

Kenneth Sayre. *Metaphysics and Method in Plato's Statesman*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN 0-521-86608-1.

With this study, Kenneth Sayre extends into new terrain his already remarkably full and searching body of philosophical scholarship on the later Plato. This work includes *Plato's Analytic Method* (1969, referred to below as *PAM*), a close study of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* in which he articulates the logico-methodological transformations that make collection and division in the *Sophist* a reconfiguration of the method of hypothesis in the *Phaedo*; *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (1983, referred to below as *PLO*), in which he breaks the long-standing impasse between the Tübingen affirmation and the Anglo-American rejection of Aristotle's report of Plato's "unwritten teachings" by disclosing their key elements in Plato's writings, in particular in the *Parmenides* and the *Philebus*; and the nearly Heraclitean brace of books published within a year of each other, *Plato's Literary Garden: How to Read a Platonic Dialogue* (1995) and *Parmenides' Lesson: Translation and Explication of Plato's Parmenides* (1996), in which he explores, on the one hand, the form and dynamics of Plato's new literary genre and, on the other, the labyrinthine conceptual gymnastics of Plato's most abstract argumentation. Kenneth Sayre's new book, *Metaphysics and Method in Plato's Statesman* (referred to below as *MMPS*), picks up the threads of his first two and, by the passages it brings together for the first time and the questions it raises about them, extends and deepens our access to the metaphysical issues that Plato pursues in his later work. Whether one finally agrees or disagrees with his interpretive proposals, this is a book that every serious reader of the *Statesman* — and, too, of the *Sophist* and the *Philebus* — will find rich and thought-provoking.

Sayre describes as a catalyst for *MMPS* the "serendipitous discovery" that the terms used in the *Statesman* for the subject matter of the two kinds of measurement distinguished at 283c-285c — ὑπερβολή καὶ ἔλλειψις, "excess and deficiency" (283c4) — are a "synonym for the expressions used both by Aristotle and [by] his commentators in reference to the Great and the Small" (p. 2). The serendipity of this discovery evidently lay in the way it opened the way for a series of connections both within and between the metaphysics and the methodology of the *Statesman*. Because in *PLO* he had already recognized the appearance of the Great and the Small (and the whole set of "unwritten teachings" reported by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* A.6) in the distinction of the four kinds in the *Philebus*, he was able to connect the Stranger's two kinds of measurement — merely relative comparison and comparison with the mean — to Socrates' notions of the Unlimited and Limit, respectively. And because he had already developed thorough-going interpretations both of collection and division in the *Sophist* in *PAM* and of Forms as numbers in the *Philebus* in *PLO*, he was able to connect the Stranger's methodological instruction in the *Statesman* to divide διὰ μέσων ("through the middle," 262b6) with Socrates' argument in the *Philebus* that dialectic is the "most exact" of the arts. Dialectic, Sayre argues in *MMPS*, practices the second kind of measurement by its systematic discernment, in its divisions, of how Forms — understood as Limits as, in turn, "numbers in the sense of measures" (203, 204) — "mark off a middle ground between extremes of the Unlimited" (239).

This summary of Sayre's core insight is, of course, impossibly dense. In order to explicate it, we need to step back and acknowledge some of the rich analytic work with which he prepares the way. An important part of this work consists in the crucial philological labor of retrieving the vocabulary of Aristotle and his later commentators and of canvassing Plato's own usage (Sayre discusses passages in the *Philebus*, the *Parmenides*, and the *Republic*) for identical or comparable expressions. This labor puts the reader of the dialogues in position to share Sayre's recognition that what Socrates in the *Philebus* calls τὸ ἄπειρον ("the Unlimited") is in play in the Stranger's account of the merely relative measure of ὑπερβολή καὶ ἔλλειψις ("excess and deficiency") in the *Statesman*. Sayre provides the resources for this recognition in an invaluable appendix, "Equivalents for the Great and the Small in Aristotle and His Commentators."

The lion's share of his preparatory work, however, consists in chapter after chapter of close reading and analysis of the relevant passages on method, measurement, and metaphysics in the *Sophist* and the *Statesman*. Here is a distillation of the key sets of claims for which he argues in *MMPS*:

(i) In the *Sophist* dialectic takes the form of collection and division, and these identify the necessary and sufficient features, respectively, for the being of the *definiendum*. To see how this is so, however, requires penetrating the shifting variety of forms that collection and division take. Consider, first, collection. In the *Sophist* it is executed, surprisingly, by the first five sets of *divisions*; the way in which each would-be definition of the sophist fails to include the four others forces the Stranger to step back and try to make out what they all share — "imitation" or the "producing [of] images" (45). Hence the seventh, seemingly satisfactory division reverses the initial choice to seek the sophist within "acquisition" and begins instead from "production." In the *Statesman*, in turn, collection is done — or rather, Sayre argues, it is replaced — by the use of paradigms: by what it shares with the initially puzzling, more difficult form that it is paradigmatic for, a paradigm discloses features that are "essential" (80) and "intrinsic to" (89), and thus "necessary" for, the being of the more difficult form "as well" (90). The paradigm of the weaver makes visible, in particular, that both weaving and kingship "involve the intertwining of contrasting elements" (89). Finally, in the "godly method" of the *Philebus*, collection no longer stands as a separate methodological activity complementary to division. Rather, "dialectic begins summarily with the 'positing' of some appropriate Form" (50). Collection proper, formerly a process in its own right and of equal weight with division, has "faded from the scene" (51).

(ii) Division too undergoes a basic variation in form. In the *Sophist* it takes the form of a series of bifurcations and moves always, to cite language first introduced in the *Phaedrus* and reiterated at *Sophist* 264e, to "the right-hand" side (54, 70 *et passim*); that is, thought proceeds step by step through an "increasing specification" (112) of what the subject to be defined *is*, thereby gathering a set of "conditions" that are "sufficient" for it. In the *Statesman*, by contrast, division shifts from the work of specification to that of "elimination." The Stranger abandons bifurcation and moves repeatedly to the left, distinguishing each of the kinds of art that are "kindred" to statesmanship (Sayre counts 21 in all [113-124]) in order, by showing exhaustively what statesmanship *is not* (126-

131), to leave it standing by itself. Rather than gathering a set of characters, division is now guided by the idea that "a sufficient condition [for the art of the statesman] is that it differs from all other arts determined to be similar to it in relevant respects" (112).

(iii) Socrates' category of the Unlimited in the *Philebus* includes "all contraries that can be compared only with respect to each other" (179); because, Sayre argues, it is only with the imposition of Limit that equality and, "after" equality, relations of number to number and measure to measure are first introduced, these comparisons take the form of a pure more-and-less that involves no "definite quantity" or "numerical relations" (161). Accordingly, they are cases of what the Stranger in the *Statesman* characterizes as purely relative measure, and the Unlimited and this, his "first kind of measurement," are "equivalent" (179).

(iv) Conversely, Sayre argues, the Stranger's second kind of measurement, measurement that takes "the mean, the fitting, the timely, and the requisite — all that has been withdrawn from the extremes to the middle" (284e) as its standard, corresponds to Socrates' category of Limit. Just as it is by guarding against "exceeding due measure or falling short of it" that the arts "preserve measure" and "everything good and fair is produced" (*Statesman* 284b), so it is by the imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited that "all sorts of fair things" — or, to give full due to Socrates' πάντα at 26b1, "all the things we have that are fine" — "are brought into being" (*Philebus* 26b). Sayre is explicit and pointed in bringing into focus the formal cause at work in this production of the good and beautiful: translating the Stranger's obscure characterization of the mean, τὴν τῆς γενέσεως ἀναγκαῖαν οὐσίαν (283d8-9), as "the being necessary for generation," he declares that this "must be ... Limit" (178).

(v) At *Statesman* 284d, the Stranger postpones an "exhibition" (ἀπόδειξις) of exactness<sup>1</sup> itself" (191). Sayre holds that Socrates' series of distinctions of kinds of art at *Philebus* 55d-59d "could plausibly count as" such an exhibition (195). Socrates sorts the arts according to their degree of "accuracy" or exactness, moving from [1] arts like "lyre-playing" that proceed by "practiced guesswork rather than measurement" (193), through [2] arts that count up sense-perceptible things and, so, "reckon with unequal units" (194, quoting 56d), and [3] the "philosophic[ally practiced] arts of arithmetic and measurement" that reckon with non-empirical and, so, equal units (194-5, quoting 57d), to [4] dialectic. How can dialectic be an exact art, much less the most exact of all? Its supreme accuracy Socrates establishes by pointing out that as the study of Forms, dialectic most of all studies "what is certain and accurate and overall the most true" (196, quoting 58c). But how do Forms constitute an exact subject matter in the first place? Here Sayre invokes his study of the "unwritten teachings" in *PLO*. Working with Socrates' account of Theuth's establishment of the letter-sounds as his chief example, Sayre explains that "the Form [of each sensible phoneme] enter[s] into [the] constitution [of the phoneme as that] fixed reference point along the continuum [of vocal sound] from which [the phoneme] receives its determinate character" (200). Such fixed reference

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<sup>1</sup> Socrates' word is τὰκριβὲς (284d2). Sayre sometimes translates this and its variants as "exactness," sometimes as "accuracy."

points are at once Limits in Socrates' sense and "numbers" in the sense of "measures" that apportion and harmonize the opposites that frame the continuum. But arts that take "measures and numbers" as their subject matter are "exact" (204, quoting 57d). Hence the status of dialectic: in that it studies Forms as Limits as, in turn, "numbers in the sense of measures" (203, 204), it is an exact art.

With these preparations, we are now in position to share Sayre's vision of the convergence of method, measurement, and metaphysics in the *Statesman*. Sayre takes his bearings from the Stranger's declaration at 285d that the basic purpose of the inquiry into statesmanship is that it "make better dialecticians (διαλεκτικωτέρους) of its participants" (14 *et passim*). Dialectic is an art, and like all arts, it must practice the second kind of measurement, that which preserves the mean or, more generally, the appropriate sort of "measure" (178). This it does by following the instruction the Stranger gives Young Socrates in his "tutorial" (22, 239) on the method of division at 262b-263b: wherever possible, one must divide διὰ μέσων, "through the middle" (262b6); following this rule makes it "more likely [that the dialectician will] hit upon Ideas" (238, quoting 262b7). In response to Young Socrates' request for clarification, the Stranger gives him two exemplary bifurcations, cutting human kind into male and female and number into odd and even. But, as we noted in (ii) above, Sayre is keenly aware that when the Stranger comes to the final phase of his effort to define statesmanship, he leaves bifurcation behind. How does non-bifurcatory division nonetheless divide "through the middle" and in this way "hit upon Ideas"? In response to this question, Sayre turns from the *Statesman* to the numerous examples of eidetic order offered by Socrates in the *Philebus*: in Socrates' reports of the dialectical accounts of, e.g., "phonetic elements ... in articulate speech," of "intervals of pitched sound" in music, and of the "measures involved in reasonable weather and in lawful regulation of pleasurable experience," there is in each case a set of "fixed reference points" that occupy a "middle ground of moderation" between "extremes of Excess and Deficiency" (235). These reference points, as we noted in (v), are Forms functioning as Limits and, so, as "numbers in the sense of measures." Accordingly, it is because things themselves are constituted by the imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited that dialectic, when, dividing διὰ μέσων, it seeks out the "middle ground" of its subject matter, is "likely to hit upon Ideas." For "the middle itself" — in short, the "being that is necessary for generation," in the *Statesman's* account of the second kind of measurement, that just *is* Limit in the *Philebus's* ontology of the four kinds — is "itself ... established by the relevant Forms" (240).

This penetrating synthesis of the accounts of the method of dialectic, of the kinds of measurement, and of the ontology of Limit and the Unlimited is stunning. To understate dramatically, it provides the interpreter of the later Plato a host of fresh resources to work with. Is it, however, altogether persuasive? I want to offer five sets of challenges. But let me be clear from the outset: these are intended not as reasons to reject Sayre's synthesis but rather as suggestions for refocusing or expanding his proposals in ways that point to a still deeper potential content. These challenges are offered, then, in a spirit of partnership.

[a] Is relative measure in the *Statesman* really "equivalent" to the Unlimited in the *Philebus*? Sayre is right that the relations of reciprocal "outstripping" between the opposites in the Unlimited (cf. πρὸς ἄλληλα τάναντία διαφόρως ἔχοντα, 25e1) precede the introduction of number; where "the more and less" by which such opposites relate to each other prevails, Socrates says, they are "always in flux" (24d), and there can be no "definite quantity" (τὸ ποσὸν, 24c6, also 4, 7). For this very reason, however, their relation also precedes the introduction of measure itself, even of the first kind, relative measure, that the Stranger distinguishes in the *Statesman*. The decisive evidence for this is the Stranger's list of arts that practice relative measure, the first member of which both contradicts the denial of "numerical relations" (166) and of the use of "fixed standards" (181) that Sayre's "equivalence" would imply and shows that relative measure can even be exact: "with regard to all the arts, we must posit as one part of measurement whichever [arts] *measure number* and lengths and depths and breadths and speeds according to contraries" (*Statesman* 284e3-5). That measurement "according to contraries" can be exact, however, does not imply that it is in any sense normative; that it is by exactly 3 that 5 is smaller than 8, and that 8 is greater than 5, implies nothing about whether 5 or 8 is an "appropriate" or "timely" or "requisite" size. This suggests the possibility of a slight refocusing of Sayre's double correlation of the Unlimited with relative measure and of Limit with due measure: why not follow Socrates' distinction in usage between "definite quantity" (τὸ ποσὸν) and "the mean" (τὸ μέτριον) at *Philebus* 24c and correlate, on the one hand, the introduction of relations of number to number and measure to measure into the otherwise unstable pairs in the Unlimited with the *mere* imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited and, on the other hand, the introduction of appropriateness or timeliness or requisiteness into these numerical relations with the *wise* imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited by a demiurgic intelligence (τὸ ... δημιουργοῦν, 27b1, cf. 30b, d) as "cause" (αἰτίαν, 27b2)?

[b] Sayre argues that collection is replaced by paradigm in the *Statesman* and disappears in the account of the "godly method" in the *Philebus*. Both claims, I think, are problematic — and for reasons that Sayre more than anyone helps us see. For his insightful recognition that collection or, better, its work of recognizing necessary features is accomplished in the *Sophist* by the first five *divisions* shows us how deeply collection and division are in interplay. First of all, in the *Statesman* as in the *Sophist*, it is the palpable weakness of the initial divisions that provides the occasion for the recognition of the kind within which the *definiendum* is to be sought; well before the paradigm of the weaver is introduced at 279b, the Stranger realizes that understanding the statesman as a provider of "nurture" (τροφή) locates him within a subkind with many others, both divine and human, who have a much better claim to the status of ruler, thus understood (267ef., 275b); accordingly, the Stranger turns to the more general kind, "care" (ἐπιμέλειαν, 276d1, cf. 275ef.), in order to begin the search afresh. Isn't this an act of collection precisely in the sense that Sayre understands it? As the Stranger did with his turn from "acquisition" to "production" in the *Sophist*, so he now does with this turn from "nurture" to "care": he identifies a general character necessary to the being of the statesman. Secondly, it is true that in Socrates' schematic description of the "godly method" at *Philebus* 16cf., he speaks as if we were to "begin summarily with the 'positing' of some appropriate Form" (50, cited above), and in his first example, the account of the musical

modes, we seem, at least, to begin straightaway from the Form Pitch (that is, φωνή, Sound, "as it is understood in music," 17c1). But Socrates makes a point of resisting Protarchus' initial satisfaction with this example and insisting on giving him the second example of the letter-sounds that make for articulate speech, and here he describes how Theuth starts from a "many" and only reaches the relevant "one" — or "single form" (16d) — at the end (18cf.). As with the Stranger's remarks at *Statesman* 285b about the equal importance of moving from the initial recognition of likeness to that of differences and from the initial recognition of differences to that of likeness, so Socrates insists that dialectic can move either from the one to the many or from the many to the one. Aren't these the movements of division *and collection*, respectively?

[c] Sayre warns his reader at the outset that *MMPS* will for the most part abstract from the political content of the *Statesman*, directing its attention almost entirely to methodological and metaphysical issues (6). As a choice of focus, this is fine. Indeed, narrowness of one sort can enable breadth of another, and *MMPS*, in bringing into interplay for the first time language from the doxography and passages from the dialogues on method, measurement, and metaphysics, is a case in point. Nonetheless, by leaving the *Statesman*'s political content unexplored, Sayre may have blocked from his own view some important methodological questions. Let me note three: (1) The Stranger's great myth of the ages of Cronus and Zeus reveals how the initial divisions, in yielding the account of the statesman as shepherd of the human herd (267a-c), have been complicitous both in the confusion of human rulers with the divine and in the concealment of the intelligence and social self-responsibility of human beings as the ruled. Doesn't this re-raise in a new way the same general question raised by the failure of the first five sets of divisions in the *Sophist*, the question, namely, of how the procedures of dialectic, above all of bifurcatory division, relate to the difference between insight and error? (2) In fact, in the final section of divisions before he turns to the myth, 264b-266e, the Stranger hints at this problem with an odd mix of humor and mathematical allusion. In this passage, he gives Young Socrates *two* exhibitions of division, one that follows his prescription to divide "down the middle" and another that violates it; remarkably, both successfully isolate human beings as the statesman's subjects, and in doing so, both commit the reduction of human being to its animal features that the myth, in turn, exposes and challenges. Surely Plato intends these divisions to give us pause. As Sayre remarks, although the first of the two series of cuts "may do a better job of 'cutting through the middle,' ... it says next to nothing about what it is to be a human being" (24).<sup>2</sup> But neither here nor later does Sayre, proceeding as he does without the helpful prompting of the myth, formulate the two questions that cry out for discussion: first, what does it imply about the value of dividing "down the middle" that it can be just as unrevealing as a set of divisions that violate this principle? Second, since both series of cuts do successfully isolate human beings, is Plato inviting us to see that — now to invoke Sayre's language from *PAM* as well as *MMPS* — division can yield

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<sup>2</sup> Sayre treats this passage only briefly, on pp. 23-24. By an editorial error, many of the references to this passage listed in the Index Locorum actually refer to discussions of passages in the *Sophist*, not the *Statesman*, that happen to have the same Stephanus page numbers.

a list of the necessary and sufficient characters of something *without thereby disclosing its "essence"* (cf. τὸ τί, also τὸ ὄν, *Seventh Letter* 343c)? (3) Finally, attention to the myth and its political content might have made an important difference to Sayre's understanding of the final non-bifurcatory and leftward-moving divisions in the dialogue. As matters stand, he offers the interesting interpretation noted in (ii) above, that the Stranger distinguishes each of the kinds of art "kindred" to statesmanship in order then to "eliminate" it and thereby leave statesmanship exposed. But *why* does the Stranger prefer this approach to the hitherto standard bifurcatory process with its "increasing specification" of the *definiendum*? If the point is just to show what statesmanship is not, why is it important to the Stranger to sort through the variety of the arts at such a fine-grained and determinate level? Why not just distinguish statesmanship from the larger kinds to which the various specific arts belong? The myth sheds light on this. In exposing how the shepherd paradigm has led the initial divisions to conflate human rulers in the Zeusian present with the god who tends to the human herd in the age of Cronus, it relocates the statesman as one among the many human craftsmen; and in contrasting the self-responsibility of human beings in the Zeusian present with the pre-political heteronomy of our ancestors in the age of Cronus, it reveals the collaborative "care" for our communal well-being to which each of the various arts makes its specific contribution. In the context of these disclosures, we should find it fitting that, as the Stranger teaches in the final phase of the dialogue, the statesman's own special part in this "care" is to direct and, more fundamentally, to secure the very possibility of this civic collaboration itself, "weaving all together" (πάντα συνυφαίνουσιν, 305e3-4) by its instructions to its three true aides, rhetor, general, and judge, and by the basic educational work of cultivating balanced character in the citizenry. Given this, doesn't it make sense that the Stranger now abandons bifurcation and, moving leftward, makes fine-grained distinctions among all the other kinds of art? If, to hark back to the questions raised by 264b-266e, the task of dialectic is not merely to set its *definiendum* apart but, more deeply, to reach an understanding of its essence, mustn't division now take a form that lets these arts emerge in their differences not only from statesmanship but also from one another, a form that thereby makes intelligible their various specific roles in our collaborative "care" for ourselves? Insofar as it is the statesman's task to orchestrate and, at the level of character formation, first enable this collaboration, mustn't we reach an understanding of it as part of our understanding of statesmanship?

[d] To pursue a step further this question of the form of the final divisions, it is necessary to pause over a conceptual issue. As we have seen, a key to Sayre's remarkable synthesis of Plato's accounts of method, measurement, and the ontology of Limit and the Unlimited is his taking the Stranger's notion of dividing διὰ μέσων, "through the middle," to apply to the "middle ground" of the sorts of ranges exemplified by Socrates' accounts of musical modes and letter-sounds and seasonable temperatures. In making this connection, however, Sayre risks conflating two distinct kinds of contraries. As we noted earlier, to clarify his instruction to Young Socrates to divide διὰ μέσων, the Stranger gives him two exemplary bifurcations, the divisions of human kind into male and female and of number into odd and even. The contraries in each of these pairs are mutually exclusive, and each contrary constitutes a class whose members share (or are

intended to be understood as sharing)<sup>3</sup> their common character unqualifiedly; hence, for example, odd and even do not overlap, and no odd number is any more or less odd than any other. There is, then, *no middle ground* at all between these contraries. This is not true, however, of the contraries that frame the sorts of ranges that Socrates discusses in the *Philebus*. Between high and low in musical sound there is pitch that is ὀμότονον, "even-" or "equal-toned" (*Philebus* 17c4), and between speech sounds that are voiced and speech sounds that are mute there are — as τὰ μέσα, "the middle [sounds]" between these two (18c5) — sounds that are "not voiced but do make a certain noise." Likewise, the whole array of seasonable temperatures, each combining hot and cold in a different ratio, falls between "the excess[es]" (τὸ ... πολὺ λίαν) of "frosts and stifling heat" (26a). In these examples the contraries in play are not only mutually relative<sup>4</sup> but also both interpenetrating and constitutive of continua. Thus, as the concept of the middle of the tone continuum as ὀμότονον implies for its neighboring ranges, the classes of high and low contain members in which high exceeds low, and low exceeds high, respectively, and the whole array of these members is ordered as a gradient ranging from the extreme predominance of high over low to the extreme predominance of low over high. The same holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for hot and cold in the range of seasonable temperatures and, with some reformulation of these terms, for voiced and mute in the range of letter-sounds. In all these cases, contraries relate by "more and less" (μᾶλλον τε καὶ ἧττον, *Philebus* 24a and ff.), each being what it is only in determinate reciprocal relation to its other. Accordingly, these two sorts of contraries, e.g. odd/even and male/female on the one hand and high/low and voiced/mute and hot/cold on the other, are different in kind, and this difference makes for a difference in kind as well between the modes of division they invite, the bifurcatory mode the Stranger practices throughout the *Sophist* and in the *Statesman* up to 287c and, for lack of a positive term, the non-bifurcatory mode that Socrates refers to in his examples of the godly method of dialectic and of the order created by the imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited in the *Philebus*.

[e] These remarks bring us to the threshold of a much bigger question, one too big, indeed, to take on in full in this space. But it can be delineated for the sake of future reflection. In its immediate focus in the *Statesman*, it is the question we began to raise at the close of [c]: just what is the mode of dialectic that the Stranger practices in his final distinctions of the fifteen<sup>5</sup> kinds of art that "care" for the city, and what is the eidetic

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<sup>3</sup> As the inventor of Aristophanes' speech in the *Symposium*, Plato would have known better than anyone how to challenge the strict dichotomy of male and female and the understanding of the members of each class as unqualifiedly characterized by their gender. But there is no trace of such subversive interests in the Stranger's introduction of the division of male from female at *Statesman* 262e.

<sup>4</sup> This is also true, in my view, of odd/even and of male/female; but in the case of this first class of contraries, as Sayre argues (219-220), it is possible to define each contrary independently, without reference to its other. This is not true of the second class of contraries.

<sup>5</sup> Both because the six kinds of "governors of imitative polities" are not practitioners of any art at all and because, as Sayre notes, they "have no role in the city governed by the genuine statesman" (123), Sayre is right to consider the Stranger's distinctions of them



order that it discloses? In its deepest and most comprehensive focus, it is the question of whether and, if so, how the "unwritten teachings" that Aristotle ascribes to Plato in *Metaphysics* A.6 and the godly method of dialectic that Socrates presents at *Philebus* 16c-18d may be in play in the Stranger's final distinctions. No one is in better position to pursue this possibility than Sayre, for in *PLO* he has made seminal connections, first, of the godly method with the ontology of Limit and the Unlimited and, second, of these in their interplay with the "unwritten teachings." In light of this, two omissions in *MMPS* are surprising. First, Sayre holds back from any renewed discussion of the godly method, preferring merely to refer the reader of *MMPS* back to the analysis he offered in *PLO*. (See 156 and 162, n. 5 and 7.) He thus fails to give himself occasion to argue that the sorts of gradients with "fixed reference points" that Socrates presents in, e.g., his accounts of musical sound, of letter-sounds, and of seasonable temperatures put on display the kind of eidetic order that the godly method of dialectic discloses. Second, Sayre reserves *all* of his focused discussion of the Stranger's non-bifurcatory distinctions at the end of the *Statesman* for Part I ("Method") of *MMPS*; we never get in Part II ("Metaphysics") any consideration of whether the Stranger's distinctions may give us yet another example — and, indeed, if it *is* an example, the most sustained and determinate one of all those that have yet been recognized in the dialogues — of the way Forms function as Limits in picking out "fixed reference points" on the ranges of possibility constituted by the sorts of mutually relative and interpenetrating contraries that belong to the Unlimited. I have argued for a version of these connections elsewhere, and in *MMPS* Sayre has both acknowledged this (see 155, n. 3) and declined to pursue it. This "road not taken" is, I think, rich in promise for Sayre's line of approach both to the *Statesman* and to the later Plato more generally.

— Let me close, with the reader's forgiveness, on a more personal note. In his preface, Sayre acknowledges my having read and commented on an earlier version of *MMPS* as "a scholarly gift of extraordinary generosity" (xii). These are very kind words. But as I hope the reflections in this review make evident, reading Kenneth Sayre is work that repays itself many times over. It is his nearly forty years of scholarly gifts to lovers of Plato — a host of analyses both bold and careful that invariably open new ground for thought — that set the bar for generosity.

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from one another and from the statesman as — and in no "dismissive" sense at all (n. 6, p. 122) — a "digression" (124) from his divisions of the kinds art that "care" for the city.