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M.H.M.
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M.M.
May 22, 2004
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With one major and two minor additions, this is a reprinting of The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman as it was first published by Martinus Nijhoff in 1980. The minor additions are this preface and an updated bibliography. The major addition, on which I shall comment shortly, is the essay “Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato’s Statesman,” first published in Plato and Platonism, edited by Johannes M. van Ophuijsen, Catholic University Press, 1999.

* * *

When I first began work on the Statesman in the early 1970’s, I both dearly hoped for and would hardly have believed possible the transformation that the Anglo-American community of Plato scholarship has in fact undergone in the years since.

At that time the developmentalist program was in the ascendancy, and its concerns to extract an historical Socrates from the “early” dialogues and to resolve differences in formulations of doctrine by assigning them to different stages in the development of Plato’s thinking fit closely with the paradigmatic mode of inquiry, the logical analysis and critical reconstruction of particular arguments. The yield of these commitments has been impressive—one thinks of the vast literatures on, for instance, Socratic elenchus, the unity of the virtues, the object of eros, and the Third Man. But, to my way of thinking, these achievements too often have come at a high cost. Developmentalism tempts one to presume that Plato’s thinking can be read directly from the speeches of his dramatis personae, and the logical analysis of particular arguments invites a focus that ignores the larger discursive contexts in which arguments first have their function. Avoiding these dangers requires orienting one’s reading by very different assumptions. Plato wrote dramatic dialogues, situating every speech as the response of one persona to another in a specific and unfolding context of inquiry and contest; to reach his thought, accordingly, he himself requires that we begin by attending to a concretely drawn setting, to the specific perspectives and commitments written into the fictionalized identities of his characters, and to the distinctive sequencing—the “plot” of the “action,” so to speak—that integrates the drama of their conversation. My aim in writing The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman was to situate the conceptual analysis of Platonic argument within these hermeneutic attunements and, so, to transform it into one mode in interplay with others for hearing and responding to the indirect communication of the dialogues. I hoped, moreover, to make the fruitfulness of this approach vivid and concrete by working with a dialogue in which, prima vista, it might seem least appropriate. When I went to work on The Philosopher in Plato's
Statesman, there 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—in the familiar developmentalist scheme—the "early" and "middle" dialogues. On the contrary, the consensus was that Plato, his interest having shifted from Socrates' negative dialectic to a more technical consideration of forms and of the methodology by which to articulate their relations, had largely abandoned dialogue in the Statesman, letting it lapse to the status of a "mere external form" for what was, in truth, something more in the mode of a "treatise." My hope in writing The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman was that if I could show how even the Statesman substantively repays being read as a genuine dramatic dialogue, I'd have made a strong implicit case for the universal value, for all the dialogues, of this hermeneutic stance.

In the context of English language Plato studies in the late 1970's, this project was, to borrow a fitting term from the Statesman, atopon, "out of place," even "outstandish." Apart from the work of the "Straussians"—work that it was fashionable to dismiss out of hand—there was next to no substantive discussion of Platonist anonymity, of the genre-character of the dialogue, of the function of the dramatis personae, of the array of rhetorical modes and sub-genres adopted within the dialogues, of Socratic versus Platonic irony, of the dramatic (as opposed to historical) mimesis by which each dialogue puts its audience 'on stage,' so to speak, before itself, of the psychagogic stages through which the dialogues both singly and in combination lead the receptive reader, or of the characteristic whole-part structure that, recurring in almost all the dialogues, gives each its distinctively Platonic unity. Happily, in recent years there has been increasing discussion of all of these issues, sometimes in the form of single-author studies, sometimes as anthologies that gather diverse voices into proximity and, for the reader, potential interplay, and sometimes in the more transient but also more direct form of conferences bringing different perspectives into encounter and conversation. Moreover, the Statesman in particular has received a comparable burst of attention. When I first went to work on The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman, there was no full-length study of the Statesman as a whole, much less a serious treatment of it as a dramatic dialogue. Since then, at least four books have made the Statesman their single focus, and three other commentaries take it up as a member of the three (or, including the Parmenides, four) Eleatic dialogues. In addition, the International Plato Society devoted its Third Annual Symposium in 1992 to the Statesman, leading to the publication of more than forty new essays that touch on nearly every aspect of the dialogue.

It is, accordingly, with real pleasure that I now re-submit The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman to the community of Plato scholarship. I hope that what might have first appeared an eccentric venture will now, in the much more open and heterogeneous context of conversation that has arisen, prove itself to be of manifold use to fellow students of Plato and of the Statesman in particular. As a way of re-introducing the book and at the same time facilitating this usefulness, let me begin by marking out a set of areas of inquiry in which the perspective I have developed in The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman continues to have contributions to make to the interpretation of the dialogue. Here are four clusters of questions that go to the heart of my reading of the Statesman:

(i) Questions concerning the heterogeneity and unity of the Elatic stranger's repository of methods. Even for Plato, the Statesman is extraordinary for the explicitness of its focus on the methodology and, further, for the surprising heterogeneity of the particular methods it puts into play. On the latter score, the stranger's turn from the fine-grained distinction-making of the opening bifurcatory divisions, focused as much on its own critical transparency and self-accountability as on the subject matter of statesmanship, to the speculative anamnesis of the myth, a narrative that claims to discern in the endlessly repeating rhythm of cosmic change the fundamental relation between the ultimate divinity and the whole of the cosmos, is breath-taking. So, next, is the stranger's shift from this myth to the method of paradigm, in which, acknowledging how "very out-of-place I appear" (mal' atopos eikoi, 277d5), he abruptly turns Young Socrates' attention from the vast and unfamiliar context of the myth to the small and commonplace, the experiences of children learning their letters (277e-278e) and the familiar work of the weaver (279a-283a). His subsequent turn to the notion of the mean or due measure, though it seems gratuitous to Young Socrates (283b), both heightens and provides language for the question that the heterogeneity of the stranger's methods should raise for us: to the realization of what good(s), in what context(s), is this array of approaches a "mean" or "duly measured," that is, "appropriate and timely and needful" (284e)?

(ii) Questions concerning "division according to forms" (diatresis kat' eide). In beginning his pursuit of the nature of statesmanship by an extended series of bifurcations (258b-267a), the Elatic stranger resumes in the Statesman the mode of division he has practiced throughout the Sophist. He calls this "dividing down the middle" (dia meson toremontas, 262b6) and "halving" or "bisecting" (mesoteomen, 265a4). All seven of his accounts of the sophist, in addition to his initial paradigmatic account of the anger, have proceeded by bifurcatory division. In the Statesman his initial account of the statesman, the corrections he makes after the myth, and his paradigmatic account of the weaver are all bifurcatory. The point of each cut is to exhaust the kind that is under division and, in doing so, "to hit upon forms" (ideis... prostugchonoi, 262b7). In the important reflection at 262a-264b on how to do this, the stranger appeals in his examples to the principle of contrariety, offering Young Socrates as paradigmatic cases of successful bifurcation the cuts of number into odd and even and of human being into male and female.

All this being so, the stranger's handling of division in several subsequent passages is surprising. (a) At 264e he reiterates the importance of bifurcation, saying to Young Socrates that "we must show [the management of creatures that go on foot] being cut into two like an even number." In his next speech, however, he points out "two routes" by which to complete the account, one of which is shorter but violates the requirement to "halve" (mesoteomen, 265a4), the other of which is longer but conforms to the requirement. Why does he even mention the shorter route? Odder still, when the eager Young Socrates asks to take both, the stranger readily agrees. Why does Plato portray the stranger as suddenly ready to contravene
the methodological rule he has only moments before declared and explained, and, in his immediately preceding speech, insisted upon? (b) In addition, when he does pursue the “two routes,” he interjects a strange new note of dry humor, perhaps even parody, into his cuts. What is the substantive point of his jokes in this section—above all, of his elaborate geometrical pun in dividing bipeds from quadrupeds as “the diagonal” from “the diagonal of the diagonal”? (c) What does it imply about bifurcatory division that, in the next major phase of the dialogue, the stranger finds it necessary to construct what, in its rhetoric, seems so different in kind from it as can be, namely, his myth of the ages of the cosmos, in order to secure the basis for his criticism of the results of the division? (d) Most importantly, when the stranger, armed with the corrections provided by the myth and oriented by the paradigmatic bifurcatory division of the weaver’s art, turns back to the task of defining statesmanship at 287b, he suddenly abandons bifurcation altogether. Why? He says only that “it is difficult to cut [the remaining arts] into two” (287b), then that “we cannot [cut them] into two” (287c), without giving any explanation. “The cause,” he assures Young Socrates, “will become more evident”—or, more literally, “no less evident” (ouch héto... katastaphes, 287c1)—“as we proceed.” Is this so? Nowhere in the following text does Plato have the stranger pause to identify the obstacles or to explicate the new manner of dividing by which he completes the definition. This unexplained abandonment of bifurcatory division is largely neglected in the secondary literature—a neglect that, given the stranger’s consistent use of and insistence upon it up to this point in the Sophist and Statesman, is itself almost as puzzling as the abandonment itself. What is the stranger—or, rather, what is Plato in this portrayal of the stranger—doing here?

(iii) Questions concerning the paradigms of the herdsman and the weaver. Much has been said—first of all, of course, by the Elastic stranger—to explain what makes the figure of the herdsman a defective and, indeed, a dangerous paradigm for the statesman.17 Plato, of course, knows in advance of writing that he will have the stranger expose these problems, and careful reading shows that he grants this foresight to the stranger as well. Why, then, does he have the stranger offer Young Socrates the figure of the herdsman in the first place? Why is it so important to Plato to put forth and then reject this figure, replacing it with that of the weaver? This question leads at once into an interpretation of the myth and its portrayal of the presence and absence of the god in the cosmos and, through his daemonai, among the communities of human beings; it also requires reflection on the history of political consciousness as this is visible in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod (whose texts are sources for key elements of the myth) and, as well, on the ongoing political crisis of fifth and fourth century Athens and Plato’s own prior responses to it. We need to ask: to what currents of political tradition and vision—past, present, and future, in the Greek world generally, in Athens, and in the Academy—does Plato give expression with the figure of the herdsman-ruler, and how, and how radically, does he challenge and re-orient understanding by having the stranger turn instead to the figure of the weaver?18

(iv) Questions concerning dialogue form and mimetic irony. There is no disputing that the action of the Statesman lacks the overt interpersonal conflict and the exist-
tential tension that, albeit in a range of different keys, make the aporetic Socratic dialogues and dramatic masterworks like the Symposium, Gorgias, or Phaedo so vivid. But how should we interpret this lack? Does it reflect Plato’s loss of interest in the genre of the dialogue, or—what is not the same—his failure to “bring off” in practice the kind of genuine dialogical search to which he remains committed in principle,19 or—a third possibility that differs essentially from both of these views—his adaptation of dialogue form to give mimetic expression to a different sort of conflict and tension? In the Statesman the elder Socrates watches in silence while time and again Young Socrates leaps to agree with positions that, as the stranger must then protest, he himself does not affirm; the dynamic is that of the over-eager disciple whose very deference to authority pre-empts the probing substantive exploration and critical self-examination that his education requires. In the interest of pursuing the third possibility, that in the Statesman Plato neither abandons nor fails at dialogue form but, rather, modulates its drama in order to expose and address the problems posed by this dynamic, consider these questions: (a) what readership of “first intention”20 is implied by the fact that the persona “Young Socrates” is the fictionalization of a known member of the Academy, a contemporary of Plato’s who was respected especially for his expertise in law?21 (b) Why does Plato, by linking the Sophist and the Statesman to the Theaetetus at Sophist 216a,22 situate the stranger’s inquiries into sophistry and statesmanship (and, projected but never pursued as a discrete inquiry, into philosophy23) at the same dramatic time as Socrates’ trial? (c) What is the dramatic character and function of the “Elastic stranger”? To pursue this, we should ask: [1] what are we to make of the seemingly unsocratic character of his repertory of methods—methods aimed not, or not expressly, at refutation but at substantive exigesis of the relations of forms? [2] What significance is there in Plato’s having the stranger first reject Theodorus’ request for inquiries into sophist, statesman, and philosopher, then accept this same request when Socrates makes it (Sophist 217b, in context)? And in the same vein, what significance is there in the stranger’s acceptance of the elder Socrates’ request that he “look at”—or “test” (skopeasthai, Statesman 258a5)—Young Socrates to see if the two are akin in more than name (257d—258a). [3] Why does Plato have Young Socrates repeatedly either try to complete (262a) or deem as complete (267a and c, 277a, and cf. 280b) the inquiry when, as the stranger in each case then reveals, his enthusiastic presumption serves to conceal what is still to be sought? And why does Plato portray the stranger as anticipating that the agreeable youngsters will “many times later on” (pollakis husteron, 283b7—8) suffer the “sickness” of impatience with the laborious discipline of distinction-making required by the method of division? (d) Finally, what is the significance of the elder Socrates’ self-imposed silence throughout the stranger’s and Young Socrates’ inquiry—until, at least, the dialogue’s final speech of “broad and authoritative”24 (but, too, very precisely measured)25 approval?26

Let me stress that I pose these questions in (iv) not only out of a real interest in the devices of Platonic writing in the Statesman but also, and more importantly, for the light they may shed on the questions posed in (i), (ii), and (iii) and, thus, on the philosophical content and function of the dialogue. To say what should not
be controversial: by the dramatic setting and action Plato constructs in each dialogue, he provides the context of inquiry and contest in which the speech he writes for his dramatis personae have their first-level purpose and specific meaning. Accordingly, if it is right that in the Statesman Plato neither abandons nor fails to "bring off" dialogue form but rather modulates its drama in order to expose and address a new sort of difficulty in communication, then coming to understand the specificity of its drama must be our starting-point in interpretation. The complex claim that motivates The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman is roughly this: by attending closely to the stranger's speeches as a set of double-edged responses, on the one hand to the requests of the elder Socrates and on the other hand to the problems posed by the limitations and needs of the younger, we put ourselves in the best possible position to understand the stranger's repertory of methods and, specifically, his handling of division and of the paradigm of herdsmen and weaver; and, in turn, by coming to understand these, we put ourselves in the best possible position to understand what Plato attempts in constructing this drama with these contents in the first place. That is, we position ourselves to hear and respond to the Statesman as a complex act of indirect communication.

... It remains for me to introduce the major addition to this volume, the essay "Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's Statesman."

The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman concludes by laying out the manifold sense in which the dialogue itself serves as a "mean." By constructing an interlocutor, "Young Socrates," who at once mimetically represents the young Academicus and shares the limiting predisposition of the many regarding the rule of law (see 293e, 296a), Plato gives himself occasion to speak on two levels, addressing both audiences at once. "Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's Statesman" focuses on Plato's address to readers in the Academy. To them the Statesman provides, by its dramatic exposure of Young Socrates' limitations, both a provocative display of the danger of uncritical deference and—for those who, recognizing in this their own educational predicament, are thus alerted to the long-term task and difficulty of philosophical education—an orienting exhibition of how to proceed.

At the risk of letting these preludial remarks get too far ahead of my main texts, I need to observe that in The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman I take the deepest significance of the stranger's shift into non-bifurcatory division at 287b ff. to be his implicit 'modeling' of the goal-phrase of philosophical education. This is the time when, having finally put one's own uncritical opinion in check by the discipline of the rules of bifurcation, one also becomes capable of letting the eidetic structure of 'things themselves' over-ride these rules and present itself, so to speak, in its own terms. This would be that sought-for time anticipated in the Seventh Letter when...

... after practicing detailed comparisons of names and accounts (logoi) and visual and other sense perceptions, after examining them in friendly elenchtic by the use of question and answer and without jealousy, at last in a flash understanding (phronesis) of each blazes up, and the mind (nous), as it exercises all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light (344e-c). At this stage, the methods by which one has proceeded in working out one's "accounts" are superseded; they turn out to have the profound but nonetheless secondary value of techniques by which one becomes actively receptive, "to the limit of human capacity," of the order of "the what" (to ti) and "the being" (to on) of the subject of inquiry (343b-c), and it is this order, accordingly, that now guides "understanding" and "mind." It is, I argue in The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman, in order to provide a paradigm of this transformation that the stranger drops bifurcation and offers instead his distinction of the fifteen kinds of art that together "care" for the city; the series of fifteen traces the eidetic structure itself of the "care" that defines the good city and statesmanship.

In The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman, however, I did not yet have eyes to see the still deeper order that this eidetic structure both belongs to and exhibits. I did mark the way in which the stranger's series answers, in its abandonment of bifurcation, the elder Socrates' call at Philebus 16d for "two, if the case admits of there being two, otherwise for three or some other number [of forms]." And I also saw how the stranger, in moving step-wise from kinds of art that share in the least degree in the "care and responsibility for the city" that statesmanship is, through kinds that share in ever higher degrees, to kinds that share in the highest degree, traces a "continuum." But these recognitions, I have since come to see, pick out particular features of a much more comprehensive structure. This is laid out in "Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's Statesman," which I have therefore added to this volume as, in effect, an expansion of The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman. I won't try to reiterate here the argument of the essay. Suffice it to say that the stranger's series of fifteen kinds of art fits together with two other sets of passages—one from the Parmenides that yields an account of the participation that is constitutive for sensibles, the other from the Philebus that explicates the "god-given" method of dialectic and the eidetic structure it presupposes—and that when it is read in conjunction with these, it provides a highly determinate exhibition of the "unwritten teachings" that Aristotle credits to Plato in Metaphysics A6.

If this is right, it provides remarkable confirmation and encouragement for at least three lines of Plato interpretation. First, for the reading of the Statesman presented in The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman, nothing could be more supportive. As the core content of Plato's indirectly communicated gift to the alert Academician, namely, an orienting exhibition of the eidetic structure that discloses itself in the climactic goal-phase of inquiry, what could be more appropriate than a paradigmatic manifestation of the order constituted by the One and the Unlimited Dyad? Second, for inquiry into the "unwritten teachings," the stranger's series of fifteen is triply striking. Not only does the passage give us a concrete instance of these teachings; it also gives us an instance in Plato's writings—and not only in the Statesman but also, by way of the passage's connections with these, in the Parmenides and the Philebus as well. What is more, the detail and specificity of each of the three passages and the precise coherence of their fit give decisive help...
with the effort to see through the enigmatic compression of Aristotle’s report and interpret the determinate content of the “teachings.” Finally, just as the Statesman passage links with the Parmenides and Philebus passages in a way that points to their further link to Metaphysics A6, so this set of four points to still further connections, in particular to Socrates’ account of the “incorporeal order that rules harmoniously over soul and body” in the Philebus,36 to Timaeus’ accounts of the eidetic structures constitutive for elements and for animals in the Timaeus,36 and, perhaps providing the unifying appreciation of all of these reflections, to Socrates’ pointed mentions of the “longer way” in the Republic.36 The Statesman, on the reading to be offered here, leads us into a Platonic archipelago, the full expanse and interconnectedness of which is still to be charted.

Mitchell Miller
May 22, 2004

NOTES

1I borrow this language from Stencl, Taylor, and Jaeger, as quoted in The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman, Introduction, n. 17, text to n. 7, and n. 9, respectively.
2See, in context, ma’i auopos edika, 277d6, noted on p. xii above and discussed on pp. 58ff.
3Especially helpful to me in this period were the exemplary studies by Klein 1965, Rosen 1968, and Hyland 1968.
4A striking exception, indicative of the welcome change now occurring in the temper of scholarly dialogue, is the thoughtful essay by Ferrari 1997.
5I was fortunate to have worked with a remarkable teacher, the late Jonathan Ketchum, who introduced me to earlier German and French scholarship on these topics, notably Friedländer 1958, 1964, 1969, Gadaner 1968, Gundert 1971, and Scharer 1938. Ketchum’s own work survives only in his unpublished dissertation, submitted in 1980, long after he first conceived its main ideas in the 1960’s and early 1970’s.
8Especially productive for me have been the regular meetings of the recently founded Ancient Philosophy Society, of the Arizona Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy, of the International Plato Society, and, as singular events, the Blackburg Conference on Methods of Interpreting Plato at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1988 and the Conference on the Timaeus as Cultural Icon at Notre Dame in 2000.
12These studies, listed in the Bibliography, appear in Nicholson and Rowe 1993 and Rowe 1995a. Christopher Rowe, tirelessly supportive of the work of others in his organization of the Third Symposium and in these editorships, has also produced his own edition, with translation and commentary, of the Statesman in 1995b.
13It is only for the sake of consistency with my usage in The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman that I continue to use this traditional translation of the term, xereus, by which the unnamed guest from Elea is addressed in the Sophist and Statesman. But I don’t disagree with White’s preference, 1993, adopted in Cooper 1997, for the less exotic “Visitor.”
15See Lane 1998 for thought-provoking reflections on paradox and keirous (“the timely”).
16This is Rowe’s translation, 1995b, of his reading, in correction of the Oxford text, of arion at 264a11.
17Note the vigorous heterodoxy of Clark 1995. On my own reading, the stranger both replaces the herdsman with the weaver and yet, with a suggestive irony, leaves the figure of the herdsman lingering in the margins of his account of statesmanship. See pp. 94–95 and 117–118 (with p. 31 n. 34).
18For an exceptionally rich study of the cultural-historical resonance of both figures and of Plato’s exploitation of it in the Statesman, see Blondell, forthcoming.
19This is Rowe’s thesis in 1996.
20This is Allen’s expression in 1983, p. 197.
22The Sophist opens with Theodorus’ confirmation, “We’ve come at the proper time by yesterday’s agreement, Socrates.” (216a, White’s translation in Cooper 1997) This refers back to Socrates’ parting request at the very end of the Theaetetus: “And now I must go to the King’s Porch to meet the indictment that Meletus has brought against me; but let us meet here again in the morning, Theodorus.” (210d, Levett and Bunney’s translation in Cooper 1997) This link does not require, pace Lane 1998, p. 7, that we take the Sophist and the Statesman to fall within the narrative frame of the Theaetetus.
23Sophist 217a. As the pun in my title is intended to suggest, I will argue that philosophy is indeed exhibited indirectly, on the one hand in the stranger’s practice of inquiry in the Statesman (cf. Frede 1992) and on the other hand in the sophia he credits to (and discloses partially in his final portrait of) the statesman.
24Rove 1995b does not translate pollakis (“many times”) explicitly, nor does he comment on the passage; does he understand the force of pollakis as that of an adversial “perhaps,” following the conditional particle ana, and intend to express this by the generality of his English conditional, “in case it should come”? (My stress.) Ostwald 1992, in his 1957 revision of Sluemp’s 1952 translation, seems to take the word this way, writing “as indeed it well may.” For this construal, see LSJ III. Waterfield, in Annas 1995, turns pollakis into a singular with his “at some time in the future.” (My stress.) But I think that the phrase in the stranger’s final clause, peri pantan tou tiotostom (“in all such cases”), invites us to give pollakis its usual meaning of “many times”: accordingly, I follow Sluemp 1952 (“from time to time”), Fowler 1975 (“frequently”), and Schleiermacher 1964 (“often”).
25Rove 1995b, comment to 311c7–8.
26See pp. 112–113 below.
27To this last set of questions concerning the intentions at work in the drama of the Statesman I am tempted to add, as (c): does the trajectory of the conversation exhibit the four-part structure that (as I have claimed in the Introduction below, pp. xxxi–xxxii, and in Miller 1986 and 1997a) is the organizing principle for dialogue form generally? But since this claim requires a comparative study of all the dialogues, I leave it here in the marginal space of a note.
28See the “Epilogue: the Statesman Itself as a Mean,” pp. 114–118.
29In this regard see the important argument in Robb 1994 that Laws 811d–e “encourage[s
us] to imagine the young students of the Academy reading (or hearing read aloud) the Socratic dialogues of Plato and themselves entering into the dialectic under the guidance of one who was more familiar with them . . . ." (p. 238ff.)

30Post's translation, slightly revised, in Hamilton and Cairns 1961, as quoted below, p. 80. See also 341c–d, in which, by describing how the insight that bursts forth "itself from the start nourishes itself" (auto heauto ède trophet), the author indicates that this illumination is not fleeting but marks a new stage of understanding.

31On the reasons for the stranger's—and, still more interestingly, Plato's—reticence, see pp. 81–82 below.

32Hacking's translation, slightly revised, in Hamilton and Cairns 1961, as quoted below, p. 75. That it is a "number" of forms that the method seeks is assured by the feminine treis at 164d, which refers back by way of mían at d3 to mían ideoi, "single form," at d1.

33See pp. 77, 79, 104 below.

34For critical encouragement to pursue this inquiry in the Statesman, I owe thanks to Szlezak 1983.

35Does this help explain the force of Aristotle's qualifying term legomena, "so-called," in his phrase ta legomena agrapha dogmati, "the so-called unwritten teachings," at Physics 209b14–15? In any case, on the implications of the fact that these teachings appear in Plato's writings, see Sayre 1983, which, in my view, decisively changed the status quo of the "unwritten teachings," and Miller 1995b, Part 3.

36See Miller 1995a.


38See Miller, forthcoming.

39See Miller 2003.

4033c–d, 504a–c, discussed in Miller, forthcoming.
INTRODUCTION

PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION

In contemporary writings on Plato it is almost commonplace to remark that he is at once a profound philosopher and dramatist and teacher. Even by its form, however, this remark may convey more about contemporary scholarship and higher education than it reveals about Plato. In disciplinary terms, philosophy, literature, and pedagogy have been separated as distinct fields. The usual consequence for our study of Plato is that the correlative aspects of his dialogues—roughly, their content, form, and communicative function—are approached in isolation; and this, in turn, results in a significant diminution, if not concealment, of each. “Content” comes to mean expressed doctrine, to the exclusion of implicit, subsurface meaning which it is the function of expressed doctrine, within the dramatically projected context, to suggest; “form” is reduced to style and the devices of stage-setting and portraiture which enliven, but have no internal bearing on, doctrinal content; and the pedagogical “function” of the dialogues tends to disappear altogether, to be replaced (in our special studies of Plato as an educator) by the expressed pedagogical doctrines of the Republic, Meno, etc. In short, even when we know and remind ourselves of the integrity of these elements, our modern scholarly predispositions, which begin from their separation, make this integrity extremely difficult to grasp. And much is lost as a result.

Some of the dialogues have fared better than others in resisting these predispositions. The philosophical interpreter of certain middle dialogues, especially, can hardly overlook their rich dramatic character (one thinks of the Protagoras, Symposium, and Gorgias) or focal pedagogical thrust (the Meno and Phaedrus come to mind). Yet this very prominence of form and function can lead to the opposite problem, the emphasis of these to the exclusion of content. Many of the early dialogues, especially, have suffered from this tendency. Their portraiture and drama is so vivid, and their argumentation so pointedly elenchetic, that one too easily reads them as mere drama or as mere exercises in Socrates’ negative pedagogy, to the neglect of their philosophical substance. It is with the later dialogues, however, that the difficulties are both most complex and most extreme. There is a general consensus that Plato reaches a turning-point in his literary and philosophical career around the time of the writing of the Theaetetus. He seems to lose interest in the dramatic and to give us much more positive doctrine than ever before. This is not to say that critics fail to note the artistic merit of the later works, or at least, of many of them. (There is, in fact, some outspoken criticism of the Sophist and Statesman as bad art.) The masterly analyst of Platonic rhetoric, Holger Thesleff, notes the development by the later Plato of a style which, on account of its grave and august tone as well as its density and complexity, he calls “onkos.” The difficulty, however, is that scholars of Platonic rhetoric have tended not to
bring their studies to bear on the substance of the dialogues. Conversely, philosophical interpreters have generally felt free to approach the extensive logical and ontological, cosmological, and political doctrines of the later dialogues without concern for questions of literary style and form. Given, moreover, the equally sharp distinction between the disciplines of philosophy and cultural history, it has been too easy to treat this bulk of doctrine without a pointed sense of the specific historical audience to which it is addressed. As a result, the pervasive tendency has been the reverse of that which has dominated the reading of the early dialogues: here we tend to neglect drama and pedagogy and to focus exclusively on philosophical substance.

Both in general and particularly in regard to the later dialogues, the difficulty is that our predispositions have the force of self-fulfilling prophecy. Are we sure that the later Plato's apparent loss of interest in the dramatic is not, on the contrary, a reflection of our limited sense of the integrity of drama and substance, form and content? What we lack eyes for, of course, we will not see. The basic purpose of this essay is to develop eyes, as it were, for that integrity. The best way to do this, I think, is to take a later dialogue and to try to read it as a whole of form, content, and communicative function. By going into one dialogue, of course, we sacrifice some universality; my interpretation can only exemplify the sort of approach which, I believe, is proper for all of the dialogues. On the other hand, we gain in concreteness, and this is invaluable. The real discovery of predispositions occurs, paradoxically, in the effort to think beyond them; likewise, it is hard to recognize our own onesidedness—or self-fulfilling prophecy, as I just called it—without actually seeing an alternative. Programmatic and polemics are by themselves not very helpful.6

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To introduce the project of interpretation I am proposing, it is useful to reflect more locally on the general, more or less standard view of the later Plato which I have questioned. This will give us the necessary context in which to define—first negatively, then positively—the contrasting view which will serve as our heuristic methodological basis for interpreting the Statesman.

1. DIFFICULTIES IN THE ‘STANDARD VIEW’

What I call the 'standard view' of the later dialogues is very cogently articulated by A.E. Taylor.7 He singles out four basic features which distinguish the later from the early and middle dialogues:

(1) the dramatic element, though never wholly wanting, is reduced to a minimum; (2) Socrates ... plays a minor part ...; (3) the leading speaker in every case has a very positive doctrine to teach ...; (4) there is an increasing tendency to employ a periodic style, quite unlike that of other dialogues. ... We are getting something much more like a formal treatise or essay.8

A general implication of these points is that the dialogue form, even while retained in its external features, has become an inadequate vehicle of expression for Plato. He is now interested in advancing positive doctrine (3) in the more direct, expository fashion of the "treatise" (4), and the dramatization (1) of Socratic elenchic (2) is superfluous, if not actually an obstacle, for this.9

What is questionable in this view? To put it generally, Taylor's observations contain an immediate judgment and so run the risk of begging the question. (1) In speaking of "the dramatic element," for instance, one must be sure not to confuse one species with the thing itself. In the Statesman, for example, we shall see that there is indeed very little of the explicit conflict between speakers which is a hallmark of the drama of the aporetic and sophistic dialogues. But unless we identify explicit antagonism with the dramatic element itself, this observation does not tell us whether the dramatic element is being diminished or given a new form.10 We must ask, in particular, whether a placid atmosphere expresses the lack of conflict or its hidden presence. If the former, then perhaps drama is being reduced; but if the latter, then it is becoming more subtle. (2) The same sort of ambiguity affects the judgment that "Socrates plays a minor part." To focus on the Statesman again, the explicit action tells us only that he falls silent. We must therefore ask whether silence can have major dramatic significance. Is Socrates' silence a minor part or a new and different kind of major part?11 Both the early and the middle dialogues (if we locate the Phaedo in the middle period) provide evidence that silence can have important dramatic meaning. At Phaedo 84c Socrates falls silent while Simmias and Cebes whisper together anxiously. This expresses the disparity between Socrates' commitment to philosophy and the doubt and uncertainty of his young interlocutors. He is absorbed in the logos of the soul's immortality, whereas Simmias and Cebes, betraying materialist doubts about the separate reality of the soul, are sharing objections to the logos.12 The opening passage in the Hippias Minor shows another sort of significant silence. While an excited crowd cheers the "magnificent display" (363a ff.) Hippias has just given, Socrates sits silent and unmoving. This symbolizes both his objection to Hippias' sophistry and the alienation of dialectical philosophy from it. Moreover, it makes him conspicuous and thus serves to puzzle the crowd and draw its attention away from Hippias to him.13 The general implication of these passages for our view of the later dialogues is to alert us to a question and a task which Taylor's approach seems to miss. Before judging it "minor," we must explore the significance of Socrates' silence in the dramatically projected context of (in our case) the Statesman.

(3), (4) Analogously, we would be jumping to conclusions if we presumed that the stranger's "very positive" teachings and expository style14 in the Statesman signal Plato's abandonment of the negativity and indirectness characteristic of earlier dialogues. There is, first of all, the obvious fact that Plato retains his anonymity. We are not entitled to assume an immediate identity between Plato and (in our dialogue) the Elean stranger. From the fact that the stranger speaks positively, we cannot presume that Plato does; this must (if true) be shown. This means, sec-
ondly, that we must interpret the stranger’s positivity itself. We cannot even presume that he speaks directly, nor should we rule out in advance that his positive teachings, once set and seen in the dramatically projected context of the dialogue, have some deeper negative function. This becomes obvious when we remind ourselves of the two dramatic relations which this positivity implies. First, there is the obvious contrast to the characteristic negativity of Socrates. With Socrates standing in silence, the stranger’s expository manner is conspicuous, even surprising. We can hardly help but ask why, when he is in Socrates’ very presence, he departs so strikingly from the latter’s established manner. (As Sophist 217de indicates, Plato expects and intends that we wonder about this.) Secondly, the stranger’s positivity presupposes a “tractable” (Sophist 217d) partner. This too should give us pause. Is this “tractability” a strength or a weakness, a sign of understanding or (in some sense) a lack of inquisitiveness? Since the stranger, guiding this “tractable” partner, is also responding to his capabilities, our answer to this question has important consequences for our interpretation. If the “tractability” is a strength, then the stranger’s positivity expresses a freedom from the burden of pedagogy; in this case we can take the stranger to speak his mind directly. But if it is a weakness, then, presumably, his positivity is itself pedagogical; and in this case it will represent a form of indirectness, indeed, a form of hidden negativity, and his words will require twice as much interpretation, so to speak, as explicitly negative, elenchic teaching.

These objections amount to a basic caution: before we presume that Plato gives us “something much more like a formal treatise or essay,” we must consider the alternative possibility that he gives us a new form, as it were, of dialogue.17 Even if we grant that there is much which looks like positive exposition, we must ask whether this breaks with or falls within (and so exercises a specifically dramatic function in the context of) the possibilities of dialogue form.

2. AN ALTERNATIVE HETHEISTIC THESIS FOR INTERPRETATION

If the core thesis of the ‘standard view’ is that the later works are less dialogues than formal treatises, then our counterthesis is that (given our focus on just one of those works) the Statesman is essentially a dialogue. To work this out, however, requires some positive account of this essence. We need this both to guide the detailed interpretive work we will attempt later and, in the present context, to give a preliminary indication of some of the important differences between our approach and the ‘standard view.’

a. The essence of the dialogue

Like the Socrates and (as we shall discuss later) the Eleatic stranger he portrays, Plato is teacher and philosopher at once. All of the dialogues, even the most abstruse,18 depict encounters between nonphilosophical and philosophical men; likewise, the dialogues themselves are presentations of philosophy to a (more or less, depending on the dialogue) nonphilosophical public. Both within and by the dia-

logues, then, Plato integrates the philosophical aspiration for truth with the pedagogical desire to persuade others to share this aspiration and the work it involves. In terms of the allegory of the cave, the nonphilosopher needs to “ascend,” to become philosophical and thereby rightly oriented to the reality which founds all of existence and human experience. But it is the philosopher, not the nonphilosopher, who sees this need most clearly; out of a knowledge, variously expressed and always somewhat mysterious in the dialogues,19 of the basic integrity of psyche, community, and cosmos, he recognizes the nonphilosopher’s situation as one of self-stranglement, and he therefore “descends” to mediate. This mediation consists, however, in making philosophy itself somehow intelligible and compelling. In these allegorical terms, the Platonic dialogue is Plato’s own descent for the sake of enabling others to join him in ascent.

Needless to say, in undertaking this pedagogical task Plato is confronted with severe problems of communication. First of all, there is an important sense in which each man must make the ascent for himself. Plato himself (through Socrates in the Republic) is responsible for the classic formulation of this: education is the art not of “putting into the psyche knowledge which isn’t in it” but, rather, of “turning [the psyche] around” so that it may exercise its own inner “power” for knowledge (518c, d). Moreover, not just knowledge but the initial “turn” itself must be motivated from within. Plato knows that the ascent which he urges can truly begin only with his reader’s—or hearer’s20—own recognition of his own need for it. Yet, secondly, there is a real element of challenge or threat in the initial prospect of this ascent.21 To recognize my own need for a major venture is to acknowledge a major lack in what I am. Thus the invitation to ascend may first feel like an attack on my identity and security or—if I take it less to heart—an insult to my status or past accomplishments. And as the dramatic interplay of many of the dialogues attests, the philosopher who gives the invitation may first appear as a destructive or rude or, at least, alien presence. Thirdly, even if he avoids immediate rejection by establishing a mutual trust, the philosopher remains in danger of substantive mis-
interpretation. The hiddenness of the etic from nonphilosophical consciousness is not overcome by the achievement of an atmosphere of good will. Indeed, precisely to the extent that the nonphilosopher, having overcome the feeling of personal threat, mistakes his good will towards the philosopher for genuine readiness to understand, he poses a more complex and subtle problem of communication for the philosopher than does the expressly hostile person. In the case of the latter, it is clear that there is basic disagreement. In the case of the former, however, it is hidden, and the philosopher must find a way of revealing it without shattering the trust and friendship which has been achieved. Finally, it is by no means clear that genuine understanding can be achieved even if the first three difficulties—lack of recognition of the need for philosophy, personal hostility, and wrongly presumed understanding—can be overcome. Plato does not suppose that everyone is equally capable of the whole journey. On the contrary, only a few are deemed capable of radical philosophical insight, while others fulfill themselves in reaching lower stages of the ascent, achieving the relatively limited conditions of soul proper for the “guardian” or the “artisan,” to take up the terms of the Republic. Yet the dia-
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Dialogue, as a form of published writing, is presented to the public at large. Somewhat, then, Plato must not only exercise Odysseus’s ability to speak “one thing to the captives, and another to the troops,” but, what is more difficult, he must do so in the same set of words. He is faced with the task of somehow being intelligible and pedagogically effective on several different levels at once.

In its essential character and form, the dialogue both anticipates and responds to these difficulties. To begin with, the dialogue is mimetic. By this we do not mean to assert the familiar but problematic view that the dialogues, especially the early ones, are positive reports of actual incidents in the life of the historical Socrates. It seems self-evident that the *dramatis persona* “Socrates” is Plato’s conscious and interpretive idealization of the historical figure. Even more clearly, the Eleatic stranger in the *Statesman* is a Platonic construction. Likewise, the various interlocutors with whom Plato’s protagonists speak are not to be viewed as positive-historically accurate portrayals of Socrates’ and Plato’s contemporaries. Rather, whether well-known figures like Protagoras, Gorgias, or Anytus, or little-known ones like the Young Socrates of the *Statesman*, Plato’s interlocutors are his interpretive representations of aspects of contemporary culture. In their dramatically portrayed personalities and opinions, they represent, in the words of Chaim Perelman, “what is considered . . . valuable, what ought to be admitted unless the contrary is proven; . . . [they] express the opinion taken to be ‘reasonable’ in their context.” Hence the dialogues are mimetic in the sense that they imitate or put on stage the encounter between philosophy and current opinion. Sometimes the dialogues comically present the shallowest, most patently absurd aspects of current opinion, as in, for example, the *Euthydemus* or the *Ion*, in other instances Plato presents deep and important strains, deeply rivaling or even closely akin to his own notion of philosophy, as in the portrayals of Protagoreanism in the *Theaetetus* or Pythagorean leanings in the young interlocutors of the *Phaedo*. In either case, however, whether shallowly or deeply, the dialogues essentially put some element of the audience itself on stage. To the extent that Plato’s representations of contemporary culture are accurate, the nonphilosopher, in hearing the dialogues, is presented with his own attitudes and opinions, dramatically objectified.

The effect of this mimetic aspect of the dialogues is to enable the initial step towards philosophy. In all of the dialogues the interlocutors are shown to be lacking philosophy. Earlier we said that the educational journey must begin with the hearer’s own recognition of the need for it and that this recognition entails a consciousness of his own limitations. If the hearer can recognize himself in the dramatic interlocutor in a dialogue, he will have taken the first step in the journey; namely, he himself will have recognized his own lack of philosophy.

As we also observed, however, this experience of self-recognition can be a threatening, even painful one, and the all-too-human reaction is to resist it precisely as it begins to occur. The possible forms of resistance are countless and diverse, ranging from immediate hostility through less deliberate kinds of evasion like boredom or loss of attention or even an immediate agreement or deference which pre-empts the examination of real disagreement. What is most striking is that Plato depicts all of these responses in the dialogues themselves, ranging from the anger of Callicles and Thrasy machus through the drowsiness and torpidity of Ion and Meno to the admiring deference and immediate capitulation of Pheidrus or Cleinias and Megillus in the *Laws* or even, as we shall see, Young Socrates in the *Statesman*. Thus the reader is given an opportunity for even more penetrating self-consciousness. Not only does Plato’s mimesis enable him to see his own lack of philosophy, but it also presents him with a dramatic depiction of his own possible resistance to this self-recognition.

Within the dramatic action of the dialogues the Platonic protagonists respond to these various forms of resistance in an equal variety of ways. Their responses may be generally grasped, however, under the unitary heading of irony. The basic structure of irony within the dialogues has been laid out in a superb study by René Schaefer. He focuses especially on Socrates, but as we shall see later, his analysis, if understood generally and properly set in context, sheds light on the conduct of the Eleatic stranger as well. Schaefer shows how Socrates, faced with an interlocutor’s resistance to self-examination, deliberately pretends to agree with the latter’s own unexamined opinions and conceits while all along, by his tone and by carefully indirect statements, giving hints of his real disagreement. If the interlocutor has the least bit of uncertainty regarding the truth of his own opinions or the substance of his public reputation, then Socrates’ manner will be disturbing. Sensing Socrates’ self-concealment, on the one hand, and feeling within himself the threat of what is being concealed, the interlocutor will be moved to oppose Socrates, to flush out Socrates’ real opinion in order to defend himself against it. Yet his efforts to do so necessarily backfire. In opposing Socrates, he finds himself opposing Socrates’ feigned agreement and admiration; that is, he finds himself coming into explicit disagreement with and criticism of his own opinions and conceits, and thus expressing not his own but Socrates’ real views. In this manner what was at first perhaps a vague insecurity is transformed into an inescapable self-examination. Had Socrates himself simply put forth his criticisms directly and explicitly, the interlocutor might have responded with indifference, treating the conflict involved as an external matter, a simple question of differing opinions. In that the interlocutor is driven to become his own examiner, however, there is nowhere to flee. Socrates emerges from within, not from without, and as a result the Socratic task of self-examination becomes an internal necessity.

This description of irony within the dialogues is, in one respect, obviously defective. It describes the aim of Socrates’ maieutics and not the usual outcome. With only several exceptions, the interlocutors resist the Platonic protagonist’s irony to the end of the dialogue. At the same time, however, this very defectiveness of the description points to its adequacy on a higher level. By depicting the various forms of conscious resistance to his protagonist’s arguments, Plato anticipates and represents the hearer’s own likely resistance to self-recognition. The interlocutors again and again display a resistance to open self-examination, and this is a sign of their weakness, of the tenaciousness of their opinions and conceits. The hearer who can take the first step of recognizing himself on stage witnesses this weakness and is naturally moved to do better. But this leads him to dissociate himself from the interlocutor’s—that is, what might otherwise have been his own—resistance and
to accept the Platonic project of self-examination. Thus, precisely where Socrates’ irony fails within the action of the dialogue, Plato’s irony succeeds. If, for example, the interlocutor is portrayed as hostile, the hearer is moved to be receptive. If the interlocutor is portrayed as inattentive, the hearer will be moved to wakefulness. And if the interlocutor is portrayed as facilely agreeing and thereby preempting the examination of underlying disagreement, the hearer will be moved to circum-
spect and careful consideration of what is agreed upon.

Insofar as the mimetic irony of the dialogues engenders these reversals of attitude
in his hearers, Plato accomplishes his fundamental goal of enabling the nonphilosopher to begin philosophical ascent. The difficulties posed by the need for an authentic self-recognition and by the possible immediate responses of hostility or blind agreement are overcome with the birth in the hearer of an attentive circum-
spect receptivity. It is important to note that this birth is not the same as an imme-
diate acceptance of the express doctrines set forth in the dialogues. It is rather the
achievement of the freedom required in order to examine both the interlocutor’s immediate opinions and the assertions of Plato’s protagonists. If Plato’s mimetic irony is, in a sense, a manipulation of the reader, its goal is the very opposite of
authoritarian control. Plato aims to engender the very freedom which is the goal
of the Socratic maieutics he portrays: that freedom from one’s own unexamined
opinion which permits one, precisely by means of submitting opinion to reflective
examination, to reach beyond to an intuition of the otherwise hidden truth.

At the same time, it is also important to remember the obvious point that not
every reader can be expected to suffer the birth of philosophy by means of the
dialogues. This was the fourth of the difficulties we noted above: Plato deems only
a few to be capable of radical insight, while others fulfill themselves in reaching
lower stages of the ascent. Thus far we have been speaking of the model experience
of the model reader. But Plato presented his dialogues to a general public and
therefore had the task—to repeat—of speaking “one thing to the captain, and
another to the troops” in the same set of words.”

The key problem for us to consider in this regard is the double function of the
express content—the “positive doctrine,” as Taylor says—of the dialogues. For the
reader who has won the freedom to examine, the express content does not stand
as an unquestionable dictum, an absolute statement of the truth. Rather, it will
represent—in a sense to be discussed in detail when we come to our analyses of
the content of the Statesman—a sort of “mean.” On the one hand, in serving to
refute the partial, usually unreflective opinions of the nonphilosophical interlocu-
tor, the protagonist’s assertions point beyond the limits of the interlocutor’s under-
standing and embody a more complete, more fundamental grasp of the truth. On
the other hand, even as pointing beyond the interlocutor’s understanding, the pro-
tagonist’s assertions are oriented specifically to it. He has the complex task of pre-
senting the truth in a way which will be intelligible to the interlocutor. Thus he
must shape his self-presentation in a way which is responsive to, and so restrained
by, the limits of the latter. This pedagogical self-restraint has the effect of giving
the express doctrines of the dialogues the basic status of signposts, of indications
of the direction which reflection must take. They are “means” between initial igno-
rance and full insight that, by checking and revealing the former, point beyond
themselves towards the latter. The model hearer, the one who has suffered the
revelation of his ignorance and opened himself to these doctrines and who has,
moreover, recognized the necessity of this very experience, will not regard these
doctrines as he did his own initial opinions, namely, as fixed, adequate presenta-
tions of the truth. Rather, seeing how they were oriented to his own initial, unrec-
ognized needs, he will seek beyond them, for further doctrines that, analogously
with the earlier ones, disclose and fulfill his new, philosophically more radical
needs. Thus, as is exemplified by the process of repeated refutation and deepening
insight within each dialogue (and, too, in the interrelations between certain of the
dialogues), his ascent will be gradual, moving towards a purer and purer grasp of
the full truth.

On the other hand, for the hearer who has not won this freedom to examine,
the reader who—like so many of the interlocutors—fails to accept the Platonic
project of becoming philosophical, the dialogues also have something to say. The
Platonic protagonist orients his assertions to the interlocutor’s limits not only to
challenge him but also, precisely to the extent that the challenge is refused, to
leave him with something of value. Whereas the express doctrines of the dialogues
are “means” for the model hearer in the sense that they point beyond themselves
towards the whole truth, they are “means” for the unsuccessful reader in the sense
that they provide him with a grasp of the truth that, though partial, points beyond
his own initial opinions. At the very least, they serve to check or restrain his affir-
mation of these opinions, serving in the manner of “true opinions” or “orthodoxy
(orthé doxa)” to guide his practical life and give him a higher sense of his place in
the polis and, indeed, the cosmos.

* * *

One further aspect of dialogue form deserves mention here, though it is difficult
to explicate in the abstract, without reference to specific text. This is the dialogue’s
distinctive compositional structure. If Plato’s works were formal treatises, we
might reasonably expect their basic structure to be a sequence of propositions or,
more broadly, of arguments, the later ones following from the earlier ones accord-
ing to some syllogistic or quasi-syllogistic pattern. Of course we find such se-
quences in numerous particular passages. But the dialogue as a whole is not struc-
tured as a process of formal reasoning. It is crucial to distinguish between
argumentation as such and its communicative function; the peculiar compositional
structure of the dialogue is to be sought in terms of the latter, not the former.
Argument serves the purpose of enabling “conversion” (Republic 518d), and the
dialogue is structured in terms of phases or moments, as it were, essential to the
process of “conversion.” Inasmuch as this is a process of self-encounter, it must
begin with (i) an elicitation of the interlocutor’s opinion; this sets the stage for (ii)
a basic refutation by the philosophical protagonist, (a) confronting the interlocutor
with the problem in his opinion and, once this is purged, (b) setting the issues at
hand in a new, more properly philosophical light. This ‘new light’ characteristically takes the form of a sudden insight or suggestion by the protagonist—for example, the principle of cause/effect in the Euthyphro (10a ff.), or the doctrine of the philosopher-king in the Republic (473c ff.), or the new interpretation of ‘non-being’ in the Sophist (254c ff.). In the final part of the dialogue, the initial discussion, which was interrupted by the basic refutation, is (iii) resumed on the basis of the suggestion. The success of this resumption depends directly on the success of the refutation and reorientation. To the extent that the interlocutor can grasp and appropriate the refutation (ii) (a), he will be more or less open to the philosopher’s suggestion (ii) (b); and to the extent he is receptive, the resumption will be more or less philosophical. To put the matter oversimply, this receptivity or lack of it will make the difference between a dialogue that moves on to a philosophical conclusion (e.g. the choice for the philosophical life over the tyrant’s, performed ‘actually’ in Republic IX and mythically in X) and one that, lapsing back to nonphilosophical opinion, ends in aporia (e.g. the relapse and impasse at Euthyphro 15c).

To these comments we might add two complicating observations. First, because these various moments characterize the basic rhythm of encounter of philosopher with nonphilosopher, it is not surprising that they make up the inner structure of various parts within the dialogue as well as of the dialogue as a whole. It would be out of place to go into this here. Later, however, we shall see how both the elicitive first part and (with some reservations) the resumptive final part of the Statesman are internally structured according to the rhythm of elicitation/refutation-and-reorientation/resumption. (See the Appendix.) This structural analogy of whole and part underscores how deeply the pedagogic process organizes Plato’s thought in the dialogues. Secondly, we must be careful to avoid identifying the interlocutor’s experience with the hearer’s, as we try to think through that process in our interpretation. Here our earlier comments on Platonic irony come to bear on the issue of structure. When an interlocutor obviously fails to appreciate the refutation and reorientation, this makes it all the easier for the critical hearer, seeing the former’s mistakes, to avoid them himself; thus a dialogue whose resumption-section is overtly aporetic may be, for the hearer, quite positive, generating a wealth of new insight. On the other hand, when an interlocutor seems to understand the refutation and reorientation, but in fact does not, this generates a complicated situation for the hearer. Insofar as the protagonist, unable to break through, orients the resumption-part by “what the interlocutor claims to understand” (Men. 75d), that part may have the appearance of philosophical success—even while, for the rightly critical hearer, it is instead riddled with obscurity and veiled difficulties. In this case an apparently positive resumption and conclusion may be, for the hearer, all the more aporetic and demanding of critical rethinking. As we shall see, something of this sort holds for the Statesman.

b. Formal treatise versus genuine dialogue

These comments on the essential character of the dialogue are, as we have said, preliminary and necessarily abstract. They must be concretized and tested by the specific work of interpreting Platonic text. Nonetheless, they do enable us to anticipate some of the basic points which will distinguish our approach to the Statesman from the ‘standard view.’ If one regards the work as essentially a formal treatise, then one will tend to focus on the stranger’s speeches as a direct expression, not restricted by the dramatically projected context, of Plato’s insight. Young Socrates’ meager and brief responses will appear as the vestiges of Plato’s earlier use of the dialogue form, vestiges that, because the dialogue form has in essence been abandoned, are of little importance for our understanding of the philosophical substance of the work. Likewise, the elder Socrates’ silence, itself an indication of Plato’s abandonment of dramatic dialogue, will make him irrelevant for our understanding. Our primary task will consist in grasping the main lines of the stranger’s explicit argumentation. If, on the other hand, the Statesman is grasped as a genuine dialogue and not a formal treatise, interpretation becomes much more complex. First, we will want to explore the quasi-historical context projected by the dialogue. Second, we will need to explore the characters of the dramatis personae. We will take a focal interest in the elder Socrates’ silent presence and ask what Plato means this silence to signify. Moreover, as we come to recognize the specificity of the context in which the stranger speaks and the elder Socrates remains silent, and to perceive the limits which Plato, by casting the stranger into this context, imposes on what he can intelligibly say, we will become just as interested in what is left unsaid and implicit as we are in what is explicitly asserted. The outcome of this whole reflection will be an insight into what Plato wants his hearer to recognize through critical reflection on the dialogue. Only on one level, that attained by the hearer who does not suffer the experience of the birth of philosophy, will the content of this recognition be reducible to the express content of the dialogue. For the hearer who does suffer that experience, the express content will have the function of a “mean” and, as such, will point through and beyond itself to a deeper inexplicit content.

3. THE PROGRAM FOR INTERPRETATION

Our course of interpretation follows directly from these remarks. In chapter I we will examine the dramatic context and each of the dramatis personae. Then we shall turn to the main body of the dialogue. By examining its explicit argument in the light of the interplay of viewpoints revealed in chapter I, we shall be able to grasp its pedagogic function and implicit, subsurface content. I divide this examination into three parts, in accord with the tripartite compositional structure of the dialogue. Chapter II treats the elicitive initial diariesis of statesmanship (258b–267c). Chapter III treats the major refutative digression from the diariesic course, the myth (267c–277a), and the reorienting introduction and discussion of paradigms (277a–287b). Chapter IV treats the resumption of diariesis and its apparent success in generating a sufficient definition of the statesman (287b–311c).
CHAPTER I

THE DRAMATIC CONTEXT

I. DRAMATIC SITUATION: THE TRIAL OF SOCRATES

The most striking feature of the action of the Statesman is the lack of any explicit conflict. The assembled company consists of refined and erudite men—Theodorus the famous geometer, Socrates, and the Elistic stranger—and the gifted students in Theodoran mathematics, Theaetetus and Young Socrates. The explicit tone is one of mutual deference, especially towards Socrates. In the Sophist, the twin dialogue with the Statesman in which the topics and form of both conversations are established, the stranger, according to Socrates' request for an exposition of the Elistic conceptions of sophist, statesman, and philosopher, expresses a certain shyness, ἀπίστα (217d), at giving a lengthy exposition at his first meeting with Socrates; this is an expression of respect. Likewise, Theodorus remarks that there is "something divine" (216b) about philosophers, and in the beginning lines of the Statesman he cheerfully accepts Socrates' half-jesting objection to his democratic equalization of the three types, sophist, statesman, and philosopher (257b). Theaetetus and Young Socrates, in their turn, defer to the greater wisdom of the stranger and Socrates repeatedly. The elder Socrates, in response, has flattering words for all, praising the stranger's definitions and calling Theodorus "our greatest mathematician" (257a).

On the 'standard view' described above, this absence of conflict, combined with Socrates' silence and the stranger's positive mode of exposition, signals Plato's de-emphasis of the dramatics of dialogue form in favor of the style of a 'formal treatise.' But the lack of explicit conflict is itself a dramatic element, a feature of the projected dramatic situation of the Statesman. For us, therefore, the first task is to explore this situation.

Note first that the Sophist and Statesman stand in a trilogy with the Theaetetus. A brief recount of the sequence of events encompassed by the trilogy will begin to set the apparent harmony of the Statesman in a new light. (1) In the Theaetetus, Socrates meets Theodorus, Theaetetus, Young Socrates, and other young students of mathematics under Theodorus, and leads them in a long and difficult search for the essence of episteme. But, apparently, they struggle in vain. For Socrates, exposing basic contradictions in Theaetetus' proposals, guides him into a series of dead-ends, and the conversation is adjourned in aporia. They all agree to meet again the next day. (2) Socrates then goes off to the porch of the king-archon to face the charge that he has profaned the gods and perverted the youth by sophist teachings. (See Theaetetus 210d.) (3) The next day, as arranged, Socrates meets with Theodorus, Theaetetus, Young Socrates, and others. Here Theodorus introduces
discussion of the general natures of sophistry, statesmanship, and philosophy. Thus the trilogy seems to counter and complement Socrates’ courtroom defense. Here we can hope for a genuinely philosophical judgment of Socratic philosophy.

2. DRAMATIS PERSONAE: ANTIPATHY, EAGERNESS, SILENCE

Socrates’ pointed mention of his trial thus sets the trilogy into a new light. Once we see it in this light, however, new tensions and problems begin to emerge. Above all, just how deep is the rapport between Socrates and Theodorus and his students? (We shall consider the stranger later.) There is no doubt about their personal friendship. But especially if we make the distinction between the person and the essence of Socrates, we must go on to ask how fully Theodorus and his students appreciate Socratic philosophy. The question becomes urgent in light of two further questions. If the trilogy is to contrast with the trial as philosophical versus non-philosophical judgment of Socrates, then it would seem that the respondents to Socrates (and to the stranger) must transcend the doxa, the unreflective opinion, which characterizes the Athenian jurors. They must be able to know, come to epistémé, about what sophistry, statesmanship, and philosophy are. Yet in the Theaetetus Theodorus and Theaetetus have proven unable to define *epistémé* itself. Can we expect that men unable to know what knowledge is will be able to know the three types—especially when *epistémé* is a constituent element in the essences of all three? Secondly, the trilogy never gets around to the crucial definition of the third type, the philosopher. Yet it would be precisely by this definition, presumably, that Socrates would receive his substantive vindication. Can the trilogy fulfill its function as a philosophical judgment of Socratic philosophy without this definition? And if not, why is it missing? Is there—to bring all of these questions together—some lack of philosophical depth that, causing Theodorus and his students to remain within the limits of doxa, disqualifies them from a judgment of Socratic philosophy?

If so, the relation between the trial and Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman becomes deeper and more complicated. To put one last leading question: is the explicit personal conflict in the Apology, provoked by the willful antagonism of an Anytus and a Meletus, actually mirrored by an implicit substantive conflict in the trilogy, provoked by involuntary limitations of understanding?

a. Theodorus: geometry and philosophy

Quite apart from their personal good will towards one another, there does indeed appear to be a substantive antagonism between Theodorus and Socrates. Though his actual participation in the trilogy is brief, Theodorus is a key character. He is the middle-man, introducing Socrates to Theaetetus and Young Socrates (*Theaetetus* 144c–d) and the Eleatic stranger to Socrates (*Sophist* 216a–d). More pointedly, as the teacher of Theaetetus and Young Socrates, he exercises a determinative influence on them; in this way he is responsible for the general type of intellect...
with which philosophy, embodied by Socrates and the stranger, must contend in the trilogy.2

The antagonism surfaces only indirectly. Throughout the early part of the Theaetetus Socrates tries to involve Theodorus in dialectic. Theodorus repeatedly begs off, six times invoking his age as a liability in philosophical argument and pleading his preference to listen to Socrates converse with the younger men present. (See 146b, 162b, 164e–165a, 168e–169a, 177c, 183c.) But age can hardly be the main reason. Socrates, after all, is his elder. More basic is the general antipathy he confesses towards philosophy at 146b: “I am not at home in this sort of discussion.” Later he explains that “my own inclinations diverted me at rather an early age from abstract discussions to geometry” (165a).

Brief as they are, these remarks represent the direct antithesis to the Platonic/Socratic view of the proper relation of geometry and philosophy. To bring this into focus, first recall Socrates’ complex position in the Republic. On the one hand, Socrates grants geometry and the kindred mathematical sciences a privileged place in his philosophical curriculum; because its true objects are conceptual, mathematics serves as the crucial proaideutic to dialectic. On the other hand, considered in and for itself, apart from its function in the curriculum, geometry stands as a specific opposite to dialectic in two important ways. First, it is axiomatic, proceeding directly to conclusions on the basis of assumptions that the geometry regards as “obvious to everybody” (510c–d). The dialectician, by contrast, begins by moving in the opposite direction, proceeding not from assumption to conclusion but rather from assumption to the higher principles which it presupposes and which, thus, are its founding preconditions. Only once this “upwards” motion is completed by an intuition of the “anthetical” or unconditional, genuinely first principle, does dialectic turn around, proceeding now “downwards” from first principle to conclusion (511b).3 Secondly, the geometry is accustomed to make use of visible forms and figures as illustrative symbols (510d–e). Dialectic, by contrast, seeks to dispense with such reference to physical-sensible things as a distraction from its true noetic objects. Though they may be necessary for the philosopher’s pedagogical communication with the nonphilosopher, they are unnecessary to the philosopher himself. Since in his “downwards” movement, in particular, he works from a genuine intuition of the “anthetical,” the philosopher “makes use of no object of sense but only of pure forms, moving on through forms to forms and ending with forms” (511c).

Theodorus’ brief remark counter this complex position at every point. First of all, for him geometry is anything but a proaideutic to philosophy; indeed, he characterizes it more as a refuge from philosophy, a study to which he was “diverted” precisely because he was “not at home” in philosophical discussion. Thus he implicitly rejects Socrates’ curriculum and, secondly, Socrates’ critical view of the dogmatic character of geometry. In turning away from philosophy towards geometry, he shows that he does not see the need—internal to geometry itself—to make a philosophical test of the truth of its axioms. This is important, for without such philosophical review the geometr’s assumptions are ungrounded. Indeed, accepted simply because they seem “obvious to everybody,” they have the status merely of widespread opinion. And this reduces the whole of the geometr’s reasoning to the status of a formalized statement of doxa. Finally, Theodorus’ reason for fleeing philosophy undercuts just what makes geometry so crucial, in the Platonic/Socratic view, to philosophical education. “Philosophical discussions” are too “abstract” for him. If geometry, by contrast, is concrete, then in his practice of it, we may presume, Theodorus makes full use of the physical-sensible forms and figures which the dialectician seeks to do without. In short, the Theodorean study of geometry, dissociated from philosophy, implicitly grants the nonphilosophical hegemony of opinion and sense-perception.

In none of these points, of course, does Theodorus take a self-conscious, deliberate position against Socrates; indeed, so far as he himself is aware, there is no opposition or tension at all. But this itself points to an even more basic difference between them. Bluntly put, Theodorus is unreflective and even misologistic. Both in his efforts to avoid dialectic with Socrates and in his early turn away from philosophy, he shows himself willing to be governed by unexamined opinions and personal inclinations. To be sure, he rejects philosophy only for himself, not for Socrates. But this only shows that Socrates chooses the right metaphor in characterizing him as a “trustee” of his late friend Protagoras (Theaetetus 164e–165a).3 Not as a point of doctrine (for Theodorus is disinclined to “abstract discussions”) so much as of conduct, Theodorus seems to espouse the individualistic thesis which Socrates credits to Protagoras in the Theaetetus: “What I opine is true, at least for me.” (See e.g. 152a ff.; 160c ff.; 165d; 168b; etc.) Nothing could be more opposed to the insistence on self-examination and on searching for the universal which is essential to Socratic philosophy. On this non-personal, substantive level, Theodorus emerges more as an unwitting prosecutor than as a friend of Socrates.

b. Young Socrates: the “test” to discover kinship

Like Theodorus and Theaetetus, the dramatis persona “Young Socrates” apparently has reference to an actual historical figure. The author of the Eleventh Letter, usually dated about 360–359 B.C., refers to a member of the Academy named “Socrates.” The Letter is a response to a request by Laodamos of Thasos that either Plato himself or “Socrates” come to Thasos to assist drawing up a code of laws. Plato (if indeed he is the author of the Letter) writes that neither can make the difficult journey, he because of his age and “Socrates” because of poor health.

Since the Letter may well be inauthentic,4 we have to suspend belief in most of its content. It does seem safe to trust its reference to a “Socrates,” however. This is incidental to the main content, and it would be important to a forger, whatever his basic motives, to cover himself by accuracy in incidenials.5

The existence of a real “Socrates” in the Academy has important bearing on the hermeneutic questions of the intended audience and the author-audience relation of the Statesman. By making “Socrates” the chief respondent, Plato puts the Academy on stage before itself. Yet he does so with a certain indirectness. At the time the Statesman was written, this historical Socrates would have been about fifty-five years old. In representing the persona as about eighteen, he deflects attention
away from the actual Socrates and towards the young men of the Academy. Thus the dialogue is an act of indirect communication between Plato and the youngest generation of Academicians; they are given a general representation of themselves, one which cannot be pinned down to any particular one of them, to observe and reflect upon.

The point of this mimetic play begins to emerge when we consider, first, the motif which the elder Socrates uses in welcoming Young Socrates’ entrance into the dialogue and, second, the dramatically projected situation and character of Young Socrates.

At 257c the stranger and Theodorus agree to give a rest to Theaetetus, weary from the exertions of the Sophist, and to introduce his “youth gymnast” Young Socrates into the conversation in his place. The elder Socrates is pleased at this and gives a deeper reason:

Furthermore, stranger, they may both have a certain kinship with me. Theaetetus, you say, is like me in facial looks, and Socrates bears the same name. We ought always seize opportunities to discover (anagnōrizein) our kin through conversation (dia logos). Yesterday I joined in discussion (dia logos) with Theaetetus, and today I have heard him respond to you; but I have not heard Socrates do either. He too needs to be tested. At some later time he shall reply to me, but now let him answer you.

Thus Socrates gives the dialogue the task of testing to discover kinship. In doing so, he plays on a well-established motif in Greek literature. As paradigms of “discovery” (anagnōrizein), Aristotle cites Oedipus’ realization of his true birth and, as a case of reciprocal recognition between two persons, the self-disclosures between Iphigenia and Orestes in Iphigenia in Tauris (Poetics 1452a29–b9). Still closer analogues to the Statesman, however, are the first encounters of Odysseus with Penelope and with his father Laertes after he has slain the suitors. As in these cases, so in the Statesman Socrates projects a “test” in which both parties (recall his “we,” 258a2) may seek proofs of their kinship with the other; moreover, the means of the “test” is conversation.

In playing on this motif, Socrates varies its traditional elements, appropriating it in a distinctively Socratic way. (i) In treating “looks” and “name” as signs of kinship, he distinguishes appearance from reality and introduces a new tension into the situation. Is Young Socrates what he appears to be? (ii) “Kinship,” in turn, has a pointedly inward sense. Whereas Penelope and Laertes want to know if this can really be their beloved husband and son Odysseus, the elder Socrates wants to know if his young namesake is really Socratic in spirit. The choice of means for the “test” reflects this difference. Penelope and Laertes ask for signs in the form of biographical details which only Odysseus could know. Socrates, by contrast, urges a “conversation” in the sense of λόγος, “philosophical words” or “discussion”; he wants to know if Young Socrates is also, to use it somewhat awkwardly, Socratically philosophical, and so the relevant sign will be his performance in dialectic.

(iii) At a deeper level, moreover, it is not his own knowledge of Young Socrates which interests the elder Socrates, and his whole request for a “test” is ironic. He indicates this when he postpones his own conversation with Young Socrates to “another time” (258a5) and defers to the stranger. In the dramatically projected sequence of events (which, note, he indirectly reasserts at 258a3–4), he has just met Meletus’ indictment (Theaetetus 210d); there is hardly likely to be “some later time” for further discussion with Young Socrates. But this does not undermine so much as refocus the motif of the test to discover kinship. It is the younger, not the elder, Socrates for whom this “test” is really intended. And his task is to “discover” not some external relatedness to the elder Socrates (who, after all, removes himself by his silence) but, rather, the essence of Socratic philosophy within himself. If the elder Socrates has a personal interest in the “test,” it is to know if he has a spiritual heir in the younger Socrates, someone who will incarnate the Socratic essence after he is gone. And whether this is so—the elder Socrates would realize better than anyone—depends entirely on the inner self-relation and development of the younger. Does he have a sense for the forms and the search for them which the elder is constantly undertaking? And does he have that self-knowledge which the elder stresses as the prerequisite and basic point of departure for such searching?

Without pre-empting the close analysis to come of the dialogue proper, we can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses Young Socrates brings to such a “test” by considering his situation and character. That he is a student of Theodorus, first of all, is a very mixed blessing. On the one hand, he has doubtless received the best mathematical training; and Theaetetus’ earlier reference (Theaetetus 147d) to Young Socrates’ collaboration in the study of irrationals suggests that he has excelled in it. Thus he has fulfilled the prerequisites for a study of dialectic; in terms of the curriculum in the Republic, he is prepared to begin philosophy. On the other hand, our own earlier reflections hardly suggest that Theodorus would have initiated this. On the contrary, we may presume that he has studied mathematics in a two-fold isolation. Antipathetic to “abstract discussions,” Theodorus would have had no interest either in reflecting on the immaterial forms which are the real referents of mathematical thought or in making critical examinations of its axiomatic assumptions. And as a man who, quite apart from his general good will, is content to follow his own inclinations uncritically, Theodorus has likely not extended his teaching beyond technical training to the formation of character. In his performance in the dialogue proper, Young Socrates seems to reflect both of these limitations. As we shall see, he has difficulty grasping the forms in his responses to the stranger; he shows little sense, at least initially, for their distinctive nature. And in his character he is both energetic and overconfident; in several key passages the stranger will chide him for a boldness verging on thoughtlessness (see 262a5) and for potential impatience with rigorous method (see 283b). Most striking, however, he shows this impulsive energy less by taking up positions of his own than, quite the contrary, by repeated, hasty agreements. At crucial points he accepts the stranger’s teachings while the stranger himself does not! We shall come to these passages in due time. For now, suffice it to say that Young Socrates shows himself un-Socratic in this uncritical tendency to presume his own understanding of what is really quite strange to him.
If these observations on the "test" motif are well-taken, and if the more general thesis that the Statesman puts the young Academicians on stage before themselves is correct, there are several remarkable implications for Plato's relations to the Academy. First, by presenting Young Socrates as immersed in mathematics and not yet introduced to philosophy, he seems to address his students at just the point in their education where they must first turn from the one to the other. And by setting Theodorus before them, he seems to warn them of the dangers of not making this turn. Second, by presenting Young Socrates as uncritical and thoughtlessly receptive of authority, he may be indirectly criticizing dogmatic enthusiasm amongst his own students. This is an issue we shall consider again at the proper time. But it is worth noting from the beginning what a new light it casts on the lack of explicit conflict in the dialogue: this would be the proper appearance not of harmony but of hidden conflict.

c. The elder Socrates: silence and unheardness

What we have called the 'standard view' of the later dialogues regards Socrates' silence as, like the lack of explicit conflict, a symptom of Plato's loss of interest in the dramatics of dialogue form. Yet it too is a dramatic fact. Plato retains Socrates as a *dramatis persona* in the Statesman, and given its contrast with Socrates' behaviour in earlier dialogues, his silence actually draws attention to him. In the dramatic action of the Statesman he is conspicuously present in this silence. We should therefore ask: why, within the dramatically projected situation, does he keep silent?

On the surface, this is simply an act of deference to the visiting stranger, who has said he prefers a tractable partner for the difficult inquiries ahead (Sophist 217d). But this answer only complicates the question. Why does Plato introduce this new character in the first place, and so give Socrates someone to whom to defer? Or, to divide the issue into its negative and positive aspects, why is it in some sense impossible for Socrates, and yet proper for the stranger, to lead the others in the search for sophist, statesman, and philosopher?

With regard to Socrates (we shall consider the stranger in the next section), we have already worked out the crucial elements in the preceding reflections on the trial, Theodorus, and Young Socrates. Socrates suffers a two-fold estrangement. Condemned by the nonphilosophical many, he seeks "philosophical judgment," as we called it, from the learned few. But these, in particular their leader Theodorus, show the same basic antipathy to Socratic philosophy that the many feel; in his repeated efforts to avoid dialectic with Socrates, Theodorus re-presents the Athenians' rejection of him. But there is one crucial difference. By his good personal feelings towards Socrates, Theodorus conceals his rejection of the Socratic; he himself, above all, seems unaware of it.

This situation is deftly brought home in the two opening exchanges between Theodorus and Socrates in the Sophist and the Statesman. In the first of these, Theodorus introduces the visiting stranger as a philosopher. Socrates replies,

*Good to hear, my friend. All the same, this type [i.e. the philosopher] may not be any easier to recognize than the divine. Indeed, such men, not fake but real philosophers, as they 'range from city to city' and survey from above the style of life of those below, appear, owing to the world's blindness, to wear all sorts of shapes—thus to some they seem quite worthless, to others worth everything; sometimes they appear as statesmen, sometimes as sophists, and sometimes they can have the semblance of being completely mad. (216c–d)*

Socrates' point has a crucial bearing on the dialogues to come. Through the universality and contemplative character of its interest and activity, philosophy stands remote from the affairs of ordinary men; and the philosopher is consequently difficult for them to make out. Rather than recognizing what he is, in and for itself, they project upon him identity types familiar to themselves—sophist, statesman, madman, depending, presumably, on whether they happen to approve or disapprove what he seems to be doing. Does the philosopher have a "shape," an appearance, proper to himself? Can philosophy appear in and for itself, apart from what it is not but is mistaken to be? If so, it would presumably require a philosopher to recognize it, one who had transcended ordinary opinion and its range of familiar experience. Strikingly, Socrates does not mention this possibility to Theodorus. We begin to see why in the opening exchange of the Statesman:

Socrates: For introducing me to Theodorus, and at the same time also to our visitor, Theodorus, I am much indebted to you.

Theodorus: Well then, Socrates, soon you will owe three times as much thanks, after they have finished their work by exposing the statesman and the philosopher.

Socrates: Three times as much? Really, friend Theodorus, are we to say that we have heard our greatest mathematician and geometer say that?

Theodorus: What are you thinking, Socrates?

Socrates: You have posited each of these men as of equal worth, whereas in value they are more removed from one another than any mathematical proportion could possibly express. (257a–b)

Socrates' tone here is jesting—Theodorus meant nothing serious by his phrasing. At the same time, it shows that he has not yet understood Socrates' point in the earlier exchange. Sophist, statesman, and philosopher are not to be treated as commensurates, as positive units of the same order. Sophist and statesman, Socrates has suggested in the first exchange, stand as opposites, "worthless" and "worth everything"; and both, in turn, relate to the philosopher as "shapes" or appearances which he takes on for the nonphilosopher. By his easy language Theodorus inadvertently reveals what we have already recognized about him in our earlier reflections. Though "our greatest mathematician and geometer," he is quite unaware to the problem of appearance and reality. Presuming to know the stranger as a philosopher, unhesitant in listing the three types *serpents*, personally respectful and familiar with Socrates throughout, he simply does not recognize the unfamiliarity or, in a phrase, the hiddenness of the philosopher to the nonphilosopher. And in this, he himself stands as an exemplary nonphilosopher presuming for himself the insight which, from the Socratic standpoint, has just such presumption as its very antithesis.

How is Socrates to respond to this subtle estrangement? It would be wasted effort to pick a fight. In contrast to the Athenian jurors, or again to the sophists and their followers whom he contests in other dialogues, Theodorus and his students are his friends; the estrangement here is substantive, not personal. But by the
same token, it would be equally beside the point to simply state the problem of this estrangement. Since what is required, ultimately, is an act of self-recognition and development, the problem is rather for each of the others—above all, for Young Socrates—to grasp for himself. Instead of elenchic opposition or discursive exposition, therefore, Socrates chooses to keep silent. As we noted at the outset, this is by no means a refusal to take part in the conversation. Quite the contrary, his silence is a definite role, vividly expressing what a direct communication, it seems, could not. Falling silent, Socrates makes almost palpable the fact that he has not been heard, even by his friends. Or in terms of his own remarks in the Sophist, Socrates displays by his own presence the impossibility that philosophy appear in and for itself to the nonphilosopher. His silence is thus an indirect communication of the substantive estrangement which divides him from his friends.

These reflections, taken together with earlier reflections on the motif of the “test” to discover kinship, have an important bearing on our earlier question about the missing search for the philosophical type. Did Plato really intend to write such a dialogue, a “Philosopher”? Some scholars have argued that Socrates, after first requesting such a search at Sophist 217a, promises to undertake it himself in projecting a conversation with Young Socrates “at some later time” to come, at Statesman 258a. This seems problematic for several reasons. Not only is time running out for Socrates, condemned by the Athenian jurors, but more basically, Socrates’ opening remarks in the Sophist and the Statesman suggest that such a third dialogue would be impossible. If to nonphilosophers the philosopher assumes no distinct appearance of his own but rather those of sophist and statesman, then, since Theodorus and his students are clearly nonphilosophers, there can be no distinct search for the philosopher. 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. On the other hand, the projection of the Philosopher does have pedagogic significance. If the interlocutor—in particular, Young Socrates—can meet Socrates’ “test” and become philosophical, then he will be in position to undertake the third search. But this will hardly take the form of a fourth dialogue expanding and completing the trilogy. To become philosophical is to appropriate the Socratic essence—and so to no longer need the elder Socrates’ personal presence. Thus the “Philosopher” makes little sense as an actual encounter between the two Socrates. On the contrary, the elder Socrates projects it as a spiritual goal, the culminating act of self-knowing self-development, for the younger.

This goal, however, immediately forces into view the question of means. Given the hidden estrangement which separates the two Socrates, and given Socrates’ choice to keep silent, how is the goal to be reached? This question, in turn, brings us to the role of the visiting stranger.

3. THE STRANGER FROM ELEA

Why, we asked earlier, is it proper for the stranger to lead the others in the search for sophist, statesman, and philosopher? A full answer, of course, requires analysis of the whole contents of the Sophist and Statesman. Nonetheless, it is Plato’s way to generate orienting anticipations by his dramatic staging. This he does with richness and precision at Sophist 216a–b and Statesman 258a–b.

a. Judge and mediator

The Sophist begins with this exchange:

Theodorus: Here we are, faithful to our appointment of yesterday, and, what is more, we have brought a guest. Our friend here is a native of Elea; he is one of those in the school of Parmenides and Zeno, and is devoted to philosophy.

Socrates: Perhaps, Theodorus, you have brought us an ordinary guest but, unknown to yourself, some god. Homer tells us how the gods attend upon the affairs of reverent and just men and how, especially, the god of strangers comes to mark the hybrist and the well-ordered doings of men. Your companion may be one of those higher powers, a god of refutation (theos elenchikos) come to witness and refute our weakness in philosophical discourse (en tois logos).

Theodorus: That is not the stranger’s style; rather he is more moderate (metristeros) than the devotees of eristic dispute. Theodorus’ point here is that the stranger, though an Eleatic, is not an eristic; he does not belong to the notorious tradition, initiated by the young Zeno, that converted Parmenides’ teaching of the unity of being into a contentious denial of all forms of pluralism. This is good news, surely, to Socrates, and it helps us, as hearers, to interpret the stranger’s background (see b(iii) below). But it also shows a shallow understanding of Socrates’ remark. To him, “refutation” (elenchos) has a much deeper sense than the eristics of one-sided monism. It refers to his own task as a philosopher, which he explained in the Apology by reference to the oracle at Delphi (20e ff.). Elenchos is the dialectical demonstration of the limits of human insight: the work of testing whether those who seem to themselves to be wise are really or only apparently so. This task, while it opposes Socrates to the whole Athenian community (see Apology 22e, 25a), is mediative on a higher level. Ordained by the god, it is the mediation of the divine and the human by the negation of human conceit and the proper subordination of human opinion to divine wisdom.

Heard on this level, Socrates’ opening remark becomes richly suggestive. Does the stranger, like “some god come to refute,” come to Athens with Socrates’ own divine mission? Socrates is pointedly ambiguous about the occasion for such intervention. Surely his reference to “the hybrist and doings of men” refers to his trial. The hybris of the Athenian jurors consists in their willingness to condemn him as an irredeemable sophist meddler on the basis of popular opinion. Such a judgment requires just what no mass of citizens can possess, genuine philosophical insight, and so there is need of a genuine philosopher to refute it. This, Socrates seems to suggest, is the stranger’s mission. Thus it is not surprising that he goes on to ask for the stranger’s account of sophist, statesman, and philosopher. He is requesting just the philosophical judgment of his own philosophizing that, we earlier suggested, the trilogy represents. At the same time, however, Socrates also speaks of “our weakness in philosophical discourse.” This, surely, refers to the present com-
pany. Is the stranger, "come to witness and refute" this "weakness," charged with the task of bringing it to light, making it self-conscious to Theodorus and his students? Such a knowledge of ignorance would be the first crucial step in overcoming the hidden estrangement of Socrates from his friends. It would also be the beginning—to focus on the Statesman in particular—of Young Socrates' becoming genuinely Socratic. Thus Socrates appears to give the stranger the same basic task on two levels: he is somehow to be judge and mediator both for the explicit conflict between Socrates and Athens and for the implicit conflict between Socrates and Theodorus' circle.

b. Alienation and mediation, some clues

Of course, it would be premature to consider how the stranger will fulfill this complex task. Nonetheless, the exchange in the Sophist gives some pointed clues which we ought to have in mind as we proceed.

(i) The mean. Plato has Theodorus give the assurance that the stranger is metrīteros, "more moderate" than the Elatic eristics. This is a nicely ironic touch, for Theodorus' word, built on metron, refers ahead to the stranger's own doctrine of "the mean" (to metron). Is there a confluence of surface and deep meaning here? The stranger will define the mean as what is "appropriate," "timely," "needed," and "dwells in the middle apart from the extremes" (284e, discussed below, ch. III, B3). Does the stranger's own "style" of philosophizing, moderate, in the sense of being non-eristic, non-disputatious, constitute what is "appropriate, timely, and needed" to mediate the double-estrangement of philosophy? Here we come to that "positive" character of the stranger's presence which, on the "standard view," is a signal of Plato's disinterest in the dramatic dialogue. The stranger, we will see, refrains from Socrates' characteristic "negativity," the overtly elenchic style of seeking contradictions and precipitating aporia in the respondent. Instead he leads two successful processes of definition and presents the crucial methodological doctrine of diareisis along the way. At the same time, he does interrupt himself, exposing hidden problems at key junctures. Without examining these points further here, we should raise and retain the question: does the stranger's "style," with its mix of the positive and the negative, signify an effort to find the "middle" between the "extremes" of ordinary human presumption, with its immediate resistance to self-examination, and Socratic elenchos? Or again, do the stranger's doctrines—in particular, his accounts both of statesmanship and of diareisis—function as means, as the "timely" intermediate steps "needed" and "appropriate" for the reconciliation of the Socratic both with Athenian poetry and Theodoran mathematics?

(ii) The Homeric allusions: homecoming and disguise. These questions point to the possibility that there may be some irony, some element of subsurface significance, in the positive style and doctrines of the Statesman. As a general possibility, this is strongly underscored by the allusions to Homer which Socrates makes in his opening remarks in the Sophist. In recalling that

Homer tells us how the gods attend upon the affairs of reverent and just men and how, especially, the god of strangers comes to mark the hybris of the well-ordered doings of men (216a, quoted above),

and in employing the Homeric phrase epistrophoi poleis ("range from city to city") in his next speech at 216c, he is transposing a passage from Book 17 of the Odyssey. There we are presented the episode in which Antinoos, one of the most abusive of the suitors of Penelope, strikes the wandering beggar. Others of the suitors rebuke him, saying,

Antinoos, you did badly to hit the unhappy vagabond:
a curse on you, if he turns out to be some god from heaven.
For the gods do take on all sorts of transformations, appearing as strangers from elsewhere, and thus they range from city to city,
watching to see which men keep the laws, and which are violent. (483-487)

Of course, the suitors are wrong: though favored by Athena and, through her persuasiveness, by Zeus, the beggar is Odysseus, not a god but rather a king or statesman. That Socrates should evoke this Homeric situation is intriguing. One implication is that the stranger, not a god but a philosopher come to restore philosophy to Athens and Theodorus' circle, must conceal himself. Does the stranger represent the disguised presence of the Socratic? Of course, Odysseus returns home in disguise precisely in order to be able, when the right time comes, to reveal himself for who he is and resume his kingship. Is this, following out the parallel, also the stranger's purpose, to enable Socratic philosophy to reveal itself for what it is and resume its proper place in the state? And is this place—to carry out the parallel one step further—at the head of the state?  

(iii) The stranger's Parmenidean heritage: education and irony. The Platonic point of characterizing the stranger as an Elatic but not an eristic is to make a distinction and a criticism. Plato seems to suggest that the true Parmenidean spirit is not well represented by the eristics. And he proposes the stranger instead as a true heir to Parmenides. One manifestation of this comes in the central passages of the Sophist. There the stranger, speaking with great deference for Parmenides, nonetheless violates his injunction and reinterprets non-being. That injunction is a key weapon of the eristic Elatics. The implication is that it is truer to Parmenides to renew his line of inquiry than to insist uninquiringly on his conclusions.

A second manifestation—of particular relevance to the Statesman, as we shall see—relates to the pedagogical orientation, or lack of it, in the eristic tradition. Parmenides' own poem stands in basic contrast to the sheerly argumentative treatise, for example, of the youthful Zeno. Whereas the latter makes no attempt, either in its rhetoric or in its substance, to enter into the perspective of pluralism
or to distinguish levels of insight, Parmenides’ poem aims precisely at such inward encounter and accommodation. By its remarkable imagery of a divinely inspired journey to the gates of Night and Day, the proem symbolizes the seeming ultimacy of the dualist point of view which Parmenides challenges. And by the complex image of the successive displacements of the gates by the chasm (symbol of non-being) and of the chasm by the broad way (symbol of being), all explicated in the argumentation of the middle fragments (the Way of Truth), Parmenides both rehearses and explicates the reflective discovery of the ultimacy of being. Thus he attempts to lead ordinary “mortals” beyond dualism by exposing and developing a possibility of thought internal to it. Nor is this all. Those who can make this movement from “opinion” to “truth” will find themselves “far from the path of men” (1.27); their thought will be alien and nonsensical to others who have not made the movement. For their protection, “so that the wisdom of mortals may never outstrip you” (8.61), Parmenides proposes and exhibits a mediating irony in the closing fragments (the Way of Opinion). “From here on learn the beliefs of mortals,” he announces at 8.51–2, “listening to the deceptive order of my words.”

He then goes on to present just the dualist account of the cosmos, blind to the ultimacy of being, which he overcame in the proem. This gives the poem as a whole an extraordinary pedagogical depth. While the proem initiates the nonphilosopher into philosophical insight, the closing fragments teach the philosopher how to speak and think in terms of the nonphilosopher. Thus the poem presents education and imitative irony as the possible ways of reconciling philosopher and nonphilosopher. Nor, finally, are these essentially separate: it is precisely by speaking in terms of dualism, that is, by imitative irony, that Parmenides first engages the nonphilosopher in the educative experience of the proem.

If Plato’s Eclesic stranger is thought as a true heir to Parmenides, in contrast to the intervening eristic tradition, these reflections should have implications for his response to Socrates’ estrangement. As philosophical mediator, he faces a challenge analogous to that of the one who has traveled Parmenides’ Way of Truth and must now come to terms with Opinion. The best mediation, of course, would be to initiate opinionated mortals into the Truth; but the very need for mediation shows that this cannot be done directly. As in the (here strikingly parallel) Homeric situation, to reveal the true requires, first, its concealment. To follow out the parallel again, Socrates must defer to the stranger and the stranger must in some sense cover himself with—or enter into—the perspective of the nonphilosophers. This is the necessary means, it seems, to the restoration of philosophy both in the city and in the souls of the students of Theodorus.

4. THE AGREEMENT TO BEGIN

The transition from stage-setting to argument proper in the beginning of the Statesman occurs in the following passage. Agreeing to Socrates’ proposal that Young Socrates respond to him “at some later time” but answer the stranger now, the stranger says, “So be it.” Then, turning to Young Socrates, he asks,
CHAPTER II

THE INITIAL DIAIREISIS (258b–267c)

We begin the Statesman with the definite expectation that the whole search will be conducted by the method of bifurcatory diairesis. This was the stranger's sole formal method in the preceding definition of the sophist, and he encourages us to believe that he will follow the same procedure in defining the statesman. At 258b, referring directly to the Sophist, he establishes that the statesman "too" (kai touton) must be sought out by "distinguishing the forms of knowledge, as before." When he says that the particular "line of division" differs, the clear implication is that the basic method will be just the same. Thus we are led to expect an inquiry by bifurcatory diairesis alone. This is important because it gives the subsequent introductions of myth, paradigm, and due measure (267c–267b) their initial force as surprising digressions or interruptions. And this, in turn, makes it striking and conspicuous that the initial diairetic process (258b–267c) makes up only the first phase of dialogue. Why, we are moved to ask, is the stranger's distinctive formal method restricted to the first phase? Why is bifurcatory diairesis interrupted and, in the turn to alternative methods, suspended?

The obvious answer, of course, is that it yields an inadequate definition of statesmanship. But this only raises the more difficult question: why does Plato have his Eleatic stranger pursue a lengthy diairetic process to an inadequate result? Moreover, further questions arise if we look within this process. Analogously as the turn to myth, paradigm, and due measure form an extensive digression at the middle of the conversation as a whole, so there is a digression of sorts at the middle of the initial diairetic part. Young Socrates makes an error, and the stranger must refute and reorient him. Further, once he has done this and resumes diairesis, there is a marked difference in its structure and tone. To begin with, the stranger discloses two paths, not one, to the final destination. And he injects a new, curiously humorous tone into the discussion, making light of his own findings; it seems, even as he puts them forth.

These various features complicate the work of interpretation. In the following discussion of the initial diairetic process at 258b–267c, we must not only explicate the formal structure of the method. We must also ask why Plato gives us such a seemingly inadequate, disrupted, and comical example of its application.

1. FORMAL STRUCTURE OF THE METHOD;
THE APPARENT ACCORD (258b–261e)

The first part (258b–261c) of the stranger's initial diairetic process provides a clear exhibition of the method in its standard form and function. By a series of bifurcation movements, the stranger aims to "isolate" (choris aphielonias, 258c4) the unique form or nature of statesmanship from all others. This point of this process is to grasp the distinguishing features of the form and thus to define it.

Presupposed by the method is the doctrine of the "communion" or "blending" of forms which the stranger presented at the center of the Sophist. According to this doctrine the several forms or kinds, the ideal unities to which all discourse and thought ultimately refer, are capable of various combinations with one another. We may distinguish two levels or sorts of combination. On the one hand, there are certain all-pervasive forms with which every form must necessarily commune: as a self-same unit different from all others, each form must commune with oneness, self-sameness, being, and difference. On the other hand, every form is also capable of a specific set of combinations proper to its own definite nature. In his practice of diairesis, the dialectician focuses on this second level, distinguishing, kind by kind, in what ways each [of the forms] can or cannot combine (Sophist 253c). Thus he is able to enumerate the "properties" of each form and, so, give its definition.

In exhibiting rather than explaining his method, the stranger leaves it to his auditors to grasp its procedural rules. Through his repetition of the same series of steps, however, he makes these rules evident. Before any distinctions can be made, first of all, the relevant field of distinctions must be established. In terms sufficiently general to be safe but not so general as to be vague or irrelevant, one must grasp what the definitiun is. In the Statesman the stranger presents this inaugural insight abruptly, by a leading question at the very outset:

Tell me, then, Socrates, whether [the statesman] too must be classified as one of those who possess some kind of expert knowledge, or must we begin some other way? (258b)

Thus it is established that statesmanship is, or combines with, science (episteme). This act of identification, however, calls for a counterbalancing act of differentiation. 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 (258c). His procedure is twofold. First, he "halves" the initial kind ("science"). From the various examples the stranger's distinctions provide, it is clear that the principle of "halving" (mesoteunis) is contrariety: one seeks to distinguish contrary characters or kinds of the initial kind. The advantage of this also seems evident. Contraries are mutually exclusive and so long as they express an essential aspect of it) exhaust the initial kind. All science—to take the stranger's first distinction—must be either practical or theoretical, thus anything which is a science must be one of and not the other of these two characters, must combine with one of them and not combine with the other. This sets the stage for the second step. Having "halved" the initial kind, the dialectician must now discern which of these halves the definitiun combines with and which it does not combine with. This choice discloses a second property of the definitiun. The stranger now knows, to return to the example, that statesmanship is a specifically theoretical science.
In these three moments—inaugural insight, bifurcation of the initial kind, and location of the definitendum in one of the halves—we see the inner rhythm and momentum of the diairetic process as a whole. The third is precisely analogous to the first: in both cases one sees what statesmanship is or combines with; and as such an act of identification, the third like the first calls for a further act of differentiation. Obviously, statesmanship does not combine with all kinds of theoretical science. Thus there is need of another bifurcation in order to establish, by yet another locating or identifying insight, what kind of theoretical science statesmanship is and what kind it is not. And so on. Constantly alternating between bifurcation and identification, the dialectician proceeds. He will stop only when, finally, one of the halves he distinguishes picks out the definitendum by itself. At this point he will have completely isolated the sought-for nature. And the full series of proper forms disclosed along the way will serve as the nature’s defining elements; the dialectician needs only to recollect them, and he has his definition.

Up to 261e, the stranger’s search for the statesman appears to proceed smoothly towards this goal. Young Socrates accepts the stranger’s inaugural intuition, that statesmanship is a science, without reservation. And the stranger then leads the way through a series of bifurcations and identifications which may be diagrammed as follows:

```
practical
  theoretical,

  critical
    directive,

  giving directives
    conceived by others
      passing on directives

  concerning the
    “production” (genesis)
      of non-living beings

  singly

... concerning the
  “production” (genesis), i.e.
    nurture, of living beings ... 

... collectively, in herds
```

At no point in the course of making these distinctions is there any disagreement or controvbersy. Young Socrates is deferential and eager to follow the stranger’s lead. Indeed, if anything, he is too tractable. At several points the stranger feels called upon to remind Young Socrates that he must be ready to share responsibility for the work. At 258c, Young Socrates tells him that defining statesmanship “... must be your task, sir—it is not for me to attempt it.” The stranger objects indirectly, saying, “Yes, but the achievement must be yours as well, Socrates, when all becomes clear to us both.” And at 260b, after the stranger proposes bifurcating theoretical science into critical and directive, there is the following exchange:

Young Socrates: Yes—I for one would agree to it.
Stranger: I hope so, for it is desirable that those sharing a common task should be of one mind.
Young Socrates: Indeed it is.
Stranger: So long as we ourselves share this happy agreement, we must not bother about the opinions of the rest of the world.
Young Socrates: Yes.

The ease of this exchange is striking—especially when we think of the elder Socrates silently listening. Time and again, but above all in his courtroom apology, he has insisted that the reasoned agreements of conversants must take precedence over the external authority of popular opinion (see Apology 34c–35c); this is an essential element of his distinction between dialectic and rhetoric. And time and again his interlocutors have resisted the point to the end. In utter contrast, Young Socrates agrees immediately. Here and throughout the opening series of distinctions, he and the stranger appear to be in complete harmony.

2. YOUNG SOCRATES’ ERROR: THE VALUE OF BIFURCATORY DIARESIS (261e–264b)

In the middle part (261e–264b) of the initial diairetic process, however, it becomes evident that this harmony is more illusory than real. At 261e the stranger tests the depth of Young Socrates’ understanding by giving him the initiative; the stranger invites him to make the next bifurcation. Young Socrates is enthusiastic—“I am eager to try” (prohumentosomai), he says (262a). But the division he makes, separating the “production” or “nurture of herds” into that of men and that of “beasts” (ton thiron), shows a basic failure to appreciate diairetic method and the forms that it aims to disclose. The stranger objects immediately:

You’ve made the division with utmost zeal and bravery (prohumenta kai andretesta); however, we must not let this happen again if we can help it. (262a)

The following exchange is rich in implications for the whole dialogue. The stranger first gives a careful account of Young Socrates’ error. Interestingly, while his direct and explicit concern here is diairetic method and the nature of forms or kinds, he also makes indirect reference, by a brief recourse to examples, to the underlying political-cultural issue of partisanship. This gives us our first glimpse of the ultimate intersection of the formal-methodological and substantive-political themes in the dialogue. Then at 263c the stranger turns to “the next point after this” (to meta touto): shifting from refutation to correction, he instructs Young Socrates how to avoid such errors as they proceed. We shall consider these two passages in turn.

a. The refutation: halving and forms (261e–263b)

The stranger’s objection takes Young Socrates by surprise. It is obvious that statesmanship as a form of nurture has men as its nurslings, and his bifurcation to men
and beasts achieves this result directly. The stranger, however, is not concerned to contest Young Socrates’ result—indeed, he will confirm its positive correctness later on by his own singling out of men. (See 266c, e, 267c). Nor does he object to directness per se; “it is best of all (kalliston),” he even says, “to divide immediately to the sought-for [kind], separating it from all the rest, if one can do it correctly” (262b).

But Young Socrates has done it incorrectly. He has gotten the right result by unwitting deformation of the method, and this deformation undermines the philosophical significance of the method. In his objection at 262b, the stranger points out that “men” constitute only “one small portion” of “living beings.” In separating out “men” Young Socrates “chops [living beings] into small bits” (leptourgán), and in setting them over against all other kinds of “living beings,” he makes a lopsided division rather than a halving. This is “dangerous,” the stranger points out, for substantive reasons.

It is safer to go down the middle to make our cuts—we are more likely to hit upon forms that way, and this makes all the difference in an investigation. (262b)

Young Socrates does not understand this right away and asks for clarification. This is natural enough. “Men” is so obviously right, and as a mathematician he is presumably so inexperienced in thinking about forms, that the stranger’s criticism must be obscure. Just how has his cut failed to “hit upon forms”? And why does “this make all the difference in an investigation”? To provide him the experience he lacks, the stranger responds by working through a series of examples. Like Young Socrates “men”/“beasts” division are (1) the commonplace polarization of mankind into Greeks and barbarians (262d), (2) a (quite fanciful) division of all numbers into the unit 10,000 and all numbers other than 10,000 (262d–e), and (3) the (polemical or sarcastic) splits of Lydians or Phrygians—barbarians “particularly despised” by the Greeks—and all other peoples (262e). Unlike Young Socrates’ division, the other hand, and correct alternatives to (2) and (1), respectively, would be “odd”/“even” and “male”/“female” (262e).

From the negative examples, first of all, it should be clear how Young Socrates’ cut misses forms. As with “barbarians,” the presence of the word “beasts” gives the semblance of a genuine kind; but any such semblance dissolves in the analogous case of “all numbers other than 10,000.” In truth all three are merely negative groupings. Their members are unified by no common character, no form; they share nothing but their stipulated opposition to another term—“men,” “Greeks,” “10,000”—with which, in truth, each has as much and as little in common as with one another. Thus, for example, barbarian peoples are just as distinct and segregated (ameikoí, 262d) from one another as each is from Greeks; though all fail to speak Greek, no one speaks the language of any other either (see asymphónoi, 262d). Indeed, any character which, transcending these differences, would integrate them into a kind would also include Greeks. And likewise for “beasts,” “all numbers other than 10,000,” and “all others than Lydians or Phrygians.” These are all mere aggregates, without any inner affinity. On the other hand, what of “men,” “Greeks,” “Lydians,” “Phrygians”? Here we seem to have genuine kinds. (And “10,000,” while arguably a kind, is certainly a positively intelligible entity.) In fact, however, Young Socrates’ way of dividing does not reveal them as genuine kinds. Since “men,” for example, are brought to light in contraposition with “beasts,” and since the sole meaning of “beasts” is “not-men,” the distinction is really a mere circle. We do not learn what form “men” cannot combine with, for “beasts” lack any common form; and since this remains opaque, we also get no hint of the form of “men” itself, the inner unifying character which, common to individual men, sets them apart as a genuine kind. The same holds equally for “Greeks,” “10,000,” etc. This should make it clear, moreover, why Young Socrates’ failure to “hit upon forms” makes all the difference in an investigation. Such a circular distinction is completely uninformative about “men,” “Greeks,” “10,000.” It does not “investigate” at all but, rather, presupposes that one already knows the forms in question.

The stranger’s positive examples—“odd”/“even” and “male”/“female”—show the virtue of his methodological rule of “going down the middle.” The notion of halving involves more than the merely quantitative equality of extensions. Halves are equal also in the broader sense of mutually relative terms on par. “Odd” and “even” are halves in this sense. Rather than a positive term and its indeterminate contradictory (“men” and “not-men”), they are reciprocally defining contraries. Thus each both excludes the other and yet is a definite, positive character in itself. And likewise for “male” and “female.” In this sense these cuts do “hit upon forms.” And since what each distinguished form is not (does not combine with) is definite and positive, they are genuinely informative; to know what each is not illuminates what it is.

How deeply does Young Socrates understand the stranger’s examples? By his response at 263a Young Socrates shows that he at least grapples the problem. “How can one know to distinguish more clearly between a mere part and a kind?” he asks. He stands between a merely extensional grasp of diastatic method as a cleaving of whole into parts and a philosophical grasp of it as the tracing of the relations of forms. Interestingly, the stranger seems satisfied to leave him here. When he first presented the examples, he noted that “under the present circumstances it isn’t possible to explicate these issues fully” (262c); and now at 263a he puts off further inquiry until “some later time when we are at leisure.” In the meantime he gives Young Socrates a summary formula to work with. A true class, he says, will necessarily be part of an encompassing class; but a part will not necessarily be a true class (263b). On the face of it this is less an answer than a heightening of the question: it is just this ambiguous relation between kind and part which makes it crucial to distinguish them.

There is, however, a pedagogical point to the stranger’s evasions. What makes a part a kind or true class is the presence of form; to distinguish part from kind therefore presupposes an understanding of the notion of form. But the stranger knows he cannot presuppose this with Young Socrates; on the contrary, he is only just introducing Young Socrates to the notion through the practice of diastasis. From a pedagogical point of view, the stranger is right to limit himself, instead, to giving Young Socrates the means—the quasi-mathematical rule of halving—by
which to achieve the understanding for himself. Since halving entails finding contraries, and since contraries—as positive, definite characters—are forms, the practice of halving should itself lead Young Socrates to forms. By experience with and reflection on halving, he should then be able to answer his own question for himself.¹¹

Note: panhellenist partisanship: The stranger’s explicit focus in his refutation of Young Socrates’ error is diatetic method. Yet his recourse to and choice of examples point to a connection between philosophical method and the political content of the dialogue.

From our detached standpoint as modern readers, the political-cultural problem to which the examples allude is obvious. To divide men into Greeks and barbarians is blatantly partisan. Interpreted in the worst light, it expresses the cultural self-centeredness and provincialism which partitions the world into “us” and “them.” Taking his own ways as somehow fundamental, the provincial lumps together everything unfamiliar and foreign. But some very unprovincial minds also invoked this division—and for anti-provincialist reasons. Isocrates, for example, hoped that a common hostility to the barbarians might unite the Greeks, overcoming the hostilities which had set city against city for decades; the barbarian “them” might negatively elicit the old sense of “us” which Greeks had known in the glorified times of the Trojan and Persian Wars. But most striking of all, Plato himself had Socrates express this general view at Republic 470a ff. Taking war and faction as opposites, Socrates there contrasted the “natural enmity” which divides Greeks and barbarians with the “natural” friendship between Greeks. And this contrast provoked Glaucon to make the double judgment that

...our citizens must behave [as friends] toward their [Greek] opponents; and toward the barbarians they must behave as the Greeks do now toward one another. (471b)

But now Plato challenges this Hellenism, both by the recourse to examples and by the diatetic method which these are meant to clarify. The recourse to examples, first of all, is a preliminary and unannounced use of the method of paradigm. Much later in the dialogue (at 277d ff.) the stranger will focus on this, explaining how the good teacher proceeds by confronting his student with the strange and the familiar, the complex and the simple, at once; the student learns by recognizing in the strange and complex what he has already understood in its familiar and simple appearances. Evidently, however, the stranger must clarify not only Young Socrates’ error but his own clarifying examples as well. He needs the first example—“Greeks’/barbarians”—because he seeks to show Young Socrates the specifically partisan character of his cut. Though it is not political-cultural in character, “men/ beasts” reflects the same one-sidedness as “Greeks’/barbarians”; if he can see this, Young Socrates will be forewarned of the danger of lapsing into partisanship. That the stranger needs a second example, however, suggests that the first is not clear by itself. Yet the cut as such, “Greeks’/barbarians,” is surely familiar enough; as the stranger says, “most people in this part of the world” endorse it. Thus it must be not the cut as such but its deficiency which the stranger judges unclear to Young Socrates; Young Socrates himself, apparently, is one of “most people,” still immersed in provincial opinion. This also helps to explain why the stranger turns to a mathematical example to clarify the political-cultural one. As the well-trained Young Socrates will appreciate immediately, there is simply no occasion or basis for partisan interest in the abstract, non-perceptual work of mathematics. Thus the favoritism in the cut of 10,000 from all other numbers is immediately clear and absurd. The juxtaposition of this cut with “Greeks’/barbarians” should make the otherwise latent deficiency of the latter, its Hellenist bias, patent. The third example, finally, returns to the political-cultural sphere and drives home the point with a twist. Since Phrygians and Lydians were particularly disliked, to define all other peoples with reference to them would be particularly obnoxious; here, in contrast to “Greeks’/barbarians,” the one-sidedness would be obvious. But the Greek who rejects this cut must also reject “Greeks’/barbarians,” and for the same reason. Neither love of one’s own, so to speak, nor dislike for the foreigner is a proper basis for genuine distinctions. Rather one must rise above local opinion (what “most people in this part of the world” think) and, with the disinterestedness of the mathematician, search for true classes. Here we begin to glimpse a political significance for the method of dairies. By subordinating unreflective preferences to its principle of halving, diatetic method puts a check on partisan bias; thus it keeps the whole in view. The echoes of the Republic are deep and direct. The stranger suggests by his examples that it is not the patriotic so much as the mathematical spirit in Young Socrates which offers the real potential for political judgment. And his notion of diatetic method recalls the distinctive feature which makes the philosopher qualified for statesmanship, the love of the whole which raises him above all partisan politics.

Why, however, does Plato go to such lengths to raise the particular issue of Greeks versus barbarians here? Partisanship might have been addressed through other examples just as easily. Does Plato want to reverse Socrates’ position at Republic 470a ff.? To begin with this second question, there is no doubt that the stranger counters what Socrates explicitly says at 470a ff. But there are reasons to wonder how fully Socrates means what he says. There is a clear tension, first of all, between his seeming acceptance of war with barbarians and his earlier rejection, in arguing against Polemarchus in Book I, of violence or injury even against one’s foes (335b–d).¹² Is there irony in one or both of these passages, or simply inconsistency?¹³ One notes, moreover, that this tension is also present in the passage at 470a ff. just by itself. Even while Socrates argues against faction between Greeks, he at no point actually speaks in favor of war against barbarians. Strikingly, the second half of Glaucon’s judgment, that “...towards the barbarians [our citizens] must behave as the Greeks do now toward one another (471b),” is nowhere suggested by Socrates. Is Glaucon extrapolating unjustifiably? Conversely, does Socrates introduce the polarization of Greeks and barbarians solely for its bearing on relations between Greeks? And if so, does this reflect back on the polarization itself, suggesting that—in accord with Socrates’ arguments in Book I—an international Hellenist partisanship would be no more justifiable than, for instance, an Athenian or a Spartan factionalism? Without deciding these questions, the very
ambiguities which provoke them suggest why Plato has the stranger go out of his way to address the issue. Young Socrates, we have argued, is a general representative of the young generation of Academicians, and the dialogue is an indirect communication with them. Might some of them, at any rate, have read the Republic passage more in the spirit of Glaucian than of Socrates? If so, they might well have taken the passage as an endorsement of contemporary panellenism. Plato evidently feels the need to undercut that reading and to call their attention to the unphilosophical provincialism of this aspect, at least, of the popular movement.

b. The correction; the status of diaireis (263c–264b)

In his first responses to Young Socrates’ cut, the stranger has shown him what his error is, how his lop-sided division fails to “hit upon forms.” For Young Socrates, who does not yet fully grasp what a “form” is, the thrust of these reflections is negative. Denied the obvious partition of “living beings,” how shall he proceed? In a second series (“the next point after this,” 263c) of reflections at 263c–264b, the stranger tries to show him both why he was prone to error and how he might avoid it. These reflections are positive in character. In what is basically a Socratic rhythm, the stranger follows his refutation with reorienting reflections, aimed to enable a resumption of the interrupted process.

The stranger begins by considering “what caused us to stray from the argument” (263c). In successive speeches, he makes three points about Young Socrates’ erroneous cut. First, Young Socrates divided mala prothumaten (263c5). This might be inelegantly translated “with excessive zeal” or, more literally and interpretively both, “with your thumos too much in the fore.” The stranger’s phrase directly reiterates his initial characterization of Young Socrates’ cut as prothumoten kai andreia ("with utmost zeal and bravery", 262a5); and he will reiterate the point once again, shortly, in his gently chiding vocative characterization of Young Socrates as ἄνδρος ἀνδρειοτάτος ("you bravest of men," 263d3). It is no accident, as later passages confirm, that these terms recall the psychological analysis in Republic IV. Thumos (roughly translated as “heart” or “spirit”) is the source of non-appetitive passion, intermediate between the appetitive desires and the “reasoning” part (logismon) of the psyche. The virtue of the thumos, in turn, is andreia, “courage.” According to Socrates’ teaching, thumos is courageous when it is informed by and obedient to the counsels of the “reasoning” part about what is and what is not to be feared. This submissiveness of the lower to the higher faculty, moreover, is the essence of sōphronê, “prudence.” Such obedience, or sōphronê, makes the difference between courage and a rash, foolhardy daring. Thus the stranger’s remarks constitute an indirect criticism and warning. Young Socrates’ thumos is “too much in the fore” in the sense that he needs to check his zeal by “reasoning”; he is no “brave” in the sense that he accepts uncritically, without the counsel of “reasoning,” what seems obviously true.

Thus—and this is the thrust of the stranger’s second point—he was fooled by appearances in making his cut. “...you broke off a portion,” the stranger says, and because you were able to give the common name ‘beasts’ to all [the living beings] that remained, you thought that they make up one kind. (263c)'

Young Socrates was deceived by a name. It is natural to presume that where there is a common name, there is a “one kind” of things to which it refers. (This has been a rule of thumb in the elder Socrates’ presentation of the theory of forms.) But to presume is not to think. As in the earlier case of “barbarians,” “beasts” denotes only a portion or part of a kind. Conversely, there are also true kinds which happen to lack names. In fact, the stranger hit upon just such a kind earlier on, at 260c–e, when he had to invent the name autépetaktikê to signify the directive science in which the practitioner himself [aut[ô]k] conceives the directives [-epitaktikê] he gives. To recognize such disparities between the orders of names and of true kinds or forms, however, one must be able to think the latter apart from the former. To think this way is a primary case of the “reasoning” which should counsel and guide the thumos. The enthusiastic and uncritical Young Socrates has not yet learned this art of sōphronê.

But if not “reasoning,” what has guided Young Socrates in his cut? By a wry analogy at 263d–e, the stranger gives an indication, and in the process he brings out the relatedness of the methodological problem of lopsidedness and the political-cultural one of partisanship. The crane, he notes, shows signs of rationality. Suppose cranes were to make their own division of “living beings” on the same basis as Young Socrates? “Investing themselves with a unique and proper dignity” (sēmmoun auto heauto, 263d7), cranes would distinguish themselves from all others, including men, “lumping them together” as “beasts!” This comical proposal reacts on Young Socrates’ “men/beasts” just as the stranger’s earlier “Lydians/non-Lydians” reacted on his “Greeks/barbarians.” For man to be called a “beast” is ridiculous—especially (to keep tongue in cheek) when it is done by cranes! But it is not different in principle from man’s relegation of cranes and all other creatures as well to that status. What the stranger exposes by his analogy is the anthropocentrism of Young Socrates’ cut. It is because he “invests” mankind “with a unique and proper dignity” that the singling out of “men” from all other creatures is obvious and compelling to him. And it is this very obviousness, in turn, which makes him overly bold and thoughtless.

Is anthropocentrism so serious a deficiency? From one point of view, the universality of its interest seems to make it a harmless prejudice. Analogously as Hellenism transcends partisan differences amongst Greeks, so anthropocentrism—or humanism—transcends the partisan character of Hellenism; no one is excluded. What is more, with the decline of the old gods no other standpoint seems possible; in this sense the homen mensura doctrine of Protagoras (old friend of Theodoras) is more inevitable than novel. From the Socratic point of view, however, what is “obsolete to everyone” (Republic 510D) nonetheless requires inquiry and a validation by the “reasoning” part of the psyche. To put the interest of man highest risks concealing its specificity and losing sight of the true universality of logos, philosophical thinking. (We shall see this developed more explicitly, and in a strikingly ironic form, by the stranger’s myth.) Thus the stranger insists that Young Socrates and he “guard carefully against” (exulabreïthai, 263e1) such mistakes.

But how to “guard”? The stranger closes the whole interruptive middle part on the same note as he began it. One must hold patiently to bifurcatory procedure.
Young Socrates “rushed” the process, trying to divide “all the class of living beings” at once. That is, he leapt straight to the goal, the small kind of living beings with which the statesman is concerned, rather than working gradually through the cuts and kinds intermediate between the two. Just such step-by-step work is the best safeguard against error. To make this clear, the stranger once again invokes an example. This one, however, is drawn from his own earlier divisions, before Young Socrates’ error. He too, he points out, jumped over intermediates. As Young Socrates leapt from “living beings” to “men,” he leapt from the “directive part of theoretical science” to “the part concerned with the nurture of living beings, in particular, of those dwelling in herds” (263e). A nurturing art, however, and especially one which approaches its nurslings collectively, as a herd or flock, presupposes that the latter will have a domesticable or “gentle” nature. Thus, the stranger indicates, he jumped over the intermediate distinction of “living beings” into the “gentle” and the “wild.” He ought first to have made this distinction and only then, working within the class of “gentle living beings,” gone on to the distinction between “herd-dwelling” creatures and those “living singly.”

All of the stranger’s comments in this middle section—the refutative remarks concerning halving and partisanship and the reorienting corrections alike—point to the crucial role of bifurcatory method in Young Socrates’ education into philosophy. Put to the test, he shows by his leap to “men”/“beasts” that he is in the grip of ordinary opinion. Not only is the cut wrong, diverging from eidetic structure. Worse, by his very confidence or “bravery” Young Socrates shows the presupposition which keeps error hidden; unaware of the lack of content and of the partiality of his opinions, he assumes his own wisdom. Bifurcatory diarēsis addresses both difficulties at once. By his insistence on working through the intermediates, the stranger requires Young Socrates to check his immediate, prejudicial sense of the goal. Young Socrates must suspend his sense of the obvious. Moreover, to help Young Socrates, until now unintroduced to forms, find his way in this strange domain, the stranger provides him with the methodological rule of halving. As an accomplished mathematician, he should have a concrete feeling for this rule.23 Thus the stranger in effect attempts to turn his strength, his mathematical sensitivity, against his weakness, his uncritical subjection to the obvious. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, the method gives Young Socrates first experience in philosophical accountability. By distinguishing differentiation from identification and by proceeding in many small steps, thought is exposed to critical review. Intuitive judgment is broken down and made visible to reflection. In this way bifurcatory method can help to free Young Socrates from the self-concealment—ignorance of ignorance, in the elder Socrates’ terms—which is the essence of mere opinionatedness.24

Precisely its pedagogical appropriateness for the nonphilosopher, however, points to an important question. What is the value of bifurcatory diarēsis for the philosopher? As one who has already become philosophical, the stranger does not require the checks and discipline Young Socrates needs. Thus the question involves the substantive power of the method. Is diarēsis, while indispensable to the one first learning to think the forms, dispensable to the one who has already accompl
resumption of this process itself in the final main part of the dialogue (287b–311e) will provide grounds for developing them.

3. THE CLOSING BIFURCATIONS; JOKES AND PROBLEMS (264b–267c)

The stranger resumes diacriticals with the signal phrase *palin ex archēs* ("once again from the beginning") at 264b. Beginning with the division Young Socrates could not make, the halving of the science of "collective nurture" (*koivosoterikē*), the stranger proceeds to an apparently successful definition of statesmanship as the "science of shepherding man" (cf. *anthroponomikon*, 267c). Midway through the process, as we have noted, he points out that there are really two paths, a longer and a shorter one, to the goal. If we pick up from the point at which the initial divisions (see the diagram, p. 18) broke off, the closing divisions may be diagrammed as follows:

Such diagramming hardly indicates the odd complexity of this section of the dialogue. Ostensibly its purpose is to complete the definition of statesmanship, but actually it contains much more—and much less—than this requires. Not only is the final definition inadequate, requiring new reflections and further diacriticals later on in the dialogue, but also the very steps towards this definition are problematic and ambiguous. In fact the stranger seems to speak on several levels at once, addressing the two Socrates, as it were, in the same words. On the one hand, he speaks pedagogically to Young Socrates; on the other hand, he reflects critically on the ultimate philosophical limitations of what he offers on the first level.

(i) To begin with, the substantive end-point of these closing distinctions is clear in advance. Young Socrates' error lay not in isolating men as the statesman's nurseries, but, rather, in the overzealous or impetuous (mala prothumēs) way he did it. The central thrust of the closing distinctions is therefore pedagogical. By applying the lessons of the intervening digressions, the stranger will reach the same end Young Socrates did but by the correct method. As he says at the very outset (264b),

... It may well be that the argument, when it comes to its conclusion, will itself show you better (kallion) [than your mistaken cut] just what you are so eager for (prothumē).\[26\]

The stranger's desire to make a concrete display of the lessons of the digression goes a long way toward explaining the two special oddities—the humor and the two paths—of 264b–267c. First, the stranger's humor centers on the belittling characterizations of mankind. The "longer way" pairs man with pig—and consequently, statesman with swineherd—and the "shorter way" gives the notorious characterization of man as a featherless biped, pairing him with birds. The pride of the crane notwithstanding, these characterizations hardly honor the special dignity of man. But this is just the point. Precisely reversing Young Socrates' anthropocentric cut, the stranger's divisions vivify the principle that

... in a search for definitions like this, it is irrelevant whether something has greater dignity (sousoteria) or not; the search must not dishonor the lowly in behalf of the great but rather must always proceed in its own proper way (kath' hautoyn) to what is most true. (260d)\[27\]

The two paths, in turn, give a concrete display of the stranger's principle of "going down the middle." This too he makes explicit; in first pointing out the two paths, he distinguishes them by saying,

One reaches the goal quicker but divides off a small part from a large one; the other is indeed longer, but it observes the principle we enunciated before, that we ought to cut down the middle (mesosotein) as much as possible. (265a)

Once again, then, the stranger both mirrors Socrates' error and compares it to correct procedure. In the second, final step of the shorter way, the "bare" or "featherless" (*pdsios*) is but a small part of the class of bipeds; man alone qualifies, and is vastly outnumbered by all the kinds of birds. Moreover, by a pointed contrast between the two ways the stranger seems to expose the bad logic of this one-sided distinction. In the longer way, *pteronon*, "winged," is distinguished from *pezon, footed" or "ambulant"; in this distinction it refers to flying creatures in specific...
contrast to walking ones. Thus *πτέρων* is distinguished from its contrary; each is both something positive in itself and the specific negative of the other. This makes it striking when, in the final step of the shorter way, *πτέρων* is distinguished from *πτηνον*, "bare." What is winged and a flier is distinguished merely from what is "bare" of wings (or feathers) and, as such, is a non-flier. Though the term *πτηνον* is not privative, the sense is. 25 It is thus merely the contradictory, not the contrary, to *πτέρων*. Just as in "men"/"beasts" and "Greeks"/"barbarians," one side of the cut lacks any positive and definite character of its own and instead depends entirely on the other for its sense. The sole difference is that in "winged"/"bare" it is the small rather than the large side which is parasitic.

Given this seemingly pointed deficiency, however, the stranger's manner in presenting the two ways is surprising. Immediately after his critical distinction between them (cited just above), he tells Young Socrates, "We can proceed by whichever path we want" (265a). And at no point during or after presenting the shorter way does he explicitly criticize it. This reserve is in striking contrast to his quick, pointed objections to "men"/"beasts" and "Greeks"/"barbarians." Why is he so outwardly tolerant? One compelling interpretation is that he is fulfilling the elder Socrates' request in a genuinely Socratic manner. By putting the two ways before Young Socrates, he tests the latter's understanding of the lessons in the digression; and by his apparent indifference, he challenges Young Socrates to grasp the deficiency of the shorter way for himself. This line of interpretation should be carried one step further, however. Young Socrates has no critical response at all; he shows himself not yet Socratic. Thus the responsibility falls to the hearer of the dialogue—above all, to the young Academician who is, in effect, represented by the persona "Young Socrates." Can he grasp what Young Socrates, apparently, as yet cannot?

(ii) Even as we accept and think through this interpretation, another, supplementary possibility suggests itself. For the stranger to reject the shorter way would be tantamount to accepting the longer one. This raises the question whether he approves *either* of them. Might his reserve cover a disapproval of both paths? And in fact, the critical hearer who reflects on the methodological superiority of the longer way may discover something surprising. By the jokes with which he makes the final cut of the longer way, the stranger shows how it contains the same basic deficiency as the shorter way. Since, however, the longer way is a sound application of the principle of "cutting down the middle," the presence of this deficiency reflects critically on the substantive limits of the method itself.

To bring this out, we need to consider the particular implications of the stranger's three jokes at 266a-d.

The first joke (266a-c) consists in the application of complex geometrical theory to make the seemingly simple division between bipeds and quadrupeds. 26 The stranger begins by announcing that he sees a way to divide peculiarly "appropriate" to Young Socrates and Theaetetus as geometers. Then he distinguishes the two classes as "the diagonal" and "the diagonal of the diagonal." In his "mode of walking," man is of course *δυναμει διπος*, "two-footed in capacity"—but these words also have the mathematical sense of $\sqrt{2}$, "the square root," *δυναμις*, "of two feet," *διπος*; and $\sqrt{2}$ is the length of the diagonal of the square whose sides are one foot each. The contrary class, which has "twice [man's] two feet," would be "four-footed in capacity"; and this, taken in its mathematical sense of $\sqrt{4}$, is the diagonal of the square whose sides are each $\sqrt{2}$, that is, "the diagonal [of the square of the [first] diagonal." 27 On its surface, the joke is merely a droll acknowledgement of the special competence of Theodorus's circle. But there is deeper significance as well. The stranger, who has already characterized his bifurcatory method as "halving," here suggests a closer and more pointed affinity between it and geometry. The notion of the square root (*δυναμις*) and the play with the diagonal and squaring all refer to the particular concentration of Theodorus and Theaetetus in the study of incommensurables. By working with the diagonal, they were able not only to generate surds but also to treat them together with integers as lengths in common figures; and by generating areas (*επιποδοι, Theaetetus 148b*) through squaring they could even commensurate them in a secondary way. 31 By applying these various notions in his cut, the stranger suggests that bifurcatory method has something like these powers. It too can discover, compare, and even in some sense commensurate incommensurables.

Whereas these are clearly virtues in geometry, however, their philosophical value is rather problematic. The stranger shows why by his second and third jokes. In the second (266c) he punitively reveals the quadruped with which man, as biped, is paired in the final cut: man "is matched with ... the noblest and most indolent" species (c4-6), the one which, as "the slowest," "arrives last [hustato]" (c8)—namely the pig (*hipos*). Nothing could make clearer the sense in which bifurcatory diairesis commensurates incommensurables in a secondary way. Paired with pig as biped with quadruped, mankind is revealed solely through the brutish aspect of its being. 32 And this only epitomizes the whole series of disclosures, beginning with the fifth cut and location of man within the class of herd animals. Precisely in order to arrive at man by halving, the stranger has had to interpret the being of man in terms of what it shares with that of other animals, that is, in terms of its merely animalic features. Yet these—"on dry land," "ambulant," "hornless," etc.—conceal more than reveal what man is. 33 Indeed, this concealment is so conspicuous that it calls attention to the unmentioned feature which makes man incommensurable with his fellow animals: nowhere does the stranger have occasion to credit man's intelligence, the capacity of his psyche for reasoning (to *logistikos*). Since nothing corresponds to this as its proper contrary in other species, there is no bifurcation into contraries which can disclose it; but this does not make it any less essential to man. In rather striking analogy to geometry's secondary commensuration of the surd and the integer by turning to their squares as areas, so the stranger's bifurcations pair and distinguish man and pig by turning away from what is unique and essential to man and to what, regarded merely as animals, they share. In the same way, moreover, the bifurcations conceal the nature of statesmanship. This is the subsurface point of the third joke (266cd): since man is "matched" with pig, and since the statesman is first disclosed through the isolation of his nursing man, so the statesman is "matched" with the swineherd. 34 As the following phases of the dialogue will show, this has serious implications. Just insofar as man is revealed solely in his brutish aspect, so the governing of man will come to light as a sort of...
animal-keeping, the work of the herdsman. And this obscures just what is unique to statesmanship, that the tended subjects themselves share in the intelligence and the work of the tending ruler.35

Thus it becomes clear how the longer way contains the same basic deficiency as the shorter. Methodologically, it is indeed superior: in contrast to "bare" (or wingless, featherless), "two-footed" is a genuine contrary, and "four-footed"/"two-footed" correctly halves the whole class. Substantively, however, the latter distinction is like the former in that it reveals the definition man in terms which do not reflect its essence. To put this another way, the longer path does succeed as an isolation of the kind or class, man; but it does not reveal the essential character—the eidos in the fullest sense of this term36—of man. Moreover, there is a certain necessity to this failure which points back to the stranger's elliptical digression on the relation of "true class" and "part" (263a–b). The whole which each cut partitions is a class united by some common character; every partition, or differentiation, presupposes such a whole, or fund of identity. Likewise each part, the stranger insisted in the digression, must be a whole in its own right, a class united by a positive, definite character. Now, however, we have come across a kind or class, man, whose essential common character has no positive contrary corresponding to it in some other class. The differentiation, "intelligent"/"lacking-this-intelligence," is not a differentiation into positive contraries. If, therefore, the kind or class, man, is understood in terms of this character, intelligence, it is no longer the sort of "part" which halving seeks. And conversely, since this character or eidos (in the sense used above) is the unifying essence of the class, halving does not fully reflect the eidetic structure it means to trace. On the contrary, at least in the present case the method conceals the true eidos and is thus inadequate to fully philosophical insight.

At the same time, it is also clear why the stranger must restrict himself to such an indirect, subsurface indication of this problem. In its outward form, the philosophical distinction of uniquely intelligent mankind from other animals is no different from the partisan "men"/"beasts." And the nonphilosopher, since he lacks in-sight into eidetic structure, knows nothing else than such outward form; he is not in position to distinguish the philosopher's transcendence of bifurcatory method from his own failure to achieve it. Thus the intrinsically "best" (recall kalliston, 262b) way must be suppressed for the sake of what is, relative to the mere opinion of the nonphilosopher, "better" (recall kallon, 264b). Since bifurcatory method is Young Socrates' sole means of freeing himself from mere opinion, the stranger cannot afford to criticize it explicitly.

If the foregoing reflections are well-taken, then the stranger's final distinctions bear a deep pedagogical irony. On the surface he puts them forth as if he meant them. But this apparent positivity is really dissembling. On subsurface levels the stranger both (i) tests Young Socrates' understanding of the lessons of the digression and (ii) for the one who, transcending Young Socrates, succeeds in this test—indicates his own philosophical criticism of the method of halving.37 In addition to this methodological content, moreover, the stranger's irony has a substantive aspect.

We have noted this in referring to his third joke (266c–d). To pair man with pig is to pair statesman with swineherd. The stranger's surface point here is that philosophical definitions must be oblivious to differences in dignity and esteem. But beyond this, the pairing calls attention to what the stranger will expose, in the next phase of the conversation, as a basic problem in the definition so far; the statesman has been related to those he governs as a herdsman to his herd. This has entered into the particular vocabulary of the definition as early as the fifth cut (261d–e), where statesmanship is characterized as "nurture" (trophe) and men as "nurseries" (thremmata). More generally, the species difference between herdsman and herd pervades the series of distinctions from beginning to end: the statesman is characterized as practitioner of a science, and as autonomous and directive in this practice, while his human constituency is characterized as a mass of tameable bipeds, with no mention of its intelligence or self-responsibility. Now, especially since the stranger will himself object and expose the difficulties in all this very shortly, it is perplexing why he puts forth this image of the statesman and his constituency in the first place. Specifically, since these particular deformations of statesmanship are not essential to his methodological points, why does the stranger dissemble in this way?

If his ironic practice of bad logic and problematic method is any guide, then the stranger in some sense tests Young Socrates. He is interested in knowing if Young Socrates holds or has any sympathy for the notion of the statesman as "herdsman to man" (anthroponomikon, 267c). As by his offer of the longer and shorter ways, so by the initial diacritic process as a whole he invites Young Socrates to make critical objection. Young Socrates, however, has none to make. On the contrary, with the same uncritical enthusiasm of his one-sided leap to "men"/"beasts," now at 267a he gives unreserved endorsement to the definition:

Your debt to me is beautifully paid off by the definition—and you have more than paid it, for you have thrown in the digression by way of interest.38

And in response to the stranger's synopsis of the whole initial diacritic process, with its concluding characterization of the statesman as anthroponomikon (267a–c), Young Socrates gives unqualified assent: "Absolutely so."

If this helps to explain the stranger's dissembling, however, it only provokes questions about Plato's. Why does he go to such lengths to have his protagonist articulate this notion of statesmanship? This contains two more pointed questions. Why does Plato associate the persona "Young Socrates" with this notion? And why does he consider it so important to expose and refute? In short, who are Plato's real antagonists, and what is the basic issue between them?
CHAPTER III

THE DIGRESSIONS ON SUBSTANCE AND METHOD (267c–287b)

Young Socrates' uncritical acceptance of the two ways and of the definition of the statesman as "herdsman to man" makes vivid the special difficulty facing the stranger. While the stranger intends to put Young Socrates' critical capacities to the test, Young Socrates is eager to defer to the stranger's lead. In part, this excessive docility is the natural response of a respectful youth to an impressive elder. Considered against the spectrum of interlocutors presented by earlier dialogues, he most resembles Hippocrates of the Protagoras. For both, their very eagerness to learn, since it is not tempered by critical reflectiveness, is actually an obstacle. As the elder Socrates points out to Hippocrates, without such reflectiveness he is in danger: enthusiastically entrusting his soul to this stranger who has arrived among us, he opens himself indiscriminately to "harmful" as well as "beneficial" ideas. (See Protagoras 313a–314b.) Just as important, however, is the influence of Theodorus (friend of Protagoras?) and his mathematical education. We have already noted the crucial but pointedly limited value of mathematics as propaedeutic for philosophy. The mathematician makes use of visible things as symbols; and since he does not, qua mathematician, reflect focally on the nonsensical nature of his real objects, he risks an unwitting dependence on the visible. What is more, in his axiomatic character mathematics stresses the deductive "downwards" path at the expense of the reflective "upwards" way which puts the axioms themselves in question; starting from what is "obvious to everyone," the mathematician accepts results which, however well reasoned along the way, lack a true foundation. In fact, Young Socrates proves vulnerable in both respects at once. As we have begun to see, the initial diatropic process is founded on a popular image—the herdsman or shepherd—which in fact misrepresents the statesman. Precisely because he has not learned the philosopher's circumspection, however, he is unprepared to recognize the error.

As mediator of the hidden conflict between Theodorean geometry and Socratic philosophy, the stranger has the task of teaching Young Socrates this circumspection. In a two-fold sense, the initial diatropic process (258b–267c) shows how he seeks to do this. In his manner, first, he is indirect and mimetic. He prefers examples to discursive accounts of principle. When Young Socrates asks for authoritative explanation, he responds with illustrative imitations—some announced, some not—of the youth's errors, in these respects, he is genuinely Socratic. Secondly, and very closely related, when Young Socrates wants to rush "downwards," he instead makes a disruptive turn "upwards." That is, he rejects Young Socrates' leap to a positively correct result and—suspending all process towards the substantive goal of defining the statesman—leads a digressive reflection on method.

Earlier we asked why Plato has the stranger begin the dialogue with an inadequate definition. The foregoing reflections shed a general light on this and prepare us to see the function of the next major phase of the conversation. By eliciting Young Socrates' acceptance of the definition, the stranger at once provides him an exemplary error and sets up his own objections to it. He works out these objections in two lengthy, internally complex digressions—first the presentation of the myth (267c–277a), then the introduction and discussion of paradigm (277a–278b). In their content these focus both the ill-foundedness, in its substance, and the methodological deficiency of the initial definition. Thus the stranger also gives Young Socrates an exemplary philosophical turn "upwards." In this sense the first two major phases of the dialogue as a whole, the initial diatropic process (258b–267c) and the critical digressions at 267c–287b, are analogous in structure to the first two parts within the initial diatasis. The rhythm and exemplary value are the same: in both cases the stranger's elicitation of error and the subsequent critical reflection offer Young Socrates the experience of becoming philosophical.

A. THE FIRST DIGRESSION: THE MYTH OF THE DIVINE SHEPHERD (267c–277a)

1. THE STRANGER'S OBJECTION (267c–268d)

As soon as Young Socrates has expressed his enthusiastic endorsement of the definition, the stranger dissent from it. He first presents his objection in terms of completeness. "The definition...has not yet been worked out fully and adequately" (267d).

Statesmanship has been distinguished from all other arts of herdsmanship. The point of the closing distinctions at 264b–267c was to isolate statesmanship in its uniqueness, as "a particular one" (mia tis) of the many arts of herdsmanship, by isolating its "unique herd" (mias tinos agelias, 267d). But there is something quite different which distinguishes statesmanship—perhaps even from herdsmanship per se. In no other case does the herdsman find his position challenged by members of his herd. The cowherd, for example, rules without dispute; he is all things to his cattle, serving as feeder, doctor, matchmaker, midwife, even as provider of "play" and soothing music (268a–b). In the statesman's case, however, all these forms of nurture are provided by members of his herd. And just insofar as statesmanship is nurture, these others—including farmers, traders, millers and bakers, even doctors and teachers of gymnastic—have as much claim to the statesman's title as he.

In its present form, the definition is therefore eristic rather than dialectic. Where it asserts a "one," there are really many. And where it asserts an identity—namely, of statesmanship with nurture of man—the very presence of other contestants shows there is difference. By its ambiguity, the present form of the definition fails to resolve this contest; and by its assertiveness in "merely singling out one from amongst the multitude of disputants" (268c), it even exacerbates it. What is required, it seems, is further diarisis. The selfsame "one," nurture of the human...
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herd, evidently needs further differentiation into the many which blend with it, if
statesmanship is to be “fully and adequately” isolated.

It is therefore surprising when the stranger announces that they “must begin
from another starting-point and travel by a different path” (268d). They must have
recourse to myth. This is an unlikely turn. On the face of it, no mode of discourse
could be more the opposite to rational, methodologically principled diareisis. The
stranger seems to give up self-accountable analysis for the posture of the inspired
“seer.” (He will do this several times more, at equally crucial junctures later in
the dialogue. See 277d, 279b, 287c.) Why? His superficial indication at 268d—
that they need some “play” (paideia)—is certainly ironic. There has already been plenty
of “play” in the comical closing distinctions of the initial diareisis. If anything, the
stranger becomes much more serious in the myth, radically expanding the context
and deepening the issues regarding the nature of statesmanship.

2. THE MANIFOLD FUNCTION OF THE MYTH (268d–274e)

In more substantive respects as well, the opposition between myth and diareisis
is not what it appears. To begin with, the final upshot of the myth will be the rea-
soned rejection of the dialectic definition as proper only to a pre-rational, mythic
mentality? But more to the point at hand, Platonic myth is hardly nonrational.
Plato indeed has profound objections to the anti-traditional, declaredly humanistic
spirit of his time; but they are objections arising from the very source of this spirit,
the emergence of autonomous reason. He does not, accordingly, take refuge from
the present in ancient myth; rather he reappropiates the latter, subjecting it to
rigorous rethinking. The result is a new kind of myth altogether, a mythos which
is transparently logos. This is pointedly demonstrated by the structure of the stran-
ger’s narration. He begins (268d–269b) by declaring that men have lost an aware-
ness of the unity of cosmic history; they have retained only bits of legend—in
particular, the stories of Zeus’ reversal of the motion of the heavens, of the reign
of Cronus, and of a race of earthborn men—which report isolated pieces of the
past. His myth, by contrast, will reveal the underlying unity of these fragments by
recalling the calamitous event, the pathos, which they all reflect. From this preface,
however, the stranger goes on not to tell yet another story but rather to give a
carefully reasoned account (269b–270b) of the necessity of the fundamental
rhythm of cosmic history. This necessity derives from the relation of the one
god—a non-Olympian, indeed altogether nontraditional deity—to the cosmos or
“all,” the psychophysical whole which includes all finite living beings. Only after
he has explained this relation does the stranger narrate the myth proper (270b–
274e), telling how life generally and man in particular are affected by the cosmic
rhythm. It is here for the first time that he employs traditional mythic images,
most importantly the shepherd-ruler and the paradisal age of Cronus. Because the
myth proper is framed by the rational account, its images have a new clarity of
meaning; and this, in turn, gives them a new vitality for an age which has intention-
ally liberated itself from them in their ancient “compact” character. The images
also have a new irony. Precisely because they are transparently present as symbols,
they provoke a sense of their own past. There is an odd, interesting contrast with
the diareisis in this respect: there the figure of the herdsman was immediately
effective as an unrecognized guide or motif for thinking; but in the myth its trans-
parent presence qua symbol undercuts its efficacy and makes the listener aware of
it and its historical specificity explicitly.

This transparency of mythic symbol for thought enables Plato—through the
stranger—to accomplish two quite different purposes at once.

First, and positively, he can offer a newly significant myth to fill the spiritual
void created by the predominant strains of pragmatic humanism and anti-tradition-
alsm. In earlier dialogues like the Gorgias and Phaedo, Plato concentrates his
myths on the psyche. He both appeals to and partakes in the awakening individual
self-consciousness of the time; and by exposing a supernatural stage and destiny
for the psyche, he provides a transcendent meaning, a higher measure, for the
individual in this life. In an analogous way, as we shall consider, the stranger’s myth
of cosmic history concentrates on the political life of man: playing on the height-
ened political self-consciousness of the time, the myth situates political life in the
encompassing context of cosmic history. And by his account of the god’s relation
to the cosmos, the stranger provides a transcendent measure for statesmanship.

Secondly, and negatively, by his explicit manipulation of traditional symbols
Plato can call critical attention to the thought-forms to which they correspond.
The stranger’s sudden question about the relative value of life under Cronus or
Zeus (see 272b–d) is only the most obvious example of this. As his remarks make
explicit, his real concern is not the nurseries under Cronus but the values which
the traditional stories about them reflect. In a somewhat subtler way, we shall see,
the stranger’s use of the image of the shepherd-ruler focuses and questions a deep
current in Greek political consciousness.

To ground and sharpen these comments, we need to analyze the myth in its
details. We shall begin by considering the positive function, starting with the
stranger’s account of the necessity of cosmic history, then passing to the implica-
tions for man in particular. Next we shall turn to the stranger’s manipulation of
traditional symbols. Here it will be necessary to prepare by some historical reflec-
tions on Greek tradition. This will enable us to identify the specific targets of
Plato’s indirect criticism—and will help us, finally, to identify the “real antagonists”
and the “basic issue” which motivates his dissemblance in the initial diareisis.

a. The logos of cosmic history

The stranger’s reasoned account of cosmic history centers on the relation of the
god and the Cosmos. As he presents it, they stand in a sort of asymmetrical contrast.
The god, on the one hand, is fully autonomous and prior. He—or “it”—is himself
the cause of his own perpetual circular motion (auto hauwus strophiun en, 269c5).
In his being he is unshakably constant and self-same (to kata tauta kata hóstasontos
echin en ai kai taoton einaí, d5–6). He is also responsible for the cosmos, being its
“procreator” (germésantos, d9). But the stranger is thinking not of a creatio ex nihilo
so much as an imposition of order and direction on primeval disorder. Later he will refer to the "utter chaos of disorder" which, as the character of pure "body," is the primordial given. (See 273b.) The god's "procreation" of the cosmos is his generation of order and harmony in this given; thus he is said to have "harmonized" it (sunarmosantos, 260d1). The cosmos, in turn, is of a secondary status. In accord with the god's procreative act, it has a divided or dual constitution: as a "living being" it has god-given "mind," or thoughtful judgment (phonestein, d1), and body both. But this only reflects a more basic and more complex duality. Precisely as god-formed, the cosmos shares in the stability and order which characterize the god. But if the sharing were total, the god and the cosmos would no longer differ. Thus, the difference between them requires that the cosmos differ from itself. More particularly, since the divine nature is stable and selfsame, the cosmos must be characterized both by this nature and its negative.

This internal opposition is directly expressed by—and so serves to explain—both the form of motion proper to the cosmos and the contrasting characters of its alternating periods.

In its form of motion, first, the cosmos imperfectly imitates the god. It too revolves; thus it remains centered in the same place, constantly repeating the same pattern. But "nothing except" the god himself (269c) may have such perfect motion. Hence the cosmos must suffer a deviation, albeit the least possible: it must periodically reverse the direction of its own rotation. It thus shares imperfectly in the perfect, or negates its own perfection. As the stranger explains at 269c-270a, it is ultimately its difference from the god which requires this deviation. One by one, he rules out the options (i) that the cosmos move itself perpetually, (ii) that the one god be the cause of its two opposite directions, or (iii) that two gods, opposed to each other, move it in its opposite directions. If (i) were so, the cosmos would not differ from the god. And if (ii) were so, the god would oppose himself, thereby lacking just the self-sameness which distinguishes his nature from the cosmos. Likewise, (iii) would defy the cosmos' distinctive self-difference: thus the divine as such would lack self-sameness, and its difference from the cosmos would be dissolved.

The cosmos' internal opposition also determines the contrasting characters of its alternating periods. Each reversal of its direction—the calamitous pathos the stranger referred to at the outset—marks the end of one sort of epoch and the beginning of its opposite; the whole of history is thus projected as an endless cycle between opposites. But again the opposition is complex. The determining character in one sort of epoch is the immediate presence of the one god. He directs the cosmos as a sort of pilot, and a daimon presides over each kind of animal. In such times the cosmos is profoundly harmonious: all creatures live together in peace, and the earth provides for their needs spontaneously. When the stranger tells how the god puts the cosmos in "order" and makes it "deathless and ageless" (273e), he evokes the deepest sense of changelessness and stability. In the other sort of epoch, by contrast, the cosmos is left to its own devices, and the primary character is progressive disorder. It is important to note, however, that the cosmos' self-rule, like its form of motion, is not the simple opposite or positive contrary to the god.

On the contrary, the cosmos both contains yet negates the divine within itself; as the opposite to the divine, it is itself the opposition between its own divine and mortal elements. Thus the departure of the god and his daimones sets off an inner struggle between the elements of "thought" (phonestein) and body, order and chaos. At first the cosmos is able to "remember the instruction of the demiurge and father"; but eventually it lapses into "forgetfulness" (273b-c). In the time right after the god's withdrawal it performs altogether "nobly" (see kalista ponta diagei, 273c); but in the end the "few good things" it does are "permeated by their opposites." The limit to this deterioration is the cosmos' near "sinking in an infinite sea of unlikeliness" (273d), the stranger's vivid symbol for the near total sway of the formless or chaotic element of body. It is at just this point, he says (273d-e), that the god will return, and the cosmos will once again reverse direction; in what is, in effect, a near repetition of his initial procreative form-giving, the god will re impose order and harmony upon the disorderly cosmos.

This contrast in the sorts of epoch provides an extraordinary context for the consideration of man and his present condition. Strikingly, the stranger makes clear the principle for such a consideration and follows it through right to the decisive moment—at which point he breaks off. The principle is the analogy of micro- to macrocosm: human existence "follows and imitates" the life of the cosmos (274a). Within the time of the god's direct rule, therefore, man's life shares the stability and ease of the cosmos as a whole. This is the bygone era known in popular myth (sourced in Hesiod) as the "age of Cronus." Man is born from the earth, which also spontaneously nourishes him without his labor. And "god—is this the god or a lesser daimon?"—cares for him as a shepherd. Hence there are neither private families nor any politics. It is a time of utter peace, both amongst men and between man and the other species (271e-272a). Within the epoch of the cosmos' self-rule, by contrast, man too must care for himself. This is the present so-called "age of Zeus." With the departure of the god, the earth ceases to provide for man; the work of "conception and birthing and nurturing" falls to man himself. He must also protect himself from "wild beasts," for now the various species—in accord, it seems, with the basic character of the epoch—turn against one another. To meet his new needs he develops the various arts: thus he confronts the havoc of physical life with the powers of thought; in this—as is implied by the stranger's brief mention of the Hesiodic-Protagorean myth of man's reception of fire and seeds from Prometheus and the Olympians—man like the cosmos needs a divine "instruction." On this note, however, the stranger breaks off. Leaving the account thus fragmentary and open-ended, he closes by stressing again the analogy of cosmos and man.

"... men had to manage their lives and care for themselves just like the whole cosmos," he says at 274d; men "imitate and follow" it (273e-274a).

The immediate implications of this seem clear enough. We live in a present in which, as with the cosmos, thought is dominated by body, "memory" by "forgetfulness," and order by disorder. And as with the cosmos, there is need for the renewed presence of the god. By his silence, however, the stranger leaves us to reflect for ourselves on the character of this renewal.
b. The critique of traditions

The clarity of this reflection requires that we recognize the critical bearing of the myth on several deep currents in Greek political consciousness. Plato calls these currents to mind by the use of traditional images; his critical evaluations of them, in turn, are implied by the ways he fits these images into the whole of the myth. By the identification and rejection of these currents, we shall see, Plato reorients the search for statesmanship in a fundamental way.

(1) Traditional images

To prepare for this analysis, we need first to recognize the key traditional images used in the stranger's myth.

(i) The Homeric "shepherd of the people" and the Hesiodic "age of Cronus." The notion of the ruler as shepherd to man appears indirectly in the Homeric epics. The kings who gathered their subjects into armies—above all Agamemnon but also Menelaus, Odysseus, and others—are given the epithet poimēn lados, "shepherd of the people." That the phrase is formulaic, however, suggests that the notion is an old one, received from earlier times and no longer necessarily vital. And in fact the story content of the Iliad and the Odyssey shows a pervasive crisis and breakdown of the authority of the king. In the opening of the Iliad, Achilles' ready rage at Agamemnon's claim to the lion's share of the spoils—a claim to which a supreme commander should be rightfully entitled—is a measure of Agamemnon's tenuous stature. This is made vivid when, with startling echoes of Achilles' protest, the non-account Thersites slanders the king and impugns his motives in public assembly. And in the Odyssey the basic situation is the usurpation, in his absence, of the king's authority by his subjects (the suitors); that Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar in his own palace says as much about the leveling of the king's authority as it does for his extraordinary guile. What we get in the epics, therefore, is the shadow in passing, so to speak, of an earlier notion of the king—a notion which was fully effective, perhaps, only in the pre-Homeric Mycenaean period.

Still, we can build up a sense for it through the indirect testimony of Homer. The "shepherd of the people" would have been more than a leader. Consider how Odysseus characterizes Agamemnon in Iliad II. Pursuing the dispersing Greeks on the beach at Troy and seeking to rally them, he warns each "chieftain or outstanding man" that:

...you have no idea what [Agamemnon] is thinking. He's only testing us now, but soon He is likely to smite the sons of Achaeans. Did not All of us hear what he said at the council? Take care That he doesn't get angry and punish the sons of Achaeans. Haughty indeed is the spirit of god-nurtured kings. The honor they have is from Zeus, and Zeus, the lord Of all wisdom, dearly loves them. (II 212-19)

Thus (even in the situation of its near collapse), he invokes an idea of the king as fundamentally superior to other men: to others the king's intentions are veiled and imperceptible; his might, overpowering; and his honor, sourced in Zeus rather than men. That Odysseus, himself a great lord, should invoke this idea with other "chieftains," and that in this moment of crisis they should accept it and stop their flight, attests the power it still has for the Greeks. Something complementary is implied in the Odyssey by some of the characterizations of the absent Odysseus by those who remember him best. He was, Telemachus tells the townspeople, "once king over you here, and kind to you like a father" (II, 47); Penelope tells the suitors how he did not act and spoke no word in his own country that was unfair; and that is a way divine kings have, one will be hateful to a certain man, and favor another, but Odysseus was never outrageous at all to any man (IV, 690-693);

...and Euryclea remembers how Odysseus... cared greatly for me, and granted me such possessions as a good-natured lord grants to the thrall of his house; a home of his own, and a plot of land, and a wife much sought after. ... (XIV, 62-64)

The common point of these descriptions is not only Odysseus' benevolence but also his essential supremacy. What is mourned is the loss of a ruler who was "father" and "provider" to his subjects and who stood above any partisan interests or favoritism. The same point is made by the frequent epithet "godlike." Like Agamemnon who has his "honor... from Zeus," not from other men, so Odysseus' authority is not so much grounded in as first constitutive of the people he rules. Thus the epithet "shepherd of the people," implying an essential difference in stature between ruler and ruled and the dependence of the latter on the former, is apt. This, at any rate, is the notion we can glimpse in crisis and disintegration in the epics.

Whereas the stranger's image of the shepherd goes back to Homer, the "age of Cronus" is from Hesiod. Early in his Works and Days, as part of his exhortation of brother Perses towards a life of work and justice, Hesiod gives an account of the five ages of man. Only the first age occurs in the period "when Cronus is king in heaven" (111), before the Titanomachia and Zeus' accession to power. Hesiod fashions an image of paradisiac existence. Under Cronus the "golden race of mortal men... like gods" (109, 111). They do not suffer the pangs of "old age," and death comes easily "like sleep" (113-14, 116). Their spirit is "free from troubles," and their time is spent "making merry in festivities, beyond the reach of all evils" (115). They have this leisure because "the fruitful earth gratuitously gives them fruit abundantly and without reserve" (asaphthon) (117-18). Thus Hesiod depicts a race of men free from any need to care for themselves by either labor or government, fully provided for by the gods (above all, Cronus) and the earth.

In the context of the whole fable, the salient character of the age of Cronus is harmony. Men are "friends" with the gods (120), and they live in utter community with one another: Indeed, when Hesiod writes how aei... podas kai cherias homotοi, "together with arms and legs," men make merry in feasting, he projects an
image of the coordinated gestures in dance, song, and feasting; there is no trace of conflict or competition, even of the differentiation required by social or material needs, in this existence. The four ages which follow stand in a complex but marked contrast, in this respect. Though Hesiod presents them as, the ages of silver (121–139), bronze (140–155), heroic (156–169b), and iron men (169c–201), their inner relations suggest a double series. As Gatz has argued, the ages of silver and bronze seem to belong to genuinely mythical time, while the heroic age, preceding the present age of iron, belongs to the actual-historical time preserved in saga. Thus the age of golden man, the only period preceding the rule of Zeus, stands as the counter pole both to the age of bronze (with silver as intermediate) and to the age of iron (with the heroic as intermediate). The basic contrast is the same in both series. In the first, silver men neglect sacrifices and service to the gods (135–136) and wrong one another (134–135), while bronze men, developing this disarray to the extreme, devote themselves to violence and war and "are destroyed by their own hands" (152). In the second, much of the heroic race perishes in "grim war and dread battle" at Thebes and Troy, while iron men, again developing disarray to the extreme, are at odds with one another in every way:

... father will not agree with (homoioi) his children, nor the children with their father, nor guest with his host, nor comrade with comrade, nor will brother be dear to brother as foretime. Men will dishonor their parents as they grow quickly old... And one man shall sack another's city. (182–185, 189)

As we noted, Hesiod's fable is part of an exhortation; it is a parainesis. Considered in this light, the age of Cronus has a complex function. In part, it is the standard by which the disintegration, the collapse into discord, of the present iron age is to be measured; it shows the inner concord which somehow, by a sharp reversal of the basic trend, needs to be recovered. In part, also, it represents the reward for such a recovery. Hesiod skillfully links the ideal with the satisfying, peace and community with material ease. In an important sense, however, recovery can only be partial. Golden men are innocent; their harmony is no achievement but simply the natural, god- and earth-given state. Iron men must accomplish by virtue what was simply given to the golden race. In this latter respect, not golden but heroic men—the first peoples genuinely recalled within actual history—are the standard. They are disatoirerov kat arion, "more just and better" (1.158), than their predecessors, Hesiod says; this is presumably why Zeus gave to some of them, after death,

... a living and an abode apart from men, and made them dwell at the ends of earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the islands of the blessed along the shore of deep-swirling Ocean, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing three a year, far from the deathless gods, and Cronus rules over them. (167–173, 169)

By their justice and virtue, these heroes have, in other words, won the blessings of the age of Cronus. Now iron men—so goes the unspoken implication—must do the same. However, their "virtue" must be of a different kind. By setting the heroes in an earlier, bygone age (and perhaps, too, by granting the Cronian paradise only to those not slain in battle, see 167), Hesiod underscores a theme which pervades the whole of the Works and Days. The "strife" and military courage of the Homeric kings must be replaced by the productive competition between fellow workers (see esp. 11–26) and the sweat of hard work (see esp. 289–292). Only by means of this new, quite non-heroic sort of virtue can the iron race hope to recover the peace between men and the material plenty—"victual in plenty" and "acorns" and "beet" and "woolly sheep," for "the grain-giving earth [will] bear them fruit" (232–37, also see 307 ff.)—symbolized in the myth by the age of Cronus.

(ii) Tyranny, democracy, and sophistic humanism. Quite apart from its specific intended meaning in his fable and in the Works and Days as a whole, Hesiod's description of the paradisiac life under Cronus evidently answered to a deep, persevering passion in the Greek soul. The "age of Cronus" became a proverbial symbol for just the peace and ease that, especially to the nonaristocratic elements of the population, life did not offer. When Plato's stranger briefly alludes to "the things now said about [life] then" (272c–d), he is referring to the various recurrences of the symbol in post-Hesiodic literature—and especially, presumably, to the playful appropriation of it by Old Comedy.

There is another appropriation, however, which has a more pointed connection with the issues of the Statesman myth. Aristotle in his Constitution of Athens XVI (7) notes that the tyranny of Pisistratus (561–527) was often recalled and praised as ho epi Kronou bios, "life under Cronus." The appropriateness of this runs deep. Pisistratus' policies, first of all, aimed at keeping peace between the various factions in Greek political life: once he had neutralized the conflict between the main elements of the wealthy—roughly, the traditionally powerful landowners and the newly wealthy traders—by organizing the rural poor into a potent third force, he put great stress on cultural practices that brought out what all shared in common; thus, for example, he encouraged the genuinely national, hence unifying cults of Athena and Dionysius through the expansion of the Panathenian games, the building of temples, and the institution of festivals. Secondly, Pisistratus gave unprecedented material support to his new constituency, making loans to struggling small farmers and distributing to them some of the lands of his dispossessed opponents; in addition, he made trips to the countryside and instituted a policy of holding judicial sessions there, ostensibly in order to spare the people the expense and interruption of work required by a trip to Athens. The benefits to the people aside, these practices were also shrewd politics. By winning the sympathies of the people, Pisistratus got a secure base of power over the internally divided wealthy; and by securing the farmers against impoverishment and keeping them busy on the land, he prevented their migration into the city where, as a large and needy mass, they might have realized their political significance and insisted on participating in government. Thus Pisistratus effectively kept all political power for himself alone. This is the third respect in which he warranted the title of "Cronus." By establishing peace and even a new community amongst all his citizens and by generating a situation of relative material plenty, he managed to elevate himself above the citi-
zenry as a whole and to approximate, at least relatively speaking, the Greeks' earliest, barely remembered experience of pre-political absolutism.

At the same time, by its own inner dynamic Pisistratus' tyranny was doomed to give way to the very 'power of the people'—demokratia—that it suppressed. By undercutting specifically aristocratic in favor of national culture, by taking the judiciary to the people, and by giving them money, Pisistratus indirectly apprised them of their importance and, so, potential power in affairs of state; and in undermining his opponents in the aristocracy by going to the people, he gave these very opponents an object lesson, as it were, in political tactics. It was thus inevitable that he be followed (and his descendants overcome) by others who would offer the people just what he had both withheld yet first prepared them for, genuine political power. With Cleisthenes' reforms in 508, Athenian democracy was established, and the political innocence of the people was shattered for good.20

Closely related with this was the rise of sophistic humanism. Considered narrowly, the new political self-consciousness of "the many" presented itself as a political opportunity to aristocrats who sought power. But to take advantage of this required public persuasiveness, above all the art of rhetoric. The sophistic movement in the fifth century was generated in large part in response to this need: the sophists were migrant professional teachers of rhetoric. Considered more broadly, the new fluidity and consciousness of power in politics was part of a deeper awakening. In the arts and sciences and even religion, a new consciousness of human capacity was erupting, and it called for a basic revision of culture, a new myth, as it were, which would place man at the center of existence. The sophists took up this task directly.

The foremost of the sophists, at least in Plato's view, was Protagoras, and Protagoras' speech on the origin of political virtue at Protagoras 320c ff. is Plato's exemplary presentation of sophistic myth-making.21 We take it up here because, as we shall point out in detail later (see 2 (ii) below), Protagoras' speech provides essential elements of the stranger's symbolism in his myth.

To begin with, Protagoras makes a myth only in outward form. When at the outset he gives his audience the choice of mythos or logos (320c3), he indicates that mythic symbols are merely window dressing. And he confirms this when he opts for myth as the "more elegant" or "charming" (charisterion). As his well-known statement of agnosticism also attests, the traditional Pantheon has lost its compelling force. When he introduces the Titans and the Olympians, he is only displaying his rhetorical skill at dressing up doctrine in traditional images.22

The myth centers around the creation of man. The Olympians charge the Titans Prometheus and Epimetheus with the task of distributing to all the various species sufficient powers to preserve themselves, and Epimetheus persuades Prometheus to let him do it. But Epimetheus, whose name means "after-thought," uses up all the various powers before he comes to man. As the appointed time for man to emerge "from out of the earth" (ok ges, 321c) approaches, Prometheus comes to inspect and finds man "naked and shoeless and without bedding and unarmed" (321c). He therefore steals from Athena and Hephaestus fire and the

ability to work with it and gives this to man as his means of survival (321d-e). But this is not enough. In their early times "there are no city-states (poleis)," and men "are ravaged by wild beasts" (322b). And when they unite in self-defense, then, since they lack specifically political virtue, they injure one another and must disperse again. Finally Zeus intervenes in order to save them from total destruction: through the agency of Hermes he gives every man aito de kai dikin, "respect for others and a sense of justice" (322c), the essential elements of political virtue. Now men are able to form cities and, so, protect themselves.

In its basic thesis Protagoras' story is a spirited declaration of humanism. If we strip it of its rhetorical imagery of Titans and Olympians, it comes down to the assertion that man has developed to the point of being able to determine his own fate; in economic and political terms he is the "measure of all" that concerns his existence.23 Materially, man is self-sufficient as homo faber; by fire and the arts he can nurture and shelter and protect himself. And politically he is self-governing; he can organize and determine his own social existence. A corollary thesis is that the proper form of government is democracy. Since everyone has "respect and justice," all are equally equipped to take part in political decisions. Protagoras therefore endorses Athenian democratic assembly (322d-323a).

(iii) Re-emergence of the "shepherd." If, on the one hand, sophistic humanism stands as the very opposite to the old order of the paternal king, "shepherd of the people," on the other hand it also marks the beginning of the re-emergence in a new form of the notion of the "shepherd." The great sophists themselves, above all Protagoras and Gorgias,24 would surely have had no sympathies for despotism.25 Nonetheless, there is a striking ambiguity in Protagoras' espousal of Athenian democracy. The "political virtue" he teaches—according to Plato's portrayal of his self-presentation—consists in particular in being "able to act and to speak most powerfully (dunátatous) in the affairs of the city" (Protagoras 319a). Protagoras mentions no limit to such "power". Yet for one to have unlimited power would mean the subversion of democracy. In the same vein, while Protagoras explicitly endorses the participation of the people in political assembly, in his teaching of rhetoric he provides his students with the means for manipulating them. If on the first count he shows a new respect for the people, on the second he encourages contempt for them.

This surfaces very little in Protagoras himself; Plato gives us, for example, his passing remark that "... as for the people, they have no understanding and only repeat what their leaders are pleased to tell them" (317a). But it breaks out in full force in the following generations, both amongst those like a Polus or Thrasymachus who become teachers and amongst those like a Callicles26 who seek to put their learning to use in political careers. Thrasymachus, for example, cynically regards all government merely as a power relationship between the strong and the weak, in which the former manipulate the latter for their own advantage; and the paradigm case of this, he asserts, is

... tyranny, which by stealth and force takes away what belongs to others, both what is sacred and what is profane, private and public, not bit by bit, but all at once. (Republic 344a)27
Strikingly, he applies to this relation of rulers/responded the old image of the shepherd and his herd (343b)! Thus he expresses at once the notions of the inferiority of the ruled and the self-interest of the ruler. This comes out even more clearly in Callicles' theory of natural justice in the *Gorgias*. Callicles interprets the isonomic laws of the democratic city-state as the suppressed expression of the pleonctic desire—common to every man, as Polus has argued earlier (449e, 471a ff.)—for tyrannical power. For the weak many, pleonexia, the desire to have more than another, must take the form of restricting others to equality. But not all are weak. There are some, holds Callicles, "of kingly (basileon) stock, men who by their nature (τὴν φύσιν) are capable of attaining some ruling position, a tyranny, absolute power..." [492b] To these, democracy is an invitation to overthrow, to the expression of natural strength:

But my opinion is that nature herself reveals it to be only just and proper that the better man should lord it over his inferior; it will be the stronger over the weaker. Nature, further, makes it clear in a great many instances that this is the true state of affairs, not only in other animals, but also in whole states and communities. ... I fancy that if a man appears of a nature sufficiently strong to shake off and break through and escape from all these conventions, he will trample under foot our ordinances and charms and spells, all this mass of unnatural legislation; our slave will stand forth revealed as our master ( despotes) and the light of natural justice will shine forth! (483-484b)"[28]

This vision of a natural strong man, one who can free himself of the constraints imposed by democracy, represents a resurfacing of the despotic current in Greek political history. Callicles and Thrasymachus both envision an absolute ruler, and Callicles grounds his power in a distinction in nature (τὴν φύσιν) between him and his subjects. This is the re-emergence in changed times—and with the bitter connotation of exploitation—of the ancient despot, "shepherd of the people."

In considering this re-emergence, however, the element of opportunism and exploitation should not be overemphasized. From the years of the Peloponnesian War on, the Greek city-states were engulfed both by faction within and by an interminable, debilitating struggle for advantage over one another. While its democratic form and commercial involvement made Athens particularly vulnerable, the disorder of her internal and external affairs was exemplary of the political situation throughout Greece. There was thus a widely felt need for strong political leadership. This is the other side of the Calliclean vision. If on the one hand a culmination of disorder, the natural "master" was also a seemingly necessary response to it. [29]

Thus there arose a new interest in kingship during the fourth century. [30] Xenophon and Athenicles, for example, wrote idealizing studies of Cyrus. In the opening pages of Xenophon's *Cyropaideia*, the motives are spelled out with a striking recours to the analogy of herdsmen/herd. History shows case after case of every form of polity—democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, even tyranny—being overthrown, *Xenophon* begins (1, 1, 1). In this animals seem better off than men. For cows are the rulers of their cattle, and groans, of their horses, and all who are called herdsmen (naumis) might properly be regarded as rulers of the animals over which they are placed in charge...[and] all these herds obey their keepers more readily than men obey their rulers. For the herds go wherever their keeper directs them...but men conspire against none sooner than against those whom they see attempting to rule over them. (I, 1, 2)"[26]

Cyrus, however, king of a "vast number of men and cities and nations" (I, 1, 3), is a conspicuous exception. By exploring his nature and education, Xenophon hopes to reveal the secret of stable political order.

Another representative of the turn towards despotism was Isocrates. He saw clearly how interevene struggle was undermining Hellenic culture; his writings are full of lament at the "quarrelling" between Greek cities. His lifelong hope, as we noted earlier, was to unite them in a campaign against Persia. But who was to lead them? By the early 360's Isocrates seems to have begun to give up his hope that Athens, constantly weak from its own internal quarreling, could do this, and he began to search instead for a man of exceptionally strong nature who, unconstrained by laws or allegiance to the ways of a particular city, [27] would unite all Greek cities under his command. He made appeals to the tyrant Dionysius I of Syracuse (367), to the Spartan prince Archidamus (356), and, finally, to Philip of Macedon (346 and later). Though the latter of these appeals postdate the *Statesman*, Isocrates' basic idea—and more importantly, the general despair with politics and the flight to autocracy which it signals—must have been clear beforehand.

Finally, there is even some evidence that Plato himself, prior to writing the *Statesman*, shared in the revival of the old despotism. We shall not try to decide the question at this stage in the discussion. (But see pp. 54-55, 117-118 below.) Here the key point is the existence of the evidence and hence of the impression it gives. Consider first the *Republic*. The analogy of ruler and shepherd is originally proposed by Thrasymachus, not Socrates. Socrates, however, does not challenge it; rather he argues that Thrasymachus confutes the art of shepherdy, which is concerned for the good of the flock, with that of money-making and so misunderstands the "true shepherd." (See 345b-d.) Moreover, much later, long after Thrasymachus has been defeated, he reinterprets the analogy in order to raise the question of the right relation of the warrior class to the mass of citizens in the just state: the mass is comparable (hospher) to a "flock" (poimēn, 415e), and the rulers, as "shepherds" (poimeis, 416a), must be sure that the warrior guardians, their "dogs" (lunai), treat the flock gently and as its allies rather than fiercely, as its masters. On the one hand, this is close to the issue Thrasymachus had raised, and so it is appropriate for Socrates to revert to his analogy. But on the other hand, there are other suggestions that Socrates himself has his own version of the Thrasymachus-Calliclean natural despot in mind. Above all, he stresses the superior nature of his rulers—although, to be sure, it must be developed by the right education. His "Phoenician tale" of the distribution of gold, silver, and bronze and iron to the psyches of earth-born men absolutizes the differences in nature between the several classes—although, again, it is only and expressly a myth, and is intended to express the common parentage, too, which binds the classes together. (See 414b-415b.) Further, in his account of the "smallest change" in a state by which his just order might be actualized, Socrates seems to cast his ruler as a despot: philosophers must "rule
as kings" (basileustai, 473c), he says, or "those now called kings and chiefs (dunastai)" must become genuinely philosophical. A dunastēs is one who has power with no constitutional limitations.55 Does Socrates assimilate "kings" and dunastai? Would the philosopher, or the "king" or "chief" who becomes philosophical, rule as a dunastēs? There is nothing said to deny these impressions, and so Socrates' use of the shepherd-image seems substantive. His just ruler has the look of a despot in the old sense, a ruler who, of superior nature, transcends the community and has absolute authority.

On top of this, Plato himself, in the years just before he writes the Statesman, seems to put the weight of direct action behind his theory of the "smallest change." Several times in the Republic he has Socrates allow for the possibility that the "children of kings or chiefs (dunastoi)" could be born philosophers by their natures (as phusis)" (502a, also 499c). In making his trip to Syracuse in 367 Plato seemed to hope for just this. He went to educate Dionysius II, who had just inherited the tyranny of his father. By all appearances (we cannot appeal to the Seventh Letter at this point, for the Statesman precedes it),56 Plato turned to the son as Isocrate had earlier turned to the father, in the hope that, with the help of philosophical education, the autocrat might provide genuine political order.

(2) The stranger's critique

The stranger's myth is a manifold response to the re-emergence of despotism. Young Socrates has enthusiastically approved the initial definition of the statesman as "a herdsman to man." The myth sets this definition in a Platonic perspective. As we have already begun to see (section (a) above), this is a complex act. On the one hand, the definition—and so the turn back to a "herdsman of the people"—is refuted. On the other hand, the logos of god and the two sorts of epoch together reassert the search itself, and within the context established by this reorientation the universal core of the definition is distinguished and preserved in order to be given a new specific content. We shall consider each of these moments in turn.

(i) The initial "remembrance": the ancient despot. The myth fulfills its refractory function in a way very comparable to Hesiod's fable of the five ages. In this regard, Plato follows Hesiod closely.57 As we noted, Hesiod looks back from the present iron age and judges heroic times far better. The race of heroes is "godlike," and they alone are credited with justice and virtue. But heroic times are past. Even while the possession of virtue as such makes them like gods and gives them the status of exemplars for corrupt iron man, Hesiod's relegation of them to a hygene age suggests that their specific sort of virtue will not do in the present. Iron man's heroism, as it were, lies not in the warrior's courage but rather in the worker's industriousness: his specific virtue is "the sweat of our brows" (Works and Days, 289).

Analogously in the Statesman myth, there is a distinction not only between the ages of Cronus and Zeus (see (ii) below) but also between early and late stages within the latter. At 273a-b the stranger tells Young Socrates that immediately after the most recent reversal of rotation, the cosmos returned to its ordered course and continued in it, having care for and power over (epimeletēn kai kratos) itself and all within it and remembering, so far as it was able, the instruction it had received from its maker and father. In the beginning it accomplished this more accurately, but as time went on, its memory grew dimmer.

For man in particular, the possession of this relatively "accurate" (akrhbeisteron) memory would provide, presumably, a positive knowledge of the god's earlier rule; in contrast to later Zeuwan man, therefore, he could more or less copy the god's example. In the age of Cronus, the god was present as a shepherd over man. Thus, the "beginning" stage in the age of Zeus refers to the period of ancient despotism which is glorified, even in its demise, by Homer and Hesiod, the period when godlike kings, literal copies of the shepherd-god, ruled absolutely as "shepherds of the people." And for that period, the stranger suggests, such prepolitical rule was the right thing: "in the time closest to [the god's] release [of the cosmos from his control]," he says at 273c, everything goes "most nobly" (kalōstai). Analogously with Hesiod's relegation of the heroes to an earlier age, however, the stranger's account of the "dimming" of the cosmos' memory suggests that this period is now past. The dominance of léthe, "forgetfulness" (273c), in the later stage of the age of Zeus refers to the secularization and humanization of culture and, with this, the breakdown of the prepolitical authoritarian order.58 The new and increasing "disharmony" of the later stage therefore calls for a new kind of order, and the "forgetfulness" calls for a new sort of remembrance.

(ii) "Forgetfulness": homo mensura and the new despotism. Plato goes to some lengths to have the stranger's myth recall Protagoras' speech on the origin of man. In a number of striking details,59 the former seems to borrow directly from the latter. Some of this echoing—above all, that which concerns the stranger's age of Zeus—points to a basic agreement. For instance, the earliest men in the age of Zeus, survivors of the pathos of reversal, are, like the first generation in Protagoras' myth, "earthborn" (gegenes) or emergent "from out of the earth" (ēn geb, 271a). Again, in early times men are "weak and unguarded" and "raped by wild beasts" (274b). They are saved, however, by the gifts of Prometheus (fire) and Hephaestus (the arts which use fire), especially. As for Protagoras, moreover, these traditional gods lack compelling force for the stranger; in a shorthand, peremptory way he refers to them as the subjects of "ancient stories" (ta palai lechehtina, 274c). In these points the stranger confirms Protagoras' vision of man as a resourceful natural being who, by his development of arts, can take care of himself. As for Protagoras, so for the stranger man is homo faber and provides for himself.

Or at least, such is the case for Zeuwan man. These very lines of agreement set in relief Plato's more profound disagreement with the Protagorean vision. What is true of man once and for all for Protagoras, is only half the story for the stranger. Protagoras knows nothing of the age of Cronus. In the stranger's own terms, he is one of those who has "forgotten" (273c)—or again, one of the "many nowadays" who "disbelieve" (271b) in—within the contrasting epoch. By now presenting the whole story, as it were, the stranger both reveals the danger in Protagorean "forgetfulness" and suggests the proper alternative.
In a word, the danger is that men produce just the opposite of what they seek in the troubled political present. In his sketch of life in the age of Cronus, the stranger builds directly on Hesiod’s image of paradisical existence: in material terms, man is blessed with gratuitous prosperity, provided a spontaneous nurture from the earth; and in social terms, the god who presides like a shepherd

...was in every way sufficient for his flock, so that svagery was nowhere to be found nor pruning of creature on creature, nor did war rage nor any faction whatsoever. (271c)

But even more emphatically than Hesiod, the stranger removes this paradise from the sphere of actual political possibility. By locating it in the age of Cronus, when the god is immediately present and directing the cosmos, and separating this age from the present by the pathos of cosmic reversal and the god’s withdrawal from the cosmos, he makes clear that man cannot be this shepherd to himself. “Forgetful” men, however, run the risk of not realizing this: precisely because they do not see that there is a god who has withdrawn, they lose sight of the difference itself between man and god; thus, they risk attributing to man powers which transcend him and which, for just this reason, he will inevitably abuse and deform. Protagoras’ declaration of homo mensura is the chief example of such “forgetfulness”; and the turn of later generations to the new despot exemplifies this misattribution. “Man is the measure of all” is a positive and timeless declaration. It precludes, once and for all, the possibility that there be anything which man, by virtue of a still higher measure than himself, is not. Thus it sets the stage for the dangerous turn towards autocracy in the fourth century: what we earlier noted in the work of Xenophon and Antisthenes and Isocrates, the yearning that a strong leader arise to put an end to political upheaval and internecine conflict, is—perspective of the stranger’s myth—the confusion of the human despot with the divine shepherd.

Far from an end to disorder, this confusion is the culmination of it. The stranger brings this negative implication of the myth up to the surface by his two revisions of the initial definition of statesmanship, at 274e ff. and 276d ff. First, to characterize the statesman as a herdsman to man is to fail to distinguish man from god; in contrast to the god in the age of Cronus, statesmen in the present age of Zeus, the stranger asserts, “are much more like their subjects in nature, and far closer to them in education and nurture than ever a shepherd could be to his flock” (275c). Secondly, the definition also fails to differentiate rule “by force” (toi biatallon) from rule “voluntarily accepted” (toi hekovasiaton, 276d). Benevolent or not, the shepherd’s power is imposed on the flock, regardless of their will; thus the characterization of the statesman as herdsman conflates the legitimate ruler with the tyrant (276c). Or, taking the two revisions together, the hope for a new “shepherd of the people” mistakes human for divine and thereby opens the way for the opposite extreme of tyranny. In a deep sense, this is just what may be expected of Zeussian man. The cosmos as a whole, according to the myth, suffers increasing disorder and will come near to “sinking in an infinite sea of unlikeliness” (273d); by the unwitting turn to tyranny, the extreme of political disorder and the most “unlike” what, to the yearnings of the fourth century, it first seems to be, the human situation is the precise analogue to the cosmic condition.

(iii) Philosophical recollection: deus mensura and the art of statesmanship. If the contraposition of the two ages is the stranger’s means of showing what man cannot be in the age of Zeus, it is also his means of showing, positively, what the god is in the age of Cronus. And this vision may serve as a “measure,” if not of man’s actual possibilities, at least of what, through these possibilities, he may strive towards. By his tacit assertion of deus rather than homo mensura, the stranger changes the existential force of the notion of “measure.” The being of god is transcendent. This is beautifully expressed by the image of the god’s withdrawal and absence during the age of Zeus. But this transcendence does not make the god irrelevant to Zeussian man. On the contrary, once the being of the god is conceived as transcending the being of man, the possibility and need for a radical striving is opened up for the first time. The known absence of god is a form of evocative presence. In effect, to be aware of what the god was in the age of Cronus is to know what man, within his limits as different from the god, must strive to be for himself in the age of Zeus.

The appropriation of this “measure,” however, is a complex matter. First of all, the overcoming of humanistic “forgetfulness” requires a new form of memory. The very fact of “forgetfulness”—the stranger’s symbol for the loss of “belief” in the traditional gods and the devitalization of the old mythic images—makes impossible a return to the simple, positive “remembrance” of god as shepherd characteristic of early Zeussian times. We have already seen an example of this non-belief in Protagoras’ use of the figures of Zeus and Prometheus for merely rhetorical purposes. The same holds for the Hesiodic images of life under Cronus, which had been appropriated and deflated as early as the Old Comedy of the latter part of the fifth century. Hence the stranger indirectly suggests, in a key passage (272b–d) inserted between his depictions of the age of Cronus and the age of Zeus, that there are two ways of appreciating the images of life under Cronus. The express topic of the passage is the question whether Cronian or contemporary Zeussian man is happier. If men under Cronus used their leisure for philosophical inquiry, the stranger declares, then they would be the happier by far; but if, “having filled themselves with food and drink, they exchanged with each other and the animals stories such as those which even now are told of them” (272c–d), then the present age is to be preferred. By implication, merely to repeat the Hesiodic images—“even now,” in the present exchange—would be as idle as the lives which they depict. There is another way of appreciating them, however, more appropriate to the present: the way of philosophical inquiry. And in fact, this is precisely what the myth as a whole, as the stranger tells it, embodies. By setting the various traditional images into the context of his rationally argued cosmology, he gives them, as we noted at the outset, a new clarity of meaning, a transparency for thought. Thus the very structure of his presentation of the images amounts to a turn from their literal, immediate sense to the universal and conceptual significance which that sense—albeit for philosophical hindsight—only exemplifies. This turn of “remembrance” transcends Hesiod as well as Protagoras; as the recovery of rational principle, it is as a new pathos in philosophical recollection. But, secondly, to grasp the “measure” by this reflection is not yet to apply it. To know what the Cronian shepherd is, is not
yet to know how Zeusan man may live up to it. One must still, therefore, transpose the essence of the shepherd into the terms proper to the quite different being, man, in his quite different conditions; the disorder of the Zeusan present. If, therefore, appropriation of the divine "measure" involves, first, a recovery of the universal, it also involves, secondly, a respecification which gives it concrete bearing for men in their actuality.

In fact, the stranger does not make this double motion of appropriation explicit in the course of the myth. As we pointed out before, he leaves us to reflect for ourselves on the character of the renewal of the presence of the god required by Zeusan man. But as we shall see, the rest of the dialogue responds to this reflection as it is implicitly present in the myth. The stranger points to the essence of the shepherd, first, by a tacit distinction of the god, as such, from him. There is some ambiguity (already noted, p. 39, n. 5 above) whether it is the god himself or a lesser god who shepherds man. But in any case, by describing how the god enters into this role towards the creatures in the cosmos, the stranger speaks on two levels at once, that of the god as such and that of the role; and this lets the latter refer back to the former. Thus the shepherd's work of "superintending" and "supporting" (epistaten, 271e) reflects back to the god's "ruling and caring" (ethen . . . epineloumenos, 271d). Again, the shepherd's prevention of "savagery . . . and preying of creature on creature . . . [and] war and faction" (271e) reflects back to the god's "care for the whole (holos) of the [cosmos in its] rotation" (271d). This points back, too, to the characterizations of the god as one who "orders" (kosmeine) and "harmonizes" or "fits together" (synarmozestai)—above all, to his periodic intervention at the close of each Zeusan epoch, when, "caring (kosmomenos) lest the [cosmos] . . . sink in an infinite sea of unlikeness, he . . . orders and sets it right again (kosmeiet te kai epavnoradin)". (273e). Secondly, the stranger suggests, again indirectly, the specification of the myth by the closer passage of the myth, at 274b–d. He alerts us to the importance of this passage by his periphrastic remark at 274b: "We have arrived now, at the goal for which our whole account has striven." Then he describes how, when the god withdraws from the cosmos, men are suddenly confronted by "want" (chreia). "Unskilled" (ateknoi) and "unguarded" (apitukoi), they must develop arts. It is made explicit, on the one hand, that the arts are the proper means of providing for material survival. In dividing and performing the labor which was unnecessary in the age of Cronus, the arts are the proper analogue in the age of Zeus to the gratuitous gifts and nurture by the earth and the shepherd. What is left unsaid, however, is just how the newly differentiated host of men is to recover the community it knew in the age of Cronus. By the retrospective negations in his description of the age of Cronus, the stranger indicates some of the forms of disintegration that mankind experiences: "war" between cities and "faction" within them (271e) and the further splitting into private families (272a). Thus there is the task of developing an "art" (or "science") which can somehow "harmonize" men into a cohesive social whole. As an art which, itself one amongst many, accepts labor and differentiation as the presuppositions of community, such statesmanship is essentially proper to the age of Zeus and distinct from the Cronian shepherd. But as a "care for the whole" which seeks, within the age of Zeus, to reverse its increasing disorder or "unlikeness," it is the proper human analogue, the appropriation, of the god's rule.

3. THE REVISIONS OF THE INITIAL DEFINITION (274e–277a); YOUNG SOCRATES AND THE ACADEMY

At the conclusion of the myth the stranger makes use of it to revise the initial definition. These revisions (already briefly noted) are given in the form of two new bifurcatory distinctions, those of god/man (274e ff.) and of rule by force by free consent (276d ff.).

The first revision in particular brings the basic point of the myth to the fore, redefining statesmanship in accord with the divine measure. In doing this, the stranger also exposes his own dissembling in the initial diairesis. The myth, he notes at 275b, has permitted them to . . . see more clearly that one to whom alone, as taking care of human nurture in accord with the paradigm (kata to paradigma) of shepherds and cowherds, that title [of herdsman to the human flock] is really fitting and proper.

Yet this has proven to be no man but rather the god in the age of Cronus. The source of this confusion, the stranger now reflects, was a precipitous leap (eukhos), much earlier in the midst of the fifth bifurcation, to the name agelaiotrophikes, "[science of] nurturing flocks" (275c–d). Thus he puts his finger on the precise moment when he introduced the paradigm of the shepherd." As the irony in the closing bifurcations also showed, this has hardly been an innocent error. Now, however, it is time to correct it by distinguishing the divine shepherd form the human statesman. Since bifurcatory diairesis presupposes a fund of identity (see ch. II.1 above), the stranger reflects back from "nurturer," the specific character of the god qua shepherd, to "care" (therapeein, 275e), the universal which "nurture" exemplifies. Since the god and the human statesman have this in common, they may be distinguished qua "care"-takers. Further, the statesman's "care" is characterized as an "art" (technê) concerned with the "human community as a whole" (antrôpina sumphasismenonai) (276b–c). Thus the stranger retraces, in the form of bifurcatory diairesis, just the double-motion of reflection we found implicit in the myth.

The second revision has significance on two levels. First, it seems to complete the resolution of the "dispute" earlier precipitated (267a–268d) by the initial definition. Most of the "disputants" will already be appeased by the first revision; the farmers and traders and bakers, for instance, who contested the statesman's claim to the title of "nurturer" will not now contest his claim to practice the art which most "cares" for the "community as a whole" (276c). The second revision goes on to rule out the last possible disputant: by distinguishing their "modes" (tropoi, 276e) of rule, "by force" and "by free consent," respectively, the stranger sets the tyrant aside and so isolates the statesman. Beyond this, the second revision has a
deeper, more substantive connection with the first. We saw this already in analyzing the critical implications of the myth for homo mensura and the "forgetful" turn back to autocracy. The hope for a strong leader, a new "shepherd" to restore internal and external order in the city-state, in fact clears the path for tyranny. In exposing this danger in the notion of the statesman as "herdsman," the initial diaries and the myth, as position and refutation, constitute a clear rejection of the re-emergence of despotism in Greek politics.

At the close of chapter II we raised questions about the identity of Plato's antagonists and about why he associates the persona "Young Socrates" with the definition of the statesman as herdsman to man. The first of these questions has been largely resolved by our discussion of the rising sentiment for a despotic solution to Greek political troubles. But we have given only a general response to the second. Any erroneous result of the initial dialetic process (258b–267c) would have provided sufficient material for the experience of refutation and, more generally, of the "upwards" motion of philosophy. (See pp. 34–35 above.) Why, then, does Plato have Young Socrates endorse—and experience the refutation of—this particular definition?

A likely interpretation emerges if we bring together two earlier observations. In our analysis of the dramatis persona, "Young Socrates" came to light as a general representative for the young men in the Academy; Plato puts them on stage before themselves in his persona. And in our historical study of the image of the ruler as "shepherd," we noted considerable evidence in the Republic which gives the impression that Plato himself imagined his "philosopher-king" as a dunastés of that sort, such an impression could only have been reinforced by his journey to Dionysius II in 367. Taken together, these points suggest that Young Socrates' enthusiastic endorsement of the initial definition is Plato's miming of an uncritical acceptance of that impression by young Academicians; or, what is nearly the same, it is Plato's anticipatory miming of the likelihood of such an uncritical acceptance in the future. The refutation by the myth and revisions, in turn, would be Plato's disavowal. By having the stranger reject the definition, associating it with the tyrant rather than the statesman, Plato seems to warn the Academicians that the knowing or epistemic statesman is not an autocrat—or in the language of the Republic, that the genuinely philosophical ruler will not hold power as a dunastés.

The need (or at least, Plato's perception of it) for this disavowal and warning is demonstrated by the dramatic action at the close of the revisions. Even while the statesman has apparently been isolated, the stranger and Young Socrates have not yet examined the specific character or content of his art at all. But when the stranger asks, Young Socrates declares, "I should think, sir, that at this point we have really completed our definition (apodeixis) of the statesman" (277a). This presumption of understanding is dangerous. Should a young Academician, familiar with the Republic and mistaking this familiarity for a genuine understanding of statesmanship, seize political power in the name of philosophy, he would more likely achieve more power, the dunastés of the tyrant, than anything philosophical. Such a rule would discredit philosophy and reform statesmanship at once. (On the reality of this danger, see the Epilogue.) And so Plato aims to block its possibility in advance.

If this interpretation is well-taken, then the stranger's posture towards Young Socrates on the substantive questions of the dialogue is thoroughly analogous to his posture on methodology. The stranger tests Young Socrates' understanding both of diaries and the forms and of statesmanship. In both spheres, Young Socrates responds by going euthus—"straightaway," the stranger's term for unreflective presumptive opinion—to a conclusion, the "man/"beast" distinction at 262a and the assumption of the shepherd paradigm from the fifth division onwards. In both spheres, consequently, the stranger must interrupt and refute, putting a check on Young Socrates' impulsiveness: just as he insists on bifurcatory procedure at 262a–264b, so by the myth he makes a strong positive differentiation of statesman and tyrant. But, finally, in neither case is this the stranger's last word. As the subsurface irony of the closing distinctions (264b–267c) has already indicated with regard methodology, there is a real tension between what is pedagogically timely for Young Socrates and the true complexity of the issues. Though the stranger is limited by pedagogical exigencies throughout, he will treat both sets of issues more radically later on.

B. THE SECOND DIGRESSION: PARADIGM AND THE MEAN (277a–287b)

The situation at the close of the revisions (277a) is analogous to that at the close of the initial diaries (267c). Once again the process of definition appears complete, and Young Socrates gives his unreserved approval. The stranger, however, remains unsatisfied: just as before, no sooner has Young Socrates accepted the definition than he objects to this acceptance. Responding directly to Young Socrates' declaration that "we have really completed our definition of the statesman" (277a), the stranger reflects,

That would be fine for us, Socrates. But it is not enough for you to think so—I must think so too. And at this stage, in my view at least, our king does not yet appear to have a complete form (telen...schema). Rather we have been like sculptors who, rushing their work and going too fast, elaborate the particulars much more than is needed and so slow down their own progress. We wanted to give a swift demonstration of the error in our earlier explication, and since we deemed only large-scale paradigms suitable, we wanted to make the point in a properly grand manner (megadupros). Thus we reared our wondrous mass of myth and were forced to use a greater part of it than was necessary—with the consequence that we made our demonstration lengthier, yet failed altogether to give the myth a proper ending (telen); and our definition, too, has the artless look of a portrait which is still just an outline sketch,
lacking the vividness (energartic) which comes from the pigments and the mixing of colors. Bear in mind, however, that for those who can follow, it is more appropriate to reveal living creatures by conceptual account and definition than by a drawing or any crafted model; for those who cannot follow, the use of visible models is fitting. (277a–c)

The immediate point of this lengthy reflection is the indefiniteness of the present characterization of the statesman. The characterization is incomplete in the manner of an “outline sketch” which has not been filled in with colors. The sense of this analogy is clear. The myth and the revisions of the initial diarisis do indeed, as we have argued, reassert the identification of statesmanship with “nurture” as a specific kind of shepherding. But in another sense, since “care” is more general and includes “nurture” as a sub-kind, the recharacterization of statesmanship as “care” both reasserts and extends this identification. True, other artisans will not claim equal share to the statesman’s title, once his essence is given as care for the whole of the polis. Still (and we shall return to this later), this “care” is what statesmanship has in common with all the other arts; thus the statesman is not revealed enargos, “vividly” or in his own distinctive nature. This is a defect in both the myth and the definition. By his pairing of the ages of Cronus and Zeus and his positive, imagistic account of the role of the god as a shepherd in the age of Cronus, the stranger set the stage for a correlative positive account of the role of man in the age of Zeus: this would have been the “proper close” (teleos) for the myth. But instead, as we noted (pp. 39, 52 ff.), he left the peculiar character of human statesmanship implicit. As for the definition, the revision to “care” gives us, in Aristotelian terms, the genus without its specific difference: there is therefore a need for further distinctions to reveal the statesman’s peculiar character. Thus the myth and the revisions call for just the resumption of diarisis that, at 287b ff., makes up the third and closing section of the dialogue as a whole.

Before he can resume diarisis, however, the stranger must address a prior need. What shall guide these further distinctions? However he might proceed if alone (or if speaking only to the elder Socrates), he must now work with Young Socrates. And by his performance in the initial diarisis Young Socrates showed that he still depends on ordinary opinion and sensible images: thus he made his leap to man, at 262a, and was unwittingly led by the image of the statesman as shepherd. Now, however, the myth has built on that “paradigm” on a “large scale,” working out the figure of the shepherd-god, and has shown its inappropriateness to the human ruler. This refutation leaves the inquiry without a guiding image or paradigm. Before he resumes diarisis, therefore, the stranger must provide Young Socrates with a new paradigm; the negative moment of the myth, refutation of the shepherd image, must be balanced by the positive, reorienting proposal of a new guiding image. This is in fact the central point of the whole second digression at 277a–287b: at 279a–283a, the stranger proposes the figure of the weaver.

Underlying both these needs, however, there is a still more basic problem which the stranger must address. His long reflection at 277a–c—especially when considered together with Young Socrates’ preceding and following speeches—alludes to it in several aspects. Even after the digression at 262a–264b and the myth, Young Socrates shows almost no philosophical self-consciousness. Thus, his unreserved approval of the revised definition shows the same “haste,” a presumptuous, uncircumspect impulsion towards conclusion, which he showed both in the leap to man (262a) and in endorsing the initial definition (267a and c). Nor does he show any recognition, in spite of the stranger’s comparison of their search to the work of sculptors and painters (277a), of his own dependence on visible models. Indeed, when—immediately after this comparison—the stranger distinguishes “those who can” from “those who cannot follow” “conceptual account and definition” (277c). Young Socrates seems to presume that he is among the first group. This explains his apparent disinterest in the stranger’s point that the latter must rely on visible models. “Yes, that is true,” he replies, acknowledging the point; “but,” he goes on, turning immediately back to the substantive matter of the stranger’s reflection, “please make clear where you find our definition not yet sufficient” (277c). The slight trace of impatience in this reply points to the most dangerous implication of Young Socrates’ non-self-recognition: insofar as he fails to know his own limitation, he will fail to grasp the critical relevance of philosophical method to his own development. Since diarisis and (as we shall consider) paradigm are addressed to this limitation, and since he presumes himself beyond it, he is liable to neglect them and to weary of the “lengthy” labors they require; but if he does, he will undermine his education into philosophy. Thus the stranger has a pedagogical task still more fundamental than those of generating a new paradigm and initiating new distinctions. He must somehow awaken Young Socrates to his ignorance of his own limitation and, so, to his need for philosophical method, in order to protect his philosophical future.

In its internal structure, the second digression (277a–287b) reflects the stranger’s recognition of and complex response to these various needs. The first subpart at 277d–279a exposes the value and structure of the method of paradigm. This prepares the way for the actual presentation, at 279a–283a, of the paradigmatic definition of the weaver. Throughout these phases of discussion, moreover, the stranger finds ways to mirror Young Socrates’ limitations back to him; as before, he mixes his strikingly positive teaching with a thoroughly Socratic indirect reference to the pedagogical process itself. It is largely in response to Young Socrates’ failure—by now a clearly established characteristic—to respond to this indirect communication that the stranger closes with his presentation of the doctrine of “essential measure,” at 283b–287a.

1. THE PARADIGM OF PARADIGM (277a–279a)

The stranger’s second major objection brings the basic pedagogical problem up to the surface. Young Socrates, deferring to his authority, is eager to hear his criticism of the definition—while the stranger’s real aim in raising the criticism is to awaken
Young Socrates to himself, to alert him to his own limitations and to various methods of working beyond them. Thus at 277d the stranger chooses to turn back from his criticism (indicated at 277a–c) to the basic crisis in learning which it reflects. That this turn—"upwards" rather than "downwards," in the metaphor of the Republic—will be unexpected to Young Socrates, he knows very well. As if to indicate this, he injects a new note of paradox into his language, and he addresses Young Socrates by vocatives with a gently mocking mantic color. 

Stranger: It is difficult, daemonic one, to exhibit any of the greater [beings] sufficiently without recourse to paradigms. For each of us—knowing, as in a dream, all things—runs the risk of waking to find that he knows nothing.

Young Socrates: How do you mean?

Stranger: Strangely and out-of-place indeed (kat malat atopos), I seem now to have struck upon our characteristic experience regarding knowledge.

Young Socrates: What is this?

Stranger: Paradigm itself (to paraideigma auto), blessed one, seems to stand in need of paradigm. (277d)

By "the greater [beings]," first of all, the stranger refers to beings which cannot be understood by simple recourse to perceptual experience. (Socrates already characterized "the philosopher" this way, speaking to Theodorus at Sophist 216c ff. The stranger will be more explicit at 285d–286a.) One who has not discovered the problematic relation of appearance and reality may seem to himself to understand everything perfectly well; indeed, this is our customary presumption. Encountering something "greater," however, something whose reality has no clear or adequate appearance in perceptual experience, he may suddenly find that he is ignorant; and just as far as he had presumed he understood everything, he may now suspect that he knows nothing at all. His former "knowledge" appears as a dream. It is here that "recourse to paradigms" is timely: as the stranger will explain, the comparison of lesser things, things which are rightly grasped in direct perceptions, with the "greater" may exhibit some of the same elements in both—and so generate knowledge of the latter. But before he can go into this, the stranger has a prior problem: for the one who has not had the "experience" of "waking," both this "experience" itself and the method of responding to it will fall, as it were, amongst the "greater" beings—and the one who brings them up, even in the course of an inquiry, will seem to be speaking atopos, "strangely and out-of-place." In a later passage [see 291b] the stranger will observe how "the out-of-place (to atopos) befalls everyone through ignorance." In the present context his allusions to the "waking experience" and recourse to paradigms will seem "out-of-place" precisely because Young Socrates is still ignorant of his ignorance. But then, how can "this second-level ignorance be addressed? The stranger's answer is both fully logical and yet, on first hearing, marvelously paradoxical. "Paradigm itself"—since it is both itself unknown and the means of passing from ignorance to knowledge of the unknown—"stands in need of paradigm." Before giving a paradigm for the statesman, therefore, the stranger will give a paradigm for the very experience of the need and use of paradigm. 

To this end the stranger chooses a commonplace experience of children who are just learning to spell. Though they can tell apart and identify the various "letters"—stoichèia—when these occur in the "shortest and simplest syllables," they are perplexed and make errors when confronted with longer, more complex syllables. The method of paradigm is the best way to lead them to knowledge: one must set syllables that, by "true opinion," they can analyze correctly side by side with the longer ones that confuse them, then go through and point out the occurrence of similarities in the two. In this way the letters the children grasped rightly at the outset "become exemplary"—that is, serve as paradigm—for those which at first perplexed them; and by the end they will be able to recognize how each letter is "different from the others" and "the same as itself" in all of its various occurrences in syllables (278a–c).

This case is paradigmatic in several respects. First, learning to distinguish and identify letters in syllables is a close analogue for learning how forms—the stoichèia, "elements," of reality, in the stranger's teaching—can and cannot combine. And secondly, Young Socrates is just as much a beginner in this latter study as the children are in spelling. Thus the stranger applies his paradigm of paradigm by setting the children's experience next to Young Socrates' and asking him pointedly, . . . would we be surprised, then, if our mind experienced the same thing in regard to the elements (stoichèia) of all things, sometimes being led by truth to comprehend each unit within certain groupings, yet other times, when they are in other groupings, swept away and uncertain about them all? Somehow it comes to the right opinion about some of the combinations, but then again, when the very same elements are transposed into the long and difficult syllables of things, it does not recognize them. (278c–d)

Does Young Socrates recognize himself in this mirroring image? His response is characteristic: eager to agree with the stranger, he repeats his interrogative phrase, transforming it into an affirmative. "It would not be at all surprising," he says (278d). The Platonic irony here is sharp. Wouldn't it be more encouraging if Young Socrates were surprised, even slightly nonplussed, by the comparison? The repetition of another's words is an odd way (to say the least) to express self-recognition. The sense in which deference to the teacher is actually an "obstacle" to philosophy appears here in a poignant, if fleeting, way, and we cannot help but wonder at the implications of this exchange for Plato's relations with his students. (We shall come back to this later.)

In any case, the stranger chooses to press ahead with his application of the paradigm of paradigm. If "our mind" does indeed find itself perplexed at the long and difficult syllables involved in statesmanship, then the next step is to search out something short and simple to apply as a paradigm. The stranger and Young Socrates need to select "from lesser beings"—those easily known from immediate experience—some one which has "the same form" (tation eidos) as statesmanship. (278e) Set side by side with the statesman, this being can show them how to continue their distinctions and so give their "outline sketch" its proper "vividness" and "colors" (279a).
2. THE PARADIGM OF THE WEAVER (279a–283a)

But what "smallest [being]" (σμικροτάτον) is fit to serve as paradigm for statesmanship? The stranger poses this question but does not wait for Young Socrates' reply. As his paradigm of paradigm implies, the initial pairing of the simple and familiar, as paradigm, with the complex and strange is the teacher's task, for it presupposes just the knowledge of the latter which the student lacks. In addition, the selection of the paradigm is an integral step in the stranger's effort to give the myth its "proper ending": as we shall see later, the stranger's choice is predetermined by the project of working out the human analogue to the god's rule. He therefore takes the initiative. Beginning with a rare oath which both renews the oracular tone of his declarations at 277d and also reminds us that he searches for the Zeusian statesman, he proposes,

By Zeus! Socrates, if we have nothing else ready at hand, let us take the weaving art—and, if you agree, not the whole of it. For the weaving of things out of wool may well suffice. (279b)

Moreover, the stranger also suggests that the definition of weaving be executed by bifurcatory diariesis:

In fact, why don't we, just as in our earlier discourse we distinguished each being, cutting parts from parts, also now do the same with regard to weaving? (279b–c)

The effect of this second suggestion is to make the definition of weaving "paradigmatic" in a complex double sense. On the one hand, the weaver (more precisely, the weaver of wool things) is to be a model for the statesman. On the other hand, the method of definition in the initial diarhetic process and revisions is to serve as a model for the method of defining the weaver's art.

This second aspect of the paradigm relation is somewhat surprising at first sight. The divisions in the "earlier discourse" have proven unsatisfactory and insufficient. Why, then, does the stranger choose to mirror its procedures in defining the weaver's art? The answer lies, in part, in the crucial pedagogical value he grants to bifurcatory diariesis. But this is not all. In fact, in its course and inner structure the definition of weaving mirrors the dialogue as a whole, not just the earlier phases of diariesis. Once we see this and examine it in light of the stranger's complex intent, the mirroring turns out to be fully consistent with the corrective function of the method of paradigm.

Consider first the course and structure of the definition of weaving. Strikingly, the stranger leads Young Socrates through the same three phases which make up the dialogue as a whole: (1) a diarhetic process toward definition which culminates in apparent success, (2) digressions which show how this success is merely apparent and which provide a basis, in turn, for (3) resumption of the diarhetic process and a real completion. The stranger first divides human "making and getting" in ten steps, arriving finally at "the art which most of all cares for clothes [or cloaks (τόν hymation, 279e6)]." The precise path may be traced diagrammatically as follows:
The stranger concludes this initial diatresis (279c–280a) with a brief synopsis, and Young Socrates endorses it. Then, however, he objects to its insufficiency—or more pointedly, to the assumption “someone” might make that it is sufficient. The problem is that the closing characterization of the weaver is too general: even if the weaver’s art “most of all cares for clothes,” still there are many other arts which “collaborate” in this care, yet are not properly “weaving.” Reflection on these motivates and provides the basis for a resumption of diatresis. These further distinctions (281d–283a) proceed as follows:

- Directly responsible arts
  - the fuller’s art
  - wool-working
  - the art of separating (diakritikê)
    - carding
    - separating threads with the shuttle
  - the art of combining (synkritikê)
    - spinning
    - warp-spinning
    - woof-spinning
  - intertwining warp and woof, i.e. weaving proper

This mirroring of the whole inquiry in the definition of weaving reflects both aspects—substantive and pedagogical—of the stranger’s intent in introducing the method of paradigm. Substantively, he is concerned to give a sufficient definition of statesmanship. But the inquiry has reached an impasse; apparently complete, its initial result fails to differentiate the statesman’s from other arts which care for the city. By bringing the process of defining the weaver to a precisely comparable impasse and then moving through it, passing from the objections to further distinctions which resolve them, the stranger shows the way by example, as it were, for the resumption of diatresis and completion of the definition of statesmanship. As we shall see later, the specific pattern of distinctions provides a concrete guide for those to come. In this respect, the mirroring is anticipatory and projects the way from the aporetic second to the positive third phase of the dialogue as a whole.

This substantive breakthrough, however, will mean little if Young Socrates does not recognize the problem it addresses as his own. We come back again to the stranger’s pedagogical drive, essential to his role as Socratic mediator, to occasion Young Socrates’ self-recognition. In this respect, the mirroring compares directly with the stranger’s preceding description of the baffled children facing strange and complex syllables. In both cases he gives a pointedly mimetic representation of the actual state of affairs in the inquiry—and so provides Young Socrates the opportunity to recognize both what his difficulties are and that they are his own. In the definition of weaving this mirroring is concentrated especially in the middle section (280a–281d). Here the stranger twice repeats the same basic error, with regard to the weaver, that Young Socrates has made with regard to the statesman. He begins the middle section, first, by indirectly recalling the problematic situation after the initial diatresis and again after the revisions:

But now let us recognize together that someone might suppose (dauzômen) that the weaving of clothes, as just characterized, has been described sufficiently—someone, that is, not able to realize that it has not yet been distinguished from some closely related arts which collaborate with it, even while it has been separated off from many others which are akin. (280a–b)

This “someone,” of course, refers to Young Socrates. At 267a and c he enthusiastically endorsed the definition of statesmanship as “nurture,” even though, as the stranger immediately pointed out, many other arts have an equal, if not stronger, claim to be the nurturers of the community. (See 267e–268a.) And though the revision from “nurture” to “care” in one way mitigated the problem, in another it extended it: as we have noted, “nurture” is a subkind of “care,” which the statesman has in common with all the other arts. Yet Young Socrates once again approved the definition as final at 277a. Presented now with the precisely analogous error regarding the weaver, Young Socrates seems unable to make the connection. When he responds by asking, “What are these arts which are akin?” the stranger remarks dryly, “It appears you are not following what has been said,” and reiterates the distinctions made in the first phase (see 280b–d). Then at 280e, concluding the reiteration, he tries again:

...[having set aside all those other arts], we might suppose (dauzômen) that what remains is the sought-for art concerned with producing a woolen barrier against violence of the climate, called by the name “weaving.”

Once again, however, Young Socrates fails to recognize the problem. "Indeed it does seem so," he responds. The stranger must therefore object again. "But child (paî), this characterization is not yet complete."

The stranger’s vocative, recalling the image of the baffled children, is the only hint of exasperation. But the very explicitness of his subsequent explanation shows his judgment that Young Socrates is not now able to rise to his challenge. Finding no sign of self-recognition or critical initiative in Young Socrates, the stranger evi-
dently feels he has no alternative but to intervene in Young Socrates' behalf with an explicit, discursive account of the incompleteness of the definition. At 281a–c, therefore, he points out each of the collaborating arts which, though essentially involved in the "care of clothes," nonetheless differs from weaving proper. Thus he establishes both the need and the field for further distinctions, and at 281c–d he wins Young Socrates' explicit agreement that without them the definition would be "neither clear nor complete."

On the basis of this agreement, they move into the final third of the inquiry into weaving, and as we have already noted, it is on the basis of the distinctions in this last subsection that they are able to move on to the final third—the resumption of diaries—of the dialogue as a whole. Thus, from the point of view of the substantive development of the definition of statesmanship, the inquiry is back on track and proceeding well. From the point of view of the Socratic test of recognition, however, the dialogue is in crisis—a crisis that, by its very nature, is quite hidden from the agreeable Young Socrates. It is in response to this that the stranger postpones the resumption of the definition of statesmanship in order to introduce his doctrine of the mean.

### 3. THE STRANGER'S PREVENTATIVE DOCTRINE OF ESSENTIAL MEASURE (283b–287b)

We have studied the stranger's myth exclusively in its metaphysical and cultural-political meanings. There is, however, still another level of meaning altogether, one closely bound up with the hidden crisis of communication in the dialogue. Recall first the situation of the human flock in the age of Cronus. On the one hand, this is a time of innocent heteronomy: the nurturing shepherd has complete, immediate authority and meets all the needs of the flock, rearing it and serving as its doctor, midwife, even provider of games and music (see 268a–b). But there is a danger in this: utterly satisfied with the shepherd's rule, the flock has no cause to suspect, much less prepare for, the destined cosmic reversal and the shepherd's withdrawal. When the time comes, men find themselves "in great aporia" (am megalaes aporiais, 274c): they have only their own abilities to rely on, and these, due both to their dependence on the shepherd and to their failure to anticipate, are undeveloped. If their one aid is the early "memory of the instruction of the demiurge and father" (273b), even this is insecure; eventually, as the stranger tells it, disorder prevails and "forgetfulness sets in" (273e).

There are striking parallels with the dramatically projected situation of Young Socrates. He relies totally on the stranger's authority. Indeed, without knowing them himself, he leaves all his educative needs—for rearing and, more specifically, for "games and music," in the myth (see 268d), for maieutics, in the mirror-play of the paradigms, and for cure of "illness" (see 283b), in the coming passage on the mean—for the stranger to meet. The danger in this heteronomy is foreshadowed by the fate of Zeustan men. The stranger is soon to leave Athens; likewise, the elder Socrates is about to be put to death. What shall become of Young Socrates in the future? Left to his own devices, his lack of inner development, much less of self-knowledge, will leave him hard-pressed to continue with philosophy. True, he will have his positive memory of the stranger's "instruction," didache. But this will be insecure on two counts. First, insofar as this memory preserves the stranger's work, while he himself fails to recognize his own need of it, he may eventually lose interest; in particular, the method of diaries may come to seem superfluous. Secondly, insofar as this memory is, in its positive character, confined to the particular subject matter the stranger treats, it will not help him in face of other subjects; for this reason too, the method may come to seem useless, even encumbering.

Having failed in the maieutic tests of self-recognition, yet unreserved in his endorsement of stranger's definition of weaving ("Absolutely right," 283a), Young Socrates epitomizes both the innocence and the heteronomy of man in the age of Cronus. The stranger chooses this moment to raise the problem of the future.

So be it. But really, why didn't we go straightaway (euthus) to the conclusion that weaving is intertwining warp and woof, instead of proceeding on this roundabout course through such a host of pointless distinctions?

Young Socrates: Oh no, sir! In my opinion, at least, there was nothing pointless in all the things that we said.

Stranger: It isn't at all surprising that you think so now; but, blessed one, someday you may come to a different opinion. Against this illness, should it affect you many times later on—and this too would not be at all surprising—here now a doctrine applicable to all such difficulties (283b–c).

As we shall see, the stranger's doctrine is designed to save Young Socrates from forgetfulness. The positive core of the doctrine is the notion of "essential measure." Should he ever "come to [the] different opinion" that a diatriptic speech, with its "host" of distinctions, is superfluous or pointless, Young Socrates is to apply "essential measure" to it. By reminding him of the essential purpose of the speech, this will restore his perspective and curb his impatience. But this is not all. After first presenting the notion of the mean (283b–285c), the stranger goes on, in two steps (285c–286b and 286b–287b), to apply it to the dialogue itself.22 Thus he aims to prevent in advance Young Socrates' forgetfulness—or, to follow out the parallel with the myth one step further, to generate in Young Socrates the same sort of "philosophical recollection" of the inquiry itself that he himself displayed by his "memory" of the shepherd-god. Such an attunement, penetrating beyond particulars to their universal sense, would permit Young Socrates to grasp the dialogue itself as an example and to use it as such when, alone and forced back on his own resources in the future, he will have to structure his own philosophical education.

#### a. The diatriptic revelation of "essential measure" (283b–285c)

In its root character, the "illness" which may afflict Young Socrates "many times later on" is a misological disdain for philosophical method; it will take the form of impatience with methodical speeches like the definition of weaving and the dis-
misactive judgment that they are “longer than needed” (283C). The antidote for this is a philosophical way of evaluating length and brevity, excess and deficiency, as such.

Such evaluation is the work of the “art of measurement.” But, the stranger points out, there are two kinds of measurement, and only one is suited to the task at hand. By a bifurcatory cut he distinguishes

... the kind based on the mutual relativity of greatness and smallness from that based on the essential being necessary to coming-into-being (kata twn genesei anagkatan oustai). (283c)

Young Socrates is understandably puzzled at first by this distinction. The first kind of measurement is not hard to recognize. As his reply at 283e shows, Young Socrates shares the common presumption that whatever is “greater” is only relative to a thing that is “lesser” and vice versa; the stranger’s first kind includes all those measurements that, comparing the size of one thing with that of another, articulate such relativity. The second kind, however, is not immediately clear to him. What is the “essential being” to which the stranger refers, and how is it “necessary to coming-into-being”?

The stranger gives a partial clarification at 283e. “... will we not assert,” he asks,

... that it really occurs (hōi oustai gigmonen) that we hear speeches and witness deeds that exceed or are exceeded by the character of the mean? And is it not just this matter of attaining the mean that differentiates the good and the bad amongst us?

The sort of “coming-into-being” (genesis) the stranger has in mind, first of all, is that of speeches and deeds—that is, the purposive activity of human praxis (see 284c). “Existents” (gignomena) of this sort are particulars in time and so not “beings” (ousiai) in the sense proper to forms. Nonetheless, the “being” of forms is “necessary” to such existents: as purposive, speeches and deeds are essentially defined by the aim to realize or instantiate forms. Thus, to fashion a relevant example, the statesman works to realize the just state, that is, to actualize in social-historical fact the ideal of just polity. The difference between good and bad deeds and speech and, correspondingly, between good and bad agents and speakers is a matter of how fully such instantiation is accomplished. Thus we see the sense in which the second kind of measure is not “relative” but “essential”: it evaluates an existent by considering its relations not to other existents but to its essence, the “being” which defines it.44

But there is an important distinction to be drawn here. The norm against which “essential measure” measures an existent is not a form, as such, but rather “the mean” (to metron). Essential measure asks whether an existent exceeds or is exceeded by or realizes the mean (see tēn toutou metrōn genēsin, 284c, d). This is important for several reasons. The “being” (ousia) of forms is not commensurate with the “existence” (or “coming-into-being,” genesis) of things; essential measure therefore requires an intermediate, a term that, while referring to the relevant form, may be set into comparison with existent things. Moreover, essential measure needs to be sensitive (as the form, as such, is not) to the existential limitations of context. At 284e the stranger specifies the sense of to metron by the appositions to prepōn (“the appropriate”), ho kairos (“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; 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.45

The initial explicit motive for introducing the notion of essential measure was precisely to provide such a standard for the judgment of philosophical speeches. The stranger worried that Young Socrates might “later on” grow impatient with lengthy, “roundabout” speeches like the definition of weaving. Now that he has articulated such a standard, however, the stranger is in no hurry to apply it. On the contrary, having so often before interrupted the substantive process of inquiry for the sake of reflections on method, he now interrupts his reflections on method for a substantive insight (283e ff.).

Essential measure is indispensable to statesmanship. At the outset of the initial diatribe, the stranger had established the statesman’s science as theoretical and directive, hence as both not a praxis, in itself, and yet vitally concerned with the practical activity of others. (See 258d–260b.) Now he points out that the statesman and the weaver and every artisan concerned with praxis is guided by essential measure:

... they guard against what is more and less than the mean as a peril for practical activity, and because they preserve measure in this way, they achieve goodness and beauty in all that they produce. (284a–b)

This inner connection makes the acceptance of essential measure and the mean crucial to the project of defining the statesman: since the mean is essential to statesmanship, to fail to acknowledge its being would be to “make statesmanship invisible” (284a, b), and this, in turn, would be to make the whole inquiry “valueless” (apōros). The situation is comparable to that of the Sophist: there Theaetetus and the stranger came upon a notion, “non-being” (to mē on), that was ontologically problematic like the mean; and similarly, because it was implicated by the nature of the sophist, they had to accept its being and undertake a lengthy reflection justifying this (284b–c). Yet in the Statesman the stranger chooses not to pause for this lengthy reflection. The basic issue—obscurely noted as idērēs autē, “the accurate itself,” principle of measurement—would apparently be too difficult, for the stranger puts it off for “sometime” in the future (284d). For the moment he chooses only to stress the connection of statesmanship and the mean. Three times he asserts it (284a, c, d), and on the third he credits it with having “come to our rescue, magnificently” (megalopropēs).46

The stranger’s recollection of a past inquiry and anticipation of a future one both digress from the present reflection on the role of essential measure within states-
manship. This reflection, in turn, digresses from the methodologically oriented introduction of essential measure, putting off the stranger’s application of it. At last, Young Socrates begins to feel the slightest restlessness. “This is quite right,” he says, endorsing the stranger’s third assertion of the connection of statesmanship and essential measure, “but what follows from it?” (284e) The stranger’s quite “roundabout” way seems finally to have irritated the geometer—that is, the desire for straightforward movement from premise to conclusion (see pp. 4, 34)—within Young Socrates. Appropriately enough, the stranger responds by backtracking, turning back to reiterate his opening diatetic distinction of the two kinds of measure.

But there is a new dimension in his reiteration. He now spells out the first kind, relative measurement, by reference to the mathematical “arts which measure number and length and depth and breadth and speed” (284e)—that is, to arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, and kinematics, the core studies established by the elder Socrates in the Republic as paideia for philosophy. And having rearticulated his distinction, he then turns to a criticism of a certain “number of the erudite” (285a) who have overlooked it: these are right to say that “measurement is involved in all that comes-into-being,” but they wrongly identify measurement as such with relative measure.

Because they have not accustomed themselves to study by distinguishing according to forms (kath’ eidos...diaterror), they immediately (eudoxe) conflate these two so different kinds and take them as similar, and in addition they make the opposite error, dividing other [kinds] but not according to their parts. What is needed (dein) is that whenever someone first perceives what many things have in common, he not cease inquiring until he grasps all the eidetic differences which are there within the commonality—and conversely, that whenever one perceives the many various likenesses which stand out in a multitude, he not be permitted to grimace and give up before he has gathered all the beings which are akin within one likeness and comprehended them under the being of some common kind. (285a–b)

The indirect references in these passages are striking. 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 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.

If these connections are correct, then the whole passage on essential measure takes on the character of critical advice to the young Academician. Stepped in the mathematical studies prescribed in the Republic—Plato seems to say—the Academician risks the Pythagorean mistake of identifying mathematics and philosophy. Indeed, we see in retrospect that Young Socrates’ initial failure to recognize essential measure (283c) was in unwitting agreement with the error of “the erudite.” To see only relative measure, however, is to let the arts concerned with praxis “become invisible.” Moreover, only essential measure turns back from the domain of existent things (gignomena, genosis) to set them into relation with their essential forms.

Thus to overlook “essential measure” is at once to narrow the philosopher’s field of concern and to neglect his principal objects. The young Academician—Young Socrates, in the mimetic play of the dialogue—must therefore distinguish mathematics from philosophy and move from the one to the other. Both this particular passage and the dialogue generally, moreover, show how, “What is needed,” deon, says the stranger, invoking his own doctrine of the mean to point out the fullest possible realization, in present circumstances, of philosophy, is for the Academicians to “accustom themselves to study by distinguishing according to forms.” As a quasi-mathematical method which provides a check on “immediate” (eudoxe) opinions and a rule-structured way to turn from existents to the consideration of forms (see pp. 21–22, 26 above), diatresis is both appropriate and timely.

b. The purposes of the dialogue; its value as a paradigm for Young Socrates (285c–286b)

To apply essential measure to the length of a speech requires, first, that one identify its essential, defining purpose. Hence the stranger, having established the existence of this measure, “next” raises the question of the dialogue’s purposes.

He begins by returning to his case of young children learning their letters. When a teacher puts a word before them—“any word whatsoever” (285c)—and asks them to spell it, is the point of the inquiry to establish the true spelling of this one word or to make the children better able to spell all words? “Clearly,” Young Socrates responds, the point is the latter. The stranger then takes this as a paradigm for the dialogue as a whole. “What about our present search for the statesman?” he asks.

Is this undertaken more for the sake of the statesman in particular or more in order that we become more capable in dialectic regarding all things? (285d)

Young Socrates evidently grasps the analogy. “In this case too,” he says, “we aim to become more capable regarding all things.”

This is an important moment in the pedagogical drama of the dialogue. Albeit under the stranger’s pointed guidance, Young Socrates asserts the exemplary value of the whole inquiry. As the spelling teacher’s question is exemplary for all others, so the dialogue itself is exemplary for all inquiries. If he can hold on to this insight, Young Socrates will emerge with a philosophical, not a merely positive, sense of the meaning of the dialogue. He will be able to see through what is particular to it—including the stranger’s own guiding presence and its focal subject matter of statesmanship—to what is universal; as the stranger’s analogy indicates, this is the diatatic method of dialectic, which may be practiced by anyone and in reference to all the “words,” that is, comminations of forms, in being.

Young Socrates’ insight is not yet sufficiently specific, however. His assertion makes no distinction between the two diatreses within the dialogue, nor does it express why dialectic method is so important. The stranger therefore takes it as a point of departure, affirming it yet offering three related qualifications in a lengthy reflection at 285d–286b. (i) "Indeed yes," he replies, "for no reasonable person
would want to track down the definition of the weaver's art, at least, just for its own sake." The unspoken implication of this is that the statesman's art, by contrast, is worth defining "just for its own sake." Thus the stranger tacitly distinguishes the two inquiries in terms of the value of their subject matters. This is not new; in first introducing the method of paradigm he contrasted statesmanship as one "of the greater [beings]" (277d) with "weaving" as one "of the lesser" (278c). (ii) He now reverts to this language to make his second point. "Most people," he says obliquely, fail to recognize a crucial difference amongst "beings." Certain ones have "perceptible likenesses"—that is, participants—which are "easy to understand." The stranger is referring here to the relatively commonplace beings like weaving (or earlier, herdsmanship). Since such forms have no nonproblematic appearance through their participants, one can identify and study them simply by "pointing out" the latter; there is no need for logos, rational inquiry and account. The case of the "greatest and most valuable beings"—that is, the beings that, like statesmanship, are intrinsically worth trying to understand—is just the reverse. These have "no perceptible image (ekdēmōn), vividly and fully worked out, for men [to look at]." Hence rational inquiry and account is indispensable. The sense in which this generalizes on the difficulties of defining statesmanship should be clear. The inquiry has been at an impasse since the close of the initial diatribe on account of the many who rightly claim to fulfill the general function of statesmanship as "nurture" or (as revised) "care of the whole community." Moreover, we shall later see a new many, the "party politicians" (303c), who falsely claim to fulfill the specific function of statesmanship proper. Is there even one true statesman amongst this host of "appearances?" This is not to be presumed. However, even if there is (and we are thinking of the elder Socrates, see pp. 2, 13 above), the host of claimants makes direct perception useless as a way of recognizing him. The true weaver can be spotted more or less "straightaway." But the true statesman must first be understood conceptually, in terms of the principles that, making up his essence, set him apart from the many pretenders. (iii) The stranger's distinction shows why dialectic method is so important: at least for Young Socrates, it is the proper mode of rational dialectical inquiry, and this is essential to the disclosure of the "greatest" beings. But it also leaves uncertain why it is important to apply the method to the lesser beings which may be known by simple perception. The stranger comes to this with his final point. On account of its indispensability for understanding the greatest beings, we "need to practice (melētai) being able to give and to grasp logos," the stranger says. "But," he adds, "in every case practice is easier if we work on the lesser rather than the greater [beings]."

With this the stranger completes his specification of the exemplarity of the dialogue. It stands as a paradigm not simply for all inquiries but, more to the point for Young Socrates, for the series of inquiries he will need to make for the sake of his future philosophical development. In this way the stranger provides a model for the task of "accustoming [one]self to study by distinguishing according to forms" (285a) which he has just recommended. One begins with dialectic inquiry into the "lesser" beings, like the weaver. The real purpose of this "practice" is not to win knowledge of these—they are already evident from direct perception; rather

c. The application of essential measure (286b–287b)

The dialogue as a whole is a paradigm in one other respect as well. If Young Socrates does heed the stranger's "instruction" to "acustom himself" to diatribe by "practice on the lesser beings," he will put himself under a dangerous temptation. Precisely because the "lesser beings" are perceptually knowable, the labors of diatribe may well seem an unnecessary burden. Indeed, since one already knows perceptually what diatribe reveals conceptually, these labors will seem circular. (This is the precise meaning, surely, of the stranger's phrase en λεγόμενοι, "on this roundabout course," at 283b, repeated at 286e.) Thus, just the "practice" which he so badly needs may confirm him in the mistaken belief that he does not need the method or, therefore, the practice itself. By attempting to work through this mistake now, the stranger gives Young Socrates an anticipatory example of the way to cope with it in the future.

This way is, of course, the application of essential measure. Now that he has brought out the essential purposes of the dialogue, the stranger is ready to consider whether the lengths of its various parts—the definition of weaving, especially, but also the myth and even the digression on non-being in the earlier search for the sophist—have been excessive or appropriate.

Stranger: Let us now recall (μνημονεύομεν) what moved us to say everything we have just said.

Young Socrates: What was it? (Τίδεν;)

Stranger: It was the impatience and annoyance (τὰς δισευρίας) one felt at the lengthy definition of weaving—and also at the accounts of the universe's reversal of rotation and, in discussing the sophist, of the being of non-being. We realized how very long these were, and we reproached ourselves for it, fearing what we said was long-winded and even superfluous. Please realize that what we have just said is aimed at preventing us from suffering any of these apprehensions in the future.

Young Socrates: So be it. Proceed, please, to what comes next. (Ταύτ' εστι. Λέγοντ' ἡκέως μονο-)

Once again, Young Socrates' responses display the very problems the stranger means to address. It is understandable that he has forgotten ("What was it?") the motivational difficulties the stranger pointed out at 283b; he is so thoroughly other-directed and eager to follow the stranger that, as his initial response at 283b also showed, he simply knows no motivational difficulties now. That he will indeed
CHAPTER IV

THE FINAL DIAIREISI (287b–311c)

A t the very outset of this discussion, we established that the stranger’s exposition in the Statesman is his response to two distinct requests by the elder Socrates. Both are tasks of mediation, the first in the context of Socrates’ trial by the Athenians, and the second in the context of his personally friendly, substantively difficult relations with the circle of Theodorus.

By the close of the digressions the stranger appears well set to meet the first request. The myth, first of all, purged the initial diaresis of its misleading image of the shepherd; it also reoriented the search by establishing the god’s “care for the whole” as a measure for human statesmanship. Yet, as the stranger pointed out in beginning the second digression, he did not give the myth its “proper ending”: though he described the emergence of the arts in the “age of Zeus,” he neither isolated nor characterized statesmanship in particular. His presentation of paradigm is designed to meet these needs. On the one hand, the closing series of bifurcations at 281d–283a indicates the general line of the further distinctions needed to isolate statesmanship. On the other hand, the figure of the weaver provides a small-scale illustration of “care” (279e) and so serves as a new guide, in place of the figure of the shepherd, for the characterization of the statesman. At 287b, therefore, the stranger is ready to turn back to the substantive task of the dialogue, diacritic definition of statesmanship, by “applying” (phoromai) the paradigm of the definition of weaving.

As we follow this “application,” however, we must not lose sight of the elder Socrates’ second request. In fact, the stranger’s pedagogical task greatly complicates his substantive one. The stranger has put Young Socrates to numerous “tests”—notably, the invitation to divide at 262a, the presentations of seemingly but not really sufficient definitions at 267a–c and 276e, and the mirroring at 278d and at 280b and e. On every occasion Young Socrates has failed to respond philosophically. This necessarily puts real obstacles in the way of a successful definition of statesmanship. How can the stranger speak at once with substantive adequacy to the elder Socrates and with pedagogical appropriateness to the younger? The question comes to focus at two key points. How, first of all, is the stranger to expose the form of statesmanship to one who thus far shows little understanding of either forms or epistēmē? If he is adequate to the substance of statesmanship, will he not be unintelligible to Young Socrates? But if he restricts himself to what the latter grasps, can he be adequate? Secondly, he has earlier signaled, through the humor at 264b–267c, some pointed reservations about the ultimate capacity of bifurcatory diaresis to reveal the forms; yet in the second digression he has stressed how Young Socrates needs to “accustom himself” and “practice” the method. Does the full revelation of statesmanship require giving up or modifying diaresis? If so, does
the stranger's pedagogical responsibility to Young Socrates require giving up full revelation instead?

Somehow the stranger will have to generate a "mean"-course, addressing the two Socrates at once and fulfilling his substantive and pedagogical tasks together. As we shall see, this accounts for several odd moments—and with them, the emergence of rich subsurface meaning—in the course of the final part of the dialogue.

As before, our commentary is organized in correspondence with the internal structure of the dialogue. The completion of the definition (287b–311c) has two organizing principles. (i) As we have noted, the stranger proceeds by "applying" the paradigm. The first aspect of the application—the use of the diareis of weaving to chart the distinctions which isolate the statesman—divides naturally into the examinations of the "indirectly" and the "directly causal" arts at 287b–289c and 289c–305e, respectively. (For the stranger's explicit borrowing and use of this distinction to structure the completion-section, see 287c, 288c.) The second aspect—the use of the weaver as a model for the statesman—concludes the dialogue at 305e–311c. (ii) The presumption throughout the application is that statesmanship, itself an art, is to be distinguished from the other arts. It is therefore a surprise and an interruption when the motley host of party politicians comes into view at 291a: they are not men of art or epistêmê in any sense, yet they turn out to be the most serious rival claimants to the statesman's title. The long reflection on them at 291a–303d therefore forms a digression from the application of the paradigm at its very midpoint.

In an effort to keep both of these interwoven tripartitions in mind at once, we shall take up the final diareis in five parts: the first phase of the application (287b–289c), the second phase, part one (289c–290c), the digression from the application (291a–303d), the second phase, part two (303d–305e), and the third and final phase of the application, at 305e–311c. Before treating any of these in detail, however, we must take up the first of the several "odd moments" just anticipated in the final diareis.

a. The change in the form of diareis (287b ff.)

This first "odd moment" comes at the very beginning of the final diareis. Up to this point, not only in the Statesman but also in the preceding Sophist, diareis has always been bifurcatory. In particular, in his methodological lesson at 262a ff., the stranger seemed actually to identify the method with "cutting down the middle" (262b), and the diareis of weaving—a model for the future—was bifurcary at every step. It is therefore striking when, turning to the host of arts yet to be distinguished from statesmanship, the stranger quietly abandons bifurcation. "Do you realize," he asks, "that it is difficult to cut these into two?" (287b). Evidently Young Socrates is unprepared for this, for he makes no answer. Nor does the stranger choose to give a direct explanation. With an odd turn of phrase he says only, "The reason, I expect, will become no less clear as we go on." But how shall they "go on"? The stranger remains taciturn, offering only an image: "Limb by limb, then, let us divide these [arts] like a sacrificial animal, since we cannot bifurcate" (287c).

The stranger's remarks raise a number of questions which are critical for our understanding of the final diareis as a whole. Just what is the "difficulty," and what is the new form of diareis which overcomes it? Does this "difficulty" mark some real limitation—and so have substantial implications for the philosophical status—of bifurcation? Finally, the stranger's reticence in introducing the new form is almost as striking as the new form itself. He has just stressed the importance of diaretic method for Young Socrates' future development. Given this, why is he hesitant to stop and explain the new form and its significance?

(i) The "difficulty" and the new form. If, following the stranger's suggestion, we let the "reason" for the "difficulty" of bifurcation emerge "as we go on," then it appears to consist in the obvious fact that, of the arts to be divided, there are many more than two basic kinds. In fact, the stranger distinguishes sixteen, beginning with tool-making arts at 287d and concluding with statesmanship at 305e. He therefore seems to be confronted by the situation that the elder Socrates, in his description of diaretic procedure at Philebus 16c–d, mentions to the young Protarchus; "whatever it be that we are dealing with," Socrates says in that passage,

... we ought... to assume a single form and search for it, for we shall find it there contained; then, if we have laid hold of that, we must go on from one form to look for two, if the case admits of there being two, otherwise for three or some other number of forms.

In the present situation, according to this line of interpretation, "the case" simply does not "admit of there being two" forms. Bifurcation is therefore too "difficult"; indeed, it is "impossible" (cf. adunatoûmen, 287c).

On critical inspection, however, this explanation turns out to be a half-truth. There are indeed more than two basic kinds of arts. This, however, is insufficient reason to set aside bifurcatory diareis. Insofar as the goal of the process of diareis is to isolate or "single out" the statesman, "stripping away" the other arts and "setting him apart" (268c, 287b), bifurcation is a sufficient and adequate method. This is implied by the analogy of the stranger's differentiation of the arts with the part of the diareis of weaving which is paradigmatic for it. Indeed, one scholar has even argued that the differentiation of the arts actually does follow a bifurcatory procedure. Victor Golderich points out how various of the stranger's distinctions are grouped together and, by tiding these groups, discloses in the whole process of distinctions the following bifurcatory pattern:

- [arts concerned with the poleis, which provide...]
- [i.e. the arts which produce raw materials, tools, vessels, garments, defences, amusements, nourishments]
- and notable,
- [i.e. the arts of the slave, of merchants and traders, of heralds and clerks, and of diviners and priests]
- and agents,
- [i.e. the rhetor, general, judge]
- and sovereign
- [i.e. the statesman]
Goldschmidt's bifurcatory organization of the distinctions is valuable—not, however, because it shows that the stranger's differentiation of the arts is really a bifurcatory diariesis. Indeed, within the bifurcatory form of diariesis all of the distinctions noted in brackets might have been omitted. The main value of the analysis consists, rather, in the fact that it shows that the stranger could have successfully isolated statesmanship by bifurcatory procedure, had he wished to, and that, therefore, he must have had some other goal in mind when he chose to set bifurcation aside. Evidently, he aims to do more than isolate the statesman.

This deeper goal begins to emerge if we consider his very brief characterization of the new form of diariesis at 287c. He will divide the arts, he says, "limb by limb (kata mades) like a sacrificial victim (holon hieron). . .". This image of the "limbs" of a sacrificial victim is striking in two respects. First, the stranger compares the arts, taken as a whole, to a body, that is, to an organic totality. The various arts are compared to the various "limbs" or "members" of this body. As such, they are essentially interrelated, not merely in the abstract sense of being physically connected but rather in the sense of cooperating, each with each other, and contributing, each in its specific way, to the well-being of the whole. Hence, to divide "limb by limb" is not merely to recognize the various kinds of work distinguished in accord with a division of labor; it is also to recognize both the interrelations of these kinds and the sense in which each, in being essentially interrelated with each other, implies or partially represents the well-being of the whole. Second, the image suggests that there is something sacred about this organic totality and about the analysis of it. As a "sacrificial victim," it is in some sense a gift to the gods and an object which, as a gift, is to be pleasing to and in accord with the will of the gods. Hence, there is a sense in which the "sacrificial victim," that is, the totality of the arts, reflects and thus manifests divine purpose. Of course, this purpose will only be manifest to the priest or diviner who knows how to discern the beast in preparing and performing the sacrifice. To translate the symbols back into the terms of the action of the dialogue, only the stranger (and, silently present, the elder Socrates), who knows how to divide the arts, can see the sense in which the totality of the arts, and implicitly each of its members, embodies or manifests the sacred.

At first sight fanciful, these implications of the stranger's imagery in fact reflect the relation of the differentiation of the arts to the myth. To begin with, just in setting forth the myth, the stranger tacitly claims for himself a special knowledge of things divine. The epochal reversal of the motion of the cosmos, he says at 269b, has been almost totally forgotten; only fragments of the whole history have been preserved. He, however, claims to transcend this forgetfulness and to "remember" both the alternation of cosmic motion and (as displayed in this) the whole complex relation of man to the god. What he remembers, moreover, shows the specific sense in which the articulated whole of the arts is to be conceived as organic and sacred. To reiterate briefly: In the age of Cronus, the god, present to men in the form of a supreme shepherd, was wholly responsible for the sustenance of men and the ordering of human affairs. In this he was to men specifically what he is in general to the cosmos as a whole, "demiurge" and "harmonizer." With the great reversal, however, and the god's withdrawal, men are suddenly deprived of the necessities of existence and find themselves required to care for their own well-being. They must become producers, demioiugoi, of their own life and livelihood. Of course, no single art can restore the whole of this care; the labor previously performed by the divine shepherd must be divided and shared. Hence there are many different kinds of art which, to be effective, need function cooperatively or, in terms of the image of "limbs," organically. This latter need—though this is left implicit by the stranger—presumably accounts for the development of the polis, where the arts are concentrated and can best collaborate. It also accounts for the further need for a particular art which, while on the one hand one amongst many, on the other hand is charged with the supreme task of harmonizing the others; this art—the statesman's—would be devoted to securing and preserving the cooperative order of the arts and the citizens who perform them. Through these developments, man in effect assumes a relation to himself analogous to that previously borne to him by the god; as a political animal, he internalizes the god's care, becoming demioiurgos and harmonizer of his own existence and producing—to the extent he can "remember"—a godlike order in the human condition. Thus there is indeed something sacred about the organic totality of the arts: it is the internalization and distinctively human expression of the god's care for human well-being.

These reflections provide a basis for seeing both why bifurcation of the arts would be too "difficult" and why the new form of diariesis introduced by the stranger, which we shall characterize shortly, is appropriate.

On the first count, bifurcation would have the same liability that the stranger signaled by his jokes at 264b—267c: even while it would successfully isolate statesmanship as a kind, it would conceal its form, its essential character. But here this liability arises in a different way. Earlier bifurcation concealed Man by showing it only through its relatedness to other animal types; here it would conceal statesmanship by showing too little of its relatedness to other arts. As we have just noted, statesmanship is a member of the whole of the arts; though not itself "practical," as "directive" it is concerned to maintain the working integrity or harmony of this whole. Bifurcation would obscure this in several ways. Cutting down the middle would leave a number of the other member-arts undistinguished and unnamed; as in Goldschmidt's revision, these would be referred to only in terms of their very general functions, e.g. "provider of instruments," "of subaltern agents," etc. Further, because in bifurcatory procedure the left-hand side of each cut is routinely dropped, the interrelations of the arts distinct from statesmanship, both to one another and to statesmanship itself, would remain completely hidden. But this is to say that the whole, the working community of the arts which is the essential context and objective of statesmanship, would remain hidden.

The new form of diariesis is intended to let this working community appear. As in bifurcatory diariesis, of course, the stranger starts with a whole, namely, all of the arts concerned with the polis. Rather than cutting this into contrary general types, however, he goes directly to concrete particular types, and he works through these by tracing a continuum from those least to those most directly responsible for the polis. He marks each step of the way by distinguishing the arts just disclosed
finally, (305d-e)

Part two:
the true sides
(305d-305c)

Second phase:
arts of service

Digestion:
the impostors
(291a-303d)

(12) the factional politicians;
(11) diviners and priests;
(10) heralds and clerks,
(9) merchants and traders,
(8) slaves,
(5) defences, (6) amusements,
(7) nourishment;
(2) tools, (3) vessels, (4) carriages;
(1) raw materials;

(16) the statesman proper
(kath' heurion)

(kath' heurion)

(13) rhetors, (14) generals,
(15) judges;

First phase:
arts which provide
instruments
(287c-289c)

The key features of this new form of diariesis are its peculiar modulation of separation and communality and its telic drive towards the disclosure of statesmanship proper. This disclosure is the goal by which the process of distinctions is oriented; it is thus the culmination of the process when, at 305d—e, statesmanship is separated from all of the other kinds of art distinguished. But the character of this separation, and of the separations of the other arts from one another as well, differs from that of the separations articulated in bifurcatory diariesis. This difference anticipates Aristotle's important distinction between kath' hen and pros hen analogy: whereas, in bifurcatory diariesis, terms are polarized only within the unity of a higher term in which they share equally and indifferently, in the new form of diariesis terms are differentiated as participants to different degrees in the higher term; and again, whereas in bifurcatory diariesis the higher term is of a different order from the lower, in the new form the higher term is itself a member in the series of lower terms which it orients. Thus it is that the stranger, in separating each art in turn from statesmanship proper, at the same time shows it as a mode of or sharer in the latter; and by the same token, when he finally does come to the terminal separation of statesmanship proper from all of the other arts, it stands as

the epitomization or fullest realization of just the care and responsibility for the polis which the other arts, albeit in lesser degrees, themselves are.

We are not yet in position to see how the specific order of the distinctions, in its implication of subordination, reflects the specific structure of cooperation amongst the arts. This must wait until we move on to study each phase of the diariesis in detail. Already, however, the general point is evident. By presenting a continuum the stranger underscores his substantive objection to the despotically conceived of the ruler as herdsman. The statesman's subjects are represented not as a dumb herd but as intelligent participants in the "care" they require to live; and the statesman, as himself a member of the continuum, is included in their communality, his art as one amongst many. Thus, even while he is properly accorded the highest position, the sense in which he is a partner with his subjects—the sense, indeed, in which the practice of his art is essentially related to the practice of theirs—is represented by the very form of the stranger's analysis.

(ii) The self-overcoming of bifurcation. Much earlier we suggested what the stranger has since made more explicit in his asides to the "erudite" (285a ff.), that bifurcatory diariesis is a mean for the passage from the split-souled condition of the Theodorans—steeped in mathematics but oriented by opinion and sense perception in other matters—to philosophical attention to the forms. The notion of the mean (to metron) is a dynamic one. The "fullest possible realization of the form, given the limits of context" (p. 67) points to a tension of possibility and actuality. To "realize the mean" (284c, d) would abolish this tension, making the possible actual. And this transformation of context, in turn, would abolish the initial mean, qua mean; against the new possibilities now present it would be, if anything, an encumbrance. In this sense it is in the very nature of the mean to be self-overcoming.

If we are correct in our analyses of the stranger's change in the form of diariesis at 287c ff. and, as well, of his jokes at 265a ff., he is putting just such a self-overcoming before us in both passages. To be sure, it is left to us, as critical hearers of the dialogue, to recognize this. (More on this in (iii) below.) But consider: at 265a ff. the stranger presents an isolation of Man qua kind which conceals its essential character—so conspicuously, however, that it actually stirs us to an awareness of the latter. Once we have this awareness, we see in retrospect that bifurcation, an initial help in attuning us to kinds, is ultimately a hindrance in concealing forms (again, in the full sense of the term). And so we need a new mode of analysis, a pattern of diariesis that, rather than requiring the form to conform to our positive methodological rules, itself conforms in its structure to the nature of the form. This is precisely what the stranger provides by his change in the form of diariesis at 287c ff. Whereas, as we just argued, bifurcatory procedures would conceal the statesman's essential context and concern, the diacritic continuum is designed to let these appear.

This paradoxical character of bifurcatory method as self-overcoming is explicitly stated nowhere in the Statesman. Yet it exemplifies a typically Platonic turn of thought which is explicit in other writings. There is, for example, Diotima's account of the erotic ascent to the beautiful in the Symposium (210a–212a): there
each realm of the manifestation of the beautiful, though it may seem self-enclosed and final to one of the interlocutors, turns out to be but a stage pointing beyond itself to a still higher realm. Again, in the Republic Socrates leads from justice in the state to justice in the soul in Books II–IV, only to reveal that they have achieved, at most, the starting-point for the more radical examination in V–VII. Most striking and pointed of all, however, is the controversial philosophical digression in the Seventh Letter.

In that passage (342a–344e) Plato posits “three classes of objects”—name, account (logos), and image (eidos)—“through which science (episteme) must come.” These are all, however, inadequate to “what is the actual object of knowledge and truly is what-is (alethos estin on).” (342a–b) The basic reason for this inadequacy, he explains, is that “these, on account of the deficiency of language, do as much to reveal the particular quality (poion ti) of each [thing] as its being (to on)” (342e–343a). A few lines later he stresses this again:

The most important problem, as I just pointed out, is this, that of these two—the being and the particular quality (ou to ontos kata ou to poion tomos)—when the soul seeks to know the what (ti), not the particular quality (ou to poion ti), each of the four [i.e. name, account, image, science] presents the soul with the unsought particular quality instead, conceptually (logos) as well as by its actual presence. (343b–c)

“The being” (to on) of something, this last formulation makes evident, is its ti, its “what”; thus Plato refers to the form. With this in mind, his complaint seems to apply perfectly to the problem with bifurcatory diariesis in the Statesman: as a method for giving a “scientific account,” it reveals the “particular qualities”—e.g. land-dwelling, two-footed, etc.—which differentiate its object as a kind; but it consistently fails to reveal the “being,” just “what,” essentially, the object is.” Nonetheless, Plato does not reject the four classes; on the contrary, he regards them as prerequisites, indispensable advance stages or—in our analysis of this notion—“means” for the revelation of the sought-for “being” or “what.” In the most famous passage of all he declares,

The study of virtue and vice must be accompanied by an inquiry into what is false and true of being in general (ti esti hulon euseias) and must be carried on by constant practice throughout a long period. . . . Only after practicing detailed comparisons of names and accounts (logoi) and visual and other sense perceptions, after examining them in friendly elenchic by the use of question and answer and without jealousy, at last in a flash understanding (phronemosis) of each blossoms up, and the mind (noe), as it exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light. (344b–c)

In a number of its key details, this passage reads almost as an account of the action of the Statesman.1 The dialogue is about virtue and vice, in that statesman-ship is, for Plato, a moral concern; but the stranger treats it ontologically, focusing on what is true and false of the being of the statesman. (This approach will reach its climax shortly, when the pseudo-statesmen, the party politicians, challenge the “true,” alethos, or “really real,” ontos on, statesman at 291a ff.) Moreover, the dialogue examines names (e.g. 26e, 275c, etc.) and compares sense perceptions, that is, the paradigmatic herdsman and weaver. And it strives by diariesis to give a full

“account,” logos, of statesmanship; it both prescribes and exemplifies the lengthy practice necessary to this. All these particular details of surface congruence, however, point beyond themselves to the much more important subsurface matter. In making his jokes at 265a ff., does not the stranger seek to provoke just the “flash of understanding” by which the mind passes from “particular quality” to “being,” from kind to form? And in changing the form of diariesis at 287c ff., does not the stranger act in accord with such eidetic intuition? He lets the structure of his method respond to and reflect, rather than impose its own rules upon, the form now present to him. In this regard the exemplary value of the dialogue as a whole has a substantial dimension of striking importance. We have seen and stressed how, by its movement from the “lesser” to the “greater” beings, it exemplifies the pedagogical path Young Socrates must take in his future training in diariesis. The dialogue now seems to show us the substantive goal of this work: mastery of bifurcation, itself difficult and hard-won, occasions an insight beyond kind into form—and so, too, an awareness of the limitations of bifurcation itself. Strikingly, in this way the method, the stranger’s “very positive doctrine,” turns out to be much like the characteristically negative guidance of the elder Socrates: it fulfills its value precisely when, having awakened an intuition of the forms, it is no longer needed.

(iii) The stranger’s—and Plato’s—reticence. The very importance of this reason for the change in form makes our final question all the more pressing. Why is the stranger so reticent in explaining the change? Why is he content merely to give his odd image of the mantic’s “sacrificial animal” and then to “go on”? It is sure that lacking such explanation, Young Socrates does not understand. Much like Protagoras and the other young interlocutors in the Philebus, he doubtless assumes that in this particular case there simply happen to be too many kinds for bifurcation to work. Thus he will stay with bifurcatory procedures, following the paradigmatic diariesis of weaving, in his own future practice.

To begin with, Young Socrates’ limitations and needs impose definite limits on what the stranger can safely say. In this respect too the situation compares positively with that in the final phase of the initial diariesis: the stranger must weigh the substantive importance of his criticism of bifurcatory diariesis against its pedagogical value for Young Socrates. By this point in the dialogue, moreover, the danger which Young Socrates poses for his own future as a philosopher is even clearer and more emphatic than it was earlier. He has repeatedly shown himself ignorant not merely of the forms but, more crucially, of this very ignorance: he does not yet realize—to recall the stranger’s paradigm of paradigm—what a child he is in dialectic. Even the sort of indirect communication the stranger attempted earlier, through his jokes, would therefore be too risky. It would be fully in character for Young Socrates, were he to detect the stranger’s distinction between kind and form, to presume he understood it. And on the basis of this presumption he might well feel justified in abandoning bifurcatory procedure at the very outset of his period of “practice.” This would be a disaster, of course, both for him and for Socratic philosophy in him. Without the formal constraints of bifurcatory procedure, he would have nothing to guide him but his unchecked opinion—which,
moreover, he himself would mistakenly deem eidetic intuition. Thinking himself at the goal, he would be unable even to begin in philosophy.

This reflection shows more than the reason for the stranger’s reticence. It also points to the fittingness, first, of his mantic image and, second, of his insistence that they “go on.”

We have noted the stranger’s playful recourse to mantic tones at a number of key points in the dialogue. It is present in his introductions of the paradigm of paradigm (277d) and of the weaver (279b), as well as in the image of the “sacrificial victim” (287c); and the stranger also laid claim to the seer’s insight in his claim to “remember” the great reversal in the direction of the cosmos (268e ff.). The immediate effect of his playful language was to mark how unexpected he knew his next proposal would be to Young Socrates. The mantic speaks as if from another world, from a source concealed from his auditors; thus he alone can really know, much less overcome, the distance which separates him from them. Now we can see what makes for this distance. In each of the four passages the stranger speaks from eidetic intuition, of god and cosmos in the myth, of “paradigm itself” (to paradéigma auto) and of the weaver’s art in the second digression, and of the statesman’s art here at 287c ff. And he knows there is no way, “in the present circumstance” (recall 262c), for Young Socrates to understand this standpoint.

At the same time, the stranger also knows that the “present circumstance” can be overcome. The key is that Young Socrates “go on”—not just in the immediate inquiry but in what it models, the “long period” of “constant practice” which the Seventh Letter, too, prescribes. The only way to span the distance between the standpoints of Young Socrates and the stranger, between opinion and eidetic intuition, is for Young Socrates himself to have this intuition. Nothing is guaranteed; the connection between methodical practice and genuine insight is, at best, occasional, not causal. Still, the check on opinion and the exposure to kinds which bifurcatory procedures provide are indispensable as a beginning. This is why the stranger must protect, in the pedagogical context, what for substantive reasons he needs to transcend. His odd silence and quick passage into the actual work of dividing the arts is his “mean”-course, as we called it, between these requirements.

b. The first phase: the indirectly responsible arts, makers of instruments (287b–289c)

Given our account of the change in the form of diatresis, we must study the final diatresis on two levels. Even as we observe the arts as they likely appear to Young Socrates—as simply the minimum number of distinctions which the subject matter permits—we must also appreciate the deeper sense they will have for the elder Socrates. That is, we must see how the continuum form reflects the way in which the arts, as “limbs,” collaborate to make up an organic, self-caring whole.

At its surface level, the first phase of the final diatresis is a straightforward application of the relevant part of the paradigmatic diatresis of weaving. Guided by his earlier distinction of the tool-making arts, which are “indirectly responsible” (exonaiotai) for weaving, from those “directly responsible” (aitiati) (see 281c, d ff.), the stranger sorts through the arts “concerned with the polis” (kata polin) for the analogue to the former. The notion of “tool,” organon, however, is fruitfully ambiguous. It has the narrow sense of a thing to be used to make other things, and it has the broader sense of any thing which is useful, serving as means to something else (287d). The stranger exploits this, first posting those arts which make “tools” in the narrow sense and then counting out, one by one, six further types which fashion “tools” in the broader sense, namely, (2) containers, (3) bases (oxehmata), (4) defences (problemata), (5) objects of amusement, (6) raw materials, and (7) nourishments.15

But this is not a mere list of distinct equals. The stranger provides two pointers, as it were, to guide reflection to the deeper structure of the series. The most obvious is his revision of its sequence in the synopsis at 289a–b:

... it would have been most just to have placed [the kind of arts which produce] raw materials at the beginning, and next after this, [those productive of] tools, containers, bases, defences, amusements, nourishments (or nurslings, thematai).

Thus he makes it clear that the sequence itself is meaningful, that it signifies something about the relations of the arts and not just the pattern of association by which they first happen to mind. The significance of this change of sequence, to begin with, seems clear enough. The procuring of raw materials is first in the genetic order of production. Without such materials—raw in the sense that they are asanethetai, "not yet put together" in any determinate artifactual structure (288e)—none of the other arts could begin; they would have nothing to work on. In this sense these procuring arts come "at the beginning." Note, moreover, that they have this priority over all six of the following arts, equally and as a whole. As giving matter up to be formed, they stand at a qualitative remove from those which do the forming. This is why the stranger, in phrasing his synopsis, sets them off by the articulatory phrase, "next after this [type]" (meta de touto), and groups the remaining six types in an unarticulated series.

What, however, of the relations amongst these six? Here too the sequence is significant, but the pointer for this lies elsewhere, in the different sorts of negations by which the stranger, in the passages just preceding, distinguishes each of the six types from statesmanship. There is a qualitative difference between his negations of the first three and of the second three. Tools are "certainly not" (ouden pou, 287d), containers "in no way at all" (ouden atehetai, 288a), and bases "not at all" (ou pamu, 288a) the products of statesmanship. By contrast, his negations are indefinite, if not ambiguous, when he considers the second three kinds of art. In discussing defences and nourishment, he says that one would "more correctly" (orthororon, 288b, 289a) attribute these to defence- and nourishment-providing arts "than to statesmanship." Would it then be somewhat correct, or at least arguable, to attribute them to statesmanship? As to the arts which make objects of amusement—that is, the visual and musical and poetic arts—the stranger says only that "none of these are done for any serious purpose but rather for play (paidías)" (288c).
begs the prior question whether "play" can be part of serious work. Can the same speaker who has given us diaretric jokes and a "playful" (268d) cosmo-theological myth really dichotomize play and seriousness in this way?

The effect of this contrast in the negations is to divide the final six types into two groups and to provoke reflection on their relations. Several points emerge. If the middle three types are so obviously distinct from statesmanship, this is because they produce-in a phrase-things for the sake of things: tools are tools for the making of other things, and containers and bases contain and support other things. The last three types are like statesmanship, by contrast, in that their products are for the sake of the producers themselves, hence for the community as such: defences (especially city walls but woollens too) protect the citizens, while plays and poems and paintings amuse and entertain them. As for the arts of nourishment, it might even be said—as the stranger seems to in his synopsis (289b, quoted above)—that their real product is the citizens themselves, considered as their "nurslings" (thremmatia).

In actual fact, the contrasts will not be so sharp as these reflections seem to suggest; the stranger himself puts us on notice about this with his closing remarks on the coin-making and engraving arts at 289b. Nonetheless, a basic tripartition does emerge within the seven basic types, and it points to a fundamental structure of the division and integration of labor in the polis. The basic industrial activity—the manufacture of useful things—presupposes, as form requires matter, the acquisition of raw materials from the earth. This industry, in turn, generates social conditions which call for further industry, the arts which care for the producers themselves. In a non-literal but illustrative sense, the producers themselves are the "matter" for the last three kinds of art analogously as the raw materials produced by the first kind are the matter for the second three kinds.

Seen in this light especially, the last three kinds seem to verge on statesmanship. The statesman is essentially concerned with security, culture, and public health. At the same time, this very convergence brings the more basic distinction to mind. The last three kinds have it in common with the first four that they all produce useful things, "tools" in the broad sense. By contrast, the statesman does not produce things—rather he directs such production. This reflection shows in an exemplary way the particular appropriateness of the continuum form of diaeresis. Each step brings us closer to the statesman; to come closer, however, is to see more precisely what statesmanship proper both is not yet presupposes and, ultimately, directs; and this, in turn, is to see more clearly what, in its whole essential concern, it is.

c. The second phase, part one: the directly responsible arts, subaltern servants (289c–290e)

With the enumeration of the seven kinds, the final diaeresis reaches a turning point: the elimination of the "indirectly responsible" arts brings the directly responsible ones into the fore. These are the arts which provide not things but services. Comparing their relation to the statesman with that of "spinners, carders, and the rest" to the weaver, the stranger "prophesies" that it will be from amongst these that the statesman's most serious challengers will emerge (289c).

The first of the kinds of service arts—that of the slave (289d–e)—makes the warning seem unnecessary. The slave is the precise transition figure between instrument and service: he serves, in effect, by making himself an instrument for whatever work his master requires. In his utter heteronomy, he is the very contrary to the statesman. In the arts of service proper, however, the sense of the warning begins to emerge. The stranger distinguishes, successively, the powerful classes of retailers and traders (289e–290a), of heralds, clerks, and civil servants (290b–c), and of mantics and priests (290c–e).

For the subsurface project of exposing the integral community of the arts, these are carefully chosen distinctions, reflecting four crucial dimensions of the well-harmonized polis. Especially as they become more differentiated and technical, the various instrumental arts require a large labor force. The slaves provide this. In addition, there need be special mechanisms for the exchange of the goods those arts produce: there must be marketplaces connecting city and country, trade between cities, and money as a means of exchange, and this commercial life, in turn, requires retailers, traders, and bankers (289e). Thirdly, with commerce, regulative government becomes important; there is need of an able, highly literate administrative and judicial bureaucracy, and this need is met by the formation of a new class of "civil servants" (290a–b). These three groups would seem to complete the community in its materialistic aspect, but the stranger hardly breaks stride in passing on to the fourth, mantics and priests. In fact, recourse to the oracles and ritual practice celebrating the city's patron gods were a traditional (though by now largely ceremonial) element in public life; thus, as the stranger points out, religious functionaries often held political positions, and political offices often carried religious responsibilities (290c–e).

By his opening "prophecy," the stranger sets the last three classes, especially, in an ambiguous light. As he takes up each in turn, acknowledging its importance, he also finds an indirect way—a retoit (290a), an aside (290b), a bit of pointed sarcasm (290d–e)—to warn against its power. This reaches its height in his sarcasm at 290d–e. As evidence of the importance of the priest, he cites the (supposedly) Egyptian rule that the king must belong to the priestly caste. "And," he adds, "if someone from another caste should come to power by violence, then he must be initiated into the priesthood later on." The trappings of the priesthood, in other words, are used to cover the violence done to it and to the state. Is this merely an Egyptian hypocrisy? Several lines later the stranger finds further evidence of the importance of the priest right at home:

What I mean is strikingly exemplified amongst you Athenians. The most august ancestral rites of your country, they say, are entrusted to the one the lot designates as King-Archon.

This is no merely passing observation. Rather it calls the existential situation of the dialogue suddenly into focus. Only the day before the elder Socrates went to the hall of this very King-Archon to be tried for sacrilege! (Theaetetus 210d, also Euthyphro 1a)
The abuse of religion in the polis is, obviously, only of passing concern to the stranger here. The King-Archon, after all, only presided—the real usurpers of statesmanship were those who brought the charge in the first place and those in the jury who supported them; and both, in turn, owed their success to the popular democratic system in Athens whereby such charges could be instituted in the first place. The stranger’s allusion to the King-Archon and Socrates’ trial thus precipitates the fundamental question that Socrates, at the very outset of the whole conversation (Sophist 217a ff., discussed on pp. 2 ff.), posed for him to settle. In the encounter of the philosopher and the nonphilosophical citizenry, who is the statesman and who is the sophist?

\[d. \text{The digression: philosophy and ordinary opinion; statesmanship and actual political order (291a–303d)}\]

With the emergence of the actual political leaders and their constituencies, the search for the statesman comes to its deepest crisis. The stranger marks this by his literally fantastic description of them: “A vast mob . . . is coming into view,” he says, “quite a strange (out-of-place, atopous) crowd.” It is, he adds,

... a race of many tribes—or so they seem at first sight. Some are like lions, some like centaurs or similar monsters. A great many are like satyrs and weak, wily beasts who quickly change into each other’s shapes and assume each other’s power. (291a–b)

Ostensibly, these bizarre images reflect the stranger’s own perplexity: “Things are strange (atopos),” he explains, “because we are ignorant of them” (291b). Thus the passage exhibits just the aporia which he described in his paradigm of paradigm. Proceeding smoothly towards disclosure of the statesman, seeming to understand everything, he “wakes up,” as it were, to discover his actual ignorance. Now his task is to work through this, to identify the bizarre beasts and “distinguish them and thrust them aside in order to see” beyond them, “clearly and sharply,” to the true statesman (291c).

Or so, at least, he says, speaking for Young Socrates’ benefit. In fact, his task is both much easier and much more difficult than this. On the first count, his pick of images displays just the insight which he feigns to lack. Lions and centaurs are caricatures of violence and lust—or, in the psychology Socrates presents in the Republic, of excessive “heart” (thamos) and sensual appetite (epithumia). Satyrs, in turn, caricature lust without boldness; “weak,” they rely instead on stealth and guile. What these “beasts” all share is the lack of wisdom; atrophied in the lion and refined as a means toward perverse ends in the satyr, “the capacity for thinking” (to logistikon) is denied its proper sovereignty in the psyche. In picking these images, therefore, the stranger has already—and in precisely the manner of the elder Socrates—accomplished the task of identification and distinction: these politicians lack the epistēmē: insight, or wisdom, which is the very essence of the statesman. If they practice an art at all, it is that of “the sophists” (219c)—namely, as the stranger described this earlier, the art of imitating, on the basis of mere opinion, what one is not (see Sophist 264c ff.).

But it is one thing for the stranger (or the elder Socrates) to make this distinction and quite another for Young Socrates. What the politicians lack, seen from the philosopher’s point of view, is itself invisible to the nonphilosopher. This is why the politicians’ sophist deception is so effective—even, or perhaps above all, as unwitting self-deception! And this is also what distinguishes a being like statesmanship from the “lesser,” immediately recognizable ones like weaving. To understand the difference between the real and the merely apparent statesman requires understanding epistēmē. And this, in turn, requires education into philosophy and epistēmē itself of the forms.

What is really “strange,” therefore, is not the identity of the politicians, for the philosopher—it is the philosopher’s standpoint and more particularly, his criterion in making the identification, for the nonphilosopher. The stranger is perfectly aware of this. He also knows that Young Socrates requires a long period of educative training before, as a philosopher himself, he will have overcome this substantive estrangement. His task is therefore complex. He must both express the philosophical point of view and protect it from misunderstanding. This is a task, moreover, with critical political implications. Both the uncomprehending denial of political epistēmē and the equally uncomprehending presumption of it have grave consequences.

As we shall see, these difficulties, pedagogical and political at once, account for the long, convoluted path, sometimes reiterative, sometimes self-canceling, which the stranger traces in his digression.

\[1 \text{The sole true criterion: the statesman’s epistēmē (291a–293c)}\]

The project, then, is to distinguish the “strange crowd” from the statesman. In just the same way that he began the search initially, the stranger offers a series of distinctions which seem to the point; the real point, however, is that they touch only the appearance, not the reality of statesmanship. Once Young Socrates has accepted the distinctions, the stranger therefore objects. It is a characteristic piece of mimetic irony. Substantively, however, it exposes the distance between philosopher and nonphilosopher at a new depth, even to the point of undermining an earlier, hard-won and seemingly definitive agreement between them.

The stranger’s distinctions differentiate five forms of polity. By the criterion of number, “we have” (homin) monarchy; “someone might mention next” the rule of the few; and there is the rule of the many, “called by the name ‘democracy’” (291d). Furthermore, by considering whether the rule is by force or by free consent, by the poor or by the wealthy, and lawful or lawless, “one calls” (literally, “they call,” prosegoroumen) the first two of these by different names, splitting each into two types. Monarchy may be tyranny or “kingship” (baskilē), and the rule of the few may be aristocracy or oligarchy (291e). For democracy, the stranger says, “no one is accustomed to change the name.” (292a) The stranger can merely refer to the last three sets of criteria, without explicitly applying them, because they are customary and familiar. As his vague attributions (“someone,” “they,” “no one is accustomed”) indicate, he is re-presenting the standpoint of popular opinion. Young Socrates misses the irony, however, precisely because this is
his own viewpoint. He accepts each distinction as it is posed, and when the stranger finally objects, he is taken by surprise.

Stranger: What then? Do we suppose any of these polities, so long as it is defined by these criteria, to be a true (orto&tau;̂) one?

Young Socrates: But why not? (292a)

In his absorption in the customary criteria, Young Socrates has lost sight of the essential character of statesmanship. The stranger therefore reminds him of their basic agreements (cf. 266b ff.) in the opening distinctions of the initial diariesis: statesmanship is an epistēmē, a "science," for the direction of living beings.21 Though they are "still not able to specify it sufficiently" (292c), the presence and absence of such epistēmē, the stranger gets Young Socrates to reaffirm, must be the sole criterion for distinguishing "true" polity and, so, the true statesman. This is a crucial point. The basic character of the inquiry—that is, whether it shall be philosophical in the Socratic-Platonic sense—is at stake. The various customary criteria are merely empirical. They do sort out actual states from one another, in that the terms in each set (one/few/many, rich/poor, etc.) are mutually exclusive and each set exhausts some range of character necessary to every actual polity. The actual, however, is not necessarily the "true" (orto&tau;̂). The philosopher must look from the actual or existent to its form or essential character; and he must examine the actual as the appearance of the form, in order to judge whether and how fully it realizes the latter. In earlier terms, he takes its "essential measure."

Such measure-taking is just what the stranger now insists upon. To distinguish the statesman from the "crowd" of political leaders, it is necessary to ask "in which, if any," of the five types of actual polity one finds the statesman's epistēmē (292d). The answer, however, is not straightforward; above all, it underlines the strange character of the two sorts of criteria. On the one hand, the stranger does exclude democracy. If, as Young Socrates asks rhetorically, grasping the point by analogy, there are not even fifty experts at draughts in any one city, how could there be a man who know statesmanship? Thus the many, the mass of citizens in democracy, are set aside. Only "one or two at most a few" (293a) will know statesmanship. (Note, though, this does not preclude that there happen to be "one or two" such men amongst the many in a democratic city, true statesmen, as it were, in an untrue or merely seeming state. The stranger comes back to this later, 297c–301a). On the other hand, the nonepistemic character of democracy implies nothing positive about any of the remaining sorts of polity. Nor, the stranger goes on to point out, do the customary criteria which differentiate them have any necessary connection to the presence or absence of epistēmē. Any one of each set of the customary criteria may characterize epistemic rule, and it, conversely, may assume any of the forms which the criteria differentiate. Thus,

... we must deem these [one or two or several men of epistēmē] and these alone—regardless of whether they rule willing or unwilling subjects, whether according to laws or without them, and whether rich or impoverished—to rule according to art (kata technē, no matter what form their rule takes (hównous archēn). (293a)

The indifference of true statesmanship to its particular constitutional form recalls the point of the jokes at 266a ff. True statesmen and ordinary politicians differ as incommensurates. They cannot be differentiated in the manner of the distincta in a bifurcatory diariesis, for the latter reveals difference within encompassing identity. Bipeds and quadrupeds, for example, are both "footed," and it is in terms of this encompassing or generic identity that they may be differentiated as specific opposites or contraries. The statesman and the ordinary politician, by contrast, must be differentiated not with respect to what both have in common but rather with respect to what the one has and the other lacks, namely, epistemic insight into the good for the polis. In this regard true statesmen are like doctors. Neither may be distinguished from "pretenders" (292d) on the basis of the external form of their art or, indeed, of their persons. Neither the unwillingness or willingness of patients, nor the particular surgical and purificatory techniques they may employ, nor their use of written prescriptions or failure to use them, nor, indeed, their wealth or poverty can define doctors and reveal whether they are genuine or merely quacks. Rather what is essential is that, practicing "by art" and being concerned "solely for the good of bodies, they improve the condition of and... save those for whom they care" (293b–c). Likewise, the true statesman cannot be identified by referring to their particular policies or to the constitutional forms of their rule. All that is essential is that "by recourse to epistēmē and the just, they save [the city] and improve the citizens as much as possible" (293d).

In principle, this completes the distinction of the statesman from the "crowd" of ordinary politicians. "Only seeming" (dokountas monon, 293c) to have epistēmē, these differ from the statesman as concealed absence from presence, or as verisimilitude from the truth itself. Hence the stranger says, in apparent conclusion,

... of all other polities [than the epistemic one], we hold that they are to be understood neither as genuine nor as really real (kontes ou &tau;̂̂̂̂), but rather as imitating that one (meimimēnous tauten)—some, those having good laws, for the better, the others for the worse. (293e)

In fact, however, the stranger's solution to the problem of the identity and status of the "crowd" only raises new and deeper difficulties regarding the identity of the statesman. Though the criterion of epistēmē will satisfy the philosopher, the consequent indifference to lawlessness and violence will be anathema to the nonphilosopher. The stranger knows this very well, of course, and even plays on it by his vivid references to purgative executions and banishments in his closing speech at 293d–e. Really, he does not intend to conclude at all; rather—just as in the first subpart (291d–292a)2 of this first part (291a–293e) of the whole digression—he seeks to elicit the viewpoint of customary opinion within Young Socrates in order to open it up for critical self-examination. Thus, if he seems to exacerbate the alienation of customary opinion from philosophy, the real point is to make a genuine mediation possible.

The elicitation is necessary precisely because the alienation, in its substance, runs so deep that it is concealed. Consider the character of the various customary criteria for differentiating types of polity. As we have remarked earlier (see pp. 22
ff.), through the fifth and fourth centuries the Greek cities had been plagued by stasis, factional strife between the opposed interests, above all, of the rich and the poor. There was constant struggle, sometimes erupting into war, to subvert the polis as a whole to the special interests of one’s own part within it. The customary criteria reflect a basic passivity towards this, an implicit acceptance of stasis as the norm. The stranger brings this out in characterizing the core of democracy as the “control over those who have property,” at 292a. All of the criteria presuppose a factionalized polis and serve only to distinguish amongst the possible distributions of factional power (to some one or the few or the many, to the rich or the poor) and the various means (through violence or free consent [implying, however, demagogic persuasion, see 292d], with or without a code of laws) by which it is established and maintained. Thus they preclude the very possibility which the philosopher envisages, that of an epistemic ruler who “cares for the whole.” Moreover, the preclusion is tacit, not explicit, and so there is no occasion to recognize it, much less oppose it, in its real depth. There is, of course, limited opposition. The distinction between lawful or lawless reflects the power of law to check the caprice of the ruling element. Again (and especially for the Athenians), the rule of the many checks partisanship in the limited sense that it is less exclusive and more representative of the whole citizenry than the rule of the few. These, however, are reactive restraints, means of mitigating and not of eliminating stasis. However constant, laws are originally initiated by one party or another (as the stranger will indicate later, 298c); and however inclusive, the rule of the many is pitted against the interests of property. If customary opinion regards these as features of the best possible polity, to the philosopher they are only relative goods, ameliorations within a fundamentally corrupt situation. And so they too reflect the pre-emptive negation, unwitting and therefore all the harder to resist, of his vision.

On the face of it, the resurgent appeal of the image of the shepherd-ruler might seem to contradict this. The longing for the shepherd, we have seen, is prephilosophical, rooted rather in the most archaic Greek political tradition. As a longing for one who, towering over his flock, would transcend the differences dividing it, it seems to suggest a radical contrast to stasis. But if there is some truth to this, in that the longing glimpses the god, there is also a perversion of this truth in the unwitting reduction of god to man. (See our comments on the Platonic criticism of homo mensura, pp. 44 ff., 50 ff.) The longing obscures the distinctively human achievement of episteme by its stress on a natural superiority of ruler to ruled; and it neglects the intelligence, internal differentiation, and self-responsibility of the human community. As a result, the longing turns out to lapse into the most extreme form of stasis—the rule of the tyrant. This is why the stranger opposed it in his revisions of the initial diairesis, above all in his differentiation of the shepherd-ruler from the true statesman by the (now plainly) customary distinction of rule by violence from rule by free consent (276d–e).

Now, however, the stranger wants to go deeper. Having undercut the despot’s pretension to statesmanship by invoking customary opinion, the stranger seeks, in turn, to undercut customary opinion’s more general pretension. Hence he now overrules the earlier distinction of rule “by violence”/“by free consent,” insisting that neither follows from or has any essential connection to the statesman’s episteme. Defined by neither, the epistemic statesman may assume either means of rule. To Young Socrates, who does not yet grasp the statesman’s episteme, the dialogue must seem to have come full circle. Having earlier unwittingly accepted despotism, only to have it set aside by the “violence”/“consent” distinction, he now hears the stranger lift this distinction: does this not open the way for the despot once more? The implication is strong enough to move him to make his sole substantive objection in the whole dialogue. Seizing on the other, generally correlative distinction made by customary opinion, he protests:

For the rest, sir, what you have said seems fair enough; but the assertion that statesmen should rule even without laws is a hard thing to understand. (293c)

Thus the stranger’s opening distinction of the statesman from the “crowd” succeeds in its elicitive function. Young Socrates himself experiences the estrangement of nonphilosophical opinion from what, as such opinion, it must inevitably misunderstand philosophy to propose. The stranger turns now to the mediation of this estrangement.

(2) The ways of mediation (293e–301a)

Of course, the ultimate mediation would be revelation of the statesman’s episteme—that is, the transformation of nonphilosophical opinion into philosophical insight. And this is indeed the stranger’s ultimate project, both in the long term for Young Socrates, to whom he is now giving pointedly exemplary training in the practice of dialectic, and at the subsurface level for the healer who grasps and transcends Young Socrates’ limitations. This ultimate project is not enough; however, what is an interim state of estrangement, seen from the point of view of this project, is more the permanent state of things, seen from the point of view of political actuality. Socrates’ trial is reminder enough of this. And so there must be a second best way of mediation as well, one in which, even while the philosopher works for radical transformation, he enters into and works with untransformed actuality.

Within these limits, the stranger’s mediation proceeds in two main stages. First of all, if nonphilosophical opinion, seeing only the possibility of violence and not his episteme, subordinates the statesman to law, then it is necessary to show how his episteme is superior to law. And if, in turn, the invisibility of his episteme makes it impossible to do this directly, then it is necessary to proceed indirectly, by recourse to what is visible to opinion; for this, the stranger has already introduced his method of paradigm. In the first stage of the mediation, at 293e–297c, the stranger shows the superiority of the statesman to law by means of the paradigm of the voyaging doctor. In an important sense, however, this is unsatisfying. Doctors are at least relatively easy to recognize; moreover, there are a good number of them. But it has been agreed (292e–293a) that the true statesman is rare. Given a true ruler, it is not hard to compare his use of force to a doctor’s surgery—but given only the use of force, it is much less certain whether it is that of a true ruler, and not merely of a political “quack.” The philosopher is in the best position of all
to appreciate this danger and to prescribe against it. Knowing both the character and the rarity of the statesman, he understands even better than the nonphilosopher both the relative justification and the proper orientation of the rule of law. In the second stage of mediation, at 297c–301a, the stranger shows Young Socrates how the law-state, even while it suppresses the true statesman, may nonetheless save its citizens from themselves.

(i) Statesmanship and the law: the “best” way and “ridiculousness” of the doctrine of the many (293e–297c). The stranger begins by declaring that “the best (to... ariston) is not for laws but for the king with insight to have full authority” (294a). But as the pro-and-con structure of his opening argument (293e–295e) indicates, his position is complex. On the one hand, the human community is too heterogeneous, and human affairs too variable, for any unqualified rules to be adequate. There are echoes here of the myth and of the doctrine of the mean. The stable and uneventful life of the internally homogeneous herd of men in the age of Cronus is a thing past; the age of Zeus is characterized by “unlikeness” (anumóntas, 273d, 294b), and this shows up in all the dimensions—including the divisions of sex and of labor, most conspicuously—of human life. In this situation, the goal of the ruling art would be to realize the mean, that is, to achieve “for everyone what is best and most just” (294a–b) or “for each what is fitting” (295b). By its very nature, however, law is incapable of this. It is “simple,” or abstractly universal, imposing the same directives and constraints indifferently on all men at all times. Ironically, this insensitivity gives it the character it is meant to oppose, an arbitrariness verging on tyranny: it is “...like some self-willed, presumptuous man,” says the stranger,

...who is ignorant and who lets no one either do anything contrary to the order he himself has established (tēn heauton taktin) or even question it, not even, indeed, should something new happen and produce a better situation than the one for which he had originally legislated (mēd' an ei neon ara tōi sunbainai belion para ton logon hon auton epetazen). (294c)

On the other hand, it is also the case that the epistemic statesman cannot realize the mean for each of his subjects at all times. The reason, however, is significantly different. While it is the intrinsic character of law which causes it to fail, in the statesman’s case it is not his insight but the sheer plethora and press of circumstances which limit him. In this regard the statesman is like a teacher of gymnastics: though he has the knowledge to deal with each of his many “trainees” individually, he does not have the time, hence the practical capacity, to do so; and as a result, he too must make use of generalized instructions, oriented towards the majority and the average case. Such instructions—written and unwritten codes of law—are the statesman’s instrument for achieving the mean, as it were, of the mean: unable to achieve “what is fitting for each,” he nonetheless approximates it as fully as possible by treating “each” of the citizens in terms of the general roles they play within the whole community.

Thus the stranger accepts law but only as instrumental for epistemic statesmanship. This directly opposes Young Socrates’ objection to “rule even without laws” (293e), for it puts the true statesman himself above the law. Is Young Socrates persuaded? He himself seems to think so, but his agreement is shallow, showing that he follows the argument without being fully committed to it. When the stranger brings out the important implication that if,

...among those who grasped the real epistēmē of kingship, there were some capable of [treating each individual situation at a time], he would hardly put obstacles in his own way by writing these sorts of codes of law,

Young Socrates replies only, “That certainly follows, sir, from what has been said” (295b). This is why the stranger presses to make the argument more concrete, introducing the paradigm of the doctor in a second phase of argument at 295b–296a. Suppose, he suggests, that a doctor must make a lengthy trip. Because he will not be personally present, he will give his patients written instructions how to care for themselves. There can be no question of the priority of his live insight over these instructions. Should he return unexpectedly early and find that, for some contingent reason, the condition of his patients had changed for the better, he would not hesitate to change his orders. To hold them in such circumstances would be “supremely ridiculous” (gelos... ho magistas, 295e). In just the same way, the statesman’s living insight is superior even to his own legislation. The journey motif itself makes it clear that laws are made necessary only by his “absence” (295c), the fact that (in the stranger’s earlier words at 295b) he cannot be “sitting by each citizen all the time and giving an exact prescription of the fitting.” Should he “return” (295e), that is, should he or “someone else like him” be personally present, and should the political circumstances warrant some change in the laws, it would be “no less ridiculous” (oudon ki ton... gelion, 296a) for the statesman to hesitate to make it. Any “prohibition” of such change would effectively subordinate epistēmē to the old laws, and these, however the changed circumstances would be impediments rather than expressions of it. Epistemic statesmanship, then, transcends laws. Whereas it may express itself through them, it cannot be bound to them—not, that is, without ceasing to be epistēmē.

Again, Young Socrates seems to himself to understand and agree. “Of course,” he approves at 296a. But the stranger probes, turning Young Socrates to an actual case of just such a “prohibition.” The latter’s response is typical and telling.

Stranger: Well then, do you know the doctrine which the many advance in this regard?

Young Socrates: I can’t bring it to mind, not right now at least.

Stranger: Indeed it seems quite compelling. They contend that if someone discovers (gignesthai) laws better than those already in effect, he can enact them only after first persuading his city, and otherwise not.

Young Socrates: But what of this? Surely this is a sound contention.

Stranger: Perhaps. But tell me... (296a–b)

Young Socrates shows here both the real contradiction in his thought and his unconsciousness of it. He cannot recall the “doctrine” of the many “right now”—for right now he is under the sway of the stranger’s personal presence. Following the argument and the paradigm, he has momentarily lost his own nonphilosophical
position. But when the stranger recalls the “doctrine,” he shows that it still has his deeper sympathies. Thus he contradicts himself unwittingly. On the one hand he has now twice accepted (295b, 296a) the subordination of laws to epistemic statesmanship. On the other hand, the “doctrine” of the many seems “sound” to him. Yet this doctrine would subordinate one capable of “discovering better laws”—the epistemic statesman—both to existing laws and to the opinion of the many. To change the former, the statesman would have to cater to the latter. Yet the many, as Young Socrates has already seen (recall 292e ff.), cannot be expected to understand the statesman’s epistēmē; therefore, either the statesman’s discoveries will be misunderstood and emasculated, or he will have to turn popular rhetorician or demagogue, saving his discoveries by emasculating himself.

Of course, the stranger knows precisely the fear underlying the doctrine of the many. Because they do not recognize the epistemic statesman for what he is, the only alternative to “persuasion” and the laws which the many can see is the violation of the usurper. At this point (in contrast to the different tack he will take shortly, at 297c ff.), the stranger responds by radicalizing his challenge to customary authority, turning his paradigm directly against the presumption implicit in the fear. Having argued that the statesman transcends the law (293e–295a) just as the doctor transcends his own written orders (295b–296a), he goes on to compare the doctor’s use of force to the statesman’s (296a–297c). It is obvious that the good doctor may sometimes go against his own prescriptions and that in these situations it may sometimes be necessary to use “force” (or “violence,” bia, 296b) on unwilling patients. Yet no one characterizes this force as a violation of medicine; so long as the new treatment is based on the doctor’s real insight, it is medicine. In just the same way, the stranger argues, the true statesman may use force to override or change the laws; so long as the new policy is based on his epistēmē, it would be “ridiculous in the extreme” (katagελαστάτους, 296d) for anyone to characterize such force as a crime against the state. Thus the stranger focuses the critical thrust of his earlier objection to the customary criteria for classifying states: whether he resorts to force is not, in itself, relevant to the identity of the statesman. The real criterion is whether, “wise and good” (296c), he preserves this one great principle: always to dispense the highest justice, determined by mind and art (mata nou kai technēs), to the citizens and thus both to preserve and improve them as much as possible. (297a–b)

And the stranger returns, too, to the underlying reason why his criticism is both necessary and obscure: such “mind and art” is beyond the reach of any “multitude” of men (πλῆθος) and is possessed, if at all, only by “a very few or even just one individual”; the polity, in turn, which is governed by this “mind and art” differs from all others as the true or genuine differs from “mere imitations” (297c).

We noted earlier that there are echoes of the myth in this section. The most intriguing of these are two brief, seemingly casual reversions to the shepherd-flock metaphor. At 294e the stranger refers to the statesman as “the lawgiver who has charge over the flocks (tais agelais).” And at 295e he refers to the statesman’s subjects as “the flocks (tais agelais) of men who live in their several cities as their appointed pastures, shepherded (rōmenvontai) by the codes their lawgivers have written.” These phrases are too incidental and non-thematic to indicate any full-scale restoration of the shepherd metaphor. Yet they are not accidental either—the repetition makes them too conspicuous for that. Why, then, is the metaphor even partly appropriate?

By now the earlier point of the metaphor has been overcome. The characterization of human being in terms of the differentiated community of the arts grants man the intelligence, self-responsibility, and heterogeneity which the notion of the “flock” had denied him; and the inclusion of statesmanship within this community undercuts the natural difference in kind implied by the distinction of shepherd from flock. At the same time, this new “Zeusian” horizon also permits a new sort of transcendence to appear, and it is in the present section, above all, that the stranger points it out. It has a double aspect. Negatively, the stranger’s insistence on the statesman as above the law, both free to make and alter it and to resort to force if necessary, underscores the sense in which statesmanship is invisible to the many. Though the citizens are devoted to arts of other sorts, in face of the statesman’s art they are uncomprehending and lapse to inadequate opinion; statesmanship transcends their political criteria. Positively, in his use of laws—hence in his role as nómothenes, the one who first “gives” or “establishes” (-the-) the nómos—the statesman transcends the polis itself. It is only on the basis of the laws, whether written codes or unwritten customs (see 295a, 296c), that the plurality of men is first constituted as a political whole. There are economic incentives for this, as the myth and the earlier distinctions at 287b–290c disclose; but the laws are the explicit and implicit norms which first permit the gathering and cooperation of men into and as the polis, and this is prerequisite to the development of economic relations. As the true author of the laws, the statesman therefore transcends the polis as the artificer transcends the product of his work.

In both these respects the statesman is like the ultimate shepherd, the god. The latter is “invisible,” as the myth expressed this, through his withdrawal from the cosmos in the age of Zeus. And men, having “forgotten” the age of Cronus, have unwittingly confused this absence with non-being; this becomes evident in the declaration of homo mensura. Again, the one who does “remember” knows the god as the “artificer” (démouergos, recall 270a) and “harmonizer” (recall 269c) of the cosmos and, within it, of the human community in the age of Cronus. As Zeusian man and practitioner of epistēmē, the statesman differs essentially from the god. But this difference lets the complementary points of identity appear all the more clearly. As the unrecognized lawgiver, the statesman is the analogue to the god. It is presumably to remind us of this, the theological dimension of the dialogue, that the stranger makes his pointed reversions to the shepherd-flock metaphor.

(ii) The “imitative” polity: the “second best” way and the relative justification of the doctrine of the many (297c–301a). Young Socrates replies towards the close of the preceding section are ambivalent. He sees and accepts the stranger’s application of the paradigm of the doctor (“What you say is quite true,” 296c, 296d); but he
seems to hold back from its implication, that the true statesman may well use force (296d), even as he approves the positive conclusion that the statesman must hold to the "one great principle" ("There can be no objection to your last remarks at least," 297b). And when the stranger closes by reiterating his major distinction of the epistemic statesman's rule from all others as "imitations" at 297c, Young Socrates seems to turn away, asking instead about his subordinate distinction between "better" and "worse" imitations (297c). The stranger immediately agrees to give an explication, especially because, he says, "There is a current error about it" (297d) which needs to be exposed. He then gives an account of the absolute rule of law as the "second best" sort of polity, preferable when there is no true statesman present (297c, 301a). If in its content section this section (297c–301a) appears discontinuous with the preceding examination of the "best" way, in its pedagogical function it is the second stage of the stranger's ongoing effort to mediate the estrangement of nonphilosophical opinion from philosophy. In fact, this effort becomes only more intense and subtle. To credit the rule of law as "second best" is at once to justify it—as "second best"—yet relativize it—as "second best"—to what is first. This is the contrary strategy to that of the preceding examination: there the stranger remained aloof and criticized nonphilosophical opinion as "ridiculous" (295e, 296a, 296d); here he will take it seriously, entering into its ambit and perspective in order to show, from within, both what transcends it and why, nonetheless, it really must be taken seriously. As for Young Socrates, we shall see that the stranger's new tack both undercuts and then in a sense restores, but as articulate and philosophically principled, his initial ambivalence.

The stranger examines the "second best" polity by giving a step-by-step description of its genesis. It is an extraordinary passage, the most concentrated performance of pedagogical irony in the dialogue. Here above all, the stranger aims to open up customary opinion for Young Socrates and to expose it, in him, to critical self-examination. We will grasp the real meaning of the passage best by singling out four features of its irony in advance. (i) The stranger describes a law-state which could be either a plutocracy or a democracy; at several points he describes its founders as either "the whole people or the wealthy alone" (298c, 298e (twice)). But the features of polity he presents—including, finally, the thinly veiled trial of Socrates!—all refer pointedly to Athens. Thus he puts the Athenian many on stage—and insofar as Young Socrates is sympathetic with the doctrine of the many, on stage before themselves. (ii) The step-by-step procedure allows him to give a gradual revelation of the concrete consequences of the initial motivation for the law-state. This mitigates the shock of self-recognition and permits what is much harder to accomplish all at once, a thoughtful turn from affirmation to criticism of the initial motivation. (iii) This motivation, in turn, is the fear implicit in the doctrine of the many. If the stranger attacked its presumption before, now he honors its actuality and power as the basis of the law-state: "Suppose," he proposes, referring to the doctor and ship captain as paradigms for the statesman, "all of us were to think that we suffer the most terrible things at their hands" (298a). His examples, "cutting and burning," exorbitant fees, taking bribes from relatives or enemies of the patient, even killing, or again, plotting to scuttle ships or throw certain passengers overboard (298b–c), refer to just the sorts of violence, extortion, and self-aggrandizing abuse of power which the many fear from a ruler not restrained by law. Thus the stranger takes up the point of view of the many and, as its present representative, Young Socrates! This will have a double effect. That his point of view is being advanced, not attacked, gives Young Socrates room to think; he is freed from the immediate compulsion to defend or protect. On the other hand, he must also feel the stranger's irony. Young Socrates has inclined, even leapt, to agreement with the stranger throughout the dialogue. This, together with his awareness that the stranger really disagrees with the point of view he is presenting, will surely put Young Socrates on the alert. Freed from defensiveness and searching for the stranger's true position, he will be inclined critically towards the stranger's presentation. The pedagogical virtue of this, of course, is that the stranger thus incites Young Socrates towards self-criticism. (iv) This effect is heightened, finally, by the new way the stranger now uses the old paradigms of the doctor and (first introduced at 296b–297a) the ship captain. The doctor, in particular, was an especially apt paradigm in the preceding section because the many recognize him as a man of art, even while they also recognize their own lack of this art; indeed, these are just the reasons why they will give themselves over to his care. In applying the paradigm the stranger implicitly urges them to entrust themselves to the true statesman for these same reasons. Now, however, he reverses the order and thrust of the analogy. In taking up the motivation for the law-state he says, in effect: "Just as 'all of us' fear 'the most terrible things' at the hands of a ruler who claims epistemic insight, so suppose that 'all of us' mistrusted the doctor or the ship captain in the same way." Precisely because 'all of us'—that is, the many—do not mistrust the doctor or captain, we enter into the description of the law-state with a questioning attitude. Since, however, the law-state expresses, via the mediating paradigms, the doctrine of the many, we will thus be incited to question 'our' own doctrine!

With these features in mind, let us consider the stranger's description.

Given the crimes which the doctor and the captain are "thought" to commit, the first step in the genesis of the law-state seems quite reasonable. The citizens resolve that "neither of these arts are to be entrusted with autonomy" (298c) in its particular sphere. Of course, the "thought" or "suspicion" (dianoethemai, 298a, also b) is just that. Is it reasonable for those without art to interpret whether a doctor's "burning" is good surgery or torture, or whether a captain's order to abandon ship is for scuttling or rescue, etc.? Is there even an occasion for this question to arise, however? The suspicion casts doubt on whether the doctor or captain is really a man of art; and once there is this doubt, it becomes impossible and absurd to defer to them for the right interpretation. But then where shall one turn? This makes the next step, however odd, inevitable. The citizens turn to themselves, calling a general assembly and granting it the authority to determine how medicine and seamanship shall be practiced (298c–d). Doctors and seamen will be allowed to join in these determinations, but of course they will be quite outnumbered by unqualified private citizens (298d). This is a transparent reference to the Athenian
assembly, in which everyone was free to give advice on political matters. Finally, "what seems right to the multitude" (το τι πλῆθος δοξάσα, 298d) will be given the status of law, governing the practice of medicine and seamanship "for all time hereafter" (298e). Part will be written "on tablets of wood and stone," a reference to the Solonian tablets, and part will be accepted as "unwritten ancestral customs." Here Young Socrates makes his first response: "This is really quite bizarre (αὐτοπα)." But there is more. Having set the law in place of the doctor and captain, there must be new practitioners, that is, executors of the law; and since the law is common knowledge, they are logically to be drawn from the ordinary public. Indirectly referring to the Athenian selection of archons (recall, e.g., 298c) to manage various spheres of public affairs, the stranger proposes that the citizens select, by lot and once a year, several from their own number to care for the sick and captain the ships. Now Young Socrates expresses dismay: "Things are getting worse and worse (τι ἄλλα ἄλλα)". Still, there is more. In order to prevent abuses of power, the citizens need to check on these archons. To this end there must be popular courts—a reference to the Athenian courts, which by the late fifth and fourth century had become the chief forum for demagogic opportunism and party politics.\footnote{At the end of their terms, the archons will be met by this court. Any citizen will be entitled to charge them with deviations from the law in their medical practice or sailing, and the jury, like the archons also selected by lot, shall decide a judgment and sentence by vote (299a). Young Socrates now becomes contemptuous: "Well then, whoever should willingly take office in such a society would deserve any punishment and fine which might be imposed." (299a-b)}

The obvious irony of this response is that the popular courts are only the logical consequence and institutional embodiment of the position he earlier affirmed. If "rule even without laws" then seems "a hard thing to understand" (293e), the rule of the laws now seems even more intolerable.

But the worst is still to come. The doctrine of the many was not limited to transgression of the law or to those actually selected to rule; it was aimed at "anyone" who had "discovered" or "come-to-know" (cf. τις γνώσκει, 296a) laws better than those already enacted. The stranger must therefore carry the genesis of the law-state one step further, assigning to the courts the function of protecting the polis from any inquiry or reflection on the laws. Also, indeed," he says at 299b,

...there shall be need of establishing a law covering all such cases as this, whenever anyone appears to be inquiring beyond the written laws and engaging in sophist rhetoric about their subject matters, health and sailing (αν τις ... ζητεῖ γνῶσιν παρά τα γράμματα κατ' οἰσοσμονέοις ἠλιθίους προ τα τοιαῦτα).

The stranger's language here is pointed. The law will concern itself merely with "appearances"—neither it nor the jurists are in position to tell the difference between genuine "inquiry" and "sophistry." Indeed, since any genuine inquiry must suspend established authority, it will appear, in and of itself, to go "beyond"—or better, "against," para—the laws; yet the laws have been declared the truth "for all time hereafter" (recall 298e). To all "appearances," therefore, inquiry and sophistry are inseparably linked; the very fact that he appears to inquire makes the inquirer appear, as well, a sophist. The stranger thus recalls the problem which the elder Socrates pointed out to Theodorus at the very beginning of their conversation, the problematic appearance of the philosopher to the nonphilosopher. (Recall Sophist 216ff, discussed on pp. 8 ff.) Moreover, the stranger has in mind Socrates’ own direct experience of the problem. He goes on, first, to give a transparent description of the issues and facts of the trial and execution of Socrates. The passage is filled with references to the Apology and needs only be translated. The needed law would decree,

...first, that [we] not call [the inquirer] a man of medicine or of sailing but rather a stargazer, a babbling sophist, and further, that anyone of the citizens who so wishes may take him before the court for trial, having charged him with corrupting the youth and having persuaded them to devote themselves to helmsmanship and medicine not as the laws dictate but rather by exercising absolute rule (αὐτοκράτωρ φιλήματι) over ships and the sick. And should he seem to persuade either young men or old men, then [we] shall punish him by the most extreme penalties. For no one may be wiser than the laws. (298b-c)

Then, generalizing on the paradigms of medicine and seamanship by naming some fifteen other kinds of art—including, at the close, arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, and kinematics, the study propaideutic to philosophy and philosophical statesmanship according to the elder Socrates in the Republic—the stranger asks,

Indeed, Socrates, if all these things should come to pass... and everything be practiced according to the laws which happen to be written and not according to art, how then would things appear? (299d–e)

With this question we reach a climatic moment in the dramatic interplay of the dialogue. Addressing him conspicuously by name, the stranger asks Young Socrates to judge, in effect, between the elder Socrates and his jurors, or more generally, between the way of inquiry which questions and transcends "what seems right to the many" and the way which protects it against such inquiry. Thus the stranger fuses his mediating tasks as adjudicator and as intermediary in the "test of recognition." (See pp. 11 ff.) He has prepared Young Socrates carefully. Having just elicited his sympathies for the doctrine of the many, the stranger has by now led him gradually—from perplexity (298e) through distress (298e) and contempt (299a–b)—to turn against it. Young Socrates’ response to his question marks the culmination of this process. "Clearly," he says,

...all of our present arts would be destroyed, and none would come into-being later on, on account of this law prohibiting inquiry. The result would be that life (ἡ ἀσκεία), hard enough as it is, would be quite impossible then and not worth living (ἀπολείπεται). (299e)

Thus, in spite of his manifold failures in this one, Young Socrates takes a strong stand for inquiry as such. In spite of his substantive lack of development, this stand separates him from the many and puts him at the beginning of the Socratic path. Indeed, the striking echo in his words of the fundamental declaration by the elder Socrates—"life without inquiry is not worth living" (Apology 38a)—gives the moment a revelatory power. It is as though, with the elder Socrates silently present, the Younger Socrates "hears" him within for the first time and gives him voice.
The stranger knows, however, that Young Socrates' reversal of position is only a
beginning. Young Socrates has grasped the inferiority of the law-state, to be sure,
but only after failing to grasp the superiority of the rule of 
epistēmē; moreover, he has had to rely on paradigms throughout. The nature of statesmanship is still
beyond him. This, as we shall see, explains the stranger's surprising last step in the
 genetic account. Having brought Young Socrates to reverse himself and agree with
 him, the stranger now, in effect, disagrees with himself, interrupting the progressi
vively more and more damning characterization of the law-state to point out its
relative excellence.

Dropping all reference to the paradigms, the stranger asks Young Socrates to
consider the possibility that an elected or lotted leader, "knowing nothing," should
"pay no mind to the laws, whether for the sake of personal profit or some private
pleasure. Wouldn't this," he asks, "be a still greater evil than that which we have
just described?" (300a). Compared with such abuse of the law, its strict enforce
ment has a relative merit. As he goes on to say,

... the laws [are] established on the basis of much experience ( 


 ek peiras polite) and also of
certain counsel given by counselors who, on particular occasions (hekasta), managed by a
pleasing manner (charismat) to persuade the multitude to establish them. ... (300b)

To be sure, "experience" is a basis inferior to 


 epistēmē, and the need to "please" and
"persuade" the multitude is just what the stranger exposed as "ridiculous" earlier.
His adverb hekasta, moreover, suggests the piecemeal character of genuine reform.
On the other hand, the negative look of these features turns to positive when the
law-state is compared to the abuse of the law. "Much experience" is much superior to
the little experience of one group or individual; and however outnumbered, the
few competent counselors do give the multitude access to some insight, while the
willful one who "knows nothing" has access to none. Even piecemeal reform be
comes a real virtue in contrast to wholesale deformation.

By this comparison, of course, the stranger comes finally to the point he agreed
to explicate at the outset, the distinction between better and worse "imitations" of
the true polity (297c, also 293c) and the "current error about it" (297d). The
negative sense of his notion "imitation" is already clear: rulers who lack political
epistēmē are facsimiles, as it were, and not the genuine thing they pretend to be.
The comparison between the law-state and the abuse of the laws, however, reveals
a positive sense as well. Just insofar as its laws are based on or reflect the insight
and counsel of "knowing men" ( 


 para ton elatoton, 300c), the law-state will be like
the polity of the true statesman, resembling it as a sort of copy. It is "about" this
resemblance, however, that men make the "current error." By all appearances, one
can be most like the statesman if one

... attempts to do or enact something different, contrary to the laws, when it seems better;
[for in doing this, one] does just the same thing, according to one's own lights, which the
true statesman does (300d).

But in reality such action can only destroy the likeness. Either one has political
epistēmē, in which case one is the true statesman and not "like" him at all, or one
lacks that 
epistēmē, in which case one's judgement as to what "seems better" than
the laws will be founded on ignorance and fall far short of epistemic insight (300d-
). The "error," then, is to try to imitate the statesman directly; it is based on
ignorance of one's own ignorance of the statesman's epistēmē. What seems like a
statesmanlike supercession of the law will be rather, since based on ignorance, the
most extreme distortion of statesmanship.

The moral of the stranger's reflection is clear. So is its immediate aim. It is one
thing for Young Socrates to grasp, finally, the supremacy of the rule of
epistēmē to that of law; it is quite another for him to grasp that epistēmē itself. If the first
insight marks the beginning, the second is the final goal of the lengthy process of
philosophical education. For the interim, during this process, Young Socrates must
abide by the same general imperative which (in a complexly related context) the
elder Socrates will 'later' direct to his friend Crito. The stranger says,

... it is incumbent on these seeming polities, then—if they are going to achieve as good a likeness
as possible to that true polity, the one ruled by the one possessed of art—to never do anything
against the written laws and ancestral customs, once these have been established. (300e-
301a)

(3) The return to the diatries of polity: knowledge of ignorance and the political
means (301a–303d)

In the opening phase (291a–293c) of the digression, the stranger made a point
of dismissing the customary distinctions between types of polity, he stressed the
exclusive validity of the philosophical criterion for true ( 


 orthēn) polity and its in
comparability with the nonphilosophical characterizations of factionalized actual
polity. In the intervening phase, however, he has worked to relate the two
perspectives; and since his main tack has been the relativization of the nonphiloso
phical to the philosophical vision of polity, the customary distinctions turn out to
be relevant after all. Thus in the final phase of the digression he takes them up
again, restating them in terms of his notion of imitation (301a–c), reiterating
both the primacy and the rarity of the epistemic ruler (301c–302b), and finally
integrating the two sorts of distinction in a comprehensive ranking of polities ac
cording to their desirability (302b–303b).

There is one new element in this integration. In his initial application of the
customary criteria the stranger halved the rule of one, yielding tyranny and (law
fully constituted) monarchy, and the rule of the few, yielding oligarchy and aristoc
racy, but not democracy. Neither did the criteria call for any change of name
(291c–292a), nor could epistemic statesmanship assume any form of it (292e–
293a, see pp., 88 ff. above); so there seemed no reasons for further distinctions.
Now, however, the situation is different. Given the project of relativization, the
rule of law becomes important, differentiating the second best. Thus the lawful
democracy must be distinguished from the lawless one. Moreover, just as it is
now important to identify the second best polity, in the absence of epistēmē, so it
is important to distinguish the third best, in the absence of the rule of law. And
this, the stranger proposes, is democracy, since it so atomizes and disperses power
that it has the least potency for doing evil (303a). The result of these reflections,
the comprehensive ranking, is a precise series of political means (mētria)—that is, of fullest possible realizations, given the existential context, of the ideal. The ideal itself, of course, is epistemic statesmanship, the rule of the statesman with the use of, but not in subjection to, the law (recall 293e–295a). But where there is no insightful statesman and ignorance, rather than epistēmē, prevails, then the mean is the rule of law. Within this general condition, further, the rule of one (law-constituted kingship) takes precedence over aristocracy and aristocracy over democracy; though he never actually stops to justify this, the stranger’s reason is presumably the converse of his insight about lawless democracy: the more concentrated the power, the greater is the potency for doing good. Finally, where the authority of law is impossible to achieve, then the mean is the rule of the many, with oligarchy, in turn, preferable to the very worst, tyranny (302e–303b).

Throughout both this phase and the closing passage (300a ff.) of the previous one Young Socrates’ responses seem attentively affirmative. His affirmativeness is not surprising. In a sense, he is hearing his own initial sympathies vindicated; the stranger’s new stress on the primacy of law and then on the rule of the many articulates the political values which, we saw earlier, are implicitly in play in the customary criteria for policy. (Recall pp. 90 ff.) But there is a difference. In the meantime Young Socrates has been through the experience of recognizing, even if negatively and not paradigms, an altogether higher political possibility. The stranger’s vindication is therefore double-edged: law and democracy are restored as explicitly relative political values. In affirming them, Young Socrates now affirms something higher as well. When, for instance, the stranger makes the summative reflection that the various nonepistemic polities... arise when men are troubled and reject (diachronamantōn) that one true ruler, disbeliefing that there could ever be a man worthy of such a rule, willing and able to govern with virtue and epistēmē and to render what is just rightly to all... (301c),

he expresses Young Socrates’ own sentiments when he was earlier “troubled” (diachronaineis, 294a) at the prospect of a ruler unchecked by law. In the meantime, however, Young Socrates has been even more troubled by the rejection—itself—bluntly put, by the murder of the real man of state, the elder Socrates. Thus Young Socrates accepts (“I am afraid so, yes,” 301c) the stranger’s imperative to “gather together to write laws, chasing to catch the tracks of the true polity.” But at the same time, he also confirms the stranger’s affirmation of the true statesman as “like a god among men” (303b)—an affirmation which, incidentally, recalls the myth’s notion of likeness to the god in setting him above the constraints, including laws, of other polities. And when the stranger closes by calling the leaders of these other polities—the many and their law-state included, of course—“the greatest sophists of all sophists,” Young Socrates refers back to the trial of the inquirer and says, “Things have come full-circle, now that this title goes to those who most deserve it, the so-called politicians” (303c).

Young Socrates’ position is itself a mean, the fullest realization of philosophy, in effect, short of philosophical insight itself into statesmanship. Pedagogically, the stranger has now achieved in these political reflections what seemed unachievable in his earlier methodological reflections. To know the law-state as “second best” and yet to accept it is to recognize that one lacks the epistēmē which is first best. Thus Young Socrates has recognized his own lack of epistēmē; he has attained the genuinely Socratic station between ignorance and wisdom, the knowledge of ignorance.

At the same time, there is a crucial problem just beneath the surface of Young Socrates’ and the stranger’s achievement. This has shown itself only indirectly in the course of the stranger’s account of the second best polity, as an ambiguity in his characterizations of law. At a key point while stressing the inferiority of the law-state, he identified the laws as ta tôn plēthēi doxanta, “what seems right to the many” (298d). But in stressing the relative excellence of the law-state he referred to the laws as approximative imitations of the statesman’s epistēmē—recall, for example, 297d and 301e (just quoted). The tension should be evident. “The many” must “imitate” precisely because they do not know statesmanship itself. But how can one “imitate” what one does not know? Mustn’t the “original” be somehow present in order that a “copy” be made? The solution may be, as the stranger seems to suggest at 300a and c, that there are “knowing men” (eîdotes) amongst the many. But in a way this only puts the problem in a new form. How are the many to recognize these “knowing men” in their midst? This is the issue dramatized by the trial of Socrates—and compounded by his stance in the Crito. Again, according to the stranger’s series of political means, the best course in a democracy is to press for and support the strict rule of law. Is it an insoluble and tragic difficulty that this course most of all suppresses those few whose transcendent insight could be best guide the many and determine the laws?

If there is a way through these problems, the clue to it may be the stranger’s reference to “pleasing counsels” (cf. chariōntos samboulosantōn, 300b). We have already observed the dangers associated with pleasure: it is hardly an index of the philosophical or educative value of a speech (recall 286d ff.), and the statesman who seeks to please the many risks turning himself into a sophist instead (recall p. 94). But on the other hand, since some disclosure of the “knowing man” is needed, and since it is unrealistic to ask the many to understand his knowledge, a “pleasing” image of the man may be the highest possible political “counsel.” Surely, this helps to explain the political function both of the Socratic dialogues generally and, in the Statesman, of the stranger’s recourse to paradigms. It also suggests the political significance of the stranger’s closing portrait of the statesman as weaver. Even though not the same as revelation of political epistēmē itself, such an image might serve to orient and determine the legislative responsibility which the many—and, for the present, Young Socrates—must take up.

e. Resumption of the diairesis (second phase, part two): the true aides (303d–305e)

Having completed the long digression on the stasisiastikē, “factional politicians” (303c), the stranger now resumes the process of diairesis. At the surface level (recall p. 82), there is but one task remaining before the statesman proper will be completely isolated, shown "stripped and alone by himself in his own nature"
(304a). He must be distinguished from his true aides, the orator, the general, and the judge. It seems evident why this task presents itself at this stage in the process. The "mob" of factional politicians includes demagogues, politically ambitious military men, and the ignorant (if not corrupt) lotted and elected judges and jurors. Only once these are set aside can true orators, generals, and judges—practitioners of their arts who do not lay claim to the higher authority of the statesman's art—appear for the first time.

It is this relation of practice and authority which is the key to the stranger's distinctions. Each of the three arts is a kind of practice: oratory does "the work of persuading the mass and bulk of the people through imaginative stories (mythologias)" (304c−d); generalship determines the strategy of war (304e); and the art of the judge consists in settling disputes impartially on the basis of the laws (305b−c).

None of these arts, however, has the responsibility of first directing its own use. The stranger prepares Young Socrates to understand this by an analogy from education. There is a distinction between the art which teaches music and the art which decides it is a good thing to study; and the second, directive art has priority over the first, performative one (304a−c). The analogy is particularly clear in its application to oratory and generalship, since these are roughly complementary contraries. The alternative possibilities of persuasion and force (304d, 304e) require a higher art—one not predisposed towards either possibility, as oratory and generalship are—to make the decision. (The complementarity is rough, however: one must think across the distinction of domestic and foreign affairs, understanding diplomacy as a kind of oratory in the context of foreign affairs and police action as a kind of war-making in the context of domestic affairs.)

The art of the judge also requires this higher art: the judge only applies the laws; indeed, it is essential to his impartial status that he himself is responsible neither for the content of the laws nor for his own appointment to office.

In first introducing the true aides, the stranger went out of his way to stress the difficulty of distinguishing them from the statesman. (See the metaphor of refining, 303d−e). In fact, the statesman and the aides seem to fit together as inseparable complements; the statesman directs, but himself does not practice, the practices which the aides perform but themselves do not direct or institute (305d). Thus it is natural for these distinctions to raise a new kind of difficulty; they seem almost to empty statesmanship of any positive, visible content. Just what does the statesman do? The stranger recalls the introduction of essential measure to characterize statesmanship (284a ff.) when he says the statesman "knows the timely and untimely occasions" (305d) for political action; and he tells us, recalling both the divine measure from the myth and the new paradigm, that statesmanship

controls both these [other] arts and the laws and cares for everything in the polis as a whole [sympanthos ton kata polin epيمελειομενον] and weaves everything together most perfectly (poista suμphathtanos orhathatos). (305e)

But all this reveals the results of the art more than what the statesman must do to attain them. And so the stranger moves on, in the final part of the dialogue, to characterize the "way" or "mote" (tropos, 306a) of the statesman's work.

The foregoing addresses the surface project of isolating statesmanship. What, however, of the subsurface project indicated by the continuum form of diaeresis, the revelation of the way the arts, under statesmanship, collaborate to make up an organic whole?

On this deeper level the discussion of the true aides is pivotal. On the one hand, the passage completes the enumeration of the "limbs," the various working parts of the polis, by enumerating the last key arts. And it responds to important implications in earlier passages about their cooperative totality. In particular, the stranger's indirect negation at 288b suggested the affinity of the production of defenses for the polis and statesmanship; naming the general as a true aide both reasserts the affinity and establishes—between the production of military equipment, or things, and the statesman as commander-in-chief—the necessary art of military service. Again, the stranger's earlier dismissal of the fine arts as only "for play" (288c) provoked the question whether such play mightn't itself be part of the statesman's "serious" work; the characterization of the orator's work as mythologia—just the sort of "play" (recall 268d) the stranger himself indulged in—and the direct subordination of oratory under statesmanship seem to attest to this. Finally, an immediate implication of the development of the seven "material" arts was commerce and the development of the arts of business (289e); business, however, invariably means disputes over contractual matters (ta symbalaia, 305b), and the settlement of these, though aided by the newly emerging civil service (290a−b), requires impartial judges.

On the other hand, the passage also turns the subsurface account in a new direction. As an organic whole, the polis has psyche as well as body; to work together, its "limbs" require not only interconnections but, too, the life-force which activates them. Moreover, if the whole is to be healthy, its psyche or life-force must be in good order. In the earlier phases of the final diaeresis, the stranger concentrated almost entirely on the physical dimension of the polis, its satisfaction of its bodily needs. The first intimations of the psychic dimension came in his depictions of the factional politicians as "Ions" and "centaurs" and "satyrs" (291a−b)—Socratic images in the style of the Republic for their disordered souls. (See pp. 86 ff.) In turning back from those politicians and their seeming politics to the true aides and true polity, the stranger makes a closing reference to the "band of centaurs and satyrs" (303c−d). This should put the Socratic hearer on alert for a characterization of the right order of soul in the polis. And strikingly, albeit without any explicit announcement, this is just what the stranger presents. By his mythologia the orator persuades the "mass" of citizens to accept the statesman's policies; this acceptance, in effect the ordinary citizen's subordination of himself and his desires to the wisdom of the statesman, reverses the "satyr"ic rule of the appetites and is the sophrosyne—moderation or temperance or prudence proper to Socrates' just city. The general, in turn, keeps a fit, aggressive force at the ready for the statesman's orders; this reverses both the lion's subordination of mind to thumos and the centaur's subordination of thumos to the desires. It is the courage (andrôia)
proper to Socrates' just city. Finally, the judge by his impartial application of the laws preserves "the order (taxis) of the lawgiver" (305b-c)—is it too much, having noted the statesman's orchestration of orator and general, to glimpse here that harmonization of moderation and courage, in subordination to wisdom, which is justice (dikaiosune) in Socrates' city?

In these several ways the foursome of the aides and the statesman stand as symbols for the right order of the psyche proper to the true polity, correcting the deformations visible in the factional politicians.35 Yet this inner order is presented altogether externally, both as result and in terms of the social differentiation of authority. The hearer attuned to the deeper project—represented on stage by the elder Socrates—will want to know how, in terms of the educative formation of the psyche, this right order is to be achieved. The question is analogous to that raised on the surface level: just what does the statesman do? The levels themselves, however, are far apart. It is one thing to learn the statesman's actions towards his constituency, quite another to grasp the "wisdom and goodness" (see, e.g., 296e) that, as the essential characters of the Socratic statesman, guide his integration of the psyche and, so, of the polis. Thus the stranger, addressing both Socrates at once, is faced with a final mediative decision: weighing substance and pedagogy, the philosopher's insight and the needs of the many, Young Socrates' future and present, how much of the Socratic vision shall he disclose? Or again, how may he best span the gap which makes this very decision necessary?

f. The third phase: the statesman as weaver; the virtues and the mean (305e-311c)

Like the final diarisis, the stranger's closing portrait of the statesman must be appreciated on two levels. For Young Socrates, on the one hand, it marks a fitting conclusion; with his turn from the methodological to the substantive aspect of the paradigm of weaving (305e) and his application of it to the nature of statesmanship, the stranger validates the rejection of shepherd for weaver and brings the definition to real completion. Or so it seems. For the Socratic hearer, this is not so clear; the portrait constitutes the last of the "odd moments" we anticipated earlier. It does resume and fulfill important themes left implicit or only partially developed in previous sections of the dialogue—in particular, the specifically "Zeusian" character of statesmanship and its practice of essential measure. And in so doing, it seems to complete the subsurface project of revealing the human community as an organic whole. But in another respect—the depth of its account of the right order of the soul—the portrait seems conspicuously lacking, as pointedly open-ended in its own way as the stranger's earlier false endings.

(1) The application of the paradigm. The stranger defined weaving both narrowly and broadly in concluding his diarisis at 283a: weaving was both the integrative act of intertwining warp and woof (antaplokai to koreis kai stemonos) and the art in charge of (epi) producing the resultant woven garment. The broader characterization incorporates the weaver's responsibility for the preparation of the warp and the woof; though the carder and others actually do this work, they do it for the weaver, and he must superintend them. To fully apply the paradigm, the stranger therefore has three points to establish: that the statesman's "material" is like what is made into warp and woof; that there are key subordinate arts which do this preparatory work; and that the statesman's own proper action is like the intertwining of warp and woof. This explains the inner structure of the portrait, which divides36 into the "startling argument" about courage and sophrosune (306a-308b), the characterization of the work of the "teachers and nurses" (308b-309b), and the characterization of the statesman's subsequent integration of the citizenry (309b-311c).

In his "startling argument" (daimaiston tina logon, 306b) the stranger shows how "in many things" (306b)—or again, "for much the most part" (307c)—courage and sophrosune are ranged in "enmity and factional conflict" (asteiron kai stasin, 306b, 308b, also 307c) with one another. This is "startling" because it "dares" to reverse the "familiar" (eidos) teaching that virtue is one and its parts "in accord with one another" (aleitai . . . philia, 306c). The stranger refers to the elder Socrates, of course. And he seems to reverse Socrates' method as well as his thesis. Socrates argues normatively, beginning from critical rejection of more traditional views of courage37 and sophrosune38 and refounding virtuous conduct in insight.39 The stranger, by contrast, surveys particular cases of behaviour which "we" praise and censure as virtuous. This "we" (306c) is not discriminating—the stranger asks Young Socrates if he remembers evaluations "you yourself or someone else" has "ever" made (306d); and the evaluations he chooses reflect a customary and unreflective grasp of courage and sophrosune. Thus "courage" (andreia, literally, manliness) is associated with "speed and vehemence and keenness of thought and body, even of voice" (306e), and sophrosune is associated with being "quiet and restrained" in thinking, "slow and gentle" (or yielding, malakos) in deeds, even with a "smooth deep voice" (307a-b). And when they are "untimely," what otherwise might be praised as courage is faulted as hybris and madness, while the characters otherwise associated with sophrosune are called cowardice and indolence (307b-c). UnSocratic as these characterizations are, the stranger is really preparing for a genuinely Socratic turn. By establishing the opposition between the two "natures" in their behavioural expressions, he is able to argue that the citizens in a polis tend to polarize into two opposed camps, each defined by one of the two "natures"; and given the human tendency to seek out what is like oneself and avoid what is unlike, each camp tends more and more towards the extreme form of its own disposition, thus threatening the city with civil strife or, should either camp gain the upper hand, with the equally self-destructive foreign policies of constant war-making and of isolationist appeasement (307d-308b). Thus the stranger points to the need for an integration of the city through a reformation of character. And this reformation will proceed along characteristically Socratic lines: courage and sophrosune must be harmonized in the soul. The unity of virtue is normative for the stranger too.40

The stranger's account of the work of reformation is also Socratic in its specifics. To begin with, it must be done from the ground up; the best medicine for the "sickness" (neos, 307d) is preventative. This is why the statesman, like the weaver, needs subordinate arts to first prepare his material. Passing into the second phase
of the portrait, the stranger therefore introduces the “educators and nurses” as analogues to the carders and spinners who comb out the raw wool and make it into warp and woof. They lead the city’s children in the most serious form of “play” (poitidia, 308d) of all, the early training which “tests” and determines which will make good citizens and which will not.4 The latter must be treated like bad wool: inclined towards violence, godlessness, hybris, and injustice, they must be thrown out, through executions and exiles, or chastened by public disgrace, or relegated to slavery (309a).42 The former—some of whom will have shown the “firm” and “warp-like,” courageous nature, others the “soft and gentle,” “wooflike” sophrosomic nature—must be passed on to the statesman.

The stranger thus comes to the statesman’s own distinctive work. He “binds” or “weaves together” (sundein kai sumplekein, 309b) the two natures, or “harmonizes” (309c) them, by two sorts of “bons” (desmos, 309c, e, 310a, e). The first is “divine” and unites the citizens in the “immortal part” of their souls, that is, in their minds: acting as lawyer, the statesman “makes and instills” (empolein) a “genuinely real true opinion about things beautiful and just and good and their opposites” (309c–d). This will temper the soul predisposed towards courage, keeping it from lapsing to savageness, and it will firm up the gentle soul, making it “prudent and thoughtful, at least in its civic life (hòs ge en politeian)” (309d–e). Thus the stranger recovers Socrates’ foundational claim: for him too, the virtues are, and are united in being, founded in insight! His characterization of the second sort of “bond” also echoes Socrates. These are “human” bonds and tie men together in “the animal [part of their souls]” (to zoogénese) (309c). The stranger begins with a eugenic doctrine built on the notion of the two natures as genetic strains. The ordinary practice of marrying one’s like must be reversed. The long-term isolation of the two strains from each other can produce deformations, the stranger argues—madness in the courageous strain, torpidity and unresponsiveness in the sophrosomic. The statesman must therefore be sure that there is intermarriage and interbreeding between them (310b–c).43 In addition, the statesman must use “public honors and repute and pledges” (310e) to encourage the integration. If the bonds of marriage and recreation link souls on the most physical level, that of the desires, these last seem to work on the level of the social passions, or thumos.44 In any case, both will be easy to tie once the divine bond is present. Nor will it be hard, finally, for the statesman to maintain an even distribution of offices and responsibilities (311a–b). The “true opinion” will make men “like-minded” (311b) on all basic matters, and they will thus be predisposed towards mixture and sharing.45 As a result, what would otherwise be a situation of conflict will be transformed into one of mutual completion.

(ii) The statesman’s and the stranger’s realizations of the mean. With this application of the weaver paradigm the stranger makes explicit the implicit turn he took in clarifying the true sides, the turn from the “limbs” of true polity to the psychic foundation for their healthy collaboration. The way he depicts this foundation, moreover, both builds on key motifs from the myth and displays the statesman’s realization of the mean. In this respect the stranger’s final portrait provides the real ending (telos) which the myth lacked (recall 277b, discussed on pp. 55 ff.) and brings out the point of the negative reflection on statesmanship and essential measure at 283e–284d (discussed on p. 67).

With his characterization, first of all, of the “sicknes (nosos) which arises in the cities” (307d), the stranger sets his portrait into the epochal context of the myth. At 273d ff. he told how in the late stages of the age of Zeus the cosmos—and, analogously, man (274a, d)―“falls into sickness and dissolution” (nososai kai luthetia), nearly “sinking in the infinite sea of unlikeliness.” The primary structure of unlikeliness, we argued (pp. 37 ff.), is that between the god and the cosmos; but this has direct implications for the self-relations of the cosmos. Precisely as different from the constant and self-same god, the cosmos—and man within it—must differ from itself. For man this means that the lower elements of the psyche, associated with the bodily nature, oppose and overrule the higher, god-given capacity for insight (phronésis, 269d). Now the stranger shows the social-psychological form this self-opposition takes: by their tendency to avoid and reject those unlike themselves, men thoughtlessly (elathon, 307e, 308a) polarize the poles into mutually exclusive, partisan camps of the overly bold and the overly gentle. Both the individual, tending increasingly towards madness or indolence, and the city, divided between the equally disastrous policies of aggression and appeasement, face the threat of dissolution.

With his “remedy” or “medicine” (pharmakon, 310a) for this sickness, the statesman, in turn, relates to the city analogously as the god relates to the cosmos. Here we see the special appropriateness of the paradigm of the weaver to statesmanship in the age of Zeus. (Recall 279b, pp. 60 ff. above.) Like the god, the statesman expresses his “care for the whole” by “integrating” (308c, recall 275b) and “harmonizing” (309c, recall 269d) the opposite factions within the polis. His means, moreover, reverse the more basic unlikeliness—that between the god and men generally—which the polarization of the two factions expresses. The first, the “bond” of “true opinion,” is itself “divine,” and the instilling of it in the souls of the citizen gives them “daimonic” status (309c). By using this term the stranger refers back to his account of the god’s withdrawal at the close of the age of Cronus; there he called the god “the greatest daimon” (272c). His point at 309c is therefore that the god is in some sense restored by the instilling of the “true opinion.” The second “bond,” in turn, seems to indicate this sense in an exemplary way. For man, we recall, the most immediate consequence of the god’s withdrawal was the new need to “conceive and bear and rear” himself (274a). By his account of the newly “like-minded” citizenry’s adoption of eugenic interbreeding, the stranger portrays the entire citizenry exercising this Zeusian responsibility in an informed, intelligent way. The likes and dislikes of temperament and the specifically bodily appetites are subordinated to insight and care for the well-being of the whole. Thus the community, through the statesman’s leadership, internalizes towards itself the relation which the god bore towards it in the age of Cronus; it is “daimonic” in the sense that it is now to itself what the god was earlier. And this means, finally, that the community as a whole has become like the god. We see again why it is “sacred” (recall hieron, discussed on pp. 76 ff.) and why the revelation of the form, states-
manship, requires revelation of the state. It is the essential achievement of the statesman, in his god-like care for the whole, to extend this likeness into and throughout the state itself. His work is complete, in effect, when the citizens themselves, in their different arts and temperaments, take it over or partake of it for themselves. (Recall pp. 77 ff.)

In a two-fold sense, finally, this achievement displays the statesman's practice of essential measure. The stranger earlier described this practice in its negative aspect: all the arts concerned with practical activity, he said, "guard against what exceeds or falls short of the mean as a peril" (284a-b). The "peril" for the city is now vivid. Too much "courage" (which implies too little sophrosune) and too much "sophrosune" (which implies too little courage) are equally disastrous; whether by overextending itself in war or by seeking peace at any price, the city will bring itself "unwittingly" to defeat and enslavement (307e–308a). In each case the excess of one "virtue" makes it "untimely," akairia (307b), and so no longer a virtue at all.

This is why the statesman, choosing between the policy courses represented by the orator and the general, must recognize when each is "timely and untimely" (see 305d). And more basically, this is why the statesman seeks a balanced temperament in the citizens, an integration "which dwells in the middle apart from the extremes" (284e). The basis for this balance, the instilling of "true opinion," is itself a "realization of the mean" (284c) in a positive sense. Precisely as opinion (deoxa), "true opinion" falls short of episteme. The stranger's formulation at 309c seems to allude to the fundamental difference: the reference of the "true opinion" is "things beautiful and just and good and their opposites" (tòn kalòn kai dikèaì peri kai agathòn kai tôn toutois emantión),40 not the forms beauty, justice, goodness." Thus the citizen does not know the foundation for his own insight and is not in position to reflect and justify it. On the other hand, by virtue of its "truth," his insight is superior to mere opinion. Since it coincides in its positive content with the conclusions reflection attains, it serves as a sufficient guide in practical matters;41 moreover, the statesman gives it the "constancy" (see meta bêtôiòi, 309c) which it lacks in its own nature, codifying it as law (310a) and making it permanent. For these reasons the statesman stands to the citizens as a "muse" (309d). They are "possessed" by his episteme, "receiving [its] truth" (309d–e), yet they do not possess it in itself. The statesman's episteme, as such, remains beyond their grasp, yet its content, presented in the doxic mode of their own understanding, informs and governs their souls.42

But has the stranger even yet brought the inquiry to a really sufficient conclusion? In an odd way, the underlying insight which has determined the form and content of the final diairesis—that the revelation of true statesmanship requires the revelation of the true state—seems to lead to a new insufficiency. Precisely because the citizens partake of the statesman's insight in the mode of deoxa, to know this partak-

ing is not yet to know the episteme, as such, that is his essence. As with the "muse" generally, the explication of his effects leaves his source obscure. Thus the revelation of the state seems to leave the statesman's essence hidden. To put the same point in another way: the stranger gives a good Socratic description of the just state, but he does not explicate the principle which lies at the very core of its justice. In terms of the Socratic teaching to which he alludes (306b–c), it is one thing to describe the proper balance of courage and sophrosune in the soul; this characterizes the justice of the guardian.43 It is quite another to reveal the wisdom, sophia, to which the guardian subordinates himself and which, fully realized, characterizes the ruler. Yet the notion of the unity of virtue is incomplete without that revelation. By focusing on the citizen's character instead of the statesman's the stranger therefore leaves the inquiry pointedly incomplete.

To the hearer who has grasped the stranger's mediative role, however, this incompleteness will not seem inappropriate. On the one hand, the stranger's formulation of the reference of "true opinion" suggests why the missing revelation is presently impossible. To recover the epistemic foundation for the citizen's "true opinion" would mean to know beauty and justice and goodness, as such; and this knowledge is the essential goal and fulfillment of Socratic philosophy. Thus, to reveal the statesman would require being philosophical in the fullest Socratic sense. Yet Young Socrates has shown himself manifestly unprepared for this. In terms of his own mode of insight, he has only now been introduced to his own doxic misunderstandings of the eidetic, specifically, of the essential unity of kinds (recall 262a ff.) and of the transcendence of the "greatest beings" (277a ff., 285d ff.). [The distinction between kind and form (in the fullest sense) is still beyond him.] And in terms of his political consciousness, Young Socrates has just now begun to grasp the problem of the true statesman's nonappearance to the many (especially 299e ff.).

On the other hand, what the stranger does present in the final portrait is strikingly fitting to Young Socrates' present stage of development. This is so in a two-fold sense. So long as the philosophical core of statesmanship is beyond him, first of all, he stands with the many. He must therefore limit his political hopes to the "second best" course of the rule of law. (Recall 300a ff.) But as we have noted (see p. 103), even this course requires some notion—at least a "pleasing" image—of statesmanship. The final portrait provides just such an image. By its relatively uncritical approach to the virtues, with its stress on concrete instances and political cases of what nonphilosophical consciousness ("you or someone else," 306d) "finds" (307c), the portrait is thoroughly intelligible to the standpoint of the many. The accounts of the disastrous effects of extremist policies are especially vivid. This lends power to the stranger's stress on the preventative and curative power of the statesman's laws. As "the good and true lawgiver" (309d), the statesman both supervises the education of the young (see 308e) and fulfills his basic function, the instilling of "true opinions," "through laws" (310a). Thus the many—including, for the present, Young Socrates—are given a guiding principle for their legislation: the laws must encourage "like-mindedness" amongst the citizenry by striking the closest possible balance between militant and moderate dispositions and the correlative general courses of public policy.
Secondly, the passage has a pointed pedagogical relevance. Though he speaks in terms of “civic life” (*hês ge en politeiai*, 309c), the stranger’s image of the balanced soul reflects back on Young Socrates’ own personality structure and represents a precondition for his future philosophical development. From Young Socrates’ first independent contribution to the inquiry, his partisan division of “men”/ “beasts” at 262a, he has shown “too much thumos” or an excess of *andreia*, “courage.” (Recall the stranger’s characterization of that division, *prothumontai kai anatreontai*, at 262a5, also 263c and d, discussed on p. 24.) Time and again he has been too quick to accept conclusions which were really insufficient. (For example, 267a and c, 277a, 280b and e.) For the moment, the stranger can restrain and guide him by his personal authority. But he foresees clearly the difficulties which Young Socrates will face “many times later on” (283b), once he is on his own; this is why he has given him the methodological complex of bifurcatory diairesis, paradigm, and essential measure. (Recall pp. 64–72.) As he remarked obscurely at 282d, Young Socrates needs pay attention to the “making of the wool” as well as of the warp. Now by his image of the statesman’s weaving in the soul, he spells this out and reinforces his methodological instructions. Young Socrates’ warlike courageous nature must be “gentled” or “tamed” (309e), that is, complemented by a genuine *sôphrosunê*. He must cultivate “restraint” in his thinking and learn how to “sow” down in his judgments, checking his impulsiveness and becoming reflective. (Recall 307a–b.) If he cannot, his drive and keenness, just what give him a potential for philosophy, will come to nothing. (And to translate the political into the psychological) he will remain in unwitting enslavement to his own presumptions.

Heard in this way, the stranger’s closing portrait—analogously with the statesman’s work which it portrays—appears to realize the mean. Both the rule of law and the taming of impulsiveness are “second best” goals; yet together they comprise the fullest possible realization of political consciousness and philosophy, at present, for Young Socrates. What is more, they fall short of the “best” in a way that preserves its ultimate possibility. The rule of law, on the one hand, avoids the peril of a self-deceived presumption by the ignorant to understand statesmanship; it cuts off the possibility of tyranny and despotism. The taming of impulsiveness, on the other hand, is a precondition for philosophical education: only if Young Socrates can learn to check his presumptions will he be open to what is initially strange and beyond the reach of *dôsa*—notably, the problems of appearance and reality, of the inner structure of kinds, and of the disparity of kind and form. With this basic openness, however, the methodological “practice” which the stranger urges may lead him through these problems to philosophical intuition; and with this achievement, he will no longer be bound to the affirmation of the rule of law as the highest political possibility. On the contrary, if he reaches the ultimate philosophical achievement of the knowledge of beauty, justice, and goodness, he will himself be in position to practice true statesmanship as the stranger has implicitly defined it.

No one should recognize this “mean”-course better than the elder Socrates. Indeed, at other times he practices its major elements himself: in the *Crito* he urges the nonphilosophical Crito to accept the rule of law, in spite of its implications for himself; and in the *Republic* he makes the balance of courage and *sôphrosunê* the main aim of the education of the guardians and, as such, the foundation for the further philosophical education of the ruler. In these respects too, as in his recovery of the thesis of the unity of virtue, the stranger’s closing portrait is a thoroughly Socratic mediation. This is presumably why Plato chooses to end the dialogue as he does: the elder Socrates breaks his long-held silence to approve the stranger’s portrait. His words, moreover, are subtly pointed.

Most beautifully, in turn, have you completed for us, stranger, the kingly man and statesman. (*Kallista au ton basilikon apetelesas andra hêmin, ó scote, kai ton politikon*). (311c)

On the one hand, by his *au* (“in turn”) and *apetelesas* (“you have completed”), Socrates refers directly back to the stranger’s characterization, just preceding, of the statesman’s art as “completing (apetelesas) the most magnificent (or literally, most greatly appropriate, megalor prep-staiton) and best of all weavings.” On the other hand, by his *hêmin* (“for us”) he recalls the stranger’s specific audience and task and relates the “beauty” of his “completion” to these: this “us”—the circle of Theodorus and Socrates—is substantively divided, and the stranger has had to limit and veil his speech accordingly. Thus Socrates’ final words seem to invoke the analogy we have noted, between the statesman and the stranger, in order to confirm the stranger’s work as mediator. He says, in effect: “Even as you, stranger, approve the statesman’s weaving as the most ‘appropriate’ response to his divided citizenry, so I approve the depiction of this weaving as the most appropriate response to the divided ‘us.’ Both realize the mean.”
The Statesman Itself as a Mean

On our analysis, it is not surprising that the stranger refrains from a full, explicit recalculation of the elder Socrates' vision of philosophical statesmanship. Recognizing Young Socrates' present limitations, he speaks a "mean," what is "appropriate and timely and needed" (284e). But it is not so obvious why Plato refrains. By giving his protagonist such a limited interlocutor and the task of meditating, Plato restricts the depth of his own self-expression in the dialogue. In effect, he accepts the alienation of Socratic-Platonic philosophy as a given and speaks within the frame of reference constituted by it. Why? The question leads in several directions, in accordance with the several aspects of the representative function of the persona "Young Socrates."

(i) By his key responses (293c, 296a) in the digression on statesmanship and law, Young Socrates shows that his basic sympathies still lie with "the many." Thus Plato, by making Young Socrates his interlocutor, gives himself the opportunity to address ordinary, nonphilosophical consciousness on basic political questions. And from what he has to say, it becomes evident why he considers it important to do this. On the one hand, his radical political proposals in the Republic have gone largely unheard. To state this makes it seem too obvious to need stating: no city has taken to heart his thesis that the inner structure of the true polity is that of the unity of virtue. Quite the contrary, Greek politics in the fourth century continues to be the same weary and disastous mix of internal faction and external war which Thucydides described in the fifth. And Plato has just experienced vividly in Syracuse what was a constant in his relationship with Athens, the rejection of the thesis' core implication that philosophers should be rulers and rulers, philosophers. None of this, surely, is a surprise to him; over and over in the dialogues he stresses that "the many" lack political wisdom. Still, this 'unear-thedness' does confront him with the problem of how to keep his thought from remaining, as he put it in the Seventh Letter, "bare words," abstract or without any significance for political actuality. The Statesman seems to be his answer to this problem. In its drama (by the silent presence of Socrates), in its content (by the suppression of sophia in his final account of the unity of virtue in the statesman's city), and in the convergence of these (by Socrates' final endorsement of the account, Plato acknowledges the hiddendness or unintelligibility of philosophy to ordinary political consciousness; and by bringing forth and stressing what was secondary so long as he was striving directly for philosophical polity, namely, the rule of law, he appears to suspend that highest goal. But to suspend is not to give up. By interpreting law as "imitation" and by providing, as a model, just that part of the unity of virtue which would be accessible and intelligible to nonphilosophical consciousness, he now strives indirectly: the philosophical thesis is retained as the concealed (or only externally revealed) standard for political thought and action. In effect, he turns back from the radical goal of the Republic—to make men philosophical—to the lesser one of the Crito—to make men law-abiding; but by orienting the laws by the vision of a balance and harmony of courage and sophrosyne, he retains the Republic as the guiding standard. The Statesman urges, as the goal for the law-state, just the harmony of dispositions that characterizes the not yet philosophical guardians of Republic IV. Moreover, by describing this harmony, itself an interior structure of psyche, in terms of its external appearance in behaviour and public policy, Plato puts it within reach of nonphilosophical understanding. Every Athenian knows the crucial conflict between the policies of war and appeasement; indeed, because of the link between faction and war, this has been a dominant public question for decades. Both in its political goal and its mode of presenting it, therefore, the Statesman represents a "mean," the fullest realization of true polity which is actually possible for the nonphilosophical "many."

(ii) If it is not surprising that Plato should address "the many," it is surprising that he should do so through Young Socrates. "Young Socrates" personifies the young Academicians, and we naturally assume them, unlike "the many," to be in full sympathy with Plato's philosophical approach to political order. Indeed, it seems likely that the Republic attracted many of them to the Academy in the first place. The dramatic interplay in the dialogue, however, undercuts our assumption in a subtle way. As the exchanges between the elder Socrates and Theodorus forewarn (pp. 8–10), personal friendship and good will may well conceal substantive antipathy. Young Socrates' comportment displays this split in just the form we might expect in a youthful disciple. Time and again he gives the stranger enthusiastic support, deferring unreservedly to his personal authority—without, however, a critical understanding of what he supports or a self-critical awareness of this lack of understanding. This is why the stranger must repeatedly object and guide the discussion back from apparently philosophical practice to critical review of what is basic or preliminary to it. The image which this projects of the Academy is intriguing. Did Plato find himself "followed" by young men who, well-versed in the mathematical, the pura deities for philosophy, mistakenly presumed themselves philosophically advanced as well? More, did he find himself met with a deference and even enthusiasm which concealed from his young students themselves their own lack of comprehension? The possibility may be taken one step further. Earlier we noted how the stranger's remarks on the cut "Greeks", "barbarians" (262d ff.) and his objection to the shepherd image's assimilation of statesman and tyrant (276e ff.) appear to refer to dangerous misinterpretations of passages in the Republic. (See pp. 23 ff., 47ff., 54 ff.) Plato appears to block any association of his teachings in the Republic with panhellenism and with the re-emergence of despotism. Did his young followers, presuming ourselves philosophers, also presume their political competence and, so, stand in danger of becoming the very opposite of epistemic statesmen—namely, self-ignorant adventurers and participants in political faction? These questions must remain, finally, unresolved. For lack of firm and unambiguous independent testimony, the early Academy remains a "riddle." Nonetheless,
we may articulate a complex hypothesis, based on our interpretation of the mimetic irony of the dialogue. (a) By his dramatic portrait of Young Socrates’ uncritical, hence presumptive deference, Plato criticizes this same tendency in the Academy. Thus Plato attempts to mediate the same sort of unswerving, hidden estrangement, within his own students, that divides Young Socrates from the elder and, so, from his own innermost potential. (b) But Plato knows full well that the act of criticism is only the initiating occasion for real mediation. Beyond this, each student must, first, himself recognize the application of the criticism to himself and, second, devote himself over a long period to the labor of overcoming the ignorance which the criticism reveals. From the first of these moments, we see why Plato resorts to the indirect communication of the dialogue. (Recall pp. xxiii ff., xxiv-xxviii.) (c) The second points to a new issue. If the Statesman was written in 365 B.C.E. or later, Plato would have been about sixty-five or older. His direct references to Socrates’ trial and Young Socrates’ future seem to attest his anticipation of his own death and the challenge this will present to his young students. However insufficient his personal presence, his coming absence will put them in even direer straits. Indeed, just insofar as they depend on his presence, they will be all the more unable to continue their philosophical education after his death. Like early Zeusian men in the myth and Young Socrates “later on” (283c, pp. 64–65), therefore, they stand in need of “instructions.” This function throws new light on the strikingly “positive” character of the stranger’s complex of methodological teachings. Not yet philosophically mature, the young Academician requires a method and program of study not susceptible to his own uncertain judgment. The more predetermined by explicit principles and rules, the better. Thus the stranger’s categorical insistence that Young Socrates “simply ignore [censure and praise of arguments for their pleasantness or ‘ease and speed’] and act as though [he] had not heard it at all” (287a), his recommendation of diaricic “practice” on “lesser beings” as prior preparation for inquiry into the “greater” ones (286a–b), and the rule-governed procedures of bifurcatory diariesis are all intended to enable the young Academicians, deprived of Plato himself, to keep their bearings during the long process of education into Platonic philosophical insight. In sum, whereas the critical image of Young Socrates is the negative aspect, the stranger’s complex of methodological doctrines (mean, paradigm, bifurcatory diariesis) is the positive aspect of Plato’s effort at a genuine, long-term mediation of the hidden estrangement in the Academy.

(iii) If only because we are so much inclined to ignore it in our habitual feelings for the Academy’s and for the later Platonic dialogues as well, the theme of hidden substantive estrangement is important to stress. But it would be a mistake to end on this note. In particular, we would neglect the full sense of Plato’s mimetic irony and forget the self-overcoming character of the “mean.” Plato is most critical of the young Academicians when he makes Young Socrates fail, over and over, to recognize himself in the stranger’s mirrorings. But he presents these failures precisely in order to provoke a recognition and transcendence of them by his hearers. Thus, even while the stranger seems finally to despair of generating critical self-knowledge in Young Socrates (recall pp. 63 ff.), Plato seems to hope for it in the Young

Academicians and to credit them with the capacity for it. We have seen this same two-sidedness in a somewhat different form in his presentations of the method of bifurcatory diariesis. Even while the stranger recommends it emphatically to Young Socrates, he indicates, by his practice of it in the closing phase of the initial diariesis (264b–267c), its real philosophical limitations; and by changing the form of diariesis at 287b ff., he gives a concealed display of how, in the advanced stage of philosophical education, the positive rules of halving become an obstacle and must give way to genuine eidetic intuition. (Recall pp. 30–32, 79–81.) Thus, even while Plato gears his methodological “instructions” to an elementary level of understanding, he appears to anticipate development and transformation. The hearer who enters into the practice of bifurcation—Plato seems to say between the lines—will be led, by this practice itself, beyond the method to genuine insight into the forms. The very fact that he ‘says’ this at all reveals his hopefulness. Like the elder Socrates he portrays, he is “testing” for heirs. Even within the situation of estrangement he seeks to awaken and direct (and in a long-term, radical manner) the potentiality for genuine philosophical insight within the young Academicians.

Plato’s anticipation of this ultimate overcoming of bifurcatory diariesis raises a final question about the political content of the Statesman. Much earlier we noted how bifurcatory method and the rejection of the shepherd image serve alike as checks on the not yet philosophical spirit: if the first checks the power of unexamined opinion, the second blocks an unjustified pretension to the status of philosopher-king. (Recall pp. 54–55.) Plato reinforces the second check by the stranger’s justification of the rule of law at 300a ff. Nonetheless, he also stresses that the rule of the epistemic statesman is the best of all; the rule of law must be accepted in its place only because the actual existence, much less the accession to power, of such a statesman is so improbable and the risks in giving the power due him to an impostor are so great. Suppose, however, that Plato’s methodological “instructions” should succeed and that some “one or two” (293a), undergoing the development and transformation he projects, should achieve philosophical insight? Would Plato insist on the restraint of the rule of law—or would this, like the check by bifurcatory method, no longer be “appropriate”? Such men, his true spiritual heirs, would have raised themselves from “true opinion” of “things beautiful and just and good” (309c) to the noetic grasp, referred to in the Seventh Letter, of the “what” and “being,” or of the forms as such, of beauty and justice and goodness. Would it be right to subject them to the rule of “what seems right to the many” (ta toi pethet doxanta, 298d), codified as law? Or would this, together with any objection to their use of violence in governing, be “ridiculous in the extreme” (296d, also 295e, 296a)? While everything we know of Plato’s later political practice—especially his rejection of force in the Seventh Letter and his devotion to writing the Laws—suggests that he never recognized the actual existence of such a “one or two,” the Statesman seems nonetheless to hold the possibility open. In this regard, there is an intriguing aspect of the image of the weaver-statesman which deserves mention. We noted earlier how Plato opens the whole day’s discussion with a striking allusion to the Odyssey: at Sophist 216a Socrates compares the stranger to the disguised Odysseus, suggesting indirectly that, as “the disguised presence of the Socratic,”
the stranger has come “to enable Socratic philosophy to reveal itself for what it is and reassert its proper place in the state” (p. 13). As we have seen, however, Young Socrates’ limitations have made this revelation, at present, impossible. Does Plato now end the day’s discussion with another Homeric allusion? The most famous weaving in all of Greek literature was Penelope’s cloak. It was, of course, a ruse, designed to keep the imposturing suitors in suspense and so to win time for Odysseus’ eventual return. Thus Penelope maintained a semblance of order in Ithaca, preventing a usurpation of Odysseus’ rightful authority as king and holding open the possibility of his restoration. It is not too much to wonder if Plato’s figure of the weaver-statesman, designed to orient the law-state, is just such an ‘interim device’ or stop-gap. This takes away nothing from the crucial importance of law for Plato. Penelope did not know whether Odysseus would ever return; she was ready to weave an indefinite time, perhaps forever. Was Plato, even while concealing the philosopher-king (p. 110) and urging the rule of law for “the many,” nonetheless hoping that the stranger’s educational “instructions” would eventually overcome the need for the concealment? Though it would occur not through Plato himself but rather through “someone else like him” (295c), such an overcoming would be (to translate the Homeric allusion) Plato’s true return and restoration.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 One of the most interesting such studies is P. Rabbow, Pädagogik, Die Grundlegung der Altenbucherischen Erziehungskunst in der Sophistik (Göttingen, 1960). Rabbow examines the intellectualism of Socrates’ and (the early) Plato’s pedagogy, arguing that its very radicalism leads to its own overcomeness and the acknowledgment, in the later Plato and Aristotle, of the autonomous status and role of “the irrational” in education. Rabbow’s recognition of Plato’s concern, revealed both in the express doctrines and in the dramatic action of the dialogues, with the “irrational elements” of authority, atmosphere, emotional involvement, and habit is penetrating; this makes it all the more conspicuous, however, that he does not bring dramatic interplay to bear in his actual interpretation of express doctrines.


3 Ryle, op. cit., characterizes the Statesman as “this weary dialogue” (p. 285) and interprets 286a–287a as a “huffy response” inserted into a second edition after the first, together with the Sophist, had received an “adverse reception” (p. 286). “Plato,” Ryle judges, “had outlived his earlier genius in composing exoterically” (p. 26). Grene, op. cit., p. 181, remarks that the Sophist and the Statesman “are among Plato’s work unique in that they are dull. They are also uneven in texture and style, which in the case of an artist of such very sure touch is a clear sign that something is wrong.”


5 J. Stenzel objects to this in his seminal study, “The Literary Form and Philosophical Content of the Platonic Dialogue,” published in Plato’s Method of Dialectic (Oxford, 1940). But see n. 17 below.

6 The tendency to neglect the interplay of form, content, and function is most especially characteristic of the mainstream of English and American scholarship, as is noted by H. Gundert, Dialog und Dialektik, Zur Struktur des platonischen Dialogs (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 1–2, and S. Rosen, Plato’s Symposium (New Haven, 1968), pp. xi ff. In German scholarship, the unity of form and content has been thematically explicated most notably by F. Schleiermacher, Introductions to the Dialogues of Plato (Cambridge, 1838); Stenzel, op. cit.; H.-G. Gadamer, Platos dialektische Ethik (Hamburg, 1968), especially ch. I; and Gundert, op. cit. The most thoroughgoing and concrete display of this unity, however, is P. Friedländer, Plato, 3 vols. (New York, 1958, 1964, 1969). In French scholarship two major studies are R. Schaerer, La Question Platonicienne, Mémoire de l’Université de Neuchâtel, (1938) and V. Goldschmidt, Les Dialogues de Platon (Paris, 1947). In English, exemplary studies of particular dialogues are J. Klein, A Commentary on Plato’s Meno (Chapel Hill, 1965); Rosen, op. cit.; D. Hyland, “Why Plato Wrote Dialogues,” Philosophy and Rhetoric 1 (1968), pp. 38–50.

7 We cite Taylor only because of this cogency; there is a wide and enduring consensus on the points he makes. For other exemplary statements, see E. Brehier, The History of Philosophy, the Hellenic Age (Chicago, 1963), pp. 92, 96; Jaeger, op. cit., pp. 26–27, 75; R. Robinson, Plato’s Earlier Dialectic (Oxford, 1953), p. 84.

9Iser, *op. cit.*, p. 27, writes: “The last fruit of the Theory of Forms was the methods of classification and abstraction, which are what Plato means by dialectic in the narrow sense of his later works. These methods had revolutionized the form of the controversial dialogue that arose out of the Socratic cross-examination. They had made it psychologically meaningless and almost turned it into a treatise.”

10Gundert, *op. cit.*, p. 92, noting the withdrawal of Socrates and the loss of “mimetic–drastic force,” argues for a transformation of the dramatic element: the element of resistance shifts from “persons” to “subject matter,” and the emphasis shifts from the “purification” of opinion to the penetration of problems. Thus Gundert sees a new stress on the “immanent drama of the logos itself” (“die immanente Dramatik des Logos selbst”). R. Weingartner, *The Unity of the Platonic Dialogue* (Indianapolis, 1973), p. 12, expresses something of this last notion in objecting to the “... grave mistake of identifying drama with elaboration of setting, stage directions, characterization, and entertaining language... The drama of a Platonic dialogue can be concentrated entirely in its arguments... Each argument has a conclusion that is explicitly stated; but taken together, they have a significance that goes beyond this.” This point is well-taken, and we will explore “drama” in this sense in the *Statesman*. Nonetheless, this sort of transformation is not what I have in mind. This “logical” sense of “drama” is certainly not new to the later dialogues; it is simply the dialectic interplay of arguments. I am suggesting instead that a transformation occurs within the mimetic or “theatrical” sense of “drama,” which continues, given this transformation, to characterize the later dialogues, in particular the *Statesman*. For exemplification, cf. Klein, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–31.


12We see something like the converse of this in the *Gorgias*, in which first Gorgias, then Polus, and finally Callicles all fall silent and leave Socrates to speak with himself. Callicles, in particular, resorts to silence to express disdain for Socrates’ style of argument. See 505c ff., also 481b ff.

13Consider also the *Symposium*, in which Socrates deliberately arrives late and so provokes Agathon to long for his presence. See 174e ff.—More generally, on silence as a part or form of speech, consider *Phaedrus* 276a.

14Taylor explains his association of “periodic style” with the “formal treatise or essay” by way of a reference to Isocrates. In sentences lifted from our quotation on pp. xxii ff., Taylor writes that Plato, in using the periodic style in his late dialogues, “... is trying to adapt the style invented for the topical paragraph by Isocrates to the purposes of sustained philosophical and scientific exposition... The general effect is that we no longer have the approximation to the tone of well-bred conversation which is so characteristic of the *Gorgias*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*; we are getting something much more like a formal treatise or essay.” Isocrates’ style itself is a special topic, for which see Albin Lesky, *Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur* (Bern, 1963), esp. p. 637. On periodic style, the important points for our discussion are these: (1) The “invention” of periodic style marks the replacement especially of paratactic syntax with the use of explicit subordination. The basic “period” expresses a complete thought and is “periodic” or circular in the sense that “... at the beginning of the period there appear elements [a] thought which, being in themselves incomplete and in need of integration [e.g. the protasis of the “if...,” then...” conditional construction], are only first integrated into the whole thought at the close...” (Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der Literaturgeschichte*, Munich, 1960, pp. 458–69.) (2) That periodic style essentially expresses a complete thought makes it appropriate, in Taylor’s words, “to the purposes of sustained philosophical and scientific exposition.” (3) Moreover, in that this completeness is achieved by subordination and within the unity of one “sentence form,” periodic style appears incompatible with dialogue, in which completeness, when it is achieved at all, is achieved by a clash and exchange of sentences. This is evidently why Taylor, associating the use of periodic style with the “formal treatise or essay,” opposes it to the “approximation to the tone of... conversation” accomplished by the dialogue form of the “more dramatic” early dialogues. Though Taylor’s point bears more on the *Timaeus* than the *Statesman*, it is nonetheless true that periodic style characterizes many of the stranger’s speech. His mode of speech is indeed expository. But the question still remains: does this undermine or work within the framework of dialogical drama?

15Taylor’s very term, “positive,” seems to imply this contrast.

16Stenzel, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, points this out.

17Stenzel, in his chapter entitled “A New Form of Dialogue and a New Method,” *op. cit.*, pp. 75–85, seems to argue that Plato gives us such a “new form” in his later period. But in fact takes just the position expressed by Jaeger, as quoted in n. 9. Because Plato concentrates on the presentation of his “new method” of diairesis, “... the dialogue is a mere external form—it simply seems more convenient than a continuous speech...” (p. 77?) Thus Stenzel really argues, in accord with the “standard view,” that Plato essentially abandons the dialogue form.

18The *Parmenides* gives us the most philosophical nonphilosophical interlocutor of all, Socrates in his youth.

19This knowledge is intimated in many passages. Consider, especially, Socrates’ account of his Delphic mission in the *Apology*, his allusion to the “fellowship and friendship of the heavens and the earth, gods and men” in the *Gorgias* (506a), and the allegory of the cave in *Rep.* 7–8.

20I accept the view that the dialogues were written to be read aloud or recited before a small group.

21Rabbow, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–232, has assembled an interesting list of passages from various dialogues which allude to the sufferings experienced by the learner “in the course of [his] ascent to the Idea.”

22蛎, *op. cit.*, p. 22, notes that “we know that literacy was almost universal in Athens...”


But of course there is nothing to prevent a shallow character—or again, a shallow aspect of public opinion—from being the occasion for reflection on profound issues. Thus the encounter between the popular entertainer Ion and Socrates generates questions, implicitly developed in the dialogue, of the transcendent source of inspiration, the constitution of culture, and the relation of poetry and philosophy. See, for example, M. Murray, *Modern Critical Theory* (The Hague, 1974), pp. 13–22.

Of modern philosophers, Kierkegaard has best developed Plato’s insights into the psychological dimension of the challenge of philosophy. His first book, not incidentally, was his still very interesting dissertation, *The Concept of Irony, with Constant Reference to Socrates* (Bloomingon, 1971).

25These references to the *Phaedrus* and the *Laws* are controversial and cannot be thoroughly grounded on this occasion. But several brief remarks can be made. With regard to the *Phaedrus*, Socrates seems to contradict our interpretation of his interlocutor; he flatters Phaedrus, saying that “Of the discourses pronounced during your lifetime no one, I fancy, has been responsible for more than you, whether by delivering them yourself or by compelling others to do so by one means or another...” (242a–b). But Socrates is ironizing. Phaedrus is an admirer of Lyssias, who was known for his ability to write speeches for any and every occasion in behalf of whatever cause happened to present itself. The Lyssas-style speech just given by Socrates, itself a masterly example of mimetic irony, is partisan and, especially in the light of the inspired speech-myth which Socrates goes on to present, shallow and mundane, displaying precisely the lack of insight into the souls of men which Socrates later calls the essential foundation for a genuine rhetoric. Phaedrus misses the irony, however. His def.
erence to Socrates portrays the same quality which has made Lysias financially rich but spiritually poor. Namely, he accommodates on every occasion, regardless of—for he is oblivious to—whether he thereby contradicts himself or not. Yet the discovery and exploration of contradiction is essential to dialectic and self-understanding. Phaedrus fails to move from the plane of a mundane, insubstantial rhetoric to the plane of a dialectical, philosophically self-conscious rhetoric. As for the Laws, see especially the interpretation by E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. 3 (*Plato and Aristotle*, Baton Rouge, 1957), ch. 6. There are many indications that Cleinias and Megillus lack the Athenian stranger’s philosophical depth. They are so deferential, however, that this estrangement appears as a distance not between themselves and the Athenian stranger but rather between what he himself grasps and what he can intelligibly express to them. The paramount hint of this distance is given in the exchange at 803a-804a. Note, also, that the education of those who are to sit on the nocturnal council is only briefly mentioned in the *Laws*, whereas in the Republic Socrates, confronted by interlocutors who distinguish between seeming and real persuasion and insist on the latter (see *Republic* 357a ff., 449a ff.), discusses the question of the education of the philosophical rulers at great length.


34There are, of course, countless examples of this. Socrates begins with flattering words even for such seeming dolts as Euthyphro, not to mention the great sophists and various notables of Athens like Agathon and Cephisus. Yet he characteristically has ‘one small question’ to ask, some point of curiosity or interest to him which, no doubt, will be easily resolved by the indisputable wisdom and kind help of the interlocutor. This is “that habitual irony of Socrates” which Thrasymachus denounces at *Republic* 337a. What of later dialogues, when Plato makes use of other protagonists? Is Socratic irony rejected or transformed? This will be a prime interest in our examination of the stranger’s posture towards Young Socrates in the Statesman.

35On this, in particular, of the Phaedo and the Republic, Simmias and Cebes, on the one hand, and Glaucon and Adeimantus, on the other, allow themselves to be provoked to raise fundamental questions with Socrates. See *Phaedo*, 94c ff.; *Republic* 357a ff., 449a ff. (with reference to 423e ff.).

36Thus, for example, it is widely thought that the Republic develops explicitly insights left implicit in the Euthyphro, Laches, and Charmides. Again, F. Cornford (*Plato’s Theory of Knowledge*, London, 1935) and K. Sayre (*Plato’s Analytic Method*, Chicago, 1969) both show, by distinct paths of analysis, how the Sophist responds to the sporia over knowledge and logos in the Theaetetus. The Parmenides is widely regarded as an exposition of difficulties implicit in earlier statements, especially in the Republic and the Phaedo, of the nature of the forms.

37But this is not to say that the single dialogue ends at a high point. See the discussion of structure which follows.

38The dramatic action of the Meno illustrates such “guidance.” If Meno fails to see how virtue is knowledge, this is because—as he shows by his failure to recognize Socrates as the supreme teacher of virtue—he does not understand reflective learning and self-knowledge. But Socrates does not simply abandon him. By leaving him with the opinion that virtue is itself divinely dispensd opinion, Socrates checks his naive self-sufficiency and potentially dangerous ambition. More often, the interlocutor resists such a parting gift—but this makes it all the more difficult for the hearer, “given” the express content of the dialogue, to do so.

39The structure of each dialogue have been done by Friedländer, op. cit., vols. 2 and 3, and Gundert, op. cit. But the most systematic work is by French, R.P. Festugière, *Contemplation et vie contemplative selon Platon* (Paris, 1936), works out an ideal dialectic pattern proceeding through five stages: (1) pre-empirical consciousness, (2) ascent to the univer-

40干 (3) grasp of “being in itself,” (4) descent to the indivisibility, objects, (5) clear and distinct synoptic vision. Goldschmidt, op. cit., identifies a basic four-step rhythm in all the dialogues (except for Timaeus, Laws, and Critias); he titles these steps (1) image, (2) definition, (3) essence, and (4) science, and notes how their forms develop in Plato’s movement from the early to the later dialogues. Of particular interest to us are Goldschmidt’s stress of the difference articulated in the *Seventh Letter* (434a ff.) between the recognition of the “essence” of something and the “scientific” account of it which presents, instead, its “quality,” pp. 6-11, and his notion of “the essential detour” as the form which moment (3) assumes in the later dialogues, pp. 156 ff. Schaer, op. cit., identifies a general pattern leading from (1) illusion through (2) the surfacing of ignorance as a contradiction and (3) the resolution of this by insight into a higher, mediating value which, (4) finally, serves as the basis for a (now) scientific return to the initial object. Whereas Festugière and Goldschmidt see especially from formal dialectical method, Schaer, at least in his (1)-(3), stresses the Socratic dimension of ignorance, self-measure, and philosophical meditation. The most perceptive analysis of the final moment, however, belongs to the as yet unpublished study, *Plato’s Philosophical Artwork: The Structure of the Platonic Dialogues*, by the American scholar Jonathan Ketchum. Ketchum gives a remarkable exposition of the irony of the “descent” or “return,” which he calls the “excess” of the insights presented at the dialogue’s midpoint. He sees that this “excess” must be oriented to the interlocutor’s insight (or lack of it) and that, therefore, it is systematically ambiguous, addressed to the interlocutor on its surface and to the philosophical auditor between the lines. As a precedent, he cites the third part of Parmenides’ poem, the Way of Opinion. (For a convergent interpretation of the latter which thereby sheds light on the corresponding final part of the dialogues, see A.P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, New Haven, 1970, ch. 9. In the absence of Ketchum’s book, one may consult his tape-recorded lectures on Plato, available from Oakstone Farm, Clarence Center, N.Y.)

41As a good counter to this, see K. Gaiser, *Protevnik und Parámeis bei Platon* (Stuttgart, 1959).

42See Sophist 230a ff., also Theaetetus 150a ff.

43As should be clear, this is an analysis of the structure, not merely the literary form, of the dialogue. It applies equally to monologues like the Apology and Menexenus as to a multiperson encounter like the Symposium or Gorgias. What is a continuous passage, from the standpoint of literary form, may divide into several distinct structural moments. Thus, to cite a relatively accessible example, consider how in the Crito the speech by “the laws,” initially an application of Socrates’ decisive argument regarding just agreements, descends to Crito’s initial and much more pragmatic frame of reference at 53a-end. Or, to cite a much more controversial example, consider how in the Parmenides, part two, hypotheses I and II deal with the nature of the form (fulfilling the function of “the philosopher’s suggestion” or “new light,” moment (ii) (b), while III ff. resume the earlier question of participation on the basis of I-11 (fulfilling the function of the “resumption,” moment (iii)). I will address the Parmenides as a whole in another, forthcoming study.)

44The Meno itself, however, contains the overly aporetic sort of resumption-section. See n. 34 above.

45For studies that, while ignoring the concrete dramatic interplay and so representing the “standard view,” nonetheless provide good preparation for reading the Statesman, see J.B. Skemp’s introductory essays in his edition of *Plato’s Statesman* (London, 1952).

CHAPTER I

"This is universally agreed, but there is a range of opinion over how closely, and to what end, Plato meant this linkage. See, e.g., Voegelin, op. cit., pp. 141-143; Friedländer, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 243 ff.; Ryle, op. cit., pp. 27 ff., 284-286, 295-299; Taylor, *Plato*, p. 374. It is not clear at just what point in (or right after) the legal process of the trial the lengthy conversations between the sophist and the statesman are supposed to occur; Taylor (*Plato, the Sophist* and the *Statesman*, p. 189) situates them "at some time between the formal accusation of the philosopher by Meletus and the closing of the preliminary proceedings before the Basileus."
But this unclarity is unimportant. It is only the comparison of the trial and the trilogy which Plato is concerned to provoke.

Here and elsewhere I use the expression, “the philosopher,” to indicate the accomplished philosopher, the man who has succeeded in undergoing the “conversion” (Republic 518d) of the psyche towards being or the forms.

In the actual motion of thinking portrayed in the dialogues, thought does not reach to the anhypothetical itself. Nonetheless, the complete motion Socrates describes is paradigmatic for the more limited motions in the dialogues. In the Euthyphro, for example, Socrates posits the just as the ground of the holy (the holy is part of the just). Though he does not move back to posit the good as the ground of the just, this is nonetheless sufficient within the context of the discussion in the Euthyphro. Generally, sufficiency governs the method of hypothesis (see Phaedo 101c–d); it is closely related to the criterion of “appropriateness” which the stranger introduces explicitly at 283b ff.

Consider Parmenides 135c and the hypotheses. Even when Parmenides, in the hypotheses, refers to physical-sensible things (as in hypotheses III–IV and V–VII and, more controversially, in the course of II), he speaks in terms of their eidetic structures. This reference to things through their forms reverses the prephilosophical reference to forms through things—that is, the recourse to sensible analogies and similarities that Socrates practices in order to communicate with, e.g., Glaucon and Adimantus.

The respect due Theodorus for his accomplishments in mathematics ought not keep us from wondering if Plato means to connect him with sophistry. As a migrant who attracts “a large crowd” (Theaetetus 143d), he has the external aspect. That he cannot remember the name of Theaetetus’ father is ambiguous in meaning: is he unconcerned with wealth and nobility, and so unsophistic (see Sophist 223b), or is he rootless and unconcerned with the integrity of family and polis? Likewise, his appreciation of Theaetetus’ intellectual capacities is highly rhetorical (‘...his approach to learning and inquiry, with the perfect quietness of its smooth and sure progress, is like the noiseless flow of a stream of oil,’ 144b). S. Rosen discusses these issues in his unpublished lecture, “Socrates as Midwife.”


It is striking, in this regard, that Theaetetus and Young Socrates apparently worked out their general account of irrational numbers independently of Theodorus. Though he did the mathematical operations necessary to produce “all the separate cases up to the root of seventeen square feet” (Theaetetus 147d), he did not share the specifically philosophical work of grasping the essence of these cases. This, at least, is the implication Theaetetus gives by the way he ceases to refer to Theodorus at 147d–e.

Plato stresses the need for the formation of character as a precondition for higher or specifically intellectual education. As head of the Academy, therefore, he must have encountered the same dilemma repeatedly: how was he to proceed with young men who, technically prepared for higher studies and eager to begin, nonetheless had not been given the prerequisite training in temperament? Rabbow, op. cit., p. 101, raises this question; while he finds no direct testimony in the dialogues, he gathers and interprets a number of passages which seem to refer to various techniques of “self-disciplining through methodical behaviour” (p. 103) which might have been practiced in the Academy. See pp. 99–106, 232. It seems more than possible that Plato alludes to this educational dilemma through the persona “Young Socrates.” If so, this should weigh to our view (to be discussed later) that the practice of bifurcatory diairesis, while explicitly an intellectual method of inquiry, also functions as a technique of “self-disciplining” and character formation. Rabbow himself, however, does not pursue such a possibility; his basic thesis (see Introduction, n. 1) leads him to look for separate techniques of nonintellectual training.


I am guided here by Comford’s translation, op. cit.

3Seekamp, op. cit., 21, writes, “the world sees his [i.e. the philosopher’s] statesmanship but cannot discern his philosophy.” Note, however, that a similar ambiguity affects the statesman: he takes on the “shape” or appearance, to the nonphilosopher, of the partisan politician, but really, insofar as he is a “true” statesman, he transcends this appearance. Just as here Socrates distinguishes the philosopher from sophist and statesman, so, later on, the stranger will distinguish the true statesman from factional politicians. (See Statesman 291a–303d, discussed in ch. IV below.)


5This is worked out by Dés, ibid., and reiterated in Comford, ibid., and Skenk, ibid.

6Again, I am guided by Comford’s translation, op. cit.

In making Zeno characterize his anti-pluralist treatment as a work of his contentious youth (Parmenides 128d–e), Plato both acknowledges this tradition and suggests that it misrepresents Parmenides and the older Zeno.

This is the translation of R. Lattimore, The Odyssey of Homer (New York, 1967), with line 486 modified to conform to Comford’s translation of its appearance at Sophist 216c. (See p. 8 above and n. 11.)

8Zeus is patron god both of wandering strangers and of kings.

9See the Epilogue, especially pp. 117 ff.


11This is explicated in my essay “Parmenides and the Disclosure of Being,” Apetron 13 (1979), 12–35.

12On the irony of the Way of Opinion, see Mourelatos, ibid.

CHAPTER II

Here is the first and clearest case of the structural analogy of whole and part (recall Introduction, p. xxx. The initial diairesis passes through (i) an elicitive process (258b–261c), (ii) a digressive interruption composed of (a) refutation (261e–263b) and (b) correction (253c–264b), and (iii) a restoration of diairesis on the basis of the digression (264b–267c). The specifically elicitive character of 258b–261c and the ambiguity of the restoration will become clear as we proceed.

In the Sophist and the Statesman the terms genos (“kind, class”) and, given the reservation expressed at Statesman 263b, narios and morion (“part”) appear to be used interchangeably with eidos and idea to refer to the forms. This flux of language is initially surprising, especially given the distinctive sense that Plato has earlier established for eidos (and for the convergent, though not identical, idea). K. von Fritz (Philo sophie und sprachlicher Ausdruck bei Demokrit, Plato, and Aristoteles, Darmstadt, 1963) explains that Plato, rather than taking eidos in its current sense of a “class” or a “character,” chose to revitalize on the level of noetic the meaning which the word had possessed for Homer on the level of immediate experience: ... das, was gerade in der ursprünglichen Bedeutung von eidos und idea enthalten ist, die Bezeichnung des Auf-einmal-sehens oder Auf-einmal-gegebenseins des ganzen Gegenstandes in der Fülle seiner sichtbaren Eigenschaften[,] ... dies bleibt auf dem neuen Gebiet [i.e. the ‘realm of the noetic’] völlig erhalten, ja es erfährt in gewisser Weise noch eine Steigerung” (p. 52). There are at least two obvious reasons why Plato’s use of terms does not preserve a sharp distinction between this special sense and the more current sense that Sophist and the Statesman. First, bifurcatory diairesis is dioecetic rather than noetic, discursive rather than purely intuitive work. (Ibid., p. 50) As a series of distinctions, it reveals the sought-for eidos in terms of the connections between kinds or, again, in terms of the part-
whole relations between classes. Thus the current sense is a better reflection of the special Platonic one of that as which the eidos is brought to light by diatessaron. Secondly, even in the several passages where it is the term that dominates (both triggered by and displacing diatessaron), the terminological accompaniment of it would be un Platonic. The hearer of the diatessaron is asked to enter into its insights, and the external apparatus of technical vocabulary would hinder more than help. For both these points, see the discussions below of 264b-267c and of 287b ff.

3See Parmenides 135c.
4For this distinction, see H. Meintardt, Teilke bei Platon (Freiburg, 1968), ch. 9.
5By "properties" I mean those other characters which each form, by virtue of being the specific form or nature which it is, essentially implies. In his analysis of the exemplary definition of sophistry in the Sophist, Sayre (op. cit., p. 176) characterizes these as the properties "necessary" and "sufficient" for being a sophist.
6The stranger at several points (282b, 285b) pairs division with collection. Nonetheless, the practice of the Statesman contrasts sharply with that of the Sophist in its near-exclusive stress on division. As Sayre (op. cit., pp. 147–148, 154–156, 176–178) shows, the first five divisions in the Sophist constitute a collection, gathering various sorts of sophistry under the common heading of "productive" art. But in the Statesman the stranger begins by simply posting episteme as the common heading. The assimilation of political leader, king, slavemaker, master of the household, and the private citizen who has knowledge, at 288e–298c, "collects" various sorts of "statesman," but this differs from the corresponding passage in the Sophist in that by this point the common character (or "necessary condition," as Sayre says) is already established.
7See ch. ii, n. 20.
8The "Theoretical" translates gnômata (258e). As the next cut makes clear by distinguishing "critical" and "directive parts" in 260b, it is "theoretical" science, while not itself doing practical work, may nonetheless be directly concerned with it.
9On the "standard view" (recall especially Jaffer and Stenzel as cited in the Introduction, n.9 and 17), this would be another sign of Plato's shift from the negative elec tive of Socrates to a more positive exposition of doctrine. Sayre, op. cit., pp. 152–154, sharpens this point about Socrates' resemblance to the "sophist of noble lineage" (Sophist 231b) defined by the sixth division of distinctions and by contrasting the negative and unmechanical character of that sophist with the positive "new method" presented by the stranger. But he also undermines this interpretation both by noting Socrates' own espousal of diatresis at Phaedrus 265b ff. (and see his more emphatic remarks at Philebus 16b ff.) and by showing the inner convergence of diatresis with Socrates' positive method of hypothesis. (On the latter point, see ibid., ch. IV; also Gundert, op. cit., pp. 157–159.) The silence of Socrates and apparent case of agreement in the Statesman need to be examined more closely.
10Skemp, op. cit., translates: "It is always safer..." I cannot find this in the Greek. It is crucial not to make the stranger sound more absolute than he really is. For bifurcation to be "always safer" would imply that one can always "hit upon forms (ideai)" that way; but both the humor surrounding the two paths in 2640–267c (see pp. 30–32) and the change in form at 287b ff. (see pp. 74–82) suggest this is not so.
11Skemp, op. cit., p. 132, n. 1.
12The stranger does not raise the question of the difference between mathematical numbers and forms of these.
13Young Socrates asks about "part" and "kind" (genos), but the stranger responds by distinguishing "parts" and "class" (eidos). For this translation of eidos, see ch. II, n. 7. This is an example of the apparent interchangeability of the terms genos and eidos in our dialogue.
14I say "quasi"-mathematical because the stranger's practice shows that the notion of a half is governed by that of contrariety. The pedagogical value of presenting this in mathematical terms, as well as our view of "Young Socrates" as a general mimetic representation of the young Academicians, makes A.C. Lloyd's reconstruction of a geometrical model for diatresis, presumably presented in the Academy, all the more interesting. See his Plato's Description of Division," reprinted in R.E. Allen (ed.), Studies in Plato's Metaphysics (London, 1965).
15On the ordering and structuring of this experience as rigorous "practice," see pp. 69 ff. below.
16"Violence" and "injury" translate the general sense of blaspheioi, "to harm."
17In the exchange with Polemarcho in Book I, Socrates is baiting Thrasymuchus, much as he does Polus and then Callicles in the Gorgias. His denial that the just man will "injure" even his enemies seems absurd to the "realistic"—or at least, "realpolitik"—Thrasymachus and so provokes him to enter the dialogue. But even while this is his purpose, Socrates means what he says; the just man will have only the unjust for his enemy, and his refusal to "injure" this way would not prevent him from curative violence, acts of force which—through the unjust man might not initially recognize or accept this—chasten and improve. See Statesman 293d ff., 295b ff. For provocative discussion of these passages, their possible irony, and the issues they raise, see A. Bloom's "Interpretive Essay," published with his translation, The Republic of Plato (New York, 1968), and L. Strauss, The City and Man (Chicago, 1963). Cf. S. Rosen, "Plato's Myth of the Reversed Cosmos," Review of Metaphysics 23, 1: 59–85.
18See 306a ff., and pp. 106 ff. below; also 291a–b, with pp. 86 ff., and 303e ff., with pp. 103 ff.
19My italics.
20See, e.g., Republic 590a.
22The same caution should keep us from treating Socrates' statements about diatresis in the Phaedrus and Philebus as direct answers. These statements—made, once again, to not- or not-yet-philosophical young men—must be interpreted in context.
23See ch. II, n. 2.
24For a full range of evaluations of the method, see Stenzel, op. cit.; Crennias, Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy, vol. I (Baltimore, 1944), ch. I, and The Riddle of the Early Academy (New York, 1962), Lecture II, Ryle, op. cit., esp. pp. 135–141; J. Ackrill, "In Defense of Platonic Division." in Ryle: A Collection of Critical Essays (Garden City, N.Y., 1970); and Sayre, op. cit., esp. ch. IV. My own interpretation attempts to reconcile Plato's protagonists' frequent high praise for bifurcation (generally downplayed by e.g., Crennias and Ryle and stressed by Ackrill) with the indications of its limitations which are given in the actual practice of it (which, as Ackrill acknowledges, op. cit., p. 373, he does not examine) in, in particular, the Statesman. What all of these interpreters (with the partial exception of Sayre who, nonetheless, never considers mimetic irony in his discussions of the Theaetetus and the Sophist) share is the failure to examine this tension between praise and practice in light of the dramatic action and pedagogical function of the dialogues.
26Skemp, op. cit., unfortunately translates kallos as "more clearly." This tends to conceal the stranger's implicit reference back to kallos in 262b2. See p. 32.
27Recall Sophist 272a–c.
28Conversely, in a cut in the longer way the stranger uses a privative term to express a positive sense. When, in distinguishing "horrorgiving" and "horrible" (akronos), he says, "See (hori) the division," and characterizes it as "in nature" (phusis), he is asserting that being flat or smooth-headed is an empirically evident, intrinsic feature of some animals. (See 265b.) This is the "winged" "fowl" cut are thus complementary cases of the misleading force of names. As for the following cut of "interbreeding"/"noninterbreeding," here the stranger uses two pairs of positive terms, schistos/meniscos ("cloven-hoofed"/"whole-hoofed") and koinos/idiomaios ("interbreeding"/"breeding with one's own") before introducing the privative term amipes ("not mixing"). Aristotle, of course, objects both to the use of privatives and to bifurcational division itself in Parts of Animals Book I, chs. 2, 3. On the substance and, apparently, misunderstandings in play in his criticism of Platonic diatresis, see both works of Chernias cited in ch. II, n. 24.
29R. Brumbaugh, Plato's Mathematical Imagination (Bloomington, 1968), p. 257, writes
that this joke... is really a joke. Its humor lies in the unnecessary injection of higher mathematics into a biological discussion to accomplish a simple differentiation of the species. K. Gaiser, *Platonis ungeschriebene Lehre* (Stuttgart, 1963), pp. 125 ff., sees the joke as a fleeting revelation of the exoteric mathematical version of daisies, and makes an interesting attempt at reconstruction. Directly opposed, neither interpretation considers the ironic depth of the comic speech: the joke is either merely a joke, or it is obliquely expressed dogma.

20Skemp, *op. cit.*, p. 139, n. 1, gives the best mathematical exposition of the joke.

21See *Theatetos* 147d ff.

22Plato has exploited this contrast of pig and man already once before, at *Theatetos* 161c.

23Consider the criticism of *episteme* as revealing the 'particular quality' rather than the 'being' (or) 'what' (or) its objects, made in the *Seventh Letter* 352e, 353b-c. See pp. 80 ff. below.

24Gundert, *op. cit.*, p. 148 and, with less certainty, Skemp, *op. cit.*, p. 140, n. 2 point out the reference to Eumeuseas here. The parallel is intriguing for the king Odysseus, when he was 'matched' together with Eumeuseas as 'like to like' (Odyssey XVII, 218), was in disguise—just as here, revealed as 'shepherd of men,' he is still concealed. Cf. Benardete, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-226.

25Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 275c, in the context of the myth, and the final portrait of the statesman at 305e-311c, as discussed on pp. 106 ff.

26See ch. II, no. 2.

27Thus the final distinctions give us a striking instance of what Friedrich Schlegel (quoted in Friedländer, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 145-146) calls "double irony": "two lines of irony running parallel, without disturbing one another, one for the pit, the other for the stalls." The irony of (i) is the way the completion of the definition really is a reflection and test of Young Socrates, the irony of (ii) is the way the reflection and test, apparently justifying bifurcation, really calls it in question.

28There is a nice touch of Platonic irony here. To pay off a debt is to give back to the lender the principal which was originally his own, together with the interest which the borrower had produced. The notion of the statesman as herdsman is thus Young Socrates' own, while the methodological digression is of the stranger's, not Young Socrates', making.

CHAPTER III

1See, e.g., *Republic* 454a.

2In this regard Plato is the culmination of the speculative movement begun by Hesiod. See my "La logique implicite de la cosmogonie d'Hésiode," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 82 (1977), pp. 433-456.

3"Compactness" refers to the undifferentiated unity of symbol and symbolized which characterizes mythopoetic understanding. The term is Voegelin's (in *Order and History*, vol. 2, *The World of the Polis*, pp. 126 ff.) This "compactness" is shattered by "speculation" which, in turn, has its originating impulse in the experience of the transcendency of the source of the world's order and meaning.


5"Plato reads: *Theos ennai autous autous epitasion... Theos* may mean 'a god' and refer to the *daimon*, one out of many, appointed by the supreme god to preside over the species man. But we might also link *theos* with *autous* and take the line to mean that 'god himself'—that is, the supreme god—'was shepherd and supervisor to men.' The first way of reading the line would seem to overlook the difference between god (theos) and demi-god (daimon), but the stranger does so himself, to a degree, when he calls the demi-gods *theos* (*god") and the supreme god *tois megisti daimoni* ("the greatest *daimon*") at 272e7-8. Perhaps this is meant to caution us against a scholastic approach to the theology in the myth. In fact, the key distinction is not that between god and demi-god, *theos* and *daimon*, but, rather, that between the god as such and the shepherd-form he assumes in the age of Cronus. This is the difference between the god seen *theo-logically*, as in 269b-270b, and the god seen *mythically*, as in 270b-270e. See pp. 51-53.

6*Cf. Gaiser, op. cit.*, pp. 205-211. He stresses the internal or self-opposition of the cosmos in the age of Zeus and rightly contrasts it with the uniformity or non-opposition which characterizes the cosmos in the age of Cronus. This interpretation surpasses the more simplistic view which, contrasting the ages as times of order and disorder, overlooks the internal tension between order and disorder within the age of Zeus itself.

7*Cf. Voegelin, op. cit.*, pp. 76-83.


10Andrewes writes that Agamemnon's "position... shows traces of a kingship by the grace of god..." *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

11B. Gatz, *Weltalter, goldene Zeit, und sinnverwandte Vorstellungen* (Hildesheim, 1967), esp. pp. 28-33. Cf. Voegelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-154, who argues that the five races divide into two series, gold-silver-bronze and heroic-iron, the first three making up an "anthropology paralleling the theogony, while with the fourth and fifth races we enter the realm of man proper..." (p. 148).

12Thus we have a double-series of decline:

```
rule of Cronus      /      rule of Zeus

golden             /      (mythical time)

silver             /      bronze

(actual-historical time)    /      heroic    iron
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The double-series stimulates the hearer to compare. (Hesiod makes similar use of repetition in paring the crimes of Cronus against Heaven and of Zeus against Cronus in *Theogony.*) Both similarity—the decline through war to self-destructive violence—and difference—the distinctive justice and virtue of the heroic race—emerge.

13This and the following passage are quoted from H.G. Evelyn-White's translation in *Hesiod* (London, 1936).


15Especially because as parasinesis the whole passage is designed to motivate its hearers, it is worth remembering that it is specifically addressed to the decadent Perses. Hesiod makes the noble attractive by linking it with the pleasant and profitable. It is an odd turn of events when, much later, another master of pedagogical irony subjects this linkage to criticism—see *Republie* 363a-b, 612b (but also 468e).

16On the question and significance of the question of the authenticity of the last line, 169, see Gatz, *op. cit.*, p. 46.


3This is whether the myth is actually Protagoras’ original creation or a Platonic reformulation which departs from Protagoras. See M. Untersteiner, The Sophists (London, 1957), p. 72, n. 24, and W.K.C. Guthrie, The Sophists (Cambridge, 1971), p. 64, n. 1. Friedländer (op. cit., pp. 175–176, esp. n. 7, which is acutely disputed by G. Vlastos in his introductory essay to Plato, Protagoras (New York, 1956), p. ix, n. 11) warns against treating the myth as “wholly un-Platonic.” Rather than seeing the myth as Platonic and, so, significantly un-Protagorean, I see Protagoras’ own teachings as largely incorporated in, and transformed by the new metaphysical context given them by, Plato’s teachings.

4Cf. L. Versenyi, Socratic Humanism (New Haven, 1963), p. 23. This compares superficially with Plato’s use of mythos for logos. But for Protagoras the images are almost entirely rhetorical; he does not explore them for their deeper, implicitly philosophical meaning. Thus, in comparison with Plato, both the irony of his mythos and the content of his logos lacks depth and significance.

5The Theaetetus will explore Protagoras’ homo mensura as an epistemological thesis. By its recollection of Protagoras’ myth (see pp. 49–50), the Statesman returns to the anthropological context (but encapsulates it within a theological and metaphysical frame of reference) of the Protagoras.

6Is Gorgias a sophist? Jaeger, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 293, rightly undercuts the technical distinction between Gorgias as rētor and the sophists.

7Plato is careful to show Gorgias’ rejection of the abuse of rhetoric (Gorgias 456c ff.) and Protagoras’ conservative posture on law and order (Protagoras 322d–326d–e). But he also brings out the quite unconvincing implications of their teachings, which they themselves did not see, by showing Gorgias’ students and by developing Protagoras’ doctrine in the Theaetetus.


9This is Bloom’s translation, op. cit.

10This is W.C. Helmbold’s translation in Plato, Gorgias (New York, 1952).


12Andrewes, op. cit., p. 48.

13Eubner, op. cit., p. 46, writes that “the kingship of primitive times had always stayed in Greek memory through the myths of the heroic age; at the same time, from the beginning of the fourth century B.C., a new age of monarchy began, and with it a new type of tyrant made its appearance, the military usurper and dictator, whose rule transgressed the bounds of the Polis…”

14This is W. Miller’s translation, in Xenophon, Cyropaedia (New York, 1914).


16See To Philip 14–15, 127.


18Note, however, the Letter’s stress on abstaining from violence and supporting the rule of law. Does the author feel compelled to clear up a contrary implication of his teaching? See, e.g., 331c–d, 334c–d, also 336a–337b, 352a–c.

19E. Havelock, The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics (New Haven, 1957), ch. II, marshals much of the evidence for this connection, but his stress on the notion of history as “regressively obscures the critical dynamic in both myths.”


21Most of these are collected by Friedländer, op. cit., p. 369, n. 9.

22Theaetetus 162c.

23Cf. Baldry, op. cit., p. 60: “Elsewhere in Greek literature dreams of a happier existence were a refuge from present ills, but in Old Comedy they were a means of satire on the present rather than an escape from it.”

24Technē and epistēmē are used interchangeably of statesmanship in the dialogue.

25This is a minor case of “double irony” (recall ch. II, n. 37). Apparently, the stranger implies, their whole mistake lies in not having been cautious about the name agalēiocēphale (“hard-nurturer”), for its first part, agalē (“hard”), implicitly brought with it the notion of the statesman as ἀρχαῖος. But recall the passage itself, 261e. The stranger was quite cautious, giving Young Socrates his choice between agalēiocēphale and koinīocēphale (“collective nurturer”). Young Socrates failed to see the danger in the first and was indifferent, turning the choice back to the stranger. At that point the stranger praised him for “avoiding contention over names.” Now there is the irony that this was a fatal oversight by Young Socrates. Or do we? Had Young Socrates been “contentious,” he still would not have avoided the notion of the herdsman: both names contain -ocephale (“nurturer”). As the stranger’s distinction between “nurturer” and “care” reveals, it is this concept of “nurturer” that is really at fault in introducing the notion of the herdsman. Young Socrates was not only above contention over names; he was not critical about concepts.

26The multiply stressed notion of wholeness—sum-paste koinīocēphale—should not be overlooked. The stranger already indicates what he will spell out later, the sense in which the statesman reintegrates the disintegrated “Zeusian” community.

27Thus, although Sirens’ rejection of it (op. cit., pp. 52, 54 ff.) is well-taken, G.M.A. Grube’s interpretation of the myth as Plato’s abandonment of the philosopher-king (Plato’s Thought, Boston, 1958) is partly right. Plato undertakes a certain understanding of the philosopher-king.

28E.g., 262b2, 275d1, 283b1, 285a5, 286c6.

29This recourse to cultural terms and tone, reflecting the higher standpoint, or genuinely philosophical perspective, from which the Platonic protagonist now speaks, is a characteristic structural sign in the dialogues. Having made his basic refutation—in this case, the rejection of both the shepherding-image and its anthropocentric frame of reference—the stranger now offers his own suggestion or, as we called it in the Introduction, “new light.” (Recall p. xxx ff.) The mantic tone and terms precisely reflect the strangeness, to the nonphilosophical interlocutor, of the philosopher’s “new light”; and since it is so strange that, paradoxically, the interlocutor may miss it altogether, the new tone and terms also indirectly announce the higher standpoint and its very strangeness. For other cases where the philosophical protagonist signals the saving introduction of his own standpoint by mantic allusions, see Lysis 216c ff. (Socrates breaks through the communal aporia with a mantic insight, apomantēmenon); Meno 81a ff. (Socrates appeals to “priests and priestesses,” “wise in religious matters,” to dissolve Meno’s paradox): Symposium 201c ff. (having undercut all the speeches by showing that Eros is not a god, Socrates appeals to the inspired teachings of the mantic priestess Diotima); Phaedrus 242b ff. (having put Lysias’ speech in check by his own, Socrates, experiencing his “divine sign” and confessing himself a “mantic,” goes on to give his inspired story-myth). See also Chariote 50a, in light of 54d; Ion 533c ff.; and Charmides 167a ff. (noting, as due to the irony, mantēmenon, 169b).


31For a focal study of Plato’s uses of paradigm, see V. Goldschmidt, Le paradigme dans la dialectique platonicienne (Paris, 1947).

32Sophia 253a, also note the preparatory Theaetetus 207d ff.

33Gunderson, op. cit., p. 153. For the stranger merely the intermediate reached in the search for the statesman, but, oddly, he never considers its educative function for Young Socrates or more importantly the hearers who, seeing Young Socrates’ failure to recognize himself and the situation, are challenged to overcome this failure for themselves. Recall Introduction, n. 10.
show, the stranger must have the statesman and perhaps the philosopher in mind as well. See Goldschmidt, op. cit., p. 56, n. 16.

Thus the educational process involves a series of turns, from the primacy of sense perception to the primacy of logically disciplined discursive thinking to—as the stranger earlier intimated in 264b—257c and will reiterate indirectly at 287b ff.—the primacy of the informal truths.

In an important sense they are circular. If perceptual subject matter makes it easier to learn to think in terms of real kinds, this latter thinking has as its ultimate aim the awakening of intuition of the forms. Yet this intuition is nascently present, as an intimated potentiality, from the beginning, so that the whole educational process is really an effort to recover or reappropriate what is already one’s own. This becomes clear if we ask how the sense perceptions which guide the philosophical novel are themselves first constituted. From the Platonic perspective, the forms are already in play, although they are not present as such, in their own distinctive character as forms, to the novice’s untutored reflection.

Thus he speaks just like Theodorus! See 257b8–c1.

Ryle, op. cit., pp. 26–27, makes the interesting suggestion that 286b–287a is a later insertion, “partial apology, partial reproof to a real lay audience which had vocally expressed its understandable discontent with the difficult stretch about Non-Being in the Sophist and with the wearisome and seemingly pointless stretches in the Politics about Weaving and the backward rotating Cosmos.” I suggest instead that they are advance warnings to the young—still, surely, very much of a “lay” temperament—about “understandable” but potentially fatal motivational difficulties they will feel in the future. See the Epilogue, (ii).

CHAPTER IV

It is important to stress this. There is a tendency to downplay the importance of dividing into two. See, e.g., Ackrill, op. cit., pp. 383–384, who cites Statesman 287c and Phaedrus 16c–d as indications that two is only the best case of the prior principle of dividing into the minimal number of forms, and who cites Phaedrus 265e as evidence that this formal principle is subordinate to the substantive principle of tracing the intrinsic or “natural” structure of the subject matter. These points are correct but one-sided, for they fail to explain why the stranger holds so consistently to bifurcation in the Sophist and in the Statesman up to 287b ff. Ackrill appears to miss the specific pedagogical value of a rule-governed method for the one who is only being introduced, for the first time, to “natural”—i.e. eidetic—structure. This value becomes evident only if the interpreter takes the dramatic interplay of the dialogue seriously. Young Socrates, the representative mathematician-Académien, shows that he needs the guidance of the quasi-mathematical, more properly logical principle of contrariety, in order to first come to eidetic structures. If the stranger made Ackrill’s two points to him, he would lapse back to thoughtless opinion, as at 262a.

Thus, to bifurcate would be to fail to “cut at the natural joints” (diatomein kat хрανιον), Phaedrus 265e. As Goldschmidt shows (see n. 4 below), however, this is not the problem.

This is R. Hackforth’s translation, in Plato, Collected Dialogues (Princeton, 1961).

Goldschmidt’s groupings (presented at op. cit., pp. 270–271) omit the impostors, the factional politicians, presumably because, as lacking art, they do not belong to the arts, as such, which are concerned for their polis. On the strength of his analysis, Goldschmidt insists that “La méthode philosophique de division... est toujours bipartite” and that it is an error to see in the diaireis of the arts “l’écoulement de la méthode de division” (pp. 266–267).

Sacrifice and divination are characteristically connected in primitive religions. The sacrificial feast would be opened up and various of the organs inspected in order to discover the deity’s state of mind; this was possible because the deity was thought to identify itself with

2Recall pp. 31-32 and ch. II, n. 2.

3When, to take the chief example, Aristotle decides against the treatment of being as a *genos* and presents instead his analogical ordering of the senses of being, he seems to make the same general change in the form of his distinctions as the stranger. The stranger’s diacritical of the arts is one of several Platonic passages (Diotima’s ranking of the beauties in the Symposium is another) which appear to lay the groundwork for Aristotle’s notion of *pros hen* analogy.

4Each of the first three interlocutors presumes that the manifestation of Eros which he knows, and the context of this manifestation as well, is ultimate. For Phaedrus this is the great passion of individuals, revealed especially by the tragic tradition; for Panasinius, this is the higher love present in virtuous generosity, revealed by discriminating law; and for Eryximachus, this is the harmony of opposites, revealed by medicine and the other arts and sciences. But Diotima reveals that each of these forms and contexts marks but a stage in the ascent—that is, the heightening transformation of Eros—towards that Beauty which transcends them all. In this sense, each sort of Eros, implying its correlative sort of beauty, is fulfilled only in being transformed into a new and more universal sort.

5See *Republic* 502e and 504a 6ff. (with 435d-45). (Also Epilogue, n. 6 below.)

6If my interpretation of the stranger’s use and criticism of bifurcation is correct, then the Statesman provides internal, or substantive, evidence that the digression (Seventh Letter 342a-344b) was written either by Plato or by a genuine and insightful Platonist.

7M. Schröder argues to this effect in a very interesting dissertation, *Zum Aufbau des platonischen Politiros* (Cena, 1935).

8Indeed, the stranger appears to encourage Young Socrates to believe this when he says, at 287c4–5, “It is necessary always to divide into the minimal number (είς τον εγγενηθέν τον αριθμόν).” Lloyd, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–230, offers an interesting interpretation of the mathematico-scientific sense of *εγγενής*. But Goldschmidt’s analysis (see my schema, p. 75) shows that the stranger does not make the “minimal”-divisions in the context of Lloyd’s interpretation, the “nearest”—divisions. The encouragement is dissembling.

9The stranger makes the sequence—and so, too, the subsequent change in sequence—stand out by literally counting out the kinds, after the first two are distinguished, as “third” (288a3), “fourth” (b1), “fifth” (c1), “sixth” (d5), “seventh” (289a1).

10Moreover, as Bernadete, *op. cit.*, pp. 213 ff. points out, in several cases the stranger’s terms are the same as those by which Timaeus names parts of the human body in the Timaeus. In particular, the head is a “soul” (*nous*); the body, a “carriage” (*oichos*); and the flesh and skin, a “garment” (*exomia*). The immediate implication is that the seven arts express physical capacities of man.

11Cf. Skemp, *op. cit.*, p. 184, n. 1. The stranger’s placement of the slave both differs from and yet, surely, anticipates and perhaps even provokes Aristotle’s classification of the slave as a “living instrument” (*Politika* 1253b28).

12On the social importance of the religious functionaries, see Ehrenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–77.


14Compare the stranger’s figures with Socrates’ chimerical beast, *Republic* 588b ff., as images for the functions and states of the psyche.


16Bacher, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–174, gives a brief history of prePlatonic efforts at political typology. Skemp, *op. cit.*, p. 192, n. 1, cites Diogenes Laertius’ report of Aristotle’s assertion that the division of polity into five types belonged to the thought of the Academy. If that was so, then Plato, through the stranger, would be criticizing the nonphilosophical character of some political thought in Academy. On this possibility, see the Epilogue, (ii).

17The stranger establishes this in the first four distinctions, before he introduces the subversive notion of “nurture” and the herdsman.

18See the Appendix for the full structural outline.


20Note the stranger’s response, in which he indirectly reveals his purpose of eliciting Young Socrates’ real sympathies: “It was just going to cross-examine whether you accept all that was said, or whether any of it troubles (δισχωρειναι) you.”


22This is Skemp’s way, *op. cit.*, of expressing the full connotation of *homonymous*.

23See Ehrenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–74.

24By using the infinitive, the stranger leaves the subject conspicuously unexpressed.

25Compare this with the earlier phrasing at 298c1, where the assembly of the many prohibits “any of this to rule autonomously.” In the “charge” against the inquirer, “[w]e appear to confute rule by art with rule by a person. Since the many do not grasp the doctor/sailor/statesman’s *episteme*, but see only the man, they immediately mistake his inquiry into the laws for an attempt at personal power.

26Recall 284e and ch. III, n. 55 above.

27I follow Skemp, *op. cit.*, in translating kata dunainin as “according to one’s own lights.”

28Critio too is a good and open friend who is not philosophical; and once again Socrates’ trial sets the existential context for conversation. On the other hand, Critio is old, and there is little hope for his future education, in contrast with Young Socrates and the hopes which Socrates and the stranger have for him. To put it oversimplistically, Socrates’ irony in the Critio is therapeutic, while the stranger’s in the Statesman is pedagogical. For the best exposure of the irony of the Critio, see Hyland, *op. cit.*

29This presupposes, however, that the laws are not subverted to the status of instruments of factional power. See Maguire, *op. cit.*, p. 137. On Plato’s complex position on democracy, see R. Maurer, *Platoa Staat und die Demokratie* (Berlin, 1970).

30In fact, domestic and foreign aspects of policy converged, even to the point of non-distinction, on just the question of whether to pursue a military or diplomatic course. See Epilogue, n. 7.

31Thus the stranger completes that image of the polis as a psychosomatic individual which his earlier terms (see n. 14 above) suggested.

32Note the articulative demonstratives *tote* (308b10) and *toionde* (309b7).

33See, e.g. Laches 190e ff., 192b ff., Protagoras 329e ff., 359b ff.

34See, e.g., Charmides 159b ff., 160e ff., Phaeo 68e ff.

35See, e.g., Meno 76b ff., Protagoras 360d ff., also Charmides 164b ff. (where Critias’ proposal, 164d-f, is pointedly elicited by Socrates).

36See *Republic* 410c ff. (also 441e ff.) and 503c–d. As Krämer, *op. cit.*, p. 90, n. 112, points out, there is a distinction in the depths of the integration to which these two passages refer. The balance necessary for the good citizen, enabled by the proper education in music and gymnastics, is only a prerequisite for the higher balance, largely a gift of nature and only disclosed by philosophical education, necessary “for the most precise guardians.” Socrates himself indicates the difference in levels at 503a–b, 504a–e (cited above in n.9, also Epilogue, n. 8). But it would be wrong to forget that these are different levels, or depths, in the same basic integration. Were it not for this basic identity, it would be impossible for the stranger in the Statesman to apply Socrates’ language at *Republic* 503c–d to *all the citizens*, not just the few who are (potential) philosophers. To be sure, this application has a certain vacueness: it is unclear from the surface of the stranger’s doctrine whether he distinguishes the political (or civic) and philosophical (or intellectual) levels of integration as Socrates does. But this ambiguity has a positive function, permitting Plato to speak on both levels, addressing both the “many” and the young Academicians, at once. See the Epilogue.

37See *Republic* 413c ff.
4See Republic 410a. Skemp, op. cit., p. 228, n. 1, is right to call attention to the Christian conception of human nature which, intervening between ourselves and Plato, makes these passages seem more surprising than they should be. But there are other issues to be raised first, before we take the passages at face value. How do we square the harshness of these express doctrines with the fundamental humaneness of Socrates' pedagogical practice? How does this contrast compare with that between, e.g., the stranger's emphatic acceptance of the true statesman's surgical violence (293d, 296c ff.) and Plato's apparent renunciation of violence in his own actual political practice (see the Seventh Letter, as cited in the Epilogue, n. 14)? It might well be that the harshness of the doctrine reflects its basic function as (in the case of 293d, 296c ff.) elicitative or (in the present case) perfunctory for Young Socrates.

4Cf. Socrates' eugenic doctrine in Republic 458d ff.

4Skemp, op. cit., p. 228, writes that "...es besteht gar kein Grund, die dritteltige Psychologie des 'Staats' hier vorauszusetzen." On the contrary, its implicit presence (together with the associated account of the unity of virtue) in the stranger's images of lions, centaurs, and satyrs (291a ff.) give good reason to be on the alert for it. And once alert, the correlation of the various bonds with the three parts of the soul is striking.

4With this notion of "like-mindedness," the stranger appears to strike a Pythagorean note. For a discussion, see C.J. de Vogel, Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism (Asen, 1966), pp. 150-159.

4My term "things" is meant to bring out the force of the stranger's plurals. Socrates expresses this distinction between forms and things in the Republic by contrasting them as one and many. See 476a, d, 484b, especially 507b.

4This distinction between the objects of "true opinion" and the forms is asserted at Timaeus 51d ff.

4Cf. Meno 97a ff.

4Souslee, op. cit., p. 90, expresses this by describing the inculcated "true opinion" as "l'oeuvre d'une science, mais d'une science qui s'impose de l'exterieur, et ne penetre pas elle-meme dans l'ame des citoyens."

4See n. 40 above.

4See n. 32 above.

4Most editors (e.g. Schleiermacher, op. cit., Diès, op. cit., Skemp, op. cit.) are agreed that the elder Socrates makes the final speech. Amongst those who disagree (e.g. L. Campbell, The Sophiste and Political of Plato, Oxford, 1867, Burnet, Platonis Opera, Oxford, 1900, Taylor, op. cit.), Friedländer (op. cit., pp. 304-305) argues that the elder Socrates would have found the stranger's exposition notably deficient, "...lacking everything said about the education of the philosopher-king in the Republic," and so would have maintained a provocative, disapproving silence at the end. Friedländer sees but (in my view) misplaces the tension in the dialogue.

4Skemp, op. cit., takes the au to refer back to the Sophist and to pair the two inquiries. But this overlooks the repetition of apotelesin.

EPILOGUE

1Ch. III, n. 29.

2Skemp dates the Satterman's composition as between 366 and 361, op. cit., pp. 13-17.

3Cf. Republic 425a ff.


5See ch. IV, n. 40.

6This is also one function of the analogy of city and psyche in the Republic (see 368c - d). But Socrates' account of the just city leads beyond familiar politics, and his account of the psyche (especially in Book VI, see 504b ff.) leads beyond politics—and so, too, beyond the analogy—altogether.

3Hammond, op. cit., p. 327, explains that "The poorer citizens in Athens fought with ferocity for democracy and often for an aggressive foreign policy as well." Since they paid no war tax, received a wage for rowing in the Athenian fleet, and benefited from the distribution of conquered lands, the poor stood to gain from, and so tended to support, imperialist adventure. And since their gain generally undercut the political power of the rich, the latter had a general interest in resisting such adventures. These motives intersected, often contradictorily, with each party's interest in the success of democratic and oligarchic elements, respectively, in other cities. Thus the choice between war and peace was a pressing, constantly recurring, at once foreign and domestic issue throughout the first half of the fourth century.

4Even in the one case where Young Socrates, objecting to rule without laws (293e), asks for this review, the stranger reveals that he already knew the need: "I was just going to cross-examine you on these issues, to see if you really accepted everything [which was said]" (294a).

5Friedländer, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 90, writes, "We see the master as the center, surrounded by a circle of disciples who regard him with a veneration approaching apotheosis."

6This is put strongly for the sake of clarity. But it is not improbable. Callippus, murderer of Dion, was apparently an Academician. And note Plato's disapproval of Dion's final recourse to violence to overthrow Dionysius II, a recourse which a number of Academicians, including Speusippus, apparently supported. On the evidence and the events of Plato's and the Academy's involvement in Syracuse, see K. von Fritz, Platon in Stilten (Berlin, 1968).

7It goes beyond the scope of this study to take up the controversial and obscure issue of the nature of Plato's teaching within the Academy. The opposite possibilities that Plato was silent on metaphysical issues, "speaking" only indirectly through the dialogues, and that he presented an esoteric, "unwritten doctrine" which is only hinted at in the dialogues are powerfully argued by Cherniss, The Riddle of the Early Academy, and Krämer, op. cit., and "Die platonische Akademie und das Problem einer systematischen Interpretation der Philosophie Platon's," Kaut-Studien 55 (1904). See also Friedländer, op. cit., vol. 1, ch. IV; Ryle, op. cit.; and Gaisser, op. cit. It should be noted, however, that our interpretation of the dialogues as indirect communication, though not incompatible with the possibility of an esoteric oral teaching, seems to lose power if we accept the latter. If Plato regarded his true teaching as speakable, then why did he need to address his students in writing, much less in such ironic writing? On the other hand, one may accept the notion of an esoteric oral teaching and yet also accept Plato's (written!) denial that the truth itself is speakable—see, e.g., Gaisser, pp. 3-15. Indirect communication, whether in the form of written dialogues or in the form of enigmatic conversations or both, is indispensable both for the initial awakening of critical self-consciousness and for the revelation of the ultimate inadequacy of positive discursive method to the forms. In both cases it is the learner's own act of insight which is crucial, and indirect communication is best able to occasion this.

8Note Ryle's dating in the mid-350's, op. cit., pp. 280-286.

9See Cherniss, op. cit., pp. 61-62; Friedländer, op. cit., p. 87.

10331b–d. See also his refusal to join Dion's attack on Dionysius II, 350 bc, and the passages cited in ch. III, n. 36.

DIALECTICAL EDUCATION
AND UNWRITTEN TEACHINGS
IN PLATO'S STATESMAN
In these reflections we will be at work on two projects, letting each provide the occasion for the other. One of these projects is relatively narrow in focus; the other is wide ranging. The narrow project is to interpret the strange passages near the end of the Statesman (287b–291a, 303d–305e) in which the Estatic stranger completes the work of distinguishing the statesman by enumerating fifteen kinds of art necessary to the polis. First he names the seven “contributive arts”:

1. arts that produce raw materials
2. arts that produce tools
3. arts that produce containers
4. arts that produce vehicles
5. arts that produce defenses
6. arts that produce amusements
7. arts that produce nourishments.

Then he names the seven “directly responsible arts”:

8. the art proper to slavery
9. the arts of merchants and traders
10. the arts of heralds and clerks
11. the arts of priests and diviners
12. rhetoric
13. generalship
14. the art of justice.

Finally he names the art directing all these:

15. statesmanship

Why, in offering this enumeration, does the Estatic stranger suddenly abandon bifurcatory division, the mode of diairesis he has practiced in all of the definitional attempts of the Sophist and, up until now, the Statesman? He does not explain, but says only that “it is difficult to cut [the arts] into two” and that “the reason, I think, will become clear as we proceed” (287b10–c1). Thus, Plato leaves it up to his readers to ponder the nonbifurcatory distinctions the stranger presents. What, we must ask, is the new mode of diairesis he is practicing? What, if any, is the
ontological structure the new mode reveals in its object field? And what is the point of presenting such structure only in the closing phase of the dialogue, and with such reticence about its significance?

The wide-ranging project is to open up a much larger web of texts and teachings to which the Statesman passages belong and which, once we have seen how they fit together, will provide a context within which we can discover compelling answers to the questions those passages raise. I will argue that the stranger's list of fifteen exhibits the ontological structure envisioned by the "unwritten teachings" Aristotle ascribes to Plato in Metaphysics A6. To bring this out, however, I must first interpret Aristotle's very compressed and schematic report in A6, and, to do this, I must begin by identifying and interpreting the several partial displays of the "unwritten teachings" that can be found in the Parmenides and in the Philebus. The path of the essay therefore leads from the Statesman, to Aristotle's reports, to passages in the Parmenides and the Philebus, then back to Aristotle's reports in light of the Parmenides and Philebus passages, then back to the Statesman in light of Aristotle's reports. The result will be a comprehensive reading of the whole web. In the course of this reading, the "unwritten teachings" will emerge with fresh content and by way of, rather than in place of, Plato's indirect communication in the dialogues.

1. An orienting interpretive thesis: the Statesman as a microcosmic exhibition of the long-term process of philosophical education

In the Statesman, Plato puts the Academicians on stage before themselves in the dramatis persona of "Young Socrates," and he shows them the limitations they must overcome in their future education. Thus, he provides them an occasion for self-knowledge and self-transcendence. Young Socrates, all too ready to defer to the Elatic stranger's authority (see 258c together with 267a–c, 276e–277a, 293a–b), shows himself unwittingly under the sway of uncritical opinion (262b–e). Chief among the resources the stranger offers him as means to free himself are the technique of bifurcatory diacesis, the use of paradigms, and the notion of due measure. Beyond these, he offers the course of inquiry in the Statesman itself as an exemplary exhibition of the stages through which the educational process should lead.3 We might distill the force of this exhibition into the following set of recommendations: (a) to put a check on the power of uncritical opinion, one should subject oneself to the discipline of the procedure of bifurcatory diacesis; (b) but to learn the use of this method, one should begin with easy, directly perceptible subjects like the weaver, checking the results of one's diacesis against one's direct observation of the subject; (c) only when one has achieved competence in the easy cases, should one turn to the hard ones where no perceptual check is possible; (d) but with mastery of bifurcation comes freedom from uncritical opinion and, with this freedom, the capacity to let the subject matter present itself, so to speak, in its own terms, and when it does, one will want to set bifurcation aside and let the structure of the subject matter itself be the guide for the distinctions one makes.

Now, my interpretive thesis is that when the Elatic stranger turns from the case of weaving to that of statesmanship at 287b–f, and suddenly abandons bifurcation, Plato is projecting for his reader such a future moment, a time when, having achieved mastery of bifurcation, he needs to be ready to set it aside in order to let the subject itself, in its own proper being, determine the form of analysis. If this thesis is correct, then the Elatic stranger's reticence is both prudential and pedagogical. Plato has the stranger speak on the basis of an insight for which Young Socrates has shown himself not yet ready. For readers who have recognized Young Socrates' limitations in themselves, the task at hand is to practice bifurcatory diacesis; by his reticence, the stranger avoids undermining his recommendation of such practice. For readers, on the other hand, who have gone further, readers who have recognized the way bifurcation, even when it "hits upon forms" (262b), can conceal the essential character of the subject matter, the stranger's reticence is provocative; it challenges them to step in and try to recognize for themselves the way in which that essential character reveals itself in the non-bifurcatory distinctions he presents. For us, this focuses the key interpretive questions: if the Elatic stranger's distinction of the fifteen kinds traces the structure of reality itself, what is this structure, and what is the new mode of dialectic that is fit to seek it?

II. Five "unwritten teachings"4

As a point of departure for interpreting the Statesman passages, I want to take Aristotle's "concise and summary" (988a18) report of Plato's teachings in Metaphysics A6. The teachings that Aristotle reports present an account of the structure of the whole of things. We will concentrate on these five theses:

1. Forms and the Dyad of the Great and the Small are conjointly the "causes" of "sensibles." Forms are "cause of what [a sensible thing] is," and the Great and the Small are "the underlying matter of which [forms] are predicated."

2. The One and the Dyad of the Great and the Small are conjointly the causes of the forms. The One is "cause of what [a form] is," and the Great and the Small are "the underlying matter of which [the One] is predicated."

3. The One is cause of "good" (to eu); the Great and the Small, of "ill" (to kakos).

4. "Intermediate" (meta) between the timeless, unchanging, unique forms and the perishable, changing, many sensibles, there are the mathematical (ta mathematika); these are intermediate because they are eternal and unchanging like the forms but many like sensibles (987b14–18).

5. The forms are, but only in some limited sense, numbers. (My inclusion of this thesis and, too, its qualified character require immediate comment before we step back to look at the whole assemblage of teachings. First, by contrast with §s 1–4, nowhere in A6 does Aristotle expressly assert that forms are num-
bers. Only later, for example, 99b9–20, 1073a13ff., 1086a11ff., do we find him explicitly [albeit with varying degrees of certainty and clarity] crediting Plato with this claim. Nonetheless, it is strongly implied in A6 when Aristotle uses virtually identical language to say first that forms are "causes of everything else" [aita ... tois allois, 987b18–19] and then, only two sentences later, that numbers are "causes of the being of everything else" [aitios ... tois allois tēs ouias, 987b24–25]. At the same time, the identity needs to be qualified, for Aristotle has just credited Plato, in thesis #4, with the distinction of forms from mathematical. Hence, my open-ended "in some limited sense." Even as we wonder if there are any traces of this teaching in the dialogues, we must hope that such traces, should we find them, will show us how to understand just what the teaching means.\footnote{3}

Needless to say, Aristotle's reports are anything but self-explaining. For us, there are two levels of questions to pursue. First, on the assumption that Aristotle is reporting, however summarily and in his own terms, genuine Platonic teachings, what is the structure of the whole that Plato articulates in them? Second, how do the closing distinctions in the Statesman relate to this structure? To the interpretive claim offered at the close of Part I, above, I want to add a second claim: in the closing distinctions in the Statesman we have a specific indication of the general structure that Plato articulates in the "unwritten teachings." The main task of this essay is to make good on this second claim.

III. Related passages in the Parmenides and the Philebus

There are two sets of texts that can help us interpret Aristotle's reports and, eventually, see the Statesman's closing distinctions as an exhibition of them. These texts are the accounts of participation offered in the third (with support in the second and the fifth) of the eight hypotheses on "the One" in the Parmenides and the accounts of dialectic and of the four kinds at 16c–18d and 23c–27c, respectively, in the Philebus. Here I shall try to distill what each, on my reading, provides.

A. The account of participation in the Parmenides, hypothesis III

Each form is a simple and unique one that bestows composite unity on each of the many sensibles that participate in it. The form does this by imposing peras—that is, the internal and external boundaries that divide and relate parts and so constitute a whole—upon a sensible substrate. That substrate is the in itself indeterminate magnitude, no more great than small, that only first gains existence when peras is imposed upon it. This imposition is, thus, a metaphysical, not a physical, act: it is the form's exacting the requirement, of any sensible embodiment of it, that this latter be structured in a determinate way as the whole of a determinate set of parts. In this formation of unformed magnitude, we can glimpse the first of the teachings that Aristotle reports. The indeterminate magnitude is the instantiation of the forms of size, Greatness and Smallness. Hence, forms—that is, in each case the peras-providing form—and the Great and the Small are conjointly responsible for sensibles. We can also glimpse the first part of the second teaching Aristotle reports. Each form, as a simple and unique one that bestows a lower grade of unity on what participates in it, is itself an instantiation of the One itself, or Unity, in its causal power. But this raises the question of how, as Aristotle reports in thesis #2, the Great and Small are involved in the being of the forms. And, of course, we have not yet addressed the third, fourth, and fifth teachings.

On these issues, the two Philebus passages are helpful.\footnote{3}

B. The "gift from the gods," Philebus 16c–18d

In the first, Plato has Socrates introduce as a "gift from the gods" (16c) a new account of dialectical procedure. We begin, Socrates says, by locating whatever we are studying within a "single form" (mia idia, 16d), and we then go on to make a series of distinctions, first, of the "single form" into "two, if the case admits of there being two, otherwise into [into] three or some other number [of forms]" (16d), then of each of these, and so on. We conclude only once we have come to recognize that "the unity we started with" (to kai archas hen) is not only "a one and an unlimited many" but also, between these extremes, a "limited many" (16d). These obscure and schematic words are partly clarified by the two exemplary analyses Socrates offers, of musical sound at 17c and of the letters sounds that make up the alphabet at 18b–d. These analyses make clear, first of all, that the "unlimited many" are arrayed as a continuum framed by relative contraries and a midpoint. The midpoint, which represents an equal balance of the contraries, reveals that the other points on the continuum all mark out unequal balances.\footnote{11} (See, for illustrations, figures 2 and 4 in the Supplementary Diagrams.) Second, the "limited many" between the "single form" and the continuum are a set (or sets) of forms that are fit for interplay and constitute a whole that, when they are all well instantiated, yields a good instantiation of the "single form." In the music example, the "limited many" are the forms of the notes that fit together to constitute the various "modes" or scales.\footnote{11} (Socrates does not work this out in any detail; for an illustration of the kind of structure he appears to envisage, see figure 3 in the Supplementary Diagrams, a sketch of the Greater Perfect System in Greek harmonic theory.\footnote{15}) In the letter sounds example, they are the forms of sounds that, because each can combine with certain of the others to make the syllables of speech, are the members of the alphabet. (Again, Socrates offers no detail; see figure 5.)

C. Peras and apeiron in Philebus 23c–27c

In the second passage, we are given an occasion to deepen our understanding of the continuum structure and the relation of the limitedly many forms to it. Socrates turns from dialectic and the eidetic order that it discloses, his focus at 16c–18d, to an account of the structure of "what now exists in the universe" (τα μετανόητα en
tōi panti, 23c4). He analyzes things as mixtures of two factors, peras and apeiron. The apeiron factor, he explains, is in each case a flux and contest between relative contraries; by itself, it is unregulated and unstable, with each opposition tending to exceed the other. The peras factor, in turn, is a ratio, a "relation of number to number or measure to measure" (25a8–b1). Applied to the apeiron, it has a twofold function. First, it fixes the relative quantity (to poson, 24c6) of the opposites, putting an end to their flux by determining in what proportion they shall be present together. In doing this, second, it realizes "due measure" (to marion, 24c7); the structure it establishes is therefore normative, a good apportionment and harmony (cf. summeta...kai symphōna, 25e1) of the opposites. Socrates goes on to give a series of examples of the combination of peras and apeiron, including good health, seasonable weather, and virtues of character. Of particular interest for us, at 26a, he once again cites musical order: "And as regards high and low, fast and slow, which are apeira, doesn't the introduction of these same things [namely, ratios that realize due measure] realize peras and constitute all of music in its perfection?" The implication is that the array of notes that make for beautiful sound, sound that is on pitch, are a set of means, of normative apportionments of high and low.

This dovetails precisely with what Socrates taught at 16c–18d. There, we considered music from the perspective of the dialectician working out a "diaseresis" of "forms" (20c), and we saw how the "single form," musical sound or pitch, implicates that definite set of forms that, making up a "mode" or scale, each pick out some definite place on the continuum of possible balances of high and low. Now, looking at the structure of musical notes as mixtures of peras and apeiron, we have learned to understand these notes as a normative set of good apportionments of high and low. Putting these thoughts together, we can see that these good apportionments just are the places on the continuum that the definite set of forms picks out. The whole structure that is emerging can be spelled out in three progressively expansive steps. Consider, first, each one of the limited number of forms: for each such form to pick out a place on the continuum of high and low is for it to exact, as a normative schema for its instantiation in actual sound, a definite ratio of the opposites. But no note is musical in isolation; each requires those others that go together with it to constitute a "mode" or scale. Hence we can expand the first point: for each whole set of forms that defines a "mode" or scale to pick out a correlative set of places on the continuum is for it to exact, as a normative schema for its instantiation in actual sound, a definite set of ratios of the opposites. But, finally, each "mode" instantiates the "single form," musical sound or pitch; that no single note can be musical in isolation reflects the prior point that genuinely musical sound exists only in and as the interplay of notes that make up a "mode." Thus we can trace the causal necessity for the mixture of peras and apeiron back to the "single form" that the new mode of dialectic explicates, and we can rearticulate the whole structure with this in mind as follows: for the "single form" to be well instantiated in actual sound requires that the limited number of forms it implicates themselves be instantiated by sounds that conform to the correlative set of ratios of opposites that these forms pick out on the continuum. (For a diagrammatic representation of this multileveled structure, see figure 6 in the Supplementary Diagrams.)

D. Implications of the Philebus passages for the account of participation in the Parmenides

The two Philebus passages bear on the Parmenides passage in two important ways.

(i) Forms of parts and the mathematical sense of peras

In the Parmenides, as we saw, a thing’s form constitutes it as a whole of parts by imposing a set of perata, “boundaries,” on its otherwise indeterminate and unstructured magnitude. The Philebus permits us to make explicit two aspects of this that are left implicit in the Parmenides. First, for a form to give rise to whole-part structure in its participator requires that it implicate a plurality of forms of parts. This is the “limited many,” the determinate set of forms between the “single form” and the unlimited many, in Philebus 16cf. Second, the sense of peras that Plato has Parmenides invoke in the Parmenides, that of boundary, bears within it the sense that he will have Socrates invoke in the Philebus, that of a ratio that realizes due measure. Boundaries establish both the relative places and the relative sizes of the parts that they bound. And boundaries that answer to a form will place and apportion these parts in a way that will make the whole these make up a well-structured and well-proportioned instantiation of that form. This implies, to put the point in the language of Philebus 23c–27c, that the form puts an end to the flux and contest between the possibilities of being greater and smaller. In implicating a set of forms of parts, it fixes just how great and just how small each of the parts should be, both in relation to one another and in relation to the whole they make up.

(ii) The Great and the Small and the apeiron

These last reflections expand our earlier recognition of the way the peras-providing form collaborates with the Great and the Small. The stress on the Great and the Small in the Parmenides stands in striking contrast to the way Plato has Socrates treat them in the Philebus. There, “greater and smaller” is but one pair of relative contraries among a number of others, all of which are said to be governed by more-and-less and to be members of the class of the apeiron. In the several lists of examples Socrates offers, he also includes hotter and colder, drier and wetter, more and fewer, quicker and slower, and the musical contraries of high and low. In his synoptic remarks at 26a–b, moreover, he expands the range of possible continua to cover not only the physical (e.g., weather, strength, health) but also “a host of beautiful features found in our souls.” Thus, magnitude, privileged in the Parmenides, emerges in the Philebus as but one case among others of a more general structure that is to be found in the spiritual as well as the material dimension of reality.

E. The five “unwritten teachings” in the Parmenides and the Philebus

These two observations give us occasion to recognize the presence in both the Parmenides and the Philebus of all five of the teachings Aristotle reports in Metaphysics A6.
(i) The Great and the Small as a case of the broader apeiron

The first thing we must do is to take explicit note of the privileged status of the Great and the Small in Aristotle's reports. One possible explanation is that Aristotle, speaking "concisely and summarily" (synthomós kai kephalaiódos, Metaphysics A7:988a18), honors a particularly important member of the apeiron class by giving its name to the class as a whole. The Parthenides, with the prominence it gives Greatness and Smallness, could be read as possible evidence that in doing this, Aristotle is following Plato's own lead. It may also be that Aristotle focuses on the Great and the Small because his project in this part of Metaphysics A is to identify precursors to his own conception of the types of causality, in this case, of matter. However we sort this out, the important point for us is this: Aristotle, when he speaks of the Great and the Small, focuses narrowly what for Plato is ultimately a broader notion; the partner principle with the One is the apeiron, and while the Great and the Small provides a clear exhibition of its dyadic form, the apeiron includes, as well, all the other pairs that are named or even suggested in the Philebus passages.

(ii) The five "unwritten teachings" in interplay

This said, we can now point to the presence of each of the five teachings:

#4: "Mathematics." The Philebus passages have brought us to recognize the continuum and the select set of ratios that, in each case, the limited plurality of forms picks out on it. Continuum and ratio are essentially mathematical structures, and they are "intermediate" between sensibles and forms. If, on the one hand, we consider the continuum in its relation to sensibles, it presents itself as abstract and different in kind from them. As the full range of ratios between opposites, the continuum is the totality of structures possible for sensibles; as pure possibilities, these ratios are not located in place and time. Hence they are not subject to the flux that characterizes sensibles; as Aristotle says in A6, they are "eternal and unchanging" (987b16–17). On the other hand, they also lack the uniqueness of the forms and so are different in kind from them as well. Each continuum is an instantiation of some dyad of forms, and it bears, as an "unlimited many," an infinite number of abstract instances of each of these forms. The continuum presents, again in Aristotle's words, "many like cases" (poll' atta homoia) whereas the forms are "each of them just one" (hen hekaston monon, 987b17).

#5: The identity of forms and numbers. We can now recognize a non-reductionist way to interpret thesis #5. The select set of ratios are, of course, "relation[s] of number to number." And it is, the limited plurality of forms that picks these out and, second, the "single form" that calls for this limited plurality of forms. If we make a distinction between the nature that a form is and its causal power, we can say that in the first respect forms are not, and in the second respect they are, identical with numbers. Even while forms and the ratios they call for are (as thesis #4 asserts) ontologically different in kind, nonetheless, in their causal power forms are functionally equivalent to these ratios. In picking them out on the continuum, forms express themselves as numbers.

#1: Forms and the apeiron. We saw from the Parthenides that a form provides the boundary that structure the indeterminate magnitude—itsel itself the concrete instantiation of the Great and the Small—as a composite sensible thing. And we've seen that the Great and the Small is but one member of the class of the apeiron. So we can also see that (now to restate Aristotle's report of thesis #1 with the general notion of the apeiron in place of the specific case of it, the Great and the Small) forms and the apeiron are conjointly causes of sensibles.

#2: The One and the apeiron. We can also see what the forms presuppose in order to accomplish this causal work. To provide boundaries is to make a whole of parts, and this is to bestow unity. But, as we noted, to bestow unity is to instantiate the One itself or Unity in its causal power. These boundaries, in turn, portion the parts to one another; but this is to fix the proportions of the opposites that pertain to these parts by the selection of a set of ratios on the continuum framed by those opposites. In our three examples, these select sets are ratios of greater and smaller on the continuum of possible magnitude, ratios of high and low on the continuum of possible pitch (see, again, figure 2), and ratios of voiced and muted on the continuum of speech sound (see figure 4). Each of these continua is an abstract instantiation of the apeiron. Thus, for the form to be a cause of sensibles requires both the instantiation of the One (this instantiation is the "single form" in its bestowal of unity on its sensible participants) and the instantiation of the apeiron (this is the continuum); hence, the One and the apeiron are conjointly causes of the forms in their being as causes of sensibles.15

#3: The normative status of the select set of ratios. The task of bringing to focus how the One is responsible for good and the apeiron for ill gives us an occasion to articulate as a whole the causal hierarchy we have been retracing. The One is instantiated in a "single form's" bestowal of unity on the in itself indeterminate nature that its participant otherwise would be. A "single form" bestows unity by implicating a set of forms of parts, each of which marks out a ratio on the relevant continuum of opposites. These ratios establish the proportion of the opposites that is appropriate to each part of the whole in its relations to the other parts and to the whole. But "the appropriate" (to prepom, one of the names for the mean at Statesman 284e6) is a normative notion; a sensible whose parts conform to these ratios will be good, that is, a good embodiment of the "single form." Hence the One, insofar as it is responsible for the "single form's" bestowal of unity, is also responsible for "the good."16 The apeiron, on the other hand, is the counter-principle to the One. In its abstract instantiation as the continuum, it is in itself indifferent to the priority of one possibility over another that is implied by the selection of a normative set of ratios. And in its concrete instantiation as the indeterminate substrate that the boundaries first structure, it is an unchecked flux and contest between the opposites. Hence, when the parts of a thing exceed or fall short of the ratios set by the forms of the parts, it is the apeiron factor in the thing that is expressed and that is in this sense the ultimate cause of "ill."
IV. The exhibition of the "unwritten teachings" in the diairesis of the fifteen kinds of art in the Statesman

In the context created by these reflections, we can begin to see what Plato is doing in having the Eleatic stranger lay out his distinction of the fifteen kinds of art at the close of the Statesman. The stranger practices the new mode of dialectic that Socrates introduces at Philebus 16c–18d. The fifteen are anything but a mere list. On the contrary, they constitute a specimen case of the ultimate ontological order that Aristotle reports Plato to have articulated in the "unwritten teachings." We can now bring this order into view by three related sets of observations. (For a diagrammatic representation of the field of relations laid bare by the stranger's distinctions, see figure 8 in the Supplementary Diagrams. It is by reflection on this field that, in the next three sections, we shall try to bring to view the order articulated in the "unwritten teachings.")

A. The One and its instantiation in the "single form": "care"

Is there, present and at work in the Eleatic stranger's distinction of the fifteen kinds, that "single form" that Socrates in the Philebus says we must find as the first step in the new mode of dialectic? And does it, a simple and unique one, instantiate the One in bestowing unity of a lower grade on what otherwise would lack it? There is indeed a "single form"; it is epimeleia (276b), the "care" for itself that the Eleatic stranger finds, in light of his myth of the ages, each human community must take up as its fundamental task. If the overt claim of the myth is that no god or daimon is at hand to "care" for the needs of human beings, its implicit point is that this "care" is a task not for any despotic "shepherd of the people" but for the community as a whole, to be shared and accomplished by the coordinated practices of the arts. But this is to say, to recast the stranger's anthropological point in terms of the ontology of the Philebus, that the "single form" "care" requires, for its instantiation, the instantiation of a limited plurality of forms, the fifteen kinds of art. These fifteen are the analogues to the forms of notes that make up the musical "modes" and, again, to the forms of the letter sounds that make up syllables and words. The stranger implies this from the beginning when, first alerting Young Socrates to the need to abandon bifurcatory diairesis, he says that they must divide the kinds of art kata melos . . . hoion hieroiou, "limb by limb . . . like a sacrificial animal" (287c3). The analysis of "care" involves recognizing which are the kinds that, like "limbs," are fit for interplay, fit to constitute, in their 'organic' relations, a cooperative whole.

B. The aperion and its instantiation in the continuum traced by the series of fifteen kinds

On our interpretation of #2 of the five theses, however, the One exercises its causal responsibility conjointly with the aperion; the One's instantiation in a "single form" that bestows unity presupposes a continuum on which the forms of parts pick out ratios. Do we find in the Eleatic stranger's final distinctions the abstract instantiation of the aperion in a continuum between opposites? The more closely we study the fifteen kinds, the more evident the underlying continuum becomes.

(i) The list as a series

The Eleatic stranger makes the serial or gradual character of his distinctions explicit; at each step, he marks the distance of the kind he is distinguishing from the sought-for form of statesmanship, and by the specificity of his negations, as well as by his pointed revision of the order of the arts in his synopsis of the first seven kinds at 289a, he makes clear that he is moving stepwise and gradually from the arts most remote from statesmanship through those closer to it toward statesmanship itself.17

(ii) The opposites and midpoint

The series he traces, moreover, has the genuine bipolarity and midpoint that characterize the sample continua Socrates cites in the Philebus. At the one extreme stands the kind of art that provides the raw materials, the physical stuff, for the subsequent shaping into things by the next kinds of art. At the other extreme stands statesmanship proper with its preeminent concern, made explicit in the final pages of the dialogue (305e–311c), for the formation of good character. Thus the opposites that frame the continuum are the material and the spiritual aspects of the life of the community. At the midpoint, in turn, stands the eighth kind, the art of the slave. Slaves are both "possessions" (cf. kiaous, 289d10) and agents. As agents, they belong to the second set of seven arts, the arts of service, in contrast with the first set of seven, the arts that produce things. But as "possessions" they are like things and stand as "the opposite" (toiananion, 289d7) to the statesman. In this double status, the art of slaves is analogous to the middle kinds that Socrates picked out in his diairesis of music and letter sounds in the Philebus, "even-toned" pitch and sounds "not voiced but having a certain noise." Each of the three marks an equal proportion of the relevant opposites.

(iii) The continuum of proportions of material and spiritual

Finally, once we recognize the poles and mid-point, the continuum traced by the remaining kinds of art becomes fully evident. Each of the fifteen strikes a distinctive balance of the material and the spiritual in the specific way that it "cares" for the life of the community.18 In the first seven (the "contributive arts"), the material dominates the spiritual—but in decreasing proportion as we approach the mid-point. In the final seven (the "directly responsible arts"), the spiritual dominates the material—and in increasing proportion as we approach statesmanship. It goes beyond the limits of this discussion to attempt a detailed commentary, but it is possible to indicate in a titular way how the proportions of material and spiritual shift as we move from each kind of art to the next. Notice, first, how the series...
moves from arts that produce physical stuff (no. 1 on figure 7 in the Supplementary Diagrams) to arts that transform this into determinate things designed to produce (no. 2), then to preserve (no. 3), then to bear and transport (no. 4) other things. The vehicles made by the fourth kind of art, however, can also transport persons; hence this kind is transitional to the next three kinds, which produce things not for other things but for persons, albeit in their physical being. These are the arts that produce physical protections (no. 5), ornaments and sensory diversions (no. 6), and nourishment of all sorts (no. 7). Notice, next, how the last series moves from what is relatively external to persons in their physical being (for instance, in no. 4, ships and wagons, and in no. 5, walls and armor and clothes) to what actually makes up their physical being (in no. 7, food as it becomes part of the body [288ε] and exercise, which itself is the body’s own activity). Hence, the series leads gradually into the midpoint kind, the art of the slave (no. 8), for a slave produces his own body’s activity in order to serve. The next three kinds of art, those of merchants and traders (no. 9), of clerks and heralds (no. 10), and of priests and diviners (no. 11), trace the continuum from the economic deeds of distributing material goods through the administrative deeds of recording and regulating such distribution to the conventionally religious deeds of directing the city’s public ritual practices and, so, cultivating traditional piety. From this (after the lengthy interruption by the Elistic stranger’s reflections on types of fictional rule and the function of law) the series moves into the kinds of art that care most fully for the spiritual—that is, the good character of the citizens. Now the stranger leads from the rhetoric (no. 12) that sustains the citizens’ acceptance of the statesman’s wise rule (that is, to recall the moral psychology of the Republic, their temperance) through the generality (no. 13) that, deferring to the statesman’s decision whether or not to go to war (and so, again, cultivating temperance), sustains the citizens’ readiness to fight (and so their courage) and, next, through the judge’s ability (no. 14) to preserve the law and the harmony it aims for between the different groups of citizens (i.e., their justice) to, finally, statesmanship itself (no. 15), which consists in the wisdom that directs the cultivation of temperance, courage, and justice in the citizenry.

C. The normative status of the ratios on the continuum—the city with the fifteen kinds of art as sacred

If the reflections in sections A and B are well taken, then the One is instantiated in the way the “single form” “care” bestows unity on actual cities that participate in and embody it. This bestowed involves a complex set of relations: “care” implies a limited plurality of forms of parts, the fifteen kinds of art, each of which marks off, on the continuum between the material and the spiritual, some definite proportion (or range of proportions) of these opposites to one another. But as we have seen, the continuum is, as a series of possible proportions, an abstract instantiation of the dyadic aperion. Hence the One and the aperion are conjointly responsible for the “single form’s” being the cause of sensibles, that is, for “care’s” causal role for actual cities. The one step remaining for us is to mark the normative force of the select set of ratios—and thereby of the limited number of forms, and thereby of the “single form” —for actual cities. For in this we bring to focus the way in which, ultimately, the One is responsible for “good.” The stranger indicates that he intends his series of fifteen to express a normative order with his allusion to the sacred at 287c3: as cited in section A (but with a different stress), he introduces his distinctions by telling Young Socrates that they must divide the kinds of art katta molē... hōron hieron, “limb by limb... like a sacrificial animal.” Sacrifice was made both to please the gods and to entreat their good will. To be worthy of them and win their favor, the hieron must be perfectly formed, and the ritual dismemberment and reassembly of its parts must respect and reveal this perfection. The stranger’s simile therefore suggests that in his dizesis he will lay out the “limbs” or parts that, in their capacity for interplay, make for the perfectly formed city.

To see the normative status of the stranger’s dizesis more specifically, we would need to reflect on each of the fifteen kinds in concrete detail. Here I can only sketch the character of such a reflection. The key questions to pursue would be the same in kind as in the cases of the exemplary dizeses of musical notes and of letter sounds in the Philebus. First, focusing on any one of the fifteen kinds, we should ask what other kinds it requires in order to fulfill its function. And second, as the possible combinations (the analogues to the “modal” sets in all their variants in the case of music and to the various possible syllables in the case of the letter sounds) begin to emerge, we should ask whether a city without: the full web of physical and spiritual activities that these combinations enable would be “caring” for itself as well as it can and should. What we will find is that even while some of the kinds of art, viewed in isolation, seem unimportant (does a well-formed city really need, for example, the container-making arts?), in fact each of the kinds both requires and is required by various of the others. Thus, for example, the distribution of material goods presupposes the work of preserving and, too, of moving them, and all of these tasks require raw materials and tools; again, defending the city requires not only good generality but also strong walls and a healthy citizenry; still again, the basic cooperation involved both in distribution and in defense presupposes the shared values that are cultivated in public rites and sourced in the education for which, in different respects, the arts of the rhetor, the judge, and the law-making statesman are responsible; and so on. The more we probe, the more compelling becomes the stranger’s implicit claim that it is the presence and absence of such combinations—and, so, of the full set of “limbs” that are variously at work in them—that make the difference between good and bad cities, that is, between good and bad political instantiations of “care.”

V. Implications

In closing, it is worth making explicit several different sorts of implications.

1. I began by observing that the Statesman offers itself to its Academic readers, in particular, as an exemplary exhibition of the stages through which the process
of philosophical education should lead. We have now found, in its closing non-bifurcatory dialectic, a specific exhibition of the dialectical disclosure of the ontological order that Plato articulates (according to Aristotle's report) in the "unwritten teachings." The presence of this exhibition implies that, for the Plato who wrote the Statesman, coming to see and articulate this ontological order is a long-term goal of the process of philosophical education. To say this is to acknowledge emphatically the importance of the "unwritten teachings."

(ii) Notice, however, that this should underscore, not diminish, the importance of the dialogues. Not only have we found the "unwritten teachings" in three Platonic writings—the passages in the Parmenides, the Philebus, and the Statesman—but it has been by exploring their presence in these passages that we have been able to work out the first outlines of an interpretation of those teachings.23

(iii) This brings to the fore a crucial hermeneutic question. What do we make of the "fact" that the "unwritten teachings" are, on our reading, written? What is the status of the writings in which we have found them suggested? The possibilities before us range between two poles.

On the one hand, there is the possibility of taking the texts to operate on two very different levels at once, corresponding to the two very different audiences, those outside and those inside the Academy, which they simultaneously address. On this view, Plato's inexpressiveness—indeed, his extreme compression—functions in different ways for each of these audiences. With those outside the Academy, who, presumably, have not been introduced to the teachings, Plato's main concern is to protect against misunderstanding; by his reticence he in effect conceals the teachings from those not prepared to grasp them. But for those inside the Academy, those to whom, again presumably, Plato has introduced the teachings in face-to-face conversation, his inexpressiveness functions positively: his brief remarks in the written dialogues provide k้มpaκvov, allusive "reminders," of what they have heard and have the task of developing and explicating for themselves in ongoing oral dialogue in the Academy. This first possibility, with its potentially sharp correlative distinctions between exoteric and esoteric and between written and speaking, might be developed on the basis of a straightforward reading of the famous criticism of writing in the Phaedrus.24

On the other hand, there is also the possibility of an interpretation of the situation that takes seriously the evidence that the Statesman (and, in fact, a number of the later dialogues) mirrors with mimetic irony the teaching situation in the Academy.25 Does the failure to think philosophically that is represented in the dramatic action of the dialogue by Young Socrates' authoritative agreements and unquestioning leaps reflect problems of communication and understanding in the Academy itself? Is it, indeed, in response to such problems that Plato writes the Statesman? If so, if, that is, Plato felt the need to communicate indirectly even within the Academy, then the privileging of face-to-face conversation and the projection of the "unwritten teachings" as its straightforward content become problematic.26 Instead, the dialogues and conversation in the Academy be, in effect, embodied in one another, with the dialogues reflecting and commenting with critical irony on conversation and conversation, in turn, occasioned by and responsive to the

proivation and indirect guidance offered by the dialogues. In that event, we will need to be ready to balance the projection of the "unwritten teachings" as the goal that orients and offers a measure of closure to philosophical education with the thought that by this projection Plato "tests" our readiness, our Socratic eros, both for the inquiry the teachings authorize and for inquiry into this very authority.27

Supplementary Diagrams

1. Schema for bifurcatory diatessa ("halving"):  
   
   A
   / \                    
   B C
   / \                    
   F G

2. Initial distinctions in the first example of non-bifurcatory diatessa in the Philebus—musical sounds:

   "the original one":    "sound as treated by music," that is, pitch
   /   /                  /  "high"  "even-toned"  "low"
   \   \                  \ h>1        h=1        h<1

3. The Greater Perfect System

the seven species of the octave (i.e. scales formed by notes selected from the double octave, which is laid out as two conjunct tetrachords plus an "added" note):

   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |
   |

   middle note
   (meso)

   (proslambanomenos)

   (Note: each of the baseline tetrachords is in the enharmonic genus: the intervals are two tones, quarter tone, quarter tone. The species of the octave differ from each other by virtue of the different sequences of these intervals that each has.)
4. Initial distinctions in the second example of non-bifurcatory diairesis in the *Philebus*:

(spoken sounds)

"the" vs. "others" vs. "the
voiced" not voiced not voiced
but having and noiseless"

a certain noise"

the unlimited plurality of uttered sound: (maximal release of breath) (maximal cutting off of breath)

5. Possible reconstruction of the full diaeresis of letter sounds in the *Philebus*:

the single form: "letter" (stichesis)

"the" vs. "others" vs. "the
voiced" not voiced not voiced
but having and noiseless"

a certain noise"

the limited number of "one": [the various letter-sounds]

the continuum of uttered sound:

(maximal release of breath) (maximal cutting off of breath)

6. General schema for non-bifurcatory diairesis in the *Philebus*:

the "single form":

\[ X \]

\[
\text{the limited plurality of forms: } A \& B \& C \& D \& E
\]

the "unlimitedly many," that is, the continuum between opposites, and the set of normative balances (that is, the set of limits) that the forms A \& B \& C \& D \& E pick out:

| Opposite Q | Opposite R |
| Q > R | Q = R | Q < R |

(the particulars in place and time that, to instantiate the "single form" well, must embody the various normative balances picked out by A \& B \& C \& D \& E)

7. The continuum of the fifteen kinds of art in the *Statesman*:

\[ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 \]

(concerned with the material life of the city)

8. The distinction of the fifteen kinds of art in the *Statesman*, represented as a case of the new mode of non-bifurcatory diairesis introduced in the *Philebus* at 16c:

the "single form": "care" of the whole human community

(concerned with the material life of the city)

the "limbs":

\[ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 \]

(concerned with the spiritual life of the city)

the continuum between opposites and the balance upon it picked out by "the limbs":

(continued with the spiritual life of the city)

particular in place and time:

the arts in any actual city that—to instantiate well the "single form," "care," and so constitute a good city—must embody the various normative balances picked out by the fifteen kinds

NOTES:

1. David Lachterman was a midwife for this logos. He was a master of generous and searching conversation, and it was his open-spirited questions that first encouraged me to pursue the web of connections between Aristotle’s report of Plato’s teachings regarding the One and the Dyad and my readings of the *Statesman* and the *Parmenides*. It is a terrible loss not to be able to go on talking with him.

2. The stranger has stressed the importance of bifurcatory diairesis in at least three ways:

   (1) Every cut he has made, from the beginning of the *Sophist* up until *Statesman* 287b, has been bifurcatory. (2) His two paradigms of diairesis—the divisions that isolate the anger in the *Sophist* (216e–221c) and the weaver in the *Statesman* (279b–283b)—are bifurcatory. (3) When Young Socrates makes the lopsided cut of human from beast at *Statesman* 262a, the stranger objects, arguing that "by cutting down the middle [dia meson...tenementos]... one is more likely to hit upon forms" and telling Young Socrates that "it is this that makes all the
difference in inquiries" (262b). As models of cutting down the middle, the stranger cites odd/even and male/female. Each of these cuts exhausts the class it divides by sorting its members according to contrary forms into mutually exclusive subclasses. (For a simple diagram, useful for purposes of contrasting the two modes of diæresis, see figure 1.) At the same time, the stranger has also intimated the limitations of bifurcational diæresis in the strange passage at 264b–266e in which, with a series of pointedly ironic jokes, he complete[s] the initial series of distinctions in a way that misses fundamentally the essence of statemanship. For discussion, see The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman, 16–33.


4. The phrase is Aristotle's at Physics 209b14–15. I should say at the outset what is obvious in any case: I am not attempting to canvass all the "unwritten teachings." Indeed, I have not even exhausted Aristotle's report in Metaphysics A6; I have omitted his report of Plato's derivation of number from the One and the Dyad of the Great and the Small. Though I think there is indirect evidence in the Parmenides attesting this as a genuine Platonic teaching, it is not relevant to the present project. Nor do I mean to suggest that the appearance of "unwritten teachings" in the Statesman comes at 287b–291a and 303d–305e. On the contrary, I find plausible the argument by Krämer 1959, pp. 148–177, especially 163, that the "unwritten teachings" are on display in the stranger's account of the mean at 284a–e and in his use of it in the final phase of the dialogue (305e–311c) to locate the virtues on a continuum of vigor and gendleness. But I should reserved discussion of that for another occasion.

5. I do not think that the reported distinction between mathematical and eidetic or ideal numbers can be used to resolve the tension thesis #5. I cannot go into the obscure issue of the nature of eidetic number here. Note, for the present, that Aristotle makes no allusion to the distinction in A6; quite the contrary, he claims that Plato "agreed" with the Pythagoreans in 

6. A key study for anyone interested in the problem of the "unwritten teachings" is Sayre 1963. That I have major disagreements with his interpretations of the Parmenides (see Miller 1986, Preface, n. 6) and of the "unwritten teachings" themselves (see [1] and [2] in n. 15, below) does not diminish my appreciation of the effect of his work. By arguing forcefully for readings of the Parmenides and the Philebus which let the "unwritten teachings" appear in the dialogues, he has altered the status quasistentis, freeing us from having to choose between affirming an esoteric doctrine not presented by the dialogues (the position, in essence, of the early work of Krämer, cited in note 4, above, and Gaiser) and rejecting Aristotle's reports as a basic misunderstanding (the position argued by Cherniss 1945). Another recent work which also tends to undermine this choice, in this case by pointing to the compatibility of affirming the "unwritten teachings" with Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, is Szlezák 1985.

The following paragraph summarizes the interpretation I have worked out to date and within the context of an interpretation of the Parmenides as a whole in Miller 1986. On the constiution of sensible, see especially the discussion of 137d6–138d in hypothesys 3 on pp. 126–136, together with the discussions of 199d–151b in hypothesys 2 on pp. 105–111 and of 161a–161c in hypothesys 5 on pp. 143–146. For the way this exhibits "unwritten teaching" #1 and the first part of #2, see Ch. 5, n. 29 (but note my revision of [5] there in part III.E.ii., below). Note: for a more expansive treatment, especially of the implicit presence of teachings #3–5 in the Parmenides, see Miller 1955a. 8. The concrete meaning of peras is "boundary" or "delimiting extremity," and it is in just this sense that Parmenides uses the word throughout the hypotheys (see 137d6, 145a1, 165a5). This sets the usages of the Parmenides and of the Philebus, where peras has a mathematical sense (see section C, below), into contrast. For the reconciliation of these uses, see section D.I, below.

9. The following sections, B and C, are compressed rethinkings of analyses made at length in Miller 1990, pp. 325–340.

10. Goering's reflections in 1975, especially pp. 165–181, 196–206, on the presence of the notion of the continuum both in Philebus 16c–18d and 23c–27c are seminal for my reading.

11. Thus, on my reading, the "unlimited many" are not the many sensibles that instantiate some form. As places on the continuum, they are the full range of possible proportions of the opposites that sensibles instantiation may have.

12. Henderson 1957, pp. 336–403, points out that identification of "modes" (harmoniai) with "species of the "same" and so, for us, with scales is made nowhere by "classical composers and ... musically intelligent prose-writers" but only by "musically ignorant theorists" (p. 347). But the judgment of most translators (e.g., Hackforth, Goering, Waterfield) in taking harmoniai at 17d4 to mean "scales" because it is mathematicizing harmonic theorists—"the proseophres the men of old" at 17d4 presumably refers to the Pythagoreans—who Socrates cites as his authorities at Philebus 17c–d.

13. Fourth-century harmonic theory mapped out the matrix of possible intervals and notes implied by the various tunings in three systems, the Greater Perfect System, the Lesser Perfect System, and the Perfect Immutable System. See Giovanni Comotti, 1989, chap. 5, and Henderson, 1957, pp. 344–346. The Greater Perfect System covers a double octave, structuring it as two conjunct tetrachords with a detached note added on. Each conjunct tetrachord picks out seven notes, with the first and the seventh and the shared fourth in fixed positions and the two inner notes within each tetrachord movable in a variety of ways. The central position of the first note of the second conjunct tetrachord is made explicit by its name, the mes ("middle"). For a diagrammatic representation, see figure 3 in the Supplementary Diagrams. I have singled out the Greater Perfect System as a display of the sort of harmonic structure Socrates suggests at 17c–d because, as the analysis in Part IV, below, will put us in position to see, is strikingly isomorphic with the Elysian stranger's structuring of the continuum of the arts in Statesman 267b–291a and 303d–305e. This isomorphism may be more coincident. However, if it is the new mode of dialectic introduced by the sotariz at Philebus 16c–18d that the Elysian stranger puts into practice at Statesman 287b–291a and 303d–305e, then, since Socrates offers harmonic structure as a paradigm for the order disclosed by the new mode of dialectic, it may be that Plato actually looked to the Greater Perfect System as a model in composing the stranger's structuring of the continuum of the arts in the Statesman.

14. For evidence and argument that Plato makes this distinction in the Parmenides, see Miller 1986, chap. 4.C.1 and 5.B.2.b, especially pp. 154–155.

15. I will here note two distinctive features of this reconstruction of the sense of the "unwritten teachings". (1) On my reading, what Aristotle reports is not an account of how forms are themselves derived from the One and the Dyad. What a form gains from its participation in the One is its simplicity and uniqueness and—in a repetition, on the level of the form, of the One's bestowal of simplicity and uniqueness on it—its causal power to bestow unity on the sensible that participate in it; what it gains from its collaboration with the aperion is the continuum on which, in accomplishing its bestowal of unity on its participants, the forms of parts it implicate pick out the set select ratio of. What stands logically (not, of course, temporarily) prior to all this is the determinate nature itself that the form essentially is. In this sense, it is not the nature that the form essentially is but only the causal power that it has for which the One and the aperion are conjointly responsible. (Note that this reading saves the "unwritten teachings" from a damaging obscurity. If we destroy the forms themselves from the One and the aperion, then we must find the basis for the determinateness of each of the forms in these principles. But the One and the aperion are general in character. To bring out the problem in an exemplary way: though we can find in the uniqueness of each form a respect in which it instantiates the One itself, we cannot appeal to the One itself to

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explain the determinate nature itself that each form, in its uniqueness, is.) (2) The distinction between the nature that the form essentially is and the causal power that it has fixed us, in what I take to be a genuinely Platonic way, from the customary choice between accepting the form to be separate and taking it to be immanent. The nature is underived and transcendent, but its causal power gives it, in its expression as the ratios that structure the sensible, immanence. Traditional two-world readings and the more recent efforts to deny the separateness of the forms (see, for a powerful articulation of the latter position, Sayre 1983, especially chp. 3, part 5) each capture only one of these two aspects of the forms.

16. In this way, the formal causal force of the One coincides with that of the Good. Is this the basis for, and so a key to the interpretation of, the identification of the Good with the One that Aristotle appears to report in his famous comment on Plato's lecture on the Good? For seminal discussions, see Krämer 1959; Sayre 1963; and Ferber 1989.

17. This use of the negatives to indicate the serial character of the list is detailed in Miller 1990, p. 348, n. 29.

18. With this vision of the continuum, central to the Statesman, in mind, it is striking to read the following passage in Timaeus 87c–e: “Everything which is good is beautiful (kalon), and the beautiful is not without proportion (oude ameron), and the animal which is to be beautiful must have due proportion (symmetria). Now we perceive lesser symmetries or proportions and reason about them, but of the most basic and greatest (kurioteta kai megistha) we take no heed, for with regard to health and disease, virtue and vice, there is no proportion or lack of it (symmetria kai ametria) that is greater than that between soul and body themselves. But we do not perceive this, nor do we reflect on the fact that when a weak or inferior frame is the vehicle of a soul that is strong in all ways great or, conversely, when an inferior soul is fitted together with a strong body, then the animal as a whole is not beautiful, for it lacks the most important of all symmetries. However, the animal that is in the opposite condition (that is, that has due proportion of mind and body) is the most beautiful and loveliest of all sights to him who has eyes to see.” (My translation, with the help of those of Benjamin Jowett and R. G. Bury.) For discussion of the way material and spiritual are taken to function as opposites framing a continuum in the Timaeus, see Miller 2003, pp. 42–49.

19. Burtlet 1958 describes how “the bones are laid on the pyre prepared on the altar in just order. In Homer, beginnings from all limbs of the animal, small pieces of meat, are also placed on the pyre: the dismembered creature is to be reconstituted symbolically” (p. 57).

20. Notice, too, the characterizations of the city as united by the “divine” (theian) bond of “divine” (theian) true opinion and, so, as itself “daimonic” (daimonion), at 309c3, c7, and c8, respectively.

21. For an example of such a reflection, see Miller 1990, pp. 354–356.

22. On the possible analogy of our access to the “unwritten teachings” with that of the Academicians, see Miller 1995b, pp. 239–243.

23. Needless to say, the account we have arrived at so far must be expanded and deepened in key respects. Interpretation of the dialogues will, I hope, continue to prove to be the key. As an indication of the sorts of conceptual issues that we need to think through as we interpret, consider just these four questions. (1) The Good and the One. What relation between the One and the Good is implied by the normative status of the terms in the ratios that have the One as their ultimate source? Does it run counter to the nature that the One itself is for it to coincide in its causal power with the Good, or counter to the nature that the Good itself is for it to coincide in its causal power with the One? (See note 16, above.) (2) The unity of the forms. Is it consistent with the simplicity of the form that when it does the work of the “single form” (Philebus 16c), it implicates a limited plurality of forms that, in interplay like “limbs” (Statesman 287c), make up a whole? I have argued for the necessity of both simplicity and whole-part structure in related contexts in Miller 1986, pp. 179–183, and in Miller 1992, pp. 77–111.) (3) The nature of the mathematical. How are we to interpret the notions of ratio and number that the relation of the forms and the continuum requires? The continuum can be reconstructed in different ways, depending, for example, on whether we key from the relative sizes of parts (the starting-point suggested by some of the language
(This bibliography lists all the works cited in The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman.)


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**SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY (2004)**

(This supplementary list includes works cited in the Preface, works cited in "Dialectical Education and Unwritten Teachings in Plato's Statesman," and a selection of additional studies published after 1980 that address issues in the *Statesman* or questions relevant to the hermeneutic orientation of *The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman.*


APPENDIX

STRUCTURAL OUTLINE OF THE STATESMAN

(0) Stage-setting (257a–258b).

(1) The initial diariesis (elicitation of the notion of the shepherd-ruler) (258b–267c).

1. Initial process (display of bifurcatory diariesis) (258b–261c).
2. Digression on method (262a–264b).
   a. Refutation (one-sided cuts and “halving”) (262a–263b).
   b. Reorientation (illustration of “halving”) (263c–264b).
3. Resumption and (ironical) completion of the diariesis (264b–267c).

(2) The interruptive digressions (reflections on substance and method) (267c–287b).

A. The myth (refutation of the notion of the shepherd-ruler) (267c–277a).
   1. The stranger’s objection (267c–268d).
   2. The myth (268d–274e).
   3. Revisions of the initial definition in light of the myth (274e–277a).

B. The recourse to paradigm (reorientation, providing the new paradigm of the weaver) (277a–287b).
   1. The need for paradigm (277a–279a).
   2. Paradigmatic diariesis of the weaver (279a–283a).
      a. Mirroring of the initial diariesis (279c–280a).
      b. Mirroring of the stranger’s objection (280a–281d).
      (i) Repetition of the error and objection (280a–e).
      (ii) Explication of the further distinctions needed (281a–d).
      c. Resumption and completion of diariesis (281d–283a).
   3. The doctrine of essential measure (283b–287b).
      (i) Distinction of essential from relative measure (283c–e).
      (ii) Essential measure and statesmanship (283e–284d).
      (iii) Essential measure and diariesis (284e–285c).

(3) The resumption of diariesis and (mediating) completion of the definition (287b–311c).

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