KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: A READING OF THE DIGRESSION IN THE *THEAETETUS*

A Master's Thesis

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DOĞACAN İSMET KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: A READING OF THE DIGRESSION IN THE *THEAETETUS* Bilkent University 2020

To my beloved ones

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The *Theaetetus* digression has attracted scholars in both its form and content. No final answer is given as to how we should read the digression. I propose another reading, which engages in the structural intricacies of the *Theaetetus* and its implications of the digression. To do so, I attend to Mitchell Miller's reading of the *Republic* and I show that the digression is in fact about the unity of mathematics and philosophy. The digression, I argue, naturally divides into two. Its first part corresponds to the ones who become philosophers on their own account, its second part corresponds to the ones the city educates in the *Republic*. The digression, therefore, neither portrays a caricature, nor is its flying philosopher the ideal of Platonism. The Socrates of the *Theaetetus*, I argue, looks for someone who will continue philosophy after him, and his directives to Theaetetus follow the direction of the *Republic*'s curriculum toward dialectic.

Keywords: Digression, Knowledge, Socrates, Theaetetus, The Unity of Science

ÖZET

BİLGİ VE BİLGELİK: *THEAETETUS* ARA SÖZÜNÜN BİR OKUMASI

İsmet, Doğacan
Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü
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Theaetetus yapı ve içerik bakımından akademisyenlerin ilgisini çekmektedir. Ara sözün nasıl okunması gerektiği bakımından henüz nihai bir yanıt verilememiştir. Theaetetus'un yapısal detaylarını inceleyerek farklı bir ara söz okuması sunacağım. Bunun için Mitchell Miller'ın Devlet okumasına başvuracağım ve ara sözün aslında matematik ve felsefenin birliği ile ilgili olduğunu göstereceğim. Ara söz iki kısımdan oluşmaktadır. İlk kısım *Devlet'*in kendi başına felsefeci olmuş olanları, ikinci kısım ise şehrin eğittiği felsefecilere denk düşmektedir. Dolayısıyla ne bir karikatür sunmaktadır, ne de ara sözün "uçan felsefecisi" Platoncuğun idealidir. *Theaetetus'*un Sokrates'i kendisinden sonra felsefeyi devam ettirecek birini aramaktadır ve Theaetetus'a doğrulttuğu yönergeleri *Devlet*'in diyalektiğe doğru müfredatını takip etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ara Söz, Bilgi, Bilimlerin Bütünlüğü, Sokrates, Theaetetus

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INTRODUCTION

The *Theaetetus* is regarded to be as devoted to theory of knowledge. The problem of how to read the dialogues of Plato has received a wide interest, in different schools of interpretation. Notably, the discussion seems to be on two main issues, which are essentially connected: Plato's selection of the dialogue form and the dramatic, literary acts in the dialogues. A recent exchange concerning the *Theaetetus* digression (172c-177c) is a paradigmatic example of this debate. Rachel Rue (1993) first proposed a dramatic reading of the dialogue, classifying the digression not as a digression but as a caricature Plato draws in order to help us reconsider the role of Socrates. Stephen Menn (2019), on the other hand, takes the digression to be serious in its content, but reads it as a digression from the central question of the dialogue, what knowledge is. In this thesis I aim to provide a different interpretation, regarding the discussion of multiplicities in the *Theaetetus* and the mathematical curriculum designed for the philosopher-kings in the *Republic VII*. The upshot of these considerations would force us to see the digression in a different aspect, that while the digression in its first half is pointing at a detached figure of philosophy and its practitioner, in its second half the digression comes close to the philosopher-kings of the *Republic* and Socrates himself.

In the first chapter I give an overview of the *Theaetetus*, concentrating on the digression in its middle section.

In the second chapter, I aim to give a synopsis of the interpretations of Stephen Menn and Rachel Rue. Unfolding different interpretations, I will argue that none has the final word on interpreting the digression. I will provide another way of interpreting the significance of the digression in the broader context of the *Theaetetus*, alluding to certain images and puzzles.

In the third chapter, I propose that we need to read the dialogue in reverse order in order to see how it is based on certain assumptions. I present the dream argument and Desjardins' solution to the dilemma, and show how this is reflected in the digression,

concerning the unity of philosophy. Later I turn to the *Republic*, and explicate how mathematics and philosophy relate to each other.

In the last chapter, I present another way of reading the digression. I attend to Mitchell Miller's "*Beginning the* 'Longer Way'," on the education in the *Republic*, trying to relate his question concerning the seeming oddity between the philosopher's reluctance to descend and Socrates' willingness to descend into Piraeus to the *Theaetetus* digression. On the one hand, philosophers disdain their fellow citizens' misconception of reality, and are reluctant to descend and rule. Due to this reluctance philosophers shall be compelled to rule in Kallipolis, for they owe their education and upbringing to the city (*Rep.* 520c). On the other hand, Miller states that all this is said by Socrates, who becomes a philosopher on his own account and owes nothing to Athens. Socrates "himself willingly 'descended' into the Piraeus … with an inexhaustible generosity and zest" (Miller, 2007: 317). These, he states, are strikingly at odds with each other. Miller provides a reading of the mathematical curriculum of the *Republic* and shows how this might explain Socrates' eagerness. I argue that this is reflected in the *Theaetetus* and that the correspondence between the *Theaetetus* and the *Republic* should make us reconsider the digression.

CHAPTER I

THE STRUCTURE OF THE *THEAETETUS*

In this chapter, I will elaborate on the structure of the *Theaetetus* in terms of the three main parts: the beginning, the digression, and the ending. Throughout the dialogue proper, after the question of what knowledge is, there are four attempts at answering, none of which stands firm. Theaetetus' first answer as to what knowledge is consists of enumerating different sciences (146d), the second is the thesis that "knowledge is perception" (151e), the third is the thesis that "knowledge is true judgment" (187b) and the last is that "knowledge is true judgment with an articulation" (201d). During the discussion of the thesis that knowledge is perception, there appears a passage which Socrates refers to as digression. After the failure of the last suggestion that knowledge is true opinion with an account, the dialogue ends at an impasse and the interlocutors, Socrates, Theaetetus, Theodorus, agree to meet the following day.

1.1. The Beginning of the Dialogue

The dialogue starts with the exchange of Euclides and Terpsion, two Megareans. Euclides relates his encounter with the dying Theaetetus (142a-143d).[1] He recalls a dialogue Theaetetus and Socrates had shortly before Socrates' death, which he had written down. The slave boy reads the dialogue that Euclides composed.

Socrates asks Theodorus, a geometrician, whether he has encountered any Athenian youth who is interested in geometry and *other sorts of philosophy* worthy of mentioning (143d). Theodorus mentions a young boy at whom he is amazed, Theaetetus, and he praises the boy. After Socrates meets with the boy, he states that Theodorus has praised him, and they should not trust Theodorus without examining him? and the one who is praised should be eager to display himself (145b).

Thereafter Socrates and Theaetetus discuss what knowledge is. Theaetetus first

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all Stephanus references are to the *Theaetetus*, trans. Joe Sachs

answers that what one can learn from Theodorus, and the crafts and skills, such as cobblery, are knowledge, but Socrates rejects this, stating that his question was not addressed to what knowledge is about but what it is (146d-147c).

Theaetetus' second answer as to what knowledge is, after Socrates exhorts the boy with his self-stated midwifery (149c-151e), is the thesis that "knowledge is nothing other than perception" (151e). Socrates identifies this as a different expression of Protagoras' thesis that "a human being is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (152a). What follows is the discussion of what the Protagorean thesis means and its validity.

1.2. The Digression

Within this epistemological work, where the subject matter is explicitly said to be the problem of knowledge, there appears a so-called digression wherein the philosopher is compared to the orator. Several times Socrates himself calls this comparison a digression (most explicitly at 177b) from their original topic.[2]

The digression is significant because the passage gives us a model of philosophy or philosophies. I argue that the concern of this digression determines the form and the content of the dialogue.

Socrates states that Theaetetus' second definition (knowledge is perception) suggests Protagoras' thesis. In discussing Protagoras' thesis, Socrates states that in order not to do injustice to the thesis, they should discuss it with Theodorus. Socrates draws him into the discussion at the third attempt (169c). What follows is the well-known "self-refutation" criticism of Protagoras' thesis.

Socrates states that there is a kind of Protagoreanism which claims that there are such things by nature, having their own being, and there are objective standards for them (172b). But the just, beautiful and the like do not have their own being, these are as

[2] The original topic being the discussion of Protagoras' thesis that "man is the measure of everything," and the thesis that knowledge is perception.

they seem so to people. Those who would not say the same as with Protagoras are now the subject of discussion.

When Socrates starts to talk about the semi-Protagorean (Menn's term), he warns Theodorus that a greater argument out of a lesser one is coming, and Theodorus asks "Well, aren't we at our leisure, Socrates?" (172c). Socrates, clinging to "leisure" *seems to be* misled, and the alleged digression starts.

Socrates states that the ones who pass a lot of their time in philosophies (ἐν ταῖς φιλοσοφίαις) appear ridiculous when they are introduced into the law courts (172c). Theodorus does not understand, and Socrates goes on to make a distinction between the ones who are brought up in law courts and the ones who are brought up in philosophy and the like (τοιᾷδε).[3] The former ones become slavish in their natures and the latter ones become free.[4]

At 172d, the main difference between the philosophers and the orators is said to be *time*, since philosopher has leisure. The philosophers can discuss whatever looks satisfying to them and can change the argument freely. The length of their speeches does not matter as long as they hit the mark of truth - what is. But the orators do not have leisure, as "flowing water sweeps them along" (172e)[5]. Also the opposing party compels the orators to stick to the subject, not allowing the orators to speak what seems good or appropriate for them. Because of this predicament, the orators become slavish to arguments, "intense and sharp," and learn all sorts of clevernesses to manipulate speeches, turning to what is unjust.

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[3] It is notable that "philosophies" becomes "philosophy and the like". This will be the main concern of the third chapter.

[4] For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the slavish ones as orators and the free ones as philosophers. But as my argument aims to show, this philosopher might not be the philosopher Socrates has in mind.

[5] Socrates refers to the water clocks that were being used in law courts. But given the context, it both contrasts the things that are in flux with what *is*. Moreover, timekeeping with water clocks does not depend on the looking at celestial bodies, which the philosopher of this passage concerns oneself with. It may be said that the orator looks at that which is in flux (the water clock), and the philosopher looks at what *is* and natural (celestial bodies).

Socrates turns to the philosophers. He states that they should confine themselves to the leaders of the philosophical "chorus" and not deal with the ones who pass their time in philosophy in a poor or ordinary (φαύλως) manner (173c).

The philosopher[6] does not know his way in the city (173d). The philosopher does not see or hear the laws. The banquets with flute girls, and meetings of political offices all seem irrelevant and base to the philosopher, and he does not see them even in his dreams. The philosopher neither notices nor cares whether anyone is well-born or not, nor has any taint coming from either the paternal or maternal side (174e). The philosopher is totally oblivious to these matters, and therefore ignorant about his ignorance. What the philosopher considers worthy is to take flight "underneath the earth and above the heavens," studying geometry and astronomy, looking for each being as a whole (174a).

Until here, Theodorus does not understand and asks what Socrates means by all this (174a). Socrates gives an example, Thales, who when gazing upon the sky fell into a well. This made him a laughingstock for a Thracian girl.[7] She makes fun of Thales by saying that he was eager to know the things in the heavens but was ignorant of what was in front of him, and the same joke applies to all who pass their life in philosophy (174a). The philosopher does not know one's neighbor, whether one's neighbor is a human or not. The philosopher is only concerned with what a human being is and what is appropriate for such a nature (178b).

Theodorus now understands and assents that what Socrates says is true (174b). As he never pays attention to what is nearby and human, the philosopher, when forced in a courtroom, provokes laughter for all who are listening (174c). The philosopher, as he is concerned with the whole earth and the human being itself, when he hears praises such as who has how many acres of land and whose ancestry goes back to whom, thinks that those praises are trifles, and that they stem from lack of education (175a).

[6] Notice, Socrates only once uses "philosopher" at 176e in this long passage.
[7] The Thracian girl seems to be a representative of the orator here.

Here, Theodorus replies with full precision to what Socrates has stated, *in absolutely every detail*, is what happens (175b). After Socrates finishes his distinction between the orator and the philosopher, Theodorus states that if Socrates were able to persuade all, *as he persuaded* Theodorus (?!), "there would be more peace and fewer evils among human beings" (176a). However, Socrates replies, evil cannot be done away with in the human domain, but only the divine realm is free of evil. Hence one must escape from the human realm to the divine one, and doing so is "becoming like a god as far as is in one's power, while becoming like a god is becoming just and holy with intelligent judgment" (176b). A god is maximally just, and the godliest one is the one who is just as far as possible (177c). The realization of this, Socrates says, is genuine wisdom and goodness, and "the ignorance of it is blatant stupidity and vice" (177c). Apart from this, what passes as wisdom is said to be vulgar.

Socrates talks about an inescapable penalty for not realizing this, and Theodorus asks what that penalty is. There are two patterns, replies Socrates, in reality, the divine and the godless (176e). The evildoer does not understand this truth, because of a lack of understanding, and therefore, does not see that as one lives an unjust life, one resembles that pattern more and more (177a). But when the unjust one stands firm on his ground, and engages in giving and taking an account in private, he becomes dissatisfied with himself and the cleverness of him disappears, he looks like a child (177b).

Socrates states that if they continue, a flood of subjects will appear, and he proposes returning to their original argument (177c).

1.3. The Remainder of the Dialogue

After the final refutation of the knowledge is perception thesis (186e), Theaetetus proposes to define knowledge as true opinion (187b). There enters a long discussion of false opinion (187c-200e). Later comes the argument that "knowledge is true opinion with an articulation" (201d), and after its fall, Socrates proceeds to the courtyard of the king-archon to meet the indictment Meletus had drawn against him, but he proposes to meet the following day, at dawn (210d).

CHAPTER II

THE RECONSIDERED VIEW OF THE DIGRESSION

In this chapter, I aim to give a synopsis of the interpretations of Menn and Rue. Unfolding different interpretations, I will argue that neither has the final word on interpreting the digression. I will provide another way of interpreting the significance of the digression in the broader context of the *Theaetetus*, alluding to certain images and puzzles.

The main difficulty one might have with the digression is that the digression does not match with the Socrates we know primarily from the *Apology* among other dialogues. It is this aspect that drives many interpreters of Plato to question whether the philosopher of the digression is what Plato has in mind. There is an extensive list to be drawn between the likenesses and differences of Socrates and the philosopher; I give only a few.[8]

Socrates surely knows all about the city, he knows the way to the marketplace, knows all of which the philosopher is oblivious. Socrates soon will go to see the indictment that is brought upon him. He apparently has concerns with the well or badly born citizens, as is obvious in the case where he asks Theodorus at first instance whether he has noticed any young Athenian who is worth mentioning (143d). And when Theodorus mentions Theaetetus, Socrates, upon seeing the boy, recognizes his father, Euphronius, and also states that Euphronius has left a great property to the boy (144d). Clearly Socrates is interested in genealogies, although he may be being ironic, as in the *Charmides* (154a).

The philosopher is concerned with things above and below the earth, but it is also hard to dismiss Socrates' statement of his disappointment with natural philosophy in the *Phaedo* (Phaedo, 99a, context). There, Socrates represents himself as when in his youth he tried to learn natural philosophy, but seeing no first principle in natural

[8] For a more extensive and elaborate list, see Rue, 1993, Peterson, 2011.

philosophy as well as *unity*, he turned to his own peculiar quest in finding the Good, or the first principle of all things. He did so in turning to words and not looking directly at the things, so as not to blind himself. In the *Apology* Socrates states that the accusation condemns him with studying the things above and below, which he refuses, stating that he knows nothing about them (*Apology*, 19d).[9]. The philosopher of the digression is said to concern oneself with the people as a whole, but Socrates explicitly states, at the beginning of this dialogue, that he cares more for Athenians. However, in terms of the search for the wholeness, good life, what, say, a human being is, Socrates is of the same kind as the philosopher.

The main proponent of the view that this depiction of the philosopher cannot be what Socrates had in mind seems to be Rue, and following her paper, there seems to be an enormous literature built upon this issue.

Rue bases her reading on the distinction between the conceptions of wisdom, the contrast between Socrates and the philosopher of the digression, and the unattainable ideal of the digression's philosopher. She observes that the description of the philosopher starts with that of which the philosopher is ignorant. The philosopher's obliviousness of the city and *himself* puts him at the opposite pole of what a Socratic philosopher would be. Rue states that,

> The 'philosopher' seems to be perversely interested in 'wholes' representing things, people, and activities in which he is not at all interested. He is comically unable to make the most basic distinctions among the very ideas he spends all his time searching after… All these failings are pointed up by countless parallels and contrasts with Socrates (Rue, 1993: 91).

She contends that this cannot be a praise of the philosopher, and in fact all this depiction of the philosopher is a caricature. What the digression shows is a tendency, especially a Platonic one, to look at the wholes and the being, but this tendency itself, taken to the extreme, is self-defeating, for the failings of both the orator and the philosopher show that "knowledge of Being cannot be had without looking to the realm of becoming" (Rue, 1993: 91).

[9] In the *Phaedo* he gives a subtle geological myth of what he calls the True Earth. But one should notice that Socrates never takes credit for the myths he narrates.

Rue further observes that the philosopher is in fact more like Theodorus. Both share mathematical interests and both are independent of the city. Both disdain engaging in private conversation, neither of them thinks about dialectical discussion. For instance, justice has practical significance, and disdains looking at things nearby or human. For example, Theodorus does not remember the name of the father of Theaetetus, probably because he has not paid attention to it.

Rue turns to Socrates, calling him "a philosophical orator," stating that Socrates shares affinities with both the orator and the philosopher (Rue, 1993: 86). Socrates succeeds in both drawing Theodorus into the discussion, and showing superiority over Protagoras. As she takes it, he draws Theodorus into the discussion to pull the philosopher downwards and he shows superiority over Protagoras, pulling the orator upwards. She takes Socrates to be the best available measure for both the philosopher and the orator.

Menn, however, seems to be at the opposite pole. His text is extensive and provides a very detailed analysis of the digression, which I am not aiming to discuss in full detail. Rather, let me contrast his stance to what seems most crucial to Rue's interpretation.

Menn takes Plato to be fully serious about the philosopher's otherworldliness, "dismissing it as an exaggeration or a parody, and trying to find a compromise between the philosopher and the orator politician, means giving up on Plato's argument against the semi-Protagoreans" (Menn, 2019: 113). Here he does not address Rue directly, though he refers to Rue's text and it seems as though his reference is directed against the common approach initiated by Rue's paper.[10] In this reading, opting for Rue's Socrates seems to be destructive for what the digression intends to achieve. What the digression intends is not, he argues, to refute the semi-Protagorean thesis itself, but rather to refute the practical life that the thesis implies

[10] See for example: Paul Stern, 2002, and especially Roslyn Weiss, 2012: 168 and Andrea Tschemplik 2008: 26 who use "caricature" for the philosopher of the digression.

and the thesis itself. He claims that Plato carefully avoids arguing for justice and injustice existing themselves in the digression.[11]

Menn's main point seems to be that the life and values of the philosopher and the orator are *psychologically* incompatible. He agrees that it is possible to contemplate higher realities and practice them in the human realm, as Socrates did, but the point is that the two ways of life, one which assimilates the practitioner to the divine and the other to the godless one, are not compatible. For in the public, if the philosopher is to participate the political life of the city, as long as his interests are different from the city, in order not to suffer injustice he would have to compromise his justice, otherwise the city would kill him. The one who is "looking up," therefore, cannot also be looking down. The concern here is public, and Socrates, we may note, engaged in *private* discussions, not public ones. Two people in the dialogues remain uncorrupted by the society, Theages and Socrates, the former due to his physical condition, and the latter due to his *daimon*. Menn observes that Socrates, had his *daimon* not interfered with him in engaging political life, would have been killed (Menn, 2019).

Although Menn's reading is compelling and seems to show the main problem with the approach Rue has given, there seem to be certain problems with his approach. Although he sees the connection between the digression and the Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic*, he does not account for several points. The necessity of the return of the philosophers at the outset, seems to be the removal of conflict of interests and the need to repay the favor. Since this is not granted in the digression, it seems not to conflict with the *Republic 7*. However, I believe, Menn misses that the return of the philosophers to the Cave involves a certain *correction*: "because they'd refuse to act, thinking that they had settled *while still alive* in the faraway Isles of the Blessed" (519c, my italics).

[11] Sachs' (2004) translation reads Socrates' statement about the patterns as assertion (176e). Compare Peterson p. 82, where the statement is rendered as conditional. Menn seems to be closer to the latter, but he considers both possibilities.

Socrates describes the *properly* educated philosophers of their city as "better and more completely educated than the [ones who become philosophers on their own account] and are more able to share in both types of life" (520b). What Socrates implies here is that the ones who are philosophers of the current may not share in both lives, as the philosopher of the digression, but it is still *possible* to share in both lives with proper upbringing. The cave does not only refer to the lack of political conflict between the philosophers and the city, but it also refers to the philosophers' ability. Menn seems to restrict the incompatibility of the two ways of life to conflicting interests.

The digression talks about what the philosopher thinks worthy of consideration, and implies that what *does not seem* worthy to the philosopher, the philosopher would not notice at all. Recall the exchange between Parmenides and Socrates in the *Parmenides.* When Parmenides asks whether Socrates thinks that the beautiful, just and everything of *that sort* have a form itself by itself, Socrates answers with a confident "Yes" (130b). But when Parmenides asks what Socrates thinks of the forms of human being, fire, or of water, Socrates expresses his confusion about them. Finally, when Parmenides asks whether mud or dirt have forms, Socrates, again with full confidence, replies "Not at all" (130d). He states that what *seems* base is just *what it seems* so and Socrates resents granting forms for them. This in a way exemplifies the seeming incompatibility between looking at things nearby and the wholes. But Parmenides states that Socrates is still too young and concerned with the common opinion, and philosophy has not grasped him yet (130e). The stress here is not on the forms *per se*, but on the notion that knowledge has to do with what one considers worthy and learnable. Socrates' interest in the just and beautiful makes him overlook mundane things. Though he may be right in this, this also makes him consider what seems to him enough in the case of mud. It may as well be that the incompatibility of the two lives, both politically and scientifically, may seem due to the *common opinion* about philosophy. Menn claims that Plato, with the example of Thales, wanted physicians, mathematicians, and dialecticians alike to find similarities among themselves. But, then, it would be curious whether the top philosopher is based on the common opinion or not.

One of the main points of Menn's interpretation is that the digression is about wisdom, not knowledge. He rightly notes that the paradigm case of the digression is calculation, but does not relate how this would apply to the relation between knowledge and wisdom. He notes that Plato leaves it ambiguous as to what he means by *whole*, whether it is "a physical whole, distributed throughout the cosmos (as, say, any of the Anaxagorean stuffs are), and 'collecting' a dialectical whole, a universal, from its many instances" (Menn, 2019: 95). I will discuss this later in detail, but for now suffice it to say that one of the main problems of the digression is this, and with this, one ought to ask in what relation knowledge and wisdom stand with regard to it.

I hold that Menn's reading, though exhaustive and well worked, leaves many gaps and we need to consider the digression again. For his account has the risk of making Plato adopt a common opinion about philosophy, which finds Socrates on trial.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHY AND MULTIPLICITY

Here my strategy is to show certain general features of the *Theaetetus*, which can be taken to be why the dialogue ends in an impasse.

I propose that we need to read the dialogue in the reverse order in order to see how the dialogue is based on certain assumptions. I present the dream argument and Desjardins' solution to the dilemma. I argue that the dream argument, in several respects, is significant in both understanding the *Theaetetus* as a whole and the digression in particular.

The solution Desjardins offers to the dilemma is to reject the either/or disjunction, and this, I argue, is what Socrates wants Theaetetus to see. I argue that this has certain implications on the digression concerning the unity of philosophy and knowledge.

3.1. The Dream

After the failure of the definition that knowledge is correct judgment, at 201c, Theaetetus states that he has heard someone say that true opinion with an articulation is knowledge. This is the first time Theaetetus explicitly states the origin of his suggestion. Although he does not understand the meaning of it, he knows that the suggestion is not his own, and he would be able to follow it even if he cannot state it himself. It is *explicitly* an image, not something generated by Theaetetus (150c). Socrates replies "listen to a dream in return for a dream," acknowledging the image status of Theaetetus' suggestion (201e).[12] Also Socrates refers to himself calling it a dream, taking no credit for the theory.

[12] I go along with Amelie Rorty that the "dream" is not addressed to the theory itself, but Theaetetus' remark that he would be able to follow if someone would state it. However, this does not explain why Socrates calls "his" version also a dream, for unlike Theaetetus he can state the theory. Socrates' remark seems to be directed at both the acquisition of the theory from hearsay and the *seeming* or *hypothetical* clarity it provides. See: Rorty, 1972

Most scholars note that Theaetetus, for the first time, gives the objects of knowledge along with a definition.[13] This is likely to be seen as an improvement, but I am not sure whether this is a genuine development or not, as this theory is at *best a second-hand one* for now.

We shall see that the dream status of the theory and its imaginary nature is important and self-containing. In Socrates' narration, the dream is as follows. The primary things, like elements, cannot be articulated but can only be named, for they are themselves by themselves (201e). Therefore, there cannot be any description of them at all, for any talk about the primary things would attach something other than them. Hence elements are not knowable by the standards of the definition at hand.

Theaetetus, after hearing Socrates' narration, replies with mathematical precision, he has heard it in his dreams "that way absolutely" (202c). Unlike the Heraclitean, Protagorean theories and Theaetetus' definition that knowledge is nothing other perception, which are said to be the expressions of the same thing in different ways (152a-e), or the different expressions of six (twice three and thrice two, and four plus two are different expressions of the same thing, namely six (204b)), Socrates' dream is exactly the same with that of Theaetetus, both as a whole (its meaning) and as its expression. Theaetetus' answer should make us aware that, from here on, the problem of wholes and aggregates (alls) is at stake.

Socrates is not satisfied with one thing, that the elements are unknowable but the compounds are knowable (202e). He states that Socrates and Theaetetus should follow the patterns (παραδείγματα) of the teller of the dream; the patterns he was using to say all these (χρώμενος εἶπε πάντα), should be followed strictly (something reminiscent of the discussion of the Protagorean thesis).[14] The patterns are nothing but letters and syllables (στοιχεῖά τε καὶ συλλαβάς), but Theaetetus must have noticed that στοιχεῖά also means elements, hence we should consider the restriction of Socrates of elements to letters.

The two horns of the dilemma are as follows.

[13] For instance, Benardete, 2006: I.170
[14] For an illuminating view of the discussion see: Ford, 1994

The syllable is nothing other than the letters together: If recognizing SO is to recognize S and O together, then one would recognize *sigma* and *omega*, which are unknowable. Hence it would be absurd to be ignorant of each but to recognize both together.[15]

The syllable is different from the letters: now Theaetetus takes the position that the whole is different from all the parts. Socrates makes Theaetetus agree that different expressions of six, thrice two and twice three, and four plus two plus one, are nothing other than six. In *at least* whatever is made of number the all is all the parts. If the whole is to different than the all, then it cannot have parts, and if it is the case that an all and a whole is that which nothing is lacking, then it would be absurd to claim that the difference lies in the whole having something as its part but not as an element of it.

Then the compound must be a single indivisible look, which renders it unknowable for nothing can be said of it. The result of the dilemma is that there is no knowledge. Desjardins suggests that Plato wishes us to read the dilemma differently. Instead of taking the dichotomy that a complex is *either* (a) "the same as its elements in the sense that it is reducible to the sum of its constituent elements" *or* (b) "a complex is different from the sum of its elements in the sense that it is a unity unanalyzable into its elements" which results in the claim that (not c) there is no knowledge, she argues that Plato wants us to see that the *either/or* dichotomy is problematic (Desjardins, 1981).

Instead of reading the argument as:

1. Either a or b

2. If a then not c

[15] It is perhaps important to notice that out of seventeen consonants of Greek three are compounds, which are composed of *different* sounds, zeta, ksi, and psi, which do not stop the preceding voice as does the other consonants. I owe this observation to Sachs, 2004: 115n59. In Theaetetus' classification of numbers (147d-148b), until seventeen there are three square numbers, to use Theaetetus' term, which are composed of the *same* elements (4,9, and 16). Socrates lists seventeen possible cases where false judgment might be spotted, and out of seventeen only three have two *different* elements (192a-d). The structure of false judgment and that of the vowels have the opposite structure in comparison with the problem of incommensurables.

3. If b then not c

4. Therefore not c

We should read it as:

1. c
2. Either a or b
3. If a then not c
4. Therefore not a
5. If b then not c
6. Therefore not b
7. Therefore not (either a or b) (Desjardins, 1981: 115)

This would result in the claims that if we are to save knowledge, then "a complex will be *both* the "same as" its elements, in the sense of being analyzable into those elements, *and* "different from" its elements, in the sense of being analyzable into those elements" (Desjardins, 1981: 116).

The solution which Desjardins poses is quite interesting, and I believe, is on the right track. One thing that needs to be asked is why Socrates never makes that point explicit. It is not that he hides the solution, but is expecting Theaetetus to realize it, as the examples he gives are successively more and more organized. This, I argue, is the main feature of the *Theaetetus* and its dramatical, argumentative and literary intricacies.

3.2. Philosophies

At the beginning Socrates uses ”geometry or any other sort of philosophy” when he asks to Theodorus if he has met with an Athenian youth who is worthy of mentioning (143d). Later, at the beginning of the digression, he talks about “philosophies”, which a few lines later turns to “philosophy and that sort of pastime” (172c). I suppose that where the unity of knowledge is being discussed, this would not be a mere coincidence.

This plural usage might be interesting in several ways. First, Seth Benardete (2006: I.187) indicates that this is the only plural usage of the word in the Platonic corpus. One might take this as a sign of a peculiarity indicating that Plato is wishing to point out something. However, this may seem to be only a textual significance and not a philosophically compelling one. However, considering this plurality with respect to both the appearance of pre-Socratic philosophies and mathematical sciences with respect to the discussion of multiplicities in the *Theaetetus* would prove to be compelling. Now I mainly focus on the pre-Socratic philosophies.

These lines show several things. First Socrates initially takes geometry as a sort of philosophy, so far as to include Theodorus as a philosopher. Although he never questions his authority in geometry, Theodorus is apparently not fond of Socrates’ way of conversing. He even thinks that that kind of exchange is fit for the young (162b).

I believe the implications of this broad scope of philosophy have to be understood properly if one is to properly understand the digression. Although Menn understands that this broad scope is to contrast the intellectuals with the orators, and invite Theodorus into the discussion, I believe what this plurality means, whether it is a unified whole or an aggregate, has crucial implications, and is not understood properly.

As is indicated by both the *Gorgias* (484c-e) and *Phaedo* (64a-b), the description of the one who passes his time in philosophies in the digression accords with the common understanding of philosophy. But why this is so and is there anything

inherent to philosophies which results in this view? That can there be some other reason which we should be aware of in addition to the distance and disinterest of the philosophic ones from human matters?

I believe the answer to this question is positive. What is peculiar to the *Theaetetus* is the bearing of Theodorus' turning away from philosophy and his utterance "bare words." Notice, philosophies as a plurality is unified at the outset by "leisure" and search for *what is*. This is so broad as to include all pre-Socratic philosophies, perhaps, except the Heracliteans for Theorodus, as he has never seen them in leisure (180b). But when Socrates suggests that they perhaps talk in a leisured manner among friends, Theodorus scorns Socrates, but accepts considering them as well, but within his standards of *measure*. Why has Theodorus, later at 181b, become so eager to examine them?

Socrates warns Theodorus that they have fallen into the middle of the dispute between the Heracliteans and Parmenides, the former claiming all is in motion, the latter claiming the whole is without motion (181a). Socrates prompts that they need to take sides on account of whom they *measure* to say truer things, but if they cannot do so they would be laughed at (181b). The problem here seems to be echoing the incompatibility of the philosopher and the orator in the digression. As mutually exclusive, without a common measure or unity, both sides would say what they say about being and becoming without conversing. In all this, if they cannot find a way they would be laughed at, not only by the orators but also by philosophy. For remember that the digression first described the orator, then the philosopher in *total contrast* to the orator. Just as evil *must* accompany good in the mortal realm, and oratory, as it seems, must accompany philosophy, Socrates seems to imply that Theodorus cannot get away with rejecting the Heracliteans, for if he does not take sides with either of them he would have no place. But Socrates' bringing Theodorus amidst the war between the two camps of philosophy should make the latter realize a most fundamental problem, the possibility of philosophy, with which he had no concerns before - that he takes it for granted (cf. Benardete I.137). But is not this very incommunicability of philosophies the reason why Theodorus called them "bare words?" And is not this the reason why philosophy seems to be an act of contradiction while agreeing or accomplishing nothing to the orator and the many?

The problem with philosophies, therefore, is that if there is no unity in them, that discrete philosophies as an all constitute the whole of philosophy, in other words, philosophy would seem as an aggregate, then such a conception would be devastating for the worth of the philosophical enterprise. This, I suggest, is one reason why we should take the plural use of philosophy seriously.

The philosopher's looking down at the earth-bound is described in terms of magnitude and number. This suggests that the paradigm here is mathematical, but it might also indicate that it is specifically arithmetical. He looks at and travels *all* the earth and heaven so as to know the *whole.* If both are identical, as the *Theaetetus* gives only that option, then the knowledge of the philosopher would consist in having seen *more.* This is not to say that Plato has endorsed it, but it might seem so to Theodorus and Theaetetus.

Theodorus, after Socrates' description of the philosopher, states that if Socrates would persuade *everyone,* as he persuaded Theodorus, "there would be more peace and fewer evils" (176a). Notice that when Socrates asks Theodorus to join the discussion and defend the thesis of Protagoras, Theodorus refuses to join, for he has turned away from "bare words" (165a). "Bare words" might either mean words that have no meaning, or figure perhaps, as Theodorus puts geometry in opposition to them. But this time, persuaded by Socrates, he does not seem to regard Socrates' words as bare. Theodorus thinks that good and evil are matters of opinion, which can be, at least in principle, done away with by persuasion.

Considering such discussions as "bare words" also implies that until 175c the Protagorean thesis is still at work. For measurement is the area of competence of Theodorus, and for *his* salvation a place for him must be granted, where he can be competent again. The problem is that "philosophies", when extended outside the domain of number, such as the problem of being and becoming, they would become bare words and cannot converse with one another, if we understand from "philosophies" schools of philosophy or individuals. It becomes apparent, when he utters his disdain for the Heracliteans, that they need to take the words of Heracliteans away from them and "problematize" the words as geometrical proportions, he not only confuses them with the orators of the digression, he also

overlooks the problem of being. He is granting objective measure for calculation, but what is beyond calculation would be as it appears for him, a matter of opinion. Theodorus states that what Socrates was saying "*in absolutely every detail, is what happens"* (175b), and this recalls the response that Theaetetus gives to Socrates' telling of the dream argument. He stated that he would not be able to articulate what he has heard, but would be able to follow if someone tells him. Almost the same, I claim, happens here with Theodorus. Until Socrates' contrast between the orator and the philosopher *precisely in terms of magnitudes and number*, Theodorus' responses seem rather dim (174c). Only when he gets to understand what Socrates describes in mathematical terms does he understand with precision. This suggests that the image of the philosopher was like a dream in Theodorus, as is the case with the last definition of knowledge in Theaetetus was like a dream. If my inference here is adequate, then I hold that the digression can be split into two parts here. For the discussion that starts at 158a suggests that with respect to elements alone dreams and waking states cannot be distinguished.[16] Further, the paradigmatic example for the dreams that are evident to Theaetetus are those in which one thinks oneself as flying. Notice this parallels the language of flying in the digression. Notice, again, that the description of the philosopher until 175c takes mathematical sciences as its paradigm, which is dropped after 175c. As such the description not only includes Theodorus, but it describes Theodorus himself, for instance, as Rue holds, only with the difference that Theodorus does not seem to be concerned with justice happiness and the like. However after this point Socrates, so to speak, goes beyond the dream of Theodorus. As Paul Stern points out:

> Initially, 'flight' means 'becoming like a god,' but subsequently it is taken to mean 'becoming just and holy with phronesis.' Socrates equates this latter destination with the flight from wickedness, the opposite of the pursuit of virtue (176b1–5). What began sounding distinctly otherworldly becomes ever more terrestrialized (Stern, 2008: 177).

With *phronesis*, the description of the philosopher in the digression transforms. For it is knowing that evil in the human realm necessarily accompanies the good, and if wisdom consists of the search for what happiness, justice and alike are but they always entail their opposite in the human realm, then the philosopher must also know

[16] The discussion has a mathematical bent, which I believe is made clear in the discussion of the dream theory.

what is bad, hence what is at his feet. With this, the purely theoretical description of philosophy transforms into political philosophy. I believe this segmentation also parallels the distinction between the pre-Socratics and Socrates, and the ones who come to be philosophers on their own account and the ones whom the Kallipolis educates. The former, I believe, stressfully in the *Phaedo* is portrayed as dreaming and groping. I will turn to the distinction between the two groups in the last chapter.

All of this suggests that in the first half of the digression philosophy is an all, not a whole, and the wisdom granted for the philosopher is also knowing all. Philosophy in this sense is the sum of geometry and the like, it dissolves into schools and sciences. As I indicated above not being able to accommodate a unified view of philosophy has devastating outcomes, so as to destroy the possibility of philosophy. As for the effect of this aggregative view of mathematical sciences, I will turn at the last chapter.

Notice the dialogue is seeking what knowledge is in its unitary form. And if Theaetetus has noticed that philosophies that are explicitly listed in the digression are his teacher's disciplines (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, harmony)[17] and they dissolve into an aggregate. Had he tried to see all in order, would not he have tried to complete the "prelude" to the song of dialectics, and come closer to the song itself of which Socrates remains silent in *Rep. 7* (532d)?[18] To see how the digression would make fuller sense both in terms of unity of philosophy and in terms of mathematics, I turn to the *Republic*.

Menn and many others think that the digression is serious in its intent, and describes the paradigmatic Platonic philosopher. To make sense of the digression in light of the *Republic* might require the presence of Forms in the *Theaetetus*, and Menn argues

[17] Solid geometry is missing here, but Theaetetus alludes to his classifying the incommensurables applies to solids as well.

[18] cf. *Theaetetus* 176a, there is no mention of a "prelude." Socrates at the end of the digression indicates that if they continue the digression more would be coming which would be a "burial mound" over their original discussion (177c). This might suggest that the continuation of the digression might introduce a discussion about dialectic, but Socrates is hesitant to discuss it here, similar to his hesitation in the *Rep. 7*.

that the digression does not introduce Forms. But let us postpone this problem, and follow the *Republic's* mathematical curriculum for the philosophers.

To begin with, it seems notable that *sophia* only occurs once in the *Rep. 7*, where the freed philosopher remembers what has passed for wisdom in his former dwelling place, he considers himself to be happy and feels pity when he remembers his former place (*Rep. 7* 516c). Would not the freed philosopher, Socrates asks, "prefer to 'work the earth as a serf to another, one without possessions' and go through any sufferings, rather than share their opinions and live as they do?" (516d) Glaucon agrees.

Socrates later describes to Glaucon what this praised wisdom is. The one who would be called wise would have:

> "honors, praises, or prizes among them for the one who was sharpest at identifying the shadows as they passed by and who best remembered which usually came earlier, which later, and which simultaneously, and who could thus best divine the future" (516c-d).[19]

The "wisdom" in the cave consists of recognition, memorization and prediction. Taken as a whole, they combine what are discussed in the *Theaetetus.* We already know from the *Theaetetus* that at least prediction requires the use of our thinking.

The prisoners are *aphronein*, and this is the lack of awareness of this very double nature of what they see (the shadows *as* shadows of some original). The philosopher is with understanding, and this understanding essentially consists in understanding that what has passed for wisdom in the cave is only a phantom. For the things the philosopher formerly saw are *now* shown to be not the originals but images, and in this the philosopher has wisdom. To distinguish the original from the phantom, as I have said, requires the distinction between whole and all, in the sense that the whole must have some irreducible look so as to distinguish it from the image (an all given

[19] What is to be noted, that the scenario in the Cave is not Protagorean, in the sense of the *Theaetetus*, that is, there are established standards the prisoners would confirm and they do not think that they are the measure of everything. But it is the case that the scenario in the cave is semi-Protagorean, the very context of the digression.

from one perspective) and the whole must be analyzable to its constituent parts in order for their likenesses to be related. The wisdom that the philosophers attain, I believe, is nothing other than the wisdom the free ones have in the digression (176b). Later, Socrates states that the philosophers should be compelled to govern because "they'd refuse to act, thinking that they had settled while still alive in the faraway Isles of the Blessed" (520c). When Glaucon asks Socrates whether this would be fair or not, Socrates replies that the ones who grow to be philosophers on their own account owe no debt to the city, but the ones whom they have made philosophers must go down to the darkness and accustom there, and rule (520b). As they are better educated and more able to share in *both* lives.

The issue now is to find the best education program to turn the soul to being and implicitly to make the philosophers able to share in both lives. Now, for the education of the philosophers three arts are proposed and they must be suitable for warlike men (521d-522e):

i- Gymnastic is suitable for warlike men, but it concerns the good of body in terms of becoming. Hence it is dismissed.
ii- Music is the opposite of gymnastics. It brings about harmoniousness through habit, not knowledge. It too is dismissed.
iii- And the arts are said to be of a mechanical nature; Glaucon cannot find anything that answers to the thing they are seeking.[20]

Socrates suggests that they need some art that summons the understanding, that turns the soul to the intelligible. *Summoners* he states, are where "sense perception doesn't declare one thing any more than its opposite, no matter whether the object striking the senses is near at hand or far away" (523c). Take three fingers. There is the smallest, the second and the middle one. If one compares two, say the small with second, the second will seem larger. If one takes the middle and the second then the second will seem smaller. This does not affect the perceiving of a finger but one

[20] Something similar with their search for justice is happening here. They could not found justice in its own compartment, but it is found in the intersection of the other three virtues, courage, moderation, and wisdom. Just as justice applies to all in a sense, Socrates suggests that this art may be sought for in terms of what applies to i, ii, iii (522b).

thing seems both small and larger. Such are what Socrates calls the summoners, where perception cannot afford the clarity that is needed. The sciences that induce the soul to turn from the sensible to the intelligible are the mathematical sciences, arithmetic, geometry, solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonic theory, and each, except solid geometry, have their peculiar effect of this turning or conversion of the soul.

CHAPTER IV

MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES IN THE *REPUBLIC* AND THE DIGRESSION

In his eccentric paper "*Beginning the 'Longer Way'*," Mitchell Miller queries a discursive and dramatic aspect of the *Republic*, and that is the philosopher's reluctance to descend to rule and Socrates' willingness to descend into Piraeus. On the one hand, philosophers disdain their fellow citizens' misconception of reality, and are reluctant to rule. Due to this reluctance, philosophers shall be compelled to rule in Kallipolis, for they owe their education and upbringing to the city (*Rep.* 520c). On the other hand, Miller states that all of this is said by Socrates, who becomes a philosopher on his own account and owes nothing to Athens, who "himself willingly 'descended' into the Piraeus … with an inexhaustible generosity and zest" (Miller, 2007: 317). These he states are strikingly at odds with each other. Miller wonders whether an answer can be found in the *Republic* to this oddity.

4.1. Miller's Reading of the *Republic*

Miller wonders whether there is some internal, not external, reason for Socrates' descent, of which he has not spoken explicitly. He notes that Socrates implies that there is a "longer and fuller way" (*Rep.* 435c-d, 504b) which he does not take, for Glaucon and Adeimantus would not understand it. What Miller offers in the paper is an insight into what this longer way may be, and whether it would relate to Socrates' enthusiasm in "descending" into Piraeus.

He notes that, with regards to the Good, Socrates is obscure and not all open (*Rep.* 506e), Socrates is reticent with respect to dialectic. Miller considers the five mathematical studies (arithmetic, geometry, solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonic theory) which are said by Socrates to release the soul from its material bonds and turn one's soul to the intelligible (*Rep.* 532b). Those five mathematical sciences are *preludes* to dialectic, which we might remind ourselves that the

Theaetetus digression seems to equate the mathematical sciences with the hymn itself.

His main observation concerning the mathematical curriculum is that seeing "how *each* of the five disciplines contributes to the ascent from the sensible, however, is not yet to see how they collaborate" (Miller, 2007: 320). The experts in mathematics are not dialecticians by default, for mathematicians, as long as they cannot give and take an account of their hypotheses, can only dream about being (533b). What Miller suggests is that the five disciplines, as long as they remain hypothetical and separate, "mathematical study will be 'profitless labor' (531d) unless the philosopher-to-be reaches an understanding of 'the community and kinship' of the five" (Miller, 2007: 320). The beginning of dialectic and proper philosophical education, therefore, necessitates seeing how the five disciplines relate to each other.

I give a basic overview of his discussion of the relation of the sciences and turn to what he has to say about the Good, since to discuss all of his analysis would exceed the purpose of this thesis.

Miller first notes the importance of the sequence of those mathematical sciences, which provides a philosophical analogue to the *summoners* (523b-525a). Those sciences turn the soul from becoming to Being, sensible to the intelligible, but they still remain at the threshold of the Forms. He wonders whether we can "find concepts at the level of the Forms themselves by which to make properly intelligible the nature of the Forms and the Good and their priority to sensibles and mathematicals alike" (Miller, 2007: 323). His understanding is that the answers to these would provide clues to the main question, the philosopher's reluctance to descend and Socrates' eagerness in descending into Piraeus.

He considers the relationship between geometrical practice and the function of perfection:

> The geometer begins with (1) this sensible ▽ that he draws. But even as he considers it, he turns away from it, looking to (2) the perfection that it lacks; and in the context of pure intelligibility that the consideration of perfection opens up, he "sees," that is, conceives, (3) the perfectly triangular triangle that

> this ▽ only approaches or, as Socrates says, "falls short of." Nor is this all: even as the perfectly triangular triangle presents itself in thought, he knows of it that it is – and that the visible ▽ is not – a perfect triangle; hence there is also in play, though not as an object but as the tacit standard by reference to which he identifies and assesses the two triangles that *are* objects, (4) the Form that these instantiate, triangularity as such (Miller, 2007: 324).

Socrates distinguishes the imperfect sensible triangle (1) and the *form* triangle (4). The difference between (3) and (4), the intelligible triangle and triangularity, corresponds to the philosopher looking at things outside of the cave *through reflections* of what is. Further, the *look* at (2), *the lack of perfection in the visible triangle*, turns the mind to (3), the perfect figure, intelligible triangle.

The application of this to the Good would bring about the casual (epistemic) aspect, "as perfection as such [it] is the source of 'the truth'" (Miller, 2007: 327). As ontological, it is responsible for being, while it is beyond being.

I shall now explain what significance the harmonic theory has. In the harmonic theory, Socrates states that leaving empirical interests is necessary. In his critique of Pythagoreans, Socrates criticizes them for still relying on their ears, plucking the strings of the lyre as if they are torturing them to hear the smallest intervals (*Rep.* 531a).

With harmonics, Socrates is now able to bring normativity. For the five mathematical sciences turn the soul to the intelligible, the order of the five disciplines makes the intelligible structure *of the sensible* apparent. This structure is also normative. He adds, "if, in the case of music, sound is to be 'beautiful and good' it must conform to the ratios by which Archytas' means structure the octave" (Miller, 2007: 330). He adds that this *normative* order is also the expression of the relations between forms.

In answering his question about the conditions to which the musical sounds meet in order to be *on* pitch, he states that

> Minimally, each note must be some proportion of high to low; hence the Form pitch implies the Forms high and low and their instantiation as the tone continuum, which, since the notions of high and low are internally related as reciprocal relatives, ranges from some extreme predominance of high over low to a correspondingly extreme preponderance of low over high. Beyond this, no musical sound is ever 'on pitch' in isolation; rather, it must belong to a set of

> pitches that stand at the right intervals to one another to be harmonious (Miller, 2007: 330).[21]

Miller expresses his worries as follows:

> Is it right to project a field of eidetic-mathematical structure of this sort as what awaits the philosopher-to-be when he turns from mathematics to dialectic? Or have we read too much into Socrates' brief comments on harmonic theory? Mathematics, we have stressed, stops at the threshold of the Forms, and these reflections certainly lead us across that threshold (Miller, 2007: 331).

Miller now turns to the reticence of the philosophers and the zeal of Socrates. The distinction between the two is, he asserts, that the former goes down so as to *rule*, the latter goes down to Piraeus so as to *teach.* One might have concerns with the notion of "zeal."[22] For the reason given for Socrates' presence in Piraeus is his wishing to see the festival and pray to the goddess. He is then compelled to stay there by Polemarchus and his company, upon Polemarchus' notice of Socrates and Glaucon (327a-328b). The account Miller gives seems highly dependent on the idea that Socrates' presence in Piraeus is a provocation by Plato, a playfulness on the latter's side (Miller, 2007). One might have some concerns with this idea of playfulness.

If there is no playfulness here, then the internal necessity Miller talks about would not seem to make much sense, at least concerning Socrates. For taking the passage literally would say that Socrates visits Piraeus just because of his piety and wonder, and he would remain there by a mixture of chance and compulsion. Miller's attribution of zest and generosity to Socrates is driven by an assumption of "provocation" by Plato, and this "chance" might undermine such an attribution. Notice, again, that Miller takes Socrates' action (his presence in Piraeus, and his enthusiasm in teaching) as a result of his inner experience of the Good. If this is not so, that Socrates does not exemplify such an experience, then it might seem that the contrast between Socrates' description of the philosopher and his action would disappear. This might seem to undermine the vital notion of Miller's account that

[21] cf. *Theaetetus* 144e. Socrates reverts Theodorus' likening of him to the boy in terms of body to soul. Socrates *together with* Theaetetus can only be Theodorus' object of knowledge. When they are separate Theodorus cannot say anything. Only when their speech meets Theodorus' competence would be apparent. Also cf. *Theaetetus* 154c and 206b, where Theaetetus first gathers this necessary relation in terms of a *visual* example, but he forgets it in terms of an *audible* one.
[22] I would like to thank Prof. Geoff Bove for raising the issue.

Socrates descends in order to teach and that there is an inner experience of the philosopher with respect to the Good. For we must remember that the discussion of justice in the *Republic* is situated by the fact that Socrates' and Glaucon's ascent to Athens is interrupted.

Now, Miller states that it would be implausible to think that Socrates does not want to remain in Piraeus. According to him, Socrates is not really serious about his alternative of persuasion, he "encourages Polemarchus by showing interest in the torch race" (Miller, 1985: 168n9). Most importantly, as Socrates usually joins the occasions where he can converse with and reproduce in youth with zeal, Polemarchus' offering of conversing with the youth would appeal to him. He also reads ὡρμῆσθαι of Polemarchus (327c) as "hurrying off", taking it as an indication of Socrates' provoking Polemarchus to come after him.[23]

To say all these, one needs to show that Polemarchus is not really posing a problem in the first instance. It seems that Polemarchus' threat, if executed, would bring problems. For he would then be requiring Adeimantus to "lay his hands on his own brother" (Benardete, 1989: 10), and Polemarchus would be harming a friend - the friendly manner of his father Cephalus' approach to Socrates shows their acquaintance. Interestingly enough, he defined justice as harming one's enemies and benefitting one's friends (332a-c), if his threat were serious, he would be contradicting his future definition. And when Adeimantus interrupted and seemingly gained Socrates' interest in the torch-race, Polemarchus offers Socrates a dinner and an opportune moment of talking to the young ones (328a). Now he promises to benefit a friend. But as we that this promise too is not fulfilled, hence neither of Polemarchus' words, his threat and his friendly offer seems to have nothing serious with regard to action and justice.[24]

Miller does not observe any reluctance in Socrates. This may imply that any compromise in a way undermines his approach. But this may not be so. If Socrates'

[23] Perhaps this might seem to an overinterpretation. ὡρμῆσθαι is not always taken to imply "hurry", for instance, Grube translates it as "starting off," without implying rush as Miller wishes to see.
[24] It really seems that Polemarchus' all talk and no substantial action in contrast to Socrates' silence is playful. For Socrates, with his passivity, seems to imply that he knows how to tame the spirited, by simply not showing resistance to it.

piety brings him down to Piraeus with Glaucon, and by a compromise and compulsion they remain there, we need to understand what this piety is and whether it is *that piety* that is being compromised.

Now, Socrates will both in the *Apology* and in the *Theaetetus* imply that his divine service, piety, is to attend his fellow citizens and care for their souls. If his main motive with Glaucon is this, and in particular to cure Glaucon from his political ambitions[25], first, we need to notice that for such a curing the discussion of justice would be perhaps the most opportune situation. Second, it is Glaucon who decides to remain at Piraeus. Strauss suggests that Socrates may have followed Glaucon who wished to descend in order to find an opportune moment to cure and educate him. And such an opportune moment, perhaps, can only be when there is a compromise made, for, without the notion of compromise, it seems that justice, and politics, therefore, would not make sense.[26] This interpretation seems to accord with Miller's one. Furthermore, Socrates seems to be under a certain restraint at the beginning of the Book II. But is not this what he wanted, that now Glaucon is eager to listen Socrates' forthcoming praise of justice itself? This is to say that perhaps Socrates was reluctant to stay at Piraeus, but this is also to say that Socrates was willing to be with Glaucon in order to educate him. There is no need to attribute zest to Socrates with respect to his staying at Piraeus. The Polemarchus' and Adeimantus' compulsion and the compromise made there might be serious, but this need not undermine Miller's notion of Socrates' zest in educating Glaucon.

Let me now return to Miller's comparison of the doing of the philosophers and Socrates.Miller states:

> The philosophers' ruling activity is to use the Good as their paradigm, order the city, themselves and the individuals in accordance with it. Socrates' goal, however, is to bring his citizens to the understanding of their soul, so that they can "structure their public and private lives accordingly" (Miller, 2007: 334).

[25] See Strauss, 1978: 65
[26] See Benardete, 1989: 10

Finally, Miller returns to his initial question:, whether "the 'longer way' lead to an experience that could explain Socrates' zest for descent?" (Miller, 2007: 335)

> Recall first that throughout his presentation of "musical" education Socrates stressed the way the young soul "assimilates itself to" (377b) the models it is presented with; this, he warned, is both potentially beneficial and potentially subversive, depending on the models, for "such imitations . . . [can] establish themselves as habits and [second] nature in body, speech, and thought" (395d). Now, at 500c–d Socrates claims that the philosopher too is subject to this sort of formative power (Miller, 2007: 335).

The philosopher's assimilation to the forms or divine would make him become orderly, but this would also make him reluctant to descend, unless some necessity arises. Miller wonders what that necessity might be. He states that in Socrates' geometry and harmony we find a "keeping company with and admiring of the Good" (Miller, 2007: 337). This imitation and assimilation to the Good make the philosopher "like" the Good, hence produce a habit and a second nature.

He states,

> Finally, doesn't Socrates' will to teach in its freedom from external necessity and ulterior motives seem similar to the Good in the root character – the *giving of itself* – of its causal functioning? By his own argument (520b), Socrates is under no obligation to Athens to "go down" into the "cave" of Athenian culture, nor does he seem in any discernible way to need or be selfishly desirous of anything that Glaucon and Adeimantus, much less Cephalus or Polemarchus or Thrasymachus, might offer him… Whence comes this extraordinary "nature"? Isn't this precisely that sort of "[second] nature" that "imitation" of the Good will "establish in body, speech, and thought"? (Miller, 2007: 339)

The assimilation of Socrates, his imitation of the Good moves Socrates to educate the others like him, make him go down to Piraeus.

Miller's general point is as follows. The "prelude" consists in seeing how the five mathematical disciplines relate to each other, in a way form a coherent whole. And harmonic theory, as preliminary musical education brings about a "second nature", gives its practitioner a normativity such that both the practitioner would try to imitate the order, and would try to produce that order in the ones like him, i.e., educate them.

We may extend Miller's point with respect to our discussion of the dream argument and the *philosophies* in the digression. That the five sciences can be taken as either

collectively or holistically. The holistic gathering of the sciences, that is, granting mathematical sciences an ordered whole would supposedly grant the knower the "complete" prelude to dialectic. If assimilation to what is divine or the Good consists in moving oneself internally and trying to produce that order in the others who are alike, and a fuller vision of the Good can be attained in this combination of the five disciplines, then there might be two kinds of philosophers, the ones who come to be philosophers on their own account, and the ones whom the city guides, *who are more able to live in both lives.*

Although Socrates seems to be referring to the different constitutions in Republic 520b-c, the cities of the past and present day, and the city in speech of the Republic, here I take Socrates' meaning to distinguish two types of philosophers. As far as I am aware there is no direct textual evidence for such a difference, though in the Phaedo "genuine philosophers" (64a) and in the Theaetetus "top-notch" and "inferior" ones are mentioned, I take both of the two to be ironical. The distinction I am drawing is therefore highly interpretative, and it depends on both Socrates' reference to the ability of the philosophers of the Republic and Miller's account of the philosopher's inner experience of the good.

This difference, however, is not textually unsupported. In the Phaedo Socrates narrates his experience and wonder in natural science. He states that he was eager to find out the wisdom on the cause of everything, and this drove him to natural science (96a). Dissatisfied and confused, he heard someone reading Anaxagoras' book, and hearing that for Anaxagoras "it is the Mind that directs and is the cause of everything," Socrates thought that Anaxagoras' Mind would be the cause of the arrangement of everything in the best way (96c-97c). Now Socrates' attention is directed to what one might call teleology. But more importantly, he states that his wonder and desire for knowledge would be satisfied if Anaxagoras would show what is best for everything or the common good for all (98a-b).

Socrates is disappointed by Anaxagoras as well. He jokingly states that the man who introduced the Mind has not made use of it (98c). Socrates uses his situation in explicating what is problematic in Anaxagoras' teaching. That it is to say something like Socrates' actions are due to his mind, but his presence in the prison is due to

such and such contractions and relaxations of his sinews, and certain conditions of his bones. This is to say that Anaxagoras has promised something but he never fulfilled it.

I will not go into the details of Socrates' method described at 99d-101e here. However, we need to understand certain things in his remarks. First, he characterizes explanations that exclude an account the good, for example, Socrates' presence in the prison, as "lazy and careless" (99a). Second, he likens such views to groping in dark, giving examples from previous cosmologies.

This, I believe, suggests two things. First, any philosophical endeavor that lacks the search for the good would undermine its goal of attaining *phronesis*.[27] Second, Menn notes that "Thus the wise person has an art of measurement, which unwise people do not. Plato, and also earlier philosophers, had spoken in different contexts of what such an art of measurement or calculation can accomplish, where the paradigmatic case is the measurement or calculation of a *quantity*, of how *much* something is" (Menn, 2019: 93). But we have to notice that in the *Phaedo* 98a, Socrates states that what he sought was *both* the relative speeds of the heavenly bodies *and* "how it is best that each should act or be acted upon." What he seeks is not pure calculation of quantities but the normative structure of the ratios as well. This kind of study, he contends, was not addressed by any of the earlier philosophers. And this kind of study, Miller argues, is promoted in the *Republic VII*. If such normativity is absent in the philosopher's studies, then the assimilation to the Good and the inner experience of it would be either hindered or absent. Either way, Socrates seems to state that philosophic pursuit must be toward the Good, but as he points out in the *Phaedo*, at least to his knowledge, he has not seen any study of that sort.

If, as I stated, the ones that come to be philosophers on their own account in the *Republic* are the ones with whom Socrates disappointed with in the *Phaedo*, then their philosophical pursuit would be in a way deficient, and as their experience with the Good would be hindered or absent, then they would not have the *inner necessity* which Socrates exemplifies.

[27] For the soul cannot act or see without the good. cf. Benardete, 1989: 179; Denyer, 2007

As a last thing, it is crucial to note, along with Miller, that the ruling act of the philosophers is to order themselves and the city and the others in accordance with the Good, but this ruling act is not specifically differentiated from educating. It is even possible that all ruling might essentially be educating, which would come even more close to Socrates' own engagement with politics.

Before returning to the *Theaetetus* digression, consider the difference between the philosopher who does not combine the mathematical sciences in their succession, and the one who does so. The former would be reticent to rule, either he would not be able to see the structure of the sensible and be less able to adapt to the cave, or would not be that compelled by his vision of the Good, and hence would be compelled *externally*. But the one who combines the mathematical sciences in their proper sequence would assimilate oneself to the Good. That philosopher, due to an *internal* necessity, would descend in gratitude so as to teach, educate.

We may as well ask, running the risk, whether it is possible to read the *Theaetetus* in this way.

4.2. Digression Revisited

We have to notice, again, that there are "philosophies" in the digression. What are those philosophies? The philosopher takes a flight, "underneath the earth treating its surfaces of the earth *geometrically*," "above the heavens, engaged in *astronomy*." (174a), He *counts* (arithmetic) the ancestors (175b) and sings the hymns of the gods (harmonic theory) (176a). At 205a, Socrates gets Theaetetus to agree that whenever nothing is missing that thing is an all, and a whole. Therefore, Wholes and Alls make themselves most apparent when something is missing from them. This would not escape the notice of the keen sighted youth (*Rep.* 401e). *What* is missing then? *Solid geometry* is missing here, but we hear that Theaetetus is learning the remaining four from Theodorus, and he is working on solid geometry — "also there is another thing about of [the sort of classification he made about incommensurables] solids" (148b). Socrates exclaims, "that's the best in human power" (148b). When Theaetetus states that since he cannot answer Socrates' question of what knowledge is, Theodorus has proven to be a false witness. Socrates reassures the boy, stating that Theodorus' witness is time-bound, it has a temporal authority.

Now, the digression has two parts, in the former the otherworldly philosopher is described, in the latter the philosopher takes the orator up high, which the former supposedly cannot do, as shown above, and Socrates is silent as to why in the first instance that interaction happens. The question now is whether Miller's reading of the *Republic* can be applied to the *Theaetetus*. And it seems that the main obstacle, at least for Menn, is the *Theaetetus*' relation to the Forms. Why are the Forms lacking in the *Theaetetus*, given that it is Plato's most *explicit* epistemological work? And would the answer change the application?

There is no need to enter into the discussion of developmentalism/unitarianism. Menn believes that Plato deliberately excluded the Forms from the *Theaetetus* so as not to appeal to any specific object of knowledge in his discussion. His most notable points on the Forms is that if Plato had argued for the Forms in the *Theaetetus*, he would be open to three kinds of objections.

> The opponent might (i) deny that there are Forms, which have not been argued for or even mentioned in the dialogue up to this point; he might (ii) admit that there are Forms but, like a good semi-Protagorean, deny that there are *moral* Forms such as a Form of justice; or he might (iii) admit that there is a Form of justice, but say that there is equally a Form of injustice, and that no reason has been given why the philosopher should contemplate and imitate the former more than the latter (Menn, 2019: 81).

But the account of Forms given in Miller's reading would respond as follows: (i) if the mathematical studies are possible, their possibility grants the Forms, for our approach to the Forms is through perfection and lack of perfection, (ii) the Forms are all interrelated, and (iii) the one who is to assimilate oneself to a Form *deliberately* must *already* have attained an orderly character, that choice would not be liable at that stage.

The paradigms in the digression might in fact be Forms. But they are not some "otherworldly" Forms. They are functions, already embedded in the mathematical sciences, rather than objects that are to be attained.

If Miller's reading is compatible, which I strongly think it to be so, then our reading of digression and the *Theaetetus* as a whole would alter significantly, for the Wholes and Alls relation among the sciences is ultimately effective in the formation of the philosopher's way of life. The digression, again, is of two parts. In the former, the

sciences are conceived as an all, as the dream argument imposes, and that "all" lacks solid geometry. It is implied that without seeing the relation of the five disciplines the mathematical prelude would be incomplete, hence the path toward the Good would be deficient. Hence, the formation the sciences would impose on the philosopher is that their *thought* would be reticent to engage in politics, or any human affairs for that matter. But, say, for the sake of argument, that Socrates in fact *guided/educated* Theaetetus to a certain extent. Desjardins' (1990) solution to the dilemma is in fact given at 156a, with Socrates' initiating Theaetetus with the mysteries. Socrates is here to *educate* Theaetetus, and one needs to observe that whenever the "intrepid fellow," or "skilled refuter," or "most terrible danger" is mentioned, the problem is posed as a dilemma in the strict sense. In the first dilemma, Socrates gives the *formal* solution, and one may suppose that he forces Theaetetus to realize the solution to the dilemmas which Socrates later poses. Hence Socrates' request from Theaetetus is in fact to *unite* the "philosophies" — to bring the five mathematical sciences together, and make a unitary whole which is irreducible to its constituent elements. For as we have seen, their unity and sequence is the true form of mathematical art, which enables one to assimilate oneself to the god, or the Good, or the One in both ontological and epistemological senses. This formation is the true *ergon* of the philosopher. In the language of the *Republic,* Socrates is requesting Theaetetus to complete the prelude to dialectic. This I believe is reflected in the second part of the digression.

Let me draw certain conclusions about the *Theaetetus* as a whole and the digression in particular.

1. The digression is not a caricature, as Rue supposed. But it has is an irony in it, most probably Socrates is playing with Theodorus when he talks about the "top-notch" philosopher. It is serious in its intent, as Menn suggested, but the "top-notch" philosopher would have an internal necessity to educate, as Socrates exemplifies both in the *Theaetetus* and *Republic.*

2. Menn is wrong, for *Plato* does not endorse the "flying" philosopher, again both in the mathematical and the philosophical sense. The detached model of philosophy is not an ideal as well. If I am right in dividing the digression into two, then there is no guarantee that the philosopher of the first part is the dialectician of the *Republic*.

That philosopher might as well be the mathematician who dreams about being but is unable to step over the hypotheses.

3. Recall the Wholes and Alls problem. Theaetetus' attachment to his arithmetics and atomism gets in his way of progress, which Socrates decisively destroys. Theaetetus is more of a Parmenidean, and Socrates is forcing the boy to leave his ground by posing more *worldly* problems. Socrates' compelling Theaetetus is his manner of educating him, forcing Theaetetus to be brave and "disturb" his hypotheses. As we have seen the proper application of the mathematical sciences to the physical ones emerges from their unitary sequence and wholeness, not their aggregative collection. It seems that the most suitable way to disturb Theaetetus would be to pose him the problems of becoming, as his arithmetics or geometry alone cannot account for.

4. Why does not Socrates introduce the forms directly? Notice throughout the dialogue there is the theme of originality. Socrates does not want to indoctrinate Theaetetus, but he wants the boy to see *for himself*. This is his denial of wisdom except midwifery. Socrates tests whether Theaetetus has anything of his own, literally something true-born of him (150c). It turns out that Theaetetus has only second-hand opinions, and opinions are always counterfeits, phantoms of knowledge. This is why Socrates has to empty Theaetetus of what he thinks is his, but is, in fact, not. If he were to introduce the Forms to the boy, the boy would only have a second-hand opinion about the Forms. He might have believed in them but not *known* them. Neither the projected dialectic in the *Republic* nor the digression in the *Theaetetus* are present in the dialogues explicitly. All the dialogues are confined to the hypothetical realm, and those dialogues that talk about the forms, perhaps most notably the *Phaedo* and the *Parmenides*, do not go the fuller way the *Republic* projects. In a sense all the talk about the Forms *in the dialogues* are hypothetical; the account we are hearing of the Forms can only cause a dream-like state in us. The *Theaetetus*, in its insistence on originality, requests us to think about the Forms *for ourselves.*

The digression is not a digression at all. It represents two modes of knowledge and two modes of philosophy. At the one end there is Theodorus, who has arithmetics, geometry, astronomy and harmony. At the other end there is Socrates, who insists on the necessity of having has all mathematical sciences in their unity. Socrates

assimilates himself to god, Good. His knowing all too human things does not mingle with his doing philosophy therefore. After all he has learned from Parmenides, now common opinion does not interfere with his philosophy. He is philosophy incarnated.

Socrates is about to face death. He looks for someone who will continue philosophy after him. Socrates finds Theaetetus, perhaps the most suitable one for he is on his way to the whole of the mathematics. But he needs to be purified, his knowledge gets in the way of his learning. Theaetetus is ignorant due to his knowledge (cf. 199d). He has not yet been initiated into the mysteries yet. Theaetetus' Parmenidean spirit has to be overcome. Socrates plays the "gadfly", the Heraclitean, for Theodorus has to face with becoming in order to see how his mathematics would have a unity. Socrates told Euclides that if the youth was to fulfill his potential, he would be highly renown. Socrates, just before his leaving here and dwelling in the Isles of the Blessed.

4.3. Afterthought

The question of the dialogue arises out of the praise and wonder of Theodorus. By the standards of the dialogue about knowledge, i.e., the definitions put forward in the dialogue, we need to say that Theodorus knows Theaetetus. He perceives that Theaetetus (knowledge=perception), can identify him although Socrates and Theaetetus are similar in their appearances (knowledge=correct judgment). And he articulates his true judgment about the boy (knowledge=true judgment with articulation), can state what he thinks (first sense of logos), can enumerate the elements of the boy's character (second sense of logos), and can state the difference of the boy from *all other* students of him (stating the differentiating mark). The passage where Theodorus introduces the boy to Socrates includes all the arguments of the dialogue within. The *Theaetetus*, therefore, might seem to be an analysis of Theodorus' claim of knowledge. What is more interesting is whether in their combination as a whole or as an aggregate the three definitions would bring about knowledge, which the dialogue wants us to consider, as it does with the mathematical sciences.

At 145b, Socrates states that Theodorus has praised many to him, but not in the way (ὡς) he has praised Theaetetus. We do not know how he did so in his previous

praises, but a reflection on Theodorus' praise may give us hints as to how this praise might differ from others. First, Theodorus, with his acquaintance with Theaetetus comes upon a combination of gentleness and wit, a combination of which he was initially skeptical (144a). However, what Socrates refers to is the way in which Theodorus has praised the boy. Theodorus is stating that the boy is peculiar, he has not seen anybody like him - and this seeing makes him understand that such a combination can in fact be. Socrates is stating that the praise is peculiar, he has not heard such a praise from Theodorus until now. Should we draw an inference to the point that Socrates was not supposing the geometer to speak in such a manner? The question is in what manner Theodorus speaks. Second, he enumerated and specified character elements (wit and gentleness) and draws an image of their combination. Theodorus is not speaking in exact manners, but in a poetical manner, drawing up images.

Theaetetus, having heard Socrates' remark, states that perhaps Theodorus was being playful (146c).

What we are seeing is a geometer needing poetry to speak of the boy. Already here it is evident that Theodorus' sciences are not enough to understand the soul of the boy, the combination of two opposing characters. Theodorus likens Theaetetus to a ballasted ship and the flow of the stream of oil - which is at the opposite extreme in comparison to himself. But this extremity is due to age as he acknowledges, for otherwise Socrates would be as stiff as Theodorus.

Notice, he is not talking about moderation, as Socrates talks about at the end of the dialogue, rather he is talking about gentleness. Gentleness, as Theodorus understands it, is primarily obedience, being easily controlled. There is no mention of the captain in the image of the ballasted ship (cf. *Republic VI*), and the flow of oil can only flow toward the direction of the conduit, wherever the conduit leads, Theaetetus will flow there. If these two images make us wonder who will lead this ship or dig the conduit for Theaetetus' flow, the problem of education and control becomes already implicit at the beginning of the *Theaetetus*. Our question becomes who would be a better leader or educator for Theaetetus. We need to notice that the combination of the opposing qualities Theodorus lists point toward self-control, self-knowledge and self-learning.

The problem of leading Theaetetus becomes the genesis of philosophy, for the suitable leading of the city is precisely the problem of philosophy, and the city in the *Republic* is the pattern of the soul. The digression, therefore, was in Socrates' mind even from the beginning, and the theme of combination and wholes is persistent throughout the *Theaetetus.* Socrates wants Theaetetus to see that the combination of different elements may bring about a whole which is irreducible to its parts, as the combination of gentle and brave nature may bring about the possibility of self-rule, the combination of the mathematical sciences may bring about an order and eagerness to educate, and perhaps the combination of different acts of cognition may bring about knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter, I have presented the *Theaetetus* in general, and have specified the digression's context and content. In the second chapter, I have shown what draws different interpreters to consider the passage, the apparent difference between Socrates and the philosopher of the digression. I have presented the views of Rue and Menn, who read the digression almost in opposite ways. I believe neither succeed in truly understanding the digression. In the third chapter, I have suggested that if we read the dialogue in the reverse order, we would understand it better. Desjardins' solution to the dream argument is a formal saving, and, I hold, this is what Socrates tries to teach Theaetetus. The dream argument reflects upon the digression, it renders philosophy as an aggregate. This has some Platonic outcomes. In the fourth chapter I have given Miller's the reading of the *Republic.* The five mathematical sciences are arithmetics, geometry, solid geometry, astronomy, and harmonic theory.
Their combinations, either as an aggregate or a whole would alter the life of the philosopher, and his zest in engaging human affairs. The one who combines those sciences into an *ordered whole* assimilates oneself to the Good, and "descends" so as to teach out of an internal necessity. Socrates' presence in the *Theaetetus*, I argue, is situated by nothing other than this, that he looks for someone to continue philosophy in the most perfect sense. This illuminates the digression, and provides a new outlook for it. Socrates, before leaving to dwell in the Isles of the Blessed, looks for one last pupil.

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