαν αὐτῇ μίαν ἐπισφραγίσασθαι, καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐκτροπαῖς ἐν ἄλλο εἶδος ἐπισημαμένους πάσας τὰς ἐπιστήμας ὡς οὐσας δύο εἶδη διανοηθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ποιῆσαι. Cf. Harvey Ronald Scodel, *Diairesis and Myth in Plato’s Statesman* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), p. 27, who gives a similar interpretation.

In making this definition this way, the Stranger has gone beyond the limit of what Parmenides has forbidden (to not say that non-being in any way *is*: *Sophist*, 258c-d). In redefining non-being as otherness, the Stranger has wiped out any way of determining degrees of difference within something that is other, because he has *de*-limited otherness to include absolutely anything that is other than the thing negated.

The same problem happens when we try to consider the distinctions between likenesses and the original. Indeed it was trying to make a bifurcation of 'likeness' in the *Sophist* that necessitated the ontological digression. The problem is that in defining non-being as simply 'other', there is no way to determine degrees of difference in the various likenesses of the original. Similarly, the term 'non-Statesmanship' does not do any justice to the various distinctions of other τέχνηαι that lay hidden within it.

Francisco Gonzalez, in his 2001 paper, "The Eleatic Stranger: His Master's Voice?" frames the problem of otherness this way:

According to the conclusion of the ontological digression that occupies a large part of the dialogue, an image *is not* the original only in the sense of being *other than* (ἕτερον) the original. But if both likenesses and semblances, as images, are simply *other* than the original, what could be the difference between them? Is one "more other" than the other? The Stranger appears to think that by showing that falsehood exists, he has demonstrated the distinction between semblances and likenesses (266d-e). But if a semblance is false simply in the sense of being *other* than the true original, then must we not also say that the likeness is false? The Stranger's account of not-being seems unable to explain the *greater negativity* involved in *distorting* the

original (semblance) as opposed to simply being *distinct* from the original (likeness).⁷⁰

As Gonzalez shows, the ontology of being and otherness cannot make distinctions between *degrees* of otherness. So too, as we have seen, the quantitative kind of reasoning that belongs to Theodorus cannot make distinctions of more or less, but renders all things either equal or unequal (the same or different) in an unqualified way. So too does the method of bifurcation. The method takes what is double and cuts it in half. To make the cut, it uses the categories of identity and difference to separate what is different, or does not combine, from what is the same, or what does combine. Miller describes the process this way: “Statesmanship, of course, does not combine with all kinds of science. Quite the contrary, it *is not* or differs in one way or another from all other sciences than itself; the dialectician’s task is to trace these differences, or to distinguish, within science, what statesmanship *is* from what it *is not*.”⁷¹

Nowhere within these divisions is to be found a way to distinguish degrees of similarity and difference – or put another way, degrees of *likeness*, for likeness has within itself the combination of *both* identity and difference to varying degrees. The method takes a given kind (εἶδος) and divides it in half, into two classes (ἰδέαι) that combine with the original kind but not with each other. If the division has been made properly, these two classes will be mutually

⁷⁰ Francisco Gonzalez, “The Eleatic Stranger: His Master’s Voice?” in *Who Speaks for Plato: Studies in Platonic Anonymity*, ed. Gerald A. Press (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 167.

⁷¹ Miller, *PPS*, p. 17.

exclusive contraries and as such will, as Miller says, “exhaust the initial kind.”⁷² Consequently, there is no way to determine if the *definiendum* is *more like* one of these contraries than the other – it is either one or the other, never both to varying degrees.

That this is an inherent problem of the method can be seen from the beginning of the diairetic process. Knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) is divided into the purely theoretical arts (γνωστική) and the practical arts (πρακτική), and the statesman is identified with the former. But this identification should cause the critical reader some concern, since surely there is some of the practical mixed in with the statesman’s *technē*. As the dialogue shows later, the statesman’s activity concerns the practical lives of human beings (306ff). Especially if we are aware of the conclusion of the dialogue, placing the statesman wholly within the purely theoretical arts makes little sense.⁷³ Yet, at this point in the dialogue, the method’s limitations require the wholesale identification with one of the two available options. Because he is considered only “to be more akin to the intellectual than the manual or the practical” (τῆς δὲ γνωστικῆς μᾶλλον ἢ χειροτεχνικῆς καὶ ὅλως πρακτικῆς...ὀκειοτέρων εἶναι: 259c-d), the statesman is thus thrown into the intellectual side of the division at this point even though he only partially fits into this class. Clearly this shows a flaw in the method from the start.

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Kenneth Sayre makes a similar point about this problematic identification; see his *MMPS*, p. 20. Cf. Scodel, 31-32.

A further indication that lacking a means of distinguishing degrees of more and less is a problem for the method is in the Stranger's suggestion about the identification of householder's art with the king's: "Shall we then assume that the statesman, king, master, and householder too, for that matter, are all one, to be grouped under one title, or shall we say that there are as many arts as names?" (258a).⁷⁴ Before YS can respond, the Stranger makes the point that one who is able to advise another on their art deserves the same appellation as the one who actually practices it. The king's adviser deserves to be recognized as possessing the kingly art just as much as the king himself does. Again this identification seems problematic. It conflates distinctions of purely theoretical and the practical because it renders all things as either one or the other and cannot recognize degrees to which they might be more or less of both. It should be intuitively obvious that someone who practices the art of statesmanship, or medicine, or any of the other technical arts, has more right to be called a statesman or doctor than the one who merely advises them.

Continuing the consequences of equating the advisor and the practitioner, the Stranger asks YS, "Well, so far as government is concerned, is there any difference between the grandeur of a large house and the majesty of a small state?" YS's response, governed by the method's inability to recognize

⁷⁴ Πότερον οὖν τὸν πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλέα καὶ δεσπότην καὶ ἔτ' οἰκονόμον θήσομεν ὡς ἐν πάντα ταῦτα προσαγορεύοντες, ἢ τοσαύτας τέχνας αὐτὰς εἶναι φῶμεν, ὅσπερ ὀνόματα ἐρρήθη;

distinctions of qualitative difference, is “No.”⁷⁵ This again is blatantly false to one who is concentrating on what is being said.

The real value of the method of bifurcation is that it forces its practitioner to adhere to the real classes of things in making their divisions. In doing so, they will become more impartial to the ignorant distinctions of better/worse in politics and in life.⁷⁶ Yet there are clearly still problems with a method that does not make distinctions of more/less, since such distinctions are a part of the eidetic structure of reality that the philosophy tries to grasp. Keeping the diairetic process’ benefits in mind, it is necessary to go on to see how it fails in just this respect: it is blind to the distinctions of more/less.

Parts and Partiality

The next important point that highlights the nature of the method in its deficiencies and its benefits is the digression about the method itself that results from giving YS the reigns of the discussion to make a cut of his own.⁷⁷ Making it

⁷⁵ 259 ff. Compare this section of the *Statesman* to Aristotle’s *Politics*: “Those then who think that the natures of the statesman, the royal ruler, the head of an estate and the master of a family are the same are mistaken; they imagine that the difference between these various forms of authority is one of greater and smaller numbers, not a difference in kind” (*Politics*, 1252a6-9, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library). Aristotle seems to take the passage in question from the *Statesman* as a serious doctrine. But I see it rather as a case of intentionally erroneous reasoning, which Plato uses to show how the method’s foundations are flawed. Because the method of bifurcation does not consider questions of more and less, the method does not distinguish between the rulership of the householder or statesman, when in fact these are not only questions of more/less but of kind as well. Because the method does not perceive the former, it does not recognize the latter.

⁷⁶ Miller (19-27) makes a similar point about the value of the diairetic process. This prophylactic against unjust partiality inherent in the method is a serious point of Plato’s, even though the Stranger uses a seemingly ridiculous remark about the rationality of cranes to make it.

⁷⁷ In the intervening parts of the dialogue, there have been some other divisions that do not need our utmost attention. See Scodel p. 45-49 for a detailed treatment of these cuts (Cf. Rosen, 18 to 27). Scodel points out (p. 47) that the Stranger breaks with the explicit code of the method to forget distinctions of noble and base when he makes the division between lifeless and the *nobler*

clear that the Stranger wants a division that will cut the kind in question (ἀγελαιοτροφικήν) into equal parts, the Stranger instructs YS to “cause that which is now sought among a double number of things to be sought among half as many” (261e-262a).⁷⁸ YS eagerly divides the art of herd-rearing into the caring (τροφή) of humans and beasts. The Stranger points out the flaw in his division immediately: “We must not take a single small part, and set it off against many large ones, nor disregard species in making our division. On the contrary, the part must be also a species” (262a-b).⁷⁹ Human/Beast is a division that relies on a more/less distinction, which is precisely the kind of division that the method cannot make. Instead, as we have seen, the method of bifurcation relies on making divisions which create equal halves of the original kind.

(γενναϊότερον) living creatures (*Stsm.*, 261c9). On the one hand the Stranger could simply be ironic here, since “noble-born” could only apply to living beings. On the other hand, if he is being serious and slips up in the argument, he could be demonstrating how the method cannot account for these distinctions. Furthermore, (contra Scodel, 47) the method does not actually divide anything according to the distinction of the noble and the base, but the Stranger merely calls the production of living things nobler than that of the lifeless. He does not say that it is therefore more worthy of investigation (*Stsm.*, 261d-e). The only reason that I can tell why he would bring up the comparative nobility of living beings is to stress the imminent breakdown of the method. It is interesting to note also that the Stranger makes similar attributions of worth (or the lack of it) when he discusses living things in the *Sophist* as well (220a). Further, he uses this same adjective (γενναῖα) to discuss the kind of sophistry that seems to capture Socrates the most accurately (*Soph.*, 231b8).

⁷⁸ Τὴν δὲ ἀγελαιοτροφικὴν ἄρ' ἐννοεῖς πῆ τις δίδυμον ἀποφύνας τὸ ζητούμενον ἐν διπλασίοισι τὰ νῦν ἐν τοῖς ἡμίσεσιν εἰς τότε ποιήσει ζητεῖσθαι;

There is a very interesting remark made by the Stranger which praises YS's indifference to calling this kind either the art of herding (ἀγελαιοτροφικήν) or community management (κοινοτροφικήν). When YS says to use whatever name works well for the sake of the argument, the Stranger says, “Good, Socrates; if you preserve this indifference to mere names, you will turn out richer in wisdom when you are old” (Καλῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες· κὰν διαφυλάξης τὸ μὴ σπουδάζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν, πλουσιώτερος εἰς τὸ γῆρας ἀναφανήση φρονήσεως: 261e). Of all the possible options for what this remark might mean, I take it to be a signal that we are to recall the reason why the elder asked for the Stranger to examine the younger Socrates – because he is his namesake and this implies a sort of likeness.

⁷⁹ Μὴ μικρὸν μόνιον ἐν πρὸς μεγάλα καὶ πολλὰ ἀφαιρώμεν, μηδὲ εἶδους χωρὶς· ἀλλὰ τὸ μέρος ἅμα εἶδος ἐχέτω.

In the digression which follows the remark above, the Stranger makes the operating principle of the method most clear: a division is better the more it is able to distinguish kinds that are “more truly classified and more equal” (κάλλιον δέ που καὶ μάλλον κατ’ εἶδη καὶ δίχα διαιροῖτ’ ἄν: 262e). While this may look like the Stranger is violating his own methodological principle and making distinctions of better and worse (as Rosen notes, p. 30), he is in fact still adhering to a quantitative standard – equality – which does not make distinctions of more and less in the divisions themselves. This standard of equality *does*, however, provide the means by which we are able to judge between better and worse divisions, and so the Stranger has revealed a kind of evaluation of the method that the method itself would be unable to detect.

Because the standard that measures the quality of the method is equality in division, those cuts which separate kinds into equal halves are better than those which do not. One important thing to note, however, is that all the examples the Stranger uses are either political or mathematical. The political examples all show that it is more proper to be impartial when making divisions between groups of humans – e.g. Greeks and Barbarians or Lydians and Phrygians – since these are not real (eidetic) divisions, but merely partial political ones.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Compare this political and methodological point to Socrates’ first words in the *Theaetetus*: “If I cared more for Cyrene and its affairs, Theodorus, I should ask you about things there and about the people, whether any of the young men there are devoting themselves to geometry or any other form of philosophy; but as it is, since I care less for those people than for the people here, I am more eager to know which of our own young men are likely to gain reputation” (*Thts.*, 143d). Clearly Socrates here in this trilogy belongs to the camp of partiality. The implicit standard in his

There is clearly a connection between distinguishing incorrectly between parts of a kind and immoderate political partiality. Both of these divisions ignore the real eidetic structure of reality and make distinctions of more and less. The same thing is true about a human marking of human beings from the rest of the animals, as YS has done with his division of humans/beasts. While it may seem intuitively obvious that humans differ from beasts *in kind*—i.e. having reason vs. not having reason—this, according to the Stranger (and, I argue, according to Plato too)—is not so.

The Stranger makes his point by way of a seemingly ridiculous thought experiment. Humans should not think themselves special on account of their capacity for thought since, “Perhaps, if there is any other animal capable of thought, such as the crane appears to be, or any other like creature, and it perchance gives names, just as you do, it might in its pride of self oppose cranes to all other animals, and group the rest, men included, under one head, calling them by one name, which might very well be that of beasts” (263d).⁸¹ Indeed, the only way it seems possible to distinguish between humans and animals in terms of their thought is that humans have a capacity for *greater* thought than

remark is that his amount of his care is determined by the proximity of the men to his own home *polis*. I make the distinction between Socrates in this trilogy and the Socrates elsewhere (particularly the *Republic*), because in the *Republic* Socrates presents a distinctly indifferent attitude towards the Athenian performance at the festival of Bendis (the Thracian equivalent of Artemis) (*Rep.* 327a). In this trilogy, it seems fair to place Socrates squarely on the side of the partial, of the qualitative, of the more/less.

⁸¹ τάχ' ἄν, εἴ που φρόνιμόν ἐστί τι ζῶον ἕτερον, οἷον δοκεῖ τὸ τῶν γεράνων, ἢ τι τοιοῦτον ἄλλο, ὃ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἴσως διονομάζει καθάπερ καὶ σύ, γεράνους μὲν ἐν γένος ἀντιτιθὲν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις καὶ σεμνῶν αὐτὸ ἑαυτό, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων συλλαβὸν ταῦτ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν ἴσως θηρία προσείποι.

animals.⁸² Yet such a distinction is one that relies on a distinction of more/less within a kind, which the method of bifurcation emphatically forbids (see 266d, which I discuss below). We shall see, with the Stranger's help, that this methodological principle is flawed, since under its direction we arrive at an even less satisfactory definition of the human being.

Part vs. Class & More/Less vs. Equal

After the Stranger provides several examples of how YS erred in his division and other examples of what would make more proper cuts, YS asks, "how can we get a clearer knowledge of class and part, and see that they are not the same thing but different from one another?" (263a).⁸³ The Stranger replies by saying that he cannot answer such a question right now, but he leaves YS with the following principle: "[W]hen there is a class of anything, it must necessarily be a part of the thing of which it is said to be a class; but there is no necessity that a part be also a class" (263b).⁸⁴ We can glean from this remark the following points: 1) Classes and parts are divisions of a kind. 2) Classes are always also parts of a kind. 3) Parts are not always classes of a kind.

⁸² This conclusion has, in fact, been borne out by contemporary zoologists (see http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_sapolsky_the_uniqueness_of_humans.html). Contra Rosen, who believes that the Stranger is being ironic throughout this whole methodological digression and that "[t]he division of Young Socrates is in accord with nature, whereas the Stranger's example is based on conventional or political opinions" (Rosen, p. 30), I hold that the Stranger is entirely serious in this methodological digression, but what follows from it is a demonstration of how this quantitative kind of methodology proceeds to an untenable definition and that we must rely on distinctions of more/less in some ways as the lesser of two evils.

⁸³ πῶς ἂν τις γένος καὶ μέρος ἐναργέστερον γνοίη, ὡς οὐ ταῦτόν ἐστων ἀλλ' ἕτερον ἀλλήλοιν;

⁸⁴ Ὡς εἶδος μὲν ὅταν ἦ τοῦ, καὶ μέρος αὐτὸ ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος ὅτουπερ ἂν εἶδος λέγεται· μέρος δὲ εἶδος οὐδεμία ἀνάγκη

In order to understand these points better, it may be helpful to bring in the terminology of equal, more, and less. Classes are those divisions which are equal halves of a given kind (this much the Stranger has made clear from his digression). Parts, however, are made up of more and less of two classes. In just the same way that something is more or less equal to something else, parts are more or less classes. A part can be a class in the same way that an equal can be equal. But something can also be *more or less* equal to something else. Anything other than full equality is only more or less equal, and is therefore a part. But the Stranger does not go into more of the details of the distinction between class and part because he has yet to find a way to make distinctions of more and less within the method of *diairesis*. What follows from this digression is more demonstrations that a way to determine between distinctions of more and less within the method of *diairesis* is necessary.

The Breakdown of the Method

After the digression about methodology, the Stranger points out the following error that he committed himself. Between the stages of herd-rearing and herd-rearing-in common there should have been the distinction between tame and wild animals. Instead, this cut was only implied by the latter division and went unsaid by the Stranger. Now, since they have run into time-wasting errors, the Stranger bids YS to “begin again [from the beginning] and try to divide the art of tending animals in common; for perhaps the information you desire so much will come to you in the ordinary course of our conversation better

than by other means" (264b).⁸⁵ The "information" that YS "desires so much" is the distinction between humans and beasts, which will also provide us an insight into the statesman's art, since they are his object of care. "In the ordinary course of our conversation" means according to the rules of bifurcatory *diairesis*.⁸⁶

It is not long before the method runs into the same problem as it did before. Using the method of bifurcation, the Stranger and YS are only able to ascertain that the statesman cares for a herd that walks on dry land. "And" the Stranger says, reminding us of the principles of division that he explained in the previous section, "the art of tending animals that walk must, like an even number, be divided in half" (264e).⁸⁷ But now, says the Stranger, there are two ways of proceeding: "The quicker way, by separating a relatively small part and a larger, and the other way, which is more in accord with what we said a while ago about the need of making a division as nearly in the middle as we can, but is

⁸⁵ πάλιν δ' οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὴν κοινοτροφικὴν πειρώμεθα διαιρῆιν· ἴσως γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο ὃ σὺ προθυμῆ διαπεραινώμενος ὁ λόγος αὐτός σοι κάλλιον μηνύσει.

⁸⁶ Aristotle, it seems to me, has this section of the *Statesman* in mind in his following remarks: "If genera are different and co-ordinate, their differentiae are themselves different in kind. Take as an instance the genus 'animal' and the genus 'knowledge'. 'With feet', 'two-footed', 'winged', 'aquatic', are differentiae of 'animal'; the species of knowledge are not distinguished by the same differentiae. One species of knowledge does not differ from another in being 'two-footed'" (*Categories*, 1b18-19, trans. E.M. Edghill). I do not take Plato to be saying that same thing in this section of the *Statesman* that Aristotle concludes above. Instead I believe him to be making a point about the combination of equal kinds and the consequences of separating distinctions of more/less from those kinds. In this section on division, I take Plato's overall goal to be to show the problems of such a separation. One such problem is that a method that does not allow for distinctions of more/less cannot provide a satisfactory definition of the human being or of the statesman because it cannot properly distinguish between humans and animals. An adequate definition of the human being and the statesman relies on distinctions of degrees of difference within a kind.

A separate but related Aristotelian treatment of bifurcatory *diairesis* is in Book I of his *Parts of Animals*. See in particular Chapters 2-3.

⁸⁷ Τὴν δὲ πεζονομικὴν, καθάπερ ἄρτιον ἀριθμόν, δεῖ τεμνομένην δίχῃ ἀποφαίνειν

longer” (265a).⁸⁸ These two options represent the separation of two things that need to be combined. On the one hand there is the measure of equality in the diairetic process. On the other hand, there is the division which arrives at the *definiendum* more quickly but cuts the kinds into “relatively smaller and larger parts”.⁸⁹ Presented with the option of taking one or the other, YS asks, “is it not possible to do both?” (ἀμφοτέρως ἀδύνατον; 265a7). Nothing in his suggestion implies that he wants to do both *at the same time*. It is odd then that the Stranger rejects this option outright: “It is impossible at least to do both at the same time, you wonderchild; but clearly it is possible to do each in turn” (265a8).⁹⁰ His rejection of this option is ironic, since it actually draws attention to the possibility of doing both at the same time. I argue that the Stranger rejects this option as a possibility precisely to draw attention to it, because the Stranger knows that we need to combine what at this point remains separate: the equal and the more/less. What if we could combine these two paths into one? It would look like the combination of the equal with the more and the less. The method cannot do this at the same time, but it can take each approach in turn, and we can observe the consequences (265b).

⁸⁸ τὴν μὲν θάπτω, πρὸς μέγα μέρος σμικρὸν διαιρουμένην, τὴν δέ, ὅπερ ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν ἐλέγομεν ὅτι δεῖ μεσοτομῆν ὡς μάλιστα, τοῦτ' ἔχουσαν μᾶλλον, μακροτέραν γε μὴν.

⁸⁹ As the Stranger pointed out in the methodological progression, “It is best (*kalliston*) to separate the object of our search at once from everything else, if the separation can be made correctly”, yet, in the same speech, he cautions that “it is safer to proceed by cutting through the middle” (κάλλιστον μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων εὐθύς διαχωρίζειν τὸ ζητούμενον...διὰ μέσων δὲ ἀσφαλέστερον ἵεναι τέμνοντας: 262b).

⁹⁰ Ἄμα γ', ὧ θαυμαστέ· ἐν μέρει γε μὴν δῆλον ὅτι δυνατόν. Both this and the former translation are my own.

Each way of proceeding is discovered to have laughable conclusions. The “better” method which is in accord with the criterion of equality between divisions, shows the human to be most closely connected to the pig, and consequently the statesman to the swineherd. It is after this conclusion that the Stranger takes the time to praise once more – this time ironically – the value-neutrality of the method: “For now, Socrates, we have shown more clearly the truth of that which we said yesterday in our search for the sophist... That the method of argument pays no more heed to the noble than to the ignoble, and no less honour to the small than to the great, but always goes on its own way to the most perfect truth” (266d).⁹¹ YS’s response – “So it seems” (Ἐοικεν) – is fitting.

The other path, which is “best” and proceeds more quickly to the *definiendum* by siphoning off larger and smaller parts in unequal divisions connects humans to chickens when it defines the human as a featherless biped that walks on land (266e).⁹² Clearly neither approach offers a satisfactory definition of the human being in its distinction from animals. For such proper distinction we need to have a way to distinguish degrees of more/less within a kind/class. What if we had taken YS’s implicit suggestion and tried to do both – combine equality with more/less – at the same time? Such a question cannot be answered by the method of *diairesis*. All that the method of division can show us

⁹¹ Νῦν γάρ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐκεῖνό ἐστι καταφανές μᾶλλον τὸ ῥηθὲν τότε ἐν τῇ περὶ τὸν σοφιστὴν ζητήσει... Ὅτι τῇ τοιαύτῃ μεθόδῳ τῶν λόγων οὔτε σεμνοτέρου μᾶλλον ἐμέλησεν ἢ μή, τὸν τε μικρότερον οὐδὲν ἡτιμακε πρὸ τοῦ μείζονος, αἰεὶ δὲ καθ’ αὐτὴν περαίνει ἀληθέστατον.

⁹² There is an infamous story of someone plopping a plucked chicken into Plato’s Academy and saying to Plato, “There’s your human being!”

is its own deficiencies. In order to define the Statesman, we will require a new method – for which we will require the doctrine of due measure.

The second type of measurement offers us a new method of proceeding – one which can distinguish degrees of difference within a single class. It is able to make such distinctions because it combines the equal with the more and the less. Each of the means that the Stranger lists at 284e act as external measures that lay outside of the pairs of contraries that comprise the first kind of measurement. As external to their opposition, due measures act as fixed points which enable us to compare degrees of more/less to the best form of a given class. Mitchell Miller phrases it this way: “[the second kind of measurement] evaluates an existent by considering its relations not to other existents but its essence, the ‘being’ which defines it.”⁹³ As the definition *par excellence* of that which it measures, the due measure provides the ideal instance of the class/kind to be determined. The varying degrees of likeness of this kind in its imitators can then be determined through a comparison of the ideal and the actual. Holding up the ideal as the standard against which all other instances of it are judged allows for the distinction of degrees of difference within a single class. In other words, it allows for hierarchical ranking of multiple sub-classes that exist within an initial kind.

An example of how this method works is given in the next section of the dialogue, when the Stranger and YS make their final attempt to define the

⁹³ Miller, *PPS*, 66.

statesman.⁹⁴ Once the interlocutors re-determine that the statesman's foundational characteristic is knowledge (*episteme*), they quickly deduce the manner of rule that is fitting to his character, through an investigation into what knowledge is: "It is then, a necessary consequence that among forms of government that one is pre-eminently right and is the only real government, in which the rulers are found to be truly possessed of science, not merely to seem to possess it, whether they rule by law or without law, whether their subjects are willing or unwilling, and whether they themselves are rich or poor – none of these things can be at all taken into account on any right method" (293c-d).⁹⁵ The only requirement for statesmen is that "they act in accordance with science and justice and preserve and benefit it by making it better than it was, so far as is possible, that must at that time and by such characteristics be declared to be the only right form of government" (293d-e).⁹⁶ With this conception of the ideal form of rule fixed in place, it then becomes the standard against which all other forms of rulership are properly ranked: "All other forms must be considered not as

⁹⁴ See also Miller's *Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's Statesman* (in *PPS*, 141-161) for an excellent interpretation of "contributive arts" (287b-291a). Miller notes there that the list of the fifteen kinds of art necessary to the *polis* can be ordered serially from the most material to the most immaterial, and he also analyzes the potential for this kind of ordering to signify the 'unwritten teachings' of Plato.

⁹⁵ Ἀναγκαῖον δὴ καὶ πολιτειῶν, ὡς ἔοικε, ταύτην διαφερόντως ὀρθὴν εἶναι καὶ μόνην πολιτείαν, ἐν ἣ τῖς ἂν εὐρίσκοι τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἀληθῶς ἐπιστήμονας καὶ οὐ δοκοῦντας μόνον, ἕαντε κατὰ νόμους ἕαντε ἄνευ νόμων ἄρχωσι, καὶ ἐκόντων ἢ ἀκόντων, καὶ πενόμενοι ἢ πλουτοῦντες, τούτων ὑπολογιστέον οὐδὲν οὐδαμῶς εἶναι κατ' οὐδεμίαν ὀρθότητα.

⁹⁶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ προσχρώμενοι σώζοντες ἐκ χείρονος βελτίῳ ποιῶσι κατὰ δύναμιν, ταύτην τότε καὶ κατὰ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ὅρους ἡμῖν μόνην ὀρθὴν πολιτείαν εἶναι ῥητέον.

legitimate or really existent, but as imitating this; those states which are said to be well governed imitate it better, and others worse” (293e).⁹⁷

Metaphysics

The Metaphysics of the Mean: Closing the *Chorismos*

The words ‘form’ and ‘instantiation’, ‘likeness’, and ‘imitation’ have been used frequently in our discussion of measurement, method, and the mean. This is no coincidence, since in addition to having methodological significance, the doctrine of due measure plays a crucial role in the development of Plato’s late metaphysical system. In particular, it articulates (obscurely as it may seem) the relationship between form and particular which Plato has been building towards in the dialogues that precede the *Statesman* in dramatic time – primarily in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.

To summarize briefly what we concluded in Part One of this thesis, the *Parmenides* rejected the doctrine of participation as a way to explain the relationship between form and particular. It revealed the chasm or χωρισμός between these ‘Two Worlds’, and then went on to lay out the hypothetical principles behind both form and particulars – namely the one-beyond-being and the one-being. Unable to bring these two principles together, the result by the end of the dialogue is the perfect metaphysical conditions for sophistry (*Parm.*, 166c).

⁹⁷ ὅσας δὲ ἄλλας λέγομεν, οὐ γνησίας οὐδ’ ὄντως οὐσας λεκτέον, ἀλλὰ μεμιμημένας ταύτην, ἃς μὲν ὡς εὐνομοῦς λέγομεν, ἐπὶ τὰ καλλίω, τὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσχίονα μεμιμῆσθαι.

The *Sophist* then picks up where the *Parmenides* leaves off, and overcomes the opposition between being and non-being by redefining non-being as otherness. Yet this redefinition does not completely close the gap between form and particular. Although the argument in the *Sophist* shows how otherness exists in the forms themselves (and consequently in the world of particulars as well), we are still left without a way to determine degrees of otherness by the opening of the *Statesman*. The doctrine of due measure accomplishes this very thing by showing the necessary relationship between absolute and relative. In doing so, it begins to close the χωρισμός.

'Otherness' from the *Sophist* translates into the *Statesman* as "relation to an opposite" (284e). As noted previously in our reference to Aristotle's *Categories*, the contraposition of the terms great and small produces the illogical contradiction of small being large and *vice versa*. Rendered relative purely to its opposite, these terms become merely other than each other, since 'large' and 'small' have no definite meaning on their own. It takes the imposition of a limit on the indefinite otherness of the relation between opposites to ground them and give them stable identity. In the doctrine of due measure, this limit is the measure (τὸ μέτρον) itself. When the measure combines with the more/less, the mean is produced as the combination of the two. This is the sense in which artisans "preserve the measure" in their works, and in which "we must now force this second conclusion, that the greater and the less are to be measured, not only to one another, but also to the establishment of the standard of the mean"

(284b-c).⁹⁸ With the standard of the mean fixed in place, it is possible to judge whether someone or thing exceeds or falls short of that mean, and the degree to which they do so. In metaphysical terms, the measure is the form, the more/less are the sensible particulars, and the mean is their fitting combination. The necessary existence of means is deduced by the existence of τέχνηαι that preserve measures in their works – i.e. by creating means within the indefinite materials they use. By combining their knowledge of the measure with the material before them they create the instantiation of the measure in their craft by approximating the mean as closely as possible.

The relationship between measure and more/less is a necessary one – not merely hypothetical. For without measures, there could be no instantiations of measures. In other words, they would have nothing to measure. Since means combine the relative otherness of more/less with the absolute measure, they bridge the gap between form and matter, by proposing (and later deducing) the relation between absolute and indefinite.⁹⁹

Finally, through the doctrine of due measure, Plato's late metaphysics has a way to determine degrees of likeness. With the mean fixed in place by its

⁹⁸ οὕτω καὶ νῦν τὸ πλεόν αὐ καὶ ἔλαττον μετρητὰ προσαναγκαστέον γίνεσθαι μὴ πρὸς ἄλληλα μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ μετριοῦ γένεσιν.

⁹⁹ Cf. Miller, 66-67. "At 284e the stranger specifies the sense of *to metrion* by the appositives *to prepon* ('the appropriate'), *to kairon* ('the timely'), and *to deon* ('the needed'). All of these notions refer implicitly to concrete historical context as orienting and delimiting. What is 'appropriate' is appropriate to a situation; what is 'needed' is needed by someone for something; above all, what is 'timely' in one circumstance may be quite untimely in another. In both these respects the mean spans the ontological gap between form and particulars. As the fullest possible realization of the form, given the limits of context, the mean serves as the norm for *praxis*, the standard by which essential measure can judge speeches and actions."

connection to the absolute measure, it can then become the stable point away from which imitations or approximations of that ideal fall.

CHAPTER THREE: Dramatic Details

Introduction

Having analyzed the philosophical scope of the doctrine of due measure in the *Statesman*, we now can turn to examine its potential to unlock the dialogue's literary details. We shall see that the doctrine of due measure explains the majority of the dialogue's literary features. In particular, I shall show that it is able to account for the following: the often confusing content of the prologue and the myth; the definition of the three men that Socrates asked for at the beginning of the *Sophist*; the salvation of Socrates from philosophical condemnation; and the structure of the dialogue as a whole.

The Prologue

Often, if not always, the first lines of a Platonic text carry special meaning.¹⁰⁰ They in particular, as well as the rest of the prologue in general, foreshadow key philosophical elements in the dialogue, and the *Statesman's* opening lines are no exception. The prologue of the *Statesman* (257a1-258b2) presents the reader with a number of confusing statements and dramatic details. These details, along with those of the myth, provide the bulk of the "matter" of the dialogue, which, if they can be explained by our interpretation of the

¹⁰⁰ I argue that any in-depth reading of a Platonic text will illuminate the significance of the dialogue's first words. Clearly this cannot be proved sufficiently here, except insofar as it I show that it is the case with the *Statesman* in particular. For more on this topic, see M. Burnyeat, "First Words: A Valedictory Lecture," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 43 (1997): 13-14.

dialogue's "form" will indicate that we have found the real meaning behind Plato's words.¹⁰¹

Scholars have traditionally had trouble with the opening lines of the *Statesman*. Some avoid them altogether (Sayre, 2006; Lane, 1999), others simply summarize their content (Klein, 1977, p. 146-147), and others again try to explain its content as a reference to the argument of the *Sophist* (Gonzalez, 2001).¹⁰²

There is also a small group of scholars who suggest that the opening lines point toward the section on measurement (Bernadete, 1984, III.69; Skemp, 1952, p. 119-120), but they do no more than point to that pointing. Only one, so far as I can tell, sees that the problem lies in Theodorus' misperception of the matters at hand.¹⁰³

I agree with those who see a connection between the section on measurement and the opening lines of the *Statesman*, but I add this: the opening lines of the dialogue – Socrates' comments in particular – show the need for a

¹⁰¹ For an explanation of what I mean by the dialogue's matter and form, see the section of my thesis called "A Neoplatonic Method of Interpretation", pages 5-7.

¹⁰² For the most part, I fundamentally agree with Gonzalez and the interpretation he puts forward in his 2001 article "The Eleatic Stranger: His Master's Voice?", yet I try to show here how the interpretation of the first words of the dialogue do not need anything outside of the dialogue to be interpreted sufficiently. However, since the *Statesman* is so closely connected to the *Sophist*, explaining the dialogue's opening in terms of the dialogue which immediately precedes it is only reasonable. I believe extraneous material can be brought in to help fill out the full range of connections being drawn in the opening lines of the dialogue, although connections made to the content of the same dialogue are best. Since I believe that the best way to explain a part of the dialogue is to understand its relation to the rest of the same dialogue and not to something external to it, I also fundamentally disagree at times with Gonzalez's interpretation – particularly when Gonzalez neglects to adequately discuss the doctrine of due measure. For more on my treatment of Gonzalez' paper, see the section of this Part called "The 'Value' of Diairesis", page 44-45 ff.

¹⁰³ See Miller, *PPS*, p. 9, who thinks that Theodorus is unaware of the difference between appearance and reality. I argue something similar, although I try to identify the source of Theodorus' misconception more specifically with his profession as reasoner and geometrician and the mode of perception that belongs to that line of thinking.

kind of relation which uses a fixed reference point that is external to the contrary qualities of more and less to measure them – in other words, he calls for the doctrine of due measure.

Socrates' and Theodorus' Opening Exchange

The dialogue begins with Socrates' expression of gratitude to Theodorus: "I really owe you a great deal of gratitude, Theodorus, for my acquaintance with Theaetetus and with the Stranger too."¹⁰⁴ In his response to Socrates, Theodorus says, "Presently, Socrates, you will owe triple that amount, when both the statesman and the philosopher have been filled out for you."¹⁰⁵ In these words Theodorus belies his own ignorance. Notions like gratitude and indebtedness are not quantifiable in the same way that the objects of geometry are. Yet Theodorus tries to force this very quantification of the unquantifiable. His error is like that of the craftsmen whom Socrates describes in the *Apology*: "because of practicing his art well, each one thought he was very wise in the other most important matters, and this folly of theirs obscured that wisdom."¹⁰⁶ Theodorus, the expert in geometry and logistics (λογισμός), has tried to force the kind of thinking that mathematicians use to examine quantities onto qualities, which are not the same objects and therefore need to be looked at differently. While mathematical thinking is apt for dealing with quantities (things like lines, numbers, planes,

¹⁰⁴ Ἡ πολλὴν χάριν ὀφείλω σοι τῆς τε Θεαιτιήτου γνωρίσεως, ὦ Θεόδωρε, ἅμα καὶ τῆς τοῦ ξένου: 257a1-2

¹⁰⁵ Τάχα δέ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀφειλήσεις ταύτης τριπλασίαν, ἐπειδὴν τόν τε πολιτικὸν ἀπεργασωνταί σοι καὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον: 257a3-5

¹⁰⁶ διὰ τὸ τὴν τέχνην καλῶς ἐξεργάζεσθαι ἕκαστος ἡξίου καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ μέγιστα σοφώτατος εἶναι, καὶ αὐτῶν αὕτη ἢ πλημμέλεια ἐκείνην τὴν σοφίαν ἀπέκρυπτεν: *Apol.*, 22d

solids, etc.), it is ill suited to the investigation or examination of qualities, such as happiness, worth, honour, etc. In his attempt to look at qualities as though they were quantifiable, Theodorus has pretended to know what he does not, and Socrates, in his characteristically ironic way, picks up on Theodorus' mistake:

SOC. Well! My dear Theodorus, have we really heard the greatest among mathematicians and geometers speak this way?

THEO. How, Socrates?

SOC. When you rated each of the men of equal worth (τῆς ἴσης ἀξίας), who, in terms of honour, are farther apart from one another than can be accounted for by proportion – I mean the one belonging to your craft.¹⁰⁷

Socrates' problem is with the word 'triple'. 'Triple' is a relation that does not allow for distinctions of more and less. It is, essentially, a relation particular to quantities, since quantities do not admit of variation by degree either.¹⁰⁸

Something cannot be any more or less triple than something else, just as something cannot be more or less 4 than something else that is also 4. It is either triple or not; it is either four or not.¹⁰⁹ What is tripled is identical, and the three men being tripled are of inherently differing worth. The operation of tripling the amount that Socrates owes only applies if each of the men are worth equal

¹⁰⁷ ΣΩ. Εἶεν· οὕτω τοῦτο, ὃ φίλε Θεόδωρε, φήσομεν ἀκηκοότες εἶναι τοῦ τερὶ λογιμοῦς καὶ τὰ γεωμετρικὰ κρατίστου;

ΘΕΟ. Πῶς, ὃ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. Τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἕκαστον θέντος τῆς ἴσης ἀξίας, οἱ τῇ τιμῇ πλέον ἀλλήλων ἀφεστᾶσιν ἢ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τὴν τῆς ὑμετέρας τέχνης. 257a6-b4. My translation.

¹⁰⁸ I am indebted to Aristotle's *Categories*, especially chapters 6-8 for this and many other insights about the nature of quantity, relation, and quality here and throughout this section. Although Aristotle does not state that triple is a relation particular to quantities in particular, he does say that the relations 'double', 'triple' and the like have the same characteristics as quantities: neither quantities nor relations like 'triple' have contraries, nor do they admit of degrees of more/less. Cf. *Cat.* 5b11-6a10 & 6a19-23 with *Cat.* 6b17-18 & 6b24-26

¹⁰⁹ While numbers like 4 can be more than 3 and less than 5, I mean 'neither more nor less' here in the sense that what is 4 cannot be more or less 4 than something else. The same is true with lines: while they can be longer and shorter than other lines, one cannot be more or less 'line' than another.

amounts, which they are not. This, as we note later, is the very same problem that befalls the method of bifurcation. Yet, as Socrates points out, this quantitative kind of relation (which sees things as either equal or unequal without degrees of variation) is unable to account for the differing degrees of worth/honour/value (or of quality in general) that belong to the sophist, statesman, and philosopher.¹¹⁰

There are two ways of looking at the sophist, statesman, and philosopher. One which would see them quantitatively as individual and separate, and that, as separate and distinct, cannot be compared. The other perspective – the one that Socrates is trying to articulate here – seeks to compare them all to the external standard (the quality) of worth (ἀξία)/honour (τιμῆ). In the quantitative point of view, each of the men is equal in worth because they are all incomparable, separate quantities. But from the Socratic/qualitative perspective, all of these men *are* comparable to one another as they measure up against the external standard of worthiness *per se*. One will therefore be *more valuable* than another by the degree to which they participate in that quality of worth. Yet Theodorus' quantitative perspective is blind to such distinctions because it keeps each of the men separate from one another as incompatible quantities, or, to use the language of the *Statesman*, they are different classes/kinds.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Socrates has already in the days discussion pointed out the different worths that people assign to the philosopher: “to some they seem to be worth nothing, to others worth everything” (*Soph.*, 216c-d).

¹¹¹ We can also note, briefly, that the method of bifurcation proceeds in exactly the same way. At two points in the LT the Stranger states that the method of bifurcation is blind to distinctions of more and less honour. See *Soph.*, 227b & *Stsm.*, 266d, discussed above, p. 37-54.

If we dig a little deeper into the details of what has recently been called a “bantering interchange” (Sayre, 2006, p.11; cf. Lane, 1998, p. 34), we can see the connection of the opening lines to the section of the dialogue which defines two types of measurement. The Stranger explains the difference between the two types of measurement in the middle section of the dialogue: “One part comprises all the arts which measure number, length, depth, breadth, and thickness in relation to their opposites (πρὸς τούναντίον μετροῦσι); the other comprises those which measure them in relation to the moderate (πρὸς τὸ μέτριον), the fitting (τὸ πρεπόν), the opportune (τὸν καιρόν), the needful (τὸ δέον), and all the other standards that are situated in the mean between the extremes (καὶ πάνθ’ ὅποσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀπωκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων)” (284e). The main difference between the two types of measurement is that one measures something in relation to its opposite, while the other measures it in relation to a standard that is external to the contrast of those opposites. According to the doctrine of due measure (the second kind of measurement), what is long is not only measured by what is short, but both are measureable in relation to what is *fitting*.

We see a hint of the first kind of measurement in Theodorus’ assumption that each of the men is of equal worth. The correlative of ‘triple’ is ‘one-third’. Thus, each of the men to be defined, in Theodorus’ view, constitute one-third of the total worth, which is three times that of one of them alone. But such a contrast of correlatives does not tell us anything about the actual worth of any of the men to be defined. Instead, it equates the worth of all three of them, which

renders them equally value-*less* as well.¹¹² Instead it is necessary to have a way of looking at value which imports an external standard against which we can measure each of the men and rank them according to the degree to which they participate in the quality of worth—for this, we need the doctrine of due measure.

Socrates, whether he is aware of it or not, actually suggests an example of a relation which implicitly relies on the doctrine of due measure the next time he speaks. He does this when he agrees with Theodorus that the younger Socrates ought to replace Theaetetus as his interlocutor, because “both are related to me in a certain way” (ἄμφω ποθὲν ἐμοὶ συγγένειαν ἔχειν τινά: 257d1-2).¹¹³ Subtle though it is, Socrates in these words has actually provided an example of a relation that uses an external standard as a measuring device—himself. Socrates is to be the external standard against which we can compare the likenesses of Theaetetus (who is like Socrates in appearance) and the younger Socrates (who shares Socrates’ name).¹¹⁴ With Socrates as the measure, we can tell which one of

¹¹² And this is precisely what Socrates does *not* want. See *Sophist*, 216c-d.

¹¹³ The word ποθὲν suggests that both of them stand a certain distance from Socrates in their appearance. The question is then, who is closer and who is farther away? In the same way the question could be asked about the worth of the philosopher, sophist, and statesman: who is closer to absolute worth? Who is worth the *most*? Theodorus’ quantitative reasoning cannot fathom such questions because it renders all parts equal to one another. Can we now see just how ironic Socrates is when he calls Theodorus the greatest (κράτιστος) of those concerning calculation and geometry?

¹¹⁴ Socrates says that his sharing the same name as the Younger Socrates “implies some sort of likeness” (258a1). Yet without the external measure of the appearance of Socrates himself, the only way we can compare the two Socrates is by the designations of elder and younger. On their own, these two comparatives tell us nothing about the actual age of either of the men. ‘Elder’ as a comparative without an attachment to an external reference point is merely the opposite of ‘younger’ and *vice versa*. It is only as the younger of the elder Socrates that we get an idea the younger Socrates’ actual age. Cf. Scodel, 46-47: “it is for the reader to discern how different their

the two young interlocutors is more like him than the other. The next step will be to make the logic of this second kind of relationship (measurement to an external standard) explicit, which is accomplished by the doctrine of due measure.

The Myth

Introduction

The next significant portion of the dialogue's dramatic details comes from its myth, which is by far the most famous section of the *Statesman*. Spanning from 268d5-274e3, it takes up roughly 1/10th of the whole dialogue, but has generated the majority of scholarship on the *Statesman* – from ancient Neoplatonic commentary which focused almost solely on the myth, up to today's commentators.

Melissa Lane, in her *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman*, notes that the majority of the papers delivered at the Third Symposium Platonicum (which was devoted to the *Statesman*) treated the myth.¹¹⁵ We can also see that the myth is the main concern of ancient scholarship on the *Statesman* in the commentaries of the ancient Neoplatonists. John Dillon states that the standard Neoplatonic reading of the myth interprets the Age of Kronos as the divine life of the intellect (*Nous*), while the Age of Zeus represents the life of embodied reason (Soul).¹¹⁶ I see no reason why this is not an plausible interpretation, although I take a different

essences are." It will be for the method – equipped with the doctrine of due measure – to do so too.

¹¹⁵ Melissa Lane, *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 9, n. 22.

¹¹⁶ John Dillon, "The Neoplatonic Exegesis of the *Statesman* Myth," in *Reading the Statesman: Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium Platonicum*, ed. Christopher J. Rowe (Bristol: Sankt Augustin, 1995), 364-374, p. 365.

path— one which I think is more in line with the logic of the dialogue as a whole as I have interpreted it thus far.

Measure in the Myth

If we do as the Stranger bids at the beginning of the myth and “hold [our] mind to the myth” (τῶ μύθῳ μου πάνυ πρόσεχε τὸν νοῦν: 268e), we will see an image of the due measure during the time of the change in revolution. At 284e, the Stranger defines the mean broadly as “whatever is situated in the middle between the extremes” (πάνθ’ ὅποσα εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀπωκίσθη τῶν ἐσχάτων: 284e). On the one end of the cosmic cycle, we have the idyllic, stable, and ordered period of revolution when God himself tends to the cares of the universe. And on the opposite end we have the opposite state of affairs: chaos, disorder, strife, dissimilarity, and even reversed aging. In the middle, between these opposed periods is, quite literally, the measure: “During a certain period God himself goes with the universe as guide in its revolving course, but at another epoch, when the cycles have at length reached the measure (μέτρον) of his allotted time, he lets it go, and of its own accord it turns backward in the opposite direction” (269c-d).¹¹⁷

Not only are there literal occurrences of due measure in the text, but the myth also depicts an image of how the doctrine of due measure works. It does

¹¹⁷ τὸ γὰρ πᾶν τόδε τοτὲ μὲν αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ξυμποδηγεῖ πορευόμενον καὶ συγκυκλεῖ, τοτὲ δ’ ἀνήκεν, ὅταν αἱ πείοδοι τοῦ προσήκοντος αὐτῶ μέτρον εἰληφῶσιν ἤδη χρόνου, τό δὲ πάλιν αὐτοματον εἰς τάναντία περιάγεται, ζῶον δὲ καὶ φρόνησιν εἰληχὸς ἐκ τοῦ συναρμόσαντος αὐτο κατ’ ἀρχάς. And it appears again, later, when there is mention of the changeover from the god-ruled to the god-less cosmos (κατὰ καιρόν: 270a6). So far as I am able to tell, this detail has gone unnoted by other commentators of the dialogue.

this first at the level of the structural integrity of the cosmos, and the stability of the human community mirrors the cosmic situation. In both instances, the closer the age is to the time when the god ruled, the more stable it is. The farther away it moves in time from the period of the god's absolute rule, the more disordered it becomes: "[I]n becoming separated from him it always got on most excellently during the time immediately after it was let go, but as time went on and it grew forgetful, the ancient condition of disorder prevailed more and more and towards the end of the time reached its height, and the universe, mingling but little good with much of the opposite sort, was in danger of destruction for itself and those within it" (273c-d).¹¹⁸

The same pattern – of initial stability in the age of the god's rule followed by a steady degradation into chaos after he leaves – is repeated at the level of the human political community. The time right after the god has left retains the memory of his rule and imitates it in its own self-governance:

And as the universe was turned back and there came the shock of collision, as the beginning and the end rushed in opposite directions, it produces a great earthquake within itself and causes a new destruction of all sorts of living creature. But after that, when a sufficient time had elapsed, there was rest now from disturbance and confusion, calm followed the earthquakes, and the world went on its own accustomed course in orderly fashion, exercising care and rule over itself and all within itself, and remembering and practicing the teachings of the Creator and Father to the extent of its power, at first more accurately and at last more carelessly. (273a-b)¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Χωριζόμενος δὲ ἐκείνου τὸν ἐγγύτατα χρόνον αἰεὶ τῆς ἀφέσεως κάλλιστα πάντα διάγει, προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ λήθης ἐγγιγνομένης ἐν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον καὶ δυναστεύει τὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς ἀναρμοστίας πάθος, τελευτώντος δὲ ἐξανθεῖ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ σμικρὰ μὲν τὰ γαθὰ, πολλὴν δὲ τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων κρᾶσιν ἐπεγκεραννύμενος ἐπὶ διαφθορᾶς κίνδυνον αὐτοῦ τε ἀφικνεῖται καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ.

¹¹⁹ ὁ δὲ μεταστρεφόμενος καὶ ξυμβάλλων, ἀρχῆς τε καὶ τελευτῆς ἐναντίαν ὁρμὴν ὁρμηθεὶς, σεισμὸν πολὺν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ποιῶν ἄλλην αὐτῷ φθορὰν ζώων παντοίων ἀπηργάσατο. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα

Both of these instances in the myth illustrate the main principle of the doctrine of due measure: the closer something is to the measure, the better it is. With a measure fixed in place, it can then be used to determine the degrees of difference. The closer the approximations are to the measure, the better they are. In the case of the cosmos, the closer in time that the cosmos is to the age when the god ruled, the more stability it enjoys; the farther away, the more it sinks into dissimilarity and ruin. So too with the self-rule of humans within the god-less cosmos. The closer they are to the time when the god ruled, they exhibit more control over themselves, as they remember the manner of the god's rule through myth and memory; the farther away they get from that time, the more forgetful humans are, and the community begins to disintegrate.

The kind of rulership that the god displays during the period of his rule becomes the example *par excellence* of statesmanship. His rule acts as the divine standard against which all human approximations of statesmanship are measured. Further, the myth actually provides an image of what this method of measurement looks like. Thus the myth provides the example of statesmanship and the kind of measurement that we will need to carry out the definition of the statesman.

προελθόντος ἱκανοῦ χρόνου, θορύβων τε καὶ ταραχῆς ἤδη παυόμενος καὶ τῶν σεισμῶν γαλήνης ἐπιλαβόμενος εἰς τε τὸν εἰωθότα δρόμον τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κατακοσμούμενος ἦει, ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κράτος ἔχων αὐτὸς τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ τε καὶ ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν τοῦ δημιουργοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἀπομνημονεύων διδασχὴν εἰς δύναμιν. κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν οὖν ἀκριβέστερον ἀπετέλει, τελευτῶν δὲ ἀμβλύτερον.

Cf. 271a-b, an earlier part of the myth, which echoes this same image and explains why the race of humans is earthborn.

Defining the Three Men

Although the definition of the three men – sophist, statesman, and philosopher – is not exactly a dramatic detail of the dialogue *per se*, this section simply seeks to show how the doctrine of due measure functions in this the overall explicit project of the *Sophist* and *Statesman*, which Socrates calls for at the beginning of the *Sophist* because of his impending trial.

The Philosopher and Sophist

Just after the Stranger defines the two types of measurement more clearly at 284e, he launches into a speech about two kinds of people. The two types of people are divided between those that recognize the difference between these two types of measurement – as well as all things that differ according to kinds – and those who do not:

[W]hat many clever persons occasionally say, Socrates, fancying that it is a wise remark, namely, that the science of measurement has to do with everything, is precisely the same as what we have just said. For in a certain way all things which are in the province of art do partake of measurement; but because people are not in the habit of considering things by dividing them into classes they hastily put these widely different relations into the same category, thinking they are alike; and again they do the opposite of this when they fail to divide other things into parts. What they ought to do is this: when a person at first sees only the unity or common quality of many things, he must not give up until he sees all the differences in them, so far as they exist in classes; and conversely, when all sorts of dissimilarities are seen in a large number of objects he must find it impossible to be discouraged or to stop until he has gathered into one circle of similarity all the things which are related to each other and has included them in some sort of class on the basis of their essential nature (285a-b).¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Ο γὰρ ἐνίστε, ὦ Σώκρατες, οἰόμενοι δὴ τι σοφὸν φράζειν πολλοὶ τῶν κομψῶν λέγουσιν, ὡς ἄρα μετρητικὴ περὶ πάντ' ἐστὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα, τοῦτ' αὐτὸ τὸ νῦν λεχθὲν ὄν τυγχάνει. μετρήσεως μὲν γὰρ δὴ τινα τρόπον πάνθ' ὅποσα ἔντεχνα μετείληφε· διὰ δὲ τὸ μὴ κατ' εἶδη συνειθίσθαι

The first group of people are sometimes associated with Pythagoreans (see, for example, Miller, *PPS*, 68)¹²¹, but I argue that they are sophists. Since sophists posit themselves as the “measure of all things”, they believe that all things can be measured relative to their subjective standard; they rely on the non-existence of external standards like means or due measures in order to situate themselves as the sole standard “of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not.”¹²²

Philosophers, on the other hand, pay attention to the due measures of things, and seek to group all things into their respective classes. They are receptive to the εἶδη, and seek only to represent the constituted classes of things through *logoi*. They behave as the Stranger believes all people should, by collecting and dividing similarities and differences to arrive at a dialectical knowledge of the εἶδη.

σκοπεῖν διαιρουμένους ταῦτά τε τοσοῦτον διαφέροντα ξυμβάλλουσιν εὐθὺς εἰς ταῦτὸν ὅμοια νομίσαντες, καὶ τούναντίον αὐ τοῦτου δρῶσιν ἕτερα οὐ κατὰ μέρη διαιροῦντες, δέον, ὅταν μὲν τὴν τῶν πολλῶν τις πρότερον αἴσθηται κοινωνίαν, μὴ προαφίστασθαι, πρὶν ἂν ἐν αὐτῇ τὰς διαφορὰς ἴδη πάσας ὅποσαι περ ἐν εἶδεσι κείνται, τὰς δὲ αὐ παντοδαπὰς ἀνομοιότητας, ὅταν ἐν πλήθεσιν ὀφθῶσι, μὴ δυνατὸν εἶναι δυσωπούμενον παύεσθαι, πρὶν ἂν ζύμπαντα τὰ οἰκεία ἐντὸς μιᾶς ὁμοιότητος ἔρξας γένους τινὸς οὐσίᾳ περιβάληται.

¹²¹ Miller uses the following reasoning to identify the clever persons with Pythagoreans: “The elder Socrates’ curricular suggestions in the *Republic* presumably were the basis for the studies carried on in the Academy; thus the stranger’s list of mathematical disciplines at 284e refers the young Academician [the Younger Socrates] to his own current studies. The notion of the universality of measurement, in turn, is a logical corollary of the Pythagorean thesis that ‘all things are numbers’; and – quite naturally, given the shared emphasis on mathematics – Pythagoreanism was highly influential in the Academy. Thus the stranger’s reference to ‘the erudite’ probably refers to the Pythagoreans.” I find the ‘universality of measurement’ much more in line with sophistry, as I explain above.

¹²² Attributed to Protagoras, as quoted by Sextus Empiricus in *Against the Mathematicians* 7.60=80b1), in *A Presocratics Reader*, ed. Patricia Curd, trans. Richard D. McKirahan, Jr. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.), 98.

The Statesman

As we shall see, the Statesman occupies the middle position between the sophist and the philosopher. Where the sophist supplants himself as the due measure of all things by ignoring the constitutive εἶδη, and while the philosopher remains purely receptive to these εἶδη, the statesman – that is, the true statesman – actually becomes the due measure of justice in the *polis*, and creates the mean within the *polis* by weaving together the ‘contrary’ qualities of courage and temperance in the souls of its citizens.

The Statesman as Artisan

This same scheme outlined above that applies to all craftsmen applies similarly to the ideal statesman who has knowledge. He too works with the indefiniteness of the *polis* (particularly the souls of its citizens) to realize the due measure of justice in the human community.

The scheme correlates as follows: the two qualities of courage and temperance are like the indefinite qualities of more/less. Each virtue, if left unchecked, will spin off into either madness (in the case of courage: 310d) or disability (in the case of temperance: 310e). It requires the statesman’s limitation of these two seemingly opposed virtues through their combination to bring each virtue into a fitting relation with each other and the mean.¹²³

¹²³ So far as I am able to tell, it is only James Doull who sees a metaphysical connection to the ideal Statesman’s activity: “Plato answers that in the passions there is a principle division between the passive and the active. Not that the passive is without an active, the active without a passive, aspect. But a disunity and imbalance of these aspects is the source of indeterminateness and evil in the soul and in the state. The principle work of the ideal ruler is to find a synthesis and limit of active and passive powers in the irrational soul. In this way the soul is rendered

In the case of the statesman's activity, the mean that he creates is the combination of the virtues of courage and temperance. The Statesman himself is the measure, who imposes limit on the unlimited character of the virtues by binding them together in due proportion – in other words, by ordering them to the standard of the mean. In this case, the standard of the mean is brought about in two ways. On the one hand, well-balanced souls are literally created through the mixture (i.e. intermarriage) of people who exhibit each virtue. On the other hand, is the “divine bond” (θείω...δεσμῶ), which the Stranger clarifies as “that really true and assured opinion about honour, justice, goodness and their opposites” (309c).¹²⁴

Saving Socrates

The question of how to distinguish between a sophist, a philosopher, and a statesman is obviously a pertinent one for Socrates, who, in the dramatic setting of the Late Trilogy, has just been indicted by Meletus and is about to go on trial. In this section, I outline just how Socrates fits into what is sometimes called the overall goal of Plato's Dialogues in general, and into this Late Trilogy in particular.

Different scholars have said the same thing when it comes to the overall goal of Plato's dialogues: Leo Strauss says bluntly “all Platonic dialogues are

receptive to the mutual limitation of affirmative and negative which is the logical basis of law as of ideal finitude generally” [James Doull, “The Christian Origin of Contemporary Institutions” in *Dionysius* 6, (1982), 123].

¹²⁴ Τὴν τῶν καλῶν καὶ δικαίων περὶ καὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῶν τούτοις ἐναντίων ὄντως οὖσαν ἀληθῆ δόξαν.

'apologies' of or for Socrates."¹²⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer asserts, "Plato's magnificent writings are dedicated in their entirety to showing that the figure of Socrates who had to drink the cup of poison was no sophist."¹²⁶ Yet sections of the *Sophist* and the *Statesman* – set just before Socrates' trial – problematize their thesis. In *Sophist* the Eleatic Stranger describes those who practice the "true born art of sophistry" (ἡ γένει γενναία σοφιστική: *Soph.*, 231b8) in a way that is remarkably similar to Socratic cross-questioning (*elenchus*): "They question a man about the things about which he thinks he is talking sense when he is talking nonsense" (*Soph.*, 230b).¹²⁷ In *Statesman*, the Stranger says that any sort of investigation into the laws and unwritten customs of the *polis* will warrant calling the investigator a "stargazer" (μετεωρολόγον) and "a babbling sophist" (ἀδολέσχην τινὰ σοφιστήν), indicting him on charges of "corrupting the youth", and exacting the "harshest penalties" on him (299c). Meanwhile, Socrates sits silently by as the Stranger and his interlocutors appear to produce philosophical proofs for why he should be put to death.

In this section, I bolster the claim that the goal of Plato's dialogues is to defend Socrates. I do so by looking at the metaphysics and the resulting politics of Plato's late or stoicheological dialogues, paying special attention Plato's *Statesman*. In particular, I argue that Plato's late metaphysics produces a political philosophy which vindicates Socrates' political activities and examinations. I

¹²⁵ Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983), 38.

¹²⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 3.

¹²⁷ Διερωτῶσιν ὧν ἂν οἴηται τίς τι πέρι λέγειν λέγων μηδέν.

make two claims in my argument: One, that Plato's political theory is influenced by his metaphysics. And two, that the political theory which results from introducing otherness into the Forms in *Sophist* produces an ideal *polis* in *Statesman* that would, in fact, allow Socrates to live. Moreover, this ideal political constitution could not actually come into being without Socrates.

Eli Diamond, describes how metaphysics determines politics in Plato's middle or eidetic period:

In the middle dialogue ontology, the Good and its determinations, the ideas, are wholly self-identical and beyond division, in order that they exist beyond the power of the sophistic dialectic and its manipulation of every contradiction. Having a principle that is beyond all division means that the particulars that it comprehends must be stripped of their particularity in order to be truly comprehended by the self-identical form. It is because the Good and each idea are absolutely beyond distinction that citizens are stripped of all their natural individuality in the three waves [of the *Republic*]. Differences of private property, gender, and family, as features that distinguish the individual from the common identity of the whole, must be wholly eliminated by the logic of the *Republic*. It is only in the move to the late dialogues, in which it is shown that what is other than being is not wholly non-existent, but merely different than what is, that those aspects of reality through which one exists as an individual as apart from the community (property, family) can be cautiously allowed to co-exist alongside the common identity of the state.¹²⁸

To further illustrate the connection between metaphysics and politics in Plato's late or stoicheological dialogues, I quote James Doull:

The question how the good polity can exist is treated farther in *Politicus* or *Statesman*. In that dialogue, as in others nearly related to it, Plato has before him the Eleatic conclusion that there is no true finitude but only the One itself. In *Sophist* he has shown how there can be a definite otherness or finitude for a theoretic thought, namely by a limitation of indeterminate difference in relation to an absolute identity. In this way is constituted both an unchanging ideal world of genera and their species and a

¹²⁸ Eli Diamond, "Understanding and Individuality in the Three Cities: An Interpretation of Plato's *Laws*," in *Animus* 7 (2002), 6.

changing sensible participation of this order. [FN. *Sophist*, 266a ff.] In *Politicus* the same question is asked about a political community: how can its ideal ordering to the good – its constitution – exist in a sensuous will moved by needs and struggling to find a self-relation against them?¹²⁹

To their observations I would add only the following two pieces of evidence, both from Plato's *Statesman*, to further demonstrate the connection between the Plato's late metaphysics and his corresponding late political philosophy.

First, the Statesman's rule by knowledge is the political representation of the first best kind of metaphysics found in late Platonic philosophy, which Doull summarizes as, "the limitation of indeterminate difference in relation to an absolute identity." Although we have seen an instance of this kind of relation already in the doctrine of due measure, this first best kind of metaphysics translates into the political sphere of the *Statesman* in the following way: the statesman, by means of his knowledge and technical expertise in the art/science of politics, is the absolute standard of what is moderate, fitting, opportune needful, and "all the other standards that are situated in the mean between the extremes" (284e). He imposes limitation on the indeterminate difference of the citizenry and their passions, particularly those of courage and temperance, which if left unchecked would run an individual and eventually the state into slavery and, essentially, indeterminacy (307e ff).

Secondly, in the famous myth of the *Statesman*, we receive a description of the inherent bodily nature of the cosmos. Because of its bodily nature, "it is

¹²⁹ James Doull, "The Christian Origin of Contemporary Institutions" in *Dionysius* 6 (1982), 122.

impossible for [the cosmos] to be entirely free from change” (269e).¹³⁰ Compare this inborn quality of change in the cosmos to the characterization of human life in the *polis*. The Stranger calls it a fact that “nothing whatsoever in human life is ever at rest” (294b). When he makes these two assertions, the Stranger uses the exact same word – ἀνομοιότητες – to describe the diversity or dissimilarity inherent in human life and in the bodily nature of the cosmos (cf. 273d and 294b).

It is this quality of change/dissimilarity/diversity in human life that prevents laws from being the best type of rule, and necessitates that “the man who is wise and of kingly nature be ruler...Because law could never, by determining exactly what is noblest and most just for one and all, enjoin upon them what is best...But we see that the laws aim at pretty nearly this very thing, like a stubborn and ignorant man who allows no one to do anything contrary to his command, *or even to ask a question*, not even if something new occurs to some one, which is better than the rule he has himself ordained” (294a-c, italics mine).¹³¹

This character of the law – that it remains the same always and for every particular instance to which it would apply itself – is inimical both to philosophy and the Socratic activity, for it does not permit questions to be asked about it. This inherently unchanging character of the law is simply unable to commune

¹³⁰ ὅθεν αὐτῷ μεταβολῆς ἀμοιρῶ γίγνεσθαι διὰ παντὸς ἀδύνατον.

¹³¹ ἄνδρα τὸν μετὰ φρονήσεως βασιλικόν...” Ὅτι νόμος οὐκ ἂν ποτε δύναιτο τό τε ἄριστον καὶ τὸ δικαιοτάτον ἀκριβῶς ἅμα πᾶσιν περιλαβὼν τὸ βέλτιστον ἐπιτάττειν... Τὸν δέ γε νόμον ὀρώμεν σχεδὸν ἐπ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ξυντείνοντα, ὥσπερ τινὰ ἄνθρωπον αὐθάδη καὶ ἀμαθῆ καὶ μηδένα μηδὲν ἑῶντα ποιεῖν παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τάξιν, μηδ’ ἐπερωτᾶν μηδένα, μηδ’ ἂν τι νέον ἄρα τῷ ξυμβαίῃ βέλτιον παρὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν αὐτὸς ἐπέταξεν.

with the inherently changing nature of human life in the *polis*. This is why the ideal statesman's rule by knowledge is superior to the rule of law: because it is not bound by rules that are unchanging it can account for the inherent differences in particular human situations, and change its prescriptions based on the needs of the situation. Written law cannot do this, for, as the Stranger sums it up, "that which is persistently simple is inapplicable to things which are never simple" (294c).¹³²

This language of changing versus unchanging, and of the inability of the unchanging, absolute laws to apply themselves to the relativity of human circumstances should sound familiar, at least to the elder Socrates who is still sitting silently as the discussion continues. When he himself was young he took part in a conversation with Parmenides where a grievance similar to the one raised about the laws is also raised about Socrates' theory of separate and absolute forms. Parmenides' four arguments show their separateness and absoluteness creates an unbridgeable chasm between the Form and its particular instances that the mere word "participation" could not overcome. If this similar way of talking about absolute laws and absolute forms was not already apparent to us, Plato makes the connection between them a little clearer when he has the Stranger call the rule of law the "δεύτερος πλοῦς" (300c2) – or second best course – to the rule of the statesman's knowledge. And the second best course is,

¹³² ἀδύνατον εἶ ἔχειν πρὸς τὰ μηδέποτε ἀπλᾶ τὸ διὰ παντὸς γιγνόμενον ἀπλοῦν.

of course, the term Socrates uses to refer to the theory of Forms he espouses in *Phaedo*.

There is an identity between these two things called δεύτερος πλοῦς – they are both unchanging, absolute λόγοι which cannot by their very nature apply to all instances under their purview. Socrates in the *Phaedo* can no more explain how different instances participate in one absolute Form than the absolute laws explain their *raison d'être*. As we know from the *Parmenides*, there are serious problems with the theory that Forms are absolute and self-identical. So too are there serious problems with the rule of law – most notably, its rule requires the death of Socrates.

For the laws do not permit questions to be asked of them. And this is for two reasons: one, because they cannot answer any questions posed to them, since, as written, they go on asserting the same thing forever. And two, in the absence of the ideal statesman's political τέχνη as the absolute standard which limits the indeterminacy of human life, the laws must take up this task and become the absolute standard in the statesman's place. The laws, imperfect imitations though they are, can never be questioned, lest their makeshift measures become open to the unwieldy scrutiny of sophism, which would lead to the rule of ignorance and the dissolution of the state into dissimilarity or indeterminacy.

This inability to question the laws is in direct conflict with the Socratic activity. In order to prevent the *polis* from falling into total disarray, all meddling

into the reasons for the laws must be stamped out: “No one,” says the Stranger, is allowed to “do anything contrary to the command of the laws, or even ask a question, not even if something new occurs to some one, which is better than the rule of law” (294c).¹³³

Therefore, in order for Socrates, who is going to question the already existing laws and *mores* regardless in his quest for wisdom, to be able to live in the *polis*, it will have to be governed by the ideal statesman who rule with knowledge. For it is with this knowledge that the ideal statesman would actually be able to answer Socrates’ questions. The statesman would be able to provide reasons to Socrates for his law-making decisions. The laws, we have seen, cannot do this. Moreover, anyone who questions the laws needs to be put to death, lest sophistic manipulation ensue.

But if we can ignore that law, there is one question begging to be asked. Is it ever possible to move from the rule of law to the rule by the ideal statesman’s political expertise? Given the absolute and unchanging character of the law, the answer, it seems, is no. But, I argue, there is hope – so long as Socrates is alive. As it turns out, Socrates needs the ideal statesman to exist in order to be able to live in the *polis* as much as the *polis* needs Socrates to have the ideal statesman come into power.

Addressing ‘Socrates’ – not specifying either young or old – the Stranger says:

¹³³ μηδένα μηδὲν ἐὼντα ποιεῖν παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τάξιν, μηδ’ ἐπερωτᾶν μηδένα, μηδ’ ἄν τι νέον ἄρα τῷ ξυμβαίνῃ βέλτιον παρὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν αὐτὸς ἐπέταξεν.

Can we wonder, then, Socrates, at all the evils that arise and are destined to arise in such kinds of government, when they are based upon such a foundation, and must conduct their affairs in accordance with written laws and with customs, without knowledge? For every one can see that any other art built upon such a foundation would ruin all its works that are so produced. Ought we not rather to wonder at the stability that inheres in the state? For states have labored under such conditions for countless ages, nevertheless some of them are lasting and are not overthrown. Many, to be sure, like ships that founder at sea, are destroyed, have been destroyed, and will be destroyed hereafter, through the worthlessness of their captains and crews who have the greatest ignorance of the greatest things, men who have no knowledge of statesmanship, but think they have in every respect most perfect knowledge of this above all other sciences. (301e-302b)¹³⁴

Who could be better at showing the self-ignorance of the pretenders to the ideal statesman's throne than Socrates? Recall the description that the Stranger ascribes to the "true born art of sophistry" in the *Sophist*, not-so-implicitly talking about Socrates and apply it to the following section of the *Statesman* which talks about those who would try to imitate the laws of the ideal statesman:

And yet we said, if we remember, that the man of knowledge, the real statesman, would by his art make many changes in his practice without regard to his writings, when he thought another course was better though it violated the rules he had written [300d] and sent to his absent subjects....But is it not true that any man or any number of men whatsoever who have written laws, if they undertake to make any change in those laws, thinking it is all improvement, are doing, to the best of their ability, the same thing which our true statesman does?" (300c-d)¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Θαυμάζομεν δῆτα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις πολιτείαις ὅσα ξυμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι κακὰ καὶ ὅσα ξυμβήσεται, τοιαύτης τῆς κρηπίδος ὑποκειμένης αὐταῖς, τῆς κατὰ γράμματα καὶ ἔθῃ μὴ μετὰ ἐπιστήμης πραττούσης τὰς πράξεις, ἢ ἑτέρα προσχρωμένη παντὶ κατάδηλος ὡς πάντ' ἂν διολέσειε τὰ ταύτη γιγνόμενα; ἢ ἐκείνο ἡμῖν θαυμαστόν μᾶλλον, ὡς ἰσχυρόν τι πόλις ἐστὶ φύσει; πάσχουσαι γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα αἱ πόλεις νῦν χρόνον ἀπέραντον, ὅμως ἔνιαί τινες αὐτῶν μόνιμοὶ τέ εἰσι καὶ οὐκ ἀνατρέπονται· πολλὰ μὲν ἐνίοτε καὶ καθάπερ πλοῖα καταδυόμενα διόλλυνται καὶ διολώλασι καὶ ἔτι διολοῦνται διὰ τὴν τῶν κυβερνητῶν καὶ ναυτῶν μοχθηρίαν τῶν περὶ τὰ πολιτικά κατ' οὐδὲν γιγνώσκοντες ἡγούνται κατὰ πάντα σαφέστατα πασῶν ἐπιστημῶν ταύτην εἰληφέναι.

¹³⁵ Καὶ μὴν τόν γε εἰδότα ἔφαμεν, τὸν ὄντως πολιτικόν, εἰ μεμνήμεθα, ποιήσειν τῇ τέχνῃ πολλὰ εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ πράξιν τῶν γραμμάτων οὐδὲν φροντίζοντα, ὅποταν ἄλλ' αὐτῷ βελτίω δόξῃ παρὰ τὰ γεγραμμένα ὑφ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπεσταλμένα ἀποῦσί τισιν... Οὐκοῦν ἀνὴρ ὅστισόν εἰς πλήθος ὅτιοῦν,

Consider, finally, a section of the *Theaetetus*, which nicely captures Socrates' predicament in the *polis*: when asked by Theaetetus if σοφία and ἐπιστήμη are the same thing, Socrates has this to say:

Well, it is just this that I am in doubt about and cannot fully grasp by my own efforts – what knowledge really is. Can we tell that? What do you say? Who of us will speak first? And he who fails, and whoever fails in turn, shall go and sit down and be donkey, as the children say when they play ball; and whoever gets through without failing shall be our king and shall order us to answer any questions he pleases. Why are you silent? I hope, Theodorus, I am not rude, through my love of discussion and my eagerness to make us converse and show ourselves friends and ready to talk to one another. (*Thts*, 146a)¹³⁶

Socrates is thus allowed to live in Plato's late *polis*, which is determined by Plato's late metaphysics, precisely because the statesman, unlike the laws, would be able to answer Socrates' questions; moreover, Socrates is the only one who can bring this kind of ideal *polis* into being. Yet Socrates is about to be put to death.

In conclusion, if I am right, and Plato's metaphysics does dictate the character of his politics, the hypothesis of scholars like Strauss and Gadamer is correct: Plato stays true to the project he began in the *Apology* of defending Socrates – even as his thought turns to a reformulation of the forms themselves and as Socrates ceases to be the main speaker of his dialogues. Moreover, it is actually this later reconceptualization of the Forms – incorporating otherness within them – which, when translated into the political realm, demands a kind of

οἷς ἂν νόμοι κείμενοι τυγχάνωσι, παρὰ ταῦτα ὅ τι ἂν ἐπιχειρήσωσι ποιεῖν ὡς βέλτιον ἕτερον ὄν, ταῦτόν δρῶσι κατὰ δύναμιν ὅπερ ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἐκείνος;

¹³⁶ Τοῦτ' αὐτὸ τοίνυν ἐστὶν ὁ ἀπορῶ καὶ οὐ δύναμαι λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς παρ' ἑμαυτῶ, ἐπιστήμη ὅ τί ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν. ἄρ' οὖν δὴ ἔχομεν λέγειν αὐτό; τί φατέ; τίς ἂν ἡμῶν πρῶτος εἴποι; ὁ δὲ ἀμαρτῶν, καὶ ὅς ἂν περιγένηται ἀναμάρτητος, βασιλεύσει ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπιτάξει ὅ τι ἂ βούληται ἀποκρίνεσθαι. τί σιγάτε; οὐ τί που, ὦ Θεόδωρε, ἐγὼ ὑπὸ φιλολογίας ἀγροικίζομαι, προθυμούμενος ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι διαλέγεσθαι καὶ φίλους τε καὶ προσηγόρους ἀλλήλοις γίνεσθαι;

rule which would allow Socrates to live rather than condemn him to die. If any metaphysics condemns Socrates to die it is the Second Best Method, which Plato, in these late dialogues has been working to overcome, and relies on the doctrine of due measure.

The Structure of the *Statesman*

It is no secret that Plato's dialogues often have confounding and elaborate structures, and that what is said at the very middle of the dialogue often provides import for what the heart of the dialogue truly is. As Sayre also notes, "the section on Excess and Deficiency (283c-285c) occupies the very middle of the dialogue."¹³⁷ Sayre goes on to say, "Striking as this fact may be, we should not jump to the conclusion that it is more than coincidental. Mere coincidence seems less likely, however, in view of the equally striking fact that the middle sentence of this section – hence the middle sentence of the dialogue – emphasizes the necessity that more or less be measurable with respect to due measure."¹³⁸

This is so all the more in the *Statesman* because not only is the introduction of the art of measurement at the very middle of the dialogue, but it is at the middle of an elaborate ring structure that frames the content of the rest of the entire dialogue as well. Jacqueline Merrill outlines the ring structure as she sees it in the following way:¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Sayre, *MMPS*, 182

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ Jacquelin P. Merrill, "The Organization of Plato's 'Statesman' and the Statesman's Rule as a Herdsman," in *Phoenix*, 57, pp. 35-56, 38.

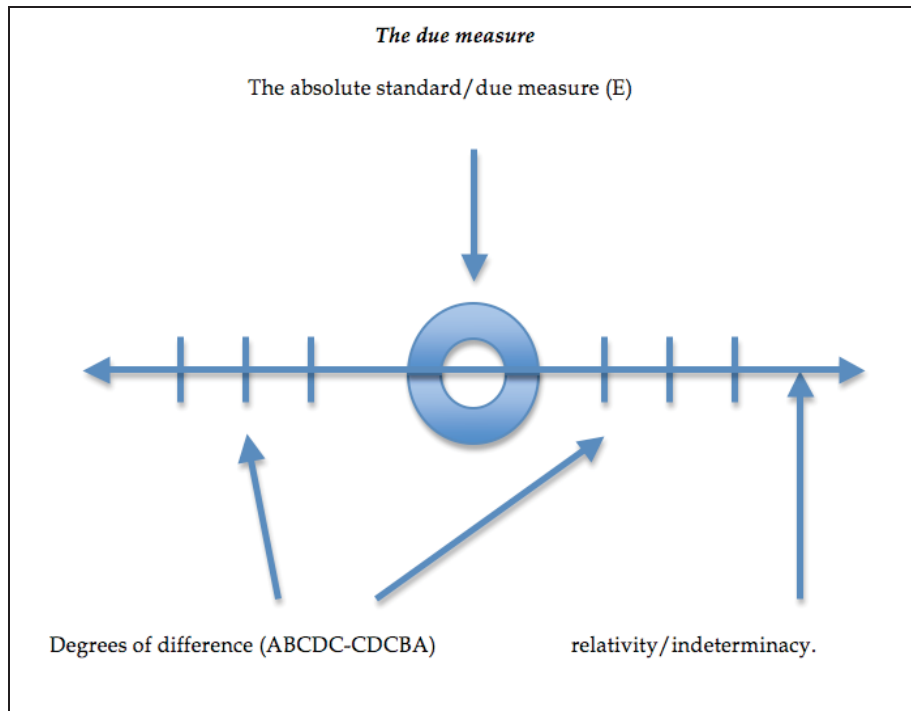
Table 1: Pfeffer's Schematic Outline of the *Statesman*

Chart I. Schematic Outline of the <i>Statesman</i>	
Link with the <i>Theaetetus</i> and <i>Sophist</i> (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)	

Just as the due measure is in the middle of a continuum of relativity and indeterminacy, with degrees of difference emanating away from the measure on either side of it in excess or deficiency, the doctrine of the due measure resides in the middle of the dialogue as a whole, with discussions of the rest of the content of the dialogue emanating on either side of it as well.

While Merrill argues well for the ring-like structure of the *Statesman*, she only speculates as to *why* it has the sort of structure it does. She suggests that it has to do with the ideal statesman as being a sort of herder, and that the ring structure might serve as an image of this (55). But to my mind it is much more clear why the *Statesman* has this sort of ring structure (ABCDCECDCBA) if we see it as itself an image of the doctrine that is at its very heart:

Figure 1: The Due Measure



CHAPTER FOUR: Conclusion

Summary

In this thesis, we have argued that the doctrine of due measure forms both the philosophical and literal core of Plato's *Statesman*. We have explained the doctrine's philosophical significance for both the *Statesman* and for the Late Trilogy as a whole. As well, we have examined the extent to which it is able to explain the literary features of the dialogue – specifically the prologue, the myth, the definition of philosopher, sophist, and statesman, saving Socrates from philosophical condemnation, and the structure of the dialogue. In using the philosophical core of the dialogue to explain its literary details, we have adopted the Neoplatonic method of exegesis, and have been able to show with it that the doctrine of due measure plays the central role in the philosophical and literary aspects of the *Statesman* as a whole.

Recently, Kenneth Sayre has argued that the purpose of the *Statesman* has been to make us better dialecticians.¹⁴⁰ His conclusion is in line with both Mitchell Miller's assessment that the dialogue is primarily concerned with putting the Academy on stage before itself,¹⁴¹ as well as the explicit purpose of the text, as articulated by the Stranger, that the dialogue has been undertaken for an understanding of all topics – not just for ascertaining the definition of the statesman (285d). However, without negating either the claims of Sayre and

¹⁴⁰ Sayre, *MMPS*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Miller, *PPS*, xii.

Miller, or of the Stranger himself, we have concluded that the real purpose of the *Statesman* has been the philosophical exposition of the doctrine of due measure. For even if the real purpose of the dialogue is to make us better dialecticians, it is understanding the doctrine of due measure that does this.

Conclusion

The doctrine of due measure is not only crucially important for our understanding the *Statesman*, but also for our understanding all of Plato's dialogues. In fact, it is what allows us to assert that one interpretation of Plato is better than another. If we maintain that the text itself is the absolute measure of our interpretation, then interpretations of that text can be judged better or worse relative to each other as they realize the text's content clearly. The more an interpretation is able to illuminate the philosophical and literary aspects of a text, the better an interpretation it is.

In the current state of contemporary Platonic scholarship, where even the matter of whether Plato has any positive philosophy in his dialogues is in question, the doctrine of due measure, and hopefully this thesis, have provided an affirmative answer.

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