

## THE PLACE OF THE *TIMAEUS* IN PLATO'S DIALOGUES

It is now nearly axiomatic among Platonic scholars that the *Timaeus* and its unfinished sequel the *Critias* belong to the last stage of Plato's writings. The *Laws* (including, for those who admit its claims, the *Epinomis*) is generally held to be wholly or partly a later production. So, by many, is the *Philebus*, but that is all. Perhaps the privileged status of the *Timaeus* in the Middle Ages helped to fix the conviction that it embodies Plato's maturest theories.

I want to undermine that conviction by questioning the grounds on which it is commonly based and by sharpening the paradoxes it imports into the interpretation of Plato. No one familiar with Platonic scholarship will claim that these paradoxes could not be explained away, given enough ingenuity. But I think that, once they are seen in aggregate, the cost in such ingenuity should seem quite exorbitant.

This discussion is preliminary to any assessment of Plato's later work. It tries so far as possible to avoid large and controversial interpretations of any dialogue and to canvass a few manageable issues on common ground. Its thesis could have been supported otherwise, by showing how the *Parmenides* and its successors gain in philosophical power and interest when they are read as following and not as paving the way for the *Timaeus*; here I want only to find grounds for this approach. And it defers what I take to be proof that the changes of view here ascribed to Plato square with and sometimes elucidate the comments of Aristotle.

### *The evidence of style*

Campbell's pioneer studies in Plato's style<sup>1</sup> were open to attack, partly for their reliance on Ast's *Lexicon*<sup>2</sup> and their uncritical deductions from the statistics of rare and unique words, partly for their assumption that the *Timaeus* and *Critias* could be taken *en bloc* with the *Laws* as Plato's latest writings. And Campbell's pupil Lutoslawski,<sup>3</sup> though he attempted a comparison of the *Timaeus* and *Laws*, still assumed a stylistically uniform *Laws* as the terminal work.<sup>4</sup> He also forgot in practice that, where a dialogue such as the *Timaeus* is unique in its technical range, the originality of its vocabulary cannot be used as a mechanical test of dating. And he discovered, after compiling his much-quoted tables on the opposite principle, that the opportunity for the occurrence of more or fewer stylistic pointers in a work bears no proportion to its volume. His admission that only equal amounts of text should have been compared (p. 185) had the effect of largely invalidating his own and most earlier and

<sup>1</sup> *Sophistes and Politicus*, introd.; essays in *Republic* (ed. Jowett and Campbell), vol. ii; *C.R.* x, 1896, pp. 129–36.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell and Lutoslawski, Raeder and Constantin Ritter have at different times written as though, even if Ast does not list all occurrences of a word, he does name all the dialogues in which it occurs; this is quite false (cf., for example, p. 84, n. 4 *infra*). He does not even list all Plato's words.

<sup>3</sup> *Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic*, chap. iii.

<sup>4</sup> This was the sheet-anchor of stylo-metrists who were not content with such broad groupings of the dialogues as that accepted by Taylor (*Plato, the Man and his Work*, p. 19). Yet there is no external or internal evidence which proves that the *Laws* or even some section of it was later than every other work: cf. p. 82 *infra*.

later attempts to order the dialogues by relative affinities of style. Stylometrists ignored the warning. But cases arose in which Campbell and Lutoslawski were compelled to exercise their discretion. Their statistics left the *Theaetetus* beside the *Protagoras* (C.) or before the central books of the *Republic* (L.), the *Phaedrus* seemed later than the *Philebus* (C.), the *Critias* earlier than the *Timaeus* (L.). The effect was, reasonably, to discredit mechanical stylometry until it narrowed its field: it was seen to be applicable only to those formal and linguistic features which were wholly independent of the topic and chosen manner of treatment.<sup>1</sup>

The new search for neutral criteria produced Billig's analysis of the rhythms of Plato's clausulae.<sup>2</sup> He found that 'the *Timaeus* has nothing to do with the rhythms of the *Sophist* digression, the *Politicus*, the *Philebus* and the *Laws*. Rhythm puts its composition earlier than that of all these works.'<sup>3</sup> And in this he confirmed Kaluscha's earlier study in the same field.<sup>4</sup> Raeder<sup>5</sup> and Taylor<sup>6</sup> drew attention to the finding; Cornford ignored it, but saw a safe stylistic test in the avoidance of 'illegitimate' hiatus.<sup>7</sup> Yet this avoidance gives no rule of thumb for ordering, say, the *Timaeus* and *Theaetetus*. That it is not an automatic test is tacitly admitted by nearly all stylometrists in dating the *Phaedrus* before the *Theaetetus* and *Parmenides* even though the former already shows, as the latter do not, a 'striking rarity of hiatus'.<sup>8</sup> (It clinches the point to construe this as a passing compliment to Isocrates.) And the *Timaeus* is essentially an essay, a 'conscious *tour de force* of style' (Shorey) where the carelessness of conversation has no place; it may well have been a later decision to adopt such ornaments in writings which make serious use of the dialogue form. (Such warnings patently apply rather to an idiom like the shunning of hiatus, which requires a decision on the writer's part, than to one such as the emergence of dominant prose-rhythms which—as Billig proved for Plato, at least (p. 242)—does not. And we shall see that the rhythms are unaffected by the transition between easy and elevated diction.)

Moreover, I shall try to show why, after an exercise in essay style, Plato

<sup>1</sup> Here the attempts of Schanz, Dittenberger, and Constantin Ritter to measure the relative frequency of synonyms were theoretically sound. But a study of the *Phaedrus* (cf. p. 81 *infra*) proves that Plato adopted the 'late' synonyms in passages of elevated style earlier than elsewhere. In fact, when Plato is said to be dropping one synonym for another he is commonly borrowing from poetry (Campbell, *Rep.* ii, pp. 50–51), and to find these borrowings either in speeches for whose poetic vocabulary Socrates apologizes (*Phdr.* 257 a 5) or in a work 'in Inhalt und Form mit der Poesie wetteifernd' (Wilamowitz on the *Timaeus*) is obviously not the same thing as finding them in dialogue proper.

<sup>2</sup> *J. Philol.* xxxv, 1920, pp. 225–56.

<sup>3</sup> p. 250. The distribution of end-rhythms in the *Tm.* closely matches that in the middle and early dialogues. Thus the rhythms which are dominant (65–85 per cent.) from the *Soph.* digression onwards total 45·6 per cent. in *Tm.*, the same in *Crito*, and 2–3 per cent. below in (for example) *Phdo.*, *Rep.* 6 and 10.

The graph for later works is interesting (but to be used with care): in the *Phdr.* these rhythms steadily recede; the overall figure (37·7 per cent. or, omitting Lysias' speech, 36·9 per cent.) matches that of the first part of the *Parm.* (38·1 per cent.); in the *Tht.* it rises, reaching 50 per cent. from Protagoras' speech (165 e) with brief further rises (e.g. in the discussion of the *κωμό*); the *Crat.*, for those who want it here, is higher (52·4 per cent.), and thereafter the rise is steep. (My figures are approximate to the extent that Billig's rules for assessing interjections are not precise.)

<sup>4</sup> *Wiener Studien*, xxvi, 1904, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> *Platons Epinomis* (1939), p. 13, n. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, pp. 4–5.

<sup>7</sup> *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 12, n. 3: cf. now Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus*, p. 3; Skemp, *Plato's Statesman*, p. 238.

<sup>8</sup> Blass, *Att. Bered.*, p. 458. By Janell's count the figure for the *Phdr.* is little more than half that for the *Parm.* (23·9 and 44·1 per page of Didot, respectively).

should revert in the *Theaetetus* and the opening debate of the *Parmenides* to a conversational form more reminiscent of the early dialogues. For I argue that the *Timaeus* and its sequel or sequels were designed as the crowning work not of the latest dialogues but of the *Republic* group. The project was abandoned from dissatisfaction with certain basic theories, and in the first works of the critical group Plato dropped the confident didacticism of the *Timaeus* to make a fresh start on problems still unsolved. Thus we at once account for the four major characteristics which Taylor singles out as allying the *Timaeus* with Plato's latest writings.<sup>1</sup> The lack of dramatic conversation and the recessive role of Socrates and his scepticism, the predominance of positive teaching and of the periodic essay style, all alike are marks of the doctrinaire assurance with which Plato set himself in the *Timaeus* to expound the system he had constructed. And just as the disappearance of these devices signals the renewal of Plato's doubts, so their readoption in the *Sophist* and its successors marks a new period of assurance which contains his maturest thought. Similarly with many affiliated devices, such as the lack of hesitant and 'subjective' replies (ἐμουγε, δοκεῖ μοι, etc.) investigated by Siebeck and Ritter. Such features are not, what they are artlessly taken to be, neutral aids to the ordering of the dialogues. They depend directly on the aims and methods of the work in hand.

This point can be proved. For it can be shown that, at a date much earlier than that now assigned to the *Timaeus*, Plato could on occasion adopt an elevated style which by the orthodox tests<sup>2</sup> tallies closely with that of the *Timaeus*: namely, the style of Socrates' speeches in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>3</sup> There is no need to repeat the broad contrasts between these and the dialogue proper (e.g. the elimination of Socrates' personality, on which Stenzel insisted); but consider the following contrasts of detail.<sup>4</sup> In the speeches ὄντως has ousted τῶ ὄντι (5/0: in *Tm.* 9/1), while in the dialogue τῶ ὄντι is ubiquitous save where at 260 a 3 its clumsy repetition is avoided by ὄντως. In the dialogue περί c. gen. still exceeds the equivalent περί c. acc. (65/22), ἴσως exceeds τάχα (11/4), and ἔνεκα exceeds χάριν (8/5); but not in the speeches (10/11, 0/1, 2/2: in *Tm.* 88/116, 0/1, 13/7). Of another group of 'late' forms the speeches show not only κατὰ δύναμιν and εἰς (ἡμετέραν) δύναμιν (as *Tm.* does) but ὡς δυνατόν (as it does not), and echo the rare καθ' ὅσον δυνατόν of *Tm.* 90 c; of these the dialogue proper has εἰς δύναμιν once. The proportion of δέ γε / δὲ δὴ in the dialogue is 5/8, but in the speeches 0/10 and in *Tm.* 1/24—a figure otherwise unapproached save in works comparable in form, *Symposium* (1/7) and *Apology* (0/5). καθάπερ, except for the poetic interlude of the cicadas (259 a), is confined to the speeches, where its ratio to ὥσπερ (3/5) is over four times that for the whole work. (This is less than in *Tm.*, but in other 'late' forms the speeches not only surpass *Tm.* but carry the dialogue with them, e.g. in the complete ousting of σχεδόν τι by σχεδόν and the frequency of the Ionic dat. pl.) There is further, as Campbell showed, the massing in the speeches of tragic, religious, and medical expressions

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> For which cf. esp. Ritter, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 2–33, 56–59 (with corrections in *Platon*, i, pp. 236–7), 70, n. 1; Lina, *de praep. usu platon.*, p. 12; Campbell, *Rep.* ii, pp. 53–55. But these critics draw no distinctions within the *Phdr.*, and sometimes we shall correct their totals.

<sup>3</sup> Lysias' speech, which I shall not con-

sider, tallies by present tests with the dialogue proper.

<sup>4</sup> Ritter's figures, after large corrections in *Platon* and articles in Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, remain untrustworthy: e.g. in *Phdr.* he underestimates cases of κατὰ/εἰς δύναμιν (2 excluding 257 a 3), ὡς δυνατόν (1), πότερον and πότερα before a vowel (2, 1), εἶπον, etc., in rel. clause (2), δὲ δὴ (18).

often coinciding with those of *Tm.* and *Crs.* (C. gives some twenty instances peculiar to this group); and Campbell's instances of periphrasis in *Tm.* (ἡ τοῦ θατέρου φύσις, τὸ τῆς ἀναπλανησέως) are echoed in *Phdr.* (ἡ τοῦ κάλλους φύσις 254 b, τὸ τῆς μνήμης 250 a). Other such echoes are πάντη πάντως, πᾶσαν πάντως (246 a, 253 c). The same conclusion is confirmed by other figures, e.g. for certain uses of τε and for expressions confined to the dialogue proper (τί μήν; γε μήν, δῆλον ὅτι/ώς, etc.). No one would use these data to argue that the speeches were written later than the dialogue (and no one should have used them indiscriminately to post-date the whole work). What they prove is that, when Plato was still writing dialogue having very close affinities with the *Republic* and *Theaetetus*, he could write uninterrupted prose having equal affinities with the *Timaeus*. This distinction is not touched by the fact that he was not yet prepared to shun hiatus thoroughly in a work of which two-thirds was dialogue (though, equally, in such a work he now refused to give it free rein). What is of quite different importance in this connexion is that the speeches do not interrupt the graph of end-rhythms in the *Phaedrus*. The test of rhythm sustains its claim to neutrality.

Billig went on to ear-mark the few indexes of style other than end-rhythms which seemed to him to have the required neutrality, and his suggestions tell for my thesis.<sup>1</sup> That thesis (to repeat) is that, while the *Timaeus* and *Critias* undoubtedly follow the *Republic* and possibly follow the *Phaedrus*, they precede the 'critical' group which begins with the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*. And on the strength of the present discussion and of some clues of diction still to be noted,<sup>2</sup> it seems fair to claim that this reordering tallies well with the admissible evidence of style.<sup>3</sup>

Now for the paradoxes of orthodoxy. In discussing them I follow the order of the critical group.

### Παραδείγματα in the *Parmenides*

At one stage of the earlier argument in the *Parmenides* (132 c 12–133 a 7) Socrates defines μέθεξις in terms of ὁμοιώματα and παραδείγματα. *Parmenides* has no trouble in proving that, if participation in some character *A* is to be construed as resemblance to some παράδειγμα in respect of *A*, then, since resemblance is symmetrical, both παράδειγμα and ὁμοίωμα must exhibit *A* and hence *ex hypothesi* resemble a further παράδειγμα in that respect. And so on, in regress. Now the suggestion refuted by *Parmenides* is precisely the account of the relation between Forms and particulars given in the *Timaeus* (e.g. 29 b, 48 e–49 a, 50 d 1, 52 a, 52 c). So commentators, hoping to reconcile a late *Timaeus* with a Plato who saw the point of his own arguments, have laboured to show that the *Timaeus* theory was immune (or at worst thought to be immune) to the objections raised in the supposedly earlier work. But their attempts have failed.

<sup>1</sup> e.g. in the coining of adjectives in -ώδης and -ειδής the *Tht.* and *Parm.* are characteristic of the late dialogues, and the *Tm.* of the middle period (Lutoslawski, p. 115). Of Billig's other criteria some are discussed above and one, the greater frequency of περί after its noun, is not a late form (cf. Lutoslawski, pp. 131–2: in the *Rep.* it is much higher than in the *Tm.* and as high as in the *Soph.* and

*Pol.*): B. may have confused this with the predominance of περί c. acc. over περί c. gen.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 84, n. 4; 93, n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Here it seems on stronger ground than recent post-datings of the *Cratylus*; but the stylistic evidence on that dialogue (like the arguments so far given for its lateness) can and should be pruned and supplemented.

Taylor's contention (after Proclus)<sup>1</sup> that the *παράδειγμα* and *ὁμοίωμα* were not related symmetrically by *ὁμοιότης* was refuted by Hardie,<sup>2</sup> and since it combined a logical fallacy<sup>3</sup> with a disregard for the evidence<sup>4</sup> there was no excuse for its repetition by Cherniss.<sup>5</sup> Cherniss also argued<sup>6</sup> that in the *Republic* (597 c) and the *Timaeus* (31 a) Plato used a regress argument of the type in question (the 'third man') in order to establish the uniqueness of a Form, and hence, since both these dialogues postulate *παράδειγματα* and *εἰκόνες*, that Plato thought the argument applicable to relations between Forms but not to those between Forms and particulars. But this is a confusion which seems to arise from the indiscriminate use of the label *τρίτος ἄνθρωπος* (some of the heterogeneous batch of arguments it covers do not even employ an infinite regress: cf. Alex. in *Met.* 84. 7–21). For neither in the *Republic* nor in the *Timaeus* does Plato use a regress of *similarities*;<sup>7</sup> his premiss is simply that of the *ἐν ἐπι πολλῶν* which is (as Parmenides' interrogation of Socrates shows) neutral as between the resemblance-account of *μέθεξις* and others. So neither argument shows or requires any awareness of Parmenides' point that, since resemblance is symmetrical, on this version of predication the same account which is given of the particular's participation in the Form must be extended to the Form.

(On this faulty foundation Cherniss built another proof of Aristotle's dishonesty.<sup>8</sup> Aristotle was accused of citing such regress arguments as valid against the old Forms<sup>9</sup> without mentioning that Plato had, or supposed he had, rebutted them. But the reason why Aristotle is as silent as Plato himself on this vital answer is just that no answer existed.<sup>10</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> 'Parmenides, Zeno and Socrates', *Proc. Ar. Soc.* xvi, 1916, pp. 234–89; *Plato's Parmenides*, intro., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *A Study in Plato*, pp. 96–97.

<sup>3</sup> That of arguing as though, because the relation between copy and original is not simply resemblance, it does not include resemblance; for if it is included Parmenides' regress follows at once. The most one could maintain on Taylor's lines is that, if to predicate *X* of *A* is to assert that *A* is not only like but copied from a Form, then (by definition of 'Form') it is a contradiction to predicate *X* of the Form that *A* allegedly resembles in respect of *X*. But then no such resemblance between *A* and the Form can be maintained, nor *a fortiori* can *A* be the Form's copy; so this serves Parmenides' ends by wrecking the *εἰκῶν-παράδειγμα* account of predication. But the evidence is against this line of argument (see next note).

<sup>4</sup> e.g. (i) such uses of the *παράδειγμα* terminology as at *Rep.* 501 b where the legislator is a painter with his eye on the *θεῖον παράδειγμα* and able to make a direct comparison between sitter and portrait (cf. *Phdo.* 76 e 2); (ii) the fact that on the old theory of Forms the property represented by the Form was predicated without qualms of the Form itself: Justice just, Holiness holy (*Prot.* 330 c–e), Largeness large (*Phdo.* 102 e 5),

where the predicate-expression is used unambiguously of Forms and particulars, as is proved, for example, by *σχολῆ μιν τὰ ἄλλα ὅσιον εἶη εἰ μὴ αὐτὴ γὰρ ἡ οὐσίτης ὅσιον ἔσται* (*Prot.* 330 d 8); (iii) Aristotle's use of the premiss that the *λόγος* was common to Forms and particulars (e.g. *Met.* 997<sup>b</sup>10–12; *E.E.* 1218<sup>a</sup>13–15). So Plato did not suppose the paradeigmatic function of the Form of *X*, any more than its being *μονοειδές* or *αἰδίον*, to rule out the assertion of resemblance between Form and *εἰκῶν* in respect of *X*. And this position is not modified in the *Tm.* Hence Parmenides' regress is the exactly appropriate criticism of the theory.

<sup>5</sup> *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Early Academy*, pp. 297–9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 295–7; cf. Apelt, *Beiträge*, pp. 52–53.

<sup>7</sup> In the *Tm.* the resemblance of *εἰκῶν* to *παράδειγμα* is introduced to prove not the uniqueness of the Form but that of the *οὐρανός*, given that of the *παντελὲς ζῶον*.

<sup>8</sup> *A.C.P.A.*, p. 293.

<sup>9</sup> e.g. *Met.* 990<sup>b</sup>17, 991<sup>a</sup>2–5, 1032<sup>a</sup>2–4.

<sup>10</sup> As to the answer which Cherniss constructs for Plato, certainly Plato later concluded that the *εἶδος* should be regarded as 'being that which the particular has as an attribute' (*A.C.P.A.*, p. 298)—the necessary type-distinctions are forced by Parmenides'

Ross agrees that the apologists have failed and that Parmenides' objection goes home.<sup>1</sup> But, by accepting the lateness of the *Timaeus*, he falls on the second horn of the dilemma. He is forced to suggest that in the *Timaeus* the defeated version of *μέθεξις* is retained as a 'metaphorical way of describing the relation'; but his own argument refutes this. For in discussing the scope of *εἰκῶς λόγος* in the *Timaeus* he rightly says that 'in general for his metaphysics, Plato would claim that it is true. That for which he disclaims anything more than probability is not his metaphysics but his cosmology';<sup>2</sup> and he recognizes that the metaphysics of the *Timaeus*, save for the Demiurge, centres in the description of *παραδείγματα* and *χώρα* and its contents (50 c–52 c)—a description to which the resemblance of Forms and particulars is integral. Moreover, the distinction between *εἰκῶς μῦθος* and unshakeable truth is explained wholly by reference to the relation of the physical *εἰκῶν* to its Model (29 b–d). The explanation (and with it the pointed use of *εἰκῶς*) is annulled if at the time of writing Plato regarded any talk of *εἰκόνες* in this connexion as a mere metaphor which on his own showing could not be pressed without generating absurdities.

In fact, Plato does not again introduce such *παραδείγματα* to explain predication:<sup>3</sup> in the *Politicus* (277 d–278 c) he emphasizes a different and important function of the expression *πάρδειγμα*; and in the *Philebus* (15 b–17 a) he either leaves the nature of *μέθεξις* an open question or, as I think, implies a different analysis.<sup>4</sup> The reasonable solution of the puzzle is to regard the *Timaeus* as preceding the *Parmenides* and as inheriting from the middle-period dialogues a fallacy which Plato subsequently exposed.

first regress (132 a 1–b 2) and sketched in *Th.* 156 e, 182 a–b; but to expound *μέθεξις* in the idioms of resemblance and copying is just to show that one has not yet grasped these type-distinctions.

<sup>1</sup> *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, pp. 89, 230–1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Ross (*P.T.I.*, pp. 228–30) has collected occurrences of the idioms by which the relation between Forms and particulars is described in the dialogues. From his data he infers that 'there is a general movement away from immanence towards transcendence' (sc. towards the *πάρδειγμα*-idioms). But his list does not bear this out. Of the dialogues taken to follow the *Phdr.*, the *Tm.* is alone in using the *πάρδειγμα*-idioms, and uses them exclusively and almost exhaustively. *Th.* 176 e 3–4 is no exception (as Ross agrees, p. 101), for the context (the 'digression') is strongly metaphorical, and the twin *παραδείγματα* cannot be *τάκει* because the *ἀθειον ἀθλιώτατον* at least has no place in the *κακῶν καθαρὸς τόπος* which is the soul's proper habitat (177 a 5). Ross does not note the following points: (a) the special term *νόησις* used to describe knowledge of the *παραδείγματα* seems to be confined to the *Rep.* and *Tm.*, except for its occurrence at *Crat.* 407 b 4 and 411 d 8 where the particular form is required by the etymology. Since

such knowledge was a dyadic relation between minds and Forms, it seems likely that the old expression was shelved when the *Th.* had proved (199 c–200 c) that knowledge and error were not a matter of bare recognition and misidentification. (b) The term *ὁμοίωμα*, introduced in the *Phdr.* myth and *Parm.* and subsequently often used for *εἰκῶν*, etc., is not found in the *Tm.*, which here too confines itself to the vocabulary of the *Rep.* (e.g. *ἀφομοίωμα* seems to be peculiar to these two works). But the word occurs in *Crat.* 434 a (Ast omits this, so it has eluded Campbell and Lutoslawski).

<sup>4</sup> Contrast with the refutation of the *παραδείγματα* the less intimidating arguments brought against the so-called 'immanence' version of *μέθεξις* (*Parm.* 131 a 4–e 5). In the *Phil.* (15 b) it is these arguments alone that are quoted as needing an answer if the *μονάδες* are to be saved. Professor Skemp (*P.St.*, p. 238) thinks that, since *τὸ δημιουργοῦν* is explicitly located in the fourfold classification in *Phil.* 23 c–27 c, the *παραδείγματα* cannot have been superseded either. The plain fact, whatever one makes of it, is that this classification of *πάντα τὰ νῦν ὄντα ἐν τῷ παντί* does make room for the *αἰρία* and does not make room for *παραδείγματα*: I do not quote this on behalf of my position, but it scarcely tells against it.

*Γένεσις and οὐσία*

The *Timaeus* distinguishes absolutely between τὸ ὄν ἀεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον and τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν ἀεί, ὄν δὲ οὐδέποτε (27 d–28 a); that is, it ‘treats γένεσις and οὐσία as simple incompatibles’.<sup>1</sup> It reaffirms this incompatibility by advocating that the expression ἔστι be reserved for pronouncements about ἀίδιος οὐσία and (by implication) that γίγνεται be left to do duty in statements of contemporary empirical fact (37 e–38 b). So it has taxed commentators to say why this principle is to all appearances jettisoned in the *Laws* and its immediate predecessors.<sup>2</sup> But the common plea that such departures show merely a venial looseness of language<sup>3</sup> fails, for they are the exact consequence of new arguments in the late dialogues.

First, the *Theaetetus* states and explodes the thesis that γένεσις excludes οὐσία. By a convention which echoes that imposed on contingent statements in the *Timaeus*, Plato eliminates εἶναι in favour of γίγνεσθαι in all contexts (*Tht.* 157 a 7–c 2; cf. *Tht.* 152 e 1 with *Tm.* 27 d 6–28 a 1). And then by using the distinction between change of quality and change of place he shows that this convention produces absurdities. Some have wanted to believe that Plato is at this point trying to establish the thesis of the *Timaeus*: namely that, although γίγνεται alone is appropriate to contingent statements, there must be some entities (viz. the Forms) to whose description only ἔστι is appropriate.<sup>4</sup> If Plato had drawn this conclusion from his argument it would have been a sheer blunder;<sup>5</sup> but he does not draw it. He is saddled with it to save the *Timaeus*. What he plainly points out is that if *anything* (and anything in this world, not the next) were perpetually changing in all respects, so that at no time could it be described as being so-and-so, then nothing could be said of it at all—and, *inter alia*, it could not be said to be changing. If an object moves, we can say what sort of thing is moving<sup>6</sup> only if it has some qualitative stability (182 c 9–10); conversely, to have complete qualitative flux ascribed to it, a thing must have location. Nor can any quality of the object, such as its whiteness, be

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Comm.*, p. 32. Taylor says that the *Tm.* maintains this incompatibility ‘from first to last’ in sharp contrast to the *Phil.* theory of γένεσις εἰς οὐσίαν, but contradicts himself in a note on 31 b 3 by importing an allusion to the *Phil.* and so leaving the *Tm.* inconsistent on a key-doctrine; he is corrected by Cornford ad loc. (*P.C.*, p. 42, n. 1). The *Tm.* does not in fact (and does not promise to) adhere always to the special usage proposed in 37 e–38 b and discussed in this section: naturally, since (as Plato came to see) its adoption is ruled out by logical absurdities. The point is that if he had seen this when writing the *Tm.* the proposal made in 37 e–38 b would never have been made.

<sup>2</sup> *Laws* 894 a 5–7, *Phil.* 26 d 8, 27 b 8–9, 54 a–d (cf. *de gen. an.* 640<sup>a</sup>18), *Soph.* 248 a–249 b, *Parm.* 163 d 1–2, and passages discussed above. *Phil.* 59 a and 61 d–e are not parallels to the *Tm.* disjunction, because the *Tm.* says not only (as the *Phil.* does) that some things exist without changing but (as the *Phil.* does not) that some things change without exist-

ing; this step, the outcome of the *Republic*'s muddles about existence, is not entailed by the commonplace distinction between ὡσαύτως ὄντα ἀεί and γιγνόμενα (μὴ βέβαια, etc.), and it is this which is refuted in the *Tht.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Diès, *Philèbe* (Budé), pp. xxviii–xxix.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 101; Cherniss, *A.C.P.A.*, p. 218, n. 129.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Robinson, *Phil. Rev.* lix, 1950, pp. 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> οἷα ἄττα ῥεῖ τὰ φερόμενα, 182 c 10: this argument defeats the lame plea of the *Tm.* (49 d–e) that even if we cannot say *what* any mere γιγνόμενον is we can describe it as τὸ τοιοῦτον (cf. *Tht.* 152 d 6). In a similar argument the *Crat.* makes the point so explicitly (ἀρ' οὖν οἶόν τε προσεπεῖν αὐτὸ ὀρθῶς, εἰ ἀεὶ ὑπεξέρχεται, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἐκεῖνό ἐστιν, ἔπειτα ὅτι τοιοῦτον; 439 d 8–9) that this alone would vindicate its place in the critical group.

claimed as a subject of this unqualified change: any change here would be *μεταβολή εἰς ἄλλην χροάν*, and to apply 'whiteness' to a colour-progression is to deprive it of determinate sense (182 d 2–5). So no description of any process is possible if we can say only that its constituents are changing from or to something and never that they are something (cf. *Tm.* 37 e 5–38 a 2, where it is allowed to say only what a *γινόμενον* was and will be; the White Queen offered Alice jam on the same terms).

Notice that Plato does not say, as he is reported to say, that knowledge is not perception because the objects of perception are always wholly in flux. He says that the attempt to equate knowledge with perception *κατά γε τὴν τοῦ πάντα κινεῖσθαι μέθοδον* fails because that *μέθοδος* is (not false for some things, but) nonsense about anything. His instances are drawn from the everyday world, not from the world of Forms. And on the strength of this he goes on to ascribe *οὐσία* to objects of perception (185 a, c, 186 b ff.) and thereby to demolish the equation of perception and knowledge independently of the theory of flux.<sup>1</sup>

I omit arguments in the *Sophist* and *Philebus* which help to supersede the assimilation of *οὐσία* and *γένεσις* to a pair of incompatible qualities. But one other is worth mention. The *Parmenides* introduces (and for its own ends misemploys) the Megarian thesis that any process of change is analysable in terms of a series of particular states of affairs, each obtaining at a different time and none being itself a process (152 b 1–d 4). It is validly deduced from this that to the descriptions of the component states of affairs the process-word *γίγνεται* will be inappropriate and that *ἔστι* is indispensable to some statements of contingent fact (152 c 6–d 2). Now this is Plato's theory, if the analysis of perception in the *Theaetetus* is his; for sensible change is there atomized into a succession of *αἰσθητά* with correlated *αἰσθήσεις* (*Tht.* 156 a–157 c, 182 a–b) and it is correspondingly argued, and made a basis of the perception theory, that a person undergoing change is rather a series of persons (159 b–c, e) having no term as long as the change continues (166 b–c). (True, in temporarily amalgamating this with the theory of general flux Plato talks of reimporting change into the atoms of change. But this patently self-defeating step is cancelled with the defeat of the *ῥέοντες*, and before that the right theory is kept very carefully in view: cf. 160 b 5–6, 8–10.)

However, this atomistic theory could consistently be denied to be Plato's. But the first argument certainly cannot. It suffices to defeat the disjunction of *γένεσις* and *οὐσία* in the form propounded by the *Timaeus*, and Plato, unlike his commentators, does not resuscitate it.

### *Eudoxus*

It is commonly agreed that by 368 at latest Eudoxus had brought his school to Athens, and that it was probably at this period that he answered Plato's challenge by producing his pioneer contribution to the mathematical theory of astronomy.<sup>2</sup> Hence it is a familiar puzzle why, if the *Timaeus* is late, Eudoxus' hypothesis has had no effect on its theories. Taylor cited this peculiarity in

<sup>1</sup> Cornford, misconstruing the previous argument, can naturally make nothing of the fact that this final refutation hinges on the *οὐσία* of *αἰσθητά*. He is reduced, first to seeing an ambiguity in *οὐσία*, finally to making the argument turn on the *denial* of *οὐσία* to *αἰσθητά* (*P.T.K.*, pp. 108–9).

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus sets his *floruit* in 368–365. The theory was in any case presumably published before he left Athens for the final task of legislating for Cnidus (D.L. 8. 88), and this in turn must be some years before his death in 356–353. Cf. Harward on *Ep.* 13. 360 c 3 (*The Platonic Epistles*, p. 234).



defence of his thesis that the dialogue was a philosophical archaism.<sup>1</sup> No one has given the simpler explanation that the *Timaeus* was written before Eudoxus' theory was produced (and so quite possibly before the *Theaetetus*, which is now by common consent dated a little after 369). Yet the sole essential difference between the astronomy of the *Timaeus* and that represented by the simple model described in the Myth of Er seems to be that the *Republic* does not provide for the obliquity of the ecliptic.<sup>2</sup> However we expound the *ἐναντία δύναμις* of *Tm.* 38 d 4, the expression embodies Plato's continued failure to meet his own challenge (*τῶν ὑποθεθεισῶν δμαλῶν καὶ τεταγμένων κινήσεων διασωθῆ τὰ περὶ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν πλανημένων φαινόμενα*).<sup>3</sup> For whether the point of it is to ascribe all apparent variations in planetary speed and direction to intermittent voluntary action on the part of the planets<sup>4</sup> or merely to record, without explaining, such variations on the part of Venus and Mercury in particular,<sup>5</sup> the introduction of the Contrary Power is no substitute for an explanation in terms of 'uniform and ordered movements'.<sup>6</sup> Where Plato failed to meet his own requirements, Eudoxus came near to succeeding. Yet his hypothesis is ignored by the *ἀστρονομικώτατος* *Timaeus*.

The *πλάναι* of the five minor planets are *πλήθει μὲν ἀμηχάνω χρωμέναι, πεποικιλμένα δὲ θαυμαστῶς* (*Tm.* 39 d 1–2), a phrase in which Cornford seems (inconsistently with his main position) to detect a reference to Eudoxus' theory.<sup>7</sup> But for these planets Eudoxus required only twenty component motions (or in effect twelve, since two are shared by all)—a number for which *πλήθος ἀμηχανον* would be an absurdly strong expression even in Cornford's weakened version ('bewildering in number').<sup>8</sup> If, on the other hand, we construe the *πλάναι* as all those apparent anomalies which Eudoxus' supplementary motions were later designed to explain (a clear inference from 40 b 6: *τρεπόμενα καὶ πλάνην τοιαύτην ἴσχυοντα*), it is tempting to find Plato's later acknowledgement of Eudoxus' solution in the vexed passage of *Laws* 7 (821 b–822 c) which rejects all celestial *πλάναι*.<sup>9</sup> Some critics find nothing here to contradict the *Republic* and *Timaeus*. So they can point to nothing which Plato might have learnt in later years (*οὔτε νέος οὔτε πάλαι*). I am inclined to locate the discovery, not indeed in the whole of what is maintained there, but in the implication that the other planets need no more be supposed to 'wander', in the sense of showing arbitrary variations in speed and direction, than the sun and moon themselves.

#### *The alleged dependence of the Timaeus on the Sophist*

So far we have been chiefly concerned with the probability that the *Timaeus* preceded the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*. Now, following the order of the late

<sup>1</sup> *Comm.*, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> As this implies, if *ἰλλομένην* at *Tm.* 40 b 8 signifies a motion I accept Cornford's account of it as compensatory rotation (*P.C.*, pp. 130–1).

<sup>3</sup> Eudemus ap. Simplicius in *De Caelo* 292<sup>b</sup>10 (488. 20–24, cf. 492. 31–493. 32).

<sup>4</sup> Cornford, *P.C.*, pp. 106–12.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, *Comm.*, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> In fact it represents part of the source of Plato's complaint against empirical astronomy in *Rep.* 530 a 3–b 4—a passage which clearly refigures the *Tm.*, and not only in introducing the *δημιουργὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*. Equally, it explains why Plato's astronomy

throughout depends for its precise exposition on the manipulation of an orrery (e.g. *Tm.* 40 d 2–3).

<sup>7</sup> *P.C.*, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> Cornford in this connexion wrongly quotes the number 27 (which includes the motions of sun, moon, and stars); but even 27 is no *πλήθος ἀμηχανον*.

<sup>9</sup> It is sometimes said (e.g. by Professor Skemp, *T.M.*, p. 79) that the *Tm.*, like the *Laws*, condemns the description of the planets as *πλανητά*. This is not so. It says merely that they are so called (*ἐπίκλην ἔχοντα 'πλανητά'*, 38 c 5–6) and goes on to define the *πλάνη* (40 b 6). Cf. Simplicius in *De Caelo*, 489. 5–11.

dialogues, we turn to the recent counter-claim that at two points the *Timaeus* presupposes the argument of the *Sophist*.

1. Concerning the psychogony of *Tm.* 35 a Cornford has maintained, with less reservations than Grube<sup>1</sup> or Cherniss,<sup>2</sup> that 'the *Sophist* (as the ancient critics saw) provides the sole clue to the sense of our passage'.<sup>3</sup> Such arguments for dating can cut both ways: e.g. Cornford has to appeal to the *Timaeus* to support his account (or expansion) of the perception-theory in the *Theaetetus*<sup>4</sup> and of the description of mirror-images in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*.<sup>5</sup> But in any case the claim cannot be allowed. Cornford can hardly have supposed that Plato's readers had to await the *Sophist* in order to be informed that any *εἶδος* existed, maintained its identity, and differed from others (cf. *Phdo.* 78 d 5–7, *Symp.* 211 b 1–2, *Rep.* 597 c) or that existence, identity, and difference could be distinguished from each other (this is of course assumed throughout the *Parmenides* and occasionally stated, e.g. at 143 b in the case of existence, difference, unity). Yet this is all that he borrows from the *Sophist*.<sup>6</sup> The distinction between divisible and indivisible *οὐσία* is explained by reference to the descriptions of *εἰκόνας* and *χρόνος* in the *Timaeus* and the contrast between *ἀπλᾶ* and *σύνθετα* in the *Phaedo*.<sup>7</sup> On the indivisibility of Identity and Difference he is reduced to 'conjecture'<sup>8</sup>—naturally, for there is no enlightening contrast to be found in the divisibility of *ἡ θατέρου φύσις* in the *Sophist* (257 c–258 a) which cannot be accommodated within the disjunction of the *Timaeus*. The *Timaeus* employs an older and simpler schema: the *μεριστῆ* *θατέρου φύσις* which is contrasted with the *ἀμεριστος* *ἰσπερὶ τὰ σώματα γυνομένη*, and Cornford admits that the *Sophist* does not discuss divisibility of this order.

Consequently I cannot see that Cornford's exposition takes anything from the *Sophist* which is original to the argument of that most important dialogue, or which could not be gathered from such an earlier passage as that in the *Republic* (454 a–b) which makes *τὸ δύνασθαι κατ' εἶδη διαιρεῖσθαι* a mark of *διάλεκτος* and ascribes it to a failure in *διάλεκτος* that *ἐπεσκεψάμεθα οὐδ' ὀηροῦν τί εἶδος τὸ τῆς ἑτέρας τε καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως καὶ πρὸς τί τεῖνον ὀριζόμεθα τότε*. And, on the other hand, it is noteworthy that, in a highly elliptical context<sup>9</sup> and a dialogue whose ellipses are seldom supplied elsewhere, Plato subsequently offers so full an explanation of this stage of the soul-making (*Tm.* 37 a–c). To go beyond this and pronounce the indivisible Existence, Identity, and Difference 'Forms', as Cornford does, is to manufacture the difficulty (which he ignores) that their role in the psychogony then breaks the law laid down for all Forms in *Tm.* 52 a 2–3.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Class. Phil.* xxvii, pp. 80–82; *Plato's Thought*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> *A.C.P.A.*, p. 409, n. 337.

<sup>3</sup> *P.C.*, p. 62. The parenthesis hardly deserves refutation. If such 'ancient critics' as Xenocrates and Crantor ever attended to the *Sophist* in constructing their divergent interpretations, it was notoriously not their 'sole clue': cf. Taylor, *Comm.*, pp. 112–15. Xenocrates' importation of motion and rest was presumably grounded in the *Tm.* itself (57 d–e), and attempted to reconcile the *Tm.* with the definition of *ψυχή* given in the *Phdr.*

<sup>4</sup> *P.T.K.*, p. 50 and n. 2; cf. especially his introduction of 'visual fire' and 'fiery par-

ticles' which 'interpenetrate and coalesce'.

<sup>5</sup> *P.T.K.*, pp. 124, n. 2; 327, n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *P.C.*, pp. 59–66.

<sup>7</sup> *P.C.*, pp. 62–64, 102. It might have been glossed by the *Phdr.* myth (247 c–e) in which the *ἐπιστήμη* that represents *οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα* is contrasted with that which is *ἑτέρα ἐν ἑτέρῳ οὐσα ὧν ἡμεῖς νῦν ὄντων καλοῦμεν*.

<sup>8</sup> *P.C.*, pp. 65–66.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the determining of harmonic intervals in the world-soul and the mathematical idioms in *Tm.* 31 c 4, 36 c 5–7.

<sup>10</sup> I think Plato may have seen conclusive reasons for excluding *παράδειγματα* of existence, identity, and difference before he saw

2. Perhaps we can settle the order of the *Sophist* and *Timaeus* in the course of rebutting a further claim. Discussing the account of λόγος in the world-soul (*Tim.* 37 a–c), Cornford remarks that the passage ‘can only be understood by reference to the *Sophist*. There all philosophic discourse is regarded as consisting of affirmative and negative statements about Forms.’<sup>1</sup> Now this argument would carry weight if the *Timaeus* anywhere presupposed the analysis of negation in terms of θάτερον offered in the *Sophist*. But it does not. It mentions only assertions of identity and difference (37 b, 44 a), and in this respect shows no advance on the passage quoted earlier from the *Republic*. So it is at least misleading to gloss λόγος ὁ κατὰ ταῦτόν ἀληθής (37 b 3) as ‘discourse true in either case, whether the judgments are affirmative or negative’.<sup>2</sup>

This in itself shows only that in the *Timaeus* the analysis of negation given in the *Sophist* is not presupposed,<sup>3</sup> not that it had not yet been worked out. But this further point can also be proved. For the tenet on which the whole new account of negation is based, namely that τὸ μὴ ὄν ἔστιν ὄντως μὴ ὄν (*Soph.* 254 d 1), is contradicted unreservedly by *Timaeus*’ assertion that it is illegitimate to say τὸ μὴ ὄν ἔστι μὴ ὄν (38 b 2–3); and thereby the *Timaeus* at once ranks itself with the *Republic* and *Euthydemus*. Cornford tries to excuse this, but his plea miscarries. He has to say that at *Tim.* 38 b 2 τὸ μὴ ὄν means ‘the absolutely non-existent, of which, as the *Sophist* shows, nothing whatever can be truly asserted’.<sup>4</sup> But what the *Sophist* argues is that any attempt to give this use to μὴ ὄν (we could say, to treat ὄν as a proper adjective) leads directly to absurdities, and that in the only sense which can consistently be allowed to μὴ ὄν it is wholly correct to say τὸ μὴ ὄν ἔστι μὴ ὄν.<sup>5</sup> And this formula is echoed insistently and always without the reservation which would be required on Cornford’s interpretation.<sup>6</sup> So the *Timaeus* does not tally with even a fragment of the argument in the *Sophist*. That argument is successful against exactly the Eleatic error which, for lack of the later challenge to Father Parmenides, persists in the *Timaeus*.

### Second thoughts on government

1. At the start of the *Timaeus* Socrates alludes to a number of theses canvassed in the *Republic*. They are to be developed and illustrated by Critias in the sequel (*Tim.* 26 c–27 b). Some critics, perplexed at the omission of other doctrines found in the *Republic*, have guessed at an implied discontinuity in the argument of the two dialogues instead of insisting, as Plato does, on its continuity. They forget, firstly, that Plato repeatedly takes care to quote the words

the general objection to making the Forms παραδείγματα: then the readmission of existence, etc. as εἶδη in the *Sophist* would mark the revised function of the εἶδος. But this falls outside the present paper. In the *Tim.* Plato does not commit himself and should not be committed by his commentators.

<sup>1</sup> *P.C.*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *P.C.*, p. 95, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> ‘*Timaeus* always talks of the μὴ ὄν in the old indiscriminating fashion familiar to us from the fifth book of the *Republic*’ (Taylor, *Comm.*, p. 32).

<sup>4</sup> *P.C.*, p. 98, n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> To try to give it the former use is to try to say what is ἀρρητον καὶ ἀφθεγκτον καὶ

ἄλογον (238 c 10); correspondingly ὅποταν τὸ μὴ ὄν λέγωμεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐκ ἐναντίον τι λέγομεν τοῦ ὄντος ἀλλ’ ἕτερον μόνον (257 b 3–4). For a further refutation of Cornford’s account of the *Sophist* see A. L. Peck, ‘Plato and the μέγιστα γένη of the *Sophist*’, *C.Q.* xlvi, esp. pp. 35–38. Though I think Dr. Peck’s positive thesis mistaken (viz. that the *Soph.* has primarily the local virtue of beating certain sophists on their own ground), I take it to be at least partly prompted by the very real problem why the *Soph.* differs markedly from the *Tim.* in its terminology and interests (cf., for example, op. cit., pp. 39, 53). My own answer to this will be evident.

<sup>6</sup> *Soph.* 258 c 2–3, *Pol.* 284 b 8, 286 b 10.

of the *Republic*;<sup>1</sup> secondly, that the *Timaeus* describes the doctrines it takes over as *κεφάλαια* of Socrates' talk on the previous day and that in the *Politics* (1264<sup>b</sup>29–1265<sup>a</sup>1) Aristotle summarizes the conclusions of the *Republic* in exactly the way adopted in the *Timaeus*, explaining the selection by saying that the rest of the dialogue consists of 'digressions and a discussion of the Guardians' education'. And Plato also calls the central books a digression (*Rep.* 543 c 5). With this emphasis on continuity in mind, then,<sup>2</sup> we can try to connect the abandoning of the *Critias* with the fact that certain doctrines which the *Timaeus* takes over from the *Republic* as a basis for its sequel are rejected outright in the *Politics*. For the moment we shall set on one side what is said in the *Laws*.

First, some special theses. The *Timaeus* (18 b) repeats the prescription of the *Republic* (417 a) that the Guardians must have no gold or silver or private property. Breach of this law in the *Republic* marks immediate degeneration from the perfect constitution (547 b–548 b). But against this the *Politics* insists (four times in two pages, to show that this is novel doctrine: 292 a, c, 293 a, c–d) that whether the true ruler has any wealth is wholly irrelevant to the question whether his is the best possible government. Correspondingly, the system of marriages for the Guardians (*Rep.* 457 c–465 c, echoed in *Tm.* 18 c–d), which was said to stand or fall with the abolition of private property (*Rep.* 464 b–c), is abandoned by the philosophic statesman in the *Politics* (310 a–311 c). Its nearest analogue is the complete elimination of normal marriage and parenthood, by other means, in the non-historical time-cycle of the myth (271 e 8–272 a 1), whither Plato also banishes the lack of private property. Nor can these discrepancies be patched by saying that in the *Politics* Plato argues only that the abolition of property—and, by implication, of families—is not to be taken as *defining* the best government, though it is, in a weaker sense, still a necessary condition of it. Plato does indeed insist that it is not a *ὄρος* of *ὀρθῆ ἀρχῇ*, but what he now denies is that it is a necessary condition at all: this is proved (quite apart from the myth, to which I shall return) not only by the present context (e.g. 293 a–b, if a doctor worthy of the name can be rich so can the statesman), but by the suggestion of different and more familiar arrangements for property and the marriages of *ἄρχοντες* under a scientific government (310 a–311 c).

But, more important, Plato now jettisons the general principle on which these detailed prescriptions depended: namely the assumption that *νομοθεσία*, provided it does not become embroiled with minutiae, can be final.<sup>3</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rivaud's notes on *Tm.* 17 c–19 a; he does not remark *Tm.* 18 b 3 = *Rep.* 419 a 10 or the deliberate use of *σύνεξις* for the State marriages (a word apparently confined to *Rep.* 460 a 9 and *Tm.* 18 d 9).

<sup>2</sup> As to dramatic date, surely the reason why the *Tm.* could not be set after the *Rep.* (i.e. two days after the Bendideia) is just that when writing the earlier work Plato had not yet formulated the plan of the later and therefore had not seen the need to introduce any speaker of Timaeus' powers among either Cephalus' guests or Socrates' (presumed) auditors next day. Hence a further recital had to be invented. To infer from this that

'the design of the [*Timaeus*] trilogy is completely independent of the *Republic*' (Cornford) is to invert the natural inference.

<sup>3</sup> Barker's paradox, that the *Republic* is 'uncompromisingly hostile to law' and that this hostility is relaxed in the *Politics* (*Greek Political Theory*, p. 271), hardly needs refutation. The *Republic* does not repudiate any 'system of law'; it contends only that continuous piecemeal legislation and litigation will be eliminated *ἐάν γε θεός αὐτοῖς διδώ σωτηρίαν τῶν νόμων ὧν ἐμπροσθεν διήλθομεν* (425 e), since then the Guardians will know *ἅσα δεῖ νομοθετήσασθαι*. Even if the *νόμοι* of the *Republic* were 'unwritten ordinances', the

*Republic* there is no question of changing the original broad νόμοι laid down by Socrates, e.g. those governing the living-conditions and marriages of the Guardians and the ordering of their education. Earlier, the Guardians are permitted merely to obey the laws and 'imitate' them in details of interpretation (458 c); later, when there is no longer (as once in 414 b) any need or hope of duping them with the Noble Lie, their powers are commensurate with those of the original legislator solely in as far as they now understand why the νόμοι must be maintained (497 b 7–d 2) and must be supreme (519 e 1–2). Correspondingly, the prime virtue of Critias' model State is that of Sparta, εὐνομία (*Tm.* 23 c 6, 24 d 4), and it is Socrates' νόμοι which are taken over as the basis of that ἀρίστη πόλις (e.g. *Tm.* 23 e 5). But this whole doctrine of sovereign and immutable laws, asserted in the *Republic* and inherited by the *Timaeus* and its sequel, is denounced in the *Politicus*. No τέχνη (such as statesmanship) can lay down a permanent and universal rule (294 b). The scientific ruler will be independent of legislation (294 a–301 a *passim*), and if for convenience he enacts laws, he is liable to discover that those which were the best possible in past circumstances need to be changed (295 b–296 a). Only inferior constitutions require laws binding on all members of the State, and such laws must be written records of what is at some time prescribed for the best State (297 c–e).

The conclusion is in sight that the *Timaeus*, since it adopts without comment these superseded theories, was written before the *Politicus*; but there are two more steps required to reach it. And in countering the first objection we shall find independent support for our view.

2. It has been argued that the propositions quoted from the *Politicus* do not apply at all to human statecraft. On this interpretation, what the myth in that dialogue teaches is that the ruler with knowledge and independent of the laws is not a human possibility or matter for 'serious political theory';<sup>1</sup> so in the latter sphere, for all that Plato says, the *Republic*–*Critias* constitution may still rank first. But this is demonstrably a misreading of the *Politicus*,<sup>2</sup> where the argument moves as follows. The initial definition of the statesman as a kind of shepherd of men is pronounced unsatisfactory; it is inferred that by mistake some other σχῆμα βασιλικόν has been defined. The mistake is illustrated by the myth, which brings to light these objections: (a) The βασιλεὺς καὶ πολιτικός of the present time-cycle (viz. the historical as opposed to the ideal) must be distinguished from the θεῖος νομεὺς of the other cycle: only the divine shepherd is worthy of the original definition, but he is 'higher than a king' (274 e 10–275 a 2, 275 b 4–c 1). And (b) the earlier descriptions of the statesman as ruling the whole State must be clarified and amended (275 a 2–5). The objections are respectively met by (a) replacing τροφή by ἐπιμέλεια in the definition and (b) analysing the human ruler's ἐπιμέλεια to distinguish it from other functions in the State. The conclusion at once follows that the true statesman

*Politicus* censures immutability in written and unwritten alike (295 e 5); but in fact it is only the σμικρὰ δοκοῦντα εἶναι νόμιμα that will not have written legislation (*Rep.* 425 a–b). No punishment for crime is considered because Plato concentrates on the Guardians, whose crimes will disrupt the constitution and make punishment unavailable and unavailing. If it is true of this πολιτεία that 'its

government is the result of its nature' (op. cit., p. 204), it is conversely true that its nature is the result of the παιδεία prescribed by νόμοι which are irrevocable (424 b–d).

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *P.M.W.*, p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> Probably under the influence of *Laws* 4. 713 a–714 a, on which see p. 93, n. 4. For another refutation of Taylor's interpretation see J. B. Skemp, *P.St.*, p. 52.

independent of laws who subsequently appears in the dialogue is an ἀνὴρ μετὰ φρονήσεως βασιλικός (294 a 8): unlike the divine shepherd of the myth, he is a human possibility.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell saw Pythagoreanism in the political theories which are contrasted, under the guise of the divine shepherd, with Plato's own current doctrine.<sup>2</sup> But his evidence is late, and we can come nearer home. When Socrates wishes to see his πολιτεία illustrated in the lives and actions of φιλόσοφοι καὶ πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες (Tm. 19 e 5–6), Critias without qualms establishes it under the guidance of 'divine shepherds' (Crs. 109 b 6–c). Then (a) if the *Politicus* follows and corrects the *Critias*, it can be read as arguing that the very appropriateness of the *Republic's* institutions to a Golden Age should have removed them from a study of πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες. And Critias' introduction of the gods and their instrument πειθῶ (109 c 3) has merely the purpose it seems to have—that of avoiding the difficulties (already envisaged in *Rep.* 500 d–501 a, 540 d–541 a) of establishing by authority a State based on consent.

But (b) if the *Critias* follows the *Politicus*, there can be only one inference from Critias' reference to divine shepherds. His whole discourse must then be devoted to illustrating the negative thesis that the institutions taken over from the *Republic* are not a matter of human political theory at all (and this not in the sense that they are a παράδειγμα ἐν οὐρανῶ, as the ideal human State may be, but that they are a radically inappropriate model for men). No one, I imagine, would defend this paradox. But two other points make it intolerable. First, it makes Critias' promise to talk of θνητὰ καὶ ἀνθρώπινα (107 d 7–8, taking up Socrates' request) a pointless fraud. Next, Critias takes the distribution of the earth among various gods as the setting for his πολιτεία (109 b 1–2); and the *Politicus* not only relegates this setting to the ideal time-cycle but denies that under these conditions there would be any πολιτεῖαι at all (271 d 4–6, 271 e 8).

3. This weakens in advance a last objection, but it deserves independent discussion. It could be said that in the *Laws* Plato reverts to political theories having a closer affinity with the *Republic*, and hence that the *Timaeus* and *Critias* may equally have been written after the reversion. Now it is easily shown that the *Laws* as a whole embodies no such reversion, and that its inconsistency on a cardinal issue reflects the changes in political theory sketched above.

In *Laws* 4 (715 c) it is laid down categorically that the ruler must be τοῖς τεβείσι νόμοις εὐπειθέστατος: here the continuity with the *Republic* is still direct and unbroken by the argument of the *Politicus*. (Contrast, for example, the assertion in 715 d, that no State can hope for salvation unless the law is δεσπότης τῶν ἀρχόντων, οἱ δὲ ἀρχοντες δούλοι τοῦ νόμου, with *Pol.* 294 a: τὸ ἄριστον οὐ τοῖς νόμοις ἐστὶν ἰσχύειν ἀλλ' ἄνδρα τὸν μετὰ φρονήσεως βασιλικόν.) Curators of the law must also be legislators in order to fill any lacunae, but they must remain νομοφύλακες (770 a 6, cf. *Rep.* 458 c 2–4): no question here, as in the *Politicus*,

<sup>1</sup> The possibility is not cancelled by the concession that men do not credit it and that at present no such natural autocrat is to be found (301 c–e). At this point Professor Grube's analysis breaks down (*Plato's Thought*, chap. vii). Against Barker he rightly points out that the *Republic* never supposes, what the *Politicus* affirms, that 'the best laws, even those enacted by the philosopher-king

himself, are inevitably imperfect' and that law is a δεύτερος πλοῦς (*Pol.* 300 c 2). But he thinks that now the philosopher-king has risen 'so high [sc. above law] as to join the gods' (p. 281), and is consequently puzzled that 'the final definition of statecraft seems to imply the philosopher's knowledge all over again' (p. 284).

<sup>2</sup> *Politicus*, intro., pp. xxi–xxvi.

of inevitable revision and repeal.<sup>1</sup> But in Book 9 (875 c–d) there is the first clear echo of the *Politicus* argument in the present sequence of the *Laws*.<sup>2</sup> There it is suddenly conceded that *τάξις καὶ νόμος* are second-best and that *ἐπιστήμη* and *νοῦς* should not be subject to them; but that, since the latter commodities are found *οὐδαμοῦ οὐδαμῶς ἀλλ' ἢ κατὰ βραχύ*, the inadequacies of legislation must be tolerated. Note that previously the 'best state', without reservation, has been that whose laws are fixed and supreme: e.g. in 5. 739 a–e the *πρώτη πόλις* (as contrasted with the second best, which is shown in more detail) is that whose laws prescribe a thoroughgoing communism; this is at once the *ἀρίστη πολιτεία* and the *νόμοι ἄριστοι*, and Plato calls it the *παράδειγμα πολιτείας* (cf. *Rep.* 472 d, 592 b). Moreover, such legislation is the direct result of power in the hands of a man possessing *τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ σωφρονεῖν* (711 e–712 a), whereas in the *Politicus* (294 a) it is independence of such permanent and universal *νόμοι* that marks the *ἀνὴρ μετὰ φρονήσεως βασιλικός*. On the other hand, the sole difference of view between the passage in *Laws* 9 and the *Politicus* seems to be that, whereas the *Politicus* suggests that a ruler with knowledge may well be found (e.g. 293 a 2–4, 297 b 5–c 2), the *Laws* implies that the search has been and will probably continue to be a failure.

Thus what enters the *Laws* as a *παράδειγμα πολιτείας* becomes before the end a *δύτερος πλοῦς*. And if Book 9 imports an internal change of theory which reflects the emergence of new arguments in the *Politicus*, either of two explanations may be given. It may be that the *Laws* as a whole is Plato's latest work and that in it he designed to modify and reconcile political theories which he had advanced at different times. In that case the material is present but (what is evident on other counts too) the work is unfinished. The *Timaeus* and *Critias* show no signs of this late intention. On the other hand, it is arguable that the writing of the *Laws* was concurrent with that of the various late dialogues<sup>3</sup> and that Plato transferred arguments from them to the *Laws* without returning to make the necessary revision of earlier passages in the work.<sup>4</sup> But however the

<sup>1</sup> Taylor seems to be right in saying that 'we are apparently to think of the authorities of [Plato's] "city" as needing less than a generation for the experience which would justify them in declaring their institutions definitely inviolable' (*The Laws of Plato*, intro., p. xxxii).

<sup>2</sup> There is perhaps another in 12. 945 b–948 b where certain political abuses described in *Pol.* 298 e–299 a are eliminated by arrangements for the election and scrutiny of magistrates. In 6. 773 a–c the marriage of complementary characters recommended in *Pol.* 310 a–311 a is independently defended. On 4. 713 a–714 a see p. 93, n. 4 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Suggested by Taylor, Diès, Field, and Ross, *inter alios*. There is no direct evidence that any part of the *Laws* was written after every other dialogue. The work certainly followed the *Republic* (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1264<sup>b</sup> 28). But Diogenes' remark that it was left on the wax does not certify even that it occupied Plato to his death, much less that nothing else was written at the same time. (Who would argue that the works which Descartes

or Leibniz left in manuscript must have been their last?) The connexion of the *προοίμια* with Plato's work at Syracuse (*Ep.* 3. 316 a) does not show that the technique first suggested itself to him there or in the year 360 (Taylor, *P.M.W.*, pp. 464–5; cf. Burnet, *G.P.*, p. 301. But note that in the *Tm.* (29 d 5) the contrast between *προοίμιον* and *νόμος* has the musical connotation found in the *Rep.* (531 d 8), not the later legal sense). Taylor arbitrarily and inconsistently assumes a 'block' *Laws* in arguing that, if *Laws* 4. 711 a–b (describing as if from personal knowledge the powers of a tyrant, which the wise legislator may hope to harness) should be dated after Plato's last return from Syracuse, 'the work must therefore belong to a date later than 360' (*Laws*, intro., p. xii). In any case (a) the optimism of the passage hardly accords with Taylor's dating and (b) the personal experience (of a tyrant's power to shape a State for good or evil) could clearly have been gained earlier.

<sup>4</sup> This would more easily explain the form of a myth in *Laws* 4. 713 a–714 a which bears

chronology of the *Laws* is decided, our point is made that the dialogue embodies no consistent reversion to the political theories of the *Republic* and that, on the other hand, we shall go astray if we deny the direct continuity with the *Republic* which is stressed in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*. These three dialogues know nothing of the hope (whether inspired by Dion or Dionysius or a new analysis of *τέχνη*) that a State may be saved by the supremacy not of immutable laws but of an *ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος* above the law.

### Conclusion

I hope I have proved that in metaphysics and cosmology, in logic and politics, the *Timaeus* and *Critias* belong to the middle dialogues and ignore salient arguments and theories developed in (or, in the case of Eudoxus' hypothesis, concurrently with) the later 'critical' group. No one doubts, I suppose, that the *Timaeus* represents the culmination of a period of growing confidence, a time in which Plato came to think himself ready to expound an ambitious system of speculations. The misfortune is that this crowning work has been tacked on to the latest dialogues, with which it disagrees largely in interests, methods, and conclusions. Its place is at the end of the *Republic* group (allowing a sufficient interval of time for Plato to have developed and coordinated the contributory theories). Just as the tripartite soul is taken over and given a physiological basis in the *Timaeus* (44 d, 69 c–72 d), so the *ἀναλογία* of the Divided Line is repeated and made a basis of the metaphysics (28 a, 29 c), the *παράδειγματα* are put to the service of the *δημιουργός*, the astronomy of the Myth of Er is developed and refined, and a quasi-historical illustration of the *Republic's* political doctrines is undertaken. (So, too, with details: the *Republic's* proof of the uniqueness of any Form is given a second hearing.) And this provides us with more cogent reasons than those usually given for the abandoning of the *Critias* and the non-appearance of its sequel (supposing a sequel is promised in *Crs.* 108 a–c). Doubtless, if a third member of the group was planned, much of the material for it may now be found in the *Laws*. But we need not suppose that Plato—after repeatedly insisting on his practice of selecting from the available subject-matter (e.g. *Tm.* 89 d 7–e 3, 90 e 3–6)—was merely bewildered into shelving his project by the abundance of this material.<sup>1</sup> We can suggest now that some or all of the changes of theory outlined in this paper induced him to turn aside and make the fresh start recorded in the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus*.

The ordering of the *Timaeus* and *Phaedrus*, whose affinities so far outweigh their discrepancies, cannot be determined by arguments of the sort that I have tried to find. There are, however, some pointers. For instance, it seems that an apology for the abandoning of the *Critias* may be found in the *Phaedrus*, with its novel denial of *βεβαιότης* to any written work and its condemnation of the man who 'has nothing more valuable than his own past writings and composi-

a superficial similarity to that in the *Politicus*. The moral wrongly imported by Taylor into the *Pol.* (namely that the ideal ruler independent of laws is not an historical possibility) is in fact the moral of the allegory in the *Laws*, which can be regarded as a briefer and less sophisticated version corrected, in the light of later political theories, by the *Pol.* For whereas in *Laws* 4 the 'divine shepherd'

and the supremacy of law are presented as a simple disjunction (713 e–714 a) and law is itself the *διανομή νοῦ* (714 a 2), the *Pol.* insists on the *tertium quid*, the independent ruler with *νοῦς* and *φρόνησις*. And in the *Laws* this possibility does not seem to be entertained before Book 9.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cornford's development of Raeder's suggestion, *P.C.*, pp. 6–8.



tions which he has spent time turning and twisting, welding and censoring' (278 d 8–e 1). There is no hint of this revulsion in what the *Timaeus* and *Critias* have to say about types of λόγοι (29 b–d, 107 a–e); and if the *Timaeus* group was abandoned through dissatisfaction with some now veteran theories, the refusal to waste time 'welding and censoring' gains point after the abandonment but sounds oddly if it comes between the *Republic* and its avowed successor.

Again, there is Plato's apparent inconsistency on the nature of discarnate soul. The *Timaeus*, as from our argument we shall expect, combines the tripartite psychology of the *Republic* with the immortality of νοῦς taught in the *Phaedo* (cf. *Rep.* 611 b 9–612 a 6): it excludes passions and appetites from the ἀρχὴ ψυχῆς ἀθάνατος. But this is seemingly contradicted in the *Phaedrus* (246 a ff.) and the *Laus* (897 a). However, we avoid the conclusion that Plato 'wavered to the end' between these alternatives<sup>1</sup> if we set the *Phaedrus* after the *Timaeus* (and the resulting account of Plato's final views seems to be confirmed if Jaeger and Nuyens are right, as against Themistius, in denying that in the *Eudemus* Aristotle confined immortality to νοῦς). Within the same field there are other pointers. Those who accept Aristotle's literal exposition of the 'creation' in the *Timaeus* can of course argue that the doctrines of that dialogue exclude the definition of ψυχή as αὐτὸ κινεῖν and so ἀγένητρον (*Phdr.* 245 c–d). But even if we follow Xenocrates here, doubts remain. It is not merely that no mention of the definition occurs in the *Timaeus* (for what is sometimes taken for an oblique reference to it in 46 d–e may well contain only its raw material). It is rather that, firstly, when Plato does mention self-motion, he denies it to plants in the same breath as he ascribes to them ψυχή (77 b–c: contrast, for example, *Phdr.* 245 e 4–6); that is, he seems to use κίνησις ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ in an everyday sense innocent of any special doctrine. And, secondly, it does not seem that any attempt to reconcile the disorderly motions in the *Timaeus* with the doctrine that ψυχή is the ἀρχὴ κινήσεως has yet won general credit. But these hints do not add up to a reasonable certainty. In particular, they are weaker than arguments of the type I have so far tried to find because they do not exhibit a precise error or inadequacy correlated with a subsequent precise correction.

On the other hand, I trust the earlier arguments may arouse enough faith to remove one mountain and deliver our interpretation of the critical dialogues from the shadow of the *Timaeus*. It is time, I am sure, to be quit of such ancestral puzzles as that of inserting the Paradigms into the more sophisticated metaphysics of the *Philebus*, and to leave the profoundly important late dialogues to their own devices.

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<sup>1</sup> Hackforth, *P.P.*, p. 75.