

# Truth

Studies of a Robust Presence

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Truth

## 2 ∞ A More “Exact Grasp” of the Soul?

### Tripartition in the *Republic* and Dialectic in the *Philebus*

Of proportions (συμμετριῶν), the less important ones we perceive and calculate, but the most authoritative and important escape our reckoning (ἀλογίστως ἔχομεν).

—*Timaeus* 87c6–d1

The project of this essay is to pursue the “truth” in a Platonic sense in a central region of Platonic inquiry. How may we win *the deepest disclosure* of the embodied soul? In what terms and by what course of reflection may we bring the embodied soul to light *in its own, most genuine being*? The favored text for this inquiry has long been the *Republic* and its analogical account of the tripartite soul. But as Socrates indicates at two key moments in the *Republic* itself, this should be our point of departure, not arrival, and I will argue that close attention to the implications of his language will lead us away from the city/soul analogy in the *Republic*<sup>1</sup> and to the account of the good life in the *Philebus*.

I am grateful to Kurt Pritzl and Alexander Mourelatos for arranging gatherings at the Catholic University of America and the University of Texas at Austin, where there were lively discussions of lecture versions of this essay; to Thérèse-Anne Druart, George Harvey, and David Scarbrough for valuable correspondence; and to Michael Anderson, Matt Evans, Rachel Kitzinger, and Jeff Seidman for helpful discussion of issues in the *Philebus*.

1. This is not to say that the idea of a structural analogy of the just soul and the just city is to be rejected. Rather, the embodied soul and the city must each first be explored in its own terms—that is, by the mode of dialectic that, first presented not in the *Republic* but rather in

Socrates makes his first objection to his account of the tripartite soul even before he offers it. At *Republic* 435c–d, he reports this exchange with Glaucon:

And I said, “So, you remarkable fellow, we’ve come upon a trifling question about the soul, eh? Does it have within itself these three forms [that is, analogues to the three classes constitutive of the just city: rulers, auxiliaries, and producers] or not?”<sup>2</sup>

“It doesn’t seem trifling at all,” he replied. “Perhaps, Socrates, the proverb is true: ‘beautiful things are difficult.’”

“So it appears,” I said. “Indeed, you should know, Glaucon, that in my view we will never get an exact grasp (ἀκριβῶς . . . οὐ μὴ ποτε λάβωμεν) of the matter on the basis of procedures (μεθόδων) such as we’re now using in the discussion—for it’s a different path, longer and fuller, that leads to this. Perhaps, however, we can answer the question on the level of (ἀξιῶς) what’s been said and considered so far.”

“Mustn’t that content us?” he replied. “That would be enough for me, at present.”

“Well, then,” I said, “that will also be quite enough for me.” (435c4–d8)<sup>3</sup>

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the *Philebus* and the *Statesman*, is capable of this. The analogy must be sought on the basis of what dialectical analysis finds and not, as in the *Republic*, as an alternative to it; that is, we must take the “longer path” before we will be in position to assess the claims of the ‘shorter path.’ For an exegesis of the dialectical account of the city offered in the *Statesman*, see my *The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004).

2. For the Greek I have used the Oxford edition, *Platonis Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). I am responsible for all the translations in this essay, but I have often deferred to Tom Griffith’s *The Republic/Plato*, edited by G. R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and to Dorothea Frede’s *Plato, Philebus* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993). I have also found useful G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve’s *Plato, Republic* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), Frede’s *Platon: Philebos, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1997), and H. N. Fowler’s *Plato: Politicus, Philebus* (1925; reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

3. Surprisingly, this passage is rarely discussed; none of the works cited in n. 5 below, for instance, give it close attention. Two exceptions are Thomas Tuozzo, in his commentary on Christopher Bobonich’s paper at the Princeton Classics Colloquium in December 1996 (“Politics and Plato’s Late Ethical Psychology”), and Bobonich himself in his recent *Plato’s Utopia Recast* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002). Tuozzo offered in passing this intriguing remark: “Socrates in the *Republic* makes clear that there is a more fundamental account of the soul than the tripartite one he gives in that dialogue (see 435c–d) . . . . Something very like such a fundamental account is attempted, I think, in the *Philebus*.” Bobonich (perhaps in reply?) reserves his discussion for a footnote, n. 11 on pp. 527–28; see, for discussion, my n. 16 below. A third exception is David Roochnik’s very stimulating *Beautiful City: The Dialectical Character of Plato’s Republic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003). Roochnik, pp. 30–31, reads 435d as

In this exchange Socrates is willing to accommodate Glaucon, agreeing to proceed “on the level of” the city-soul analogy. Later, however, going out of his way to recall his objection at 435c–d, he expresses serious misgivings about his earlier agreeableness:

“We said, I believe, that in order to get the finest view possible (κάλλιστα . . . κατιδεῖν) of these matters, another, longer way around (μακροτέρα . . . περίοδος) would be needed, and that to the one who took it they would be clearly revealed, but that it was possible to give demonstrations that would be up to the standard (ἐπομένως) of the previous argument. And you said that would be enough. So it seems to me that our discussion at that time was lacking in exactness (τῆς . . . ἀκριβείας . . . ἔλλιπῆ)—whether or not it satisfied you is for you to say.”

“I thought you gave us good measure,” he said, “and so, apparently, did the rest of us.”

“Any measure of such things that falls short in any way of that which *is* (τοῦ ὄντος),” I replied, “is not altogether (οὐ πᾶν) good measure, for nothing incomplete is the measure of anything—but to some it sometimes seems that enough has been done and that no further inquiry is needed.”

“Indeed,” he said, “this is something many feel out of complacency.”

“That’s a condition,” I replied, “that least of all befits a guardian of a city and its laws.”

“That’s likely so,” he said.

“Well, then, friend,” I said, “such a man must take the longer way round (τὴν μακροτέραν [ὁδὸν] . . . περιτέον) . . .” (504b1–c9)

Needless to say, these passages cast a shadow over Socrates’ account in the *Republic*. But how substantive an objection does Socrates intend by faulting his division for its lack of “exactness”? In being set at “the level of what’s been said and considered thus far,” how far short does it fall of the “finest view possible” that “tak[ing] the longer way around” will en-

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an acknowledgment of the abstractness of the account of the tripartite soul in Book IV and, in its reference to a “longer road,” an anticipation of the dialectical negation and reconception of the soul effected by the introductions of eros and time in Books V–VII and VIII–X. While I welcome the deepening and enrichment of the very notion of the soul within the *Republic* that Roochnik’s attention to the narrative movement of the dialogue lets come to view, I think he has misidentified the “longer path,” failing to recognize Socrates’ specification of it at 504b–e when, recalling 435c–d and calling again for a more “exact grasp” of the soul and its virtues, Socrates identifies it as the course that will lead the philosophical guardian to the study of the Good (see especially c–d); this is the path that leads through the five mathematical studies to dialectic, and Socrates does *not* attempt it within the *Republic*.

able? To answer these questions we must, of course, discover that “view” by taking the “longer and fuller path.” The substantive difficulty of this task is compounded by Socrates’ reticence. The “longer path” is the educational route that the philosopher-king must take, and Socrates, after naming its goal, understanding of the Good, and outlining the five mathematical studies with which one must begin, refuses even to describe the study of dialectic that comes next. Glaucon, he explains, would not “be able to follow . . . any longer,” for to do so, he would have to move beyond “seeing an image” of dialectic to “seeing the truth itself” (533a1–3). We are thus left to wonder when, if ever, Plato picks up the trail. Is there a text in which he supplants Socrates’ account in *Republic* IV with another that yields a more “exact grasp”—indeed, “the truth itself”—of the soul? If there is, what is the new “view” that it gives us, and by what new “procedures” does it make its way?

True to the Socratic character of his dialogues, Plato never straightforwardly presents an alternative account. But, I will argue, in Socrates’ distinctions of the kinds of pleasure and of knowledge in *Philebus* 31b–59d, he offers to the reader who emerges from the *Republic* committed to the “longer path” both the pointed provocation to seek this “finest view possible” and the resources for reaching it. To make this proposal intelligible, we must address four sets of questions. (1) What are the problems and limitations of the tripartition of the soul that Socrates’ own objections suggest? (2) What is the route of the “longer path,” and where on it do we find ourselves in position to gain the “finest view possible”? (3) If (as I shall propose) it is with the *Philebus*’s offering of the god-given method (16cff.)<sup>4</sup> of non-bifurcatory division that we reach this position, what are the “procedures” that constitute this method, and what structure does it disclose in the subject matter that one investigates by means of it? (4) Finally, just how do Socrates’ distinctions of the kinds of pleasure and of knowledge, when considered in light of the god-given method, provide the resources for the account of the soul that Socrates holds back from giving in the *Republic*?

4. Socrates calls this method “a gift from the gods” at 16c5. As a matter of convenience, I will henceforth refer to it as the “god-given” method.



I. PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE  
TRIPARTITION OF THE SOUL

What are the problems and limitations of the tripartition of the soul *that Socrates' own objections suggest*? This restrictive clause is important. The wide-ranging and often fascinating literature on the tripartition has exposed a heterogeneous host of difficulties;<sup>5</sup> starting with these, however, would be a mistake. Our goal is to discover, somewhere along the "longer path," what Plato understands as the "finest view possible." Our heuristic assumption is that *by having Socrates himself object* to the account he is about to give, Plato is indicating its limitations and challenging us to seek to overcome them in order to reach the "finest view." To accept this challenge, we should take as our point of departure whatever orienting implications we may find *in the language with which Plato has Socrates express his misgivings*. There are at least five passages to note.

(a) "... an exact grasp . . ."

What is the "exactness" that "procedures such as we are now using" must necessarily lack? With the exception of Socrates' reiteration of his objection at 504b–d (see especially 504b5, e1–3), Plato does not have Socrates return to the theme of ἀκρίβεια in the *Republic*; in fact, the only sustained text<sup>6</sup> in all the dialogues that addresses it is *Philebus* 55c–59d,

5. Among the discussions from which I have learned the most are, in addition to those noted in n. 3: David Sachs, "A Fallacy in Plato's *Republic*," *Philosophical Review* 72 (1963): 141–5; Bernard Williams, "The Analogy of City and Soul in Plato's *Republic*," in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, edited by E. N. Lee et al. (= *Phronesis* suppl. vol. 1) (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), 196–206 (reprinted in *Essays on Plato's Psychology*, edited by Ellen Wagner [New York: Lexington, 2001]); Gregory Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness in the *Republic*," in his *Platonic Studies*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 111–39; Christopher Bobonich, "Akrasia and Agency in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 76 (1994): 3–36 (reprinted in *Essays on Plato's Psychology*, ed. Wagner); Fred Miller, "Plato on the Parts of the Soul," in *Plato and Platonism*, edited by J. M. Van Ophuisjen, *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* 33 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 84–101; Nicholas Smith, "Plato's Analogy of Soul and State," *Journal of Ethics* 3 (1999): 31–49 (reprinted in *Essays on Plato's Psychology*, ed. Wagner); G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato's "Republic"* (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2003). My own earlier contribution is "Platonic Provocations: Reflections on the Soul and the Good in the *Republic*," in *Platonic Investigations*, edited by Dominic O'Meara, *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy* 13 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 163–93.

6. There is, however, at *Statesman* 284d an important allusion by the Eleatic Visitor to a fu-

Socrates' distinction of the kinds of knowledge. We will of course come back to this passage when, in Part IV (a), we turn to question (4). But we must take a provisional look now, for Socrates' treatment of ἀκρίβεια there begins to show us the different kind of analysis of the embodied soul that Plato already envisages in the *Republic*.

At *Philebus* 55c–59d, Socrates takes up “knowledge as it is pursued in the [various] studies” (τῆς περὶ τὰ μαθήματα ἐπιστήμης, 55d1–2) and sorts it into an array of kinds by four distinctions. By the first, the opposition of “the craftsmanly” (τὸ δημιουργικόν) and the disciplines “concerned with education and nourishment” (περὶ παιδείαν καὶ τροφήν, d2–3), he opens up the full field of arts and sciences. By the next three he makes his way, step by step, from the disciplines most concerned with physical production to those most devoted to theoretical truth, articulating a continuum that leads from the “less” to the “more” “exact”<sup>7</sup> (or, in his pointed term to indicate the converse, from the “more impure” [ἀκαθαρτότερα, 55d7–8] to the less). Thus his second distinction opposes to the “manual arts” (d5) that rely on “the educated guesswork of sense perception schooled by experience and practice” (e5–7) those arts that, especially by using drafting and measuring tools like the compass and the carpenter's square, are forms of applied mathematics (56b–c). Though he also mentions medicine, agriculture, navigation, and military strategy, Socrates picks as the extreme case of the first sort the art of tuning in music; the builder's art is his paradigm of the second. Then in his third distinction he opposes to the applied mathematics in building the pure mathematics that is practiced “in accord with philosophy” (56e8). He marks the difference by distinguishing the sense perceptible units—as different from one another as two “herds” or two “armies”—counted in applied mathematics from the perfectly homogeneous, hence non-empirical units that constitute the object field in pure arithmetic (56e). (An analogous distinction is surely implied between, for example, the architect's drawn figures and molded shapes and the ideal figures that, transcending in their perfection the diagrams and models constructed to represent them, are the real referents in pure geometry).<sup>8</sup>

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ture “explication of the exact itself” (τὴν περὶ αὐτὸ τὰκριβὲς ἀπόδειξιν) to which what he “now” says about due measure will be essential. But Plato does not have the Visitor go on to explain.

7. Variants of “exact” appear at 56b5, c5, c8, 57c3, d1, e3, 58c3, 59a11; cf. also 59d5.

8. See *Republic* 510d5–7.

With this shift in the object field, Socrates crosses from “the craftsmanly” arts into the region of those “concerned with education and nourishment”; most importantly for us, he marks this movement as a second advance in the degree of “exactness.” “Let it be said,” he declares at 57c9–d2, “that whereas these arts [sc., that involve mathematics] are greatly superior to the rest, those among these whose dealing with measures and numbers is motivated by the spirit of true philosophers are immensely superior to the others in exactness (ἀκριβείᾳ) and truth.” Still, this is not the extreme; Socrates reaches this only with his final distinction, in which he claims for “the power of dialectic” (e6–7) the status of most exact, surpassing even pure mathematics. Socrates grants dialectic this eminence because, he says, its subject matter is “what is, namely, that which really [is] and is by nature forever the same in every way” (τὸ ὄν καὶ τὸ ὄντως καὶ τὸ κατὰ ταῦτὸν ἀεὶ πεφυκὸς πάντως, 58a2–3).

This language, both grand and vague, gives us two obvious questions: what is it that “really is” and “is forever the same”? And how does the grasp of it achieved by dialectic surpass in exactness the grasp of mathematical order achieved in pure arithmetic and geometry? In this passage Socrates only points to the difference in subject matter that his privileging of dialectic implies, distinguishing without explanation “those ‘things’ that are always in the same condition and in like manner hold themselves free of any admixture” (τὰ ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ὡσαύτως ἀμεικτότατα ἔχοντα) and “[that which] is as akin to those ‘things’ as possible” (ἐκείνων ὅτι μάλιστα ἐστὶ συγγενές; 59c3–5). What does each of these kinds refer to, and how are they related? In three other passages in the dialogue, Socrates makes what I regard as unmistakable references to forms: at 15a–b he alludes to the evidently indivisible “ones” that “admit of neither generation nor destruction,” for example “man,” “ox,” “the beautiful,” and “the good”; at 62a he speaks of “justice itself,” then of “circle and sphere, the divine sphere itself”; and in his extended reflection on the god-given method at 16c ff. he explains how dialectical inquiry may begin with the recognition of a “single form” (μίαν ἰδέαν, d1), then proceed to distinguish “two . . . or three or some other number [of forms].”<sup>9</sup> We will of course come back to this last passage and discuss it in de-

9. That “forms” is the understood referent is secured by the feminine ending of τρεῖς, “three” (16d4), which refers back to ἰδέαν, “form,” at d1. See Andrew Barker, “Plato’s *Philebus*:

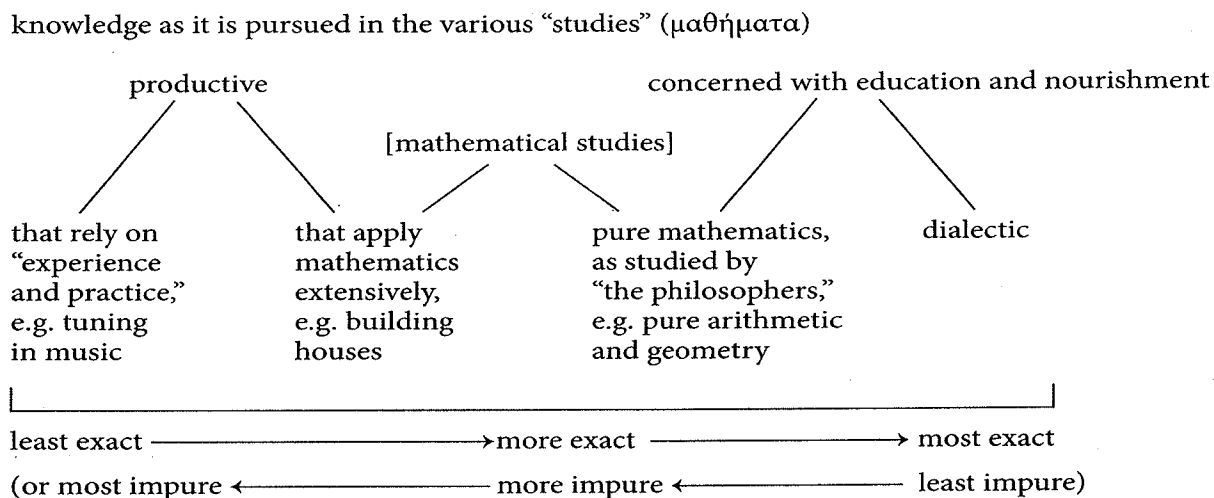
tail in Part III. At this point, I can only articulate its key contribution to our understanding of 59c3–5 and then defer until Part III the exegesis of the god-given method that will secure this. Here is the key point: forms imply, as a normative structure for the sensibles that instantiate them, the kind of mathematical order that is studied, paradigmatically, by harmonics. Since dialectic studies the forms, and since the forms have this causal priority to mathematical by virtue of their implication of them, dialectic does indeed surpass even pure mathematics, speaking with the “the most exact truth” (59a11–b1) of all; since, however, mathematics also transcend becoming and—again, as we shall see in Part III—are implied by forms, they are “as akin to [forms] as possible” (59c5, cited above).

What light, then, do Socrates’ distinctions at *Philebus* 55c–59d shed on the notion of “exactness”? Taking the four distinctions together, we can reconstruct the full continuum Socrates traces (see figure 1). As the criterion for this ordering, “exactness” signifies the kind of clarity and precision that mathematical subject matter allows. But Socrates’ continuum suggests two important qualifications. First, in turning from mathematical objects to forms, thought becomes even more “exact”; thus, mathematical precision turns out to constitute only the penultimate degree of “exactness.” As given paradigmatically by the lucidity of a dialectical knowledge of forms, “exactness” itself is, rather, adequacy to “what really is.” Second, as we move along the continuum in the direction of greater exactness, we don’t leave the empirical behind so much as we bring out, more and more fully, the non-empirical intelligibility that lies at its core; this is suggested by the key placement of applied mathematics between thoroughly empirical knowledge and pure mathematics, for pure mathematics studies in and for themselves, or in terms adequate to these, the sorts of mathematical structure that applied mathematics discloses *in* the objects of empirical knowledge. This connects importantly with my claim, to be argued later, that forms imply mathematical order. To achieve the “exactness” of dialectical knowledge of the forms is not to leave the empirical behind; rather, it is to disclose in its own terms the eidetic and mathematical order that lies at the heart of the empirical.

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The Numbering of a Unity,” in *Dialogues with Plato* (= *Apeiron* 29 [1996]), edited by E. Benitez (Edmonton: Academic Printing and Publishing, 1996), 143–64.

FIGURE 1



Without yet being in position to see just what this might mean, we can mark the implications of the *Philebus* passage with a leading question: does Plato, in having Socrates fault the tripartition of the embodied soul as "lacking in exactness," envisage the supplanting of it by an account that will bring out its eidetic and mathematical order?

(b) "a longer and fuller path . . ."

If it is such an account that Socrates has in mind when he speaks of the "finest view possible" of the soul, to become able to give it will indeed require taking a "longer and fuller path" (435d3). Socrates first speaks of what will give this "path" its length and fullness when he reiterates his objection to the tripartition at 504b–e. What he there projects fits well in its major features with the continuum Plato has him present at *Philebus* 55c–59d. The goal is understanding of the Good (505a). This requires propaedeutic study of the five mathematical disciplines, by which one prepares oneself for the dialectical study of the forms. The most obvious feature of this preparation is that it leads to the ability essential for dialectic, the ability to think "without availing oneself in any way of anything sensible but, instead, having recourse to forms themselves, passing to forms through forms and end[ing] in forms" (511c1–2).

But several more particular points should be of special interest to us. First, the entry into the first mathematical study, “calculation and arithmetic” (λογιστική τε καὶ ἀριθμητική, 525a9), involves rejecting the sense perceptible units counted up by, for example, “tradesmen and retailers” (c4), each of which is always also many, in favor of the perfectly indivisible (525e) and homogeneous (526a) units of pure arithmetic; this is just the turn from the applied mathematics of the “manual arts” to the theoretical mathematics practiced by “philosophers” that Socrates traced in the *Philebus*. Second, even while the major movement from “calculation and arithmetic” through geometrical studies to harmonics leads thought to an ever more abstract subject matter, breaking the hold of picture-thinking by moving from figurative arrays of units to pure figures to ratios, within the three geometrical studies there is also a secondary counter-motion that leads, without abandoning mathematical abstractness, back to the world: thought moves from the two-dimensional figures of plane geometry to the three-dimensional figures of solid geometry to the setting of the three-dimensional into time in “astronomy.” Thus, even as one becomes ever more capable of contemplating *abstract structure*, one is also brought to recognize it as the *structure of the sensible*.<sup>10</sup> We have just seen this same immanence of abstract structure as it is implied by the turn from applied to pure mathematics in the *Philebus*. Finally, there is an intriguing hint that the turn from mathematics to forms in the “longer path” is to be understood as a turn beyond mathematical order to that which, as its source, manifests itself in this order. At 532c1–2 Socrates credits the man who is just emerging from the cave with a “newly acquired ability to look at divine images in water and at shadows of the ‘things’ that are” (τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων). As “divine” and outside the cave, these “images” are not sensibles; and as “of the ‘things’ that are,” that is, of forms, they are not themselves forms but images “of” them; rather, both as between sensibles and forms and as a subject matter that the man emerging from the cave has only “newly acquired” the “ability to look at,” they must be the objects of mathematics. But if this is right, then mathematics are in some way “images” of forms, and forms, conversely, are in this way manifest in mathematical order. In each of these three re-

10. See my “Figure, Ratio, Form: Plato’s Five Mathematical Studies,” in *Recognition, Remembrance and Reality: New Essays on Plato’s Epistemology and Metaphysics* (= *Apeiron* 32, 4 [1999]), edited by Mark McPherran (Edmonton: Academic Printing and Publishing, 2000), 73–88.

spects, the course of the “longer path” appears to proceed along the continuum that Plato has Socrates trace at *Philebus* 55c–59d.

(c) “. . . that falls short of that which is . . .”

In another important respect, however, the continuum in the *Philebus* may give a misleading sense of the character of the “longer path.” The pivotal project for one on that path is the “conversion” of the soul from becoming to being (518c), and this makes for a radical *dis*-continuity in the traveler’s intellectual and spiritual life. By his powerful metaphors of awakening from a dream (cf. 476cff.) and of being freed from enchantment in the cave and ascending into the hitherto unsuspected region of the sun (514aff.), Socrates conveys nothing less than the breakthrough to a new sense of reality. Recognizing this helps to explain his more critical attitude when at 504aff. he reminds Adeimantus of his earlier challenge to the account of the soul in *Republic* IV; now that he has introduced the forms, the tripartition is exposed as “incomplete” in the fundamental sense of “fall[ing] short . . . of that which *is*” (c1–2).

We can bring into focus just how it falls short—and in the process, perhaps, gain another glimpse of the alternative account that Plato may envisage—by recalling the divided line. One who knows nothing of the “longer path” not only lacks the “thought” and “understanding” (511d) cultivated by mathematical study and dialectic, but he also lacks a genuine awareness of what it is that he thereby fails to understand. His basic attitude will be that of “trust,” πίστις (511e1), the presumption that “the animals around us, all the plants, and the whole class of man-made goods” (510a)—that is, individuals perceptible to sense—are the basic realities. Even if, like Glaucon and Adeimantus, he has heard from Socrates the doctrine that there are forms, his soul will still be turned toward becoming rather than being; without the educational work of mathematics, he will depend on “images” (cf. 533a), taking his bearing toward the forms from sense experience and conceiving forms on the model of spatio-temporal things. But, as even the keen young Socrates himself is portrayed as having to be brought to realize by a Platonic “Parmenides,” forms are radically unlike sensibles, being unique, simple,<sup>11</sup> not subject to

11. This simplicity is incompatible with physical complexity but not with logical complexity. See my *Plato’s Parmenides: The Conversion of the Soul* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986; reprint, University Park: Penn State, 1991), Epilogue, B.

spatial or temporal determinations, and, in this transcendence, causally prior to all that is subject to them.<sup>12</sup> Liberating oneself from the habits of mind that go with “trust” and coming to conceive the forms in terms appropriate to them is, as the “conversion” from becoming to being, the crux of the “longer path.” The thinker who has not made the “conversion” cannot help but misconceive “that which is,” treating the forms in terms proper to sense perceptible individuals.

(d) “. . . on the level of what’s been said and considered so far . . .”

It is this inevitable mistreatment that Plato has Socrates allude to by implicitly criticizing his account of the soul in Book IV as “on the level of what’s been said and considered so far” (435d4–5). Socrates, we recall, hypothesizes the analogy of the individual—that is, of the embodied soul—to the city in order to be able to use the justice of the city as an orienting analogue in seeking the justice of the individual. And he builds up his good city from the individuals who make it up, gathering them into groups in accord with the kinds of work the well-being of the city requires of them; hence the city is composed of “producers” and “guardians,” with these latter then re-characterized, once the most civic-minded among them are separated out and put in charge of the whole, as “rulers” and “auxiliaries.” These groups are easy to hold in mind, for the form, εἶδος, that unites each of them is, as the form of its kind of work or agency, *borne and exhibited by the individuals* who make up that group. To lay out his good city, then, Socrates does not need to challenge the “trust” that takes sense perceptible individuals as the basic realities. When it comes time to turn from the city to the embodied soul, however, Socrates faces an altogether different situation. On the one hand, he knows the “three forms” (435c5)—or, at least, analogues of them—that he seeks. On the other hand, since he seeks *within* the individual soul, it is now suddenly unclear what it is that might bear and exhibit these forms. But this means that he can no longer rely on the “trust” that orients the un-“converted” Glaucon and Adeimantus—or, more to the point, that if he does, he will have to project into the individual soul a further set of individuals as the bearers of the three forms within it. Socrates there-

12. The present tense in which we make predications of forms is, as implicating neither past nor future, in this sense atemporal. See *Parmenides* 141eff. (discussed in my *Plato’s Parmenides*, cited in n. 11) and *Timaeus* 37e–38b.



fore stands at a crossroads. Should he interrupt the project of working out the analogy in order to take up the major new project to which it has brought him, the project of learning to think the forms in their own terms, that is, in their difference from and priority to the participants that bear them? As his call for “exactness” has led us to see, this would be to take the “longer and fuller path.” Or should he tolerate the violence, unsuspected by the “trusting,” with which this very “trust” pre-empts “understanding”—all for the sake of completing the analogy and gaining the rich insight that it can provide into the dynamics of the soul and, too, of the city?<sup>13</sup>

Plato, I am in the process of arguing, will have it both ways. On the one hand, in Book IV he has Socrates proceed “on the level of what’s been said and considered so far,” representing the three “forms” (or, elsewhere, “kinds” or “beings” or “parts”)<sup>14</sup> that he distinguishes within the soul as *three agent-like individuals*. Thus, for example, he tells Glaucon how “the calculative” (τὸ λογιστικόν) and “the appetitive” (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) may fall into “civil war” (440a, b, e, 442d), and how “the spirited” (τὸ θυμοειδές) allies itself with one against the other (440e–441a); how “the calculative” answers the desires of “the appetitive” with its own negative desires (439c, cf. 437c) and speaks with passion to “the spirited” (441b), while both “the appetitive” and “the spirited” respond to each other (440a–b) and to the counsel of “the calculative” with understanding (440c–d) and beliefs of their own (442c); and how, at best, “the spirited” has the understanding to yield to “the calculative’s” persuasion (441e) that it should bring “the appetitive” too (442b), along with itself, to agree that “the calculative” should rule (442c). In these various ways, each of the three forms within the soul is represented as if it were itself an individual agent with, moreover, two or three of these very forms within itself as well.<sup>15</sup>

13. For a particularly astute discussion of this yield of insight, see Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato’s Republic*, cited in n. 3.

14. That is, γένη (441a1, c6, 443d3, 444b5), ὄντα (436a9, 443d5, 444b1), and μέρη (442b11, c5, 444b3), respectively. εἶδη, “forms,” appears at 435c1, c5, e2, 439e2, 440e8, e9.

15. Christopher Bobonich offers a valuable discussion of this in his *Plato’s Utopia Recast*, esp. ch. 3.2. He reserves for a footnote, however, any discussion of 435c–d: in n. 11, pp. 527–28, he rejects regarding Socrates’ “Book 4 argument” as merely “metaphorical” and taking Plato to invite us to “discard its conclusions” as “false” once we have completed the “deeper inquiry” of the “longer and fuller path.” I agree that the latter stance, thus formulated, is too one-sided to be warranted by Socrates’ rhetoric; see n. 16 below. But I think that we should not err in the

On the other hand, even as Plato has Socrates give this depiction of the soul as a community of agents, he also has him object, marking—and, so, setting as a future task—the “longer and fuller path” that will lead beyond it.<sup>16</sup>

(e) “. . . like the three boundary notes in a musical mode . . .”

Is there, finally, any indication of what the supplanting account might look like? Perhaps. At 443d5–e2 Socrates characterizes the just individual and the condition of his soul by saying that he

has harmonized the three beings (τρία ὄντα),<sup>17</sup> just like the three boundary notes in a musical mode (ὄρους τρεῖς ἀρμονίας), *neatē* and *hypatē* and *mesē* (νεάτης τε καὶ ὑπάτης καὶ μέσης). And if there should be any others in between

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opposite direction either and minimize, as Bobonich tends to do (see point 2 in his footnote), the objection that the account in Book IV fails to give us an “exact grasp” of the soul; we will not be in position to determine the seriousness of this objection until we see better what such “exactness,” once achieved, may bring into view. (Hence the very project of this essay.) Two lesser points: Socrates *does* point to the partial falsehood—and, connotatively, the fictional character—of his account when he remarks with ambiguous irony at 444a5–6, “I don’t suppose that we’ll seem to be telling a complete falsehood (πάνυ τι . . . ψεύδεσθαι).” (This is Reeve’s translation.) And, secondly, Socrates *does* arguably point to an alternative that does not project “agent-like parts” into the soul when he offers his simile of musical notes at 443d5–e2; I will discuss this simile in subsection (e) below.

16. If (as I will argue in Part IV below) the “longer path” does lead to a more “exact” account of the embodied soul, what status does this imply for the *Republic*’s tripartition of the soul? Until we have reached the more “exact” account, we will not be in position to say. For the sake of this future reflection, however, we should note how Plato lets this issue arise with Adeimantus’ remark and Socrates’ reply at 504b8 and c1–3. Adeimantus’ expression μετρίως suggests that the account stands as “duly measured” (or a “mean”), implying that even though it may not be the definitive or fully adequate account, it is—to interpret μετρίως with language borrowed from the *Statesman*’s discussion of τὸ μέτριον, “due measure”—“appropriate” to the context and, so, “timely” and “fitting” (284e). Socrates’ reply to Adeimantus does not directly contradict this suggestion. He denies that any account that “falls short of that which *is*” can be the measure of anything else, not that the account in Book IV, when measured by an account that is adequate to “what *is*,” may emerge as “appropriate” to the context. (Note in this regard his curiously ambiguous οὐ πάνυ [504c2], which can mean either “not at all” or “not altogether.”) What is more, Socrates has himself suggested such “mean”-status for his account with his ἐπιεικῶς (“pretty much,” “as is reasonable,” “as is meet”) at 441c5, and he will do so again at 612a6.

17. I can find no very helpful English translation of Socrates’ ὄντα. My “beings” is literal, rendering the Greek substantivized plural present participle with the precisely corresponding English. But “beings” risks calling to mind ‘things’ or ‘individuals’ whereas ὄντα, while it *may* do so, may also foreground the notion of being and, with this, call to mind the sorts of principles and/or kinds that, for Plato, precede and are basic to things or individuals; an adequate translation would preserve this ambiguity, letting the reader’s attunement determine how it

FIGURE 2



(μεταξύ), he binds them all together and becomes in every way a unity of many, moderate and harmonious (σώφρονα καὶ ἡρμουςμένον).

The musical “modes” were the groups of eight harmonious tones, distributed over an octave, from which a performer would draw in singing or playing a melody.<sup>18</sup> Each mode was structured as two tetrachords, separated by a whole tone, with the boundary notes of each tetrachord fixed at an interval of a fourth; the inner notes in each tetrachord were movable,<sup>19</sup> yielding a remarkable plurality of modes and their variants. *Neatē* and *hypatē* were the names of the outer notes in the mode, highest and lowest, respectively, and *mesē* was the name of the inner boundary note for the lower tetrachord, a fourth higher than *hypatē* and a fifth lower than *neatē*. We might diagram the skeletal structure of a mode as is shown in figure 2.

Socrates’ simile is striking for several reasons. First, his reference to the possibility of there being “other” kinds in the soul than the “three” is an indirect acknowledgment of the artificiality of the tripartition; he holds open the possibility that the city/soul analogy—or, more precisely, that the analogy of the soul to the specifically *tripartite* city of Books II–IV—may conceal as well as reveal elements in the soul and, so, misrepresent the soul’s ownmost structure.<sup>20</sup> Beyond this, his recourse to the

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is to be resolved—and, for the reflective reader, thereby providing an occasion for both self-knowledge and ontological inquiry.

18. Socrates has discussed the various modes in laying out the musical education of the guardians at 398c–399e. Plato will have him make crucial use of the modes at *Philebus* 17b–e (and 26a).

19. As, further, were the intervals themselves; but to enter into discussion of the systems of modes yielded by rearranging the intervals would take us beyond the context of Socrates’ simile here, for *neatē*, *mesē*, and *hypatē* would no longer be the boundary notes. Socrates does refer to these systems in the *Philebus*, however. For general and specific background, see M. L. West, *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writings*, vols. 1 and 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), respectively.

20. The implication of “others in between,” that the soul may contain more than the three

one-many structure of a musical mode fits uncannily well with his projection of an “exact” account as the yield of the “longer path.” The notes that make a mode establish a normative order, with the intervals between the notes—or, to say the same thing, the differences between the various balances of high and low that the notes determine—expressible as a set of ratios. Socrates has not yet spoken of the five mathematical studies, nor, therefore, of harmonics, the last of the five studies before the turn to dialectic and the forms. But Plato will have him do so—and not only in *Republic* VII but also in the *Philebus*, where Socrates will introduce the structure of musical modes as one of two paradigms of the eidetic and mathematical order that dialectic discloses.<sup>21</sup> Does Plato, in having Socrates construct this simile at *Republic* 443d–e, pointedly anticipate the account—or, to speak more circumspectly, the general sort of account<sup>22</sup>—that will provide the “exactness” that the tripartition lacks?

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parts required by its status as analogue to the tripartite city, has been noted by N. R. Murphy, *The Interpretation of Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), 30; and N. D. Smith, “Plato's Analogy of Soul and State,” cited in n. 5. Very recently this interpretation has been contested by G. R. F. Ferrari, “The Three-Part Soul,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, edited by G. R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 189f. Ferrari first credits David Sedley with the informally conveyed suggestion that the key clause, “if there should be any others in between” (443d7), is meant only to “conced[e] that a musical scale—*unlike* the soul—does, as it happens, contain more than three elements” (189, Ferrari's italics). He then offers his own distinct interpretation that Socrates intends not so much to maintain “musical accuracy” but instead to indicate that the virtuous man “must deal with however many parts there are to his soul—even if there are fewer than three, not more” (190). Ferrari connects this possibility of there being fewer than three to Socrates' aporetic remarks at 612a about “the form the soul might take in the afterlife.” But both Sedley's suggestion and Ferrari's response are unpersuasive. First of all, restricting the relevance of the trouble-making clause—“and if there should be any others in between”—to the musical side of the simile is implausible; indeed, Socrates' open-ended hypothetical hardly applies to musical modes, which definitely do have “other [notes] in between” the three that are named, whereas it fits the uncertain case of the soul very well; as we have seen, Socrates has made a point of warning that applying the analogy with the city “will never [yield] an exact grasp” (435d) of what parts the soul may have. Secondly, Ferrari's association of the passage with 612a seems strained, for at 443d Socrates is speaking of the embodied soul, not of the soul that has separated from the body in the afterlife.

21. Also striking is Timaeus's construction of soul out of the ratios implied by the series of doubles and triples at *Timaeus* 35bff.

22. I mean to leave open the question of whether we should read Plato with an eye to the development of his thinking or to the systematic unity of his ideas. I think that neither developmentalism nor unitarianism serves us well as a basic hermeneutic stance; this is not only because each misses in advance the merits of the other's basic idea but also because of particular deficiencies not necessary to but nonetheless characteristic of each. Developmentalism (1) tends to ignore what Charles Kahn has nicely called the rhetorical “opacity” of the dialogues,

## II. THE ROUTE OF THE “LONGER PATH”: SUBSTANTIVE AND HERMENEUTIC NOTES

To provide the context for pursuing the alternative account, we must first try to identify the route of the “longer path” and the place on it where we may find ourselves in position to gain the “finest view possible.” Because, however, Plato has Socrates refuse Adeimantus’s request for a description of the path after its propaedeutic mathematical phase, we must discover it for ourselves in the later dialogues, and this is a task that goes far beyond the limits of a single essay. Let me therefore defer it to other occasions<sup>23</sup> and offer, for the moment, two sets of synoptic reflections that will position us to turn to the *Philebus*.

### (a) *Adjusting to the Light—Three Phases*

As Plato has Socrates point out, it is one thing to climb out of the cave, quite another for one’s eyes to adjust to the light of the sun (*Republic* 515d–516b, cf. 516eff., 520cff.). This is why, I suggest, we can distinguish roughly three phases, each involving a major expansion of our conceptual horizons, in the post-mathematical stage of the journey along the “longer path.”

[i] *First phase: The “conversion” from sensibles to forms.* By his dramatic portrayals of Theaetetus, brilliant student of the geometer Theodorus, and of the youthful Socrates, Plato makes clear that neither theoretical expertise in mathematics nor, indeed, the explicit recognition that sensibles derive their characters from forms is sufficient for an under-

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incautiously identifying the words of characters in the dialogues with Plato’s own thoughts at the time of composition; (2) generally neglects the likely fact that Plato worked on different dialogues at the same time and reworked the same dialogue over different times; and (3) tends not to consider what, if we can judge by the various remarks on the stages of education that he has Socrates, his “Parmenides,” and the Eleatic Visitor make, Plato may understand as the stages in the development of his readers and the constraints he may understand this to imply for what and how he writes. Unitarianism (1) tends to miss the basic irony and the open-ended character of the dialogues and, (2) where it does find irony, tends to reduce it to the merely pedagogical device of a thinker who, no longer searching, keeps a finished and fully formed doctrine to himself.

23. I have been working on various phases of the “longer path” for some time. See, along with the work cited in notes 10 and 11, also my “Beginning the Longer Way,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato’s “Republic,”* 310–44; and “The *Timaeus* and the ‘Longer Way’: Godly Method and the Constitution of Elements and Animals,” in *Plato’s “Timaeus” as Cultural Icon,* edited by Gretchen Reydam-Schils (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 17–59.

standing of forms that is adequate to them. Theaetetus is shown to fail to respond to the elder Socrates' pointed provocations to introduce forms into the final definition of knowledge ("true judgment with an account") in the *Theaetetus*,<sup>24</sup> and the youthful Socrates is exposed as conceiving forms on the model of sensibles.<sup>25</sup> What is required is the radical distinction, free of dependence on sensible simile, between the kinds of being and unity proper to forms and the kinds proper to sensibles (*Parmenides*, hypotheses I and II), together with a rethinking, now with priority given to forms, of the notion of their "being in" sensibles (hypothesis IIa). This rethinking opens up two lines of fresh insight. On the one hand, Parmenides reconceives the participation of sensibles in forms; in place of Socrates' notion, which keys from sensibles, of their being likenesses of forms, Parmenides introduces the notion of the constitution of the participant by form's imposition of "limit" on the intrinsically "indeterminate" (hypotheses III–IV). On the other hand, he introduces the new conception that forms themselves participate in other forms, and he shows how the resultant eidetic network may be explicated by veridical predications of what each form "is" and "is not" (hypotheses V–VI). Thus he gives the forms their rightful priority: to understand sensibles, one must understand forms, and to understand forms, one must understand their relations with one another.

[ii] *Second phase: Learning to think forms in terms of forms—collection and bifurcatory division.* Again, however, it is one thing to climb out of the cave, another for one's eyes to adjust to the light of the sun. Whereas Parmenides' hypotheses provide the resources for the "conversion" of the soul from sensibles to forms, the Eleatic Visitor's cultivation of collection and division in the *Sophist* and *Statesman* provides the resources for learning the concrete practice of dialectic, the study of forms

24. Many have felt the *reductio* force of the aporetic cast of the *Theaetetus*, connecting its failure to reach a successful definition of knowledge with its failure to introduce forms into its account. See, especially, F. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1957); E. S. Haring, "The *Theaetetus* Ends Well," *Review of Metaphysics* 35 (1982): 509–28. But most accounts fail to show how pointed this connection really is and, so, fail to make the case for this reading as strongly as it needs be made. For closer readings on this issue, see Rosemary Desjardins, "The Horns of Dilemma: Dreaming and Waking Vision in the *Theaetetus*," *Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1981): 109–26; and my "Unity and Logos: A Reading of *Theaetetus* 201c–210a," *Ancient Philosophy* 12 (1992): 87–110.

25. For this point and the rest of the paragraph, see my *Plato's Parmenides*, cited in n. 11 above.

by analysis of their relations to other forms. Some of these resources are metaphysical, and some are methodological. With regard to metaphysics, the Visitor introduces the notion of the “communion” or “blending” of forms to interpret the participation of forms in other forms, and he explicates as communion with Otherness the veridical-predicative “is not” that is necessary for dialectic. With regard to methodology, the Visitor provides illustration after illustration of dialectical procedure, and he both organizes and supplements analysis by introducing the use of examples (e.g., angler, shepherd, weaver) and by the doctrine of due measure. But most important, throughout the *Sophist* and in all but the final set of distinctions in the *Statesman*, the Visitor divides by “bifurcating” (δίχα διελέσθαι, 262c10–d1) or “cutting down the middle” (διὰ μέσων . . . τέμνοντας, 262b6), that is, by distinguishing what a form contains into contrary subkinds that exhaust this content and exclude one another. This methodological rule, which the Visitor first makes explicit at *Statesman* 262a–264b, is of crucial importance for one in the early stages of learning dialectic: because contraries are each a positive and internally integrated “one,” thinking that distinguishes its subject matter according to contrariety is assured of “hitting on forms” (ιδέαις ἄν τις προστυγχάνοι, 262b7). Thus, by submitting one’s thinking to the discipline of “cutting down the middle,” one keeps one’s ‘vision’ focused on forms, letting one’s ‘eyes’ adjust, if not yet to the Good itself, then to the beings the Good ‘illuminates.’

[iii] *Third phase: Non-bifurcatory division and the return to sensibles.* But mastery of bifurcatory division is not the ultimate goal of the “longer path.” The Eleatic Visitor’s practice of bifurcation suffers two important limitations, one of commission and one of omission. First, the methodological requirement to bifurcate, while invaluable in orienting and disciplining for one in the early stages of education in dialectic, will come to seem an arbitrary constraint to one whom this very education has rendered capable of discerning eidetic order in and for itself. As the Visitor indicates by his equal and indifferent acceptance of both the methodologically proper but “lengthier way” and the methodologically violent short-cut at *Statesman* 265a–b, it need not be the case that the forms discerned by “cutting down the middle” reveal rather than conceal the true character of the form under study.<sup>26</sup> As he indicates when he abandons

26. See my *The Philosopher in Plato’s Statesman*, cited in n. 1.

bifurcation in his final set of divisions in the *Statesman*, it may even be “impossible to cut into two” (287c4), in which case to remain obedient to the methodological rule will be to do violence to the eidetic order the method means to disclose. In the language of the *Seventh Letter*, one may end up with an account of “the particular quality” (τὸ ποῖόν τι, 342e3, 343b8) that differentiates a form from certain others rather than, and at the expense of, a disclosure of “the what” (τὸ τί, 343c1) that is its true “being” (τὸ ὄν, 343a1, b8). For this disclosure, accordingly, it may be necessary to set bifurcation aside.

Bifurcatory division suffers a weakness of omission as well. The hypotheses in the *Parmenides*, we noted earlier, reconceive the participation of sensibles in forms, introducing the notion of form’s imposition of “limit” on the intrinsically “indeterminate,” and they also introduce the notion of forms participating in other forms; they do not, however, offer an account of how these two levels of participation relate.<sup>27</sup> Bifurcatory division does not help with this; its focus on the relations of forms leaves the relation between these very relations and sensibles unexplored. As we proceed on the “longer path,” however, and our philosophical ‘vision’ grows more adequate to “that which really is,” we will come to ask for this account. If sensibles are (somehow) constituted by a defining form’s imposition of “limit,” and if this form (in some way) “communes” with other forms, then the “limit” that constitutes a sensible has as its source the defining form *in its relations with those forms with which it communes*.

Accordingly, we need a mode of dialectic that can overcome both of these weaknesses: freed from the constraints and presumption of bifurcation, it must be able to disclose the eidetic order that bifurcation may conceal; and it must be able to show how this order, by its relation to the imposition of “limit” upon the intrinsically “indeterminate,” is constitutive for sensibles. Does Plato ever indicate, farther along the “longer path,” what this new mode of dialectic might be? My proposal, to be explicated in Part III, is that this is just what he has Socrates present as the “gift from the gods to men” at *Philebus* 16c–18d.

27. See my “‘Unwritten Teachings’ in the *Parmenides*,” *Review of Metaphysics* 48 (1995): 591–633, esp. 621–24.



*(b) Platonic Provocation*

These synoptic comments are necessarily sketchy; they may also seem capricious. Is it right to find in the dramatized shortfalls of Theaetetus and the youthful Socrates Plato's summons to the reader to overcome them? Again, is it right to find in the Eleatic Visitor's brief asides on bifurcatory division Plato's indications of a mode of dialectic that supersedes it? These claims reflect my understanding of the Platonic dialogues as pointedly provocative. I have argued for this understanding both generally<sup>28</sup> and with specific textual focus<sup>29</sup> on a number of occasions; here I will restrict myself to a brief explication of the dynamics it alerts us to in the *Philebus*.

Especially if we hear them from the perspective of someone taking the "longer path," the opening nine pages of the *Philebus* are tremendously exciting. The mature Socrates is back in command; he is committed to pursue "to its conclusion" (12b) the question of the identity of the good—explicitly, of the good for living beings, above all for human beings, but implicitly (as he will confirm at 64a), of the Good itself as well; he has introduced what the philosophically prepared reader will recognize as the forms, namely, changeless natures that are each "one" and not subject to generation or destruction, for example, "man" and "ox" and "the beautiful" and "the good" (15a–b); and he is poised to analyze each of the two claimants to the status of the good for a human being, pleasure and knowledge, by a god-given method of collection and *non-bifurcatory* "division of forms" (20c4, cf. 20a6). In all these ways, the stage is set for just that kind of dialectical study of forms and the Good which Socrates posited in the *Republic* as the goal of the "longer path" and toward which, each in its own way, the *Theaetetus*, the *Parmenides*, and the *Sophist* and *Statesman* have been leading.

From this perspective, therefore, Socrates' retreat at 20b is a shock and a disappointment. When Protarchus, having just explained the point of Socrates' method to Philebus, then suddenly protests that the diffi-

28. See the prefaces to my *The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman*, cited in n. 1, and *Plato's Parmenides*, cited in n. 11; see also my "Platonic Mimesis," in *Contextualizing Classics: Ideology, Performance, Dialogue*, edited by Thomas Falkner et al. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 253–66.

29. See esp. my "Platonic Provocations," cited in n. 5 above, and "'The Arguments I Seem to Hear': Argument and Irony in the *Crito*," *Phronesis* 41 (1996): 121–37.

culty of actually putting it into practice will only “plunge us into aporia and raise questions we won’t be able to answer in the present context” (20a1–2, with 19a, c–e), Socrates’ immediate response is to set the method aside and to propose as an alternative the strategy of reflecting on the good life as a mixture of pleasure and knowledge (20b ff.). Why, we will want to ask in a protest of our own, does Socrates so readily accommodate Protarchus? If the answer is that Protarchus, however receptive in spirit, lacks the philosophical preparation to follow Socrates, then we will want to shift the question to the Platonic level: why does Plato give Socrates such a limited interlocutor in the first place? Or, if the point is to pursue the venerable contest between pleasure and knowledge at a level accessible to a non-philosopher,<sup>30</sup> then why have Socrates introduce the god-given method of dialectic in the first place? Why raise the hope of the philosophically attuned reader, only to dash it?

To recognize this as typical Platonic provocation, consider the analogous situation Plato constructs for the reader of the *Parmenides*. The pivotal moment is Parmenides’ replacing of Socrates with the man “least likely to make trouble” (ἥκιστα γὰρ ἂν πολυπραγμονοῖ, 137b6–7), the thoroughly passive and unquestioning “Aristotle.”<sup>31</sup> In the pages leading up to this moment, Plato has had Parmenides deliver a series of seemingly devastating objections to Socrates’ notions of forms and participation, only then to offer his own method of hypothesis as a means of saving the forms; what is more, he agrees to Socrates’ request, seconded by Zeno, to give an exhibition of the method. Then, at the very moment of beginning, Parmenides removes Socrates from the conversation! The effect, intensified by the way the hypotheses unfold, is to draw the reader into direct critical engagement with their content. As Aristotle affirms without inquiry one puzzling inference after another,<sup>32</sup> as the apparent contradictions accumulate and interlace in ever tighter and more complicated knots, and, above all, as the concern to save the forms seems to

30. Socrates introduced this contest and then left it behind in order to turn to the philosophical notion of the Good, at *Republic* 505b–d.

31. Nor, as it did for the listening Socrates (*Theaetetus* 183e ff.), will his experience as interlocutor form him philosophically; Plato has Cephalus note that this “Aristotle” would later become one of the Thirty Tyrants (127d). This knowledge can only intensify the reader’s readiness to be critical of his replies to Parmenides.

32. On several key occasions, moreover, Aristotle gives very problematic answers to Parmenides—see, e.g., 141e4, 144d1–2, 145e1, 159c4, 161c8, 163c7.

disappear utterly from view, one feels the absence of Socrates ever more acutely. We miss the critical energy and insight with which, after Zeno had woven a comparably paradoxical web of contradictions, Socrates forced him to go back to the beginning (127d) and then undercut his contradictions by the distinction between forms and participants. That is, we find ourselves both drawn and challenged to take up Socrates' perspective for ourselves and, by identifying and pressing the questions that Aristotle does not ask, to seek, somehow, both to disarm Parmenides' contradictions and to save the forms.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise in the *Philebus*, by having Socrates set up the concrete prospect of a dialectical study of the good, then yield to Protarchus's anxiety and set the god-given method aside, Plato both entices and challenges us to take up the method for ourselves. And—I want to propose—as with Parmenides' hypotheses, so with Socrates' distinctions of the kinds of pleasure and of knowledge, Plato provides us with the resources we require for this pursuit of the method to flourish. Accordingly, we shall first reconstruct the method (Part III), then consider Socrates' distinctions in light of it (Part IV).

### III. A "GIFT FROM GODS TO MEN": *PHILEBUS* 16C–18D, 23C–27C

What, then, are the procedures that constitute the god-given method, and what structure does it disclose in the subject matter that one investigates by means of it? Socrates first gives Protarchus a highly schematic introduction (16c–17a), then two illustrations, the accounts of "letter-sounds" (17a–b, resumed at 18a–d) and of the "modes" of music (17b–d). Later, at 23c–27c, he adds a crucial supplement, his account of "limit" and "the indeterminate." We must work through each of these three phases in turn, focusing our understanding of the method as we proceed.<sup>34</sup>

33. See Paul Friedlander, *Plato*, vol. 3 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 200; R. E. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 197–98; my *Plato's Parmenides*, cited in n. 11 above; also F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Parmenides* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1939), 244–45.

34. I have learned a great deal from J. C. B. Gosling's wide-ranging commentary in *Plato, Philebus* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1975) and from Kenneth Sayre's discussion in ch. 3 of his groundbreaking *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1983). See also the discussions by Andrew Barker, "Plato's *Philebus*: The Numbering of a Unity,"

*(a) The Schematic Introduction (16c–17a)*

Plato has Socrates speak with nearly oracular density in his first description of the method; Protarchus's response, a request for clarification, is therefore very welcome.<sup>35</sup> Here, first, are Socrates' central claims. "The things that are ever said to be," he says, "on the one hand are composed of one and many (ἐξ ἑνὸς μὲν καὶ πολλῶν), on the other hand have within themselves, grown together, limit and indeterminacy (πέρας δὲ καὶ ἀπειρίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς σύμφυτον ἐχόντων)." Because they are "ordered that way," the inquirer must begin by "positing and seeking," "within (ἐνοῦσαν)" whatever is under study, "a single form (μίαν ιδέαυ)," must next "seek two, if there are [two], or if there are not, three or some other number [of forms],"<sup>36</sup> and must proceed by treating "each of these ones again in the same way . . . up to the point at which he sees, with regard to the initial one (τὸ κατ' ἀρχὰς ἓν), not only that it is one and many, that is, unlimitedly many (ἓν καὶ πολλὰ καὶ ἀπειρα), but also just how many it is." Socrates stresses this closing point: one may not "apply the form of the indeterminate to the plurality until he sees the total number [of forms] (τὸν ἀριθμὸν . . . πάντα) . . . between the one and the indeterminate"; it is the discernment of these, he says, that distinguishes dialectical from merely eristic discourse.

We can gather under three headings most of the many questions that present themselves. First, there is the issue of *the principles of division*. We should ask about this in, so to speak, both the 'vertical' and the 'horizontal' dimensions. How is the "single form" from which we begin related to the various sets of forms we recognize 'under' it—first of all, to the "two, if there are two, or otherwise three or some other number [of forms]" that we go on to distinguish immediately "after" recognizing it, and then to the further sets of forms that we distinguish by "treating these in the same way"? How, in turn—now to consider the 'horizontal' dimension—

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cited in n. 9; Constance Meinwald, "Prometheus's Bounds: *Peras* and *Apeiron* in Plato's *Philebus*," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*, edited by J. Gentzler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 165–80; Verity Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), ch. 4.3; and George Harvey, "Techne and the Good in Plato's *Statesman* and *Philebus*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 47 (2009): 1–33.

35. Is this a case of the "brevity" that Plato, according to the author of the *Seventh Letter*, deems appropriate for speech concerning the "highest things" [344d, with 341e]?

36. See n. 9 above.

are these latter forms related, each to each other? Finally, just how far should the dialectician attempt to carry the process of division? Socrates does in fact address this last question—but in a way that only refocuses it: seeing that “the original one” is both “one” and “unlimitedly many” is not enough; more importantly, we must recognize “just how many” it is. But how do we know when we have come to the right “many,” that is, that we have not either stopped short of or gone beyond that limited plurality of forms that “the original one” in some sense “is”?

This question turns us, secondly, to the *one-and-many structure* that division discloses. “The things that are ever said to be,” Socrates says, “are composed, on the one hand, of one and many. . . .” Division begins, he says, from the “single form,” but it is “the initial one” that division shows to be also many. Hence we must ask, first, what distinction and relation is to be understood between the “single form” and “the initial one.” Secondly, how can this “one” also be many? Moreover, Socrates declares it plural in two distinct ways; how is it, then, that this “one” can be both “unlimitedly many” and limitedly many, that is, some definite “total number”? What, in each case, are these pluralities pluralities of?

Finally, what is the *conjunction of limit and indeterminacy* of which Socrates speaks? By pairing limit-and-indeterminacy with one-and-many as the two sides of a μὲν/δὲ construction,<sup>37</sup> Socrates implies that these structures are equally fundamental and that they are somehow coordinated. It is therefore striking that he does not use the term for “limit,” namely, πέρας, again in his discussion of the method and, further, that he drops the substantive term ἀπειρία, “indeterminacy,” in favor of the adjectival ἄπειρον, “indeterminate” or “unlimited,” which he uses both explicitly (16d7, 17b4, e3) and implicitly (16d6) to qualify plurality. (The one exception, which we will interpret, is the puzzling phrase, “the form of the indeterminate,” τὴν . . . τοῦ ἀπείρου ιδέα, at 16d7.) For a treatment of limit and indeterminacy in their own right and, so, as the full-fledged complement to one/many structure, Plato makes us wait for Socrates’ distinction of the four kinds at 23c–27c. We shall turn to that in section (c) below.

37. That is, a balanced contrastive pairing, translated as “on the one hand . . . on the other hand . . .”

*(b) The Illustrations: Musical "Modes" and "Letter-Sounds"*

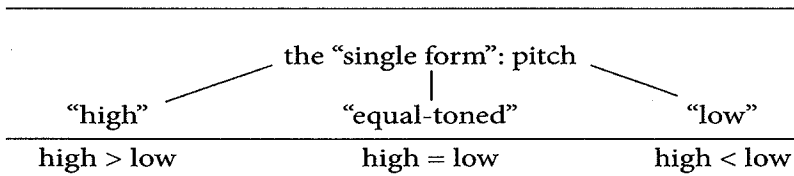
Socrates' illustrations give us rich resources for interpreting his opening account. But we should begin by acknowledging a respect in which they depart from and complicate it. At 17e–18a Protarchus and Philebus both express satisfaction with Socrates' first illustration, the account of musical modes, and urge him to show how the method applies to the question at hand, the contest between pleasure and knowledge. Socrates, however, resists, insisting that he first "go a little further" (18a6) into the method itself. In both his opening account and his division of musical sound, he described the method as beginning with a "single form" and then moving toward the "unlimitedly many" that this form somehow implies. Now he observes that the method can proceed as well in the "opposite" direction. In some cases—as with Theuth's discovery of the letter-sounds—one "is forced first to grasp the indeterminate" (τὸ ἄπειρον); in this event, one should not then proceed "straightaway to the one but, rather, should [first] discern a certain number [of forms], each embracing some plurality, and should conclude (τελευτᾶν) by moving from all of these to a one" (18a9–b3). As we shall see, Socrates' insistence on this second possible sequence is timely; the practice of dialectic invited by his later accounts of pleasure and knowledge must also move gradually from the unlimited many by way of the intermediate "number" of forms, "each embracing some plurality," "to a one."

This difference acknowledged, consider how the two illustrations allow us to respond to our questions concerning, first, the principles of division and, second, the one-and-many structure that division discloses.

[i] *Principles of division.* To begin with, in each illustration dialectic appears to proceed in two phases: an initial set of distinctions lays open the field as a whole within which, subsequently, a set of finer distinctions discloses the sought-for limited many.

Consider first the initial phase in each of the two illustrations. What becomes clear is that even while in our first cuts we may "look for two forms" (16d3), the point is not, as it was with bifurcatory division, to cut "the original one" into mutually exclusive halves. Even if our cuts should do this, the cut is really just instrumental to the deeper disclosure of the "single form's" field of possible instantiations as *a continuous range or series*. Socrates makes this evident when, distinguishing sound "as treated

FIGURE 3



by the art of music" (κατ' ἐκείνην τὴν τέχνην, 17c1)—that is, as his distinction makes immediately evident, pitch—into "low and high," he immediately adds "equal-toned," ὁμότονον, as a "third" (c4). Notes that are "equal-toned" fall between low notes and high notes by striking a relatively equal balance, within themselves, between high and low as such; it is to this relative equality that the "equal-," ὁμο-, of "equal-toned," ὁμότονον, refers.<sup>38</sup> The implications are striking. Even as we set one group over against the other as its opposite, we see that at a deeper level "low" notes and "high" notes differ *in degree*; "low" notes and "high" notes are also, like the "equal-toned," *in each case balances of high and low*, with each note differing from each other by virtue of their differing proportions of high to low. What the initial trifurcation reveals, thus, is a continuum stretching from balances in which, say, low predominates through balances that are relatively equal to balances in which high predominates. We can diagram this as shown in figure 3.

Once we see this, we will recognize the same basic disclosure in Theuth's initial groupings of letter-sounds. But we should note in passing two differences that, as we shall see, set precedents for our work in Part IV. Whereas in the music distinctions the "third" (τρίτον, 17c4) kind mediates the opposition between the first two, in the letter-sound distinctions the "third form" (τρίτον εἶδος, 18c2) reveals the second set of sounds as "the intermediates" (τὰ μέσα, c5) between the first and itself. And whereas in the music distinctions, the names by which Socrates designates the three subkinds, "low" and "high" and "equal-toned," also refer to the terms and relations that constitute the underlying continuum, in the letter-sounds example we shall require new language, dis-

38. See Barker, "Plato's *Philebus*: The Numbering of a Unity" (cited in n. 9), 146–47.

FIGURE 4

“the voiced”	vs.	“others not voiced but having a certain noise”	vs.	the both “noiseless and unvoiced”
maximal release of breath				maximal cutting-off of breath

tinct from the names of the kinds of letter-sounds, to refer directly to the continuum that they imply. With these distinctions in mind, consider Theuth’s initial divisions. Beginning with the recognition that spoken sound is “unlimited in multitude” (ἄπειρος . . . πλήθει, 17b4, cf. 18b6, 8–9), Theuth discerns “first” “the voiced [letter-sounds],” then “others that are not voiced but do have a certain noise,” and last, as a “third form,” the mutes, which he pointedly characterizes as “both noiseless and unvoiced” (τά τε ἄφθογγα καὶ ἄφωνα, 18c4). It is this last double contrast that recasts the second group, at first simply the opposite to the first, now as the “intermediate” between the first and the third, and it is this intermediate status that, comparably to the effect of introducing “equal-toned” between “low” and “high,” points to the underlying continuum to which all the letter-sounds alike belong. The sounds “that are not voiced but do have a certain noise” stand together with “the voiced” in that both involve, by contrast with the mutes, some release of breath; but they also stand together with the mutes in that their “noise[s],” by contrast with “the voiced” sounds, are made by closing the oral passage in various ways and, so, cutting off, to different degrees, the release of breath. Thus the whole threesome emerges in a new light; more than just collections of sounds, they mark out three contiguous regions on a gradient of spoken sound leading from that which requires the most open-mouthed, least fricative release of breath to that which requires the most closure and stopping of the release of breath.<sup>39</sup> We can diagram this as shown in figure 4.

In the final phase of division, the dialectician identifies the full array of sub-kinds that articulate the field laid open by the initial distinctions.

39. Cf. Robin Waterfield, *Plato, Philebus* (London: Penguin, 1982), 63, n. 2.



What guides this identification? How does the dialectician get her bearings in deciding how far to divide and, so, with what limited “many” to rest content? Though division moves toward “ones” that are each instanciable as an actual sensible individual, the illustrations show that this is neither necessary nor sufficient. The Greek alphabet<sup>40</sup> includes a number of letter-sounds that are further divisible into distinct, independently articulable sounds; and only a select few of the many performable single tones are included in any musical “mode.” Rather, what the illustrations show to be most important is that division discloses a set of terms that are capable of combining with each other to constitute well-formed wholes. In the music example, inquiry must press on beyond the initial distinctions of “low” and “high” and “equal-toned” to the recognition of the number and sorts of the various “intervals” (τὰ διαστήματα, 17c11)—the octave, fifth, fourth, and so on—for co-implicated with these are, as their “boundaries” (τοὺς ὅρους, d1), the specific sets of the notes that together compose each of the various “modes” (ἁρμονίας, d3). As we observed earlier,<sup>41</sup> the “modes” are the combinations of those notes—some at fixed intervals, others at intervals variable in determinate ways—that, as the term ἁρμονία implies, the Greeks heard as harmonious or concordant with each other. The essential mark, then, of the musical “ones” the dialectician aims to disclose by his final distinctions is that each *be fit, by virtue of its precise differences from each of the others, to combine* with these to constitute a “mode.”

This point is even more explicit in Socrates’ account of Theuth’s final distinctions in the analysis of the letter-sounds. As Theuth “distinguishes [within each of the three groupings of spoken sounds] . . . down to the level of distinct ones” (διήρει . . . μέχρι ἐνὸς ἐκάστου, 18c3–4), he realizes the impossibility of “com[ing] to understand a one itself, in and for itself, in isolation from the whole set of them” (οὐδ’ ἂν ἐν αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ ἄνευ πάντων αὐτῶν μάθοι, c7–8). The only way to parse spoken sounds is, of course, to hear them, and most of the sounds to be parsed cannot be heard at all unless they are spoken together with certain others. In general, the consonants can be heard only in combination with one or sev-

40. Socrates’ story about Theuth implies that the division of letter-sounds identifies the ancient Egyptian alphabet. But no detail in the story suggests that Plato was actually thinking about Egyptian rather than Greek.

41. See Part I (e) above and, for background, the works of West and Barker cited in n. 19.

eral of the vowels, and the mutes can be heard only in combination either with vowels or with certain combinations of consonants and vowels. Accordingly, to recognize the distinct identity of each letter-sound requires hearing it in different combinations with other sounds; our discernment of the difference between two sounds that often combine will depend on our finding different combinations in which each appears with a variety of others. Thus Theuth discovers, in the course of his distinctions, that each “one” has various powers of combination with various other “ones,” and when at the end of his division he counts out the total “number of them” (ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν, *c5*), he expresses this discovery by naming the “single form” they all share “Στοιχεῖον,” a term that means (with wonderful transparency to the heart of matter) both “letter” and “element.”<sup>42</sup>

[ii] *One-and-many structure.* These reflections provide the points of departure for responses to the questions we raised about the one-and-many structure that the god-given method discloses. To begin with, the answer to our first question—what is the distinction and relation of the “single form” and “the initial one”?—emerges along with the answer to the first part of our second question: how is “the initial one” both “one” and “unlimitedly many”? In each of the illustrative divisions, the opening distinctions disclose the “single form’s” field of possible instantiations as a continuum of shifting proportions. “The initial one” just is this field, as such. On a continuum of balances of opposites ranging from the predominance of one to the predominance of the other, any two places will stand in contrastive relations of more and less, and it is in principle always possible to refine the contrast and discern other places between them; hence there can be no limit to the number of places.<sup>43</sup> “The initial one,” accordingly, is both “one,” as the unified field or continuum of possible instantiations, and “unlimitedly many,” as the in principle illimitable number of places on the continuum.

42. In truth, it would be better to translate the second meaning as “elemental component.” See H. G. Liddell, Robert Scott, and H. S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ)*. In our ordinary use of the word “element,” we often mean ultimate part and think of the irreducible items into which a compound can be divided, its “atoms,” *rather than*, as the Greek word suggests, the components out of which an ordered whole can be constructed. See H. Koller, “Stoicheion,” *Glotta* 34 (1955): 161–74; also Thérèse-Anne Druart, “La stoicheïologie de Platon,” *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 73 (1975): 243–62.

43. See, for analytic discussion, D. H. Fowler, *The Mathematics of Plato’s Academy: A New Reconstruction* (1987; reprint, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), esp. ch. 2.

What, however, are these “many”? Here the continuum structure yields a surprising negative implication: considered in the context of the basic Platonic distinction between forms and sensibles, the “unlimitedly many” *cannot be either*. To see why, consider each possibility in turn. Treating them as forms, first of all, yields an impossible set of consequences. Not only would there be, for each “single form” from which division begins, an infinite number of further forms, but this would destroy the normative status of forms for particular things. Each place on the continuum marks some one proportion of the opposites that frame it, and every particular of the relevant type embodies some proportion of these opposites; accordingly, if the places on the continuum were forms, then every particular would perfectly embody some form and, so, in that respect be perfectly good; thus forms would no longer provide the basis for distinguishing good particulars from bad. On the other hand, treating the “unlimitedly many” as particulars is equally problematic. Each place on a continuum is unique, marking a distinctive proportion in the balance of opposites; by contrast, there can be indefinitely many particulars that embody the same proportion. These latter will differ from one another only in the worldly circumstances of their occurrences—their times and places, the agents that produce them, and so on; but the precise proportion, that is, the place on the relevant continuum that they embody, is one and self-same in them all and is not itself, as such, subject to place or time or any worldly conditions at all.

But if the “unlimitedly many” are neither forms nor particulars, what *are* they? Evidently, we have come upon the “mathematicals” that, as we saw in tracing the continuum of the sciences in *Philebus* 55c–59d, Plato posits between sensibles and forms.<sup>44</sup> The notions of continuum and proportion are mathematical in character. If we bring this together with what we have just observed about sensibles, we can see that each place on the continuum of shifting proportions is a mathematical schema or specification for the countless many particulars that may embody it; each place expresses abstractly, as a non-spatial and atemporal structure, the precise balance of opposites that these spatially and temporally determinate particulars will have. The continuum as a whole, in turn, would be

44. And, of course, cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A.6, 987b14–18; for discussion of the issue of mathematical, see my “Unwritten Teachings” in the *Parmenides*,” cited in n. 27, esp. section I.

the exhaustive array of possible specifications for the possible instantiations of—that is, for any particular that might instantiate—the “single form.”

How, secondly, does division reveal “the original one” to be a *limited* “many,” and what is this a “many” of? From Socrates’ language at 16d we learned at the outset that the limited “many” is a set of forms,<sup>45</sup> and from our reflections on the final phase of division in each of the illustrations we have learned that each of these forms belongs to its set by virtue of its fitness for combination with each of the others. We are now in position to recognize how the limited “many” stand as “intermediate” (τὰ μέσα, 17a3)<sup>46</sup> between the “single form” and the “unlimitedly many” and, so, how in sorting out these three levels, division traces a complex formal-causal order. On the one hand, the “single form” requires, if it is to be instantiated well, the instantiation of a select set of more determinate forms. Pitch requires the several tones that, in their harmony, make up a “mode”; dialectic therefore explicates the form Pitch by identifying the sets of forms of tones that compose each of the various modes. Likewise, Στοιχείον, “letter” understood as the “element” of linguistic sound, requires the several letter-sounds that, combinable in a host of ways, belong together to the alphabet, and dialectic accordingly identifies the forms of these. On the other hand, each of these select sets of forms—those of notes and those of letter-sounds, respectively—requires, if it is to be instantiated well, the instantiation by particulars in place and time of a corresponding set of places, or of ranges of places, on the relevant continuum. Thus, the forms of the notes in a mode require, for their good instantiation, the singing or playing of tones that realize the various balances of low and high that the forms of the notes specify. Analogously, the forms of the letter-sounds require, for their good instantiation, the actual utterances of speech-sound that fall within those ranges of proportions of openness and closure in the release of breath that the forms of letter-sounds specify. We might diagram the structure common to the two illustrations as shown in figure 5.

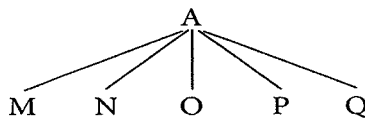
45. Recall n. 9 above.

46. To be distinguished from τὰ μέσα at 18c5, of course.

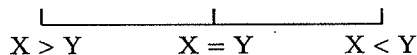
FIGURE 5

the “single form”  
that calls for . . .

. . . the “complete number”  
of “intermediate” forms, e.g. of notes or  
letter-sounds, that compose a whole  
of forms of parts that pick out . . .



. . . places (or ranges of places)  
on the continuum of shifting  
proportions of the opposites, . . .



. . . and the particular ‘things’ in place and time, for which the places (or ranges of places)  
picked out on the continuum by the “intermediate” forms—and so by the “single form” that  
calls for *them*—serve as normative structural specifications

### (c) *The Supplement: The Four Kinds*

As we have noted, Socrates’ treatment of the structure disclosed by the god-given method is strikingly one-sided, focusing on unity and plurality and leaving “limit” and “indeterminacy” largely—indeed, in the case of “limit,” altogether—unconsidered. It is therefore welcome that he returns to these and gives them their due in his treatment of the four kinds at 23c–27c. But the context of this return should give us pause. At 20b he abandons the god-given method, yielding to Protarchus’s anxiety and replacing the “distinction of forms” (20c) with the philosophically less daunting approach of examining which of the two, pleasure or knowledge, contributes the most to the good life. Since Protarchus agrees that the most choiceworthy life combines these, it is timely to consider the nature of “mixtures,” and at 23c9–10 Socrates introduces “limit” and “indeterminacy” as the two fundamental sorts of components. Accordingly, Socrates is now concerned not with dialectical knowledge but with “making” (ποιιοῦντος, 26e6 and ff.) or “crafting” (δημιουργοῦν, 27b1), and he has freed Protarchus from the burden of having to think about forms, turning instead to “the ‘things’ that come-to-be and the constituents from which they come-to-be” (τὰ . . . γιγνόμενα καὶ ἐξ ὧν γίγνεται, 27a11); as he indicates by his doubly pointed phrase at 23c4, “limit” and “indeterminacy” belong to πάντα τὰ νῦν ὄντα ἐν τῷ παντί, “all that is

now within the world"; that is, they belong in some sense among that which is subject to time and place.<sup>47</sup>

How, then, does Socrates' account of the four kinds fit together with his earlier account of the god-given method? To position ourselves to see this, we must first consider each of the four in turn.

"The indeterminate." As Socrates explicates τὸ ἄπειρον, "the indeterminate," it is in each case a relation between a pair of mutually relative and gradient opposites, a relation in which each, "always advancing and never staying put" (προχωρεῖ . . . καὶ οὐ μένει . . . ἀεὶ, 24d4), "is at variance with" (διαφόρως ἔχοντα, 25e1) the other. All of Socrates' examples have the structure of his first example,<sup>48</sup> "hotter and colder": because each term is in itself the tendency to exceed the other in its own direction, there is no "limit" (πέρας . . . τι, 24a8) or "end" (τέλος, b1, τελευτῆς, b2) to their contest, and the opposites "do not allow any definite quantity" (οὐκ ἔᾱτον εἶναι ποσὸν, c3). Does Socrates intend an actual empirical condition in which whatever actual temperature is reached at one moment is immediately undermined in the next by an increase in one direction or the other? Equally possible—and conceptually more felicitous, for what sufficient reason could there be for its being *this* rather than *that* temperature that is reached, and for its being an increase in one direction rather than the other that then alters it?—is that Socrates intends to conjure into an image the indeterminateness of the pure potentiality for temperature that is implied by the mutual opposition of the opposites.

47. With this distinction between forms and "all that is *now within the world*," I take a stand, in my reading of the *Philebus*, against the inclusion of forms among that which is subject to "coming-into-being." This exclusion fits closely together with the strong distinction between "that which *is*" and "that which *becomes*" at 59a–d as this, in turn, fits together with 58a and the revealing allusion to forms at 61e–62a. Here I can only acknowledge the controversies on every key point here—on the questions, especially, of whether forms are or are not under discussion at all in the *Philebus*, of whether forms turn out to be subject to "coming-into-being" in the sense that "coming-into-being" has at 23c–27c, and of whether, if we take *Philebus* 16c–18d and 23c–27c together to stand in a mutually illuminating relation to Aristotle's report of Plato's teachings regarding the One and the Great and the Small in *Metaphysics* A.6, *Philebus* 23c–27c explores the constitution of forms themselves or just of their power as causes.

48. Not, however, the explicit form. The terms in the musical pairs "high and low" and "fast and slow," for instance, are not relatives in grammatical form, only in concept. And in the cases of "stifling heat" and "frosts" Socrates designates the opposites by substantives, not adjectives. But, as Harte in *Plato on Parts and Wholes* (cited above in n. 34) observes, ". . . the relational character of the unlimited is . . . a function of the fact that its members are given . . . as opposing *pairs*. It is not so much that the paired terms are themselves relational terms, as that, by putting them in pairs, they are related to each other" (184).

Either way, each case of the indeterminate is a dyad in which the terms relate as “more and less” (μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἥττον, 24a9, c2–3, c10–11), each than the other, or, again, as “intensely and slightly” (σφόδρα καὶ ἡρέμα, 24c1–2, e8), each relative to the other.

“*Limit.*” The class of πέρας, “limit”—or, as Socrates twice says, “that which provides limit” (τὸ . . . πέρας ἔχον, 24a2, 3–4)<sup>49</sup>—is twice introduced by reference to its members “the equal and equality, and after the equal the double” (25a7–8, also d11); more generally, it is ratio, that is, “all that is related as number to number or measure to measure” (25a8–b1). Imposed upon the indeterminate, ratio puts an end to the flux of opposites, establishing “both the quantity [of each relative to the other] and due measure” ([τὸ ποσόν] τε καὶ τὸ μέτριον, 24c7) and thereby “measuring them together<sup>50</sup> and making them concordant” (σύμμετρα δὲ καὶ σύμφωνα . . . ἀπεργάζεται, 25e1–2).

“*Mixtures.*” This imposition is the mixing that constitutes things of the third kind, the whole range of items in place and time that come into being according to a normative order. To indicate the wide variety of these, Socrates cites the balances of high and low, and quick and slow, in music, the temperings of extreme heat and cold that define the seasons, the beauty and strength that come with health, and “the whole variety of beautiful conditions in souls” (ἐν ψυχαῖς . . . πάμπολλα ἕτερα καὶ πάγκαλα, 26b6–7).

“*Cause.*” Socrates introduces the fourth kind almost as if an afterthought, adding it only after distinguishing the first three (23d1–3) and as an implication of the basic character of the third. A “mixture” is, as such, something that comes-to-be, and “all things that come-to-be, come-to-be through some cause” (26e3–4). Socrates both specifies and resists individuating this “cause” by identifying it with “that which makes” (τὸ . . . ποιοῦν, 26e7, 27a5) and “that which crafts” (or “fashions” or “produces”) (τὸ . . . δημιουργοῦν, 27b1). Shortly he will exploit the distinction that these neuter substantives invite, between an agent and the knowledge

49. The ἔχον here should be taken in the active sense of “provides” rather than as “has,” for the latter would suggest that the second kind is that which is *subject to* “limit” and this would undercut the distinction between the second and third kinds, “limit” and “mixture.”

50. Gosling and D. Frede translate σύμμετρα . . . ἀπεργάζεται as “makes” or “making them commensurate,” and Fowler has “makes them commensurable.” But a (presumably unintended?) implication of these translations is to suggest that the opposites are not themselves commensurate or, worse, commensurable. Socrates never suggests this.

by which an agent acts;<sup>51</sup> at 30b–c he locates within the fourth kind the “wisdom and reason” (σοφία . . . καὶ νοῦς, 30c9) that, in the cosmos as a whole, governs the heavens and is responsible for the ordered motions of the sun, moon, and stars (28e, 30c) and that, in human beings, “provides soul to” (ψυχὴν . . . παρέχον, 30b1–2) and governs the health of the body.

There are three junctures, as it were, at which the fit of this account with the god-given method becomes visible. First, when Plato has Socrates cite “the high and low” in music as a paradigm case of “the indeterminate,” he invites us to connect the fluxing conflict of opposites with the continuum that the initial distinctions of the god-given method disclose. As reciprocally relative opposites, high and low are each essentially “more and less” than the other: high *just is* that which is ‘more high’ and ‘less low’ than—to invert these terms for low—what is ‘less high’ and ‘more low,’ respectively. But this leads to a coincidence of structure with what Socrates suggested when, in his earlier account of the dialectical analysis of the form Pitch, he characterized the range between high and low as ὁμότονον, “equal-toned”: the reciprocal tendency of each opposite to exceed the other implies, as its set of possible resolutions, the continuum of opposing predominances ranging from those of high over low through their relative equality to those of low over high. Recognizing this, we can now understand Socrates’ initially puzzling claim that “the form of the indeterminate,” τὴν . . . τοῦ ἀπείρου ιδέαν (16d7), “applies to the plurality”—that is, to the “unlimitedly many” possible instantiations—of Pitch: ἀπειρία, “indeterminacy” (16c10), has, as its abstract instantiation, the continuum of possible predominances that its concrete instantiation, the fluxing contest of relative opposites, implies.

Secondly, this coincidence of structure sheds light on an otherwise puzzling feature of Socrates’ characterization of “limit”: why, if limit is “all that is related as number to number or measure to measure” (25a8–b1), does Socrates give special prominence to “the equal . . . and after the equal, the double” (a7–8, also d11)? Note that to speak of the possible *resolutions* of the conflict of the opposites is to speak of the imposition of limit. Further, to speak of this set of possible resolutions as a continuum

51. Note how Plato does *not* have Timaeus make this distinction in the *Timaeus*. For a reflection on the distinctive rhetoric of the *Timaeus*, see Thérèse-Anne Druart, “The *Timaeus* Revisited,” in *Plato and Platonism*, 163–78; and my “The *Timaeus* and the ‘Longer Way,’” cited in n. 23 above, Part I.



*of opposing predominances* is already to indicate the fundamental structure this imposition entails. Opposing predominances imply a middle, a region of relative equality of the opposites, and this region, as the middle, orders the range of predominances as a whole such that to each interval between the midpoint and the predominance of one opposite over the other there corresponds an equal interval between the midpoint and the inverse predominance; this equality of intervals, in turn, implies that the whole length of the continuum stretching from one predominance to its inverse stands to each of these intervals in the relation of double. This explains, first of all, Socrates' stress of these proportions—"equal" and then "double"—in his characterizations of limit: they are structurally defining features of *any* continuum of opposing predominances of opposites, *as such*. Hence they are tacitly present as giving its fundamental shape to each of the fields of possible instantiation of the "single form" that are disclosed by the initial divisions in Socrates' illustrations of the god-given method. Even before any particular balances are established, each field—of tones and of letter-sounds—is shown to be ordered as a middle with counter-balancing intervals on each 'side.' Thus the god-given method discloses, right from the outset, how the subject it studies has "within [itself], grown together, limit and indeterminacy" (16c10).

Recognizing this disclosure provides a context for addressing the single most puzzling issue of the four kinds passage, and in this we will find the third and most important juncture between the god-given method and the four kinds. Note, to begin with, that the imposition of limit takes the form of the "introduction of number" (cf. ἐνθεῖσα ἀριθμὸν, 25e2) into the indeterminate. "Number" here refers generally to the ratios, whether "of number to number or of measure to measure," by which the opposites are apportioned to one another. In the fixing of the "quantity" (ποσὸν, 24c3, 6) of each, relative to the other, their flux and conflict is settled; by this settlement, "due measure" (τὸ μέτριον, c7) is realized. To draw from Socrates' three most prominent examples: the apportioning of, say, hot to cold establishes the right temperature range for bodily health (25e); and, now to move from one set to three sets of ratios, the apportioning of hot to cold defines seasonable temperatures for summer, winter, and the relatively equable periods of spring and fall; and again, now to move from three to a host of sets of eight ratios, the apportioning of high to low will pick out the balances that, when performed, give us musical sound that

is 'in tune.' Now, the puzzling issue is the source of these ratios: bodily health and seasonable temperatures and musical pitch are not fundamentally conventional matters; what, then, is the basis for the ratios that express them? Socrates gives a partial answer later when he names "wisdom" and "reason" as the "causes" of the heavenly motions, which are responsible for the seasons, and of the health of the body (30b-c). But really this only refocuses the question. Since the ratios establish "due measure," it makes sense that they reflect a governing "wisdom." But "wisdom" and "reason" flourish as understanding and insight, so we must go on to ask: what knowledge, or knowledge *of what*, orients and guides the setting of the ratios? And here the god-given method provides the basis for a response. The man who comes to be "wise" (σοφός, 17c7) and "knowing" (εἰδώς, c7) by his practice of the method comes to know, between "the one" and the "unlimited many," the limited number *of forms* that, in turn, require, if they are to be instantiated well, the instantiation of a corresponding set of places (or ranges of places) on the relevant continuum. These 'places,' we can now see, *just are* the ratios that fix relative quantity and establish due measure. The ratios, then, have as their source and basis *the limited number of forms and, so, the "single form"* that first implies these.

With this connection, Socrates' account of limit and the indeterminate at 23c-27c shows itself to belong together with and to complete his account of the god-given method at 16c-18d. The wise "making" or "crafting" that imposes limit on the indeterminate has its basis in, and gives worldly expression to, the knowledge of the forms that the dialectician pursues by the god-given method.

This integration has extraordinary interest for 'us'—that is, for those of us readers who, moved to resist Socrates' accommodating abandonment of the god-given method, seek to take up the method for ourselves. The fit of the two passages implies that Socrates' mixing of the good life, just insofar as it "wisely" and "knowingly" imposes limit on the indeterminate, thereby reflects a dialectical understanding of the forms and ratios—that is, of the eidetic and mathematical structure—that sets the normative order of life. Thus, *what Socrates appears to remove from the conversation for Protarchus's sake, Plato leaves implicitly at work in the text for us.* Recognizing this should spur us on in our effort to pursue the "longer path," for it puts the very project that first moved us to try to take this "path," the

project of gaining a more “exact grasp” of the soul, before us as a determinate prospect. Can we, if we study the distinctions by which Socrates sets about his work of mixing, find the elements, as it were, of a dialectical understanding of life and—since life is the mode of being proper to the embodied soul—of the soul? And can we, taking those elements as resources, rise to the level of that understanding for ourselves?

#### IV. SOCRATES’ DISTINCTIONS OF THE KINDS OF PLEASURE AND OF KNOWLEDGE: THE TASK OF A DIALECTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE EMBODIED SOUL

We now turn, accordingly, to the final set of questions we posed when we began: just how do Socrates’ distinctions of the kinds of pleasure and of knowledge, when considered in light of the “god-given method,” provide the resources for the account of the soul that Socrates holds back from giving in the *Republic*? On the strength of our understanding of the method, we can now proceed by seeking each of the three essential features that it discloses: the abstract instantiation of the indeterminate, a continuum between opposed predominances of opposites (section [a] below); the “single form” that has this continuum as its field of possible instantiations (section [b]); and the limited number of forms that, together in interplay, pick out the places (or ranges of places) on the continuum that, instantiated together by that which comes to be in space and time, make for the good instantiation of the “single form” (section [c]). These reflections will position us to ask whether, and if so, how fully, the *Philebus* supersedes the *Republic* and gives us the “finest view possible” of the soul.

##### *(a) The Continuum: The Kinds of Pleasure and Kinds of Knowledge*

Let me begin with two orienting comments. The first is partly a distinction, partly an apology. At 27d8–9 Socrates makes the significant remark that the good life is “a mixture not just of a certain pair”—to wit, of knowledge and pleasure—“but rather of a host of indeterminates, all together, bound by limit (σὺμπάντων τῶν ἀπέιρων ὑπὸ τοῦ πέρατος δεδεμένων).” In our provisional discussion of Socrates’ distinction of the kinds of knowledge in Part I, we already began to recognize the pres-

ence of one of these indeterminates, that is, of a continuum governed by a “more and less”; we will bring it into sharper focus in subsection [iii] below. But Socrates’ remark refers just as much—indeed, all the more—to his treatment of the kinds of pleasure. Here we can only call attention in a titular way to the fact that in his analysis of the first kind, pleasures associated with the satisfying of bodily needs,<sup>52</sup> he invokes the idea of the imposition of limit upon the indeterminate and then extends this—albeit by very sketchy remarks—to apply in modified forms to the remaining four kinds of pleasure that he goes on to distinguish. To put the matter in a summary way for now: bodily pleasure is associated with the restoration of a natural balance of opposites, hence, of a limit imposed on an indeterminate, while pain is associated with the disruption of this balance (31d–32b); in the fullest of Socrates’ several examples, the pleasures of warming up when chilled and of cooling down when overheated are associated with the restoration of the right proportion of hot and cold in the body, while the pains of getting chilled or overheated are associated with the balance-breaking predominating of the cold over the hot and vice versa. By characterizing the next four kinds of pleasures—those of anticipation (32b–42c); those associated with various passions (47d–50d); those of the perception of sensible ‘pures,’ for example, near perfect shapes and pitch-perfect tones (51b–e); and those of learning (51e–52a)—in terms of “replenishment” and “deprivation” (see especially 34e–36c, 47c with 45b, 51b, 52a), Socrates indicates that each of these pleasures turns on restoring a balance and so presupposes its own distinctive indeterminate.<sup>53</sup> This “host of indeterminates,” however, will not be our focus

52. Here and below I will try to avoid begging the question of whether Socrates’ account of pleasure identifies it with restorative processes or makes it the effect of such processes. I am persuaded by Thomas Tuozzo’s case for the latter position in his “The General Account of Pleasure in Plato’s *Philebus*,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996): 495–513. This is but one of several hornets’ nests of questions regarding 31b–55c; there are also, especially, the issues of the unity and reach of Socrates’ theory of pleasure, the sense and status of “false pleasures,” the basic structure of the pleasures that arise with the passions, and the relation of the sense perceptions of “pure” shapes and tones and colors to the cognition of the forms.

53. At first glance, much in Socrates’ account at 31b–55b seems to contradict his own initial location of pleasure within the class of the indeterminate, at 28a. A closer look, however, shows better. Socrates’ location of pleasure in that passage is dialectical, in the sense that he derives it directly from Philebus’s declaration that pleasure is “boundless in size and increase” (27e). Socrates goes out of his way to solicit Philebus’s view, breaking off from conversation with Protarchus to draw him out. In his reply, Philebus changes the terms of Socrates’ question, thoughtlessly deforming Socrates’ notions of limit and the indeterminate; he takes

in the reflections to come; rather, we will seek some *one* indeterminate—its unity implied by the unity of the corresponding “limit” (τοῦ πέρατος, 25d3) that “binds” the many indeterminates “all together”—that somehow underlies these many.<sup>54</sup>

Secondly, the key to this search is Socrates’ second illustration of the god-given method. He went out of his way, we should remember, to provide the exemplary account of letter-sounds, delaying when Protarchus and Philebus had expressed satisfaction with his first example, the account of musical modes, and were growing impatient to see the method applied (17e–18a). The important point Socrates makes by juxtaposing the two illustrations is not just that dialectic can move in opposite directions, from one to many in the music example and from many to one in the letter-sounds case. More closely seen, it is first possible to start from the “single form,” Pitch, because we have the Pythagorean ratios (1:2 for the octave, 2:3 for the fifth, 3:4 for the fourth, etc.) to guide us in identifying the sets of forms of tones that make up the modes. That good fortune makes the music example uniquely illuminating of eidetic-mathematical order; this very uniqueness, however, makes it a poor guide for the practice of dialectic on other subject matters. The letter-sounds example, by contrast, shows how we can proceed to recognize the continuum and its internal structure even when we lack advance knowledge of any specific ratios. Socrates, recall, makes two distinctions: first he opposes to “the voiced” “other [sounds] that are not voiced but do have a certain noise”; then he sets over against both of these, as a “third form,” sounds that are not only “unvoiced,” like the second kind, but are

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Socrates’ πέρας (27e6) not as ratio but as ‘upper bound,’ and he dismantles Socrates’ μάλλον τε καὶ ἥττον, disjoining the “more” (which Philebus asserts pleasure is subject to) from the “less” (which he simply drops) and pleasure from pain and, so, replacing Socrates’ conception of the fluxing contest of opposites with his own pleonectic conception of an uncheckably expansive mass. Accordingly, Socrates’ complex account of the kinds of pleasure at 31b–55c constitutes not a contradiction of his own view at 28a but rather a manifold challenge to Philebus’s—a challenge, moreover, that is designed, in Dorothea Frede’s well-aimed phrase, to “convert” Protarchus. (See her “The Hedonist’s Conversion: The Role of Socrates in the *Philebus*,” in *Form and Argument in Late Plato*, edited by C. Gill and M. M. McCabe [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], 213–48.)

My thanks to George Harvey for raising these issues. The dramatic interplay between Philebus, Protarchus, and Socrates is much more interesting than is usually recognized, but for reasons of space I must defer to another study, now underway, the exegesis it deserves.

54. For interesting steps toward identifying several of these indeterminates, see John Cooper, *Reason and Emotion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), ch. 6.

also, unlike both the first two, “noiseless.” This second distinction puts the second kind in a new light. Now, rather than the opposite to the first, it emerges as “the intermediate” (τὰ μέσα) between the first and third. Thus, by moving beyond one distinction to another that, by the ways in which it opposes the first two with a third, brings all three to light as moments in a series, we can uncover the underlying continuum to which the three together belong.<sup>55</sup>

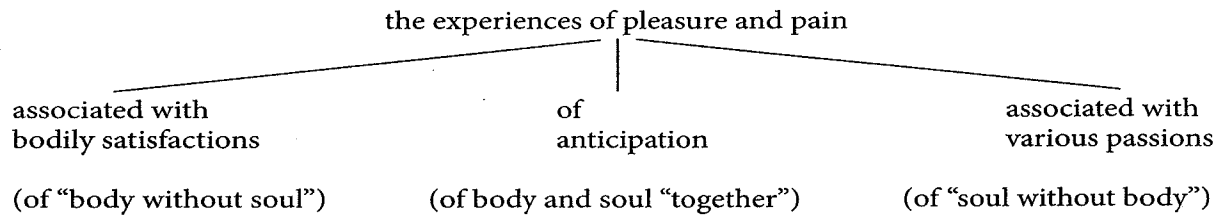
Armed with this recollection, we can identify in Socrates’ two sets of distinctions the gradual disclosure of an underlying continuum. The process of disclosure falls into three stages: Socrates’ discussion of the three kinds of mixed pleasure, his addition of the two kinds of unmixed pleasure, and his turn to the kinds of knowledge.

[i] *First stage: The three kinds of mixed pleasure.* The first stage proceeds in close analogy with the opening phase of the letter-sounds analysis. After offering his account of the pleasures of satisfying bodily needs (31d–32a), Socrates opposes to these, as “one kind” (ἓν εἶδος, 32b6), the “different kind” (ἕτερον εἶδος, c3–4)<sup>56</sup> that is associated with the anticipation of such satisfactions: whereas the former are closely associated with bodily processes like eating and drinking, the latter are the work “of the soul itself” (αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς, b9) and involve a complex of intentional activities including memory, judgment, and fantasy. Next Socrates mediates this opposition by setting over against the first two kinds the third kind, that of pleasures that arise with “anger, fear, longing, lament, eros, jealousy, envy, and all the other such states” (47e1–2): pleasures of this third kind are, like the second, the work of the soul; but whereas—as the contrasting of them with the third kind now makes prominent for the first time—pleasures of the first two kinds are mixed with pains associated with bodily processes, pleasures of the third kind are mixed with

55. In doing this, moreover, note that we let the kinds serve as “measures” for one another, as Socrates’ second formulation of the structure of “limit” at *Philebus* 25b1 suggests we may. Thus, in the letter-sounds example, the third kind stands to the second, as “noiseless” to “having a certain noise,” as the second stands to the first, as “unvoiced” to “voiced”; or, in terms of the underlying continuum, the third kind is, so to speak, *as much* “more” muted and “less” voiced than the second as the second is than the first, and vice versa. In this way, even though we have not yet begun to identify the select set of ratios picked out by the limited number of forms, we can see how, by his first phase of distinctions, Theuth reveals the presence of “the equal” and “the double” in the structure of the continuum.

56. These are Protarchus’s understanding words.

FIGURE 6



pains that are the work of the soul (47dff.). Just as in the letter-sounds example, the effect is to give the second kind the status of an intermediate between the first and the third; Socrates makes this unmistakable by the phrasing and syntactical order of each of his two synoptic passages, one preceding and the other following his explication of the third kind. At 46b8–c2 he tells Protarchus,

Of mixtures [of pleasure and pain], you know, there are some, on the one hand, that pertain to body and are found in bodies, some, on the other hand, that belong to the soul itself and are found in the soul; and then again, you will find still others that belong to the soul and the body. . . .

And in his recapitulation at 50d4–6 he moves from pleasure-and-pain mixtures of “body without soul” (σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς) to those of “soul without body” (ψυχὴ ἄνευ σώματος) and *then* to those of “[body and soul] together (κοινῇ) with each other.” Thus he gathers the three into the same sort of triad he presented in each of his illustrations of the god-given method; we might diagram it as shown in figure 6.

Once we recognize in this triad the sort of trifurcation Socrates gave us in the opening distinctions of his accounts of letter-sounds and musical pitch, we should also recognize that his terms, in spite of their apparent mutual exclusiveness, really mark opposing predominances in which the differences are of degree rather than in kind; in this they are like “high” and “low” in the music example. For consider each of Socrates’ three kinds. With regard to the pleasures associated with bodily satisfactions, Socrates is quick to make explicit that pleasure itself is or involves αἴσθησις, “sense-perceptual awareness” (34a). His theory, moreover, strongly implies that this awareness, even if in a quite inchoate and

altogether pre-theoretical manner, involves both a future-oriented awareness of the aim of one's present activity and an appreciation of the good it achieves; in eating, for instance, one takes pleasure in the sensations one has throughout the restorative activity, and this implies a pleasure *in the very process* of dispelling one's hunger and getting 'filled up' again. Thus the pleasures-and-pains of "body without soul" are not literally "without soul" at all; they are manifoldly conscious. (We shall return to this later.) "[W]ithout soul," accordingly, marks the way in which, *by the relative measure of the second and third kinds*, in pleasures of the first kind the body most predominates over the soul.

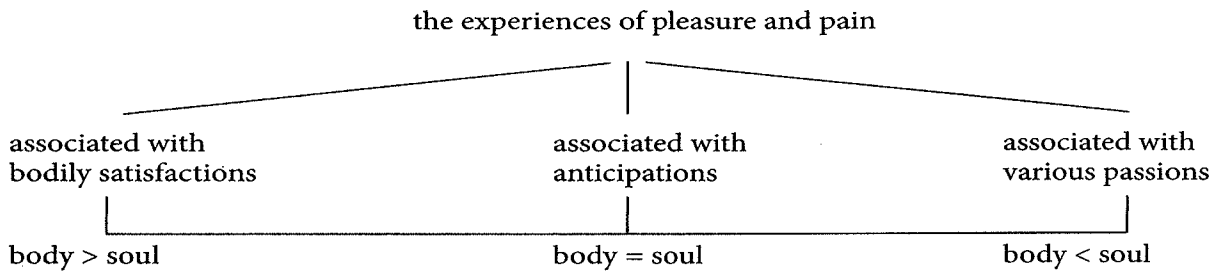
The analogous point holds for Socrates' characterization of the third kind as pleasures-and-pains "without body." His remarkable analysis of what first appears as merely the innocent and simple delight we take in the scenes of comedy does indeed show a rich play of intentional activity,<sup>57</sup> considerably richer than in the first and second kinds; none of his examples, however, support a literal understanding of these pleasures as "without body." The central category of comedy, for instance, is τὸ γελοῖον, "the laughable" (48c4). The very notion of θρῆνον, "lament" (47e1), is at once that of the mental state of grief and of the keening wail by which one physically enacts this grief. Socrates himself has just spoken of the "bittersweet" (46c9) character, so powerfully evoked in the palinode of the *Phaedrus*, of the physical ache and quickening in eros. And so on. Hence, as with the first kind, so here we must recognize that Socrates' phrase "soul without body" marks not the absence of the body but only the predominance, *by the relative measure of the first and second kinds*, of the soul over it.

Finally, these more nuanced characterizations of the first and third kinds invite a commensurating recognition of the *intermediate* status of the second kind: if, on the one hand, the anticipation of future pleasures is less a contrary to than an intensification of the futural awareness that is inchoately present in the activity of satisfying one's bodily needs, so, on the other hand, the pleasures associated with the various passions present less the contrary of, than intensifications and complications of, the intentional components of desire, memory, and envisaging that an-

57. Tuozzo writes illuminatingly of this in "The General Account of Pleasure in Plato's *Philebus*," cited in n. 52.



FIGURE 7



icipation involves. To borrow from Socrates' comments on comedy to indicate this: I could not take such delight *in the theatrical spectacle* of the exposure of my neighbor's pretenses if I did not *desire* the various goods of social station and body and soul that he appears, above all to himself, to possess and if, further, this appearance did not *remind* me of my own apparent lack of them. Thus the three kinds present themselves as successive stages, beginning from the relative predominance of the body over the soul, in the *gradual increase* of the involvement of the soul. If this were the whole of Socrates' account, we might sum up our insight by altering our preceding diagram as shown in figure 7.

[ii] *Second stage: The unmixed pleasures of perceiving the sensible 'pures' and of learning.* The fourth and fifth kinds of pleasure are pivotal for our understanding of the continuum. With his formulations at 46b and 50d, Socrates has given us a first look at its basic structure. But with his fourth and fifth kinds he shows that the first three trace only a section of it, leaving undisclosed the true 'extreme' in the predominance of soul over body and, as a consequence, misidentifying the middle region and mischaracterizing the very terms that stand in shifting proportion. The new distinctions do not, however, themselves constitute the rethinking of the whole that they show to be needed; for this we must await Socrates' distinctions of the kinds of knowledge.

Consider first the fourth kind: the pleasures we take in perceiving "the so-called pure colors and shapes and most smells and some tones" (51b3–5). As "unmixed," that is, not mixed with any pain, these oppose the first three kinds *en bloc*. Although like all pleasures they are associ-

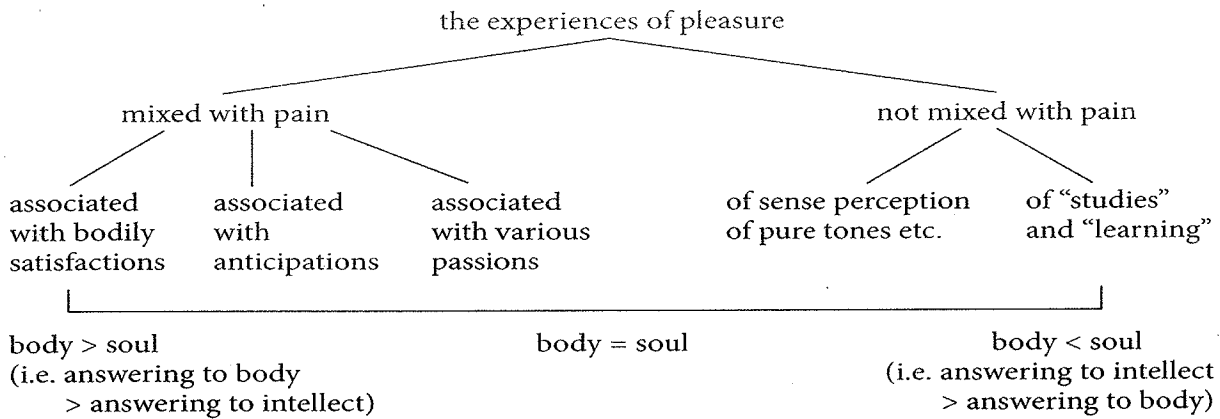
ated with the “fillings” (πληρώσεις, 51b6) of certain “lacks” (ἐνδείας, b5), these lacks are “imperceptible” and, so, “painless” (51b). What “lacks” does Socrates have in mind? What gives pleasure in the perception of certain precisely drawn or constructed shapes or, again, certain perfectly struck pure tones, is their distinctive beauty. Unlike “animals or certain drawings of animals,” which are beautiful only πρὸς ἕτερον, “relative to another” (51d7, cf. c6), pure shapes and tones are beautiful καθ’ αὐτὰ, “in reference to themselves” (c7, cf. d8). Socrates clarifies this by contrasting our pleasure in this beauty with our pleasure in scratching an itch (d1): scratching, he has earlier explained, exacerbates the very irritation it seeks to suppress; thus we extend our “lack” by the very process of attempting to “fill” it. Analogously, then, when we perceive things that have their beauty “relative to another,” we enjoy this beauty only insofar as we also take note of that other as well, and this involves looking away from, and so renewing the “lack” we seek to “fill” by looking to, the relatively beautiful thing. Socrates indicates this self-undermining by referring to the extraordinary heterogeneity of the beauty of the animal kingdom: to spell this out for ourselves, consider how, for instance, to admire the height of the giraffe is to be reminded by contrast of the compact grace of the lion, and each of these strengths, equally a weakness by the standard of the other, is equally superseded by what it also supersedes in, say, the eagle and the dolphin and the serpent, and so on. Pure shapes and tones, by contrast, have their beauty “in reference to themselves.” Partly this is a matter of their regularity or lack of internal difference, which gives such objects—a circle, say, or a cube or, again, a pure middle C—a certain self-referentiality. But this requires as well that these objects be constructed or performed with such precision that there is no apparent deviation or slipping toward another figure or note. It is because such sensibles embody their natures so precisely, and because these natures themselves, thus embodied, seem to stand alone, that nothing is felt as “lacking”; such sensibles hold our eye and ear, putting us in a state of appreciative arrest.

There *is*, however, a manifold “lack” in play, and the very *imperceptibility* of its presence is the key to the pivotal role Socrates’ fourth kind plays in alerting us to the true reach of the continuum. No matter how skilled we are with “compass, rule, and square” or, again, no matter how perfectly pitched in voice and ear, we cannot cancel the difference in

kind between the sensible and the intelligible. Indeed, the more perfectly these sensible 'pures' bring their natures into palpable presence, the more powerfully do they provoke the intellect to distinguish these natures, as such, from the sensibles as their embodiments and, further, to explore them in terms of their purely intelligible relations to one another. This, however, is precisely the work of "the studies" (τὰ μαθήματα, 51e7) and "the learning" (τοῦ μανθάνειν, 52a2) that Socrates introduces by naming the fifth kind of pleasure. Once we make this connection, we gain a first intuition of *the radical extension of the continuum in the direction of "soul"* that the fourth and fifth kinds together signal.

There are two distinct points to note. First, insofar as the fifth kind makes room for the distinctively cognitive activity that perception of the sensible 'pures' invites, it brings to light the continued increase in the predominance of "soul" over the body by which the fourth and fifth kinds together exceed the first three: whereas the needs of the body and the desires to which these give rise dominate consciousness in the first and second kinds of pleasure, and whereas the further arousal of the body to which such consciousness gives rise saturates the second and third kinds, in the fourth and fifth kinds the quiet concentration of an apprehension—first perceptual, then intellectual—of what is what it is καθ' αὐτό, "in reference to itself," becomes prominent. Secondly, with this shift, the contrast between the fourth and the fifth kinds and, with it, the specificity of what Socrates has so far spoken of merely as "soul" *first begin* to come to light. Perception of the sensible 'pures,' just insofar as it remains fixed on the sensible, fails to enter into the work that its own objects nonetheless invite, the "study" and "learning" by which one comes to understand intelligible structure. Thus it is a transitional or intermediate condition, rooted, on the one hand, as *sense* perception in the body but verging, on the other hand, on the properly intellectual recognition of the truly pure structures that its objects present so vividly. By contrast, it is by its entry into the discerning and exploration of the intelligible—the work, accordingly, of intellect—that the soul comes most into its own, liberating itself from its immersion in the demands and conditions of the body. But this is to say that the fourth kind marks the middle region of the continuum while the fifth marks the predominance that reverses and opposes that of the first three; and in the new content that this reversal opens up, the predominance itself comes to light as that not simply of

FIGURE 8



“soul” but rather of *intellect*, νοῦς or φρόνησις, over, in turn, not merely the body but rather the modes of consciousness that answer to the needs of and find expression in the body. We can mark this new appreciation of the reach and character of the continuum—again, however, only provisionally—by revising our diagram from figure 7, as shown in figure 8.

But this brings us to a moment of striking opacity in the text. From the very beginning of the dialogue Socrates has taken up the cause of the goodness of intellect and, in particular, of learning by making distinctions (12b and *passim*, especially 16b–c). It verges on performative contradiction, therefore, that he makes his treatment of the pleasures of learning (51e–52b) so short and indeterminate. He says nothing to make explicit the turn to intellect that his introduction of the fifth kind implies, nor does he distinguish the “studies” by which intellect comes into its own; quite the contrary, we are given only the vaguest indication of that part of the continuum in which the soul’s own powers of insight and discernment reach their height.

[iii] *Third stage: The kinds of knowledge.* Protarchus does not respond to Socrates’ brevity; he is focused on the project of preparing the ingredients for the mixed life, and he follows without comment when Socrates turns from the kinds of pleasure to the kinds of knowledge at 55c. To those of us, however, who are pursuing the god-given method and seeking the continuum, Socrates’ turn is more than timely. When he makes

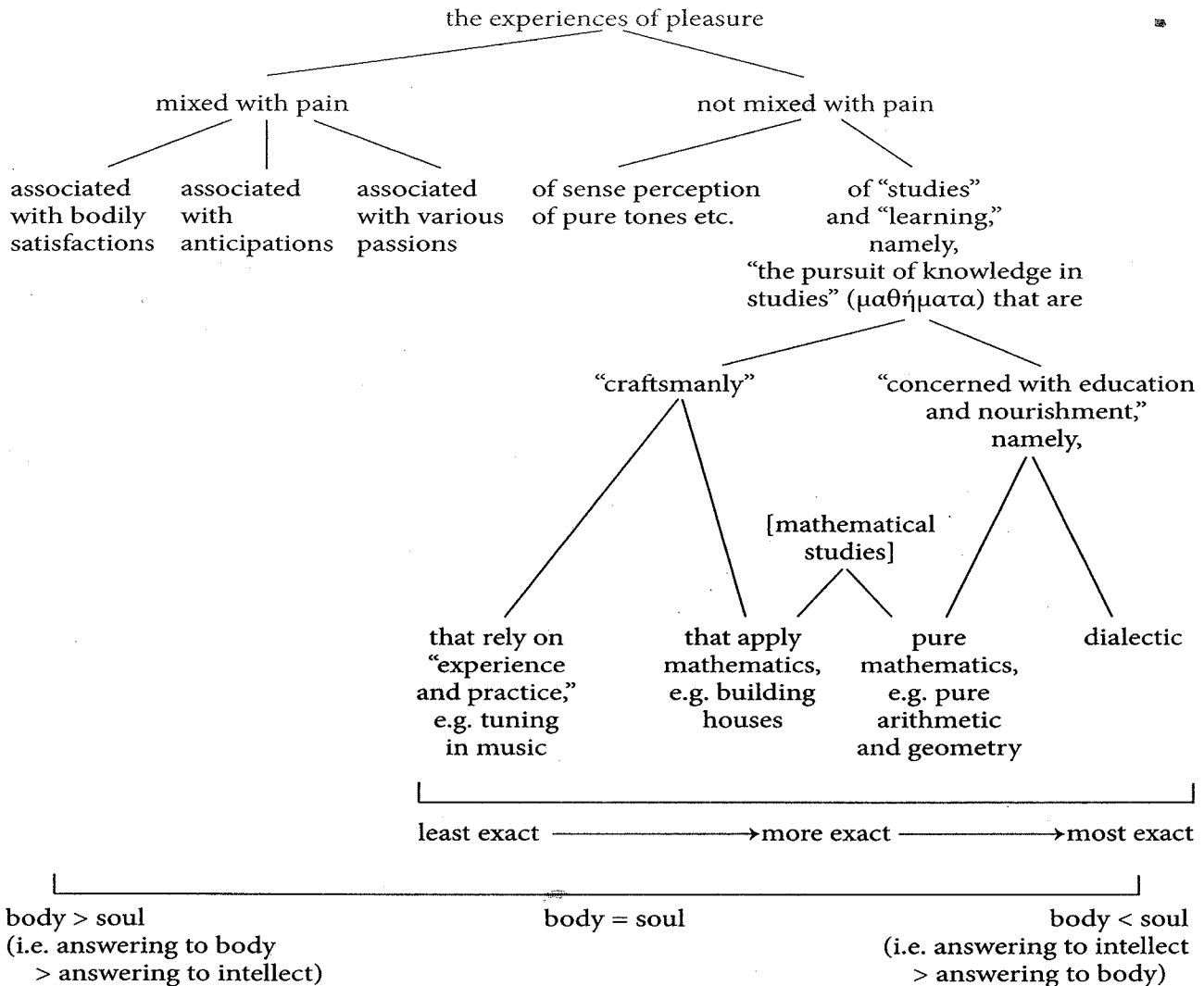
his first division at 55d1–3, he titles the field he opens up τῆς περὶ τὰ μαθήματα ἐπιστήμης, “knowledge as it is pursued in the [various] studies”; by having Socrates speak of τὰ μαθήματα, “studies,” Plato signals the integration of the kinds of knowledge with the pleasures of “studies” and “learning.” This is later confirmed when, making the same connection in the opposite direction, he has Socrates refer back to the pleasures of learning as the “pure pleasures of the soul itself, attendant *upon the sciences* (ἐπιστήμαις)” (66c4–6). We are thus invited to recognize in Socrates’ distinctions of the kinds of knowledge at 55c–59d precisely the articulation he has withheld at 51e–52b; by his sorting and placement of the kinds of learning, he leads us gradually to the radical predominance of the intellect that completes the continuum. We have already discussed these distinctions in Part I, where we traced them in figure 1. We can now combine the diagrams in figures 1 and 8 to yield the—still provisional—view of the whole shown in figure 9.

To bring this comprehensive continuum more fully into focus, we need to make four more particular observations.

1. *The adjacency of the experience of pleasure in perceiving pure tones with the “least exact” knowledge.* If the distinctions of the kinds of knowledge sort out the “studies” that are the occasions for pleasures of the fifth kind, then the first kind of knowledge should be adjacent, so to speak, to the fourth kind of pleasure. And so it is. We saw earlier how with pleasures in pure tones, the listener is in a state of appreciative arrest; to take pleasure in the tone is to remain fixed on the sensible and precisely *not* to go to work distinguishing in it its intelligible structure. But this is to say that the experience of the pure tone contains within it as a beckoning possibility just the activity that marks Socrates’ paradigm for the “least exact” of the arts, the skill of tuning. Conversely, the musician takes his bearings from his pitch-perfect hearing of the pure tone: even as he breaks with the pleasure-taker’s arrest and “*hunts for the measure* (τὸ μέτρον) of each vibrating string” (56a5–6), distinguishing in each tone the intelligible structure, “the measure,” that makes it “harmonious” (σύμφωνον, a3–4) with the others within its mode, it is his hearing of the tone that guides him. Thus the two experiences stand in close proximity.

2. *The middle region of the continuum, relocated.* What is more, in their difference, these two experiences mark the center of the full con-

FIGURE 9



tinuum. We saw earlier how with his introduction of the fifth kind of pleasure, Socrates disclosed in retrospect the intermediate status of the fourth. Now we are in position to fine-tune this recognition: whereas pleasure-taking in the pure tone gives sense perception priority over the beckoning possibility of intellectual inquiry, which it does not take up, the tuner's "hunt for the measure" gives intellectual inquiry priority over the pleasant state of perceptual arrest, from which it departs. Again, whereas the pure tone's transparent reference to its own nature gives the

sensible its pleasure-giving beauty, for the tuner this very beauty has distinctly cognitive value. In these contrasts we can see how, even as they converge at the center of the continuum, these experiences also diverge, the pleasure-taking reflecting a subordination of intellect to the senses (and, so, to the body) and the tuner's "hunt" reflecting a subordination of the senses (and, so, of the body) to the intellect.

3. *The marking of the maximal predominance of intellect by the "most exact" knowledge.* In discussing the four kinds, Socrates made "the more and less" the defining mark of the indeterminate (24a9, c2-3, c10-11). As we have observed, his distinction of the kinds of knowledge lays out a series ranging from those with "less exactness" to those with "more exactness" (56c5), with the "exactness" of a discipline being a matter of how fully it distinguishes and brings into view the mathematical or, still more deeply, the eidetic structure of its subject matter. It should now be clear how the identification of the extreme of maximal exactness is one and the same with the related extreme in the continuum of pleasures, the predominance of intellect over the modes of consciousness that answer to the needs of the body. In the final step of his distinction of the kinds of knowledge, Socrates pairs νοῦς and φρόνησις, roughly, "reason" and "moral understanding," respectively, and he credits to them together "the acts of thinking that study what really is" (ταῖς περὶ τὸ ὄν ὄντως ἐννοίαις, 59d4) and let us speak "with the most exact truth" (τῇ ἀκριβεστάτῃ ἀληθείᾳ, a11-b1). Partly complementary, partly congruent, νοῦς and φρόνησις together mark a thinking that is maximally independent from the senses and attuned to unity and the good; there could be no fuller way to specify the full power of the intellect.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, this extreme in the continuum of knowledge coincides with and defines the corresponding extreme of the continuum of the kinds of pleasure.

4. *The correspondence of the opposing predominances: The ambiguity of τροφή.* If these observations are well taken, the continuum of the kinds of knowledge fits within the continuum of the kinds of pleasure, coinciding with its 'right-hand' side and giving that 'half' of it the internal articulation that Socrates at first withheld. If we now ask about the 'left-hand' extreme, that is, if we ask whether the newly defined 'right-hand' extreme still stands as the specific counterpart to the unaltered

58. Note Socrates' pairing of these also in the key passages at 63a and 66b.

'left-hand' extreme, the text gives us some pointed help. In the distinction by which he first lays open the field of knowledge, Socrates opposes to "the productive" the part that is "concerned with education and *nourishment*," *περὶ παιδείαν καὶ τροφήν* (55d2–3). It is striking to give to that theoretical work by which the soul as intellect achieves its maximal independence from and predominance over the body the name that usually signifies food and drink.<sup>59</sup> This should remind us that it is *τροφή* in just this latter sense that the soul pursues in the activities located at the opposite end of the continuum of pleasures. Thus the opposed predominances that frame the continuum may be gathered and differentiated under the general title of the concern for "nourishment," with the shifting senses of this notion allowing for the array of activities ranging from those in which intellect is subordinate to and immersed in the pursuit of what the body needs, to those in which, on the contrary, it ever more deeply liberates itself from the body and immerses itself in the understanding of the eidetic and mathematical order of things.

The preceding observations imply that Socrates' two sets of distinctions articulate the two parts of *one* underlying "indeterminate." If we set aside for the moment the subordinate structures of the kinds of pleasure and knowledge, we can bring the whole continuum to view (see figure 10).

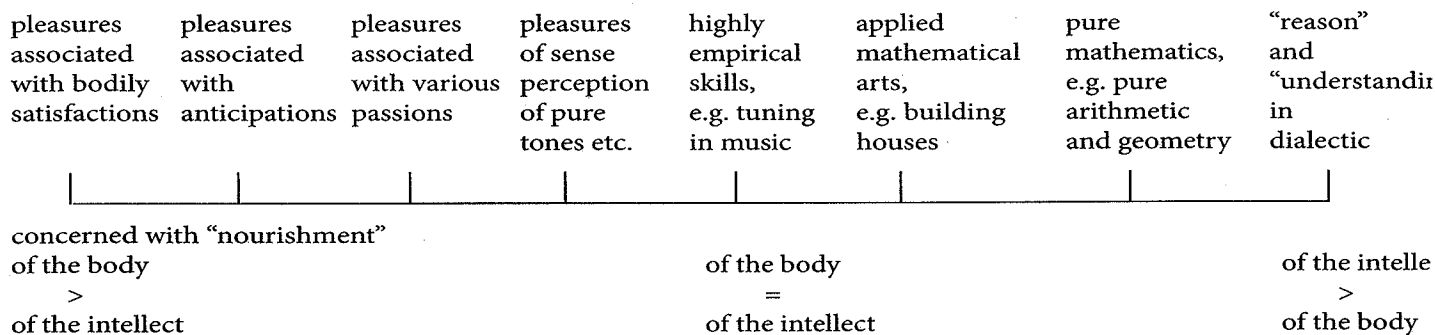
(b) *The "Single Form": βίος, "Life" in the Normative Sense*

As Socrates' two illustrations show, the practice of the god-given method may proceed from the one to the many or from the many to the one. As with the letter-sounds example, our practice of it has first disclosed the indeterminate, tracing the full continuum by distinguishing and relating

59. *τροφή* in this spiritual sense makes at least three other equally striking appearances in the dialogues. At *Phaedo* 107d, Socrates, beginning the myth, says that the soul "takes nothing with it to the next world except its education and *τροφή*." At *Phaedrus* 247d, Socrates, in the midst of the palinode, tells how "as the mind of god is nourished (*τρέφομένη*) by reason and knowledge, so with every soul that is concerned to receive what is proper to it: when it looks for a time upon what *is*, it is deeply content, and when it contemplates the true, it is nourished (*τρέφεται*). . . ." Most striking for our reading of the *Philebus*, however, is *Timaeus* 88a8–b3: ". . . natural to humans are two desires, that through the body for nourishment (*διὰ σῶμα μὲν τροφῆς*) and that through the most divine of what is within us for wisdom (*διὰ δὲ τὸ θεϊότατον τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν φρονήσεως*); the motions of the stronger will predominate (*αἱ τοῦ κρείττονος κινήσεις κρατοῦσαι*) and amplify their interest (*τὸ μὲν σφέτερον αὐξοῦσαι*). . . ." I have discussed this last passage in "The *Timaeus* and the 'Longer Way,'" 42–45, 49.



FIGURE 10



kinds. We are now ready to identify the “single form.” This form must meet a twofold requirement: it must be all-inclusive, having all the places on the continuum as its field of *possible* instantiations, and it must have normative force, implicating a limited number of forms that, fit for interplay, provide the eidetic order for its *good* instantiation.

Several brief reflections will suffice to bring to the fore what has been, quite properly, tacitly before us all along. First, we have reached the full continuum by recognizing the fit of the kinds of pleasure with the kinds of knowledge; accordingly, neither pleasure alone nor knowledge alone can be the “single form.” In fact, however, Socrates’ inquiry has all along been focused not on pleasure *per se* or knowledge *per se* but rather on the πάθη, the “experiences” or “states of life,” “in and through which each of the two comes-to-be” (ἐν ᾧ τέ ἐστιν ἑκάτερον αὐτοῖν καὶ διὰ τί πάθος γίνεσθον, 31b2–3), and these πάθη, we have seen, are in every case an interplay of body and soul. The embodiment of soul or—to say the same—the ensoulment of body is the fundamental condition of life, and it is that selection of πάθη that provides for the harmonious “nourishing” of both body and soul that makes for the good life. But this is to say it is the notion of life in its normative sense—βίος, in its rich significance as that “mode” or “manner” of existence that best realizes the good as this is instantiable by a human being over the course of a lifetime<sup>60</sup>—that is the “single form.”

60. See LSJ I.

Textual support for this comes in a reply by Protarchus that might otherwise pass us by as a mere flourish. Socrates has just asked whether music, even in the most empirical practice, should be mixed into the good life, and Protarchus answers, “It seems necessary to me, at least if our life is ever to be, in any way at all, *a life*” (εἴπερ γε ἡμῶν ὁ βίος ἔσται καὶ ὀπωσοῦν ποτε βίοι, 62c3–4).

(c) *The Task of Identifying the Limited Number of Forms:  
The “Incorporeal Order That Rules Harmoniously over  
Soul-and-body” (64b)*

Guided by the model of Socrates’ tale of Theuth’s account of the letter-sounds, we have let our distinctions of kinds disclose the underlying continuum of πάθη, and this has given us occasion to identify Life (βίος) as the “single form” that has this continuum as its field of possible instantiations. But as we have stressed, Life in this sense has normative force, and this should now turn us toward that “certain number of forms, each embracing a plurality” (18b), that is “intermediate” (17a) between the one and the unlimited many. Can we now discern, between Life and the continuum, that limited number of more determinate “ones” that are, in effect, the στοιχεῖα whose joint instantiation constitutes the good instantiation of Life?

The answer, I think, is a qualified yes. Let me proceed by three interwoven sets of observations. First of all, Socrates’ reflections on the *unmixed* pleasures have already enabled us to go a long way toward—to recall his language at 18c4–5—“distinguishing [them] down to the level of distinct ones.” Socrates himself sorted the perception of sensible ‘pures’ into the highly determinate subkinds of the “less divine” pleasures of pure fragrances, on the one hand, and of the pleasures of the perception of pure shapes and colors and tones, on the other.<sup>61</sup> His language, in turn, gave us occasion to recognize his distinction of the kinds of “knowledge as it is pursued in the [various] studies (περὶ τὰ μαθήματα)” as a basis for sorting the pleasures “of studies” (περὶ τὰ μαθήματα), and

61. This array calls for closer analysis, impossible here. For now note, first, that the “less divine” kind, namely, that of fragrances, by contrast with the others appears not to manifest forms and, second, that the series, pure shapes→pure colors→pure tones, appears to lead from the sensible predominance of figure through the recession of figure and the emergence of ratio to the sensible predominance of ratio, respectively. See my “Figure, Ratio, Form,” cited in n. 10.

he distinguished the kinds of knowledge down to the level of the determinate skills and arts and sciences, respectively, either actually, as with his identification of the exercise of “reason” and “understanding” in dialectic, or by example, as in the cases of the three other kinds of knowledge. By contrast, in the region of the continuum traced by the *mixed* pleasures, Socrates has left us with relatively unfocused groups of πάθη and the task, accordingly, of distinguishing them into more determinate kinds. How are we to go about this? Plato does give us some guiding indications, as we shall see shortly. To appreciate them, however, we need first recall the more general principle guiding the final divisions that we first identified in Socrates’ illustrations of dialectic in the analyses of the musical modes and of letter-sounds.

The final phase of the god-given method, we saw, must reach forms that are capable of combining to constitute well-formed wholes; the “ones” we identify as our limited many must be fit for interplay. This is so because the “single form” is instantiated not by any one of these alone nor by a mere aggregation of them but rather by the harmony that they realize in the various combinations that each invites with various of the others. Though Socrates has ostensibly abandoned the god-given method, his alternative strategy, the mixing of the ingredients of the good life, converges at this point with our project: what makes the “mixture and blending” (63e9–64a1) that he lays out for Protarchus superlatively beautiful (καλλίστην, e9) is its complete “freedom from internal faction” (ἀστασιαστοτάτην, e9) or, positively, its “well-proportionedness” (συμμετρία, 64e6, 65a2, 66b1), and in this we find displayed just that harmony that Life (βίος) in its normative sense requires. To bring this to view, we need only mark the three key ways in which, according to Socrates, the various ingredients of the good life require their mixing with one another. (1) Although it is the “truest section” (cf. τὰληθέστατα τμήματα, 61e6) of knowledge, the combination of “reason” and “understanding,” νοῦς and φρόνησις, in dialectical insight into forms and mathematical cannot stand alone. A man who has such knowledge of, for example, “justice itself” (62a2–3) or, again, “of circle and sphere, the divine sphere itself” (a7–8), but who fails to understand the “human circles and spheres” we construct in building (a8–b2) or, too, who lacks the still more empirical skill of music would not be “sufficiently possessed of knowledge” (ἰκανῶς ἐπιστήμης ἔξει, a7). The implication is that the purely theoretical insight the dialectician achieves

is partial and incomplete unless developed into its productive and empirical counterparts. Life, accordingly, in requiring the highest kind of knowledge, requires all the other kinds as well. (2) Dialectical knowledge is a key ingredient not only because of its superlative truth but also for a second reason: pleasure itself requires it. Socrates brings this out for Protagoras by personifying “the pleasures” *en bloc* and asking them if they prefer to live with or without all the kinds of knowledge; they reject these alternatives, instead singling out that “best kind” of knowledge “that understands not only all else but also *each of us* (αὐτὴν ἡμῶν . . . ἐκάστην) as perfectly as possible” (63c1–3). Life, accordingly, insofar as it calls for pleasure, also calls for dialectical understanding to sort and cultivate it. (3) This cultivation, however, must be selective. Socrates brings this out by turning to “reason and understanding” (c5–6, c7)—that is, to the very knowledge that “the pleasures” have called for—and asking them if they require mixing with “any pleasures” (c6). Their reply is that both their own origination (τὴν ἀρχὴν, e1) and their “offspring” (τά . . . τέκνα, e1), presumably their productive and empirical counterparts, depend upon the exclusion of some kinds of pleasure and the accompaniment of others. The physically intense joys of the sybaritic life must be excluded, for these produce madness and forgetfulness. But “reason and understanding” welcome the “true pleasures” of perception of the sensible ‘pures’ and of learning as οἰκείας, “[their] own” (e4), and they also affirm “the pleasures that accompany health and being temperate, and indeed all those that follow upon virtue as a whole as celebrants attend their god” (63e4–6).

Socrates does not pause to explicate this last, important collection. Nonetheless, it suffices to give us guidance in making the further distinctions we need in the region of the mixed pleasures. His careful phrasing points to what Life requires from each of the first three kinds of πάθη. (a) The pleasures “that accompany health” (e4) are those associated with the nourishment of the body. “Reason” and “understanding” welcome these satisfactions at least for the sake of their own self-preservation: an unhealthy body will undermine a life of intellectual pursuits, producing disabling fatigue and disruptive pain where that life requires energy and composure. But our discovery of the continuum suggests a more positive reason as well: understanding is itself involved, in however inchoate a manner, in the lived recognition of the various impositions of limit upon the indeterminate that constitute the natural norms governing bodily

needs; accordingly, in the various activities of nourishing the body we may find a mode of the flourishing, however heteronomous, of intellect. (b) To the pleasures that “accompany health” Socrates adds those that “accompany being temperate,” τοῦ σωφρονεῖν (e5). Being temperate is of course already involved in one’s self-restriction to healthy satisfactions; but it also implies the planning and, so, the foresight by which one constructs and keeps to a healthy regimen over time, and this goes best on the basis of well-focused and well-established practices of anticipation. The securely temperate person will derive pleasure from planning for the proper satisfactions of bodily needs as well as from these satisfactions themselves. In welcoming the pleasures that “accompany being temperate,” therefore, “reason” and “understanding” will select a set of anticipatory pleasures corresponding to and reinforcing those of “health.” (c) Temperance, moreover, extends beyond the concerns of bodily health. It is but one component in the larger unity of the virtues—in “virtue as a whole,” συμπάσης ἀρετῆς (e5)—and here it is concerned as well with the various passions. In his earlier account of the pleasures associated with the passions, Socrates showed how one thought can restore the equanimity that another had disrupted and how this restoration is (or brings) pleasure. At the core of the whole of virtue (however we construe its structure) is φρόνησις or νοῦς, “understanding” or “reason.” Where the thought that restores equanimity is a genuine insight, therefore, the pleasure of restoration accompanies virtue, “following upon it,” in Socrates’ evocative phrase, “as [a] celebrant upon [its] god” (καθάπερ θεοῦ ὄπαδοί, e6).<sup>62</sup> Socrates’ list of emotional states at 47e gives us an abundance of good points of departure for appreciating this connection. If, for instance, one gains release from the disturbance of fear by an understanding of the true dangers of the situation, pleasure accompanies courage. More complicated: if one’s fury expresses a recognition of injustice that, brought to focus, turns it into a clear-thinking determination to put things right, pleasure accompanies justice. Still more complicated: eros, on Socrates’ account in the *Phaedrus*,<sup>63</sup> can inspire an appreciation of beauty that, in

62. On the way Socrates’ account of our pleasure in laughing at comedy, 48a–50b, reveals the moral complexity of the restoration of equanimity, see my “The Pleasures of the Comic and of Socratic Inquiry: Aporetic Reflections on *Philebus* 48a–50b,” *Arethusa* 41 (Spring 2008): 263–89.

63. Among the numerous bits of language in the *Philebus* that remind us of the palinode

turn, can move one to a profound respect for one's beloved and turn sexual hunger into deep friendship; here pleasure arises with a remarkable mix of metaphysical insight, attentiveness to the other, and spontaneous self-control. These sketches are of course too few and too quick, but they suffice to suggest the intrinsic interest of a study of the pleasures associated with virtue and the passions. In pursuing this study, we would be explicating the perspective from which "reason" and "understanding" select a set of pleasures from the third kind on the continuum.

Socrates completes his mixing by adding "truth" (ἀλήθειαν, 64b2) as the last ingredient; "without this," he remarks, "a one" (α6-7)<sup>64</sup> "would never truly come into being or, once come-to-be, persist" (b2-3). He then declares to Protarchus that "the argument has now brought to completion a certain incorporeal order that rules harmoniously over body-and-soul (κόσμος τις ἀσώματος ἄρξων καλῶς ἐμψύχου σώματος)"<sup>65</sup> (b7-8). In the context of Socrates' project with Protarchus, "truth" appears to signify that *genuineness in being what it is* that consists, positively, in the presence of all that this "what" implies and, negatively, in the absence of anything that would contradict it. "Truth" in this sense would mark the completeness and the integrity that give stability to the existence of a composite, and it is precisely such completeness and integrity that "reason" and "understanding" have secured for the good life by the expan-

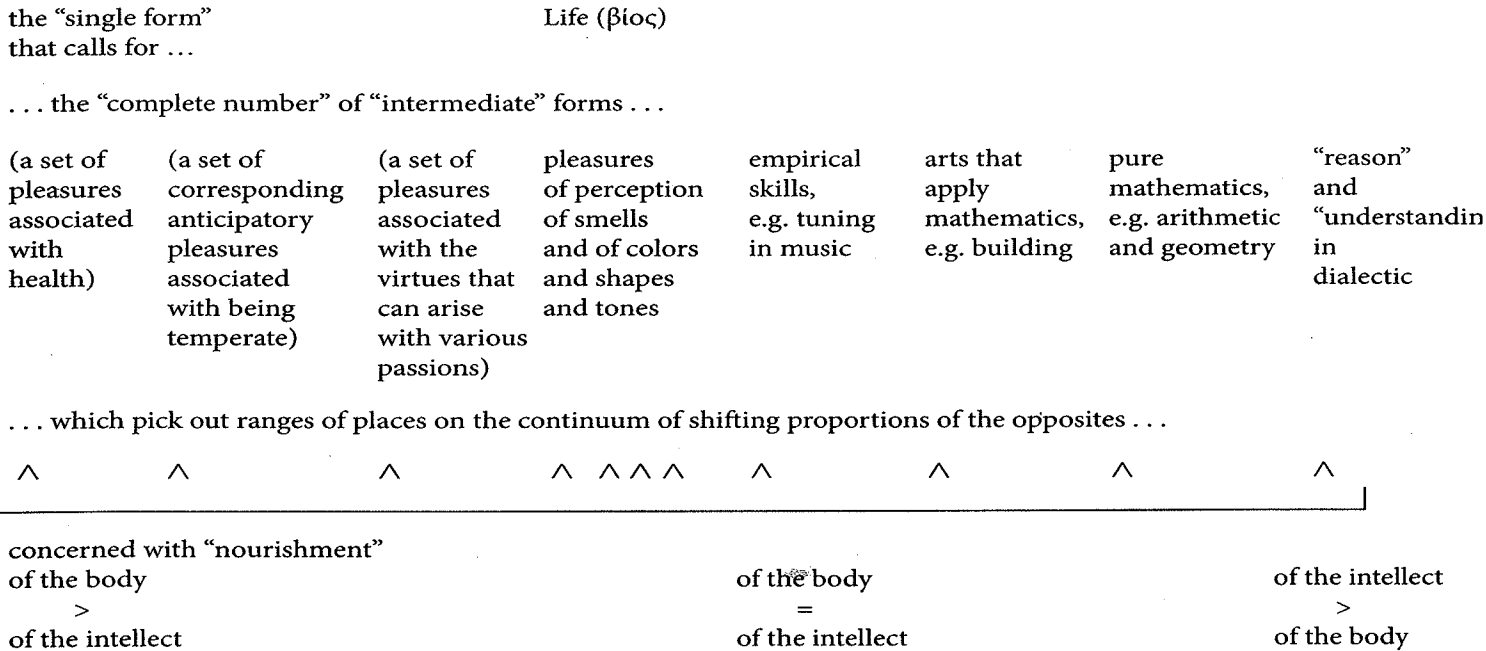
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in the *Phaedrus* are Socrates' references to the bitter-sweetness of eros (46c9), to "madness" (63d6), and to the ὄπαδοί attending their god (e6).

64. I read Socrates' full clause at 64a6-7, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλως ἂν ποτε γένοιτο οὐδ' ἂν ἓν, as "not otherwise would there even ever come to be [a] one." The line may be rendered less literally and into more felicitous English as, to quote Frede's translation, "without [which] not a single thing could come to be" or, to quote Hackforth (with a slight change of word order), "without [which] nothing in the world could come into being" or, to quote S. Benardete's translation in *The Tragedy and Comedy of Life: Plato's Philebus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), "otherwise not one thing would ever come to be." But these renderings take ἓν as 'single' to the exclusion of its sense as 'whole.' Socrates' stress on the harmony or integrity of the mixture, its being superlatively "free from internal faction" (ἀστασιαστοτάτην, 63e9), only two sentences earlier makes it important to recognize the resonance of that idea in his final and emphatic ἓν, "one," at 64a7.

65. Up to "body-and-soul," this is Frede's fine translation, slightly amended. A literal translation of Socrates' final ἐμψύχου σώματος would be "of an ensouled body"; Frede has "of a body possessed by a soul." Her translation strains to resist the obvious misimpression given by the literal rendering, namely, that the primary subject of the "ruling order" is the body; in truth it is the soul in its embodied existence or, to say the same, the living individual that Socrates has had in mind as the subject of the "ruling order" from 31b on. My translation is an effort to capture this sense with the minimal departure from the literal rendering.

FIGURE 11



sions and denials we have just retraced. In the context of the project Plato shares with us, in turn, "truth" appears also to have its related sense of *disclosure*: the "reason" and "understanding" that have guided the argument and fashioned the "ruling order" for the good life are, Socrates has stressed (59d), the powers of intellect at work in dialectic; it is therefore no surprise that, listening to Socrates' words with the god-given method in mind, we can find in the "ruling order" an indirect display of the array of forms that Life (βίος) requires.<sup>66</sup> We are now in position to mark this eidetic order as shown in figure 11 (letting figure 5 guide us in the reformulation of figures 9 and 10).

V. CLOSING ASSESSMENTS

If these reconstructive reflections are well taken, then the *Philebus* provides the occasion and the resources for a manifold accomplishment. Socrates' disappointing abandonment of the god-given method in favor of

66. Cf. Verity Harte, "Quel prix for la verité? (64a7-66d3)," in *La Fêlure du plaisir: Etudes sur le Philèbe de Platon*, edited by Monique Dixsaut (Paris: Vrin, 1999), 385-401.

his mixture strategy is Plato's provocation to those of us attempting to travel the "longer path" to take up the method for ourselves. And if we do, we find ourselves working out an account of Life ( $\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) in its normative sense that supplants the tripartition of the soul that Socrates both presented and challenged in the *Republic*. We can now mark three key respects in which this new account supersedes the tripartition.

First, Socrates holds back from imposing the ontological presumption of "trust"—the presumption, namely, that individuals are the basic reality—onto the life of the soul. If we look at the continuum against the background of the tripartition, Socrates' *not* projecting anything like agent-like parts becomes conspicuous: whereas the first, third, and final four kinds in Figure 11 coincide with what Socrates in the *Republic* gathered under the headings of "the appetitive," "the spirited," and "the calculative," respectively, there is no hint of these consolidating notions in the *Philebus*; in the one set of passages in which Socrates in the *Philebus* resorts to personification, his dramatized interrogations of "the pleasures" and of "reason and understanding" at 63a–64a, he portrays them in dialogue with himself, not in agent-like interaction with one another, and the point of the two exchanges is to show how—rather than being free-standing individuals in a *quasi*-social community—they are mutually apportioned "elements" in the well-integrated whole of the good life.

Second, by tracing the gradually shifting predominances of the involvements of body and intellect, Socrates' distinctions in the *Philebus* disclose a continuum that, in providing an occasion to examine the full range of the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$  of the embodied soul, lets Socrates in the *Philebus* discover just the sorts of "notes" "in between" the three parts that, in offering his simile of musical harmony at *Republic* 443d–e, he acknowledged his tripartition might be leaving out. The  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$  of anticipation show up "in between" the kinds that the tripartition consolidated as the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul, and the perception of the sensible 'pures' shows up "in between" the kinds that the tripartition consolidated as the spirited and the calculative parts. What is more, the continuum Socrates traces by his distinctions of the kinds of knowledge (figure 1) lets a wealth of empirical and productive cognition come to view that, in his consuming interest in the *Republic* in analogizing the calculative part of the soul with the rulers of Kallipolis, Socrates lumped together and left unattended as the skills of the producers.



Third and most important, by the two major phases of Socrates' mixing of the good life, Plato has given us occasion to discern the eidetic-mathematical order that the tripartition misses. By having Socrates' series of distinctions of kinds disclose corresponding proportions in the balance of the involvements of body and of intellect, Plato lets emerge both the continuum of these balances and the correspondence of the kinds to them; and by having Socrates mix together select sets of the kinds as ingredients of the good life, Plato lets emerge the way in which the form Life ( $\beta\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) requires their instantiation for its own. In these ways, even without anything like the authoritative Pythagorean ratios that inform the notion of "limit" in harmonic theory, he gives us the resources we need—namely, the relations of kind to kind, as "measure to measure" (25b1)—in order to discern the interplaying forms and the corresponding ratios that together constitute the eidetic-mathematical structure of the life of the soul. Thus he provides for that more "exact grasp" of the structure of the embodied soul that, as the "finest view possible," frees itself from the constraints of tripartition and personification and lets the embodied soul emerge in its "truth."

But this has too final a ring. It belongs to the structural dynamic of the dialogues themselves that the gift of a reorienting insight is also the gift of new tasks for inquiry.<sup>67</sup> It is one thing to step out of the cave into the light, another to make out the things themselves that the light illumines, and still another to re-assess the shadows on the cave wall by the new measure of these things themselves. Let me close by acknowledging the two main tasks we now face. First, we have already noted the differing degrees of depth and precision in Socrates' characterizations of the eight "intermediate" kinds that Life requires for its good instantiation. Plato has in effect provided an orienting frame of reference but left to us the complex reflective work—horizon-clearing work in, at the very least, biology, psychology, ethics, and the intentional analysis of cognition—of defining what presents itself within that frame, the eight kinds and their manifold interplay. Second, every insight we reach in the course of this work should deepen our appreciation of the difference in kind of the disclosures of the embodied soul achieved by dialectic with those achieved by the tripartition, and this should turn us back with quickened inter-

67. See especially my "Platonic Mimesis," cited in n. 28.

est to the question of the status of the account provided by the tripartition.<sup>68</sup> Judged by the new standard set by the “longer path,” how does the ‘shorter path’ measure up? Granting Socrates’ own objection that the ‘shorter path’ “falls short of that which *is*” (*Republic* 504c), still, are there ways in which, to borrow Adeimantus’s word at 504b8, Socrates did after all speak μετρίως, striking the mean? Indeed, did his falling short of the eidetic-mathematical structure that dialectic seeks enable him to reveal other content—or, alternatively, respond to other needs—than dialectic is suited to do? These challenging questions invite a re-examination of the *Republic*,<sup>69</sup> now in light of the *Philebus*; they also invite consideration of the versions of tripartition offered in the *Phaedrus* and the *Timaeus*. All of this is work for the future.

68. See n. 16.

69. Without attributing to him my formulation of them, I owe thanks to Matt Evans for pressing these questions; I am now at work on them, and I look forward to learning from Evans’s own work, in the near future, on the issues involved. For rich resources, see Rachana Kamtekar’s “Speaking with the Same Voice as Reason: Personification in Plato’s Psychology,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 31 (Winter 2006): 167–202; and Myles Burnyeat, “The Truth of Tripartition,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 106 (2006): 1–23.

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